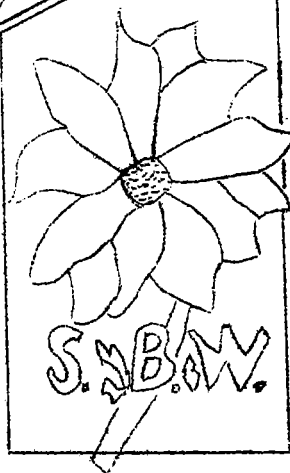


29

MAY 1936



"THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER"

A Journal devoted to matters of interest to the

Sydney Bush Walkers, 5 Hamilton St., Sydney, N.S.W.

No. 29.

MAY 1936.

PUBLISHING COMMITTEE

Miss Marie Byles (Editor)

Miss Dinah Hearfield (Sub-Editor)

Misses Ada Frost, Doris Aldon, Messrs Peter Page, Ian Malcolm & Jack Debert.

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EDITORIAL

Easter is one of the best times of the year for bushwalking, and as usual, this Easter provided scope for a number of interesting trips, although rain marred the Sunday and Monday for those who sought the coastal districts.

The most popular trip was to Yerranderie and the Colong caves, the popularity being due to cheap bus fares from Camden arranged by an enterprising Yerranderie resident desiring to see his township a tourist resort and not merely a mining village. Of course, many of our members went considerably farther afield than the Caves, despite the various entertainments staged in Yerranderie for their benefit.

Peter Page and Ray Birt took a small party over the end of Clear Hill and went with them to the "Dogs". This is not quite such a low-down district as the name might indicate, for the Dog Ranges are as much as 3000 feet height in places.

Grace Edgecombe and Marie Byles took several members from a recently formed society known as the Highbrow Hikers, (Double H, no relation to Toc H) over the highlands behind Omega and Berry on the South Coast, and got the full benefit of the rains which swept in from the sea.

Jean Trimble, Richard Croker, Tom Moppett, Dorothy Lawry, Phil and Wally Roots went from Oberon to Morong Falls above the Kowmung, and indicating the country we wish to see made into the Blue Mountains National Park, they met the following other parties at one stage or another of their journey: The The Rigbys and Taro bound for Gingkin and the Tuglow River; George Dibley, Frank Freeguard, Tom Pennyroyal and Charlie Colberg bound for Mount Guouogang and down the Cox's River; Norman Colton and party aspiring to the Thurat Plateau and Kanangra.

The Cox's River saw a number of parties besides that of George Dibley's notably Ernie Austin, Evelyn Higinbotham and Ted Dolamore, and during the week after Easter, Flo Alsworth and Mary Stoddard, while Clem Armstrong took a party down the Black Dog Range along the Cox and up Kedumba Creek.

If Easter trips are any indication, there is more than sufficient evidence as to which country is most loved by the Bush Walkers and why it is so urgently necessary that it should be converted into a Blue Mountains National Park.

In addition to the Easter trips, we must record that taken prior to Easter by Jean Travis, Gordon Mannell and Jessie Martin from the south of the South Coast across the Tablelands to the Main Southern Line. From Moruya, the party went up the Deua River, crossed the Highlands, investigated the little known Bendithers Caves, which are supposed to be more extensive than Jenolan; and created quite a sensation when they arrived at the end of a fortnight among the Braidwood inhabitants, who marvelled that two girls should have accomplished such a long, rough trip.

We are also surprised and relieved to be able to report that Frank Freeguard, Marie Byles, Suzanne Reichard and Dot English have returned safely from a rock-climbing expedition to the Warrumbungle Mountains in the company of the former president of what was generally known as the Katoomba Suicide Club. The expedition, or more precisely Dot and Dr. Dark, succeeded in making the first ascent of the Split Rock, involving a particularly difficult rock-climb. Dot's remarkable climbing ability probably accounted for their success and if she lived in a more mountainous land it would also probably make her almost world-famous.

In concluding this brief summary of various trips, we take the opportunity of asking members to let the Editor know of any interesting expeditions taken, so that they may be recorded in "The Bushwalker".

PERSONAL

We are pleased to announce the engagement of Fannie Ferrier and Vic Thorsen.

Overseas visitors recently entertained by the Club, or by members of the Club, include Miss Roberts from the New Zealand Alpine Club, Mr. Peter (Jock) Macpherson, and Social Secretary of the Tararua Tramping Club and Editor of its Journal and Miss Desbrisay of the Canadian Alpine Club.

Our new Treasurer is Mr. Cedric Barnes (Barney), and Bernard Edgar Yardley has been appointed to help him collect your ten shillings subscription. This is certainly an item of news in which you will be keenly interested.

"Paddy" has moved himself and his invaluable shop to new premises, having spent the whole of a precious Easter in the task of moving. You will find full particulars of the situation of the new shop in his advertisement.

EMU PLAINS - REUNION, MARCH, 1936.

From 9 a.m. onward on Saturday, 14th. March, Sydney Bushwalkers arrived on Sydney Station with Emu Plains as their objective, there to hold high revel, and until mid-night, each train stopped at the Plains Station to set down a goodly number of members.

The weather, which for weekend after dismal weekend had been consistently vile, now raised our hopes, and although we had several heavy showers during Saturday, we were fortunate in that we were not forced to take to the shelter of our tents, for more than a few minutes at a time.

The River Canoe Club, apparently closely related to the Sydney Bushwalkers, the greater portion of its members being also members of the S.B.W's., turned up in force - seven canoes all told, these having been brought down-stream. Whilst all eventually arrived safely, it is reported that the Commodore shot the weir with a most unorthodox flourish, giving the Canoe Club signal - a loud smack on the water - with all that he had, and also his "for'red" hand's body, the balance of the trip apparently having been done under water. If sailing position means anything, he should now be acclaimed Rear-Admiral.

However, to return to the Reunion - wood is still as scarce as ever, and it proved no easy matter getting sufficient for the large camp-fire, a large dead tree having to be felled, cut up, and carried away by those willing to work.

About this time the smoke of a "thousand camp fires" drifted heavenwards, followed closely by the manifold smells of cooking and coffee, as the camp settled down to the serious matter of dinner, the dusk creeping towards the hills, backed up by ominous looking clouds.

Just what the Social Committee had in store for us, we did not know; but very soon parties of twos and threes, guided by flickering torches, took up their positions near the dark heap of wood, and waited, not very patiently, for some sign of life from the said Committee.

Now, last year's fire was spectacular, and we could hardly expect anything better - or for that matter as good - but our Committee is, to say the least, composed of ingenious members, and they gave us of their best.

First came the late President, (also the Commodore mentioned earlier, now wrung out and dried) who chanted an incantation to the God of Fire, - it was apparent that he had not passed with honours from the College of Incantations.

Now for the ingenuity of the Committee - a ball of fire shot from a near-by tree into the heart of the wood pile, which burst into immediate flame - whilst the Club burst into song.

The Club officers and Committee then appeared in robes of spotless white, carrying each a lily, apparently a symbol of purity and not a wand of office, pacing in a slow, stately procession between the fire and the audience. That might also have been symbolical; if so it was unintentional; they crooned a ditty, claiming for themselves the terms "pure" and "righteous" which was justly laughed to scorn. There were, of course, no prospectives present; they appear to be the only ones who hold the Club officers in any kind of awe.

A few songs by the better singers of the Club, then onlookers were treated to a series of parades, something on the lines of the following: "Will all those members of seven or more years' standing come forward?" then "Will all

those members of six years etc" and so on until the ones and less than ones had in turn appeared before the party.

A light steady rain was falling throughout, whilst flickers of lightning showed a sky full of heavy clouds, "The rain" stated one member, "was sent by divine Providence to show the sheep from the goats". We leave it to you to decide which was which - whether sitting in the rain was sheepish or goatish.

Dawn found a few hardy spirits still chatting by the embers of the fire.

Sunday was a glorious, hot, summery day, so well before breakfast, swimmers and canoeists were speeding through the rapids, skidding off rocks and snags, only pausing to inspect bruises before trying again, until hunger drove them back to camp for breakfast, after which they again set forth to the river; to skid off more rocks and lose more skin.

Prior to lunch the Canoe Club paraded, then entering their crafts made a delightful picture, as, in very smart manner, they took station behind the Flagcanoe, and shot in a stately procession through the rapids, only one coming to grief. Then:

The signal was made for this grand fleet to anchor,
They clewed up their topsails, stuck out tacks and sheets,
They stood by their stoppers, and brailled out their spankers,
And anchored at last, did that noblest of fleets.

Lunch over, tents began to fall, packs were made up and from 4 p.m. a steady procession passed to the station. Some hopeful walkers tried a little "hitch canoeing" as they followed the river along, but apparently met with little success though lots of abuse.

So passed another Reunion. During the years of the club the various Committees have had the responsibility of accepting many new members, and it speaks well for their efforts that there could be gathered together over a hundred people, held together by the bonds of Bushwalking, without one incident to mar a splendid weekend.

Let us congratulate the founders that their toil has not been in vain, and say, with an unknown author:

"By the sweat of your brows, by the ache of your bones
In the sun, in the wind, in the chill of the rains,
Ye sowed as ye knew, and ye know it was blown
To be trodden, and burned - ay, and that by your own
Who sneered at lean furrows and mocked at the stones.
But ye stayed, and sowed on. And a little remains
Ye shall have for your faith. Ye shall reap for your pains".

L.D.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

In this column our Bushwalking Expert, Reklawhsub, is prepared to answer any questions you like to ask on subjects of interest to Bushwalkers. Ed.

(Q. DON'T YOU THINK THE MOCK WEDDING AT THE CLUB ROOM WAS FAR TOO
(QUIET AN AFFAIR?
(

(A. WE "YARDLEY" THINK SO, THE BRIDE MIGHT HAVE BEEN "DUMMER".

(Q. I ALWAYS KNIT MY OWN WALKING STOCKINGS; BUT THEY LOSE THEIR
(COLOUR IN WASHING. CAN YOU TELL ME A GOOD DYED-IN-THE-WOOL YARN?
(

(A. YES. ABOUT THE SHEEP THAT CAME TO AN UNTIMELY END.

(Q. DO YOU THINK TENTS WITH EAVES ARE PREFERABLE?
(

(A. CAN'T SAY; I'VE NEVER ADAM.

(Q. ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE ONCE ADMITTED TO THE CLUB EVER BOOTED OUT?
(

(A. NO. THEY ARE JUST SHOOED AWAY.

(Q. WHEN ON TRIPS I HAVE GREAT TROUBLE IN GETTING MY DAMPERS
(TO RISE. WHAT CAN I DO?
(

(A. TAKE MARIE BYLES WITH YOU.

(Q. DON'T YOU THINK IT DEPLORABLE THAT SO MANY OF OUR MEMBERS DO
(THEIR WALKING IN MOTOR-CARS? AND DO THEY REALLY ENJOY IT?
(

(A. THOSE WHO GO WITH FRANK DUNCAN HAVE A RATTLING GOOD TIME.

(Q. IF LOST AT NIGHT, HOW CAN I FIND MY WAY BACK BY THE STARS?
(

(A. PURCHASE A "PHOTO-PLAY" MAGAZINE AND SCATTER THE ILLUSTRATIONS
(AS YOU GO.

(Q. HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO GET FIRES TO BURN IN THE WET?
(

(A. I ALWAYS HAVE A FEW LIVE M-EMBERS WITH ME.

(Q. WHAT DISTURBS JEWISH PEOPLE SO MUCH, WHEN SLEEPING IN THE BUSH AT NIGHT?
(

(A. MORE-PORK, I BELIEVE.

(Q. WHERE CAN I SEE THE DEVIL'S GORGE?

(A. AT THE S.B.W. CLUB ROOM FRIDAYS, BETWEEN 6 AND 7.30 P.M.

(Q. MY SHORTS, ALTHOUGH COMPARATIVELY NEW, ALWAYS SEEM TO SPLIT.
DO YOU THINK THE MATERIAL IS FAULTY?

(A. SO IT SEEMS.

(Q. HOW WILL I GET DOWN THE OLD GOAT TRACK FROM WENTWORTH FALLS
TO KEDUMBA CREEK?

(A. PROBABLY WITH A SPRAINED ANKLE, BROKEN LEG, AND MUCH BAD
LANGUAGE.

(Q. WHAT CLUB MEMBER HAS THE BIGGEST TRIP TO THEIR CREDIT?

(A. GRIFF - WHEN SHE FELL AND BROKE HER LEG; BUT ESMA ARMSTRONG
COMES A GOOD SECOND.

(Q. HAS OUR CLUB ANY ROYALTIES?

(A. NO. BUT ONE OF OUR MEMBERS WAS RECENTLY PRESENTED AT COURT.

A CANADIAN COMMENT ON OUR DISPARAGEMENT OF THE TERM "HIKING".

' "Hiking (tell the S.B.W.) means to us long tramps into unfrequented places where we cook meals having "packed" our food there. We call the rubbish-littery specimen "picnicers" although they fondly imagine they are hikers if they merely stroll a few feet and eat a huge meal.'

But to take the sting away the letter continues, ' I like the whole tone of the "Annual" - just good fellowship and good exploring out-of-doors.'

Rita Rushworth

(Alpine Club of Canada).

BEWARE OF SHI-ING.

Shi-ing is often a branch of the activities of a tramping, hiking, or mountaineering club, and it will quite likely become a branch of bush-walking joys; in fact, there are already several good shi-ers in the club. However, so that you shall be under no delusions, let me tell you of what happened to me. Jean, who is somewhat of an expert, induced me to accompany her to Kosciusko, but I cannot allege youth and innocence as an excuse for falling to her inducements, for I had been well warned by numerous friends who have sprained their ankles or broken their arms while indulging in this simple pastime. But there is nothing like trying anything once, and anyhow we were fully agreed on one matter, namely, that we were going to Kosciusko to shi; not to dance, play tennis or to do any of the other things you can do equally well in Sydney. That being so, we were going right on to The Chalet, 12 miles beyond the hotel, the afternoon of our arrival. The fact that I had never been on shies before and that the Manager was sure to object, were minor details.

Of course, the Manager did object; but we put our feet down with a firm hand, and after making sure, in the presence of numerous witnesses, that we were going on our own responsibility and that he was doing nothing to help us go to destruction on the downward - or to be precise - the upward, path, we were allowed to depart.

There was no snow for the first five miles to Smiggins', so we trudged up the muddy road with heavy packs and heavy shies, and long before we reached the end of that five miles, I had decided that shies on the feet were infinitely preferable to shies in the hand, - a matter about which I had previously had serious doubts, in view of the accidents to my friends.

Arrived at Smiggins we donned shies and continued. It had rained and sleeted all the way from the hotel and the weather got worse as we went up. Just before Betts' Camp. we passed the tractor stuck fast in the snow. This is a car rather like the tanks used in the war, imported at enormous expense to convey people from the Hotel to the Chalet, quicker than they could shi; but to date it has always taken longer. This time it bore the Director of the Tourist Bureau and some movie photographers. It had had about five hours' more than we, and if it had not taken a sudden and unusual fit of energy soon after we met it, we should easily have beaten it to Betts, but as it was, it arrived there just five minutes ahead. Meanwhile, I had been managing fairly well, considering that it was my first attempt; I don't think I fell more than three times in the four miles, and was unfortunate that two of these mishaps should have occurred within sight of Betts, so that the rumour went round that there was a girl who had never been on shies before, falling all over the place!

As it was dark by the time we reached Betts, Jean thought I should be wise to accept a seat on the tractor for the rest of the way. I rashly did so; froze, and vainly wished every time we stuck and many times when we didn't, that I had walked. I eventually jumped off about a quarter of a mile before the Chalet, and found myself ploughing through knee-deep snow. I was making better time than the tractor, anyhow, and it was a bit too bad that it should have again had an energetic spasm, so that it beat me in by about thirty seconds!

We arrived at the Chalet in snow, and it snowed all the time we were there; but each day we dutifully went out and slid down the slopes. Jean was most successful and quickly mastered the cryptic things known as snow-ploughs, stem-turns, Christiana-turns and Goodness knows what else; but to the end I remained one of the mugs - or as George Lambie tactfully put it, "one of the less advanced".

We were lucky in having Ernst from Austria, an expert imported to put Australia on the shi-ing map, so to speak, to instruct us. When he asked the Director of the Tourist Bureau if he would be re-imported next season, the answer was that this depended on Mr. Stevens. "And who is Mr. Steyens?" asked Ernst innocently! Ernst is one of those folk whom the fairies blessed at birth with all the good gifts that it was customary for them to give to princes and princesses, but not to ordinary mortals. He has brains in plenty, a ready sparkling wit, that indefinable "char-rm" which makes a person popular, and a perfect physique. I could never make up my mind which was more pleasing - to watch him sweeping down the hill at a breakneck pace and land gracefully on his feet, or to see him making up it swiftly, seemingly without effort and much ahead of the other experts.

In addition to his other gifts, Ernst is a born teacher, and his lucid explanations would ring down the slope after our faltering headlong plunges, generally with the final addendum: "You did not fall, you sat down" - which was perfectly true; because when you sit down, you do so - not gracefully - but anyhow, comfortably. When you fall, anything may happen. Whenever I sat down in preference to falling, it was because of that vivid picture in "Punch" of a crowd of people on a London station, some on crutches, some with arms in slings or heads bandaged; all maimed or halted in some way; with the sympathetic stranger turning to his porter, remarking, "Dear, dear, have those poor people been in a railway accident?" to which the porter replies: "Oh, no, Sir! they are merely returning from enjoying the winter sports in Switzerland!"

On the fifth day I gained courage and refused to sit down. The result was a twisted ankle. Not serious; but enough to "put the wind up" me completely - especially as about a third of our number had their heads stitched up, or ankles sprained and were either hobbling around or laid up completely. Then the doctor added the last straw by saying he had used yards and yards of strapping since he came up, and would be pleased to add another yard or so to my ankle if I liked. I did not like, and anyhow the ankle was better the next day; but after that I gave up trying the fancy steps, without which you can never learn to shi, and contented myself with wandering round the hillsides and "sitting down" before there should be an opportunity for falling. Even this took courage on the steeper slopes, trained as I am to mountaineering on hard summer snow, where to sit down is the equivalent of suicide.

Meantime it continued to snow and the movie photographers began to hatch diabolical plans in the absence of anything better to do. The following scenario was among them:-

Scene I: The experts, as they do their famous high jump, knocking an apple off the photographer's head. (That is Ernst and the two Georges).

Scene II: The mugs coiled up at the bottom of the slope and trying to uncoil (that is I and a few others).

Scene III: Baby Margaret, aged three gracefully gliding down the slopes, coming to a stand on her feet and putting the rest of us to shame.

One morning it did get a little brighter. The movie cameras were produced, and we were treated to a fine show of slalams, our hearts in our mouths as the experts came down the hill at 80 miles an hour, curving in and out of the flags and ending up with a final sweep at the bottom, always on their feet. The snow came again before the photographers got to the second, not to mention the third, scene.

Then Friday dawned a perfect morning, the first day that photography was really a pleasure. Jean and I rose early, retired to secluded spot and endeavoured to take a series of photos more beautiful than the Norweigan poster of a shier standing naked before the dawn. The poster does not show the wind that was blowing, and neither do the photos! I am glad I was the photographer, not the photographed!

That day the doctor permitted an invalid lad and his mother, who had waited a week for fine weather, to depart on the tractor for the hotel. I also decided to return with a friend who had been Stenographer at the Hotel, and we were to make it a leisurely trip, taking photographs.

Before lunch snow fell once again, and Jean and Charlie, attempting to reach the summit, got only as far as Seaman's hut. The tractor got a little past Betts and ran out of petrol; the dog team fetched it petrol and then it stuck! My friend and I soon overtook it. The wretched Passengers, one with an injured knee were sitting on the top, under sodden eiderdowns, with the wet snow beating down upon them, while the invalid young man was occupying the only seat inside with his head out of the window doing his best to direct operations. We continued our way even more leisurely and arrived at the hotel about three hours' ahead of the unfortunate invalids who did not get in until 7:30 p.m., very wet and miserable; but apparently none the worse for their adventure.

That was the end of shi-ing. If you must go in for such a dangerous sport, yet cannot afford to be laid up for six months - or maybe, two years as was one of my friends, with a sprained ankle - take my advice: Go easily, and as Ernst said, "Do not try to go full tilt downhill until you have learned to turn and stop", also, as Ernst did not say, "When in doubt, sit down".

Marie B. Byles.

Something hidden, go and find it. Go and look behind the ranges.

Something lost behind the ranges. Lost, and waiting for you. Go!

R. Kipling.

A WEEK-END WITH A DUCHESS AND A PIG.

All Bushwalkers know Duch; but for the enlightenment of those who do not know "The Pig", I must explain that it is the canoe that Duch has so named because of its "swinish habit of veering to one side". Since the christening, though, "The Pig" is proving a good servant and a lovable companion, and I wonder if a more affectionate appellation will be substituted.....Still, there are pigs and PIGS, and perhaps the title, after all, is only slightly derogatory.

Groomed and ready for the trip down the Nepean, "The Pig" awaited us beneath a canopy of willow withes, and we lost little time in putting off. After the city's dust and heat, it was delightful to be free once again in the green world, the beauty of which a silvery sunshower intensified, leaving the air fragrant with the mingled scents of grass and forage.

At the weir, after safely beaching and transporting "The Pig" to the lower water, we saw "Pathfinder" pass easily over the curtained rock with a low resounding "Boooomp" "Boooomp" as the bow and stern, each struck the step, and continue through the swirling water graceful and unperturbed. "Joy", very ambitious; but of inadequate beam for this particular stunt, faltered precariously on the edge of the weir, slewed like an unwilling mount at a hurdle, and finally plunged out of sight. Submersion, however, failed to damp the ardour of the two occupants, who presently bobbed up like laughing jacks-in-boxes, and played about in those rapids as though it were the best fun in the world.

Duch and I made a leisurely trip to the Re-union site, with ample time in which to do all the little chores of making camp that we Bushwalkers so enjoy, and as evening fell, ate a savoury dinner close to our bright little fire. Thanks to the concerted effort of those willing ones who always turn up trumps when there is any work to be done, there was a wonderful fire, round which everyone settled on groundsheets and eiderdowns, enjoying once again that very comfortable feeling of palship and unity that is so typical of these gatherings. We certainly have some admirable characters in our club, and anyone unimpressed by the sincerity of the remarks addressed to the company, would be a dull clod indeed.

The fickle weather of the evening improved as the night advanced, and a score or so slept by the glowing remains of the fire, quite undisturbed - apparently, anyway. I awakened several times, tantalised by auricular recordings. There was a weird rumbling; a higher, half-staccato note and a sustained sizzling. I sleepily visualised "The Pig", escaped from its moorings, on a maraud of the camp. Imagine my relief when I realised - well, at least that there was no cause for alarm, it being the normal accompaniment of the slumbers of two wellknown members.

Sunday was calm and sunny, and Duch and I drifted down about two miles of yellow river, and lazed until it was time to paddle back to camp for lunch. Early afternoon was spent quietly; everyone being pleasantly drowsy; but after the photographing of the whole Re-union party, thoughts of the homeward journey caused tents, sleeping bags, aluminium ware and other paraphernalia to disappear into rucksacks. Duch and I enjoyed every minute of the paddling (sitting and otherwise), pulling and pushing that constituted the return upstream.

We were tranquilly moving along, as the sun sank low, each engrossed in

We were tranquilly moving along, as the sun sank low, each engrossed in quiet thought, when a 7" mullet struck me in the - er - bosom; but after a breif though sharp tussle - a la Zane Gray - I suffocated the scaley monster beneath a rubber cushion. There were cheers from the family later when I triumphantly produced it from my billy.

On reaching our destination, we restored "The Pig" to its temporary leafy shelter and retired to the boatshed to doff our wet garments, don conventional attire and generally "tidy up". After refreshing ourselves deliciously with ice-cream, we boarded the 7:20 train and travelled home with several other canoeists; very tired then, with that "back to earth" sensation that relaxation in the train after a Sunday or a weekend "out" usually brings.

Home again - hot water in a white bath - kind mother's hands and balmy liniment on tired muscles, - cool sheets - then complete surrender.

Dinah Hearfield.

Tell me not in mournful numbers
Everything is changed and new,
And no steadfast thing encumbers
Man's disturbed and restless view.
Say not so in accents bitter;
Lo! where camping parties reign
All the old familiar litter
Lies as it has always lain.

Kingdoms fall and empires totter,
Creeds collapse and fashions fade,
But the trade-mark of the squatter
Still infests the bushland glade.
As the years flash by and flitter
Many things they re-arrange;
Life moves onward; only litter
Shows no earthly sign of change.

Thus in spite of all suspicions
Things are not so wholly black;
If you seek the old traditions,
Try the camping ground and track;
Roadside places all remind us
We can take our steadfast cue,
And, departing, leave behind us
Litter just like grandad knew.

(Lucio in "The Manchester Guardian").

PADDY COMES DOWN IN THE WORLD

Having tired of the exhilarating and rarified atmosphere of the second floor and being unable to redeem certain promises regarding an escalator and/or lift, Paddy has shifted to a better camp on the other side of George St. and is now installed on the FIRST FLOOR of 327 George Street. The stairs (alas there are still stairs, but only one flight) are alongside the Rebuilt Typewriter Co. opposite Palings.

In these new roomy premises, Paddy has ample floor and shelf space adequately to display his gear. All Bushwalkers are cordially invited to come along and have a look.

FASHION NOTE:

Sleeping bags are being worn extensively this season, Slumber Green being the popular colour, filled with the duckiest down. They may be fitted with hoods, frills, zipps or elastic tops according to individual taste.

ECONOMY HINTS:

One of our young marrieds sends the following hint. Have your sleeping bag fitted with an 8 foot zipp and when not camping out, open up the bag and use it as a quilt (purple certificate to Mrs. Golightly-Coalheaver (57), Walker Avenue. Bushlands.)

HINT No. 2:

If the wintry weather works its way through your old bag, have Paddy put a few more ounces down in. It costs 1/- per ounce for the down and 2/- for opening up the bag. 4 oz of down will generally fix the most obstinate case (Two out of ten to Miss Thora Winterbottom, Bleak House, Coldharbour.)

NEW ADDRESS

Phone B.3101.

F. A. P A L L I N.
327 GEORGE STREET, SYDNEY.
Opposite PALINGS.

SEE TASMANIA FOR TWO SHILLINGS.

Dot English.

In a weak moment I happened to mention to our newly-appointed Editress, Miss Hyles, that I had just completed a 400-mile bicycle tour of Tasmania of a fortnight's duration, and had only spent two shillings for food on the trip. Immediately she pounced on me and demanded an account of my jaunt for the next "Bushwalker", under the heading of "See Tasmania for Two Shillings," Well, what could I do but obey? Accordingly, I submit for your delight my potted tale; but it is not true to label, for I have not included two shillings spent for accommodation at a guest house on the one wet night of the trip, nor have I counted the cost of the food I took with me from home, namely, 1 lb. butter, 1 lb. dates and sultanas and half a loaf of bread. It pains my sense of rectitude to have to mention, also, that I came by a box of fruit on the boat, all of which would have added somewhat to my expenses had I paid for them myself. However, our Marie, being a lawyer, is also sufficient of a psychologist to know that once you get your public interested, by means of a provocative heading, they will generally finish reading the article, so now that I know I've an audience I will continue my tale.

I am not going to burden you with a detailed day-to-day itinerary. I would have to spend hours pouring over a map to do this, and so would you, and I know you are just as lazy as I am. I shall, instead, tell you the interesting bits which stand out in my memory, and what I have forgotten is obviously not worthy of remembrance.

The first important item, after purchasing my ticket for the small sum of £2:15:0, was to get my bike aboard - preferably without paying for it. Accordingly I rode Lavinia down to the wharf at about 1 o'clock on the night before the departure. As we passed through the goods gates we were accosted by an important gentleman in uniform, complete with braid, gold buttons and what-not.

"Where's your receipt?" said he.

"Receipt! What receipt?" said I, with studied innocence.

"For that" - indicating my crestfallen Lavinia with the toe of his boot.

"Oh, that's all right", I smiled cheerfully, "The boy in the office says it goes as passenger's luggage and I don't have to pay for it."

"Then he doesn't know the regulations", blurted the big boy in buttons. "Anything with wheels on has to be paid for - baby-carriages, prams, go-carts.....", and he strung off a list of wheeled vehicles, including bikes.

"Well I haven't any money besides my fare", said I. Then a bright thought struck me. "Suppose I take it up town and disembowel it and bring it back in a suit-case, will that be all right?"

"It would be if I didn't know about it," he replied, "But now that I know about it I wouldn't let you do it".

So here was a deadlock. We both just looked at each other. Suddenly a whistle blew. "Closing-down time," muttered the official one. "Look," addressing me, "Shove that thing in that shed and we'll see about it in the morning," - which I promptly wasted no time in doing.

The boat sailed the next evening at 6 o'clock, and as I didn't arrive until ten minutes before she was due out, I had only time to ascertain that Lavinia had gone from the shed; and presumed she had been stowed below, which later proved to be correct.

A little lass who came racing up, all breathless, to wave me a fond farewell a few minutes before the boat drew out, brought as a parting gift a packet of dried fruits; but as she was not allowed on board she tied it to a streamer I held, and the whole concourse of people watched with bated breath while I carefully drew up the precious packet on its flimsy attachment. As I finally reached out and grabbed it a loud cheer rent the air, and the sigh of relief from several hundred throats caused many of the streamers to snap - or was it that the boat was moving out?

Soon the last streamer was snapped, the last eye piped, the last handkerchief waved, and the crowd on the wharf faded from sight and we were Southward bound.

When the bell rang for dinner we weren't long in obeying the summons. Like the hibernating bear which eats big while the going's good, foreseeing lean times ahead, I did full justice to the meal; but let me whisper to you that it was all in vain, and the fishes some hours later reaped the benefit of my gourmandising.

For the next half-hour everyone was too preoccupied with food to be conversational. However, meal over, we all went on deck to become acquainted.

While doing the rounds with others from our table, Fate saw fit to arrange a meeting between myself and an attractive young Danish lad. He had taken the trip to get away from women, and I ditto, ditto, ditto, ditto, to get away from men. As we had so much in common, we immediately knew we were soul-mates, and spent the rest of the time together, - that is, except at meal times, for we had been placed at different tables and the Head Steward found he couldn't change our places, for reasons known only to himself, but nevertheless suspected by me; for later I saw him so pally with the youth in charge of the ladies' bathroom that you'd think they were brother and sister. Now there had arisen an insuperable barrier between this Knight of the Ladies' Bathroom and myself, as I shall hasten to explain:

Naturally, I was travelling light, so was unencumbered with kimino, top-coat, or the like. On the first morning, at the insistence of the second gong which was being violently clashed up and down the corridors, I fell out of my top bunk and made a hasty dash for the adjoining bathroom, draped in a ship's bed-spread.

I was somewhat abashed to find it occupied by a lank youth with oiled hair and a Cockney accent, wearing a long white coat, draped toga-fashion, with a bunch of keys in his girdle.

"I say, I'm sorry," said I in confusion, beating a hasty retreat, "I thought this was a ladies' bathroom."

"An' wot would yew say if I told yew it wos?" he parried.

"I'd say, 'What the Hell do you think you're doing in here! You ain't no lady!'"

Say that to an Australian and he'll be amused and think you're a good sport - say it to an Englishman and he'll think you're rough and uncouth - which just goes to prove that there's nothing like travel for broadening one.

The young man was annoyed. I thought it time to retire from the contest, so, haughtily wrapping the bed-spread round me, I stepped into the nearest vacant bathroom.

"Yew cawn't go in there," cried the Knight belligerently, "h it's reserved."

I bowed, smiled with my teeth, and prepared to enter the adjoining bathroom.

"Yew cawn't go hin there hither," cried Eustace, getting all excited, "hits hengaged too," and he hurriedly locked both doors with his key.

"Young man," said I, all sarcastic-like, "allow me to congratulate you on your system; it's marvellous." My sense of proportion was outraged, so I left him to his locked bathrooms and hied me further aft. Here I was rewarded by finding a nice, capacious room with a dozen or so baths, and numerous basinettes for the convenience of nursing infants. I forthwith occupied one of these, (baths, of course, not the other things) and laughed a sinister laugh to think how Eustace had been frustrated.

So now you see how it was that Eustace, being blood brother to the Head Steward, made use of him to spoke my wheel.

Whenever I skulked into the bathroom to be sick, Eustace would crow delightedly, "Not feelin' too good, eh?" I would give him a withering look, intended to burn him up completely, and then forget all about him and my dignity while Mother Nature took the upper hand. Don't gather from this that I spent most of the time being sick. I think I bore up very well; and had a most enjoyable trip. Still, I did have my moments.

.....

'You may sing of a life at sea,
With a yo-ho-ho for the winds that blow,
But (as friend Ernest would say) that's all fiddle-de-de'

and I nearly went crazy with joy when I went up on deck on the Monday morning and discovered that we had arrived, and that there was firm land awaiting us.

As the boat did not leave Burnie until evening, most of the passengers went ashore, and a crowd of us spent the day 'doing' the town and surroundings, going back to the boat for meals. I was sorry to say "Good-bye" to my friends when the boat departed at 5 p.m.; but soon forgot them in the beauty of the new scenery, as I rode out of town in search of a camp site. I found a pretty spot near a little creek, where an old man was watering his horse. I outlined the plan of my trip, to his open admiration.

"You've a great heart," he piped. "I suppose, now, you do your ten miles a day?"

I should have taken that as an omen - but no, - I smiled a superior sort of smile as much as to say, "Ten miles? Huh! A hundred is nearer my style."

"Oh, I just keep going," said I nonchalantly, which spared me future embarrassment when I discovered that ten miles a day might be accounted quite reasonable going, such was the condition of the roads. I don't think I averaged more than 40 miles a day, although there was one great day of achievement when 80 miles were added to the score. The locals maintained a strict policy of silence regarding their roads. Everyone I asked would answer, to this effect: "You'll find the road a bit rough for the next five or six miles, they're doing it up you know; but beyond that you'll have a perfect bitumen road all the way to Hobart."

I swallowed this in good faith for the first two days; but my illusions gradually vanished as time went by and I realised that the good road, like the Fata Morgana, retreated always before me as I pursued it. However, I reconciled myself by remembering that I had a whole fortnight in which to cover the journey. The countryside was magnificent, and certainly did not warrant one's passing hastily through it.

From Burnie for 25 miles the road follows the northern coast-line, giving one views of long stretches of blue ocean dotted with rugged, green-topped islets, and secluded little sandy beaches for swimming.

From Devonport on the coast, the road runs inland through typical English countryside - golden fields surrounded by hawthorn hedges, each field holding a neat, well-made haystack; shapely English trees raising their stately heads and adding to the richness of the landscape; convict-built buildings, some in ruins and some as good as the day they were constructed; heaped stone walls, also the work of convict labourers; and blackberries, blackberries, blackberries. Never before had I seen so many blackberries all at the one time. You could stand in one spot and fill a bucket without taking a step. It might be fair to the Main Roads Board of Tasmania (if any) to admit that my slow rate of progress was due as much to this overplus of berries as to the condition of the roads. My trail through the island was blazed by a track denuded of blackberries, just as though a grass-hopper plague had passed through. One might mention, also, that Tasmania is very richly supplied with orchards - a veritable Paradise to the vegetarian. Without stressing the obvious, it is easy to see how a vegetarian with broad vision could easily pass through at practically no expense to herself, moreover, without committing any petty theft.

Tasmania is a land of Lots-of-Time. In the countryside the amber air lies so quiet over the sleeping hills and dales, and even in the towns of Launceston and Hobart nobody hurries. One striking difference, comparing these towns with Sydney, is that the traffic gives way to pedestrians. I didn't see old ladies frantically dashing across the main streets, as in Sydney. If they happened to be half way across as a motor car approached, the car would pull up....and take it quite as a matter of course. I saw no traffic cops, although I was informed that there was one in Hobart. However, I haven't come to Hobart yet; I'm just approaching Launceston.

The road has been mounting steadily all day, and I've been doing a deal of walking up hills. In the early afternoon I struck a trail of tomatoes, apparently shed from a passing cart. I followed them up hill for about half a mile, collecting the unsquashed specimens in a sugar-bag I carried slung on the handle-bars for just such scavenging purposes. Like the Man with the Muck Rake, my eyes were never raised above the ground, and my thoughts were following distinctly mundane channels, making laborious calculations as to the marketable value of my unexpected harvest if I swopped half of it at the next township for butter or tomatoes butter being worth about 2/- per lb. and tomatoes 2d. per lb. retail.

Being so preoccupied, I was entirely unprepared for the magnificent panorama which suddenly confronted me on topping the rise. About a mile below, the Tamar Valley stretched away into the far distance, with Launceston and its outlying suburbs dotted along its meandering banks like miniature dolls' houses.

As I stood propped against a post admiring the view, a youth emerged from a nearby store and approached me, wheeling a bike. He was clad in our regulation Bushwalker garb as far up as the neck; but there the similarity ceased, for his head was graced by an immaculate Bond Street model, its noble lines somewhat disfigured by a tattered fly-veil, for Tasmania was supposed to be suffering from a plague of flies. He was holidaying per bike, as I was. Being unwilling to put his hat in his pack, where it might be crushed, he had perforce to wear it.

He had been out a week now, and the hat was still shining in all its pristine glory. As we were both going the same way, we forthwith joined forces, and together raced down the mountain side, taking the hairpin bends on one wheel and laughing like a couple of maniacs, while the wind tried to whip us from our seats. We swooped into the main street of Launceston, all breathless and wind-blown, and here my comrade celebrated his many narrow escapes from death down the mountain side, by promptly running into a P.M.G. car, which brought him up with a jerk that buckled his frame so badly it looked like the back of a camel. It was only now that I discovered this rash youth had been riding a fixed-wheel bike, converted into a free-wheeler, with no brake on it. I think my heart is as strong as most; but it nearly stopped dead as I thought of the risks he had been taking, egged on to greater speed by me. As I had a hand brake as well as a back-pedal one, I gave him my hand brake, and then we wheeled our vehicles to a bike-shop, where we left them while repairs were effected to the damaged one. Meanwhile we spent the afternoon looking over the town; its museum, baths, gardens, shipping and, most important, its Cataract Gorge. This Gorge is a most delightful sight, made especially attractive for tourists. Here the Tamar River foams down an amazingly deep gorge. On one side of which a path has been constructed, among gardens and deep clumps of tree ferns. The vegetation is very profuse on this side, and serves as a sharp contrast with the other side of the Gorge, which is a stark of rough and jagged rocks, painted with practically every colour rocks may assume.

My companion was a very merry lad. He said I simply must come and stay with friends of his for the night, as he wouldn't hear of my camping alone in Launceston Park; so, not at all unwillingly, I accompanied him to his friends' home, where the folk were very hospitable and gave us after a nice, hot bath a good tea. In the evening we talked, played the gramophone and tinkled on the piano, and later I retired to a soft bed, which was indeed welcome after so many nights on the hard ground.

About eleven o'clock the next morning I set off again. The directions given me were either badly explained or badly understood, for it took me fully an hour to get out of the town and on to the road heading for the east coast. I passed through a mining town, which looked like the crater of a volcano, with earth-works and dikes all over the place, and a large sluicing plant in operation. There was hardly a green thing to be seen, and the roads were terrible. However, I very soon passed into more pleasant country, although the roads were still bad.

Lavinia managed to achieve a puncture about nine miles from the nearest town, and as I had burst my pump three days ago I could not mend it. I had wheeled her hardly more than a hundred yards, when I encountered two youthful schoolboys in Dad's car, out to do a spot of shooting, with crows and rabbits as game. They had a pump which was made to fit my bike, and we soon had the damage repaired, the lads almost fighting to see who was to do the knightly act for the ladye in distress, while all the fayre ladye had to do was to look on and give praise for their remarkable speed and handiness with rubber solution and patches. They insisted on presenting me with a rabbit corpse, which I accepted so as not to hurt their feelings, despite the fact that the billy I carried was of such miniature proportions that not more than the beastie's head would have fitted into it, even if I had desired to cook it. I carried it strung on the bar in front of me for the rest of the day, while it dripped blood down my front wheel, and finished up by donating it to a woman in a store who reciprocated with two glasses of milk.

One of the little inland towns - a sedate and charming place - is well-known for the good echo which can be awakened down by the banks of the river; but for the life of me I couldn't profane the quietude by yelling for an echo. A few mystery hikers would have done the trick. (Thank heaven there were none!).

The East Coast is considered to have some of the finest scenery on the Island. Certainly, its beaches are exquisite, with sands as white as snow and sparkling water said to be as blue as the Aegean Sea; deep purple in the shadows. The numerous islets, some flat and some in the form of mountains rising sheer from the sea, make this coast-line so different from what we know on the mainland.

Proceeding down this coast we came to the orchard country, where apples, pears and plums were being picked and packed.

Miles out of Hobart I met a boy wheeling his bike along. It was the usual story - a puncture and no pump. I offered to race into the next town, about five miles away, and buy him a pump, but he said it wouldn't be fair to make me ride an extra ten miles when I had already come so far, and that the walk would do him good. I walked with him for about a mile and found him fine company. As he had already been walking for several hours before I met him, I made a secret resolve to speed ahead, and bring him back a pump after all, so waving a cheery farewell, departed. It was a very small town; but the local store was well-stocked and soon procured me a pump. I left my pack with the storekeeper and raced back to the lad. We had the puncture repaired in a few minutes; but then discovered that the front fork was practically broken through. It would have been dangerous to ride, so it had to be wheeled after all.

My newly-found friend was due back at Hobart the following evening, and the only means of conveyance was the mail-car, at the exorbitant price of 15/- for the trip, which sum he did not possess. However, by pooling our brains, we soon formulated a brilliant plan. We put up at the local hotel at 1/6 a head, and next morning sent the damaged bike on to Hobart for 1/-, per the mail car, while we both set out with my bike to do the 25 miles to Hobart.

Double-banking was impossible on the equally impossible roads, so we worked on the following system. I would ride the bike down a hill and up the next, at the top of which I would leave it by the roadside and walk on. By the time I was at the bottom of the next hill my rear-man would have reached the bike, and would ride it down the hill and up the next, on whose summit he would leave it for me and walk on. In this way we achieved many miles. We were resting at the bottom of a steep hill, paddling in the creek and eating the interminable blackberry, when a lorry of road-workers pulled up and offered us a lift for six or seven miles. This was very cheering; but the piece of information passed on by one of the men was far from cheering; to wit, that my map was decidedly faulty. (We still had twenty-nine miles to do to reach Hobart.) However, they told us that several timber lorries would be passing through within the two hours, and we could easily get a lift in. So we cheered up again, and sure enough, we hadn't left the road-workers more than a mile behind when a timber lorry pulled up, and we heaved the bike aboard and were driven right into town to the Mail Depot, where my companion of the road regained possession of his vehicle. I accompanied him to the local oxy-welder's, where he wished to have his bike repaired.

Apparently Hobart is somewhat pre-War and conventional in its morals. The oxy-welding expert, a man of brawn and muscle, stared at me as I dismounted, with eyes that popped white from his grimy face.

"Gawd," he whispered, hoarsely, surveying my shorts and naked legs, "You haven't been riding through town like that have you?"

"Why not?" said I.

"Gawd. Hasn't a cop pulled you up yet?"

I assured him "No."

"Don't you worry," said he ominously, "He will."

So I thought it prudent to go out to the back of his workshop and change into my long'uns.

"They'll stare at you enough in that rig-out," said my informant, which I suppose they did; but I'm immune to stares by now, and it didn't worry me a bit.

Before I left I was given directions for finding the road to the top of Mount Wellington, where I had planned to camp. It was now almost dark, and as I didn't have a lamp I thought I'd better hurry; but I hadn't gone very far when the oxy-welder's son aged seven, a sweet-natured little kiddy, came rumbling after me on a home-made scooter and directed me to a closer camp site - at Sandy Bay. So I changed my plans, not feeling too keen on climbing Mt. Wellington in the dark, pushing a heavy bike before me, and honoured Sandy Bay with my presence. I pitched my tent before the night fell, and after a swim lit a fire, had tea, and was soon sleeping the sleep of the just.

I spent all the next day luxuriating on the beach, only going into town to find out how the boats were running. As I had been a fortnight away, I thought it time I returned to the bosom of my family, so finding that the Zealandia left the next morning at 9 o'clock, I booked my passage, was up bright and early, and soon had myself and Lavinia stacked aboard.

We left Hobart in bright sunshine, and after two wet and drizzly days, arrived in a wet and drizzly Sydney. Still, there's something about one's home town that would warm the cockles of the heart no matter what the weather, and as the gangway was run up and I stepped ashore, I realised that it's good to have a home to return to, when all is said and done. It would be a lonely life to be a homeless wanderer always, although it's good fun for a fortnight.

Books! 'Tis dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

W. Wordsworth.
