

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A Monthly Bulletin devoted to matters of interest to
The Sydney Bush Walkers, 5 Hamilton Street, Sydney.

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THIS IS NOT AN EDITORIAL BUT --

ONLY ONCE EACH YEAR.....

comes the RE-UNION, "our re-union". Already it is just round the corner, but, unlike those creeks which are always just around the corner and take ages to appear, the Re-union is right upon us. Saturday, March 11th, is the date. Already a hard-working committee has been burning midnight oil, gas and electricity, and scratching for ideas for some time past. Maybe you'd like to help them to make the 1939 Re-union the best yet. The Re-union Committee knows you are fairly bristling with bright ideas, stunts, etc., that you want to see put over. Well, the undersigned will be delighted, yea verily thrilled, to talk it over with you. See him to-day. DO IT NOW.

For the Re-union Committee.
Jack Debert.

A PAGE FROM THE PAST

by J. Debert

So much has been written about the fine exploits of Ensign Francis Barrallier and the more successful attempt of Blaxland, Lawson, and Wentworth in crossing the Great Dividing Range one is apt to overlook the two earlier and almost successful undertakings of the two practically unheard of explorers, Wilson and Barracks. To Bush Walkers who revel in exploring new country and plunging into the wildest parts of our mountains it should be absorbingly interesting to have some knowledge of these early explorations. So let us step back into the pages of the past.

One hundred and forty one years ago a number of Irish prisoners at Parramatta had been led to believe that there was not so very far away, some 150 to 200 miles, a colony of white people blessed with an abundance of all sorts of provisions without the necessity of much laborious work in obtaining them. Finding it difficult to convince them to the contrary, Governor Hunter sensibly decided to allow them to go and see for themselves. He enabled them to select their own party and granted them full permission to attempt to reach this much talked of Eldorado. He sent some soldiers from Parramatta with them, together with a guide named Wilson. Wilson was an ex-prisoner and had spent much time in the bush with the blacks, to whom he was known as Bunbodee. Reaching the foot of the mountains, approximately where the progressive town of Picton now stands, the Irish prisoners tired of their arduous task and decided to return. They were taken back to Parramatta by the soldiers.

In the party were two men of sterner qualifications, for Wilson, with dogged determination, preferred to continue on the journey and took with him a mere lad called Barracks. The first journey proved unsuccessful, for owing to the lack of food they were forced to return on 30th January, 1798, after reaching the Wellondilly River about a mile or two below the river's junction with the Wingecarribee. The river bank was very steep at this particular spot and Wilson proposed making a canoe. They were weak from lack of food, their feet were bruised and they were frightened they might not secure food to subsist on if they crossed the river.

Undaunted by the failure of the first attempt Wilson and Barracks, accompanied by a man named Collins, set out from Prospect on Friday, 9th March, 1798. When reading the records by the plucky lad Barracks, who after almost starving to death during the first journey was prepared to venture out again, we cannot fail to be impressed with the courage and energy of the early explorers.

On 14th March they discovered Picton Lakes and continuing on a South Westerly course over rugged country they sighted Mount Jellore on 17th March. The diary entry was as follows:-

"Saturday 17th. Course S.W. Still the same course. We saw an exceedingly high Mountain. We agreed to go to it, for Wilson told me that it was the highest Mountain in all the country. In going to it we crossed a small river running through the Mountains, bearing N.N.W. to S.S.E. The day being so far advanced, we could not get up and down while daylight, so we stopped under the hill till morning. The ground is covered with lime-stone and a kind of marble stone. We gathered some of these, which we put in our bags. Distance 7 miles."

(The small river running N.N.W. to S.S.E. was undoubtedly the Nattai River).

On the Sunday they climbed to the top of Mount Jellore and wrote of the

excellent view obtained from it. Those Bush Walkers who have climbed the summit will agree with them. There is no doubt they were the first white men to put foot on Jellore. Later on, Sir Thomas Mitchell made a stay of six months on the top of the Mountain, using it as an observatory whilst engaged in his map surveying. The excellent panoramic drawing he made from the summit will show how exact he was in all the work he undertook. (This particular drawing together with Barracks' records are available for those who wish to take the trouble to peruse them at the Mitchell Library).

After leaving Jellore, Wilson and Barracks crossed the Wingecarribee near Berrima, climbed Gingenbullen, and then went on to Marulan to the summit of Mount Towrang, six miles east of Goulburn. From here they saw the Goulburn Plains and discovered the upper reaches of the Wollondilly River, but once again the shortage of food forced them to return. It is regretted that such a courageous effort was not rewarded by better success.

DO YOU KNOW ?

In 1891 Kanangra Walls were known as the Kownung Walls (notice the two n's) and were alive with native bears and wild dogs.

HAVE YOU ?

Has anyone ever seen the aboriginal carvings under a rock shelter at the base of the precipitous Kanangra Walls edging the South Eastern arm of the Kowmung? The above are from interesting newspaper cuttings in the Mitchell Library.

CLUB HISTORY

Inquiries were made recently as to how the History of the Club was progressing, and when it would be available to members.

The Honorary Historian - Charles Pryde - answered, with some slight bitterness, that it was not progressing and could not progress, or be made available to the club members generally, until the older members fulfilled their many airy promises and gave him the facts they had in their various personal records about the doings in early days.

Does your conscience prick you? Mine does. But I have made a New Club Year Resolution that I really will dig up the information for which Charlie has asked me.

Each and every one of us older members really had better get busy, at once, and give Charlie Pryde all the facts we know about the Club's early days and early explorations. Then he can check one account against another and see that no inaccuracies have crept in. If we don't do this, the memory of those early adventures will die completely, and no one will be able to dig up any information about them from anywhere.

Surely we each and all of us have friends in the Club whose exploits are worth recording! Let us see that they are recorded.

D. Lawry

FROM HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

Hobart Walking Club, which has produced an excellent annual magazine for general consumption for some years past, has now brought out the first issue of a "personal" publication, which will probably be a quarterly. Welcome, Little Stranger! Not so little, either, at fourteen quarto pages. And congratulations and good wishes; Hobart Walking Club!

Here's a strange bit of news from the Apple Isle. One of the tips that some Hobart Walking Club members learned from the Victorians last Xmas was :-

"Dried Apples made an excellent food, and a change from the apricots we are usually forced back on. But they can't be bought in Hobart." !

Another tip was :- "To keep their butter fresh, the Victorians put it in their flour."

.

We agree with "Wayfaring", the excellent magazine of the Melbourne Women's Walking Club, that :-

"People who have pleasant faces
Should not leave unsightly traces
Of their meals in lovely places."

.

Here is another quotation from "Wayfaring":-

"To-day is the tomorrow you were worrying about yesterday, and all's well."

Mr. David G. Stead has offered to present copies of his book "The Rabbit in Australia" to any of his fellow-members who would care to have this authoritative work, which deals with the "History, Life Story, Habits, Effect upon Australian Primary Production and Best Means of Extermination" of the Rabbit. (Specially recommended to Tigers!) Joking aside, all you have to do to secure a copy is to let Richard Croker know that you gratefully accept Mr. Stead's offer, and he will get them for you and the other club members who have also handed in their names.

STOP PRESS !

February 28th 1939 was a Red Letter Day in the Berry family, for on it Maurie and Kath welcomed their son and heir!

We all join in congratulating our popular President on his entry to the ranks of Proud Fathers and look forward to meeting "young Berry" in due course. (The "Bunyips" had better keep this little fellow in mind, to train him to follow in his father's hob-nail marks).

FLOATING DOWN THE KOWMUNG

by W. Hall.

At a reasonable hour on Friday night, 23rd December, 1938, fifteen of us tumbled from the train and wove our way through the curious crowds that seem always to throng the subway at Katoomba Station. Some went to the cafes to satisfy the hunger so peculiarly and continuously a part of those who walk; the rest shouldered their packs and made off along the Great Western Road to the water reservoirs - there to sleep through the night.

On Saturday at the appointed hour of 5 a.m. the two cars drew up and our packs were soon stowed aboard, and we were off for Ginkin, which was as far as the cars could take us. We then took the bridle track down to the Tuglow River, there stopping for a late breakfast, which we shared with hordes of flies.

We followed the river to where its water drops over the falls and merges with that of the Hollanders' to form the Kowmung River, and when Box Creek was reached we stopped again, because the grassy flat at the junction was to be our base camp for two days. From here the beauties of Cherdon's Canyon and Dungalla Falls were explored, and the Christmas provisions with which we had so liberally provided ourselves were consumed.

The weather had been all that could be desired, and on Monday when camp was broken and an early start made at 6.45 a.m. it still held. The way was through comparatively easy country, the river meandering by glorious wooded flats and twisting in huge hairpin bends, over which we climbed, cutting off a considerable distance. From the tops of these ridges we obtained wonderful views of the ranged rolling in terraces from either side down upon us. There was always life along the river, an occasional wombat, duck, or shag. In the water, too, though more so further downstream, were fish and eels. Forcing ourselves through the blackthorn and briar we were discovering the going becoming much harder. The blackthorn in particular was very trying, the spikes digging into the flesh and, if not extracted immediately, they rotted and festered. The wretchedness, however, was often broken by the beauty of frequent patches of white daisies which grew along the banks.

When Tuglow Hole Creek was reached a halt was called for lunch. After eating and swimming, we picked our way over water-worn granite boulders through scrub to a canyon. Here the way seemed barred. There appeared nothing else to do but to go up and over the cliffs at either side, or - as we had heard of the exploits of a previous party - to float our packs through. We had come prepared for this latter prospect and rubber floats had been brought in anticipation of carrying our gear over the water. A raft was made by lashing together light pieces of timber, the rubber surf-planes were placed on it, and on top of these the packs. It was successful, but took too long to construct, and, as events turned out, at the gorges we had to swim through later there was a scarcity of suitable timber, so the idea of rafts was abandoned and the wrapping of groundsheets over our packs was resorted to. Two other pools were swum in this manner this same day, even though one or two of the packs received a slight wetting, it was pronounced most successful. From the last pool, which was about 75 yards long, the party reached Morong Falls, and split up, some camping on the Kowmung, and the others on the creek above the Falls, thus making their walk to Jenolan Caves shorter for the next day. The night proved very warm and all at the river camp slept badly, partly owing to the heat and partly to the poor camping ground. Bracken and scrub had to be cleared and soil levelled to make possible the abduelling of a tent.

At 6.30 a.m. on Tuesday morning we were off, and - jumping from rock to rock - came to the first casuarinas, and then to a pool bounded at the top by gigantic granite boulders and at the sides by walls round which it was impossible to scramble. The packs were lowered down and, this pool once swum, we were faced with another, and immediately a third, down to which our gear was handed in relays, and then, coming to the ledge where our packs were deposited, we had the thrill of sliding down a short, greasy, granite slope into the huge pothole of water, seemingly bottomless, in which our whole bodies were immersed, and clambering out of this one, went instantly into another. The packs reached, they were floated across and a rest was called for on a little sandy beach. A couple went ahead to reconnoitre, and reported a waterfall preventing further progress. It was impossible to climb down, and nothing was left but to sidle our way over the mountainside. This proved most exhausting and very dangerous, so we refrained from going too high. Our flesh was torn by the spikes from the blackthorn and briar; we had to pick our way over fallen timber; a tremendous amount of energy was needed, for foothold was difficult on the steep sides, covered as they were with loose, slippery, granite gravel. It was quickly discovered that the safe way to descend was to sit and slide, risking the tearing of our clothing. Worn out at the bottom of the slope we swam and lunched.

Continuing the perpetual rockhopping, at which we had become experts, for the tops of the weatherworn granite builders gave safe footholds, we came in the late afternoon to another pool. Some swam their packs through, but one went round the side and, reporting an easily negotiable animal track swam the 80 yards back and, with two others, carried packs over, but the track evaded us and, so frightful was the way and so precarious the footing on the loose gravel, that at times we had to wait for our panic to subside and our stirred-up stomachs to settle before continuing. At the river, when it was reached, we resolved never to sidle the ridges again, but to float every gorge - a resolve which was adhered to.

Assembling again and working downstream amid xerotes, casuarinas and blackthorn, a surprisingly good campsite was found above a waterfall, at 6.30 p.m. but the party - owing to the humid night - again slept badly, and was aroused early to pitch the tents because a thunderstorm had developed. Not much rain was received though in spite of all the lightning, and the thunder which was barely audible above the roar of the falls.

Leaving at 8 a.m. on Wednesday and crossing above the waterfall over a natural causeway, and edging our way round a ledge, we reached a tree that grew out from the bottom. Down this we slid, our packs first being lowered. We were faced now with another pool of about 120 yards long and, quickly covering our packs, swam them through, noticing a great number of rocklilies growing on the sheer walls. Here a scare resulted from one of the male members of the party beginning to choke and splutter and, leaving his pack, grasping hold of a nitch in one of the walls. Thinking he had cramp, a couple of others swam to his assistance, only to discover that, in laughing at some humorous remark, he had swallowed so much water that he had to rest. However, he quickly recovered and resumed the swim.

Then, helping one another over an awkward ledge, we came upon two other walkers who, through the fatiguing work entailed in climbing over each gorge, had taken two days to do what we had accomplished in one. They accompanied us for a few miles, during which another pool was floated, and we very quickly showed

them how to edge their way round the granite to get to this pool, and then to swim their gear through. Grey quartzite was taking the place of the granite when we lunched between Lannigan's and Matheson's Creeks. It was hot, and soon the party was strung out to Werong Creek. Here the two walkers left us; they were to camp over night and climb Misery Ridge early next morning. It is worth mentioning that it was possible here to resume the wearing of heavy boots, and we were most pleased. The banks now were followed along intermittent cow-pads, through scrub and thorns, to make camp in Rudder's Rift.

Leaving at 7.15 a.m. Thursday morning, an immediate floating of packs was made - our eleventh for the trip. Walking had become easier and a considerable distance had been covered when all progress seemed barred for another waterfall dropped down from in front of us. Remembering our resolve of but two days earlier not to climb again, we consulted, and decided to lower our packs down the 12 feet on ropes, then to jump over after them and float them through. This was exciting. Scanning the water anxiously for rocks, we leapt. It seemed an interminable time before we came to the surface, but on rising we turned, and facing the rock down which our pack was already being lowered, raised a hand to let it gently on to the water, then, unfastening the rope and watching it whisked up to lower another pack, turned and swam and pushed our pack down stream. How far we knew not for a bend in the river blocked the view. This floating proved a fitting finale, for it was to be our last and was 250 yards long, divided as it was into three parts. A narrow natural causeway, across which the packs had to be lifted, separated the first and second pools, and a shallow of greasy granite stones (over which we dragged our stomachs, propelling the packs before us) was between the second and the third. Some gear received a wetting so, during lunch, we dried both it and our tents, which were wet from the rain of the previous night. By the way, this day it had been more or less continuously raining, not heavily, but that light, misty stuff so common to our mountain regions, making the freedom from flies somewhat pleasant. The flies had been most annoying, and we had been unable to wear our flyveils because the thickness of their weave restricted vision, and made them too dangerous to wear when jumping from rock to rock.

We were now entertained by a lyrebird, and were delighted with its excellent mimicking. The birds were very plentiful, the bellbirds in particular being common.

Walking along the cowpads, Waterfall and Lannigan's Creeks were soon passed. Now by numerous prospect holes, past where the Boyd Range gently slopes to the Kowmung, and within a couple of miles of Church Creek we camped. We had observed a difference in the rock formation since lunch and conglomerate rock had become very prevalent.

The next day, Friday, was an easy one. From Church Creek we went to Yerranderie and procured more provisions. These made 250 lbs. food for the whole trip. A couple of youthful hunters gave us some rabbits, too, and after stewing them all the afternoon and night they were found edible for breakfast next morning.

Some of the party went home from Yerranderie, and on Saturday we were joined by another four people, and after they had breakfasted we were again on our way down the now peaceful and tranquil Kowmung - still passing the dilapidated huts of prospectors, in ruins alongside the fallen-in prospect holes, test holes, which, now long deserted, must have at one time been the fossickers' hope of an eldorado.

The pace of the party was quickening and the walking on the cowpads was excellent. It had rained early in the morning but, rapidly clearing, the sun burst through, and brought with it the irritating plague of flies. Christie's Creek was reached, and we thought of the explorer, Barallier, whose attempt to cross the mountains was repulsed by the precipitous walls of this creek a short distance from the Kowmung.

The open river banks were gradually giving way to cliffs, hundreds of feet high, as we were now entering the Bulga-Denis Canyon. If ever impressive and inspiring river scenery is to be witnessed on any of our mountain streams, it is here. The sheer, rugged grandeur of the mountain walls rising from the water's edge was wonderful. The track, running along narrow banks, continually crossed and recrossed the stream. The grey stone walls edged on either side by dark green vegetation, rose first on one side and then on the other. Through groves of watergum and wattle, across a large flat of eucalyptus saplings, we came to the end of the Canyon, where the sides were broken and wading somewhat reminiscent of Jenolan River was resorted to. Again the peaceful river with the grazing cattle reflected in the placid waters - but the appeal of Bulga-Denis was strong. We swam and, loitering, we lunched early on a grassy bank, and conversed of rabbits and their questionable value as a sustaining breakfast food.

Hughes' Hut came quickly and was left in the rear, and not long after that Gingra Creek and New Year's Eve were reached together. Camp was made and after tea our New Year's celebrations were held. A bottle of wine had been brought from Yerranderie; it was not much among so large a crowd of people, but it was sufficient for us to enter into the spirit of the time, and the evening of song, poetry, and ready witticisms near the dying embers of our fires was immensely enjoyed.

We seemed always to be up early. Dawn would break about 4 a.m. and the very earliest birds would begin their song, quickly followed by the others. By five o'clock the light and the life of the bush, together with the never-ending annoyance of the flies, made it desirable to be up and doing. On Sunday we were on the track by 7.30 a.m. and, after frequent swims and the killing of the only snake for the trip, although we saw half-a-dozen of them in all, we reached the Cox's river. At the foot of the Cedar Road, soon after leaving camp, on the very banks of the Kowmung River, we had seen motor cars, and the sight had depressed us for we had considered this river ours; and as we passed their deserted camping spot (they had departed very early) we noticed their litter and wondered how far cars would ultimately encroach on the Kowmung, and how much they would disfigure this area with their rubbish and vandalism?

Camp was made this night at the junction of Cedar Creek and Cox's River, and at 6.45 a.m. on Monday morning we commenced the last stage of our walk. We followed Cedar Creek and climbed to the Ruined Castle, skirting the landslide to the coal mine, and thence to Katoomba - and home again to bricks, mortar, and steel, but still we visualize the Kowmung, a waterway not yet ruined by the ruthless hand of man in his struggle for existence, and his avarice for abundant wealth.

SPLENDID NEWS FROM BOGGABRI

At the Boggabri Police Court recently two men were fined for having left their fires without extinguishing them. One man was lucky, his fire was found burning before it had spread, and his fine was only £3 (or 7 days). The other man had been the cause of a bushfire which destroyed between 500 and 600 acres of wheat stubble and 200 bags of wheat, and he was fined £20 (or 21 days),

This is the way to prevent bushfires!

TALK VERSUS SNORING CONTROVERSY

After consultation with Mr. William Shakespeare, Tim Coffey replies to Jack Debert:-

In Camp I heard a Voice cry, "Sleep no more!
Debert does murder sleep, - the absent only sleep!"

.

Still it cried, "Sleep no more!" to all the camp;
"Debert hath murdered sleep; and, therefore, ye Tigers
Shall sleep no more! Debert shall sleep no more!"

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(Ed. Note:- Anyone wishing to continue the controversy may do so in the)
("S.M.Herald" - or any other paper - but not in "The Sydney Bushwalker".)

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REMINDER - FIRST AID CLASS

The important date is WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11th - the first Wednesday after Easter. On that date the First Aid Class will start, and will take the usual St. John's Ambulance course, supplemented by special teaching to meet the special conditions arising from bushwalking. Enrol now with Mr. L.G.Harrison ("Mouldy").

All walkers are welcome, whether S.B.W. members or not. To make a successful class forty to fifty students are needed. Bring your friends and all join up.

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SWIMMING CARNIVAL

Blessed with fine weather the Swimming Carnival held on Georges River, near Minto, on 25/6th February, was an outstanding success. The events were keenly contested, and owing to lack of space we will publish the results in our next issue. The Club congratulate Bill Henley in locating this excellent pool.

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HOW TO WRITE A BOOK

By "Paddy".

It is really quite simple to write a book. All you do is to get a few pencils (or typewriter ribbons) a few reams of paper and then concentrate. It is much easier if you have decided first what you wish to write about. Some people write books and nobody ever knows what the author was writing about (and of course it is simply not done to ask an author what his book is all about). Having found something to write about, you then sit down, chew the end of your pencil (or twiddle the keys of the typewriter) until Inspiration comes. Then you just write about it. As we said before it is quite easy to write a book.

It is when the book is written that your troubles begin.. Perhaps you want it illustrated. You can't just say to an artist. "Here illustrate this". You've got to pick out the meaty bits and tell him what you want and then you've got to send the drawings back because he's drawn something inside out or back to front or something. Artists don't care.

Then there's photographs.. When you don't want them you see all the snaps you would like, but when you want a nice photograph of a tent by the side of a river. Can you find it? No sir! You can not. Then when you've got all your pictures, you start on blocks and then you get a quote. Quotes are a sort of lottery where the lowest number wins.

Having finished with quotes and galley proofs and authors corrections and page proofs, what not you get your book.

Believe me it's a thrill, to see the child of your dreams in three dimensions as it were.

However the dreams are rudely shattered when the Printer comes along with the Bill. You've heard of Printers' Devils. That's the Devil when you get your Bill.

There are only two things left before the job is complete. First pay the Bill and then sell the books - or more probably - First sell the books and then pay the Bill - if the Printer will wait long enough.

And that fellow walkers is where we are now. In case you don't know, Paddy has written a book and all he has to do is to sell the book and pay the Bill.

By the way, it is not a bad book. In fact, Paddy thinks it is a very good book.

It is entitled "Bushwalking and Camping". It costs a mere 1/3.

F. A. FALLIN

327 George St. Sydney
(opp. Palings)

'Phone
B3101.

AT OUR OWN MEETING

The attendance at the February General Meeting was better than usual (official count 69) and those present joined Maurie Berry in welcoming the following New Members:-

Misses May Boyd, Rita Hundt, Audrey Wilkins and Joyce Wilkins;
Messrs. Oswald Brownlee, Irving Calnan, William Whitney and Reg. Alder.

Mr. Ossie Brownlee was elected Room Steward for the ensuing month

Yes, the Reunion is fast approaching!! On behalf of the organising Committee, Jack Debert announced that for this year's Damper Competition standardized flour will be supplied and all dampers must be cooked in the ashes - unless the Reunion Committee decided to make a separate section for dampers cooked in billies or plates. Frank Duncan suggested that, in future, the first prize in the Damper Competition should be known as "The Ashes"!

The President reminded members that if they desired to bring any non-member to the Reunion, ON THE SUNDAY ONLY, they must first get permission of the Club, through the Committee. As usual this privilege will only apply to near relatives such as husband or wife, and cannot, under any circumstances, be extended to the Saturday night.

Saturday night's celebrations are for members and ex-members only. We all hope lots of past members will be asked, and will "re-une" with us.

Myles Dunphy, speaking on the subject of waterholes dug in swamps, told us of several such holes he had dug on the Boyd Plateaux six years ago, which are still open and providing water for many animals as indicated by the trails leading to them. He suggested that such holes be dug in duplicate, one to be hoarded over to provide water for human consumption.

The last section of the Federation report read by Alex Colley was amplified by Dorothy Lawry to the effect that Rory Lofts wished to caution walkers in the Upper Colo District about the inflammable leafmould that composes the soil by the river. Unless fires were carefully extinguished, they would smoulder underground for days or even weeks and become a menace to persons or animals which might walk on what appeared to be solid ground.

Members of this Club and other walkers are invited to attend First Aid Lectures to be commenced the first Wednesday after Easter.

Dot English advised that, on application, members of the Ranger's League would be provided with new metal badges to replace the Authority Cards they now hold.

It was unfortunate that Business Manager, Bill Mullins, was not at the meeting to add his share to the discussion on the way subscribers' copies have, or have not, been going lately. However, the folks concerned can cheer up. The Publication Committee has now made arrangements and, in future, subscribers' copies will be despatched "hot from the press".

On Jack Debert's suggestion it was decided that the Federation be asked to congratulate the authorities responsible for making the excellent track from Tallong to Barber's Creek and the Shoalhaven River.

Charlie Pryde reported that the bottle at Clear Hill had been broken and the contents stolen, and asked that the Federation take steps to have these records traced.

Alex Colley intends to ask the Federation whether newspaper publicity could be first looked over by the Secretary or Publicity Bureau before going to press.

Dorothy Lawry outlined a scheme to be put to the Federation to try to acquire the lease held by Maynards and to add the area to Garawarra. As the recent bushfires destroyed this property it was thought that the owner might feel inclined to relinquish tenure. After discussion a motion was carried to ask the Federation to move in the matter.

Just before the meeting closed a presentation was made to Joan and Harry Savage, who were married recently. In thanking the Club, Harry's remark that "They had met in the Club, and if they hadn't met they probably wouldn't have married" was the highlight of the evening.

FEDERATION NEWS

The Conservation Bureau has been reconstituted and now consists of the President and Hon. Secretary of the Federation, Messrs. T.A. Herbert and C.D.A. Roberts, together with Mr. R.E. Mitchell (Bureau Secretary). Mr. William Kenyon (C.M.W.) and Mr. Arthur Salmon (S.B.W.) The suggestion of the C.B.W. that the Federation should adopt as its main conservation objective the Greater Blue Mountains National Park scheme propounded by the N.P.P.A. Council was referred to the Bureau for consideration and a report.

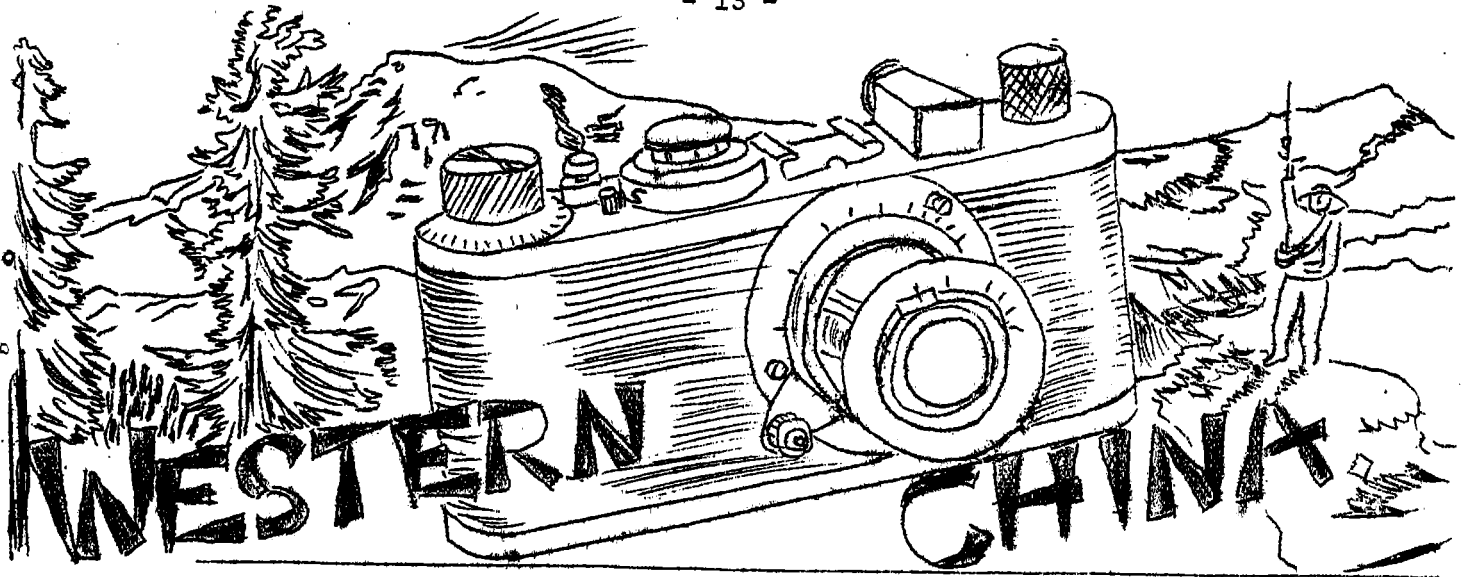
The Honorary Auditor, Miss D. Lawry, resigned because she is now a delegate. Her resignation was accepted with regret at the Council meeting on Jan. 20th. Mr. Tom Moppett was appointed to fill the vacancy.

At the same meeting a committee consisting of Mr. C. Pryde, Mr. B. Harvey and Mr. J. Debert was appointed to report on the practicability and desirability of digging a well in Corral Swamp.

BLACKHEATH SIGHTS RESERVES

Until recently the Blackheath Sights Reserves were vested in and managed by a board of trustees, but, as a result of local agitation, they have now been transferred to the control of our good friends, the Blackheath Municipal Council. They have the staff and equipment to enable proper care to be taken of tracks, etc. and their newly-appointed engineer is preparing a report and a programme of suggested improvements for submission to the Minister for Works and Local Government.

The Blue Gum Forest is not affected by this transfer.



Miss Marie Byles, the well known Bushwalker, on her recent trip through Western China, entrusted her photographic records to a Leica Camera..... and to the Leica Photo Service of Sydney.

Surely no greater recommendation can be made for a Camera! no greater faith in a Service!

Let the Leica Photo Service develop and print the records of YOUR next walking trip andR E M E M B E R we allow a 10% special discount on all developing, printing and enlarging work to members of the affiliated Bushwalking Clubs.

Easy terms can now be arranged on purchases of Leica Cameras, projectors, enlargers, etc.

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FIRE ON THE TRACK

by "Duch" Drewell.

The Editor suggested an article should be written about the bushfires on the Era Hills during THE HOT SATURDAY when I happened to be a spectator of the destruction. Vague promises don't seem to satisfy these strongminded Hippo women, so it seems that some effort will have to be made to produce a story. But how to present the material? Let myself go and write an article with pathos, bathos and pseudo phrases that would make even strong men sick? Sick with the nausea that only artificial emotion handled by an amateur can produce.

.....Amid the fearful holocaust of Nature's ruthless force the ground sprawled naked and unprotected, while fiery blood poured from the blackened limbs of wounded trees and the wind shrieked a funeral dirge over all. With sable trailing garments did Night piteously endeavour to blot out the hideous inferno. Her soft gentleness was no match for the virility of the Fire God tearing at her robes with flaming passion.....

Yet it seems impossible to write a bare statement of facts. Rather would I use my imagination even as a journalist, or a canoeist, or a fisherman, or any other of those strange sects who believe Fiction to be more impressive than Truth...

... **THREE WALKERS TRAPPED IN FLAMES:**

NIGHT OF HORROR SPENT ON ERA HILLS.

Dazed with terror of their experience, clothes and faces scorched by the searing flames, at a late hour last night three walkers staggered to the sanctuary of Felicity Flat, North Era. Each, with charming modesty, made light of his or her astounding courage in running the gauntlet of that blazing inferno to keep faith with their friends. Mr. Chamberlain may continue to turn his four cheeks to Facist aggression but while such loyalty exists in Australia, Democracy has little to fear from the racketeers of the Anti-Comintern Pact

Now if only I could write like Lennie Lower and introduce my old grandfather and nagging wife, and tell how we saved the Old Home, while the Village Maiden said, "No, No, a thousand times No," and the villain raged, the fire raged and the Hero raised the mortgage, or whatever it is that heroes raise, apart from clean honest faces and big feet in grassy places....

Well, after that spot of practice, here goes ...

Boarding the 5.15 p.m. train from Central, I shared a compartment with the Little Bean and one Mullins, who may be able to bill, but he certainly can't coo. We first noticed the bush fires near Heathcote and it was a grand spectacle. Long tongues of flame licked up trees and telegraph poles and swept on to more intensive licking.

At Waterfall the wind changed to the south, and The Bean remarked, time being six, "How lovely to come out of the pubs and find a cool southerly blowing!" No fires were apparent at Lilyvale, but half way up the hill we met a very distressed-looking couple who told a fearsome tale of fire on all the hills. North Era was burned out; the campers were sheltering on the beach! It was impossible to get down except by way of Burning Palms. We had better go home.

Thanking them courteously, we continued on up the hill. Bushfires might rage, but we had a discussion circle to attend, and nothing can stop a discussor when he, or she, wants to discuss. Along the track we walked, no untoward signs discernible until suddenly a display of fireworks, that made a "Fitzy" show look like a wax match, burst on our vision. A symphony of sable and flame to the notes of a southerly. The trees stood bare and black, lit by inward fires which, whipped by the wind, sent out showers of sparks in a spectacular display. The sparks blew across the track, the wind tore at branches nearly burned through, and we spent an anxious time watching the "overhead" and hoping the flying sparks would not ignite our packs and persons.

Except for a feeling of regret at the destruction of so much bushland, the main reaction to the scene was one of impersonal appreciation of such a beautiful and rare spectacle. And then we reached Maynards.... A large heap of red hot coals, topped with pieces of galvanized iron and garnished with the warped remains of a motor car and two motor bikes, was all that was left of the Maynard's home. Realisation of the personal tragedy and loss sobered the excitement of adventure.

We continued on. Bean tried the Jungle track, but it was decided to be too risky a way down as the southerly tended to whip the glowing trees into fresh outbursts of flame. Voting that Thelma Ridge would probably be the safest way down, we kept to the road and collected another walker, who said he would feel safer in our company.

The scene from Governor Game was breathtakingly beautiful and devastating. In the direction of The Saddle and the Garie Road the sky glowed with a fiery reflection, indicating that a big section of that area was under flame. Bill said the flames must be above the tree tops. Probably the gaseous content of the eucalytus had ignited. Fire leapt high and joyously on the ridge between Wattamolla and Garie, licking up the blasted hakis with relish. Flames still ran down the hills round Garie. From Thelma Ridge, as far as the eye could see south, millions of lights glowed on the hills and in the valleys. The impression was of looking down at night on the street and house lights of a large city.

As there is little undergrowth and timber on Thelma Ridge, the remainder of the journey down to the campsite was uneventful. We listened to the experiences of the campers; heard how the rapidly approaching fire had caused them to retreat to the safety of the beach, and how the southerly change providentially arrived to beat back the flames before Felicity Flat had been consumed, permitting them to return and pitch tents once more.

And so to discussion, and later, much later, bed at the early hour of two o'clock in the morning.

CLUB GOSSIP

He's done it again! He's scored another bullseye! Who? Why, young Cupid, of course! This time the happy victim is our own Secretary, Richard Croker. He has announced his engagement to Miss Marjorie Adams. She is now a prospective member, and is known to lots of Club Members and, of course, she's a very nice girl. So this is why there was a vacant berth on the "Orion" when she sailed for England on January 28th!

Ernie Austin has been temporarily transferred to the Relieving Staff, and he and Jean will be away from Sydney for some months - first stop Wingham.

When the R.M.S. "Orcades" sailed on February 22nd, she carried another Club Member to Europe on a holiday trip. Doreen Helmarich and her girl friend hope to be away about six months and they plan to see a lot of Europe by canoe and on foot. Happy camping, Doreen!

Ex-President Tom Herbert was married on February 18th to Miss Josephine Bell. We wish them both the best of luck and every happiness, and we apologise for our mistake in calling the lady "Rosamund" when their engagement was announced.

Everyone will be pleased to learn that Geoff Parker is now out of hospital and on the way to complete recovery. We were delighted to see him in the club rooms

At the end of Paddy's Official walk on 19th February, the party enjoyed a swim in the Pallin Pool at Lindfield (the swank of these bloated capitalists). Congratulations, Paddy! What about a visitor's book, for "Those who have cooled in our pool ???

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Our new M.D. Member, Max O'Halloran is at present doing locum work in the country and misses his walks.

In his last letter he wishes to be remembered to "the boys" and hoped to be in town some Friday night soon.

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