

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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

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Editor: Dorothy Lawry.

Acting Business Manager and Production: Brian Harvey
Subscriptions: Ordinary, Doreen Harris; "On Service", Grace Jolly.
Other Members of the) Jessie Martin, Merle Hamilton, Mary Stoddart.
Publication Staff)

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"RISE AND SHINE"

1940 is past. Thankfully we greet 1941 -- as a bushwalker welcomes the dawn after his first long, uncomfortable night in camp. Whatever the day may hold, he is glad the night is over.

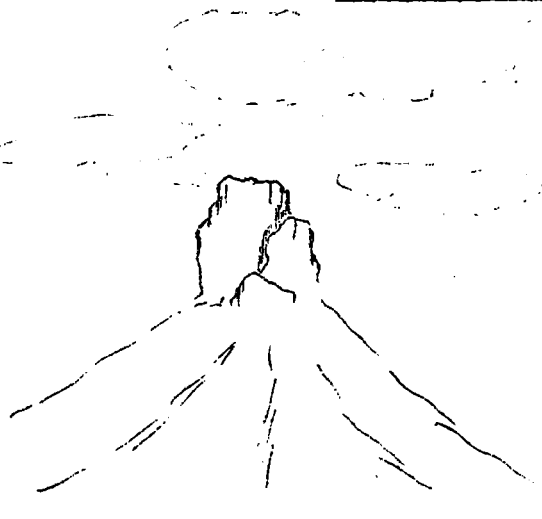
May 1941 prove to be a good year, a sparkling day for us and all our friends wherever they may be. At the end of it may we all find that as individuals we have climbed to heights that give us a wider outlook, and that as a community our united efforts have brought us to a new and better camp.

Yonder in the heather there's a bed for sleeping,
Drink for one athirst, ripe blackberries to eat;
Yonder in the sun the merry hares go leaping,
And the pool is clear for travel-wearied feet. - Ada Smith.

EXPLORING A NEW WORLD.

Pigeon-House Mountain and the Clyde River.

by D. Hellmrich.



On the Friday night of Eight-Hour Week-end, twentythree of us headed south from Hamilton Street in a motor coach for twentytwo. Our extra man was Reg. Alder who, having been granted an eleventh hour reprieve from work on Saturday, had a very varied assortment in seating accommodation as we tossed him lightly from lap to lap.

Owing mainly to excessive eating capacity, we didn't arrive at Milton till 2 a.m.! We had to turn inland then for about ten miles. As the town dance was still in progress we were able to get directions, but not quite able to follow them!

About an hour later we found ourselves on a timber road winding into the heart of a forest of tall trees - and when the track dwindled into oblivion we decided as one man to draw up our coach and snatch a few hours of sleep. Imagine the amazement of the local possums!!

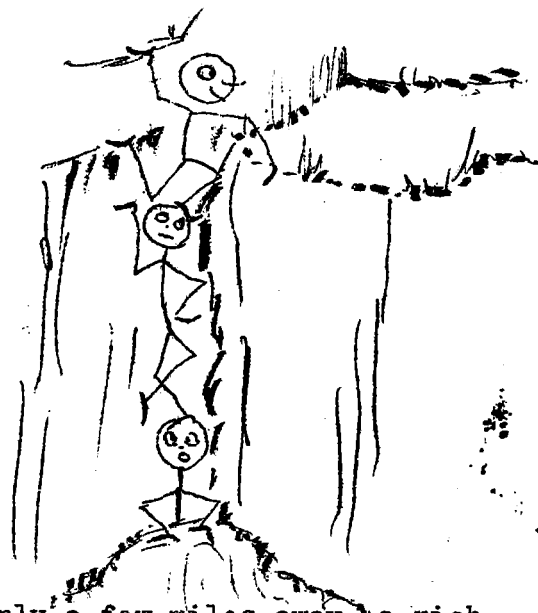
On Saturday morning we consulted a horseman, got our bearings and followed a very picturesque road through good timber with views to the sea, beaches and lakes on our left, till we turned inland again and came to the end of the road at Drury's Farm.

We were in a green valley, with groups of vivid, graceful willows lining the creek, and looking over low hills we could see Pigeon-House Mountain (2,300 ft.) seemingly not far away.

Armed with as much information as we could gather at the farm, and a rough sketch map, we set out into the unknown! Everything was a little awkward at first because there were so many small tracks in the foothills. We lost sight of the Pigeon-House and finally took a compass course set by Bill Hall, so, naturally, we came upon the track we were looking for; this led us to the foot of "our" mountain, which we hear was named by Captain Cook as he sailed along the coast. It is conical and topped by a 40-ft. rock outcropping, and was a most important landmark for us as we completely circled it.

We left our packs and sped up the slope, a very easy climb through park-like land, till we arrived at the base of the rocky outcropping and worked our way round to the west to the funnel up which we were pushed and pulled according to individual necessity, and arrived breathless but triumphant on top of the world.

The view was magnificent - a complete cyclorama of ocean, beaches, lakes, and inland over the gorges of the Clyde and its tributaries, and strange tongues and islands of land with cliff sides and plateau-like tops; towering above all, there was the colossal Castle Rock, which has never been scaled. (Up with the challenge, Rock Climbers!). Beyond were folds of hills, and mountains to compare with Gangerang, and below, only a few miles away, a rich green river flat, our camp spot for the night!



As we had almost the whole of the Photographic Section along with us, you can easily believe me when I tell you that the clicking of cameras was deafening. Alder and Cosgrove were using rival brands of colour film - in fact the whole conversation of the experts was on such a high plane of heavy technicality that the laymen were reduced to silence and awe!!!

So we came down from the mountain and down the long ridge to the valley of the Clyde, a new river for every one of us! It is tree lined, swift flowing, clear and peat coloured -- a very attractive river, running here through hundreds of acres of springy grass flats.

We didn't leave camp till nine o'clock on Sunday morning, and, after wading across the Clyde, we set out over the wide flat and up a small rise to a deserted farmhouse, surrounded by wild lemon trees and apple trees in blossom. Surely as beautiful a dwelling place as one could wish for - looking over curving valley and river, rimmed in by steep hills; Pigeon-House rising ahead, and Castle Rock immense in its nearness, towering above to the north. At the end of the flat we crossed the river again and some nice feats of gallantry were performed by strongmen bearing diminutive lasses on stalwart shoulders.

Next item of interest was a mob of picturesque wild ponies, strikingly grouped - cream with brown mane and brown with cream. Unfortunately they moved off just as the photographers were ranging into position.

We turned up a gully here to travel over the ridges and cut off a large bend in the river. The first ridge was extremely high and after we had toiled right to the top we found that we should have turned off long since. Luckily it was particularly good walking country with no undergrowth and good timber, mostly spotted gum.

At about this period we reached zero hour as the desired ridge proved horribly elusive and Bill had to set his compass again, as we followed false trails looking for the river which we should come upon at a clearing with hut and track.

George Dibley had had a hunch for some time and here he spoke his piece, so we crossed a certain low spur and came upon the very clearing for which we were searching. We had lunch here and swam in a superlative pool, but not for long!

Everything was well under control for miles from here as we swung along a very good track to another hut just past the Boyne Creek junction, where our maps led us astray and we found ourselves headed for the coast, away from Pigeon-House, our faithful landmark.

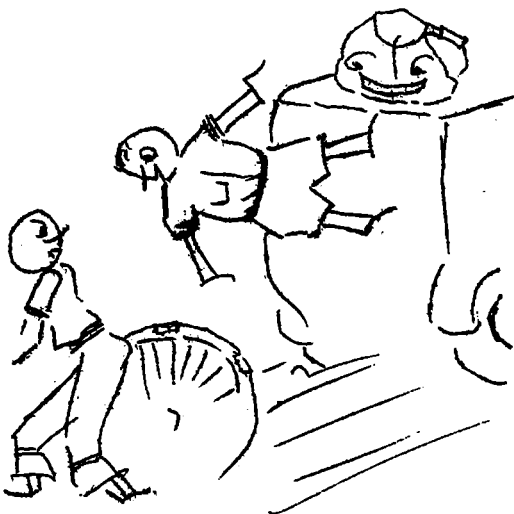
A timber track followed every ridge, but in spite of all setbacks, by a method of trial and error, we reached our camp spot on the Boyce as scheduled.

Ira Butler had caused a stir late in the afternoon by discovering that he had left one of his most valuable camera spare parts by the wayside miles back. Chief-Whipper-In Colley volunteered to assist in the search and faced the terrifying possibility of having to spend the night away from the party. However Bill decided to go back from the camp for them and brought everybody in safely at about 8.30 p.m. but no spare part. So Max Gentle rose at dawn next morn and cantered over the hills, bringing Ira's treasure triumphantly back in record time!

Monday morning consisted of just a pleasant stroll through the Boyne Valley. The path led sometimes through rich growth along the bank of the creek, sometimes across wide flats, or through acres of wattle forest of graceful dark-trunked feathery trees casting dancing shadows over the soft green carpet of grass, and so back to Drury's valley and lunch, after which most of us were able to realise an ambition cherished for years in vain - of having a long luxuriant sunbake, till the coach arrived about 3 o'clock.

It seemed too remarkable that we had every chance of being back in Sydney at a very exemplary hour, but at Wollongong, where we stopped to eat, Ira provided a dramatic interlude which prevented us from doing anything so ordinary.

While extracting money from his pack (cruel!) on top of the bus he carelessly slipped off and landed firmly on the back wheel of a local lad's bicycle which was standing below. Showing great enterprise, the wily owner demanded £2.10.0 by way of damages and Ira, filled with righteous indignation, repaired with retinue to the Police Court.



At this point there was considerable delay, and Vice-President Cotter (who likes getting home early) was observed sitting in the bus looking very bitter and not filled with brotherly sympathy for our unfortunate one. Finally a compromise was reached at the court and, 10/- having been decided on as fair value for damage caused, we were able to leave.

As we drove up Bulli Pass the myriad of emerald and white lights sparkling like jewels in the dark setting of the coastal plain was rivalled by the brilliance of the stars above.

TIME — MARCHES ON!

The House of Pallin has passed its Tenth Milestone.

During the last decade it has been the pleasure of Paddy Pallin to supply walkers with the best of camp-gear, gear which they have been proud to carry, gear which has stood the test of time !

And now.....with the coming of the New Year, and a New Era for the House of Pallin, Paddy expresses the hope that the pleasant associations with his many customers will continue for all time, and thanks them for the patronage in the years that are passed.

As to the Future "Good Walking" and a "Happy New Year".

F. A. PALLIN,

'Phone B3101.

327 George Street,

SYDNEY.

REMEMBER - "PADDY-MADE" IS BETTER MADE !

AVOID THESE RULES

And Become a Good Member.

Should you wish to become a good club member and a good sport, AVOID the following rules. Here they are:-

1. Seldom or ever go to a meeting, they are only a waste of time.
2. If you do attend, find fault with the members of the committee, or agree to everything said at the meeting and disagree with it outside.
3. Never become a committee member, it is easier to criticise than to do things.
4. If asked by the chairman to give your opinion regarding some matter, tell him you have nothing to say, but say plenty after the meeting.
5. Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary, but when other members roll up their sleeves and willingly and unselfishly use their ability to help matters along, howl that the club is run by a clique.
6. Hold back your subscriptions as long as possible, or better still, forget it.
7. When the club gives a dinner or other function, tell all and sundry money is being wasted on blow-outs that accomplish nothing.
8. If no dinners or functions are held, howl that the club is dead and it would take a charge of dynamite to wake it up.
9. When your president rises to welcome the visitors, engage in conversation with your neighbour. It is a free country, exercise your right to free speech.
10. Never be courteous; if you are, it shows a weakness. Only Sissie chaps are courteous.
11. If the club does not correct abuses as you see them, howl that nothing is being done.
12. Should the club draw attention to your faults, resign; be certain before doing this that you can get a clearance.
13. At every opportunity threaten to resign and tell them you will get your friends to resign with you.
14. Kick about the cost of membership even though you spend as much as an entire year's subscription on a little party.

--John Scott

Re-printed from "Bowls in New South Wales."

THE HISTORY OF NORTON'S SWAMP.

By "Mumbedah".

I have often wondered if those who traverse the Black Dog Track, between Debert's Knob and Carlon's, know of the very interesting piece of history concerning Norton's Swamp, through which the track passes. The swamp is not of very great dimensions and walkers may not be able to place it, but they will recall an area of long green grass and swampy plants, about a quarter of a mile east of Carlon's boundary fence gate. It forms the head of a small creek which empties into that creek known locally as Sliprail Creek, more commonly and erroneously known as Breakfast Creek and so shown on the Narrow Neck Map.

Some seventy or eighty years ago, soon after the Black Dog Track came into existence, there lived, at Campbelltown, a respected and, apparently, reasonably well-off family by the name of Norton. Campbelltown was, in those days, the "shopping centre" of the district, and the hub of society and civic business. One of the sons, then about 26 years of age, was betrothed to a local lass, and arrangements had been made for a great celebration on the wedding day. However, on the appointed day, the lass was nowhere to be found, and Norton, cut to the quick, took it very badly. He declared that all white women were unfaithful to their contracts, and vowed he would have nothing more to do with any of them, so took to the bush, deciding he would live with the blacks, who then were very numerous in the Blue Mountains and Burraborang.

Taking horses and stores Norton finally settled down with a tribe which apparently had its main camping area in the vicinity of the swamp. There we may see, today, the grooves in the rocks where the aborigines sharpened their stone implements and, without much trouble, find their stone scrapers and "axe heads", particularly in the cultivation paddock not far away.

Norton took unto himself a black wife, and became a blood brother of the tribe. In due course there appeared five children - all girls !

Although he lived with the blacks, he did not live as one; still retaining his horses, he made periodical trips to Campbelltown for supplies of "whites" tucker. The trip was a long and rough one as there was no road down to Burraborang from Campbelltown, and the descent into the valley was most hazardous for horses. Norton did not reside all the time at the main camp, as the tribe was, of course, nomadic. Wherever they went, he would follow with his wife and family, taking his belongings on horse-back, and picking up supplies if and when the opportunity presented itself. However, his unusual life was to come to a close. The law stood that no white should live with the blacks, and knowledge of the breach came to the ears of the police at Campbelltown. This police post had control over a vast area at that time for there was no communication with any of the settlements on the Blue Mountains main road from the Cox Valley, and everything went by the long route through Burraborang. The police came out from Campbelltown and arrested Norton, who was taken back, tried and flung into prison. The term of the sentence is not definitely known to the source of my information.

In some manner, after his release, Norton was appointed a magistrate at

Bathurst, although some time must have elapsed to let the affair blow over. However, he did not forget his family in the bush, and taking them with him, he started life afresh in the new district. He gave his daughters a good education, but their final place in the life of Bathurst is lost in obscurity, for then, as now, there was the unfortunate half-caste problem, and they probably became social outcasts.

Of the other Nortons little is known, but the memory of that remarkable man will live on in the cold official words on the map, "Norton's Swamp."

FEDERATION NOTES

At the December Council Meeting the question was raised as to whether the new spikes and pitons cemented in the rocks by Warrigal Club members are on "Taro's Pass" or "Duncan's Pass". After some discussion, it was decided to retain the name "Taro's Ladder" for this route, the "wallaby track" for the alternative way on this section, and "Duncan's Pass" for the whole descent from the wallaby parade on Clear Hill to Debert's Knob. Taro has been asked to paint fresh signs for placing at the forking of the routes, both top and bottom.

Harry Waite of the Warrigal Club is now Secretary of the Conservation Bureau. Talking of conservation, have you yet sent in any suggestions you may have for improvements in the Acts covering the protection of flora and fauna? As reported a couple of months ago, the matter of amending these Acts is at present being considered. If you let Federation Secretary Merle Hamilton have your suggestions, she will forward them with the others submitted by members of the affiliated clubs.

By courtesy of the Millions Club the Federation held a photographic exhibition lasting from the 11th to 18th December and finishing with a party. There were about seventy pictures from bushwalkers, supplemented by a section from the Photographic Society of N.S.W., from which our enthusiasts doubtless collected many new ideas which will blossom forth in their later work. We heard a rumour that Photographic Society members also received some eye-opening surprises when they saw what bushwalkers had obtained under the difficult conditions of taking photos of things just as they are found without waiting for "the light to be right", etc. etc.

In December also, the Federation had a window display in the Tourist Bureau. This was retained in the Challis House window for a fortnight and then transferred to Wynyard. The arrangement of this display was George Loder's final job as Convenor of the Federation's Publicity Bureau. Owing to pressure of work and study as a Reservist of the R.A.A.F. George had to resign from the position, to which another member of the Trampers' Club - Jack Walker - has been elected. And so the war causes changes, but the work goes on

BUSH WALKERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE FROM OTHER STATES

Please Note

MOST GOOD BUSH WALKERS

Rest their weary feet

at

A N N ' S P A N T R Y

Railway Arcade, 5 Hunter Street, Sydney.

EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT FOR DINNER

(5 p.m. to 7.15 p.m.)

Genuine Home Cooking

In a homely atmosphere

At reasonable prices.

Open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

for

Morning and Afternoon Tea and Lunches

Parties Catered For.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CLUB'S SLOGAN

By "Historian".

"Burn or bury all your rubbish and your tins,
And hide your bottles as you would your sins."

We have seen this quoted in New Zealand journals and in the Sydney newspapers and we have heard it flung over the air. There is no doubt that it has taken hold in a way that only the best slogans can do, and while we are discussing the origin of some of the club's songs, it may not be amiss to tell the origin of its slogan also.

The Byles family, two friends and Kath Mackay rented Bett's Camp one Xmas. Kath and Marie spent most of the time going down to Geehi. The others apparently spent most of the time in tidying up and repairing the hut and at the end of the ten days' holiday it was scarcely recognisable. It seemed a pity it should not remain for ever in the same state, so on the last evening the party foregathered to compose a "poem" which would so inspire others with noble ideals that the good work of the holiday would never be undone. The following is the poem that resulted. It was composed by Kath with occasional help - or hindrance - from the others, so Marie informs us,

If you feel inclined to chuck
All your rubbish and your muck
In the little stream a-flowing past the door,
Check the impulse, think again,
For with all our might and main
We have tidied up the little streamlet's shore.

When we came back from our tramps,
Dad had mended all the lamps,
And Dave had soldered damaged kitchenware.
Mum had tidied up the store,
And done odd jobs galore;
Dan had made quite safe the broken front door stair.

When you stay at Betts's Camp,
Follow well our good examp:
Burn or bury all your rubbish and your tins,
Scrub the tables, sweep the floor,
Leave it neater than before,
And hide your bottles as you would your sins.

Keep your fire small. Never build it against a tree or a log or in long grass.
Clear a space all round it. Extinguish it before you leave. Prevent bushfires.

FROM HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE

We have not tried this yet, but it sounds as though it may be a good tip. We found it in the November issue of the "Camp Fire Club Magazine":-

"Bites from Bull Dog Ants. To cure instantly, crush the leaf of the common Bracken Fern; apply the juice to the sting."

We remember hearing in New Zealand that the new, uncurled fronds of bracken crushed and rubbed on mosquito bites would take away the sting. Probably this fern is useful for all insect bites.

(Mental Note: Must watch to see if bracken grows near bulldog ant nests, like docks grow near nettles.)
.....

In an article contributed to the C.M.W'S magazine "Into The Blue" by the Bush Fires Advisory Committee we were glad to notice that those in authority do not agree with the general public, which thinks a bushfire is only serious if it menaces someone's weekend shack. Here is what the Bush Fires Advisory Committee says:-

"Uncontrolled bush fires do incalculable damage to the catchment areas which supply our rivers and streams. Because such fires occur in the forests or in the mountain country their devastating effect is unseen and therefore not realized by the general public. Too often we hear the view expressed that a fire will do no harm because it is only in the mountains. This view is entirely mistaken, such fires may do more harm to the general community and the State than fires in the settled country where they are more quickly brought under control. It is usually left to the rain to extinguish fires in the mountains....."

If you can get a copy of "Into The Blue", October, 1940, you really should read the whole of this interesting article - not to mention the rest of the magazine, of course.
.....

Have you seen the pamphlet recently issued about Bouddi Natural Park and how to get there? It tells of cabins that can be hired near Little Beach, and gives train and launch time-tables as well as a map of the district. Paddy has some of these pamphlets, as well as our congratulations for any share he may have had in their preparation. They are a good idea.
.....

From New Zealand comes a new book "Peaks, Packs and Mountain Tracks" by W.Scott Gilkison. The S.B.W's copy is autographed by the author so the Librarian will probably charge extra for letting you read it. Very pleasant reading it is too, even for non-climbers, though some of our mountaineering enthusiasts may bemoan the absence of technicalities. All Bushwalkers will enjoy the little stories that are interspersed, such as the passing reference to "the impecunious Varsity student who dismembered a bicycle and tried to construct a Bergens-Ruc-Sac frame out of the forks".
.....

"Splashes" Quarterly No.2 has been produced by the River Canoe Club of N.S.W. in spite of the drought and the war. After reading it from cover to cover we say to all our readers, "Don't miss it", and to the River Canoe Club, "Congratulations again."

AT OUR OWN MEETING

At the December meeting the President welcomed five New Members to the Club:- Beth Spears, Margaret Gow, Joyce Kennedy, Laurence Rayner and Ron, Baker. We hope they will all be very active members in all branches of Club life as well as on walks.

Each month now there are two or three letters in the Correspondence from members "on service". This month we had word from Hugh Dickson and Rob, Morrison. Rob, sent thanks for the magazine and kind regards to all his fellow-members. Apparently Hugh had not heard that subs are not payable by members who are on Active Service, and the Club had not heard that he had enlisted -- but he will be kept up-to-date with S.B.W. doings in future by our monthly magazine. Will all members please check up with either Jean Moppett or Grace Jolly and see that they have the names and addresses of all our fellow-members who are on service with the Navy, A.I.F., or R.A.A.F.?

"The Sydney Bush Walker's Comforts Fund" was officially formed at this meeting, the profits from the 1940 "Concert" being the nucleus of its funds. As the legal requirements for the administration of comforts funds are at present rather obscure owing to proposed new legislation, it was decided to leave any decision on this important matter until the January meeting, and the President of the Club was instructed to administer the fund in the meantime. It is hoped there will be a large attendance of members at the January meeting, and that they will provide all the necessary ideas, and workers, to make our own comforts fund for the bushwalking boys on service a real comfort to them. Remember, it is not for duplicating the supplies of socks and smokes, but to send photos, magazines, letters and any other "mental comforts" to them.

A vote of thanks to Joan Savage as Organiser and to the whole Concert Party for the evening's entertainment was moved from the Chair and carried by acclamation.

As members had been notified by circular, our Walks Secretary had resigned and a new one had to be elected. We are exceedingly happy to be able to report that a volunteer had been found for this very arduous job, and the meeting enthusiastically elected Grace Edgecombe as Hon. Walks Secretary. John Manson is, of course, still Assistant Walks Secretary, and they are now preparing the next walks programme. Leaders are asked to volunteer promptly and to give either Grace or John details of proposed walks without delay.

"FROSTIE" MAKES A MOVE

Two flights of stairs less to climb when the lift breaks down!!

Those of you who have had this experience will be pleased to know that

ADA FROST

has moved her Dressmaking Establishment from the 5th Floor to --

Third Floor, Room 6,

Post Office Chambers,

333 George Street, Sydney.

BW5427.

CHRISTMAS PARTY.

Gladioli, creamy lilies and golden roses vied with the attractive food as table decorations. Gardenias were arranged on the damask cloth amongst the pear merangues, the savoury eggs, the luscious trifles and the asparagus in aspic. It was hard to believe that all this gorgeousness was supported only by our old green tables.

The walls were adorned by clever caricatures of members done by the Duncombes (Winifred Eva and Duncan). President Richard saw himself sitting in a pond with mouth wide open. Our worthy editor was pictured with a large block of ice tied on her head, typewriter in front of her and enormous waste-paper-basket alongside. Doreen Helmrich was seen canoeing to Vienna. The Moppetts as befits newly-weds, shared one caricature. The prize for guessing all the members represented was won by Yvonne Rolfe.

Mary Stoddart was the winner of the large Xmas Stocking.

Dick Schofield and his lame foot managed to make plenty of noise, with the support of the two Joans, Bill Mullins and all the others in the corner by the map table. Arthur Brophy showed what a mouth-organ can do when handled gently. Peter Page helped with community singing. Hilda Stoddart lead the choristers in carols.

New Talent was found in New Member Laurie Rayner, who, twisting his eyes, mouth and tongue until he looked like a frog, gave a most realistic representation of a banjo solo. It was marvellous.

Dancing was enjoyed in spite of the heat and it was altogether a very happy party.

MEMORY CORNER

Here is Taro's version of the Mount Mouin episode, which we promised you last month we would republish from our August, 1932, issue.

THE GENTLE ART OF GETTING MISLAID.

In view of some recent happenings - which actually inspired some pages of song or songs of Page - a few words may be acceptable.

Getting mislaid for a minute or two, or an hour or two is just so-so, but to slip and be out all night is quite another matter.

Think of the countless S.B.W. walks and the very small percentage of involuntary pioneering trips thereof. Something is certainly wrong - to get mislaid should be everyone's experience, - makes one shudder to think of the horde of S.B.Ws. who have never failed to run to programme! What will the poor blighters do when someone slips?

Well - here's how ----- Properties required, some bush, more the better, some tracks, fewer the better, one plain old anyhow sort of a gum tree blazed both sides, this being where you swing sharp right, or is it left? This tree looks just the same as the other million odd or so, until you bump right into it and read the blazes. Of course if you don't hit this tree, there's nothing to stop you turning sharp right or left at any other old tree, provided you pick the right company and the right night - it really doesn't matter.

The party under review - four girls and four blokes - lunched in the good old bush at the foot of Mt.Mouin, then hiding packs in the scrub, set out for a two-hour ramble round Mouin. One obstinate 'og refused to leave his pack, said it was agin his religion.

One hour passed and turn-about time came. The party split into two lots, 3 blokes to further explore, four girls and bloke leader to return via the blazed tree and the packs, leaving a mark at both spots, just to show O.K. Last words of the three blokes to the bloke leader being - "hug Mt.Mouin and you can't go wrong."

Off the five toddled and smartly too, as it was getting on in the day. The leader being an experienced hugger, hugged that cow of a mountain till it was absolutely moonin, he got too high up on the slope and thus missed the blooming old double blazed gummy. (First step in that great drama - "the perfect night"). Naturally the packs were also missed and not marked.

The obvious point to march on - Clear Hill - was quite blotted out by thick trees and tall. The whole aspect was unfamiliar and after a halt and

much hurried scouting for a glimpse of Clear Hill, things seemed to come to a dead end. Even had the right track been found, it meant much night walking including the risky climb up Clear Hill with one torch for five. This alone shows the spooks know their business.

It was then 4.30 with night coming fast, so the leader declared they must be prepared to stay out all night. The prospect was not cheerful - a frosty night coming - no tents - groundsheets or coats - all in shorts - a little tucker in the pack that was not left, and divil a cave in sight. The girls were trumps - not a scrap of concern at the prospect.

A big fallen tree was the first requisite; in five minutes a beauty was found. The girls worked like navvies and dragged in quite a ton of wood of every size and sootiness. They next tackled the trees and brought in a huge mass of boughs which were used to make a semicircular wall closely packed four feet high, and considering they had no putty it was a pretty fair breakwind. A fire was started (gorbless all matchmakers), the leader fished out two square billies from the pack that wasn't and set out on a water hunt. Down in the bed of a dry creek about half a mile away, a pint or two was found in a rock saucer - just a puddle brown with debris - but wet, cold and precious. Carefully scooped with a panakin, it filled the billies and so to home again. Approaching camp a very fine picture was revealed - just dark, the fireglow playing on the big trees while the four lasses were shown bringing in the sheaves. Baths and washing being off, tea was made and declared by all to be perfection, a flavor undreamed of, probably 'twas plus the essence of bark and leaf of everything in the clean old bush. Out of the pack that wasn't came milk! sugar! ! coffee biscuits! ! ! The ration ran to two each and a mug of tea each in turn. Strangely, it seemed quite enough. Washing up was turned down. Then, neat headers out of the nippy wind and into the fresh and fragrant gumleaves.

It wss then 6 o'clock, with 12 hours of black night to cheat. Were they downhearted? NO ! ! Much fun was made about the situation and some misgiving crept out lest they be soon found and torn from their cosy nest to be marched back home. Some coo-eeing was heard and answered; it seemed possible that the three blokes of the other party may have got astray in the dark; much pity for their condition found vent. Poor whaps - lost in the bush - no cover - no packs no tucker - their situation seemed desperate, and the soprani went hoarse in the effort to help the poor blighters.

However, nothing came of it, and after dancing stars had played torches with the party, they gave up and settled back into their nests again. They sang, yarned, played games, laughed, dozed, burnt, shivered and chuckled. The biting westerly died down and then came a rapturous silence, heavy and thick with a pile like carpet, broken only by the quiet crackling of the fire and the many solo and massed coo-ees produced entirely on principle.

Not a bird, insect or wild thing broke the silence. All manner of leafy arrangements were tried - at times the girls were completely buried - just bright faces peeping out like Cosmos in a tangle, a truly wonderful sight for the stoker as he played the torch on them.

Then another spasm of fun. Off went the bedclothes and eucadowns and then came a wonderful imaginative pantomimic supper. Such careful concocting and cooking by the firelight; after that the eating, even serviettes and finger-bowls being supplied by Imagination un-Ltd. 20-course meals were as cheap as bread and butter, and so the hours stole by.

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Midnight - The quiet purr of the fire regularly fed, quite safe and sizable. The stars - vivid tiaras gleaming through lacework of leaves. Four little sleepy birds curled in the nest. The old father bird standing guard over them - taking in many impressions - some here expressed and some too delightfully vague to translate into mere words, yet as such, will outlast words. The stoker found time slip easily by, every aspect charmed and any troubles of the morrow were just pushed out of the picture.

Dawn never fails. This time the party met it. No one bothered about a shower - a show of hands looked like a coon's congress. Again the trip down creek and again the nectar of the bush. Breakfast was a swanky feed - one slice of bread with butter, jam or cheese from the bottomless pack that wasn't, tipped off with chocolate from some birdie's feathery pocket.

It had proved a wonderful and memorable night. Had it rained or fogged quite another story would have been written. As it was, a vote of thanks from the party to the blazed tree for so carefully hiding itself behind a bigger one.

A perfect day was now on its way, safing the fire, the obvious move was to climb Mouin until Clear Hill could be seen - then quick march.

It was not without regret the party left its nest, still, the rescue of the rescue party demanded all their attention, so up the Mount they moved. Just then a hail sounded quite close. Sure enough, just a few hundred yards away were the worried and tired rescuers, who took the party back to their depot - not more than ten minutes away from their nest. (What a narrow squeak).

The lads had the cheek to offer a second breakfast to the party of mislaidens, and they had the cheeks to hold it, which they did, begob. Their clatter had certainly interfered with the repose of the mislaidens, still, they meant well. The tale of their night out must be told from another angle and another pen.

And so all ended O.K. If there is any moral in it, it is that, no matter how far out into the bush one may go, one cannot shake off neighbours.

Says Taro,

Duke of Clear Hill.

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ALSO MISLAID.....

LOST - By Jean West at Club Xmas Party, one Pair Black Gloves.....
FOUND - By Jean West at Club Xmas Party, one Pair Black Gloves, one size too small. Jean will be very pleased to exchange the latter for the former.