

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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ONE MORNING THE WORLD WOKE UP

One morning the world woke up and there was no news;  
No gun was shelling the great eardrum of the air.  
No Christian flesh spurted beneath the saboteur's crews,  
No moaning came from the many agony-faced Jews,  
Only the trees in a gauze of wind trembled and were fair

No trucks climbed into the groove of an endless road,  
No tanks were swaying drunken with death at the hilltop.  
No bombs were planting their bushes of blood and mud.  
And the aimless tides of unfortunates no longer flowed:  
A break in the action at last,..all had come to a stop.

Those trees danced, in their delicate selves half furred  
And a new time on the glittering atmosphere was seen;  
The lightning stuttering on the closed eyelid of the world  
Was gone, and an age of horizons had dawned, soft, pearled.  
The world woke up to a scene like spring's first green.

Birds chirped in waterfalls of little sounds for hours  
And the sky was one vast moonstone of the tenderest blues,  
Rainbows, in miniature nuggets, were stored in the dews  
And the meadows lay carpeted in three heights of flowers;  
One morning the world woke up and there was no news.

From the "MEANJIN PAPER".

KIOLOA STATE FOREST

by Alex Colley

For the best part of three months the air had been grey with dust and smoke and the bush was parched and burnt. So we decided to spend our Christmas break in the coast at the foot of the Murramarang Range, north of Bateman's Bay. The sea at least would be unpolluted by man.

Our party was met at Cockwee Creek by a Forestry truck and driven through the forest to the sea. Arrived at Pebbly Beach, our camp site, we found that a tank of fresh water had been taken down for us, but unfortunately it had developed a leak and most of the water had gone. However next day the truck arrived with another tank and afterwards took those who were in camp at the time for a trip through a large area of the forest. Used, like all Bush-walkers, to fending ourselves, we were very grateful to be treated as welcome guests. At first we thought there must be some mistake as to our identity, but Mr. Richards, who is in charge of the Bateman's Bay forest area, supplied the answer. The Forestry Commission, he said considered that its function was not only to grow trees, but to help people to appreciate and enjoy the forest areas.

On the fourth day, after a walk along the top of the scenic Murramarang Range and through miles of beautiful spotted gum forest, we met Mr. Richards, who took us with him to a fire observation post. Here we watched with interest while forestry officers, with map spread out before them, took bearings on two fires about 10 miles distant. By telephone they received bearings taken from another station and plotted the location of the fires. Soon they would be on their way to these fires in a truck and there might be no sleep for them that night.

Next morning Mr. Richards met us again to take us round part of the forest. All the party except myself climbed on to a forestry truck with our packs. Mr. Richards followed behind in a car and I, by a stroke of luck (for me) was with him. Unfortunately the truck driver didn't follow his instructions with the result that we became separated. After spending some time looking for the others Mr. Richards took me to see some of the good timber and also some of the fire damaged country. The worst damage was done by a fire which had started on a hot day on the western edge of the forest. There was a westerly wind blowing that day and the fire had started in seven different places. It had covered 760 acres before it was extinguished. In the worst areas, on ridge tops, the trunks were fiery red and the leaves dead. Most of the trees would recover, but not without deterioration through the formation of gum veins. Many had been damaged at the base. Here dead wood would form so that the next fire would eat further into the base of the tree. Given one or two more fires these trees would be killed. The young seedlings and small saplings up to about three years old had been killed. This would mean three years loss in forest regeneration. In monetary terms three years loss of productivity while overhead expenditure continued, would be considerable. Most of the fires in the district started on privately owned land, but a few started inside the forest. On one bad day 53 fires had been reported. A large number of outbreaks always occurred in hot westerly weather. The fire control service extended over about 80,000 acres. Though the forest area was much larger than this existing men and equipment made it impossible to control fires effectively over a larger area. A proper fire control organisation required road access to

within a quarter of a mile of all parts. Given trucks, men and equipment fires could then be kept under control. The cost of installing such a system was about 15/- an acre. Fires at normal frequency, without control, would probably destroy the good timber in about 80 years.

On the way back to Nowra we passed through mile after mile of fire-blighted timber country. Some was still smoking, some black and bare. Where there had not been a recent burn half-eaten trunks, dead trees and tangled scrub showed the results of previous fires.

Public opinion usually attributes fires to carelessness or accident. No doubt this is often the reason, but few realise that they are very often lit because they pay in the short run. An area of bushland won't usually carry many cattle. If it is burnt over there is a small growth of green grass and shrubs - enough feed for a few head of cattle - and cattle are worth money - quick money. So long as land is privately owned and there is no means of preventing the owner from burning off; so long as people retain their habits of smoking and tea drinking in this inflammable land, there will be fires as often as the bush will burn. This is usually once every five years. If this sounds exaggerated, see if you can think of any walk you can do through country that has not been burnt out in the last five years. Even if you go far beyond the range of roads and picknickers and settlement you will find the bush has been burnt where it has been thick enough and dry enough to burn.

As people are not likely to modify their thermal habits for a long time we must expect fires to sweep through the bush every time it is hot and dry. It is likely to become hotter and drier and more windy as erosion goes on. What use is it then to have "recreational areas" reserved if they will inevitably be burnt out every five years? (like Morella Karong and National Park). From the Bushwalker's point of view it would be much better to have every reserve put under the control of the Forestry Commission. Some trees would be cut, but many good ones would remain. The Bateman's Bay State Forest is a much pleasanter place for a walk than almost any of our fire-blighted reserves. But we can do a lot better than walk through timber producing forests if the Commission has its way, because it is fully aware of the recreational value of forests. In the pamphlet "The Conservation Imperative" issued under the name of Mr. Swain, N.S.W. Commissioner for Forests, it is stated that there are "areas of scenic content, which in the scheme of things, will be patterned and managed as such; leaving primitive things primitive, for the enjoyment of those many who seek relief from occupational stresses by 'walking in exalted woods of naked glory, in the green and gold of forest sunshine'...." There are large areas of rough bushland - most of our favourite walking country - where the stands of timber are too small and isolated to be marketable. These are catchment areas which must be retained and increased if our rivers are to flow other than in fitful floods and yellow "freshes". We may hope that sometime these areas will be protected by the Forestry fire control service and that we will be able to enjoy some unblackened, primitive bush.

In the meantime, if anyone wants a holiday on an almost unspoilt coast, where tall spotted gum forests reach down to golden sands and rocky headlands and where there are plenty of colourful rock pools and inlets for swimming, I recommend Pebbly Beach. And what is more they will see some forest where there has been no fire for 18 years.

BELL TO KURRAJONG IN SPRINGTIME

Roy Davies and I arrived at Bell late on Friday night, the 29th September to start on a walk to Kurrajong. We had a short talk with the Station Master, who became quite friendly when we gave him the afternoon newspaper and advised us to walk by way of Mt. Wilson because of the beautiful scenery on that route.

We camped only about 250 yds. from the Station in a clearing well sheltered by trees and very warm. We easily obtained water from a tank on the railway line.

Next day we were overjoyed to see a clear blue sky after the dull overcast one of the night before. We started out early and soon covered the  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile to the main Kurrajong Road. Soon after, from the road, I noticed how pretty Mt. Victoria was, with a thick cloudbank behind and blue sky above. Wattle was scarce along the road but occasional patches gleamed gold in the sunlight and to the left a mountain covered with great rocky knobs reminded me of the gnarled fist of an old workman. It cast dark shadows on the bright slopes beneath.

About  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the Station we came across Holly Lodge Farm Guest House whose proprietor, C. Davey, has picked a location with a view of immense red cliffs about five miles away. This Guest House would be an excellent place for a quiet holiday.

On our way to the Mt. Wilson turn-off which is about 4 or 5 miles from Mt. Wilson, we were continually struck by views of cliffs mostly of a deep red colour.

From the base of Mt. Wilson, where there is a sign-post indicating that large areas of the Mountain are reserved, we started a very stiff climb which was to be well rewarded by the rich sub-tropical scenery on all sides. The soil is of an extremely rich volcanic nature, in sharp contrast to the poorer quality soil lower down, and the sudden change in the type of flora which comes as a consequence is amazing. Tall green ferns abound and gum trees grow to a great height.

Getting to the top of Mt. Wilson we were surprised to find farms and orchards, mostly owned by English people who have succeeded in creating a very English atmosphere by planting English trees around their homes, some of which reminded me of pictures I had seen of Elizabethan architecture. Other homes have embattlemented walls around them reminiscent of ancient castles.

On the top of Mt. Wilson a most beautiful contrast is provided everywhere by Old World scenery against an Australian background of tall gums and rolling hills and valleys. Australian wild flowers are scarce because of the rich volcanic nature of the soil.

After passing a Church built in typical English style, we stopped and spoke to a man working in his flower garden, who turned out to be a missionary who had brought fifteen aboriginal boys down from the Darwin area to the safety of Mt. Wilson. He had divided the boys into three groups according to age and sent them off to play. Later on, walking along the road, we came across the youngest group, going our way, and they turned out to be very well-mannered young lads. One of them asked if we were walking to Sydney! He must have heard of the Sydney Bushwalkers Club!

These boys showed us a path through the bush about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile long, which cut off a fair length of the road and we had no regrets about taking it because stopping off the road on to this path was a delightful change. Tall dark green ferns were joined into a mass of foliage by endless creepers and smaller ferns and the tall gum trees standing over them cast a perpetual twilight on the jungle below.

When we reached the road again this jungle scenery ended unfortunately, and we found ourselves very close to the bottom of Mt. Wilson and soon in sandstone country once more. However, we were compensated by the sight of three perfectly formed Waratahs on the one bush, and many other wild flowers including Black-eyed Susans and Native Fuchsias.

A little later we had an excellent view of Mt. Tomah, Mt. Hay and Mt. King George and beside the other, with smaller mountains rolling up towards them. We continued along the road from Mt. Wilson towards Mt. Irvine, through country which constantly varied from volcanic to sandstone and back again. Near Mt. Irvine we passed great formations of sandstone which stood out starkly against the surrounding bush.

It was now late afternoon on the Saturday, so we searched around for a camping-site and found an excellent one on the left hand side of the road very close to the turn-off around Mt. Irvine. There was no water handy, but we had carried some from a spring a short distance back, so we had no worries about that. We had had a hard time during the day carrying fresh food, but now we congratulated ourselves on having done so and that night and next morning had a royal feast. I forget how long we slept!

Next morning we strolled two miles along the way round Mt. Irvine and were rewarded by a particularly lovely wide view of the mountains down on the east side. The farms on the west side of the road were bordered with a pretty display of red, white and yellow garden flowers which contrasted with the neatly planned orchards behind them. There is a Post Office on Mt. Irvine.

Going down from Mt. Irvine we passed through typical sandstone country with an abundance of wild flowers, but the view was blocked by ridges on either side until the land fell away on the north revealing a deep valley about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile wide whose opposite ridge, rising about 200 ft. above us, cast a dark shadow on one side of the valley, while the side nearer to us was lit up with bright yellow sunlight.

We were now approaching one of the most beautiful places on the whole trip - the deep gorge through which Bowen's Creek flows. The road is soft and good to walk on here and winds round down into the gorge and up and out of it on the other side. There are enormous sandstone cliffs on either side of the gorge, towering above the creek which twists and turns into the distance in both directions. Anybody who has not been to Bowen's Creek should make a point of getting there, if only to see the immense cliffs.

Wild flowers were plentiful in the valley, including Honey Flowers, Native Fuchsias and Waratahs.

There is a wooden bridge over Bowen's Creek, and, nearby, a public camping ground where we stopped to have lunch because we could find no other even comparatively clear area, the country being so rugged. We bathed in one of the excellent pools in the Creek, but did not take long over washing because the water was icy cold. Roy and I had to summon up our courage in

order to duck right under the water!

We then began the climb up the winding road out of the valley which was hard going, but worth while because of the wonderful views of the cliffs and valleys and the abundance of wildflowers everywhere.

We eventually left Bowen's Creek behind and proceeded towards Bilpin where we again found an excellent, warm camping site amongst trees, just off the main highway on a track which leads to the Mountain Lagoon, 9 miles away. We watched a colourful sunset through the trees while our food was cooking over the camp fire.

Next morning we arose to make the most of the last day of our holidays, and set out for Kurrajong. Were we pleased to find that most of the way was, at first anyway, down hill! The ridge follows a very long ridge on the way to Kurrajong Heights, and there is quite a lot of delightful scenery on either side. There are neatly planned orchards here and there along the road, and occasional views of mountains and valleys, and we saw many vivid displays of yellow and purple wild flowers.

On most of the way from Bilpin we had been walking on a very easy down grade, not so steep to be unpleasant, but approaching Kurrajong Heights we suddenly found ourselves on a very steep climb. The view from both sides of Kurrajong Heights is simply beautiful. From the western side one can see a striking view of the mountains, while the view from the east is, for one who has not seen it before, simply breathtaking. We were walking from the direction of the mountains and had become used to mountain views, then suddenly, we swung around a hill, and there was a magnificent view of the plains stretching towards Sydney, with little farms showing up everywhere as green, brown and grey patches. I was told that on a clear day you can see as far as Sydney Harbour Bridge from the Heights, and didn't doubt it.

We climbed to the top of Kurrajong Heights, which is called Panorama Point, where the wind was blowing very strong and cold from the plains below. At Panorama Point we had our last meal before going home amongst some trees away from the wind, and then walked down to a flower garden which had attracted our attention on the way up. The owners of this garden devote their time to growing flowers which are native to cold countries. There were plenty of beautiful red rhododendrons and a big display of a flower which is found at 7,000 ft. in the Himalayas. We bought some flowers, in order to ensure our welcome at home, and then walked down to the station at Kurrajong where we caught the train with plenty of time to spare.

On our way back to Sydney in the train Roy and I were lost in reflection for some time over the beautiful places we had been to, including Mt. Wilson, Bowen's Creek and Kurrajong Heights as well as many other places which will stay in our memories for a long time to come.

HAVE YOU HEARD ?

Friday 2nd February and into the Club strides Tuggie pulling on her gloves and looking as though she is about to open a fete, followed by Dorothy Lawry looking just as purposeful. Stopped them and asked why they looked this way. They had just been to the wedding of Gordon Edgecombe and Jean Hay at St. Stephens Church, City, and had people to see in the club before they went on to reception at History House.

Bushwalkers seem to be holding their own in the birthrate and population problem, for there are two births to announce this month. Bert and Evelyn Whillier have a son and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Cramp have now a second child, a daughter. We congratulate both couples.

. . . . .

Early this month some members, and two prospectives, enjoyed a very full and memorable week-end. Even the "old and bold" did not find it too strenuous being on two official trips at the same time, and merely expressed added pleasure when two members of the party chose suppertime to announce their engagement. To the "young and virile" it may have been just another engagement between club members; to the "old and bold" it was far more than that. They remembered Wal Roots as Club Secretary, President, Federation President and one of the hardest working of bushwalkers. All bushwalkers will join in congratulating Wal. Roots and Miriam Lennox. (You should taste a meal prepared by a dietitian!

The week end party then returned home in time to hear another S.B.W. - Edgar Yardley - starring in the Lux Radio Play, Congratulations to you, too, Edgar.

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LETTERS FROM THE LADS AND LASSES

Letters were received during January from:-

F. R. Beaver	Doug McKellar
K.J. Taylor	Jean Ray
Dick Smith	Jack Adams
Ron Galley	George Archer (P.O.W.)
Peter Allen	Bill Burke
Gordon Mannell.	

Gordon Mannell - 15-11-44 - England. Firstly I would like to place on record my sincere thanks for the Club mags. Walkabout and sweets which have reached me recently from the Services Committee, you can be sure they are greatly appreciated. The scenes in the Walkabout brought back many pleasant memories of by gone days for Stanwell Park, a typical snap of which was shown taken from Bald Hill was one of my "happy hunting grounds". A short while ago I, together with the rest of the crew, spent a very pleasant four days in Northern Ireland. I would have liked to have seen something of Eire, but well, restrictions are restrictions. Last week we had our first fall of snow for the season. I expect a fore-runner of much heavier falls to come. The weather this past fortnight has been rather unsuitable for our job, however we have managed to get in a few decent trips over the other side. Cologne, Dulleldorf and Gilsenkirchen being some of the German cities visited. I received a very pleasant surprise in the form of a letter from our mutual friend Joe Turner a short while ago. Well Dunc, I am afraid that is all for the moment. Please convey my kindest regards to all members.

Rob Morrison - 5-12-44. It's quite a while since I last wrote to you and since that time I have been home on leave from the Territory and as my address will show, I have been posted to another unit and this time much nearer to home. But this stay of mine here in civilisation again will be only short and next time I write I shall have another address and that many, many more miles north of Sydney. However if you send any mail to the address shown here it will be re-directed quite safely to wherever I may then be.

I didn't get round to any walking during my month's leave but I did look up a few of the old cronies and perhaps Paddy or Paul Barnes of the S.B.W. have told some of you that I had been down from the Never-never.

Life is easy enough here for a change, with an excellent mess, both in quality and quantity of "vittles", the atmosphere and "blokes" therein and the camp itself is as comfortable as any I have seen, or lived in. We are domiciled in 4-man huts so am quite O.K. in all respects at present. It took a while to get used to the army and my job therein, after a break of about 2 months from it but I am happy about all that again and "rarin" to get on with the little part I can play in finishing this business so that we can all get on with our "lives and chosen work" again just as soon as possible. I hear that Hilary Jackson has been discharged from the Army. Well he's done his bit all right and I guess he appreciates the break from his long years of good service. It's almost a year since news of George Loder's last unhappy mission became known to us so I guess we can't hope for anything but a miracle to give us good tidings of that stoutest of "stout fellas".





### BACKYARD BUSHWALKING.

Things have been busy in the bush garden. In December we made a record collection of seeds just ripened from the springtime bush flower festival. Immediate plantings were made (scalding any seeds which were hard and seemed to need it) and now we have a crop of sturdy seedlings including a few woody pear plants which are laboriously struggling to lift their extra large seed leaves from the reluctant soil.

About two dozen Species have germinated and seem to flourish but like the lost sheep of the parable the absentees get most mention. So far we have had no success with any of the five corners (*styphecia*) boronias or eriostemons. Neither has there been any sign of life from the fine-leaved geebung (*persoonia pinifolia*), but we were informed on good authority that it takes 8 or 9 months for the latter to germinate. So here's hoping.

On a recent visit to the West Head Peninsula, ground which seemed absolutely and utterly burned 2 years ago is now densely clothed with a dense growth of shrubs. All the eriostemon lanceolatus was destroyed but now the lettuce green seedlings are up and about 12 inches high. There should be a lovely show of flowers next spring.

Another ground orchid has come to live at our place. A purple spotted fellow (*dipodium punctata*). It is now developing seed, but I have been warned off attempting to raise orchids from seed by fantastic (though apparently true) stories of the necessity for the seed to be placed in a culture of certain bacteria and even then it appears to be several years before one is rewarded with a recognisable plant.

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Paddy hopes to have some tents available on Saturday 24th February and steel frame rucksacks on Saturday 17th March.

'Phone B.3101.

Paddy Pallin

327 George Street,

SYDNEY

CAMP GEAR FOR WALKERS.