

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A Monthly Bulletin devoted to matters of interest to The
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CONTENTS

				Page
Gordon	1
"Twenty Miles"	M. Bacon	3
Rockclimbing in the Rain	Paul Barnes	4
Night Must Fall	...	...	Prolix	6
Night Vigil	...	...	Ron Knightley	7
A Home, Sweet Home	...	...	Bill Mullins	9
Smile, Damn you, Smile	...	...	Les Harper	10
Goodmans Advertisement	...	...	...	11
News from the Boys	...	...	Geoff Parker & Rob Morrison	11
Wotcherthink?	...	...	...	13
Mr. F. Pallin Speaking	...	...	...	14

GORDON SMITH

After months of uncertainty the news that we feared has come through. Gordon died in Borneo in March this year. Many of those near him felt, perhaps, that he would not come back. We knew that he would be in the forefront in the face of danger and oppression.

Gordon would have hated a eulogy, so we shall give only a simple description of him as he was known to his Clubmates.

He started walking as a track walker in the N.S.W. Walking Club which he joined in 1921. In 1922 he won the first of his many long distance championships. Before he enlisted he held nearly all the Australian long-distance records, including the 12 hour record (66 miles) and the 50 mile record (8 hrs. 52min) and the 24 hour record (114 miles). He was a foundation member of the S.B.W., though even before this he had done some long road and bush walks. In 1929 he met Max Gentle on the mountains train and decided to go with him to attempt a traverse of the Gangerang. They were the first walkers to do this now popular trip and the pass from Kanangra Tops to the Gangerang is named after Gordon. In February 1931 these two were the first walkers to do the Colo, probably the roughest river in Australia.

It was not till 1937 that the so-called "Tigers" came into being, their first trip being Wentworth Falls-Cloudmaker-Katoomba on Anzac week-end.

Their numbers grew and varied till a large number of club members had been on a "Tiger" walk on some occasion . In the next three years many new and sometimes dangerous routes were pioneered.

Gordon would have been the last to claim leadership of these walks. Often they were somebody else's idea. But by the time the trip started he had probably arranged the food list, found out all there was to know about the country and accurately estimated distances and walking times. In his own words (describing the "Tigers" in the Bushwalker of April 1939) "Not for them the rules and regulations or even leaders. Decisions were made in accordance with communal desire and as a result their trips in the face of almost any obstacle were inevitably successful..." This was one of the features of his trips. Everyone had a say. If we did what Gordon suggested it was because we knew his suggestion was based on knowledge and experience. And it was a fine example of how democracy should work. After such thorough discussion the party seldom took a wrong route, and only once (on their first walk) did they miss the last train home.

The walks were hard and many of those included were very ordinary walkers. They did walks which, for themselves, they would have considered impossible. In the tough spots Gordon was there to help - he was usually near the back of a big party. Just a few quiet words of good humoured encouragement and the "rabbits" forgot they were worn out. Someone once said that the walks were "killers", to which Jack Debert replied that the only one Gordon was likely to kill was himself because of the weights he carried - usually enough to enable several of the weaker ones to get through with light packs. Yes, they were hard walks, but how we enjoyed them!

And now he has gone. To those who knew him the contrast between his great strength and his quiet good humour will remain a vivid and cherished memory. To those who came after and the club members of the future he will be a legend.

Perhaps we may hope that some time an area of the country he so loved - a great expanse of mountains, a scene of wild and rugged beauty - will be dedicated to him.

To our clubmate, May Smith and his son Bruce, we extend our deepest sympathy.

"TWENTY MILES"

By M. Bacon

3.

Somewhere in the New England States of the USA is a stretch of railroad line, probably like hundreds of miles in the same area. It runs through long, softly curving, thickly wooded hills, a pile of cumulus clouds beyond, on the foothills open flats lush with fodder. These green flats will be washed with yellow or gold. Yellow from the tall branching buttercups, gold from the "paintbrush". The latter is like a dandelion on a tall thin stalk in yellow or orange-red. In the more moist spots, where the fragile iris seems to float over pale green sword-like leaves, is a pool of Blue. It has been a wet spring and so the iris is much better this year than usual.

The hills give way to lower ground and fields, with shasta daisies thickly starring the pasture. Now comes a lake about 200 yards long with the whole of its edge an irregular border of glorious blue iris and behind this the green grass thickly peopled with yellow buttercups. Three wild ducks swing straight in line and paddle quietly away. They seem just right. Then the outlet of the lake slides over a weir and down and away to beyond.

Maple trees are in full green leaf. The same trees seen in the autumn with such glorious crimson and red colouring. The Virginia creeper still in festoons, but no longer scarlet is now cool green. Upright willows, elms and beech line the wandering river. Carpets of green ferns and dappled sunlight are under the trees.

Now comes a small town with white wooden homes, each with an elegant white porch in colonial style, the lawn of one merging with the lawn of the next. Clumps of huge peony roses, in crimson, rose, white or palest pink spring straight from the grass.

We stop at a station. White clover, white shasta daisies and tiny pink and mauve ones carried on two-foot high stalks, all grow among the red clover, with soft grass plumes waving above them all. The buttercups and "paintbrushes" can barely fit into the spaces left.

The grass gets greener and a quick look out of the opposite window shows the line is skirting a lake. The far, tree-fringed shore is a layer of faintly stirring pastel greens, and now there is another field of blue iris and yellow buttercups - many thousands of blooms to the acre.

A soft clear pink dog rose has appeared and a new blue flower like lupin pikes two feet high, grows in thick clumps.

The charm of the countryside is the rich greenness which is yet full of subtle changing colour as the minor flowers become visible. Everything seems to flourish and to really enjoy growing.

At fancy being a train-line and being able to enjoy this always!!

IN VIEW of post-war conditions, will all those people who usually present the Editor Christmas time with bottles of port, dressed turkeys, bags of oysters, premature Spring tions, large pieces of brown paper and the latest in lexicons kindly say it with CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MAGAZINE?

ROCKCLIMBING IN THE RAIN

Paul Barnes

(The author would be glad to learn whether the descent described has been accomplished before, also whether the point mentioned has ever been named).

It was early in 1944 when we stood on the Hogsback Ridge, Narrow Neck, and looked south-east at the long point or headland jutting out into the valley of Cedar Creek. You may know this as the point which is immediately opposite Mount Solitary. We decided then that descent down it looked feasible, and that became our objective for 6-hour Weekend, 1945.

Our party started out bright and early on Friday night with a taxi to the Explorers' Tree, whence, after some blundering on the numerous tracks which criss-cross the area, a dry camp was made on the extreme summit of Pulpit Hill. This proved not as cold as expected, in spite of its 3,450 feet.

Few people, as yet, seem to know of the way down off the Pulpit Hill, a neat piece of rockclimbing which has been rendered easier for amateurs by the insertion of iron spikes in crucial places. (Incidentally, who put the spikes there?). This descent was accomplished as an appetiser by our party before breakfast on Saturday morning.

Breakfast was a satisfying meal on Back Creek, and there followed a quiet day's walking via Megalong Creek and much rockhopping to a good camp spot a mile or so down the Cox.

Next day's programme comprised a sweltering walk up Six Foot Track and cross country to Mitchell's Creek, a very grim lunch washed down by four mugs of a vicious brew of 50:50 tea-coffee in stagnant water, then a cold, wet, and slippery ascent of Black Billy's Head in steady rain.

It was during one of these convenient rests, dignified by the pretext of admiring the view, that a small porcupine waddled along, and, quite unconcerned, would have waddled off again, had he not been stroked with a stick, when he began, with more enthusiasm than success, to dig himself in the rocky slopes of "Billy's".

Once the top of the Head was reached we took a course through "Fools Paradise" to an early camp above the swamp, which later becomes the head of Mitchell's Creek. On account of the drizzling rain, and our "big day" ahead on the morrow, no time was lost in retiring for the night.

You all know, of course, the spot to leave the Narrow Neck main track in order to go down Carlons Head. The same spot will serve as a turnoff point to go down "our" head, and about half an hour's walk along the ridge in an easterly direction leads straight to the top. Our equipment for the descent consisted of 70 ft. of $1\frac{3}{4}$ " and 90 ft. of $\frac{3}{4}$ " manila rope. The lighter rope was doubled, and the bight in its centre was fastened to the heavier rope, giving a length of 115 ft. This length, when doubled round a tree, enabled a descent of 50 ft. sheer, without the need for an Indian-rope-trickster to return to the top and undo knots. In addition we had a pair of heavy drill overalls to take the friction of the "rapelling", which is somewhat severe on shorts-

clad legs.

The actual descent of "Paul's Point" was made in three stages, and a mild hailstorm had, fittingly enough, just passed over as we commenced. First was a 30ft. drop, done "en rappel" with suitable lowering of packs on rope end. Next a 20 ft. portion with a slight, favourable incline, which could be done by "straight" rockclimbing technique without a rope. Lastly, a 50 ft. sheer drop, done "en rappel", brought our four triumphant members to the top of the talus.

To reach Cedar Creek now entailed merely rockhopping, reminiscent of Karrowal Knife-edge, plus steep 50 degree slopes, somewhat like the foot of Black Jerry's Ridge. Soon Cedar Creek was crossed at the well-known cave, the steep pinch to the Ruined Castle saddle was surmounted, and track followed to the coalmine.

Were we satisfied with our efforts yet? Well, almost, but not quite. Just to finish off our climbing weekend, it was decided to climb out to the top via the Scenic Railway track and tunnel, a rise of some 1300 feet in 800 ft. We emerged, looking more like coalminers than bushwalkers, and proceeded to Katoomba for a clean-up and a hearty meal.

- - - - -

W I N G S - J. E. McDougall

Never on earth
Shall we know any rest
Who has borne in the night
A wild bird in his breast

Ever he'll walk
With the shadowy things
While his ears hear no talk
For flutter of wings

Life shall go over
Like swans in the night
With a whisper of wonder
and something of fright.

Though he walks in still beauty
He nothing shall see
Till two coins on his eyes
Set the beating wings free.

We have no intention of telling those people not sufficiently to know already that the Club now meets regularly on Friday nights at the Ingersoll Hall right behind the Oxford Street Post Office.

NIGHT MUST FALL

By Prolix.

The indisputable truth of the title has often been the cause of much concern to most walkers and to others, with the result that a hasty decision has to be made as to where to camp for the night.

While well planned walks never suffer from such hasty decisions, I and, I am sorry to say, my walking companions find our trips occasionally far from being such models of efficiency.

I can recall several doubtful campspots thrust upon me in the fast dwindling twilight and one in particular which occurred high in the mountains in the New England Ranges.

Gordon and I were the actors in this drama. Typical of my most cherished form of walking, none of our camps broke up much before 10 a.m. This sin, so-called in walking circles, has much to commend it, though it frequently involves one in schedule difficulties in new country.

Under such circumstances we began the descent from Point Lookout down on to and along the nine mile ridge to Bellinger River which, according to advice, could easily be accomplished in one day. Accordingly we admired the views, took several photos but found ourselves still very far from the Bellinger by afternoon. Also our observations led us to the belief that we were off the track, as we found ourselves well below the top of the ridge and following an old well-defined track going downward along the side of the ridge. Suspicion grew as our calculations indicated we were only half way along and apparently descending to the jungle-covered upper Bellinger River - very nasty! Furthermore, gathering clouds carried out their designed purpose by wetting us and the jungle around.

Stinging trees are uncomfortable at the best of times, but with approaching dusk and an overgrown track things were anything but pleasant. What to do? No obvious camp site and no water!

Following a side track (there seemed to be several in this area) in darkness and despair, some kind guardian angel (Gordon's or mine) guided us to shelter. Our torches proved it to be a blacksmith's bark-roofed lean-to complete with forge, anvil-block and some other sundries. Our relief knew no bounds. The roof was reasonably rainproof, cooking facilities suitable but sleeping accommodation definitely at a minimum. Note that this structure was built over a track on the steep slope of the ridge! It was apparently connected with the old antimony mine.

I gathered some long grass from close by and softened the earth. Our bed thus made, we tossed for outside position (i.e. on the edge of the slope) and arranged ourselves, bagged and reasonably comfortable with the upright of a handrail between the forge, we two, and the open spaces. Thus was the night spent.

OUR COOKING NOTES.TO PASTE A FRI.

Take a Fri. (lamb if possible but mutton will do and is more plentiful) and corner in the Clubrooms. Suggest to Fri. that Thurs. is a better night for the Club meeting. Stand clear while atoms fly off. Allow to stew in own juice until soft or for one hundred years whichever is the less.

Serve it right.

NIGHT VIGIL

Ron Knightley.

"The floods rush high in the gully under
And lightnings lash at the shrinking trees....."

The floods rush high - folks, if you want excitement, just cast your eye down the "Leader" column of the Walks Programme until you reach the name of Lean Blumer - and that's the walk on which you'll get your thrills. For example, take our experience in Breakfast Creek Gorge on the night of a sweltering January day. The official walk it was, with Leon as the leader and Roy Davies, Doug, Johnstone and one, Bill Carter, as my companions.

After the evening meal and a quiet hour's yarning and smoking, we went to bed at the fall of dusk with intentions of rising at 4.30 and leaving at 6 a.m. Some time later, I half-woke from slumber to become conscious of rain pelting down and an altercation between Leon and Bill. They were flashing their torches around and discussing the possibility of the creek rising and flooding the little bank in the bed of the gorge.

"Oh, it'd take a cloud-burst on top to send this creek up, now," Bill argued.

"Well, I dunno", countered Leon, "this gorge is very restricted and we're only a couple of feet above the level of the creek-bed." Somehow, I favoured Bill for the sleeping bag was warm and I was drowsy. The flashing of torches on the gurgling creek continued; hypotheses waxed and waned and Leon complained, "I don't like that roar - listen to it!" I strained my half-conscious ears but the only sound was the pattering of the rain upon the trusty tent. Oh! go to sleep.

Then suddenly, "Look! Look!" cried Leon in alarm. "Look at it now". I sat bolt upright and beheld in the concentrated gleam of the two torches, not a tiny rivulet, but a rushing torrent twenty feet wide! The creek had risen five feet in its initial wave and its nearer edge actually lapped the beginnings of our little bank. All at once I was wide awake and wham! out of the sleeping bag in two seconds flat! Wild movement followed on all sides - sleeping bags, boots, spare clothes went helter-skelter into the packs in a frenzied rush to beat the rising flood! We jammed stuff in everywhere and then went dashing madly out in the rain, gathering utensils from various rocks. Shouts and splashes from the lower tent announced that Roy and Doug, were packing up in six inches of water! The tents came down with a whoosh and were jammed, mud and all, into their respective owners' packs.

We retreated to the base of the cliffs, ready for instant flight. Arched like a tribe of mountain goats upon the lower rocks, with the rain pelting our unprotected heads, we howled curses at the teeming elements and between them surveyed our precarious position. Before us was the grassy flat, with the flood creeping inexorably on; behind us were the precipitous walls of the gorge; we couldn't go upstream and we couldn't go down. As we watched the water crept higher and higher - ugh! our former tent floor was just a racing pool of mud.

The rain ceased. For an hour and half we marked the levels of the flood, inch by inch, upon a handy rock until at last, "Look, it's going down", someone observed. We soon decided, by consensus of opinion, to repitch the tents upon the drier portions of the bank and keep one man on watch all night against a recurrence of the flood.

So the fire was built again - Bill doing a "wacko" job despite the saturated wood - and we drew matches for the order of the watch. At 12.20 we snoozed once again, safe in the knowledge that Bill would warn us in time for any future flood. It later transpired that he turned his toes to the fire and slept!. At 1.30 he woke me and we sat quietly for a few minutes, sipping the very welcome cocoa he'd brewed from the flowing mud. Then after brief observations on the water and the news that the creek was still falling, I settled down to the hour's solitude. This, though looked forward to with some misgivings, proved to be not a time of irksome loneliness but one of those periods of peace which give a man time to analyse himself - lying by the glowing fire, calmly gazing into the flames, half-conscious of the rushing waters and the dim light flickering on the cliffs, with the calm, cool air and occasional appearance of the stars through the flying clouds, this was the setting for an hour of pensive muse.

Though the waters continued to go down about two inches in the hour, the current was still strong and there was still the occasional choom! rumble, rumble, boomp! thump! rumble, rumble of boulders bashing their way along the floor of the torrent.

Calm night, solitude and the warm fire, As I gazed, unseeing into the coals, there arose a vision of the barbaric savage crouched like me before his smoking fire; a fire which he worshipped but did not understand. Anything he did not understand he called a God and I wondered in that lonely hour if it was only the poor, unknowing savage who followed the same irrational course of reasoning. The Greeks, the Celts, the Vikings could not understand the sun, the moon, the thunder and the flood so they created a deity to each and every one of them to explain the workings of the world as acts of these Gods. One by one, man came to understand the secrets of the Universe and the ancestral divinities vanished in the fire of increasing knowledge. At last two final questions stood unanswered: the function of the Universe as a whole and the existence of intelligent beings in it. Following the reasoning that had been inherited down the ages, man conceived a God to create his Universe and explained the spectacle of life as an act of this one last God. And yet, was it in a God that the answer really lay? Through all the lonely hour's vigil the flood rushed on, beyond the power of man, even yet driven by something which we could not completely comprehend.

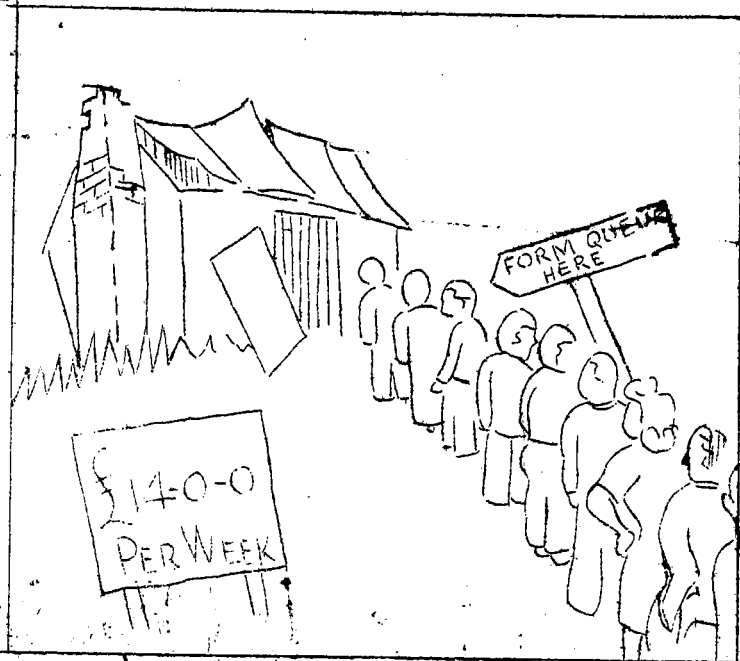
"The moving finger writes, and having writ
Moves on; nor all thy piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.

And that inverted bowl we call the sky,
Whereunder crawling, cooped, we live and die:
Lift not thy hands to it for help, for it
Rolls impotently on as thou or I."

The hour drew to a close. No, it was useless casting one's eyes to the heavens for an answer - here in the rocks and trees around us life began and they were our only comfort.

Leon joined me at the fire and after a round of cocoa resumed the vigil I had left.

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you are unable to restrain
yourself
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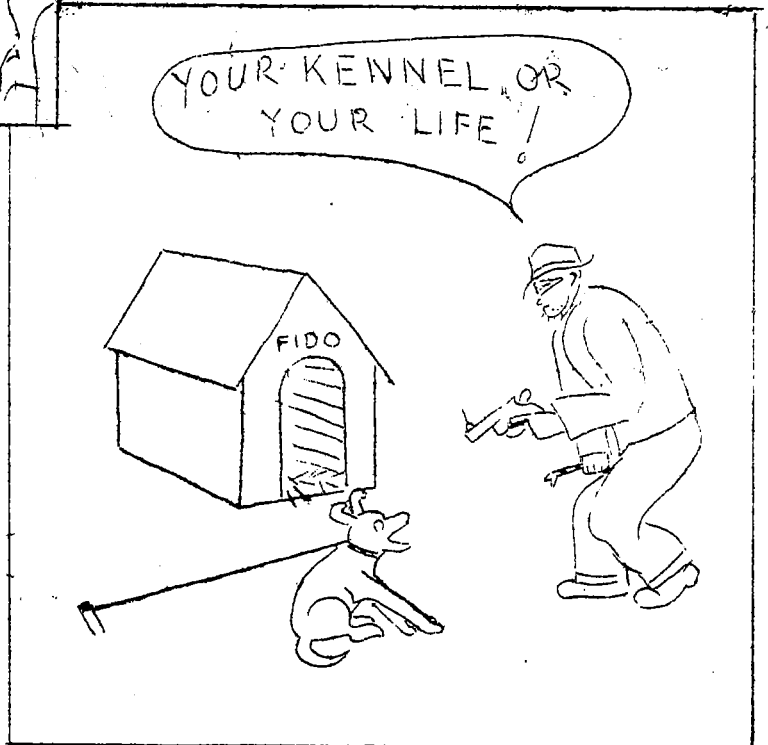
BILL MULLINS is HUNGRY -

VERY HUNGRY.

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that
is
for
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Perhaps YOU did last week, or even
this very day. If you did and are
not yourself numbered amongst the



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NEWS FROM SOME OF THE BOYS

Geoff Parker - 31st August, 1945. Since about last March I have had the job of Chief Engineer in one of the Army's Small Ships and why I didn't get into this game before, instead of the static job in the Anti-Aircraft I'm darned if I know. From the Bushwalkers point of view it is the Ants Pants, as we are travelling almost constantly, poking in and out of the most interesting places, and covering country that as Tourists would cost hundreds of pounds, instead of which the Army pay us to do it. Of course there is not much physical exercise about it, but I'm sure that other bushwalkers, particularly those who have been in the Infantry, will agree with me, that the Tropics are no place to go on a walkabout, except in certain selected localities, too many bities.

However, whenever the opportunity offers, I get ashore and go on as long a walk as the occasion permits. Chiefly for the exercise, but also because I'm a born stickybeak and curious to see what is around the corner. Just the same I'm always glad to get back to the ship and into, or perhaps better said, at of decent clothes again. Ashore we always have to wear boots, gaiters, lacks and shirt, while on board we wear only shorts, and shoes while in the gine room.

Although the war is practically over, (the wireless says it is over) don't expect to be home for at the least twelve months, but during that me I expect to see a deuce of a lot more country, maybe Tokio?

b Morrison - 27th August 1945. Greetings from the Isles of Spice! I forget: ether I've written to you yet from the beautiful Balikpapan S.E. Borneo at 116° 50' E. long. 1° 10' S - in case you don't know that already) and somehow think not.

What a different letter this will be to that one of mine, written to you mid-March, at Burleigh Heads, Queensland, and which you so kindly published in the S.B.W. About the only resemblance this place bears to Burleigh and environs is the "surf", much weaker here than at dear old Burleigh and much dirtier too - in fact, the other morning we went into an oil bath and there was hardly a ripple on the water.

I didn't come in with the first landings, but 10 days later, when all the evidence left of the battering this place took was the huge shell and bomb craters, wrecked buildings, charred and smashed vegetation, spiked guns, remnants of pillboxes, dugouts and foxholes; twisted iron which had once been cars, trucks and bicycles and the all-pervading peculiar odour of the Japanese, which still exists here in spots despite the great amount of clearing up that we have been doing, along with the native population, but I've seen some minor engagements on my tours up front and been in one Jap air raid, moon before last.

This must have been a great town before the war and I don't mean before we belted hell out of it for the Dutch applied the "scorched earth" policy here well and truly when they knew the Japs were coming down - yes, about £25,000,000 worth of damage, I'm told, and although our lads started plenty of oil fires and smashed what the Nips had re-built, it must have been nothing to the mess the Dutch left behind for the "yellow bellies".

The homes here have been really beautiful, solidly built of brick and reinforced concrete, huge rooms, ceilings to 14 feet high and with stout woodwork and best quality fittings of all kinds. Tiles were in great prominence in kitchen and bathrooms and all of tip-top quality. The Dutch go in for a different type of bath to us; they have a tiled well raised about 3 feet above the floor and it seems they dip the water out of it and pour it over themselves - no lying down to it here.

The balconies, verandahs and patios must have been things of beauty and convenient comfort and they, like the houses, have been built to see out a lifetime. Some buildings are guttered along the edge of the eaves, in the usual way, while a lot of them have no gutters or spouting, but rather an open drain directly under the roof edge, built right round the house, to carry off roof and ground water. I can see the point in such an idea, for it rains like old Harry here when it gets going, which is nearly every night. Fortunately for us, the days are usually sunny, the rain being of little nuisance at night and we don't let it run to waste - we catch it in tins, as it runs off the tent-fly; chlorinated water from the stand-pumps is pretty lousy to the palate, so good old aqua pura is at quite a premium.....

WOTSHERTHINK?Fierce Battles. Heavy Casualties Avoided.

Though most people will, by now, be aware of the decision to change the night for the Club meeting back to Friday, we record it for the benefit of those who happily, or rather haply, live in distant places and visit us rarely. On the historic night last month, there was battle in the air but results were very disappointing. However as the door of the hall opened and revealed a fresh latecomer, it was interesting to watch the eyes of the "so-called" moderns and the "so-called" reactionaries appraise him as a possible addition to their voting strength.

Thanks.

Last month and also this month we have been able to publish some drawings, the work of Mary Ramsay, (wife of Tom), Denis Gittos and our old friend Les Harper. We wish to thank the artists who are too modest to give on their work, any indication of their identity and also to hope that we shall be in a position to thank them again.

Watch for It.

We have received forward advice of the intended consideration of the possible production of a monumental work by Hilma Galliot on the life cycle of the cicada. This work would be based entirely upon her own extended observations used as an excuse for not doing any walking.

In Full Sail.

Doris Allden recently found time to dash home to Sydney for a few days. 'Tis whispered that she has lost condition which is hard to understand considering the number of farewell parties and Government Houses she has been patronising lately. Perhaps Doris is going to the extreme of leaving at least six cream puffs on the plate for manners.

Pageing Dorothy Lamour.

Geoff. Higson is back with us in civilian clothes but if his pre-war suits fit him round the chest they must have been made of elastic. Geoff. will be Australia's chance to relegate Tarzan to the pigmy class.

Interested?

If you see us, we can tell you where there are two paddy-made packs for sale.

Did She Fall or was She Pushed?

Have you ever earned the distinction of having maimed the whole of the male section of your official walk? No! you mouse. Douglas, whose name we shall not reveal for the sake of secrecy, not only succeeded putting the President's knee in mighty bad condition but also in iring the leisurely pacemaker. Woman-hating carried to its logical fusion!

TO ALL WE WISH A VERY HAPPY SEAS AND, IN ORDER TO CATER FOR THE WHOLE CLUB, WE WISH FOR A PERIOD OF FAVOURABLE WEATHER FROM KOSCIUSKO TO MARBLE BAR WHERE SOME WALKERS ARE SURE TO BE GOING FOR THE SURFING SEASON.

BACKYARD BUSHWALKING

"Come and see this locust coming out of his case" I shouted to the girls. "Cicada" corrected Jennifer, but she came nevertheless and we saw a miracle happen. After a series of convulsive back bending exercises the horny earth stained shell split revealing the insect beneath of opalescent green. Then was put on a demonstration which would make any walker jealous, a marvel of packing. We saw the unpacking of course and I am still wondering where it all came from. Finally the cicada emerged and rested after the pangs of birth whilst wings cleared and shell hardened. A lovely creature of the sunlight and air destined for a brief career of love life and laughter sipping daintily of the juices distilled by the trees, still clinging to its shabby prison garb worn during its many years incarceration in its subterranean dungeon.

"There's your cicada" I said. "It's a green grocer!" said Jennifer.

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Shop Hours.

Paddy is pleased to report that he is now open each day from 9 a.m. to 5.45 (12.30 Saturdays).

Stock.

Rucksacks (without frames) cape groundsheets and in good supply. Frame rucksacks occasionally available. Tents and sleeping bags still difficult.

Gadgets.

Pending the return of plastic or aluminium jars, Paddy has secured supplies of waxed paper jars with lids which can be washed and used several times.

<u>Prices:</u>	2 oz.	1d. each	9d doz.
	4 oz.	1½d. "	1/3 "
	6 oz.	2d. each	1/9 "

Paddy takes this opportunity to wish all walkers a happy Christmas and may we see in 1946 the foundations laid for the reign of peace on earth and good will toward men.

PADDY PALLIN

Camp Gear for Walkers

Phone
B 3101.

327 George St,

SYDNEY