

A Monthly Bulletin devoted to matters of interest to the Sydney
 Bushwalkers, c/- Ingersoll Hall, 256 Crown St. Sydney

No. 138

JUNE, 1946

Price 0/6

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WARRAGAMBA-WOLLONDILLY WEEK-END WANDERINGS

PART I.

by "Wombat".

A story of weekends in the land of plenty, complete with Introduction and two parts: with women, and without.

PART I. in this issue, outlines our sojourn with feminine companionship ("Ah, woe! woe! we cry")

PART II - next issue - "Oh, I'll go no more aroving with you, fair maid."

INTRODUCTION:

This scene is laid in the Public Library, where I am poring over books and old mining reports on "How To Find Gold", one eye roaming over the pages, and the other following the spritely attendants. Suddenly, I start into concentration, and both eyes swing towards the Report, for it actually tells where some gold is; or, rather, it describes a locality where one should look for it, but in my eagerness the two seem quite synonymous. Briefly the report instructs me to look along the upper



Warragamba for rock bars across the river, and at the foot of said bars, the gold will be lying (excuse the pun).

Seeking out Ron and telling him all, I soon have him dazzled by dreams of lazy affluence (an attractive vision, to a Public Servant!) It is easy to list the articles we can jettison from our packs to make room for the treasure, and we do a slight moan that Paddy packs were built for only about 70-80 lbs., wondering meanwhile if our backs will take the strain, even at umpteen pounds an ounce. Gold - and all we have to do is find those bars, and sit on our haunches, panning.

We decide to risk letting others in on the secret, wherefore we invite Mavis and Betty to accompany us. "Purely out of the kindness of our hearts", we say, "You'll love the Warragamba". In reality, of course, we want cooks and porters, and some attractive bait for potential hitch-hiking on the Warragamba-Silverdale road on Friday night!

The scene is set, and we are about to depart for our present-day Aladdin's cave.

PART I. - SOME BAIT IS LOUSEY - REALLY LOUSEY.

As with all zero days, this particular Friday dawns fine and clear; and so does it remain until a ring from Betty, saying that she cannot come because she has to work on Saturday morning. Then a later ring to say her charms have clicked, so that she is not working after all, and will meet us at Penrith by a later train. We other three board the scheduled loco, bemoaning our fate at having to wait at Penrith, in lieu of moving immediately towards our golden glory. However, just after leaving Blacktown, a huge rucksack comes wandering down the corridor, and who should be struggling behind it but the self-same Betty! On leaving work, she has rushed home to Cremorne and back to Central in 45 minutes (no, not walking all the way) to catch the train, but not knowing we are on it, has remained (and recovered) in another carriage. Being a true Bushwalker, her time has not been wasted, for she has shelled the peas, assisted by a volunteering stranger who fell for the age-old gag.

The bus roars out of Penrith with the whole quartet aboard. At Wallacia, we are prevailed upon to partake of a meal, just to be sociable with the member who hasn't eaten for two days, or so her story runs. This over, we at last hit the road. All around the undulating pasture land is bathed in gentle moonlight and our eager glances reveal our interest in the scene, especially in the road behind us. When about mid-way, our backward glances are rewarded; headlights on the skyline! Quickly, we exhort the girls to do their best - or else! They stand by the road with bewitching smiles, leaning somewhat forward as if their packs were heavy, doing their best to look demure whilst adroitly looking captivating. Yet all their charms are shown in vain, and oh! you should hear the epithets as the vehicle - a utility, mind you, just built for four, and empty at that - whizzes by un-



heeding! The air is thick with dust, but thicker still with vehement invective.

Midnight finds us entering Silverdale, an attractive little hamlet, in scattered seclusion on a ridge-top bathed in moonlight. The plan is to take the track which leads down to the junction of Monkey Ck. and the Warragamba, another three miles, but to find the track from the village seems a problem. Our hopes rise when down the road we hear voices, raised in song, albeit unmelodious. We stop the party and then step back - we require respite from the barrage of liquor fumes surrounding them! Our questioning is met with drunken laughter "What! Go down to Monkey Creek? Tonight? You can't do that, even in daylight. There just isn't any track!" With bushwalker's superciliousness we assure them of our supernatural powers, until one of them is able to volunteer moderately coherent information as to how we must proceed.

This we do forthwith, our ardour for the gold untrammelled by their assurances of the impossibility of our plans. At the local hall, we fill the buckets and after wandering through someone's back yard, passing through sliprails galore, and finally meandering across the golf links, we find ourselves on the track to "The Look-out" - oh, yes, even Silverdale has a "Lookout". Some time after midnight, somewhere near said lookout, we lay out our sleeping bags by the roadside. Glorious sleep, too deep for a light shower of rain to interrupt.

Next morning, we have a lazy awakening, followed by a late start - why should prospective millionaires waste energy on an early getaway. Down at the Junction, we find the camp site as bad as its reputation, but as this is to be our fixed camp for the weekend we endeavour to make ourselves comfortable. The river is very low, and very muddy, but being full of the latest issue of the mag. with its article on how to catch perch without effort, we immediately set the line. Thereafter, every hour, we replace the ever missing bait. We begin to wonder whether we read the article aright; were the fish to feed us, or were we to feed the fish? Eventual conclusion is that this bait is as futile as last night's hitch-hiking bait.

From the point of view of gold, the spot is not quite up to scratch, either. If there were a bar, then the heavy deposits of mud at and above water level would be concealing it from us, whilst the muddy nature of the water prevents us from seeing into the bed of the stream. Our dreams of riches, and of paying up arrears in membership fees, begin to wane somewhat, for there is no sign of a bar anywhere. Stoics that we are, we wander up Monkey Creek for a little practice in panning, tempered by a swim here and there.

At night, it rains steadily, and in the morning the river is up three feet, with the heavens weeping still. Wonderful excuse to lie in bed, for who wants to wander up the Warragamba in the rain? It clears at midday, but is now too late to wander far afield, so we give the gold away - just temporarily - with Ron and me deciding to return next weekend.



To the bitter end, the line remains hopefully in the river, but always with the same result - no bait and no fish. It is left behind to dry, and await our return next weekend - and there it still remains. Seventy five yards of 45 lbs. breaking strain green linen line on a little ledge in the cave top just above the camping flat; a treasure for the finder.

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Here endeth the first instalment. You were warned what a tale of woe it would be. Yet have no fear, for the second instalment is in much happier strain. "Walkabout in Paradise".

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IN GRATITUDE

The staff of the "Mag." wishes to thank YVONNE ROLFE for the service she has done as production manager. Yvonne did not resign; although in ill health, she was prepared to continue. Committee decided that she had done as much as, and more than, any member could rightly be expected to do.

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Fraser Ratcliffe is leaving us. Before the next issue goes to print, he will be off for Perth, via Broken Hill. To quote him, he is going "to seek gold, fame and fortune." Our personal opinion is that he will not be disheartened if none of these comes his way, as it is the freedom of the out of doors which seems to attract him. As witness this, his pre-war years were spent in gold-prospecting in W.A., and biking and hitch-hiking in Vic., N.S.W. and Qld, with an interlude to do some real climbing on Marie Byles' Burma-China expedition.

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RIVER CANOE CLUB - TOPOGRAPHICAL SECTION

Mr. Ted Caines Phillips, 39 Silver Street, St. Peters, convenor of the above section, advises that the following map is now on display at Paddy's

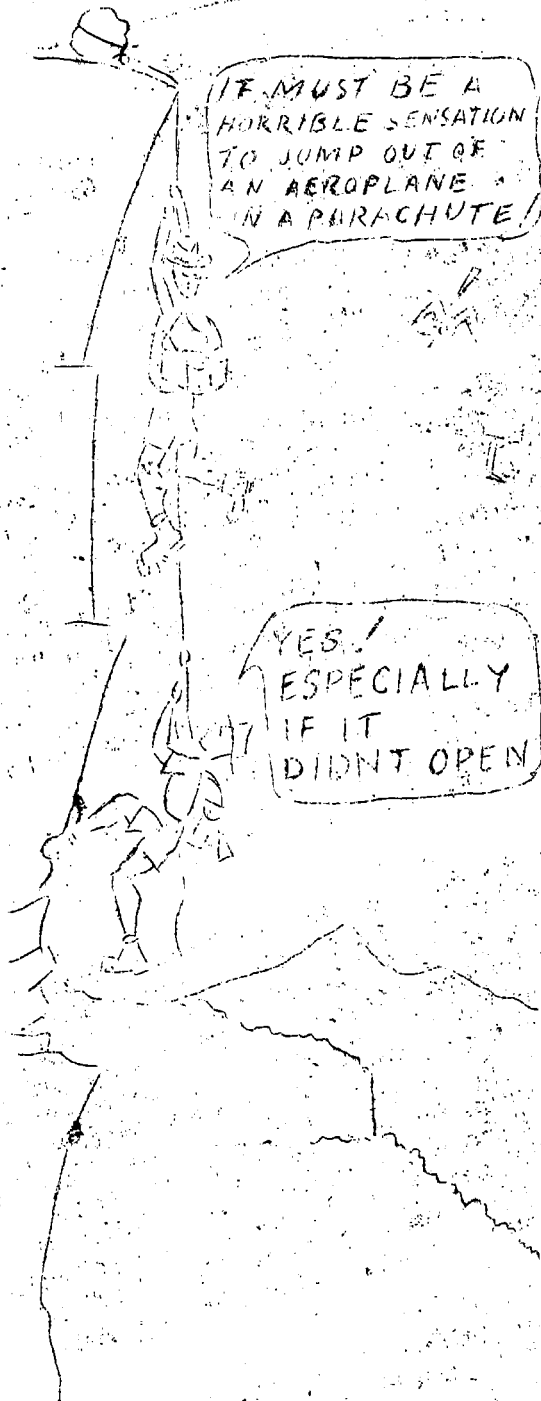
PATONGA CREEK (Lower Hawkesbury River)

MAP No. 36.

Complete tidal section.

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EVOLUTION? by Trouper B.C.



'Tis a pity my late friend and scientist Darwin were not alive today, for S.B.W. to him would be merely another observation in Evolution. Mean ter' say; Just think, What food for thought! Picture man's rise and fall along the following lines:

1. SUNDAY HIKER His luv' for the bush with a woman under one arm, a bottle of fizz(?) in the other, two Sunday papers characteristically scattered as though a paper chase were the order of the day - and, note, rarely more than $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the nearest railway station.

2. BUSHWALKER: Here we see improvement; a bloke flat on his back 30 miles from the station, so weary he cares nought for a woman in one arm and would not have the energy in the other to lift the bottle o'grog.

3. ROCK CLIMBER: Not being the artist of the cartoon aside, I am privileged to say it is inadequate. No sketch can portray the madness of the game! The climber surveys the rock face for suitable finger holds and after becoming entangled in rope at various stages, sometimes reaches the top. "Philosophical relaxation", or somethin', is his supposed reason for such activity.

4. MOUNTAINEER. Imagine being encased in 16 suits of clothing, attaching steel spikes 10" long to your boots, and then enjoying the scenery at 20,000' with no oxygen.

5. INMATE? Well, just ask the public where those "mad" bushwalkers should be!

BUSHWALKERS' WAR MEMORIAL

From Jeane Mannell,
Griffith.

I don't know whether it is quite my place to submit this article, but I am writing as I feel.

After reading "Mumbedah's" article, "Bushwalker's War Memorial" in April issue of "The Sydney Bushwalker", I would rather like to "second his motion", whatever the Federation may decide to do about a memorial.

As Gordon Mannell's Widow, and as one who loves to roam the Cox and many of our other lovely bush-walker haunts, I think a brass tablet on Splendour Rock would indeed be a fitting remembrance. I know how much both of the Gordons loved the Cox country in particular. My Gordon and I did many a lovely walk with Gordon Smith, and our first four day walk with him was at Christmas 1933. Although Gordon Smith had "done" the Cox many times before, and we had not at the time had this pleasure, he chose this walk as it was always so attractive to him if he did not want to do a particularly tough walk, and he was very keen for us to see it.

Usually I am against War Memorials of the Monument type, as I feel that they are rather useless, but as the cost of a brass plaque on Splendour Rock would not be very great, I feel that the idea appeals to me very much.

Although I have not been able to do much bushwalking since my marriage, being stationed at Griffith which is in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and 400 miles from Sydney, and, incidently, very flat except for one hill, my heart is still with bushwalking. I think both of our children, Graham and Diana, have inherited Gordon's and my love of the bush. I have mentioned to the kiddies that probably on our next trip to Sydney, about January, I will take them for a week end down to Blue Gum Forest to camp. I think they will perhaps be capable of doing this walk (they will then be seven and six years respectively). Their little eyes light up at the thought of "Blugum" and the pictures I have "painted" of it. I sometimes pack my rucksac and take them up "Scenic Hill" at Griffith, where we make a fire and cook our dinner. They just revel in this.

Maybe I have got a bit away from my original subject, but I have often been going to write to the Magazine with a bit of an article as to our doings, so I have combined the two subjects.

At the last Field Weekend, not one Prospective arose early to provide breakfast in bed for Members. Even the leader had to rely upon a visiting male's female for this meagre comfort. Is this constitutional?

SAVING LIVES OR SAVING FLOWERS

By Bona Dea

When you read in the daily papers of the millions of people in the world who are slowly dying through lack of food, have you ever wondered whether we ought to turn from our work of preserving the bush to the work of preserving men?

Probably many humanitarians get impatient when they hear of our deputations to save our wild flowers, and think we would be much better employed assisting to send food and clothing to destitute and starving people.

And yet, is any life, even that of trees and flowers, to be despised? Albert Schweitzer, one of the greatest living humanitarians, would say "No", for it was he who conceived the idea of reverence for all life. He himself gave up a world-famous musical career as the interpreter of Bach, and also an honoured place in the theological and academic world to bury himself in Africa as a humble doctor trying to make amends to the coloured people for the wrongs the whites had done them. But, though his own work was the saving of men, he insists that all life is sacred. It is true there cannot be existence without some destruction, but that destruction, must be reduced to the minimum. You may cut the poppies in the field to save the wheat, but you must be doubly careful going home that you do not knock off a single poppy head by the road side. That is his idea and he would certainly approve of our efforts to preserve the bushlands, even though there is terribly urgent need to preserve the starving peoples of Europe, China and India.

There is a rather lovely myth current in eastern Asia which illustrates the same idea that even the life of the vegetable kingdom is to be held sacred. It turns around the Bodhisattvas, as they are called, beings who have been re-incarnated over and over again, gradually rising in the scale of existence till at last they have won the right to Buddhahood, that is, the right to rest from their labours and return no more to this world of pain and suffering. But they renounce that right, and return to the sorrows of earth again and again in order that they may help every being upwards, until "the last blade of grass is raised to Buddhahood". A myth, it is true, but again embodying the truth that all life is worthy of preservation.

Our work of conserving the bush may be a lesser work than that of those who are working to save people from death by starvation. But it is not work to be despised, and, if we do the work that lies nearest us, we have done what we can to help rebuild the world after the most terribly destructive of all wars.

8.

H O T N E W S !!! by Thistle Rocky, compiled

STOP PRESS on EASTER - from the reporter who was stopped.

SCENE ON CENTRAL:

Mavis Jeanes, fresh from brides-maiding to her sister, Betty, haunted the ticket windows in the late hours, with prospective, Geoff Bradley in tow (or towing, we're not quite sure). With intentions of canoeing the Kangaroo R., they had prayed for rain. And how their prayers were answered! So much so that they paddled right out of it and finished up - Walking!

BARRINGTON NEWS:

N.S.W.G.R. resources were severely strained to provide transport for Roley Cotter and his party. He and his multitudinous entourage sloshed and slithered through slippery slush (whew!) to a perfect Youth-Hostel type weekend, with some 32 sleeping bags littering floor and furniture of Crosby's disused home. We hear more of billiards and bathing at Barrington House than care-free cavorting on Carey's Peak.

FROM OUR N.R.M.A. SCOUT:

By the Nepean was a spacious auto tent (cries of "shame!") from which a timid head peeped out at walkers passing by. On looking closer, we saw that the figure in the canvas chair (!!), absorbed in tending bubba, was none other than - the President!

No, the current dents on Bert Whillier's thumbs are not due to mishits with a hammer, but are the remains of blisters earned in "thumbing" his way to Adelaide and back.

GANGERANGS SERVICE:

From pukka sahibs to travelling tramps; forcibly ejected from sleepers on the Kempsey Mail, Gladys Roberts, Bill Carter and the Ed. etc. swing the helm towards Kanangra Walls. Spent most of Easter on Railway platforms, but did find time to get bushed between Koorie-Kirra and the Cox!

YARRANGOBILLY-BRINDABELLA TRIP:

Both porters and drivers on Central co-operated in delaying departure for 1½ hrs. to ensure that all of Ray Kirkby's crowd were on board. In the midst of the waiting, Allan Hardie took it upon himself to use his pack in sweeping a man from the platform onto the rails. Whilst lumbering engines shunted round him, he leisurely and unconcernedly picked himself up, dusted himself off, and climbed back to the platform. Apparently said man was so relieved at surviving a blow from Dorman's pack that oncoming locomotives held no fears at all!

ERA EXPRESS:

Fauna and Flora reported a quiet Eastertide, with scarcely a single walker to practice conservation upon them!

ECHIDNA

by "K.M."

It was blackberry time, so I took a billy, put on my least holey gardening gloves and went prospecting in the neighbouring bush.

Passing through the underbrush of hakeas and grevilleas, I heard a faint stealthy rustling and paused to listen. The rustling stopped too, then went on again a few yards from where I was standing. Cautiously I pressed through the scrub, expecting to find a snake or perhaps an old blue-tongue lizard going about his affairs. But there, lumbering through the fallen leaves, was spiny ant-eater himself.

He heard me and froze in his tracks, waiting for what might befall. I stooped and armed with my leather gloves tried to pick him up but no limpet on its rock clung more firmly than he to Mother Earth. In fact, he not only clung but appeared to be submerging in the soil.

I pulled and heaved and managed to get a good look at his moist earth-sprinkled nose - or rather bill, flat and broad like that of a platypus - and at the claws, wide and horny capable, they tell us, of scraping their way through concrete, given a crack to start on. With these he dug so firmly into the earth that not all my efforts could dislodge him. My gloves, thick though they were, were not proof against his sharp quills, and at last I gave up the struggle.

A long time we waited in silence, I not moving a muscle and hardly daring to breathe. I wanted to see him in action, and feared that if I startled him he would burrow into the earth and vanish right under my nose.

At last his head, which he had withdrawn as far as possible, poked out, and I could see him listening intently. Still I did not move and, reassured, he wheeled round cumbrously and proceeded on his way, for all the world like a miniature tank, creeping slowly but surely over every obstacle in his path. He scaled a low rock on the edge of the creek bed and lurched out of sight down the slope.

As for me, I came out of a trance and went in search of my blackberries, rejoicing in even so brief a meeting with this strange fellow-countryman of mine.

BACKYARD BUSHWALKING

The stage is set for a bounteous spring in the bush, for in this genial climate winter barely announces its arrival before signs of spring are apparent. The frequent showers have kept the soil moist and everything makes splendid growth. The air is heavy with the scent of wattles in bloom. In my bush garden are two shrubs of creamy five corners (*styphia laeta*) which are smothered in flowers and a small red one (*styphelia tuniflora*) has just finished flowering. A clump of *lysinema pungens* is also in fragrant bloom.

An item of news from the nursery, - 3 seeds of fine-leaved geebung (*persoonia pinifolia*) planted in October 1944 have germinated and are growing well. A batch of waratah seeds planted 2 months ago has rotted in the tins whereas seed planted at a similar time last year germinated readily. Maybe the soil was different or maybe the cold snap we had before Easter upset them. Waratahs planted out a few months ago are going well.

GOOD NEWS: Compactum knife, fork and spoon sets are here again - better than ever, 6/- per set. Military Maps now released for sale; hope to have stocks in a week or two.

Phone B3101.

PADDY PALLIN, Camp Gear for Walkers,
327 George Street, Sydney

EASTER AGAIN

By Ray Kirkby.

Easter and Tumut? Wrong, there were twenty mutts. But no, they were not mutts for at Tumut there had been no rain and there was no rain - just lovely sunny days. It is not possible to say that our train was late leaving Central because people arrived at Coota off three different trains all having various degrees of lateness. From Coota the fact that there was only one train kept us together. But not at night - Oh no - not at night. There was always one section camped on a mountainside and one in a creek, or there were two sections divided by a swamp.

At Tumut, Joyce Marchant's sister met us bearing a hamper for Joyce which, fortunately, was too large for her. There were three baked rabbits, a pot of jam, a large slab of cake and numerous apples. We did not arrive at Yarrangobilly for lunch until about 3 o'clock so it was not unusual to find one of the girls in her less aesthetic moments tearing apart a rabbit and gnawing a leg.

Our lorry halted a while at Talbingo and we discovered later that the honeymooning MacGregors were camped only an old shoe toss away. They said they did not hear us but, had we been more observant, we probably would have seen them crawling rapidly away through the grass.

Our Ex Air Force driver from Brindabella drove up the steep hair pin bends with such abandon that he had to be restrained. If he had insured us as our first driver had done we should not have minded. For who would not die gladly, clutching a third party risk policy in his hand?

LIMELIGHT ON EVEREST

The year's scoop is presented to you per medium of the Bushwalker: the fight for Everest is on again!

Eric Shipton, English mountaineer who can probably claim more Himalayan experience than any other man is planning the sixth attempt upon the highest summit in the world. He will lead a party of six climbers, early in 1947. Bushwalkers generally appear to take some interest in climbing, and for this reason we present to you the salient features of Everest history, with an elaboration of Shipton's achievements.

Mount Everest was "discovered" by the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India in 1852, its height being given as 29,002 feet, but not until 1921 did the first expedition set out. This venture, of a purely exploratory nature, paved the way for the First Attempt, in 1922. Although climbing no higher than 27,300' the expedition gave much information of value when the Second Attempt began in 1924.

They gave, for example, details of the climbing to be expected on the final heights. Across the face of Everest, roughly a thousand feet below the summit, are two horizontal bands of limestone with nearly vertical faces. These two faces, the First Step (lower) and Second Step (Upper) have proved the stumbling block of all future expeditions.

In 1924, two climbers were able to breach the First Step, but were driven back by the Second. A few days later, two other climbers set out and were seen above the First Step, at a height of over 28,000! After that the

mountain mists closed about them, and of their subsequent fate nothing is known.

This upper band of limestone has called a halt to all climbers since then. Men have conquered the question of existence in the rarefied air; they have been able to live at those freezing heights, waiting for the one or two calm days in the year which may or may not come; waited whilst snow obscured the rocks, hoping that it would not be there on the one or two days when the blizzards might sleep - they have suffered hardship only to be driven back again and again by those few feet of rock, the Second Step.

Nine years later, in 1933, the Third Attempt was launched, yet it achieved no more than the 1924 climbers, except to add to the knowledge of what not to do about that band of limestone. The second assault party of this expedition comprised Frank Smythe, conqueror of Kamet, with Eric Shipton as his climbing partner. Shipton turned back because of stomach trouble, and Smythe continued alone, only to retreat before the Second Step.

Prior to this, Shipton was a farmer in Kenya; just a plain bloke like you or me, who could see Mt. Kenya from the farm on which he worked. Because he had done some climbing in Europe, he made trips to Mts. Kenya and Kilimanjaro, in much the same spirit as you or I should make a walking trip to Kosciusko or the Warrumbungles. Frank Smythe heard of his climbing prowess, and invited him on his Kamet conquest in 1931. As a direct consequence of this expedition, he was included in the 1933 Everest personnel.

To return to farming after this was loathsome; Shipton had come to love the mountains, and he determined to live amongst them. He conceived the idea of running small, lightweight parties to unmapped parts of the Himalayas. The 1933 Everest Show had cost £10,000 and contained 16 climbing personnel. Too costly and too cumbersome was Shipton's verdict. He was no scientist, and he had no financial background; yet he and a former friend, Tilman, planned a two-man expedition to the unmapped Nanda Devi basin. A 6³ month's sojourn at a cost, not of thousands, but £300, including boat fares to India and porters' wages. £150 apiece for two farmers, both of whom were to become Everest leaders!

That Shipton's ideas of light-weight and compactness had a profound effect upon mountaineering thought is shown by every subsequent Everest attempt, in all of which he has figured prominently.

The mountain was next in the news in 1935. Shipton was back, with a party comprising six climbers and a surveyor. Their object was reconnaissance: to examine the possibilities of climbing during the periods of monsoonal snows, and to explore the north-western and western approaches, paving the way for another attempt in 1936. This, the fourth assault expedition, was placed under the 1933 leader, Hugh Rutledge. Rutledge did not agree with Shipton's ideas that small lightweight expeditions were most efficient; and yet, in the face of the latter's achievements elsewhere in the Himalayas, he had to modify his ideas, and only 12 climbers were taken, as against 16 in '33. Heavy snows on the mountain drove them back without even attempting the final climb.

In 1938, the Fifth Attempt was carried out, with Tilman as leader and Shipton as a climber. This expedition was the first really light-weight

