

FEBRUARY

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A monthly Bulletin of matters of interest to the Sydney  
Bush Walkers, C/- Ingersoll Hall, 256 Crown St., Sydney.

No. 159

*March*  
FEBRUARY, 1948

Price 6d.

Annual subscription ~~Feb.~~ 1948 to Jan. 1949 5/- *4/2*

Editor: Alex Colley, 55 Kirri-  
billi Av., Milson's Pt. Production: Brian Harvey  
Assistant Editor: Dot Butler Production Asst: Peter Price  
Walks Reporter: Kevin Ardill Sales & Subs: Christa Calnan  
Illustrationist: Dennis Gittoes Asst. Sales & Sbs: Betty Hurley  
Business Manager: Maurie Berry Typed by: Jean Harvey

CONTENTS

	Page
Editorial - National Park	1
At Our January Meeting	2
Social Notes for February	3
More News from New Zealand - letter from Ron Knightley	4
The National Park - Tasmania, by J. Kirkby	8
Fishing Memoirs, by "Rex"	11
Christmas, 1947, by Edna Garrad	12
A Gentle Trip, by "Jaybee"	13
Sonnet to North Era, by Allan Hardie	16
Federation Notes, by Brian Harvey	16
Death from Snakebite	17
Paddy's Advt.	18

EDITORIAL

National Park

We can still remember the evening, back in September, 1946, when a letter was received at the S.B.W. General Meeting from Frank Freeguard, reporting that he had seen billets of wood, cut as for baker's wood, stacked in National Park. The letter was referred to the Federation, which decided not to approach the Trust until it (the Federation) had decided now it thought the Park should be administered. Mr. Whiddon, Chairman of the Park Trust, was invited to address the Federation Council, and after this a special meeting was held to decide Federation policy. A policy was drawn up by the meeting and referred to the clubs (which means, in practice, the S.B.W. - and perhaps one or two other clubs). The clubs approved and the policy was adopted by the Federation. What was to be done next? Council

2.  
couldn't think of anything better than to make a report on it, a job which the Secretary reluctantly took on after everyone else had refused. This report came to light in August last year. It was little more than a re-hash of the one already adopted in December 1946. Now we hear that another report is on the way. This too should be essentially the same as the one approved by the Club in December 1946, as our Club has not discussed any alterations since then.

Thus while time flies conservation hibernates; and everyone is bored stiff with National Park.

#### AT OUR JANUARY MEETING.

The President was in the Chair, and about 70 members were present.

The Secretary of the Wild Life Preservation Society has written to our Club stating that it is unlikely that their constitution will permit them to subscribe to the purchase of a private park, i.e. the Era lands. Our Committee has decided to do nothing further in the matter.

It was decided that the S.B.W. should undertake to purchase 40 copies of Miss Jocelyn Henderson's booklet "Fire or Water", and take another 60 on a 'for sale or return' basis.

The Greater Blue Mountains CITY now has the matter of the Greater Blue Mountains National Park under its notice.

While returning from the Taxation Dept., where he had done his best to keep the grasping hand of the Commissioner from our Christmas Party funds, our Treasurer fell foul of the law. He was apprehended for not paying his tram fare and summoned to appear before the Court of Petty Sessions. "To the charge of not paying my fare I plead guilty your Honour," quoth Dormo, "but to the charge of being on a tram with intent to evade payment of fare I plead not guilty". This piece of eloquence, together with the tram-guard's inability to identify him as one of the culprits sufficed to free the prisoner. "Case dismissed!" said the magistrate, and so we are pleased to announce we still retain the services of our worthy Treasurer.

The response towards funds for a Bushwalker Memorial on Splendour Rock has so far been disappointing and members were asked to subscribe towards this. A Memorial Service is to be held there on Anzac Day weekend. On a show of hands about 17 members stated their intention of attending to represent our Club.

Dorothy Lawry pointed out that trees are being defaced in Blue Gum Forest and members were asked to indicate their willingness to act as Rangers to protect the area.

Ken Meadows was appointed new Walks Secretary, to replace Bill Horton, now in England.

The Club has become the possessor of a fine Notice Board. The upper third is a blackboard for chalked notices, the lower part soft caneite, for the pinning up of papers. Materials were donated by Marie Byles and Colin Lloyd, work done by Jack Wren, and organisation of the whole done by the President. It is to be hoped Walks Leaders will take advantage of it and put up full details of their walks.

It was reported that at Christmas there were between 100 and 200 members of Federation Clubs at Kosciusko, and complaints were made by the Manager that articles were 'souvenired' from the Chalet, also rifle shooting was going on and a sheep was shot. (Ruby Payne-Scott will prepare a report on the disturbance.)

Colour films of a canoe trip down the Snowy River will be shown by Gordon Ballard at 8 p.m. on 11th and 12th March (Thursday and Friday). Tickets (from Gordon) are 3/- each.

Bob Younger and Christa Calnan were thanked for their work of conducting the Children's Xmas Treat and a letter of thanks is to be sent to Mr. and Mrs. Younger for transporting a large amount of food down to Lane Cove National Park for the youngsters.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.

-----

If this sort of thing keeps up we will have to start a social column. We have to report three births, one marriage, two engagements. The births: To Bert and Evelyn Whillier - a daughter. To Jean Sigge (nee Travers) a daughter. To Laurie and John Wood - a son. The marriage: Phil White is now Mrs. Sorenson. We met Phil and her husband walking down the hill this side of Carlon's. They looked very well and were staying at Katoomba from where they did day walks. The engagements: Doug Johnson and Marge Clarke (both still in N.Z.) and Irving Calnan and Heather Care of Lismore. Irving will be coming to live in Sydney soon - after the wedding.

To the Bush Walkers concerned in these happy events we extend congratulations and/or best wishes.

-----

REUNION CAMPSITE: Places suggested by the Reunion sub-committee are Era, Moorabinda and Macquarie Fields. The choice will be made by the February General Meeting.

-----

SOCIAL NOTES FOR FEBRUARY.

On Friday the 20th brains will be matched against brains of equal capacity (capacity not stated) in a debate on the vexed question of Communism or Capitalism. The teams have not been arranged but Communists are at present willing to pay large sums of money to be included in the debate and prove they are penniless while the prospective Capitalists are saving up their tram fares for the night.

The 'lecture to be arranged' on the 27th is arranged. There will be movie films of Kosciusko and probably others. Charles Colberg, we have to thank, for this spontaneous help and interest.

TO ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS. In the New Year (not the Chinese New Year or the Jewish New Year but the S.B.W. New Year) there may be great happenings in the photographic world. Therefore dust the cobwebs off your photos and take new ones for you may be the salt of the earth.

MORE NEWS FROM NEW ZEALAND.

Ron Knightley writes on 8th January:

"Heigh-ho, everyone! The train for the West Coast speeds across the Canterbury Plains, taking us towards the Fox and Frans Josef Claciers. The sun which has shone benevolently upon us for weeks and weeks still heats the plains, and lends a blueness to the distant hills.

"Our most recent adventure has been in the Matukituki Valley where the N.Z. Alpine Club is at present building a palatial mansion (locally called a "hut") on the broad, lush flats by the headwaters of the swiftly flowing river.

"On a holiday such as this time passes almost unheeded, days and dates are meaningless, and one thinks only of the sunshine, the grassy river terraces, the snowy mountains round about, and who's cooking the next meal.

"At 7.30 a.m. one morning Les Fitzgerald of the Melbourne Walking Club, Kath Hardy and myself bid farewell to the green lawn on which we slept the night, to cross the Matukituki en route for French Ridge Bivouac, about 3,500' above the river. The N.Z. rivers are swift and notoriously dangerous, claiming more lives than any other mountain hazard. The deepest part found the water racing round our thighs, feet slipping on the stones, toes frozen and tongues mouthing involuntary curses at each new slip. Man-like, Les and I went straight for the further bank, and just as

we reached it a succession of womanly screams brought me scurrying back into the water (dropping my pack first, of course!) Kath was up to her neck in the racing stream - spitting and spluttering. She was back on her feet before I reached her and galloped for the bank like a trained charger. But, alas, her ice axe had been torn from her grasp! This puts us in a quandary somewhat - but not for long! With fiendish relish, an ice axe is purposely dropped. And what happens? Nothing. A ship's anchor could be no more effective. Kath's axe is forthwith recovered, and we still our shivers as we trudge upstream upon the further bank.

"We stop at the foot of French Ridge. Above us rises fifteen hundred feet of timber, topped by some five hundred feet of breast high bush, and then a thousand feet of slippery snow grass rising to the bare crags and the eternal snows. Above and around French Ridge are the 8,000' summits of Joffre and Bevan - rock and ice, snowfield and glacier - whilst across the river lie other snowy domes, icy peaks and craggy pinnacles.

"We pioneered a new route up French Ridge - quite unintentionally, of course. A lone fir tree stood by the river's edge and behind it a line of blazes marked the track up to the bivouac. Were we to know that there were two lone trees? That each had blazes near it? That one set of blazes plunged the innocent newcomer into bush more impenetrable than Queensland's fiercest jungle, whilst the other was the fair dinkum track, up which one could walk as one would walk up Blue Dog? Ah, misguided babes that we were! For 10½ hours we pushed and pushed through ferns, trees, vines, creepers, thorns - oh, Jonah! Wota nightmare! A most brutal set of vertical bluffs ran across our upward path, as we hauled ourselves up by tree roots, fern fronds, tore our clothes on lawyer vines, barked our shins on jagged rocks, and sweated under the midday sun. In one place a winter avalanche had swept the timber clear, and we clung to steep slabs of rotten schist, clawing upwards, fearing to look down. There was no real stop for lunch. Just once, for an odd half hour, we stopped to air the tent, still wet from the heavy dew, and to dry our wet clothes (durn that river!).

"Sheer cliffs rose above us, but from the talus slope below it, we could see that we were just above the timber line. A gully full of talus and bush ran up to snow grass at the head - sheer cliffs rose across the gully, but we felt that the gully must run clear to the top. It did. After another hour of weaving our way through boulders and bush, we saw that our way to the top of the ridge was clear. Sometimes, the bushes were so thick and matted that we could walk over them at ease; at others we pushed wearily through their clawing branches. Two stags, with antlers still in velvet, started up about 25 yards in front, stared at us for a moment, and then went racing down to the timber. Higher up, two others stood in arrogance, to watch our

6.

snail-like progress for an instant before they too took fright and went bounding away for the timber. Oh! for the feet of a deer!

"Ah, the grass at last! A thousand feet of steep grass slope, and we found the bivvy - two low rock walls, built on the windward side, with flat ground in the lee. In the calm cool of evening we pitched the tent, anchoring it with many heavy boulders, whilst Kath started to stew the dehydrateds.

"Then came the keas-winged curses of the snowline. Large olive green parrots about the size of a big cockatoo, they came strutting up to our camp, completely tame and unafraid, pottering around under our very hands and feet, quite unashamed of the curses their breed has wrung from unfortunate climbers. Scavengers of the cold heights, their sharp beaks are eternally picking at everything within their reach, and anything not immediately digestible - snow glasses, cups, spoons, tobacco pouches and the like - is whisked away to some unattainable crag, to the accompaniment of hurled rocks and loud curses from the victim, and a defiantly screamed "Kea!! Kea!!" from the vanishing marauder. Long and woeful are the tales of their ravages. A girl we met at Homer tunnel told us how she had once left her boots out at night. In the morning she found, to her utter devastation, that the keas, not content with extracting the laces and disposing of them, had picked the majority of the stitches from the uppers! And we heard tell of another mountaineer who, on returning to his tent, had it fall apart in his hands - again, the keas had done a neat job of unpicking stitches! Thus, everything movable was kept within inches of our hands, and when we retired for the night, little cairns of heavy rocks covered all articles that could not be stowed within the tent.

"Next day, again in sunshine and in calm, we wandered up rocks and snow, to a loftier crest above. Faint but clear across the snow there came suddenly a long drawn "Coo-oo-ee-ee!" In another twenty minutes we stepped off the snows, on to a sun-warmed rocky patch, to be greeted most royally by four members of the Alpine Club - four men who'd been living for a fortnight in an ice cave hard by, who had not seen other faces since leaving the valley, and who had a most inspiring tale to tell - Mount Aspiring, a 10,000 foot pinnacle of ice and rock, had bowed beneath their feet the day before. For seventeen hours they had been away from base, working on snow slope and glacier, over schrund and shingle, up rock and ice. Today, they were just sleeping ... sleeping ... sleeping.

"That night Les and I bivouacked with the mountaineers, while Kath stayed down in our own tent, alone with the keas. Imagine it! Just try to imagine, in Australia - four men who hadn't seen a woman for a fortnight, and 1,500' below them, a lone woman! And all they did was sleep!

"First, they treated us to a nightcap - cocoa and rum - oh! blissful nectar. At 2.30 a.m. a hand shook my shoulder, and a voice murmured "Porridge ready". At 3.30 we started climbing, headed for the rocky summit of Mt. French, at 7,500'. Then, for eight hours we were on the move. First, we climbed some thousand feet up the steep snows on to "The Quarterdeck", an icy shoulder to the southeast of Mt. French. We wound between crevasses, and cut steps up the steep ice wall below "the deck". An hour later, we reached the crest, and oh, the view! Moonlight was giving way to dawn. Down and away to the front and left spread the white basin of the Bonar Glacier, and across it rose the final 4,000' of Mt. Aspiring's great peak of snow. Black rock, blue shadow, and pink ice under the dawning clouds. Out over the brightening smoothness of the Glacier peak rose on peak, range rose on range, for a hundred miles on either hand - rock and ice, crag and pinnacle, cornice and bastion, becoming fainter and further towards the blue horizon.

"Sunup found us trudging across the Bonar Glacier, and now the chill of dawn gave way to the searing heat of the glacier sun. Dark glasses now shielded our eyes - thick white zinc cream guarded our faces. Especially did we smear the under sides of our chins, the hollow beneath the bottom lip, and the under sides of the nostrils - these parts especially are prone to burn from the rays reflected from ice underfoot.

"Soon we were right behind Mt. French - it must be attacked from the rear. We could see that the easy slope of the glacier ended under 800' of sheer wall - this to be our final climb! Glasses off, and sweating furiously, we breasted the cliffs - upwards and upwards on crumbling shelves, in tight chimneys, alternately belaying the rope from the man below, or clinging like a fly to the wall of a house, with only thin air and boot nails between us and the glacier ice, hundreds of feet below. Time flew - completely absorbed in the intricate problem of scaling this rotten wall we had been moving for four hours without rest before we remembered that we had little time to spare.

"Two hundred feet below the summit we turned back. We should already be hours late in our return to Kath, and had to return to the river that same day. Before starting the climb down, we tarried for a delicious half-hour on a lofty ledge. Ah, that scene with sun upon it! Way out to northwest, the blue sea; all around us the glaciers and snowfields; the sharpness of nearer peaks and the allure of white pinnacles in blue distance; the blinding whiteness of the glacier below, and thrilling curve of Mt. Aspiring's upward sweeping ridges of ice - ah, now I know why men climb mountains, why blizzard and hard ground are not sufficient to deter those who once have tasted those moments of ecstasy.

"Time had beaten us, and robbed us of a conquest. And yet, for those exhilarating hours of toil I shall again upstand before the chilly dawn; for that enchantment of the heights, for that

8.  
glorious peace and silence that comes with height and majesty - ah, who would not drive his spirit to the limit for just a taste of this? We came down beaten, but we came down happy.

"Returning to the bivouac the Enzeds treated us to another wonderful drink - dried yeast and sugar, mixed in water the night before, sent new life racing through bodies that had been on the move for eight hours.

"Down at our own tent we found Kath all ready packed, and p lunged off once more for the river - this time, to find the track! Down and down and down we walked and stumbled, perspiring in the noonday heat, gazing longingly at the river far down in the valley. Then at last we trod its banks, waded its racing stream, and wended our way back down the miles of grass flat and beech forest to the Alpine Club camp. There did Kath cook up the most wonderful stew, fry the most delicious bacon, boil the most delectable soup, cook the most palatable stewed fruit and custard - food, food for males who had eaten only scroggin and biscuits for 16 hours, who had been in constant motion for 15 - ah, food for hungry throats!

"Satisfied and sunburned, we settled down to sleep ... perchance to dream of summits that would some day yield beneath our feet. "

---

### THE NATIONAL PARK - TASMANIA.

By J. Kirkby.

Fifty miles to the north west of Hobart lies a reserve of 40,000 acres which embraces the Mt. Field range, the highest point being 4,721'. Travelling from Hobart up the Derwent River valley there are excellent views of the orchards and hop fields which are protected by lanes of poplars and through which the river winds very beautifully. The oast houses contribute a quaint effect to the scene. In the background there is the Wellington range high and graceful, and protecting this peaceful and lovely valley.

The train bounced cheerily along the line and the friendly fruit trees poked their branches right into the carriage. Riding in this train is a fairly adventurous undertaking, as there is constant danger of blasting one's skull somewhere on the wooden walls - or seats.

From National Park station we started up the nine mile road walk to Lake Dobson. At Lake Fenton (3,450'), two miles from our destination, we discovered it had been snowing. Crossing Wombat Moor we saw the mists swirling around the black mountains beyond and the moon sending down eerie shafts of light which shimmered on the whitened snow poles and grass. At the end of the road at Lake Dobson we shot off into a sea of mud, tough, prickly richa and crunching snow around the lake shore. Mt. Mawson looked very

serene up above the further side of the lake, and the snow drifts very soft and friendly in the misty moonlight.

However that was no consolation to us in the early hours of the morning floundering around in the snow and richa up to our necks, and likely to take a sudden plunge at any moment, for there were small lakes and mud pools where there wasn't richa. By great good fortune we eventually found the hut and thankfully entered its portals. This hut is a very splendid affair and was built by the Hobart Walking Club. It is mainly used the winter for skiing but is delightfully situated for a summer holiday. Built on a hillock at the edge of the lake, it looks right up to Mt. Mawson, and is set in amongst King Billy pines and pandanni. As Ray had been a member of the Club we were offered its use and very grateful we were for its shelter and comfort. The Walking Club own two other huts, one at Mt. Rufus in the Reserve, and one on Mt. Wellington.

Our first day was only half a day, as we had slept in fairly late. We climbed Mt. Mawson and saw some interesting views indicating some of the ruggedness of the country, but the mists came down very suddenly and gave us a little lesson in how easy it is to get lost in such circumstances. We reached the hut wet and cold. During the night it snowed lightly and the next morning was cold and crisp. Once again we climbed Mt. Mawson and set off for Mt. Field West about five miles distant. The route is marked out in snow poles and cairns. This is a favourite run for the skier. Ray himself had skied here some years ago but, (he said) was so engrossed in not slipping down the mountain sides, that the views were new to him also.

We set off in a snow storm. All the little pools were encrusted in ice and there was not a dry spot to be seen. The pineapple grass was a welcome stepping stone. We crossed some snow drifts which were hanging on the side of the mountain. Cracks in the drifts were showing blue, indicating some future avalanche. The big Lake Seal spread itself below the mountain and other smaller lakes were scattered around in odd places. Tarns and moraines were in great abundance. By means of a col we crossed the tops and began to ascend Mt. Field west, which is a plateau like formation with a peak on one end. The sides of the plateau were almost terrifying in their fierceness, but our approach was across the ridge. Having rounded great stretches of moraine we came out on to the moor like tops. These are covered with colourful snow grass, ice encrusted bushes, creeping pines and plush cushion plants of brilliant emerald shades, tiny snow flowers and water.

From the peak at the end of the plateau there was a magnificent panorama of all the ranges to the south, west and north. The peaks of the Reserve stood out and could have been clearly seen on a fine day. Most of the ranges looked fierce and sharp toothed, and the whole scene was wild in the extreme.

In the afternoon we explored a place called the Tarn Shelf. Perched half way up the mountain's walls this shelf holds a number of lakes, the waters of which by circuitous routes, flow from one to the other and then pour out in a surging torrent to the large lakes below. Some of the edges of the lakes have a pleasant lawn like appearance with small pines dotted around in groups, the whole scene looking as though it belonged to a fairy tale. This shelf is of particular interest to geologists, as is the whole of the Park. It is said that sapping by ice erosion and not glacier movements is the explanation for such a phenomenon. In ancient times a solid area of ice had formed and the melting edges caused the building up of cirques (natural amphitheatres). Most of the lake formation is due to a succession of cirques. In some places the Shelf drops away sheer to the floor - 1,200' below.

During the remainder of our stay in the Park we explored some of the lakes from the ground floor and looked up to the rugged grandeur of the rock formation from which we had previously looked down. From Mt. Field East (another plateau like formation with a peak on the end) the visibility was better than at Mt. Field West, and we think we saw Frenchman's Cap away on the skyline. This was possibly correct for at Frenchman's we could pick out the Field range. The Reserve was again located by the patches of snow glinting in the misty sunshine. To the east there was a glimpse of rural scenery (rare in Tasmania) and to the south we spotted the Hartz area, also to be visited later.

We returned to Hobart envying those lucky people who could reach these mountains so easily (at least by car) and who could be thrilled once more by a trip to Mt. Field West.

THE FIELD WEEK-END at Marley was most enjoyable. The idea of converting Field Week ends into ordinary easy walks mixed with instruction has proved popular both with prospectives and with members (there were as many members as prospectives present). The members, particularly the new ones, learnt a lot. Roley's First Aid Lecture is a model of practical simplicity and should be heard by every member. It may very well become the indirect means of saving a Bush Walker's life. Instruction to a group of two or three on an actual walk is the only real way of teaching map-reading. And, just as important as the instruction, is the fact that it enables old members, new members and prospectives to get to know each other. As every Bush Walker knows, the only way to get to know Club members is to walk with them.

It was good to see Bill Henley back in the Club Room after his recent long illness. We hope he is able to enjoy good camping once more. Wal Jones, another who has had a long spell in hospital is now convalescing by means of a coastal motor tour. We hope he too is back in the Club before long.

FISHING MEMOIRS

by "Rex"

It all started three years ago when we went South for Christmas. We sat dangling our legs over the edge of a 50 ft. pier at Red Head on a hot afternoon, and watched fish of all sizes and descriptions swimming in the cool green translucent depths beneath. As we cast the lines they robbed us of our bait with lightning swiftness, until with appeased appetites they disappeared, and we reluctantly returned fishless to the camp.

The following year fishing at Pebbly Beach is remembered as an idyllic dream. Dennis and Alex hauled in the fish and I regularly plodded around the golden sanded beaches to carry back the catch.

Christmas 1947 we had high hopes of fish supplementing the food list, but they were warned of our approach and were not biting. On Christmas day Eric commenced well and landed a drummer, just the right size for three hungry bushwalkers; we gazed lovingly at it while it nosed about in an exquisite rock pool, when suddenly a turbulent wave in a blind eddy crashed over the rocks and our breakfast returned to the ocean once more.

That afternoon, using for bait some dehydrated worms, and three crabs that I had wickedly murdered, we tried every headland for a few miles down the coast. A red-bellied black snake slid under a rocky ledge and all efforts to dislodge him failed: such a shame for he would have made a lovely worm to entice the big ones with. Soon after a groper (many arms long) arose to the surface and sneered at us passing by. Alex threw in a worm on the end of his line, but the groper only laughed and disappeared into the weeds.

The next day, still undaunted and spurred on with false hopes, we revisited old haunts at Pebbly Beach, but were still unsuccessful, and sunburnt noses were the only result, so that evening we tried again. It was a lovely night - a lavish moon sparkled all the waters and its silver rays lit the beach, while the constant boom of the surging breakers broke the eerie stillness. Eric and Alex cast their lines from the beach - Eric landed a large piece of seaweed, and as it was the only sort of fish biting we made for the rocks. Evidently the fish keep early hours in this region (we city dwellers forget the maxims of country living). The sea wind proving chill I left the others striving hard to awaken aquatic life, and picked my way through the drift wood and brown weed stranded by the tide, and then through the tall Spotted Gums of the forest, silent sentinels to our camp. Soon the billy was boiling and Alex and Norma were not long in following me. Eric persevered much longer, probably ambitious to supply the whole camp with fish, or perhaps he was dancing with the mermaids, but he returned ruefully with only a very knotted line.

Breaking camp Ray sniffed disdainfully as Alex dug a hole to bury some pungent smelling worms. But we did not go fishless - that day lunch consisted of tinned sardines!

-----

CHRISTMAS, 1947.

By Edna Garrad.

Christmas Day, 1947, was certainly "different". We left Cooma under the wing of Cecil Constance - a portion of the party by car and the balance in his "blitz buggy". After passing through Adaminaby we all transferred to the "blitz" and left the road to traverse a very rough track leading in the direction of Farm Ridge Hut. It was amazing what that truck could do. Over fallen branches, through creeks and marshes, we rocked and swayed with abandon. If there was a tree across the track, Constance jumped out and cut it in two, and on we went again.

The weather was far from the hot summer's day we expect for Christmas. We had rain, snow, hail, wind and piercing cold. Most of the party remained under a tarpaulin for protection, but I kept my head out and was rewarded with visions of lovely hillsides covered with Sorrell in all shades of red, clover sprinkled with buttercups, and a short mauve-flowered plant that I could not identify.

After some hours we came to a very marshy creek near McLean's Hut, and Constance decided the "blitz" could go no further. We alighted and staggered to the hut. I had been seated on the spare tyre, and in imagination I can still feel the tread of that tyre. It was not a comfortable cushion.

Whilst we ate our lunch the snow commenced to fall in earnest, and soon the ground and shrubs were lightly covered. It made a delightful picture. It was obviously not camping weather, and as the available space in the hut was limited it was decided that portion of the party go on to Farm Ridge Hut. I started off with one of the men who was actually staying in McLean's Hut, but wanted to check the track. We assumed that the others would follow but it transpired that they took a different route. It rained most of the time and was still very cold. We reached the Doubtful River. To my horror and discomfort the water was waist high and icy cold. However, there was nothing for it but to wade across and hope you would <sup>not</sup> be swept off your feet. We eventually reached Farm Ridge Hut and found evidence that a stockman was in occupation. We waited about half an hour and there was no sign of the stockman or the rest of the party. I was not impressed with the look of the hut or the thought of spending the night with the missing stockman, and as it appeared by now that the balance of the party were not going to arrive and were probably camping elsewhere, there was nothing for it but to turn back to the other hut - crossing once again the Doubtful River, which was still waist high and icy cold.

We had had little sleep on the train journey to Cooma and by this time were very tired. However as we strode back to McLean's for some reason we seemed to get new life. On our arrival the

group which had been left there fed us with lots of warm food and once we were in dry clothing life took on a different complexion.

As we stretched out on the floor in our sleeping bags (with corn sacks for a mattress), with the cheerful light of the fire flickering around the room, I was too comfortable, content and sleepy to even realise that it had been rather an unconventional Christmas Day.

### A GENTLE TRIP.

By Jaybee.

On the night of 21st September last I fell (or was pushed) out of a truck near Parramatta Station, slapped much dirt out of my rucksack and clothes and said to the dust-ghosted figure nearest "This is a moral for a story in the magazine!" Yet somehow - despite the overwhelming literary talent present - it failed to make the headlines until reported in the January issue under the title "Wilderness of the Colo and the New Road to Singleton".

If I have any complaint about the reporting it is that Max (for who else would be M.G.?) writes with the fine disdain of the man of action for human anguish, just as Julius Caesar wrote nothing of the suffering or labour into the accounts of his campaigns in Gaul. So, in the absence of a better furnished chronicler, I feel constrained to record the impressions of one of the weaker vessels who stumbled down the Colo behind Max.

The party, as I remember, numbered fourteen, including three lasses, and the start on Friday night was quite unalarming. Electric train to Granville, local steam train to Windsor and out along the strategic highway to a spot eight miles beyond the Colo at Moran's Rock, followed by night camp with reveille about six a.m. and onward movement at oh seven three oh. Therewith the first panic when the leader notified impending movement whilst our food party was dallying over the rolled oats, with sausages and eggs still to do, and the tent yet pitched.

The truck set us down some 5.8 miles (correct, M.G.?) beyond Parr's Brush and with a minimum of delay we were pressing on into desolate upland scrub, relieved at that season by the reds and yellows of countless pea-type wildflowers. We intersected a timber-getter's trail beside a marshy creek and followed it for over an hour before the leader manifested uneasiness. We were heading too far north and veering east instead of almost due west. So we crossed a low spur and dropped down another marshy creek

bed until we encountered our trail of almost two hours earlier. After some dithering around at this point - identifiable at our several returns by a tumbledown log bridge over the creek (variously styled the Bridge of Signs or the Pons Asinorum), we retired back along our trail.

Now, those who have walked with Max know that this sort of thing just doesn't happen on his trips: apart from being a superlatively comfortable leader for the frail of limb to follow, his unerring nose for direction makes a lost trail seem so improbable that I still feel it was just tossed in gratuitously to make the week-end's mileage look more formidable, possibly as a sop to the dignity of the prospectives. At all events, with suspicious facility, Max now selected the correct stream and we lunched at the first fall on Angorawa Creek at 12.30.

Being anything but good at rock-hopping I spent the afternoon well down near the tail of the party as we plunged down into the spectacular sandstone gorge of Angorawa. One regretted walking against the clock - there was so much in the way of sunlit, orange-hued and honeycombed cliff faces to admire. It was a reasonably strenuous piece of walking and we were luxuriating in the thought of a wonderful, restful, early night camp when we emerged in the rift of the Colo River four-thirtyish. Wishful thinking - it was decreed that we should bash on, bearing water-bags of precious Angorawa water, floundering through the creeper-snarled vegetation of the west bank of the Colo.

Now, there's far worse in <sup>the</sup> way of clotted scrub in the tropics, or even in the rain forest of the Illawarra Ranges, but then even Mad dogs and Englishmen don't try to penetrate tropic scrub when there's generally a trail of sorts: and I wouldn't wish my worst enemy a passage through the lantana-cum-blackberry thickets of the Coast. Any road, that mile of the Colo demanded an hour and a half of desperate effort and the remaining dregs of our energy, as we plunged into screened watercourses, through tall, rank grasses and creeper tangles, carrying, of course, our bags of Angorawa water.

Somewhere along this via dolorosa Ken Meadowe's hearing aid allegedly packed up. I haven't determined whether his soft heart could no longer endure the groans and screams of the lacerated, or whether it was a contrivance to allow one of the women-folk to express herself with unbridled emphasis on the subject of the Colo. Towards nightfall we all variously limped, walked, stumbled and crawled into the camping spot and set about the chores of cooking with numb, mechanical movements.

Had Max quoted the Churchillian blood, sweat and tears, he could not have been far awry. Blood there was aplenty from abraded shins: sweat - yes, decidedly: and two at least of the three lasses shed a furtive tear of sheer exhaustion that evening. The third wench, made of sterner stuff, sat before the fire,

15.  
contemplating her dirty, bare feet and singing a croaky dirge about a dog that stole a sausage and his merited fate. The male members would not acknowledge their weariness so readily. Max, of course, had nothing to admit, and probably a couple of the others then in training for a marathon Katoomba-Kanangra-Katoomba sprint were in fair shape, but the rest of the party eyed one another with appraising gaze - much as escaped convict Gabbett must have done as he looked for the weakest member of his team and reached for his axe. One of our tent fellows admitted in his sleep that night "Oh, I've had it ... I've had it."

The crackling of Max's fire was sufficient to rouse the whole party. Seldom have I seen walkers display such alacrity in crawling out of sleeping bags. She of the croaking voice - normally removed manually from her nocturnal cocoon after due warning - was astir about 5.30. No one wanted to be trailing too far behind Max in that savage terrain. Now, behold the virtue of sleep. We moved off quite restored and even briskly, forded the river again, and scaled a steep gulley near Island Trig. After Lunch No.1 at 10 a.m. we followed Max through a labyrinthine ridge system, with glimpses of far, tortuous gorges on the south and west. The upland going seemed ridiculously easy after the Colo, yet it added to the tracery of scratches on our shins, so that one of the girls had to wear stockings to work the following day, not that she was ashamed of the red badge of courage, but because it would have been too excruciating to scrub away the black stains of charred twigs from the raw skin.

Then it was down to the river again, and across and along and across once more to Lunch No.2 at Hungryway Creek about 3 p.m. So far I was surprised to see how well the party was faring and wondering whether their leg muscles were becoming as acutely aware of the undulations in the ground as mine. The answer was evident in the trailing feet as we breasted the last spur. One of the veterans of the party observed that it was one of the severest official trips in a long while, and he was glad Max was the leader. With all of which I concurred.

So it was down to the Colo again, and out to Armstrong's Orchard, into the truck, the sweet night wind, the cramped muscles, the road throwing up its smoky pollution to blot out a wonderful starlit sky. We were a motley, grimy crew in the train eating chocolate, making feeble, tired jests. One of the lasses practically folding up with unutterable weariness, asked what I was doing on 6 Hour Week-end.

"Going to Uraterer - Max and Roley's show", I told her.

"Oh," she remarked, ever so sweetly, "another Gentle trip?"

---

SONNET TO NORTH ERA

by Allan Hardie

O Era North, thy weary fight is on,  
 To keep thy native beauty reigning free  
 From man's accursed ingenuity,  
 As shacks he builds, and strives to jettison  
 What still remains of Nature's bastion.  
 From Sydney's tireless din we hie to thee;  
 O'er fringed paths beside the grassy tree;  
 And 'neath thy cabbage-palms encamped, we don  
 Our costumes scant, the crisping foam to woo.  
 Alone of Illawarra's peerless strand  
 Near-urban, thou to primal glory true  
 Dost keep, unspoiled by man's destructive hand.  
 Oh may thy sun-kissed dunes and verdant hills  
 Escape for aye iconoclastic wills!

FEDERATION NOTES

by Brian Harvey

Rifles: Through representations by Federation .303 rifles and ammunition are to be strictly controlled by amended legislation to be brought down shortly.

Kurnell Peninsula: Reservation was supported with recommendation for action to prevent encroachment by sandhills.

Cumberland County Council: Representative to address Federation Council apropos "Green Belt" walking tracks. All walkers will be invited.

1948 "Bushwalker" Editor and staff are required for this year's edition.

Capitation levy of 6d proposed to supplement dwindling Federation funds.

Bushwalker War Memorial: Contingent upon large support for this walk and dedication of bronze tablet at Splendour Rock, special arrangements will be made for a fitting ceremony. Let Brian Harvey know if you intend to be present. Donations of 6d. gratefully received towards cost.

"SAFE CLIMBING" is the title of a booklet prepared by the Tararua Club. It should be very valuable to S.B.W.'s visiting N.Z., who, by reports, risk their necks more than most

"THE MELBOURNE WALKER 1948" is to hand. Main interest to S.B.W. readers would probably be articles on walks in country across the Murray from Kosciusko, also round Mt. Howitt, Bogong and other places of interest. "WAYFARING," journal of the Melbourne Women's Walking Club describes an interesting trip to the Pilot and other mountains south of Kosciusko.

CAMPING FEE IN NATIONAL PARK: 2/6 per tent was charged at the Mar-loy Field week-end. Alleged reason for charge is to make hostellers use the hostel instead of camping.

17.

THE QUIZZERS QUIZZED: At the conclusion of the Grand Quiz last Friday, one of the audience, Dot Butler, turned upon the Quiz Masters (Ray Kirkby and Eric Rowen), who proved quite incapable of the most elementary calculations concerning the fluctuating avoirdupois of the Bigger family. Any mutt should have known that Mr. Bigger was Far-ther bigger, that Baby Bigger was little bigger and that, on the sad demise of Mr. Bigger, Baby Bigger was then Far-ther-less. But, separated from their encyclopedias, the quizzers failed miserably in this elementary test of intelligence.

However Eric thought up some really aggravating questions - the sort that everyone knows they know, but just can't recall at the moment - e.g. what won the Caulfield Cup last year and what won the Melbourne Cup? Who designed Princess Elizabeth's wedding dress? What is blandfordia nobilis? Who conducted the orchestra in Fantasia ("Leopold Tchaikovsky" answered the quizzee) Who is the Earl of Greenwich? Who was the runner who recently came from Japan? What did Sir Walter Raleigh, Daniel Defoe and John Bunyan have in common?

The result was no indication of the ability of the opposing teams, because the girls won by 7 to 5. The prizes were plastic tucker bags.

#### DEATH FROM SNAKEBITE.

We extend sympathy to the relatives and Clubmates of Dorothy Vera Townson, a member of the Rucksack Club, who died from snake-bite on the Cradle Mountain - Lake St. Clair track on January 8th.

According to the report in the Tasmanian "Mercury" she was walking with Alfred Watkins and Sam Hinde, and lagged behind after they had left Pelion Hut. When the two men went back to look for her they found that she had been bitten twice on the lower right leg by a snake, believed to be a tiger snake. The snake hung on and bruised her leg after the second strike. Though the punctures were lacerated and tourniquets applied the treatment was ineffective and Miss Townson died at 4.30 a.m. next morning - 18 hours later.

Three members of the Tasmanian Police Force, aided by tourists, carried the body about 24 miles in 16 hours. Because of the nature of the track only two bearers could handle the stretcher at a time. At times the bearers sank to their knees in mud, and in the arduous mountain climbing covered less than a mile an hour.

Mr. F. Smithies, a member of the Cradle Mountain - Lake St. Clair National Park Board, said that many walkers visiting Tasmania from the Mainland were not suitably attired. Brief shorts and light shoes might be suitable for hiking in Mainland districts but in the Tasmanian bush walkers should wear boots and slacks as a protection against weather, scrub and snakes.

BUSH CORNER

Rain! Rain! Rain! what a summer we've had. The ground has had the best soaking it has had for years. The creeks flow and the swamps are brimming. The springs are running and look like running for the rest of the summer. How the bush revels in this weather too. It is my opinion that the majority of bush plants in the sandstone area love wet weather. They certainly thrive on it. Plants which just hold their own in dry times grow like mad in a wet spell. This has happened in my back garden. All the seedlings planted out have romped along and have doubled and trebled in size in a month or two. Look out for news next year folks when they all begin to flower (if they do flower).

The only casualties were a woody pear seedling which "damped off" and died and Sturt's Desert Pea seedlings and a few boronias which have sprung up unbidden in odd corners.

Its a wonderful season!

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

SPECIAL

English proofed Nylon Cape groundsheets.  
Weight only 11 ounces. Price 38/6

PADDY PALLIN

CAMP GEAR FOR WALKERS

327 George St.,

Phone BX3595

SYDNEY