

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to the Sydney Bush Walkers, c/- Ingersoll Hall, 256 Crown Street, Sydney.
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AT OUR DECEMBER MEETING

At the commencement of the meeting four new members - John Luxton, Dr. Harry Lorang, Pamela Baker and Michael Elphick were welcomed by the President.

In correspondence the President told us that he had written a letter to the Rector of St. Alban's Church conveying our sympathy to the parents of the lads who lost their lives at Perrys. Later in the meeting Bill Rogers moved that we donate £5 to the Blue Mountains Council Relief Fund. The motion was carried and, on a motion by Jim Hooper, it was decided that our Federation delegates suggest at the next meeting that the other Club's might make a donation too.

Tom Moppett told us that Nadgee - an area of 28,000 acres about 40 miles South of Bega - was to be gazetted as a faunal reserve. The proposal for a National Parks Act had made some progress in that the Premier had requested the Minister for Lands to submit a minute to Cabinet on the subject. Latest news on the proposed road through the Blue Labyrinth was that it was not likely to be made, not because of any regard for scenery, but because there was not enough timber to make it pay. There was a likelihood that the proposed road along the

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Nepean would be used for taking out timber, and this was being looked into.

The President announced several Club Officers would not be continuing in their present positions next year. These were the Walks Secretary, Treasurer, the Club Secretaries and the President. Members were advised to give some thought to their successors.

Because of the difficulty of prospectives doing their test walks in December, January and February, the Committee had decided that this period of three months would not be counted as part of the six months allowed to prospectives to complete their walks requirements.

In her report on social doings Heather Joyce said that, though we had not been able to obtain the "Shell" film on the outback, the substitute entertainment - the showing of old slides - had been much enjoyed. Old members liked it because they recognised their friends and new members liked to see the old members because they looked funny in the walking outfits of the early days.

The Magazine Business Manager gave us a resumé of magazine finances. Not only was the magazine growing bigger, but costs continued to rise. He proposed a rise in price, the proposal was seconded and, without further comment passed unanimously. Bang went another 3d per reader per month without even a murmur of protest.

At the conclusion of the meeting George Gray presented the prizes to competitors in the car trial. First prize for superior guile, a handsome "lolly jar shop" with a jar for each rider in the winning car, went to the Rodgers and the Ashdowns. Second prize winners, the Maddens weren't at the meeting, but David Ingram was there to receive third prize - four drinking glasses. Consolation prizes were awarded to other competitors, including a Christmas stocking full of popcorn for the Editor.

"THE FOGGY FOGGY DO".

-- Bull Moose.

(This is a story of a dubious, fictitious character talking absolute piffle about a trip that never happened, therefore any similarity between the "F.F.D." and any other "Do", or any likeness to past or present members in these lousy characters is truly miraculouse.)

"Thick fog," he drawled, "you young blokes don't know what thick fogs are. Why I remember Easter '27. Or was it '47? On a trip from Kanangra to Glenbrook. Hang on, Blackheath. That was a trip. Yeah, we arrived Friday night - one of those clear as crystal Er-oh-merrie-brrrrr-gulp-phissly-shiv nights. Cripes it was cold. We camped at Kanangra Brook about half a mile or was it more? Say five miles above the falls. Just wandered down a ridge and found a camp site on a nice little flat - vacant possession - tons of wood and water near at hand. Just the spot to put in a night without enough comfort to make it hard for an early start next morning.

"Six of us, I think, cramped onto this campsite. Let's see, there was Bert, one of the old and bold. That young couple Sylvia and Sid who made quite a splash together on the Kowmung trip. Shirley, commonly called "Glamour Pants". Frank the New Zealander without a sleeping bag - he had an inner bag too. - Get it? What a beauty. With outer bag. - Oh well, let's see - there was that prospective Steve with the long legs and no bottom in his water bag. He later married that girl from the Y.W.C.A. No the Rucksack Club - some other club anyway. They live out near Sutherland somewhere - Yes, Bulli, that's it. Say that makes six and myself - seven. Struth, coulda swore there were only six of us.

"Well to make a short story long, it was foggy next morning. Fog like you never see these days. You c'n laugh, but although none of us are like Hooper, we didn't wake till 11 a.m. and even then we needed torches to see our watches. While I fanned a fire to life the prospective went for some water. The fire lit. I waited - cooed - yelled but alas it looked as though we'd lost the prospective before the walk had started. When I broke the news to the party still in "bed" the concern was in tents. We huddled over the smokey fire for three or was it four hours waiting for his return, each taking turns to cooee at intervals of five minutes and all giving a chorus of cooees on the hour. Finally he returned and over a late brunch we planned the future of our trip. It was now later afternoon and not light enough to make it worthwhile opening our eyes.

"The fire had to be periodically relit, as the fog was so thick it fathered - I mean smothered it, causing the party to think up a brand new set of expressions relating to fires. We also had difficulty in breathing as the fog condensed in the throat and nose almost drowning us. So improvised masks were used. All sorts of garments came into play, but they were all out done by the Kiwi's long underpants that doubled as mask and balaclava.

"We decided to do a reckon - a reconnt - have a look around the campsite for wood and perhaps a better campsite and as we didn't want to repeat the morning's performance we tied Old Bert to a length of tent cord, some 40 ft. and he would do a complete circuit of the campsite, this being possible as we remembered the very low scrub on Friday evening. Poor Old Bert unhappily moved out of the haze of the fire and started on his circuit, mumbling something about "an old dog for a hard road" and "this is my last trip". His progress through the scrub could be followed by the snapping of branches and the language grew progressively worse, till three quarters of the way around the circle permitted by the tent cord there was a splash and a string of oaths querying the parenthood of the leader and many physical impossibilities relating to Kanangra Ck. - Walking - the President and the Suez Canal. How this latter became involved we weren't brave enough to ask as he returned dripping wet, still mumbling - dived into his tent and all that was heard from that direction for two days was the pop of a cork and bubbling sounds issuing forth. Or was it fifth?

"The next day passed uneventfully, except for the drawing up of a roster for relighting the fire and fetching water from the creek. We also organised some system like gents one cord's length right, women ditto left.

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"Monday was a sorry sight. Our moral was completely broken - food was running out and we were beginning to think the fog would never lift.

"Tuesday lunch time found us still sitting there wondering about our jobs - food- the S. & R. madly searching along the Cox, when suddenly Old Bert, who had just emerged from his tent after his ducking, gave a roar like M.G.M.'s lion with a sore throat. He had walked face first into an eel who presumably had swam out of the creek into the fog. This gives you some idea how thick the fog was. As though this was the signal the fog cleared and the eel fell to the ground. It was a very big one but we couldn't weigh it for eels don't have scales. However we grilled it over the fire and all ate our fill. The sun by this time was shining brightly so we packed up and moved off."

This story is not notarized as the teller is 70 years of age and too young to begin to lie about eels, but I do hope he made his point clear that it can get very foggy at Kanangra. Or has this been mist?

YOUR WALKING GUIDE

Walk No.

- 3 Main objective is to swim through Block-up (with gear). Leader suggests the use of flippers. Walking is generally of a medium nature. One ascent and descent involved, approx. 1300 ft. each. Waterproofing of gear desirable. Return fare 39/9
- 4 All rock climbing with ropes. Fares 3/6 return from Queens Square. Of course 1/9 if you don't return.
- 6 Going will be mostly rough. Pace will be consistent if trip is to be done in three days. Bolder scrambling and swimming with gear involved. Medium to rough ridges lead in and out of Kowmung. Private transport will be used, so check with leader.
- 7 Seven days notice required. Excellent three day walk for prospectives and of course active members. Medium type walking with reasonable hill climbing. With the changing scenery, good opportunities are available for the prospective. Fares approx. 32/-.
8. Easy to medium track and river walking all the way. Area is very photographic. Return fares Hilltop 21/9. Possibility of having to hitch out of Burragorang. However reports from recent walks in this area have proved lifts to be plentiful.
9. Instructional Weekend. Usual campfire, first-aid and map reading lectures. Distance to be walked is approx. 465 yds. Swimming and surfing. Bus or car from Waterfall to Garie Beach. Don't forget your hat or sunburn cream. Fares approx 9/-.
10. This trip is of an exploratory nature. Considerable climbing and abseiling involved. Also swimming in Canyon 300 to 400 yds. Light pack very desirable. Walk in to head of Canyon and out of Blue Gum is medium. Return fare 24/9.

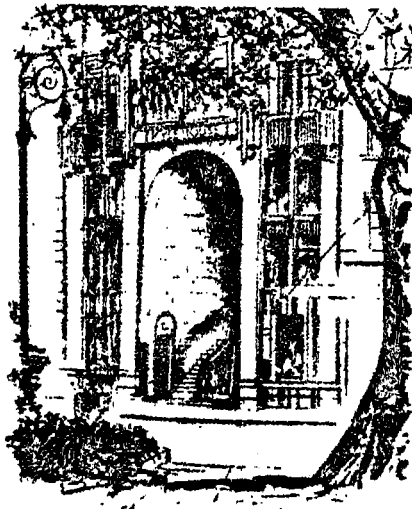
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Walk No.

11. Check with leader re train and ferry times. Combined fares approx. 18/6. Easy track walking from Kilcare to Maitland Bay. Swimming and sunbathing. Remember your "mosi" repellent.

12 Easy to medium tracks. Medium climbs in and out of coastal beaches. Swimming - Era-Burning Palms. Recommended walk for prospectives. Return fare approx. 11/2. This part of South Coast is very picturesque.

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture by the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes
By the deep sea, and magic in its roar.
I love not man the less but nature more
From these our interviews in which I steal
From all I may be and have been before
To mingle with the universe and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

NOVEMBER WALKS REPORT

B. Anderson
Walks Secretary.

Considering the extremely hot weekends and the ever menacing bushfires, it's not surprising to find that only seven of the 15 programmed walks ventured forth during November.

Actually four were cancelled due to the bushfires, the other four due to lack of starters. However despite the fires and hot weather a total of 92 charlies still managed to chunder along on the seven walks.

The month started quite well with both programmed walks going as planned. Eric Pegram with one member and one prospective reported a pleasant weekend at Frazer Park despite having to cancel their spear-fishing venture due to the dirty condition of the water.

Down south at Era, Brian Harvey with 9 members and 12 prospectives held the November Instruction weekend. Brian led the walk for Betty Sisley who was unable to make it. The usual Campfire Craft talk was given on the Saturday night followed by, on Sunday, lectures on First Aid and Map Reading given by Jack Gentle.

After hearing that a prospective was sick after drinking lemonade at the instructional I now feel that provision should be made on future instructionals for a lecture on "What to Guzzle in the Bush".

Actually I have arranged with two of the Club's most serious sober members to give this lecture. They are Messrs Hooper & Rigby.

Only one walk set forth the following weekend. This was Jack Gentle's trip over Mt. Solitary. Jack had in two 9 members, one Irish prospective, one English prospective, one Canadian prospective and three ordinary garden type Aussie prospectives. From reports it now appears that the creeks around Kedumba crossing and Chinaman's Cave Ck. are dried up.

On November 17th Alan Abbott with his party of 6 set off to Euroka, thence to the Nepean River, returning to Glenbrook via Glenbrook Gorge. However, this is as much as can be reported. Except I can make an observation. That is, that the Admiral is only an amateur compared to Alan when it comes to losing bods in the bush. Where it took the Admiral three days to lose his party it only took Alan three hours.

Although the temperatures were over the 100 mark John White & Jim Brown still led their respective walks the following weekend. John reported his trip with 2 prospectives proceeded along Red Ledge up Mitchell Ck. O.K. However most of this area has been burnt out and the creeks are rapidly drying up. The tree that gives easy access up Mitchell Ck. is unscared.

The only activity during the last weekend was the Car Trial. Needless to say the event could be summed up as an outstanding success for the organisers but a hell of a trial for the bods trying to win.

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BATTLE WITHOUT GUNS

SHORT STORY

by B. Quigley

Before me lay the long, straight road beckoning me on into the wavering blue distance. I was enjoying this, my first real walk in years and looked forward to the solitude of the Wild Dog country after the hubbub of city life.

It was warm for winter and the earth sang under the strong sun. As I drew nearer the mountains a cool breeze sprang up carrying the sharp, clean smell of gumleaves. I decided to have a smoke in the shade of a large stringybark, and had taken a few pulls at a cigarette when I noticed somebody trudging along the road about half a mile away. When he came a bit closer I knew who it was. There could be no mistaking that strange, fanatical, half-naked figure. My heart sank. It was Alf Turner.

Alf is the bane of all bushwalkers' lives, and it disgusted me to think that he too had discovered this place which I had kept a closely guarded secret for many years. Wild Dog Gorge is only to be found on Military contour maps - there's no blazed trail and you have to find your way there by compass. I had even named some of the creeks myself in a burst of pioneering egotism. As Alf Turner came nearer I began

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to curse the fraternity of the road - the fellowship of the bush and all that sort of stuff.

You get to know everyone on the road after a while whether they belong to your particular club or not, and although Alf is an "unattached walker", the phrase doesn't suit him because he attaches himself to a party like a leech. He's one of those chaps who takes up such things as politics, art and music and wears them like a badge. I can recall one wet Easter when a crowd of us put up at a pub for the night and Alf sang lieder loudly in the bathroom and alarmed conservative old ladies with his radical views on free love and politics in the lounge.

No one, I reflected bitterly, could create as much hostility in a year as Alf Turner could collect around him in an hour. I remembered too, many a quiet campfire get-together which had been ruined by the sudden emergence of Alf who could repeat from memory every bush ballad ever written. And at night under the stars such efforts as "Dangerous Dan McGrew" and "The Man from Snowy River" would literally flow from him in a vast, unending monotone. But he was tolerated because I think everyone has a kind of sneaking pity for the bore. They pity his loneliness - his tremendous but futile efforts to win friends.

But putting up with Alf when you're on your own was another proposition - a very much worse proposition. I thought of pretending I was on my way back but soon dismissed this idea - he'd probably seen me walking ahead of him. Leaning against the rustling stringybark I resigned myself to three days of Alf Turner. He yelled an enthusiastic greeting some yards off.

"'lo, Alf," I replied gruffly. He asked the inevitable questions about my War Service.

"Tired of the Navy," I retorted ungraciously. He tried again:

"Heard you won the D.S.C., Ted. Congratulations. Can't say I'm surprised - you were always game."

"Thanks, Alf," I said, grudging each word as it left my mouth.

After a time I think even Alf realized I didn't want to talk. He proved a good pace-maker and I was content to follow his measured stride at sufficient distance to make conversation difficult. I noticed that he hadn't changed much since I saw him eight years ago. I knew he must be well over fifty now, but his haversack still bulged with gear and the usual coil of rope dangled loosely from one of the leather straps. He had taken many a teasing about all the equipment he carried - but especially about that rope because he was not a rock climber and had never had occasion to use it.

Alf's broad torso was bared to the weather and ludicrously supported on thin, gangling legs, while right in the centre of his bald head stood a wisp of grey hair which insisted on remaining upright. With long arms swinging vigorously at his side and the gargantuan pack on his muscular back he resembled a sort of cross between Gandhi and Don Quixote. These were the kind of nitwits, I thought, resentfully, who made bushwalkers a laughing stock.

We had arrived at the place where the road peters out, giving way to a series of cattle pads, and soon we began to descend the walls of Deaths Defile. Wild Dog Ridge loomed straight ahead. It seemed to rise sheer from the bed of the river that foamed and leaped beneath it. Stunted gums clung to its sides at rare intervals. Turner was picking his way with easy confidence - you could see that he knew every inch of the ground. But to me the whole country had changed, somehow. It was more precipitous than I had imagined. Almost as if he guessed my thoughts, Alf shouted out:

"Been a couple of landslides here lately. Slows you up".

We had lunch at the bottom of the Defile and began to ascend Wild Dog about three o'clock. The first hundred feet was fairly easy but after that it was like trying to climb a gigantic ant-bed. You couldn't help admiring Alf. The man was able to find toe-hold in ground only fit for wallabies. But then it was a matter of balance mostly and balance, I knew, depended a lot on confidence in your own ability. While I sweated and strained I realized that my long spell from walking had destroyed this confidence.

Round me on all sides lay barren hills. They might have been the mountains of the moon so bare and rugged they looked as they shouldered that serene sky. Once I had found peace in these hills, but now they were like the ramparts of a hostile citadel. Just then a kookaburra laughed derisively high up on the ridge and in that moment I felt no longer big enough to accept the challenge of this hard, comfortless land. Metaphorically speaking, it took me up by the seat of the pants and said, "How now, little D.S.C. winner - here's a battle without guns. What are you going to do about it?"

Then I looked down - right down into that defile called Deaths, and it seemed bottomless. The further we went the less foothold there was in the shifting shale. I had been right through the War - our ship had been torpedoed and we'd had some pretty hot engagements. Yet here I was experiencing a sick, panicky fear for the first time in my thirty-four arrogant years. Alf was climbing slowly - doggedly, and the sight of him angered me.

"Blast him!" I muttered, "If he can do it so can I."

For the next twenty yards there wasn't even a blade of grass to hang on to. I tried to push myself forward and upward. All the time my haversack was weighing me down. Swaying a bit, I struggled for foothold in the dry, pebbly surface. It gave beneath me. In a frenzy of fear I dug my nails into that treacherous earth; but I felt myself sliding - slowly at first, then faster - faster. I was sliding down - down to where the rushing waters crashed over jagged rocks - down into the darkness of Death's Defile. There was a roaring in my ears. I must have cried out but I don't remember. I heard a voice - Alf's voice. I suppose he was shouting but it seemed like a whisper - an insistent, despairing whisper:

"The rope ...! The rope...! Grab the rope!"

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Then I became conscious of it - yards of rope - Alf's rope. The rope that had never been used before. I clutched at it desperately. It brought me up with a jerk. I nearly lost my grip on it. The pack made me feel top-heavy. Then I saw Alf's bald head peering down at me. It was no longer something to snigger about - it was the most comforting sight I had seen in my life.

"Are you all right? Can you make it?" yelled Alf.

"Yes!" I answered and my voice sounded no louder to me than a falling gumleaf.

Alf began pulling from the other end and I started to shin up, making slow progress. I was badly shaken and it took a fair time to scramble up and join Alf. Fortunately he had reached the safety of a rocky ledge beside a stunted, leafless gumtree. Neither of us spoke for some minutes. I sat down carefully and started rolling myself a cigarette. My hands were shaking so much that I kept spilling the tobacco. Then I said thickly, not looking at him,

"Thanks, Alf."

Alf pretended not to hear. Puffing away at his pipe, he was silent for a while. Presently he observed,

"Nasty bit of work, Wild Dog. Always glad when I make this ledge with its scraggy old gum."

He thought for a moment, then went on:

"You know, I made three attempts at this Ridge before I finally beat it,"

He smiled at the recollection, and I was astonished that until now I had never noticed what a fine, determined mouth Alf Turner possessed, nor how discerning were those eyes behind their hornrimmed glasses. I guessed that Alf must have had that rope in his hands when I slipped - otherwise he couldn't have acted so quickly. He must have known all along that I wouldn't be able to make the Ridge When we rose to go Alf said casually,

"Take one end of this rope and pull on it if you feel yourself slipping".

"Look here, Alf ..." I protested. Then a surprising thing happened. Alf turned on me angrily,

"Shut up and do as I say!" he snapped.

I took my end of the rope without another word. Alf continued on, the harness of his rucksack creaking and his studded boots biting into the loose earth. We didn't have far to go and when we arrived at the top of the Ridge I looked with relief at the gentle, tree-lined slope which now led down to the Gorge. It was hot and we stretched

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out for a rest beneath a thick, leafy red gum. I had been one of the club's best walkers before the war and now I felt conscious of a sense of failure. I said gloomily,

"Guess I ought to give up this walking."

Alf spoke without heat. "Don't be a fool."

He sat up suddenly and lit his pipe before resuming, "The trouble with you younger blokes who've seen active service is, that you don't give your bodies a chance. You take 'em on a hell of a rough walk instead of starting on the easy tracks first. But you don't want to underestimate this country, Ted." Alf stared into the distance - to where the angular hills vanish in blue waves against the tremulous skyline.

"It's just like a battle really - the strength of man against the strenght of nature," he said softly.

I look at Alf, no longer seeing his idiosyncrasies, seeing only the essential bigness of the man.

"Reckon there are battles without guns Alf, and heroes without medals," I said quietly.

BREAKFAST AT ELEVEN

-- Jim Brown

The dormant white ant that resides in almost every walker rejoiced when leader John Scott announced that the Shoalhaven trip of May 31st-June 2nd was being reversed, with transport out from Marulan on Friday night to eliminate what would have been the long final road thump.

It wasn't till we were all sucked in and brisking south on the Friday night that we learned what Flick Leyden had persuaded the leader to do. Ah, sure, he had organised a car from Marulan to a place with the absurdly civilised name of Inverary Park, and in this one stroke reduced the walking mileage from about 45 to something a little over 30. But there his own white ant stunt ended, the Iron Curtain descended and -- "We'll camp in a sheep paddock -- no water -- go on about an hour to some huts for breakfast".

The crew, ten in number, was scattered into several compartments of the train. I helped spread the news, interested to see the reaction. Apart from a thin plaint from Snow Brown, there was scarcely a whimper or threat. I began to wonder if they had ever camped in a sheep paddock and walked an hour to breakfast. It seemed to me perfect white ant fodder.

Marulan at nine-twenty-odd was cold and a little misty, but not at all bad for the Southern Highlands only $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours before the first official day of winter. There was only one car available, so we went in two consignments, with the latter batch walking out to keep warm until the car could get back.

So we arrived at the gate of the sheep paddock, Margaret Innes, Frank Leyden and Barlow, Arthur Peters and self; and half an hour later in the rearguard, Heather Joyce, Jim Hooper, George Gray, Snow and the leader, Scott of the Shoalhaven. Actually, the sheep paddock was not quite so barren as I'd fancied: a few trees fringed the roadside, and we camped beneath them. A couple of tent crews found piles of blown grass against the rabbit-proof fences and formed deep couches -- (came the morning and when the tents were hauled down they bore a remarkable resemblance to those old broken down lounges you sometimes see on rubbish tips).

Ah, yes, came the morning. Were there no white ants or was it thought of breakfast an hour away? - we were walking about 7 a.m., before the long yellow sun rays struck across the lightly frosted paddocks. But on our spur and under the trees which had stirred all night in a small sharp westerly, there was no frost. It clung in the hollows as we walked generally east, first over the paddocks, then through poor timbered country, towards the Shoalhaven and water - and breakfast. We were to find all three were wynonymous (almost four hours later).

That's right! An hour from camp we came to the remains of the huts, as predicted by Frank Leyden. But someone had pulled the plug.

out of the sink, or blown a hole in the retaining wall of the dam, and a large expanse of reedy grasses that crackled with frost and drought was all that remained of the water supply. "Breakfast on the Shoalhaven" said Frank placidly, on onward we went.

The pace was brisk. The worms were gnawing, and becoming more insistent with the lapse of time. It was a dreary parched country we walked over, and though we were soon on a decided ridge, it had an interminable quality about it, and the hazy blue gulf of the Shoalhaven Gorge took a long long time to materialise. At least it was cool - so cool that we were at the top of the descent, looking on to the loop of the river around Big Horseshoe Bend, and across to the smoky steeps falling from Tonga before we began to peel off the anti-frost layers, so the pangs of thirst weren't added to the other complaints of the inner man.

Down we went, under the steeply inclined wire of a disused flying fox (how much habitation there must have been on this churlish, harsh river-side from time to time! - mining of one sort or another of course), to reach the river in two neatly segregated parties shortly after 11 a.m. We should have established contact, I suppose - but no one could think far beyond the aching void, so we breakfasted in two colonies. Rather, our group which included the leader, made a conjoint breakfast-cum-lunch under the threat of another waterless stage which may (and did) last all afternoon. The other five (so I gather) with more confidence than the state of the nation warranted, confined themselves to a super breakfast, with bland belief that there would really be a lunch halt.

All in all, it was past 12.30 when the coalesced party started up the long ridge across the river towards Tonga. The ridges from the Shoalhaven are all pretty much alike - little vegetation, green shiny rocks telling of upheavals and heat and pressure, standing on edge and crumbling into scree - and steep, so that the party plods doggedly. We topped our spur about 2.30, and when all were assembled and had caught our winds, went on to Tonga West Trig.

Now there's quite a lookout. Nothing like the orthodox Blue Mountains sandstone scarp. Not even particularly like other Shoalhaven lookouts except that it commands a fine view of the looping river and the soaring hills rising from it. No, at Tonga, you look far - across toward Goulburn and south to Currockbilly and Budawang: the hills to the south-west must be some of the high country beyond Canberra. It's a big sweep of ground, and on a clear windy afternoon really catches the imagination. And what d'you know - there are no bullet holes in the discs of Tonga West trig!

The way from Tonga West to Tonga Trig lies through fairly open forest along the rim overlooking Horse Shoe bend. Since it was past three o'clock and five miles or more to Tallowal Creek where we might expect a watered campsite, it was resolved to pass up Tonga, reputedly an inferior view, but maybe that was simply to reconcile us to missing it.

A little way short of the ridge going out to Tonga we dropped into the head of a valley, and swarmed up to a ridge running generally north of east. I recall this stage because as I came level with Snow he looked at me with a wan expression, asking "Do you feel alright? Gee, I'm hungry". He had been in the blithe party who had spared their breakfast in faith of a lunch, but to see the racehorse Snow visibly weakening was actually quite an encouragement to me! I instantly felt the years fall away, the spring come back to leg muscles that had not been sufficiently used for a time.

Our ridge ran out into a steep grassy gully with a small dry creek bed - the upper part of Tonga Creek flowing south in a big loop to join the Shoalhaven. We rested briefly for it was 4.30, with sun-down at five, and still a mile or so to the Tallowal road. Oh, yes, there's a road in to Tallowal, north and south about 18 miles along the ridge towards the Nowra-Nerriga road. At the top of the next rise we turned north east along the spur and shortly came to a fence heading only a few degrees east of the desired bearing. We hustled along the smooth, beaten animal pad beside it for half a mile, then it swung away. The last red sunset light, which had been over my left shoulder, went plumb behind me. Of course we couldn't yet desert our fence, and though Frank Leyden a little further back was growing agitated at our deviation, we stuck with the fence hopefully for a few hundred yards more.

When finally we could no longer kid ourselves that it would come good we halted, and started to look for a trail bending to the north. This brought up the leader and Frank who promptly shoo-ed us on to a north east bearing, which we maintained (within a plus or minus 20 degrees or so) until we came on to a regular Pitt Street (you'd get a Land Rover along it) which in turn ran on to the main Tallowal highway (good for 5 mph in a four wheel drive vehicle).

In failing light we strode north, investigating and then passing one very muddy waterhole in a creek bed, and entering the big clearing towards Tallowal as the stars came out. At just on six o'clock we found water, and in spite of references to liver fluke and hydattids in sheep country, we drew from the stream and climbed into the timber above to camp. It had been quite a day.

Yes, quite enough of a day, and most of us were content to cook sedately around the several fires, stretch out a while and yarn, and then to sleeping bag. A comfortable night, not too chill, with a small westerly shivering the tree canopy and stabilising the temperature.

With the exception of Tallowal Gorge, Sunday was for me perhaps less exciting, because I knew it all from another time. But the Shoalhaven country always has its intriguing feature, with its placid, near flat tops suddenly crashing into the river ravine. That's how it is at Tallowal. We walked ten or fifteen minutes from our camp across the big clearing to the farm, situated in a deceptively undulating landscape, chatted a short time with the three men in residence "inspected" some of their livestock, ranging from horses to dogs, cats and poultry, and moved off towards the lookout, marvelling at the prodigal number of dogs and motor vehicles of assorted vintages.

A glimpse of distance through a fringe of tall trees skirting the paddock promised a reasonable view, and we downed packs and strode through the thin forest belt. In an old Federation Annual of some 16 or 17 years ago a writer calls Tallowal "The Kanangra of the South" and the description is not far amiss. Tallowal Creek in two arms, leaps out into a rift almost as imposing as Kanangra Grand Gorge and from the base of the toothy sandstone cliffs, scree slopes scarred with landslides plunge down to the stream bed. Misty sunlight, with a thin wintery brilliance, lit up the cliff faces on our side of the valley, and left the eastern scarp in delicate hazed shadow. The quietness of the air, the gentle abiding light, gave it all a vastness and tranquillity that makes a lookout doubly imposing and memorable.

Well, a few shots for the photographers, than away into the north east to pick up and follow the trail that leads to the southern end of Badgery's Crossing. En route George almost managed to leave his sea-scarred camera at one resting place, and I distinctly recall overtaking the party at the top of the Pass as Frank Barlow described an operation carried out with (I think) a rusty tin opener on a luckless appendix case on a storm harried yacht somewhere north of Auckland. The victim survived apparently. Which reminds me - every time those near me fell silent all through the weekend, the first fragment of overheard conversation was well larded with gore and Grand Guignol honors. Why should a party of well balanced, rational walkers have such blood thirsty habits of discourse?

Then down to the Shoalhaven, and Glory Be! - it's only twelve noon, so we luximate in the gentle sunlight, and take about two hours for lunch. I always remember that my first climb up the Tallong side from Badgery's was on a sweltering February afternoon, and I averred never again. Yet, in fact, it's a good hill. It keeps on going up steeply, the trail is fairly smooth to the feet, and sixty or seventy minutes sees you at the top without undue exertion. We were rested and on the way into Tallong soon after three thirty, and I diverted a few yards from the road first to see if the recognised water point still held during the dry spell. It does, so a camp at the lookout above Badgery's on a Friday night is quite practicable.

We stepped out in the freshening afternoon on the road, and apart from a couple of diversions when some of the party sought to put a tottering sheep on its feet, and later when others went "cave-ing" in some roadside earthworks that appeared to be a dug out built by the local kiddies, made good time to reach the station as the rosy sky put rippling colours on the railway dam.

With an hour and a half to train time, and no possibility of getting local provender, the scraps and oddments of the weekend grub went into an array of billies over a twiggy fire beside the wall of the dam. The early winter night closed down, and our breath steamed in the still sharp air.

Presently the withdrawal to the station began. It was accelerated when the signal for the up line clanked down, but we were still only seven on the platform when the headlight of the train popped over the rise two miles down the line toward Marulan. A few urgent "coo-ee"

elicited that the stragglers were being true walkers and quenching the miserable remains of the fire. They joined us as the train swept up to the platform, where in true walker fashion (again) we gummed up the works by loading ourselves into an empty box carriage compartment. (This is calculated to incense the station officer who waits patiently with one hand clutching a lamp and the other poised over the door handle.)

Then the night is tripping past outside, and some boots are removed, and some more rations discovered, and no one says a word about the Shoalhaven, or Tonga or Tallowal, but I'll swear most of us have a mental docket which says "Note for future reference and attention."

EXTRACTS FROM ROSSO'S LETTER TO THE PUTTS.

Flat 6, 57 Netherhall Gardens,
Hampstead, N.W. 3
Thurs. 24th Oct. 1957

As you can see from the address, Don and I are once again back in our old room with Ann and Eric. Didn't expect to be back here but as it was once again offered we jumped at the chance. Spent about one month out with our friends in Putney. --- Apart from this there is a continual stream of Aussies coming and going, so never never a dull moment. That's more than I can say about the weather. Winter is fast approaching and with it the continual overcast clouds. A couple of mornings this week it has been bitterly cold, but warms up during the day. Keep your fingers crossed that we have a similar Winter to last year, which I am told was exceptionally mild and comes only once in a lifetime. Personally it was quite cold enough for me and with snow at Christmas I thought it a perfect English one at that.

Expected to have quite a job in settling down again but it has been frighteningly easy, almost as though I'd not done the fabulous trip at all. I haven't got the faintest idea just what you know of the trip so I'll only give you a very brief outline.

Spent 11 weeks with Mrs. Phillips (she owned the car), her son Tony - just younger than me - and Don in travelling through Belgium from Ostend where we first set foot on European soil - in a fantastic cloudburst. North through Holland, taking in quite a lot of the country-side, stayed at Rotterdam, a city to end all cities. Oh, boy, is it modern! Through Amsterdam and North across the wonderful Great Dyke, 22 miles of perfectly straight road literally built up out of the sea, dividing the North Sea and the Zuider Zee. You are told that eventually the Zuider Zee side will be reclaimed land like so much of Holland, but this at the present moment seems impossible as you can't even see the land. Down South through Western Netherlands till we turned West into Germany and Luxemburg. South again into Germany and across, always heading South, through places like Heidelberg, Bonn, Mannheim, Cologne, into the famous Black Forest and lovely Fribourg, the Rhone Valley and glacier, till we went West along the Southern bank of Lake Constance and so through 5 countries in one day.

From Germany into a mere pocket of Austria to get into Switzerland. From here into Liechtenstein and back into Switzerland. Spent a full day in the tiny pocket handkerchief-sized Principality and thoroughly enjoyed it. Had really foul weather in Switzerland so decided to cut short our trip here and headed straight for Italy. Wonderful, colossal, fabulous, mighty, terrific super Italy! You know, I enjoyed that country! Spent over 5 weeks tootling round there. The Italian Riviera, Pisa, Rome (oh, the memories!), Monte Cassino, Naples, Vesuvius, Sorrento and - best of all - Capri. For 3 unforgettable days we lay in the sun by day and walked, talked, laughed and drank wine by night.

North again via Amalfi, Posajana etc. to Pompeii. Here again for another week or so and on to Florence and Venice. What a place, there isn't another like it in the World. Round to Trieste into Yugoslavia. Spent close on 3 weeks here, which included a 800 mile return boat trip to Dubrovnik in the South from Rijeka up North. Glorious weather and after 6 or 8 weeks of nothing but sun, we were like niggers.

Into Austria, over the Leiber Pass, the steepest in Europe. It's gradient is 1 in $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet for over 6 miles without a break. Poor old Pansy just couldn't make it, so we all walked up whilst Tony drove. Next morning Tony landed in hospital and stayed there for 5 weeks, with dysenteric-typhus. Don and I took the car up to Vienna for a few days and returned to Klagenfurt to hear from Mrs. Phillips that Tony was no better, so there was nothing for it - we had to split up.

Don and I started hitching our way from Salzburg after a mighty trip over Gross Glockner Pass. We gave up in disgust in Berchtesgarden in Bavaria, so caught a train via Innsbruck (where we stayed 3 days) to Milan in Italy, and there I spent every last penny I possessed and bought a Lambretta Motor Scooter. It is an Export Model and will be on the ship with me when I come home eventually.

Through Switzerland again we flew, running madly against time, as Tony's illness had put us more than a few nights behind our more or less expected arrival back in England.

Up across into Germany. Southern is lovely but the North deadly. What a break to get into Denmark. The people are unbelievably friendly and pro-British. "Vonderful, Vonderful Copenhagen, friendly old town by the sea". The song is oh so right. On up into Jutland and across into Sweden. Flat, cold, pine-tree covered Sweden. Lovely Stockholm with its mighty Youth Hostel in the form of an original 4 mast sailing vessel, moored in the harbour. From here we went West through Karlstad and so into Norway and Oslo. You can't help being reminded of Hobart here, even though I try not to compare places - spoils the fun in most cases.

After a few days North we went on our trusty machine up to Lillehammer, and across to Andalsnes. I can't possibly describe the splendour - the sheer magnificence of the Northern Fiord country of Norway. I can only say we were bitterly sorry when we at last did board our ship in Bergen to sail back to Newcastle-on-Tyne after

18.

slowly working our way up and down, up and down through the mountainous wastes of the Fiords.

From Newcastle to London, just over-night, for here we discovered that Tony had suffered a relapse in Interlaken and would not be able to travel to Scotland as previously planned.

Off we set again up to Edinburgh for the last week of the famous Festival, where we saw a couple of Concerts and Ballets as well as the midnight and final performance of the Tattoo complete with fire-work display.

For 5 weeks we toured through Scotland with two girls off the "Oronsay" who also had a Lambretta. Literally we scoured the country as with a fine comb and I think enjoyed and loved Scotland more than anywhere else. Italy for colour, people and sun, but Scotland for all-roundness, beauty, friendliness, etc.

Well, here it is Friday afternoon and a weekend before us. Went to Phoenix Theatre in Charing Cross Road last night, saw John McCallum in "Roar like a Dove". Really an excellent show; in fact, one of the best, if not the best comedy I've ever seen. Superb staging and timing and not one bad choice in the cast made it a colossal hit. We went round to the stage door and met John McCallum. He was terribly pleased to meet fellow Australians and we had a long talk. Apparently he is thinking of taking it to Australia after its run here and asked if we thought it would click over there. There is no doubt whatsoever about that. General Montgomery was in the audience and we saw him drive off in a great flash Rolls Royce flying the Union Jack. We thought when we first saw the car that Princess Margaret was there, but soon realised that it wasn't her registration number.

Tonight we are all off to see "Summer of the Seventeenth Doll" with its all-Australian cast. It's having a really good run over here but, unfortunately, the English miss so much of it as they don't understand our slang. Intend spending tomorrow afternoon at the famous Earl's Court Motor Show. If it's as great as last year's effort we should really enjoy ourselves.

We've got tickets for the Festival Hall for next Tuesday night to hear Irmgaard Seigfried, the German Singer, and also to see Laurence Olivier in "The Entertainer", a new play by John Osborne of "Look Back in Anger" fame.

Gosh, I've just realised that I didn't tell you a damn thing about the Scottish trip. Don't worry, I won't bore you with the details - just make you suffer the slides when I get home.

ROSSO.

PERSONAL

During the holiday period with everyone away, how difficult it is to get hold of those vital statistics that mean so much to Bushwalkers - I refer, of course, to the arrival of new babies. I have heard that the Meadows have recently acquired one, and also the Frosts, but have been unable to find out what sex they are. Ah, well, does it matter at that age? We all congratulate the proud parents on their little "its".

"Y -e-e-e-s, quite a good record shot, but as an exhibition piece it just ...doesn't...get...there." All too often we have heard this sad comment applied to our cherished photos, but here is an instance where it didn't apply. In the recent competition conducted by the Warrumbungles, Henry Gould won First Prize in the Black and White section and received honourable mention in the Colour Section. Good shot, Henry. Henry is now down in South West Tasmania, along with your Editor and others, and we are all waiting to see what he captures on those rolls of colour film he put in his pack.

And while we're on the subject of capturing, our little white-haired boy, Brian McLaughlin, is heading for the kangaroo country out west with literally pounds worth of bullets with which he hopes to lessen the plague-numbers of 'roos. He has been commissioned to bring back a skin or two for the Butler bedroom, but it has been pointed out to Dot that it is the wrong time of the year for good skins as all the kangaroos will be moulting and scraggy. The things we don't think of!

Those Bushwalkers who keep abreast of the times in the world of literature cannot fail to have noticed on the bookstalls a book by Marie Byles, "In the Footsteps of Gautama Buddha", the first fruits of Marie's 12 months trip through India last year, visiting the shrines of the gentle Buddha. When Marie returned from that trip she gave us a talk about her experiences, and all who were fortunate enough to be at the club that night were deeply conscious of the spirit of gentleness that pervaded her talk. Marie is now in Burma and on her return will probably publish another book which should be good reading, for whether one absorbs one's peace in the foothills of the Himalayas or in the heart of central Burma or deep in the Australian bush, silence, solitude, sun and wind and sky, earth and water all speak the same silent language which all Bushwalkers understand.



PADDY MADE



20.

A MESSAGE FOR THE GOLIGHTLY'S

When first Paddy started his business 27 years ago he emphasised the merits of lightweight gear and of course all "Paddy-made" camp gear is made with a view to achieving light loads. Nevertheless of recent years the demand for extra light weight camp gear has diminished and Paddy has often made super light weight items of gear and found that they frequently lay gathering dust in the shop.

It was with pleasure therefore that Frank Rigby's article on super light weight gear was noted and in response to a request for lightweight rucksacks, the Paddymade factory has produced a 3 pocket Zipper frame rucksack of heavy weight japara which only weighs 2lbs. 15 ozs. Price £6.19.6.

Further news on lightweight gear later.

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