

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to the Sydney Bush Walkers,
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SUMMER

Feel the beat of coming summer throbbing in the drumming of cicadas,
harsh and urgent, beating at the fleeting hours of spring.

Winter was a cold black canyon left behind; spring is a sward of
grass and fragile flowers that while we watch them wither into summer's yellow
plain.

Summer is many things. A brass ball with one great red eye that
traps and burns the helpless land - crisp salt waves hissing over sun-bleached
sands - soft and fragrant as a woman's hands.

AT OUR OCTOBER MEETING

- Alex Colley

Two new members and one old one were welcomed by the President. The new members were Albert Smalley and Peter Jorlis. The old member was ex-President Dorothy Lawry, on a visit from New Zealand. The President told us that the campfire welcome to Dorothy held at the Harveys had attracted no less than 150 members and ex-members, including 14 out of the 18 ex-Presidents, among them our first President, Jack Debert.

It was announced that at our next meeting we would have to elect a successor to Joan Walker, as Walks Secretary, (Joan is going to Cairns) and a lady Committee Member to replace Lynette Baber (en route to England by jeep).

Formal business was soon disposed of. Tom Moppett reported that he had, as requested, arranged a sign for the wildflowers exhibition, the cost being 25/-. We learned too that reprints of the Constitution are now available.

The meeting then discussed a motion that the room stewards be requested to arrange the furniture to suit the convenience of members. It was pointed out that there was no need, beyond our own inertia, for members to be forever groping their way round the clutter of forms and tables near the door, or sitting only five rows back at meetings and complaining they couldn't hear. Determined room stewards, prepared to give a quarter of an hour at the beginning and end of meetings to the job, could clear a space near the door, arrange the seats closer together and perhaps effect other improvements. Kath Brown said that this wouldn't be much fun for the room stewards if only one turned up, as so often happened. Kevin Ardill thought it was a constructive proposal and should be given a trial. Roy Bruggy professed to be reasonably happy with our lot. The club room was as handy and as good as we could get for the money, and the tables and forms very useful just as they were placed. Jack Wren said the keynote of the discussion was "inertia". Bushwalkers were not addicted to helping themselves. Jess Martin pointed out that room stewards weren't supposed to do all the work themselves, but to organise people to help. The motion was carried and Kevin Ardill, Jack Perry and Alex Colley volunteered for the job.

The President pointed out that there was no excuse for anyone at the back to complain they couldn't hear when there were nine empty seats at the front.

Snow Brown then announced the results of the walking trial - John White and party 23.9 points; Jack Wren and party 24.7; Heather Joyce 29.76; his own party 30.9; Peter Stitt 34.7; Joan Walker 38.0; Yvonne Renwick and Ross Laird 52.1; and Mike Peryman and party, the winners, with 60.5 points. The prize, a handsomely mounted boot, was then presented by the President, who thanked the organisers for a very enjoyable weekend. At Snow Brown's suggestion, it was decided to write thanking Mrs. Jarlon for her hospitality at the weekend.

The meeting closed after David Ingram had counselled closer attention by certain members to "hints to prospectives".

Coming up to the Club on the night of Mario Byles' talk, Bill Chambers and his wife, Pearl, were caught in town in pouring rain, so they hopped into a cab and said to the driver, "Do you know the Ingersoll Hall?"

"Sure mate," says he, "Know all the gambling joints in Sydney."

MT. ANNE - SEPTEMBER 1958

- Mick Elfick

PART I - "In which we spend 5 days not getting to the mountain".

Never before have I been on a trip which has involved so much planning and preparation as this trip to Mt. Anne. The food was calculated to the last calorie, and we were equipped to take the worst weather Tassie could throw at us - and probably more besides. In order to lighten our loads on the way in, we took only four days' food and the dried meat which was to form the basis of our evening meals - the rest was to be flown in. On Monday, 1st September, we boarded the 4.00 p.m. bus for Maydena and settled down for a nice comfortable 'bus ride. Unfortunately the recent bad weather had washed away the road, so halfway we were forced to change transport. All the locals filed into a car, whilst we three "charlies" ended up on the back of an old table top timber truck amongst the locals' baggage.

At Maydena we purchased a few essential "goodies", then wandered on to the old township of Kallista, where we spent the night in an empty shack.

Next morning was reasonably fine to start with, and we had, through the windows of the old shack, some glorious views of the snow-capped peaks around Mt. Field West.

We moved off at 8.30 a.m. and spent a couple of frustrating hours in the maze of timber tracks trying to find the old road leading on to the Port Davey Track. Eventually John reappeared with an A.N.P. chap in a land Rover, and he eventually put us right.

For the next hour or so all went well until we came to Pebbily Creek. Here F.H., who was leading, got off the track and charged up a steep hillside, following a minute animal pad. It took us about an hour to adjust this slight "error". Perhaps his glasses were fogged over.

From Pebbily Creek to the top of the pass was a long slow grind, with plenty of large logs across the track to make things interesting.

Lunch was devoured at the old campsite on top, then we moved off and descended a little to cross two small branches of the Styx River before climbing again and finally dropping down to the Weld River. An hour and a half later three weary bods finally arrived at Damper Inn. The roof may leak, the chimney may be draughty, but to us that night it was a palace.

We were away next morning by 8.30 and reached the South Gordon turnoff by 9.20. Up till now the going had been anything but easy - three weeks of bad weather beforehand had made a chaotic mess of the track and the bowera had been well compacted across our path by the recent snowfalls. But all this was cats meat compared to the next eight miles over Bowes Pass. Here F.H. really came into his own. With ice axe grasped firmly in leather gloves to act as a battering ram, he would put his head down and methodically plough through even the most impenetrable scrub - like a tractor moving through a wheatfield.

We had lunch in a small valley between the two crests then, partially revitalized, we pushed through the last of the bowera up and over the crest, before plunging downwards through the cool myrtle forest beyond.

From the pass we had a glorious view of the S.W. - from the rugged peaks of the Arthurs to where the Franklands were reflected in the still blue waters of Lake Peddar. It made up for all the work necessary in getting there.

At last the myrtle abruptly ended and we emerged onto the open button grass plains where we could finally have a close up view of Mt. Anne. It soared above the flat plains like a miniature Matterhorn, placed above the barrier of dark green scrub. The peak, high plateau and even the top of Deception Ridge were all plastered with snow and this, set off against the green foreground and black rolling clouds behind, made the sight really impressively beautiful. Many photographs later we moved on and slowly plugged across the sodden plains until we finally came to the northern side of Maruka Swamp, where we camped.

On Thursday we were off at 8.15 and pushed our way through the swamp. This half mile stretch really has the works - fallen logs, deep mud, fast streams, bowers, cutting grass, ti-tree etc. - really a great way to start the day. This obstacle behind, we made good time to the Huon crossing, where we had a short spell while examining the L.W.C. permanent camp pitched there. The river had recently overflowed its banks quite considerably, and the open areas under the trees near the bank had been deeply scoured.

From here we moved across country to the foot of the Mt. Eliza climbing ridge where we were supposed to find our food drop. At 11.30 we crossed Condiminion Creek, dumped our gear and started looking. Well, we searched and searched and searched. Truly, I know of nothing more wearisome than trying to methodically search a vast expanse of button grass for something which mightn't be there at all, for by now we had the awful realisation that our food may not have been dropped. By 4.30 we'd "had it" in more ways than one. John's boots were killing him and his pack had folded up. F.H. was hungry and I was completely worn out. Clearly something had to be done - something drastic.

We dumped all our gear except fleabag, rucksack and parka, all our food except one tea and one light breakfast, and headed back to the L.W.C. tent at Huon crossing, where we spent the night.

On Friday we kicked off early headed for the Aero Club tents at Lake Peddar. The morning mist soon degenerated to driving rain and the endless button grass bog became wetter and wetter - so did we.

A small creek flows across the route to Peddar and this has to be negotiated at its highest reaches where it is reasonably shallow. John, who was a mile ahead, charged on, crossed the creek, then recrossed it back on to the wrong side - apparently he had ideas of making a bee-line for the tents. It took half an hour to catch him and by this time the creek had become deep and fast-flowing with steep banks. In true Manning style John charged back across and didn't wet his knees. I tried a little upstream, slipped, fell into a pot hole and went in up to my neck. This was the last straw and fortunately we were only half an hour away from our destination.

The water in Lake Peddar was only about five feet from the sand dunes in most places, and in others we were forced to make a detour into the lake to avoid climbing the dunes.

About 10.30 we splashed into the Aero Club camp and while John and Barry lit an enormous fire, I scrounged round for food. This is what I found - flour for six dampers, some rice, mouldy lentils, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. oatmeal, half a tin of

marmalade (20% fungus, but Barry said it had been all right when he was there six months ago, so we ate it), some butter (rancid), apricots (mouldy) and some Foster Clark soups (wet).

Barry summed up the situation when he said, "The meals might be a little peculiar, but at least we eat!"

PART II -- "In which we spend 3 more days in getting on to the mountain."

We had originally intended to do the trip to Peddar and back in one day, but owing to the weather, our lack of condition, lack of food etc., we decided to spend the rest of the day cooking damper for the next week and drying out the rest of our newly acquired food so it wouldn't become any more inedible. Barry and myself soon realised that John must clearly be the best cook and food dryer - so while he performed these tasks, we industriously read the literature lying around in the tent. We also took advantage of any slight breaks in the weather to photograph the lake.

Next morning we left at 7.30 and headed back towards Mt. Anne. The Huon was crossed at 11.30 and at 12.30 we had lunch, such as it was, at the foot of the climbing ridge. At the same time we had another look for our elusive air drop.

Finally, after saying many words about food drops etc., we struggled into our now heavily laden rucksacks and plodded up the climbing ridge. Our progress was painfully slow by mainland standards but, despite the cold wind, mist and slippery grass, we were up in the high camp before 4.00 p.m.

There was snow everywhere, and with great gusto we set about levelling a campsite amongst the snow gums. This involved moving vast quantities of snow, since Barry, John and myself were working against each other, each with his own ideas as to how it should be done.

Eventually the tent was pitched to everyone's satisfaction so we changed into dryer clothes, crawled inside our tent and cooked our tea on the primuses.

The next day it rained continuously and the whole countryside was blotted out by the dismal weather. We passed the time reading, sleeping and wondering where on earth our airdrop was. Towards evening the weather improved, so we made preparations for an early start the next day.

The morning dawned fine and clear. In a burst of energy, John cooked the breakfast and kicked some life into the party in an effort to reach the top of Mt. Eliza before the clouds rolled in. It was all to no avail, for the mist closed in before we were halfway up the dolerite, and soon the visibility was less than twenty yards.

The next couple of hours were spent in an eerie white world as we tried to find our way across the snow-capped plateau in the mist. Several times we had to retrace our steps when we ended up on the edge of steep ridges or cliffs, and at one stage we found ourselves walking along a cornice about 1,000 feet above Lake Judd.

Eventually, about 10 a.m., the mist began to lift and catching sight of the pyramid bulk of Mt. Anne, we steered a course for it.

John led up from the col to the climbing gully where I took over, and here our troubles really began. Since the gully was on the south side, and in almost continuous shadow, all the blocks were iced up and all the cracks between them full of frozen snow.

We made steady progress until about 200 feet from the top, but here we ran into strife. The snow slope became near vertical and several times the step I had cut came adrift, leaving me hanging by my ice axe. Then came several blocks about seven feet high, sloping outwards and covered with six inches of ice on top and down the sides. After about an hour's hard work I still hadn't progressed an inch, although I had practically buried John and Barry under heaps of snow and ice, which I was sending down in my efforts to progress. By this time Barry's feet were frozen and John was contemplating all sorts of hairy routes in an effort to get around the troublesome blocks; so we retreated back down the gully and cut round to the N.E. side where it was more sunny.

Here John took the lead and cut up a steep narrow snow ridge. Barry was belaying him and I had little to do except get cold, so I amused myself watching pieces of ice fall off the cliffs above - they'd hit the slope, then, with a hiss would slide off at great speed before dropping out of sight.

Presently John and Barry ran out of rope, so I went up, passed them and continued on up the ridge, which became progressively steeper and narrower. Running out of rope, I brought John and Barry up before moving up and round a corner. Here our little ridge ran slap bang into the face of the main cliffs on the N.E. side of the mountain. Again we were only about 200 feet from the top, but since we had no suction cups with us, we retreated.

Lunch was had on the col at 3 p.m. - three lumps of sugar and one third of a small damper each. We then slugged our way back across the plateau in the hot sun. Generally the snow was only knee deep, although sometimes someone would sink through up to their waist.

We noticed that the edge of the cornice above Lake Judd had fallen away, taking with it about twenty yards of our footprints - good job we weren't on it then.

From Eliza the view was superb - from Precipitous Bluff across to Federation Peak, the Arthurs, Franklins and even Frenchman's Cap could easily be seen in the cold crisp air.

We reached the camp just as the sun set in a glorious fiery blaze of colour. In the last light I'll swear Mt. Anne seemed to be laughing.

PART III - "In which we achieve what we had set out to do."

After being so thoroughly rebuffed, we didn't feel like another effort, in fact, we all hoped the next day would be rainy.

I think we all slept rather badly that night but eventually morning burst upon us - with not a cloud in the sky - so we reluctantly cooked a "good" breakfast (4 oz. egg, 1 slice of bacon and a handful of rolled oats between the three of us) and plodded off up the hill.

PHOTOGRAPHY ! ? ! ? !

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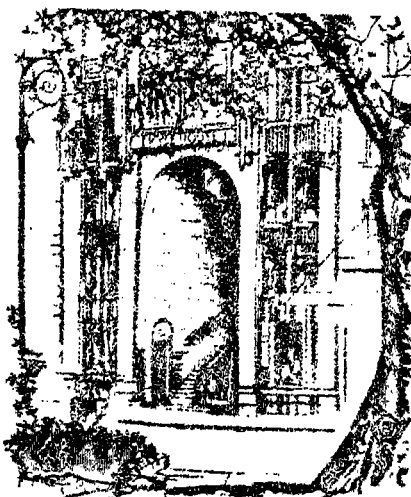
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The plateau snow had iced up overnight and we were over in the col by 11 a.m. Since the face and gullies seemed so bad, we had decided to try and go up the south-western ridge (a continuation of Deception Ridge) but, owing to several large steps in it, our chances seemed very slim.

Being the lightest, I went up first with John as a backstop. Barry was kept occupied in the rear cutting additional steps for his short legs. The ridge was reached by a two stage chimney partially blocked up with snow. From here it was a joy to be climbing and we gained height rapidly. The pitches were fairly easy and belays were good. As the ridge was too wind-blown to hold much snow, John and Barry left their ice axes behind and this saved a lot of time in climbing up the blocks.

At last we came to the biggest step in the ridge, one which had seemed impossible from the plateau. We descended to the left across a snow patch to the base of an overhanging slab about ten feet high. First try try I couldn't make it, but after John had flicked the rope over a rock knob higher up to give me a kind of top belay, I managed to pull myself up. Ten more minutes of easy climbing and we were directly below the summit block. Here the ridge became very narrow with a sheer drop on the left and a very steep snow slope, which terminated in cliffs, on the right.

The main summit block was well plastered with snow. Huge icicles - like stalactites - flowed over the edges like icing on a chocolate cake. The rich brows of the rock contrasted vividly with the white snow and deep blue sky beyond, whilst below the fantastic panorama of the south-west lay revealed.

With John belaying me, I carefully kicked my way along the ridge before climbing up into an ice tunnel through the corner of the final blocks. A short chimney between the icy walls led up on to a ledge where I waited till John and Barry came up.

Another short traverse, then up through a steep covered-in chimney, a final burst up a short steep slope and we were standing on the smooth snow cone which forms the summit.

The view was breathtaking - imagine a 360° panoramic view of the south west without haze and with hardly a cloud in the sky - truly fantastic. The staccato clicking of camera shutters sounded like machine-gun fire. To complete the picture, one of the Tasmanian Aero Club planes flew by below - it looked just like a tiny toy in a painted world.

Having written our names on the snow, we commenced to descend at 12.30 p.m. I don't know how John and Barry felt, but to me going down was far more difficult than going up. At least when you're climbing you're always looking up.

Lunch was on the col at 3.10 (damper and sugar again) before plugging back across the deep, soft snow of the plateau. This section was most exhausting, but in our elated state we hardly noticed it, instead we just slowly wandered on, stopping frequently to gaze at the surrounding scene.

At one stage when I went up to my hips, my foot got caught in the dolerite blocks below. While John and Barry relaxed on a nearby rock and gave helpful advice, I struggled to escape - it took almost ten minutes.

Eventually we arrived on top of Eliza, where we sat down and watched the sun disappear in a final ruddy blaze, whilst all around the mountains, first tinged with pink, gradually merged into the deep purple sky as night descended.

To celebrate that night we built a monstrous fire and sat in front of it drying all our sodden gear. There wasn't a breath of wind, and overhead myriads of stars shone with their cold silver light, whilst to the north the dark bulk of Mt. Anne lay silhouetted against the velvet sky. Eventually, as the fire died down, the intense cold drove us into our sleeping bags.

There is not much point in relating our trip home. Food was low (3 lbs. of dried meat, some biscuits and butter for three days) but, egged on by the thought of all we would eat later, we made reasonable time.

Tassie is a great place, especially the south west, but when the snow is plastered on the dolerite and the sun beams down from a cloudless sky on to the cold world below, it is quite unforgettable.

JERRARA - AGAIN

If you enjoy slightly intrepid trips, you may be interested to read about Jerrara Canyon in this magazine, but better still, come with Goof Wagg on 28th, 29th & 30th November and view it yourself.

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THE ORDER CHANGETH

- Jim Brown

Just in case we needed to be reminded of it, the last Annual Report, under the sub-heading of Walking Activities, observed "The electrification of the Western Line has speeded up train travel and valuable time has been gained on mountain walks".

Very true, of course. The S.B.W. Annual Report has always been a shining example of veracity, and this was not the kind of matter in which there was the least temptation to gild lilies.

Oddly enough for a moderate railroading enthusiast, none of my walking trips in '57 had involved a Blue Mountains train journey. Until a short while back my only experience of long distance electric haulage had been in Victoria (the 60 odd miles from Melbourne to Warragul on the Gippsland Line were opened about four years ago). In theory I know that electrification had accelerated the running on the big bank from Emu Plains to Katoomba; from 40 to 70 minutes had been lopped off the schedules for western passenger trains. I hadn't actually seen and felt it.

Until recently when I travelled west on the Coonamble Mail. Now, with the passing of the unlamented Mudgee Mail, the Coonamble (over the run from Sydney to Dubbo) must rate as the slowest long distance passenger train in the State, but the electrified stage to Lithgow compares favourably with other similar trips.

It was an unremarkable trip to Penrith, where because of track work, we were eight minutes late. To be into Katoomba on time would require running the 34 miles with grades as severe as 1 in 33, and a total climb of about 3,300 feet, in 58 minutes. With the old steam traction, 90 minutes would have been very good, and with the load behind the unimpressive electric locomotive, I doubt if the train could have been lifted to Valley Heights where the pilot engine would be picked up.

The "46" class electric soared up those grades, maintaining 40 m.p.h. or better in an effortless way. One felt that if the eleven-car train had been fifteen coaches, it would have made little difference. Five minutes retrieved at Springwood, on time at Lawson and finally to Katoomba at a leisureed amble, with two minutes clear before timetabled departure. I recounted it over to myself, pleased with the actual performance and its augury for walking parties. Just east of Lithgow we groaned to a halt, and as I settled down for the night run I could hear the fussy, agitated breathing of the "36" class steam engine being coupled.

Before I fell asleep, little sensations of regret were creeping up on me. Next thing we'll have a generation of walkers who know only the urbane, efficient electric train, making its way to Katoomba in a little over two hours. The glorious uncertainty of the old days of steam traction will be forgotten. On Friday nights they will have almost an hour's advantage over the battlers of the past; an hour more to sleep in the bog at Corral Swamp; an hour more to penetrate further into Mogo along for the night camp.

Yet the fun of the journey itself will be gone. No more the anxious moments when the engine struggled to get the train moving at Warrimoo, or the coupled locomotives west of Valley Heights skidded and struck sparks on the slopping up-grades near Linden.

I found myself remembering the blackout days back in 1948-49-50 when coal stocks were often depleted, and trains were reduced to a skeleton service; with petrol rationing and few cars on the road, the length of trains and the loading on them became alarming. What coal was available was often below the desired steam-raising quality, or produced so much cinder that spark arresters and fires became choked or steam pressure fell, and the engines failed.

That wet night in 1950, now, when we left Sydney on the 5.19 "Chips". The first engine failed near Blacktown, but after a while limped on to Penrith, where a change was made. That one struggled up to Warrimoo, lost the steam pressure and had to wait twenty minutes before creeping up to Valley Heights where another change, plus a bank engine went on, and we came to Blackheath seventy minutes late.

Two years earlier, in the depths of a coal shortage, one of the two up-bound trains on Sunday night consisted of twelve carriages and a van, all marshalled behind a 50-odd years old "32" class engine. (It was 3295, I remember. The veteran "32" class was much in evidence, partly because of their economy on coal, and partly, I believe, because their digestion was more rugged than later designs. Someone once said, "You could fire them on blue metal and get some steam".) On the big downhill we lost 45 minutes to Penrith, entirely because of delays at stations trying to wedge in the waiting travellers; the train was "pushed-up" to get it going on the grade for Penrith, and the valiant old iron horse actually picked up five minutes en route to Sydney! A miracle.

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Pre-war there was the Javos Express - a blue and green painted train of about 160 tons, almost exactly the weight of the "036" locomotive rostered to haul it. First stop Springwood at 50 miles and 1,200 feet was tabled 69 minutes from Sydney. It hill-climbed at 30 m.p.h. or better, and was usually worked by one of a select group of evidently "superior" performers, including 3608, 3609, 3633, 3635 and 3640. The "Javos" generally kept to its savage schedule and bore little resemblance to the emasculated version re-introduced a year or so before steam was superseded.

A final recollection: The Friday evening of an Australia Day weekend, a fierce thunderstorm filling the sky beyond Penrith with incessant lightnings, and the 6.23 from town, headed by 3277, running twenty minutes late, with its searchlight carving the gloom in Glenbrook Gorge, a golden plume of fiery light brandished over the cab, making an incredible 40 m.p.h. on the hill. Seven minutes were regained by Valley Heights, but the crew of the pilot engine didn't share the same enthusiasm, so we remained twelve late the rest of the way to Katoomba.

Well, they're gone. We'll all be much more comfortable, but when we camp at Kedumba Creek or Corral Swamp, or the Pub site in Mogalong, we won't hear that most thrilling, most lonely, most friendly of all sounds - a steam whistle calling in the night. Instead, if the wind is in the right quarter we may chance to hear the anaemic canned raspberry of the electric locomotive.

THE PRIZE

- Mike Peryman

A test of skill has been devised
 To rouse the spirit that dormant lies -
 The spirit that is of good clean walking
 Instead of sitting round and talking.
 Man against man, that could not be;
 Man against clock would be the plea.
 So Federation would not ~~file~~,
 The event was to be called a trial.
 For young and old to enter in
 (And may, of course, the best team win).
 All thought up by the Drummoyne mob
 A formulae - no one to rob -
 Ability, difficulty, mileage too,
 Points were thus allotted you.
 Certain conditions also must be -
 A weekend pack, a team of three,
 Twelve hours long you were to roam
 From Corral Swamp to Darlon's Farm.
 It mattered not your chosen route,
 In line direct or roundabout.
 Some foxy ones, a limp they feigned
 To drop their ability was the aim.
 Then came the day, the weather fine,
 And 6 a.m. the starting time -
 The teams departed both east and west,
 Each was out to do its best,
 But no space is there to write the stories
 About these teams, and of their glories.

So to the farm the scene does range
 Where all do merge and so exchange
 Their knowledge how the others went,
 Who has arrived and pitched his tent.
 Time soon draws on, the clock hits six
 And those not in are in a fix.
 Now all do turn to brew their chunder
 And each does long narrate his blunder
 For track and ridge and gully and creek
 Have seen the tigers as well as the meek,
 Times are rehashed along with stews,
 Fires rekindled to make their brews.
 A wonderful day draws to its close
 As round the campfire they sit in rows
 With their final cups of brow,
 Planning many walks anew.

The judges they do long postpone,
 For reasons to them known alone,
 Until finally, at the October meeting,
 Were results announced amidst much beating
 Around the bush, boos, cheers and hiss -
 Says Snowy, "What did I do to deserve all this".
 The presentation was then made
 In the meeting room so staid,
 And now at last I've got the loot -
 The prize, of course, "The Bushies Boot".

HEADING FOR A FALL

- Geof Wagg

Ever stopped a road freighter? Good Lord! What an experience!

Grace and I were standing bathed in the insipid glow of a streetlight on the outskirts of Mittagong when it came - a distant thunder that while we wondered filled our ears with roaring, drawing nearer, pouring down the road a flood of light, cruel, bright, pinning us like poor white ghosts against the blackness. Caught in the heart of that storm of sound, which every second grew in its intensity, we stood, overwhelmed, in awe of the huge black shape, and filled with a sense of futility I raised my arm, my thumb indicating the direction in which we were travelling.

But wonders! What miracle did I incorporate in that gesture. There was a sort of hissing roar, a kind of mechanical screech and clouds and clouds of dust, which, when it cleared, revealed the monster subsided, panting, a hundred yards along the road.

"Yes," said the monster driver, so we climbed up and very soon were at Marulan or, to be more precise, the Marulan Cemetery. This institution is situated conveniently to the Bungonia turnoff and its rickety fence encloses an amount of grass of the Ideally Suited For Lying On type according to the Dalai. What's more, you can dig up a rattling good sort at any time of night (also according to the Dalai). Myself, I'd just as soon sleep in the shelter of one of the pines growing outside the fence and so would Snow because that's where we found him. He appeared to be asleep so we shone our torch in his face and kicked him a few times, but he didn't stir so we knew he must be asleep and went away to the next pine tree to go to sleep ourselves.

At my next conscious moment I was viewing a fabulous sunrise through one eye, and when I woke again it was half past six and time to get up. I noticed that Joan and Digby had arrived and they claimed to have given us a similar greeting to the one we gave Snow, but I don't remember anything. Duncan and Barry Higgins (a prospective member) were discovered in the long grass among the monuments, angels to watch over them, etc., and I heard them discussing with Snow the hitching coming down the previous night.

"And how did you get on Snow?" asks the Dalai.

"Very well," replies Snow, "I simply stood outside the hotel at Liverpool and as the cars came along I motioned with my thumb, like this."

"I see," says Duncan, "and as the cars went by I suppose the drivers motioned with their thumbs, like this."

At eight o'clock most of us were finished breakfast and Donnie still hadn't arrived, but it didn't matter because Joan and Digby were still festering around trying to entice their third course out of its tin. The thing became serious though when it was almost half-past and the party ready to move off (you should never stop a party in this condition). So we went, more shame to us, without even leaving a note and Donnie, who had been stuck at Berrima where no-one picks up at night because of the gaol, arrived about ten minutes later. He didn't know where we were heading so he went home again.

The rest of us poached into Duncan's and Digby's vehicles and drove along the Marulan South road until we came to the ancient shearing shed which now serves as mile stone, shelter shed and ladies changeroom. Heaven knows how long we would have waited here even after the cars were parked if we hadn't eventually brought Joan out by throwing stones on the roof.

And so at last we were off to the mysterious Jerrara Creek, which hides itself in a deep, dim cleft full of right-angle bends while it progresses half a mile and drops 500 feet. The country is very flat at first with ample evidence of sheep (even including a few sheep), and it being the season of grass seeds, the Dalai was moved to complain at the savageness of the wild geraniums because he hadn't yet been converted to the wearing of synthetic socks which don't collect seeds.

We had been proceeding south by favour of Barry's compass, with a bit of east in it by favour of me, for some time when the country started to become familiar. No, what I mean is it gave me the feeling that I'd been there before and nowadays I treat this feeling with grave distrust, so I climbed a tree. From there I thought I could see a bit of country that might have been trying to be a gorge, so we put a bit more east in our south and walked that way. Presently, when the country immediately before us began to drop down a little, we saw some marvellous red cliffs beetling up and I was able to identify them at once as part of the Jerrara canyon. They looked terrific, and so they should have, because the map said they were part of Bungonia Gorge. After that we put a whole lot more south in it and even a bit of west until, though you'll find it hard to believe, we found ourselves on a saddle of the ridge leading to Paddy's Castle between Jerrara Creek, about fifty feet down, and Bungonia Creek, about five hundred.

Not expecting over much, we went on up Paddy's Castle just to see what we could see. And - what there was to see! As you scramble to the top of this airy rock you find yourself surrounded, undermined by view. How can one describe such a fantastic scene. The precipitous bastions of the Castle's own rock, the tumbling waters and sculptured stone in Bungonia far, far below and nearer, yet deeper in mystery, the dim waterfaling abyss of Jerrara itself.

Presently, as our thoughts focussed more and more on Jerrara, we became impatient for action and, hurrying back to our packs left on a low saddle of the ridge, skithered down the steep loose slope into the creek. What an ordinary looking creek - what a same-round-the-last-corner, same-round-the-next kind of creek. But how mistaken. Just walk two hundred yards and you'll see.

You'll see the rocks smoother and slithery and the water starts to get dithery and not sure if its coming or going, ebbing or flowing; then whisht! it slips and falls sprawling into the pool below. Up it comes panting and blowing bubbles. Just up for air it comes, then whisht over the next fall in a plunge that drowns it deeper than before. Now properly roused it surges down the pool to crash among the stones once more sprawling, bickering, brawling - no vestige left of self-control, a thoroughly angry stream.

We watched it out of sight, then began to waterproof our packs assailed by sundry moans. It was one thing, it seemed, to say that swimming might be necessary and regard it from the safety of a Wednesday night, but it was quite a different thing when one could see the water, cold and foaming, and know that swimming couldn't be avoided. It wasn't just the morning for swimming either,

with those clouds swilling across like soapy water washing the sun out of the sky. The Dalai looked very mournful.

"Nobody told me we'd have to swim packs," he said.

Had he looked it up on the Walks Programme? Had he read the trip advertisement? Had he consulted his walking guide?

"No," says Bob, "But my stars said it would be alright."

We avoided the first small fall and found a perfect chockstone for roping down the second. In another second the rope was round and we threw it down. Didn't quite reach the bottom, but it seemed alright and Digby was alight with adventure. Half way down we reviewed the position and decided to attach some sashcord to the end on account of a ten foot overhang which we had completely overlooked. This made everything pleasant and one by one the bods monkeyed down the rope using all manner of tactics to avoid the large knot until after a moment's procrastination on the minute shelf at water level there would be a poignant silence followed by a painful splash, then one walker and pack would appear paddling frantically for the nearest rock beyond the pool.

In Duncan's case though, the poignant silence seemed unduly prolonged. We didn't take much notice with the next bod going down, but when the bod, Grace I think it was, disappeared below the overhang, we thought "He'll have to move now," and were almost touched at his piteous cry, "Oh the pain;" then came the splash and the frantically swimming bod, but it was Grace, not Bob at all. Two or three times it happened that way and then it came Snow's turn. There was a commotion on the ledge and the "Oh the pains" acquired a more authentic note. The Dalai was launched.

With a heave or two, the rope slid down and we were committed to the canyon. Here was adventure. The future hidden by the angling walls and our bridges burnt behind!

Too chilled to linger after our swim, we hastened on and in practically no time were approaching the second fall. Without our packs we walked toward the edge, at each step seeing further down - down - down; it seemed bottomless. No, there at last the water falling, booming in the basin of a muddy coloured pool. Then let our eyes wander up the other side, the smooth rock wall stretching above our heads to meet the sky. Imagine (if you can) a cup 200 feet deep cracked in each side. Through one of these cracks plunges our fall 130 feet, a beautiful sight, eventually flowing out the other at right angles to the way it entered.

The She-Oak was nicely situated to take our rope, a manilla and a nylon joined to give us a straight abseil of 110 feet on this perfect slope. And you should, if you haven't, try abseiling with your pack on. The pack takes the punishment while you take the pleasure. I'll bet Snow wished he'd abseiled with his pack on when, as it was lowered towards him down the cliff, the rope suddenly jerked it upside down and macaroni blossomed out in all directions.

When at last I roped down, I found a schism in the party. Three members were on the far side of the long cold pool, wet, shivering and urging for action through chattering teeth; another three were on the near side of the pool, warm, dry, brandishing pieces of driftwood and urging for lunch. What a lot of urgers. There's only one solution to this, I thought, "Press on regardless". The pool was very cold and longer than it seemed but the balance of power went to the urgers of action.

The gorge here was at its narrowest. Gigantic faces of rock stared blankly at each other from a distance of thirty feet, yet reached so high above that heaven seemed to be their boundary. The creek was dammed into two pools at different levels by great rocks that had become wedged between the walls, and the falls down from these were our next problem.

I scrambled back and shouted to the warm ones still on the far side of the pool, "Bring some pieces of driftwood when you come!" A great wail went up.

"How are we going to keep them dry?" Clearly they were still blissfully thinking of lunch and cups of tea and that kind of thing, so I explained.

"It's not for a lunch fire, you slobs, it's for something to abseil off." This seemed to bring them back to reality, so they started heaving bits of wood into the pool, obviously reasoning that the longer they stayed there throwing in pieces of wood, the longer they could postpone their cold swim. Of course they ran out of wood eventually, but by then I'd returned to the problem of the falls.

The first was easy, though uncomfortable. The rope around a chockstone and a ducking from the waterfall as I climbed the ten or twelve feet to drop into the pool. No ledges to procrastinate on. Straight into water above your head. It was only a short swim but that didn't make it warmer and I had a moment's panic when, as I neared the corner between the rock and the wall where no water overflowed and I hoped to climb out, I suddenly had the fear that it might not flow over the top because it was sneaking out the bottom. I was right in the corner then and still nothing firm below to boost me up onto the smooth rock above. Trying not to appear too frantic, I scrambled and jammed myself between the rock and the wall, then inched up until I could step across on to the main rock. Relief for a moment, followed by more consternation when I viewed the route ahead.

This fall was higher than it had seemed from further back and what was worse, it overhung all the way down, and what was worse still, there was no abseiling point. No tree, no living thing, no convenient rock, nowhere that even a piece of driftwood could be safely wedged; there was just nothing. And ahead the cleft as deep as ever, hiding our future with yet another bend, but at the end a ray of hope, or perhaps a warning shaft, clear sunlight beaming unobstructed on the corner wall.

I knew that sometime soon we must come to the place where the Jerrara flows out of its canyon and without a pause, sprays itself down the great cliff to join Bungonia far below. What worried me was that this corner might be the last and I had a vivid mental picture of being swept along in the racing stream and suddenly confronted with a 200 foot fall. Barry, showing his typical keeness, swam across and joined me, shivering on the rock. For a few minutes he scrambled about searching for anything to give us a chance of getting down, then we looked at each other and I said, "Well, I wouldn't like to try it," and he said "Neither would I," so we swam back.

The party was sceptical but accepted the judgement and we began to consider the problem of extricating ourselves from the gorge. I was far too wet and cold to stand around and consider, and as the most logical way OUT was BACK, I headed in that direction. A good sized crack in the north wall appeared to offer a solution slightly less ignominious than utter defeat and on investigation proved to come within striking distance of a dip in the scrub line. The nylon

rope around a shrub gave something solid for folk to haul themselves up on, but still there were complaints. The shrub was firm enough, but the rope, it appeared, was not. The trouble was it used to stretch, and however energetically you hauled yourself up, the effort was absorbed by the rope and your feet remained planted where they were. Personally, I don't know what the complaints were about; I didn't have any trouble - but then I didn't have any rope either.

A short scramble quickly brought us over the brow of the ridge at a place where we could see a long way down and at quite an acute angle. Fortunately there weren't many loose rocks on the slope, but it was still "last man safest". As we descended, it became clear that we would not want to go as far down as we could see because a ridge was beginning to develop that seemed to lead us back towards the creek. The picture was partially obscured by tree and rock, but it looked exciting; a glimpse here; a view there, until at last as we emerged on the clear rock above the creek bed, we saw it all.

We saw the creasing canyon walls straight as a knife slash ceasing, from their keep releasing the little prisoner stream. We saw the flowing water, blindly, resignedly, sweetly unknowing, sweeping the deep cut gutters of the smooth uncluttered rock, then, overthrowing caution, gliding, sliding and leaping gladly to extinction or the keeping of the deep pool far below.

Suddenly we thought it was lunchtime - and at 2.30 so it should have been.

TO BE CONTINUED

AND NOW ALL THIS

What's wrong with Sydney anyway? First Shinsey does a flit, then Digby and the other three boys set off in their Landrover at high speed and haven't been heard of since. Last month Johnny Manning and the Famous Higgins took up residence in Hobart. Lynn Baber and Bookie have joined a group heading for India. And now three more!

The other evening we were farewelling Joan Walker, Niel Schaeffer and Mick Elflick all setting out in different directions. Joan to the Commonwealth Laboratories in Cairns, Niel to Europe and Britain and Mick to join John and the Famous One in Hobart.

Mick seemed to be having trouble getting started and was last seen heading for town to buy a suitcase so he could start packing. This was mid Saturday morning and his plane departure time was midday Sunday. There were some confident predictions that he would catch the plane with his belongings crammed in that same battered brief case that has been his companion ever since we've known him.

With all these people leaving, you might expect the club room to start looking a bit bare, but remember there are forty odd prospectives on the list. In that number a few odd members wouldn't be missed.

Talking about odd members, here's a couple who aren't odd any more - in fact they're just as even as two people can be. Kath Gibbs is now Mrs. Bruce McGuinness (the lucky man).

Just before Joan departed for northern climes (on her motor scooter by the way), she plucked up courage to pass on the news that Bev Price and Don Reed had been engaged since last long weekend "and it's about time the news leaked".

Yes, it certainly is! Congratulations Bev and Don, and our best wishes for the future.

NO TITLE

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NO NEWS

just @ reminder
about our xmas
gay and hearty
in the r.s.l. hall
on the 12th of December!

YOUR WALKING GUIDEWalk No.

- 119 Guloul Range-Mollimi Ck-Golo River-Juloul Range. This walk is only suitable for those who are reasonably fit. The trip is to the most spectacular part of the Golo Canyon and is the first official walk there.
- 120 Woy Woy-Kilcare-Maitland Bay-Woy Woy. A swimming weekend to the ever popular Maitland Bay and Bouddi Primitive Area.
- 121 Turramurra-Bus to Bobbin Head-Motor Boat cruise on Cowan Creek. For those who want something different in the summer - a boat trip. Please advise leader ten days in advance.
- 122 Mt. Victoria-Victoria Falls-Grose River-Grand Canyon-Blackheath. A medium test walk in the Upper Grose area. A good track along shaded river banks with a comparatively easy climb out up the Grand Canyon.
- 123 Robertson-Garrington Falls-Minnamurra Falls-Power Line-Jamberoo. An interesting walk in the South Coast-Barron Grounds area. Easy walking with views of the Garrington and Minnamurra Falls.
- 124 Waterfall-Kangaroo Creek-Audley. An easy walk along Kangaroo Creek with some excellent swimming holes for hot weather.
- 125 Marulan-Jerrara Falls-Bungonia Creek-Bungonia Tops-Marulan. Swimming and rope work combine to make this an exciting trip to Jerrara Creek. A waterproof pack is essential (a waterproof container inside the pack is simplest), also a rope sling and carabiner would be an advantage.
- 126 INSTRUCTIONAL WEEKEND to Maitland Bay. Popular Beach and camping spot in the Bouddi National Park.
- 127 Launch Jaunt from Bobbin Head. The famous boat race is on again - so see Pete Stitt for further information.
- 128 Kiama-Shellharbour Coastal Walk. An easy walk along scenic beaches between Kiama and Shellharbour. Excellent photographic material available and the surf is right on hand if the sun gets too hot.
- 129 Kiddies Christmas Outing to Bare Creek. Bare Creek is an excellent camping and swimming spot, and is easily accessible from St. Ives. For further information see Ken Meadows - FJ.3741.

6TH & 7TH DECEMBER - KIAMA TO SHELLHARBOUR

Are YOU keen on hard tough mountain walks in summer temperatures?
You are? Then -

THIS IS NOT THE WALK FOR YOU.

This is an easy coastal walk along grassy cliff tops, golden beaches and plenty of surfing, scenic material for photographers, and sunshine.
LEADER - FRANK ASHDOWN.

PADDY MADE

THIS PLASTIC AGE.

Plastics are gradually infiltrating into every nook and cranny of our daily lives.

Malcolm McGregor brought back from U.S.A. an interesting refillable plastic squeeze-tube which would have many uses for bushwalkers.

Paddy is investigating the manufacture of such an item but news to date is that making such a gadget may be difficult on account of patent rights.

A plastic filling for sleeping bags is not new. We have been selling Terylene-filled sleeping bags for two years now and can report the users are well satisfied.

Points in their favour are:

1. They are allergy-free.
2. Lightweight. A 6'2" "Alpine" type bag weighs only 2 lbs. 11 ozs. or 2 lbs. 14 ozs. with cover.
3. Terylene filling does not "felt".
4. Filling is not easily wet and dries easily. Terylene filled bags available in 6'2" length only. "Alpine" style - £9. 4. 6. "Kiandra" style £9.17. 3.

COME AND HAVE A LOOK AT ONE !

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Lightweight Camp Gear
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