



## THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest  
to the Sydney Bushwalker, The N.S.W.  
Nurses' Association Rooms "Northcote  
Building," Reiby Place, Sydney.

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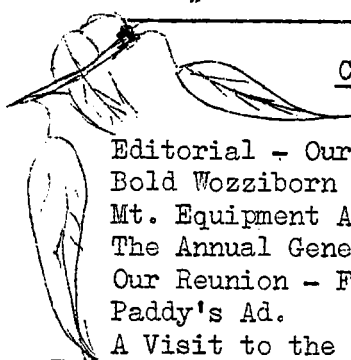
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## C O N T E N T S .

Editorial - Our Magazine	2.
Bold Wozziborn — Dot Butler	3.
Mt. Equipment Ad.	6.
The Annual General Meeting - J. Brown	7.
Our Reunion - Frank Rigby	10.
Paddy's Ad.	11.
A Visit to the "Local" in the N.T.	
- Denise Hull	13.
Abseiling in Canyons - J. Hallman	15.
Social Notes	15.
Variety is the Spice of Life -	
N. Page	16.
One More Month - Observer	
Day Walks	20..



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EDITORIAL - OUR MAGAZINE.

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By and large, our Club magazine will be about as good as members and prospective members like to make it. Unlike commercial magazines, we rely entirely on ourselves, the readers, to supply the contributions. On this basis, it goes without saying that the more effort that we, as a whole, put into it, the more enjoyment we will all get out of it. Undoubtedly, there is talent in the Club which has not yet been tapped.

Naturally, interesting and well-written material has the most appeal. But ours is a Club of bushwalkers, not journalists, so don't get the idea that your literary talents might not be up to standard - give it a bash and you might even surprise yourself with the results; and the second time always comes easier than the first!

To provide some sort of guidance, the Editor lists below the types of contributions for which the magazine hungers. The list is by no means exhaustive - you probably have ideas too, so let's have them.

- (a) Accounts of bushwalking, climbing, ski touring etc. trips. (Now and again an overseas setting adds the sprice of variety. Don't forget that a map or a cartoon sketch makes these accounts more interesting).
- (b) Bushwalking fiction, fantasy and philosophy.
- (c) Letters to the Editor. (These can be really stimulating!)
- (d) Cartoons with a bushwalking flavour.
- (e) General articles on topics that would appeal to bushwalking types.
- (f) Snippets of current gossip and happenings for the "One More Month" series. (Editor to collect these by special request of the author.)
- (g) Contributions for a series called something like "The Trip I'll Never Forget". (This will be resurrected from your past and will be outstanding for adventure, misadventure, humour, heavy drama, novelty etc.)
- (h) Profiles of personalities in the bushwalking movement.
- (i) Poems, humorous verse, ditties, jokes etc.
- (j) Conservation items.
- (k) Outstanding material from other kindred magazines. (Please bring to Editor's attention).

The normal deadline (every Editor's arch-enemy) is the Monday before Committee Meeting each month. Please deliver the goods personally to the Editor or post to the address on Page 1 and you will be in print.

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BOLD WOZZIBORN

(Tune: Bill Brink)

- Dot Butler

There once was a walker called Why Wozziborn

Who dreamt about climbing from night until morn;  
He'd take his friends climbing, the old and the new,  
He'd even take charlies who hadn't a clue.

On his first canyon trip a brash newcomer came -  
His climbing was poor and he abseiled the same,  
He used every gadget both shining and new  
To show off the fact that he hadn't a clue.

When it came to long abseils this lad had a toy  
Which he'd haul out all smiling with oodles of joy;  
Chrome-plated and polished, it gleamed in the sun,  
Cooling-fins bristling and weighing a ton -

In wait for an abseil -- a descent from the skies -  
"Pipeclay's gescendeur" was the name of this prize.  
It hung at his belt in his gleaming array  
Lurking for nylon to melt down and fray.

Steep Davies Canyon has many a spot  
For a mighty beaut abseil with quite a long drop  
And the swivel-necked swamp-tits all jostle to see  
The climbers who gamble with death for no fee.

Now our lad, having come to a strenuous climb,  
Adjusted his brain-child around his lifeline,  
Flipped off the rope ends, checked the belay,  
Gave a spring downward and hurtled away.

O how can I tell of the horror and pain  
Of that dreadful descent and his fall into shame  
For his britches did strip on the infernal device  
Which exposed his anatomy - let that suffice.

Down at the Club where the Bushwalkers go  
Whywozzi tells a story and he ought to know;  
He says down in Davies a climber resides  
Hanging from a frayed rope still held by his strides.

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Like the song says, maybe I do dream about climbing from morning till night,  
but you don't always get it good. Like this time I'm going to tell you about.

Duncan and me and Cameron and Gerry have just been ten days up the head of  
the Matuki, hoping to climb that inhospitable heap Mt. Thundergut not to mention  
sundry others, but the weather has been nothing if not lousy so we have come out

again with nothing up our sleeves except you might say snow chuff. In between spine-bashing in our fleabags and digging a great monstrous snow-cave which we don't manage to live in anyhow because who would with a nice warm dry hut close by, we do a few real pioneering excursions over the Bonar Glacier. The glacier is carved up with God knows how many crevasses only you can't see them in the whiteout, and a muckle great number of them you can't see anyhow because they have a light snow roof over them. In spite of his Doctor of Science degree Duncan is not all that educated with respect to slots and he spends a goodly part of his time falling into them.

So like I said, we've given the Matuki away and have come out to Wanaka and are waiting for a bus to take us over the Haast Pass to the West Coast side. By jingo the weather had better be better over there or Hughie will be getting his face smashed in.

With an hour to bus time we gets to looking at the local burg and we sees this new two-storey building going up and up top, leaning over the parapet, is one of those wheel things that they use to haul up barrow loads of bricks and mortar.

"What an archaic device," murmurs Duncan, meaning that they could do a lot better with one of those monstrous great cantilever cranes you see on top of Goldfields House etcetera. "Nevertheless," says Duncan, and you can see he's thinking up some wonder too powerful to relate as the cogs in his brain revolve, "nevertheless," says he, "the eye of Science must never overlook any small detail that could prove useful," and he is persuading Gerry, telling him he is the best gymnast in the party and what about if he goes up the rope and gets it. But Gerry makes like he is not all that keen, and murmurs some paltry excuse i.e. it's not his to take and that would be stealing.

Duncan replies this way, that in the interests of scientific enquiry no man's property is his own.....moral scruples such as Gerry is sadly exhibiting have held back the march of scientific progress a thousand years....take Galillio.... We let Duncan rave on but I am spending my thinking time on other things I can do with more of and don't have much of right now one of them being for example food. So me and Cameron and Gerry wander off and cram ourselves into the village store and cram a goodly assortment of commestables into our stomachs, and when we emerge what do we see but the bus has arrived and Duncan has just finished helping the driver load our packs into the luggage compartment. Looks like they needed a rear-end loader for the last one.

Well, we gets into the bus and eight hours later are flung out at some crazy spot on the west coast wilderness. Up yonder the icy mass of the Fox Glacier comes hurtling down a good 10 thousand feet from the Main Range to sea level, and up it we have to lug our packs and snow-shovels, dammit, to 9,000 ft. where we are going to dig a snow-cave as bivvy base for some mighty high climbing around Cook and Tasman.

Well the bus has left us and we don't get any bonus for hanging around so we shoulders our packs and away. Godawlmighty! mine is weighing nothing if not half a ton and I am wondering did I really pack in so much garbage that I can

hardly stand upright but go buckling at the knees like I'm half tight.

We shambles over the grey monotonous moraine type stones for hour after hour and it's beginning to get more than somewhat tedious. I wonder am I sickening for something on account of my pack is beginning to be getting almost too much for me. Then we comes to the white ice and Boy, is she cut up with crevasses!

"Scroggin stop," says Duncan on the edge of a huge monstrous crevasse that disappears down hundreds of feet into the blue ice. Ah, a rest at last - to Hell with the scroggin - I gotta lie down. Next thing I sees Duncan tearing my pack apart and what does he emerge with? Nothing if not that great wheel thingo from that building in Wanake. I am brung-on no end.

"Now," says Duncan like as if he is the Professor and we are his group of sniffly-nosed class-birds, "I am about to demonstrate my new, easy, scientific method of getting a mug climber out of a crevasse that he has been mug enough to fall into. In this demonstration we tie the climber to one end of the rope which had been passed through the pulley, thus, and to the other end we tie his pack after it has been weighted to make it heavier than the climber." And what does he do but load into my pack a dirty great heap of morains boulders, with a shovel-full of snow for good measure.

"For this experiment," says Duncan, "we need the bravest man in the party and I think it will be unanimously agreed" says Duncan - the cunning devil; they all agreed with him - "it will be unanimously agreed that the honour falls to Wozziborn."

So before I can say anything they have me grabbed and strung up, and there is Duncan explaining that he is going to lower me into the crevasse and he will then proceed to bring me out easily and painlessly and all the rest of the rhubarb that only Duncan can spout forth when he's really steamed up. I can see I'll get exactly nowhere arguing, what with them being three to one. Better get it over quickly, so I poise myself on the brink, shout "Goff, goff and we're off!" and leap into the blue depths.

I am brought to a rib-crushing stop 120 ft. down, just short of a needle-sharp stalagmite of ice that is sticking up. Duncan is shouting abuse from above and it appears he's peeved at me for jumping before he had time to put his gloves on so that he got his hands burnt.

The next step in the big rescue is he shoots my pack in tied to the other end of the rope. It is, of course, heavier than me, and as it comes hurtling down I goes roaring up. The pack frame gives me a hefty welt as it screams past me, and I continue on up to crash my head on the overhung lip of the crevasse and get my whiskers tangled up in the pulley.

Seeing that the loaded pack is heavier than me, the good old No.3 mylon stretches an extra couple of feet which is just enough to make it reach the aforesaid ice stalagmite. This rips up the side of my beaut Mountain Mule and out pours the stones.

The pack, now being lighter than me, comes rushing up again and deals me a glancing blow on the hip as I pass it on my way down again. When I come to rest I find I am pinned by the seat of my pants to the stalagmite. At this stage I must have lost my nerve because I untie the rope, so the pack comes hurtling down again and whacks me a severe blow on the head.

I am making huge efforts to extricate myself, what time I'm shouting choice excerpts of the Queen's English at Duncan, when it turns out I'm fighting my bunk and getting my crampons all snarled up in the sleeping bag (I must have gone to bed with them on) and Duncan is laying on with a pillow saying "Shut up! Shut up, Rosso! How do you expect anyone in the hut to sleep through that infernal racket!"

Like I said, it's all right to have dreams about climbing, but you don't always get it good.

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AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Jim Brown.

It was 7.40 p.m. when the President called attention of the big business event of the year, the Annual General. There was one new member to welcome - David Constable - and enquiries to be made about two members elected during the year and not since sighted. One was remoured to be at Newcastle.

After the minutes of the February meeting had been "signed as a correct record" the President confessed that in fact he had signed them in error at the March Committee Meeting. The only business arising was advice that Federation had no plans at present for an Anzac Day ceremony at Splendour Rock.

Correspondence contained advice that a body known as Associated Sports Clubs was meeting on 15th March and hoped to arrange Club Rooms in the redevelopment of the Hotel Sydney, that Federation Reunion would be at Murphy's Glen (out of Woodford) and the proposed prison camp in the Newnes area would probably be near the "Twelve Mile" on the plateau out from Newnes Junction. The National Trust was organising a seminar on bush fire control.

Jack Gentle at this stage welcomed Stan Lumsden's return to membership and told us Mr. Coates, our man in Hill Top, was full of praise of bushwalkers and hoped to see some of us en route to the Reunion.

Without further ado we received and adopted the Annual Report, to which Brian Harvey commented that it was good to see a total membership exceeding 300 and also so many names of members who had survived 28 to 35 years of membership.

Gordon Redmond presented the Annual Financial Statement and his motion of adoption was seconded .... by the Auditor. Gordon went into some detail about the statements, emphasizing that our accounts were kept on a rigid annual basis, with no "sundry debtors" etc, and that depreciation charges should account for the capital cost of all equipment within another 12 months. Over a 10 year period he said the club's "profit" had been about 10/- (sorry one dollar) per week. More in sorrow he said the magazine was in the red this year and consideration may have to be given to billing advertisers with the cost of altering their display. Advertising was not a paying proposition under present arrangements.

After we had carried the formal adoption of the statements, Ron Knightley said 10/- a week for 10 years amounted to £260, not too bad for a non-profit organisation, and asked if some of the funds in the bank accounts could be transferred to interest bearing bonds. Gordon replied

that some of the cash was in magazine accounts, and there had been fairly heavy expenditure during February. However he agreed with the principle and thought the incoming Committee might look into it.

Presentation of the February financial statement, the first in dollars showed a commencing figure of \$506, income of \$37, expenditure of \$162 and a concluding balance in the vicinity of \$381, with the prospect of a healthy intake for a month or two.

This took us to the usual suspension of standing orders to permit the election of Club officers while other business proceeded. The time honoured system of voting was adopted and old and trusted firm of scrutineers, Pallin (senior), Burke, Elfick and Gray were appointed, Eddie Stretton took post at the blackboard and we were away.

A list of the officers is given elsewhere and it is sufficient to say that John White became the 21st President, and it looked for a while as though he might reign without a Keeper of Archives until at the very end of proceedings Davig Ingram was coaxed or coerced into the post of Secretary.

There was no Walks Report available, and apart from the news that the proposed Caravan Park off Wakehurst Parkway at Narrabeen would not be developed, the remaining items in the Parks and Playgrounds Report were completely suburban in character.

Federation Report has already been summarised in the March programme, but it was also suggested that, if accosted by Water Board Rangers in the Blue Mountains Catchment area, it would be as well to have a receipt showing that one was a current member of a walking club - the President implied that this should bring a rapid response to the Treasurer's appeal for payment of subscriptions.

Speaking from the standpoint of the newest member, David Constable asked if a group might be set up to show a friendly interest in new prospectives and suggested an arrangement to provide supper in the Club Room could be a pleasant social note. Jack Gentle said a Membership sub-committee would be appointed at the next Committee Meeting, but as for supper - ah that had been tried and found wanting - not enough willing workers. Ed. Stretton added not always enough paying for it also.

That old bone of contention, the Annual Subscription and Entrance Fee was settled with neither a bang nor a whimper. On the Treasurer's motion it (or they) was (or were) set at last years rate, viz Active Member \$4 (\$2 if under 21), Married couple \$6, and Entrance Fee \$1. Your reporter thought he heard some mention of the Non Active Subscription, but studiously ignored it, because the Constitution specifically leaves that to the Committee to decide.



About this stage Ron Knightley became disturbed because all the Federation Delegates also occupied other Committee positions (Well, why shouldn't they earn their seat in Committee?) and Frank Ashdown raised his old harp about disposing of the Club Library (Why shouldn't we? - it looks pretty even if no-one much uses it). There was no seconder for the motion.

Alex Colley said recent discussions with the Minister for Lands indicated that he was aware of the S.B.W.'s published conservation policy and proposed that the Committee which drafted that statement should be re-convened and seek talks with the Minister on conservational and park-lands proposals. Carried.

With the night drawing toward its close and all positions filled, Kath Brown suggested January was not a good time to select the Reunion site - too many people who may be interested were away on holidays. It was moved and carried that the Reunion site for 1967 be chosen at the Half Yearly meeting in September, when it could be notified on the Agenda.

The final and fitting stroke of the evening, before Jack Gentle put down the Bone of Office was Alan Rigby's appreciative comment on the smooth running of Club Affairs during the President's recent term in that office. As he stood down, he also rose, as the other Presidents have done before, to cry "Let us Re-une!"

#### CLUB OFFICERS 1966-7.

President	John White	
Vice President	1. Alan Rigby.	2. Jack Gentle
Secretary	David Ingram	
Assistant Secretary	To be elected	
Treasurer	Gordon Redmond	
Walks Secretary	Kerry Hore	
Social Secretary	Ruth Constable	
Membership Sec.	Barbara Evans	
Conservation Sec.	Alex Colley	
Committee Members	1. Edna Stretton.	2. Sandra Bardwell. 3. Phil Butt.
	4. Greg Reading	
Editor	Frank Rigby	
Parks and Playgrounds Delegate.	Margaret Child.	
Federation Delegates.	1. David Ingram.	2. Alan Rigby. 3. Gordon Redmond.
	4. Kerry Hore.	
Substitute Fed. Delegates.	1. Brian Harvey.	2. Barbara Evans. 3. Phil Butt
Trustees.	1. Maurice Berry.	2. Joe Turner. 3. Brian Harvey.
Publications Business Manager.	Bill Burke.	
Auditor.	Brian Harvey.	Hon. Solicitor. Colin Broad.
Tracks and Access Committee Delegate	- John White.	
Equipment Hire.	Alan Pike.	
Magazine Sales and Subs.	- Neville Page.	S & R Contacts. Heather Joyce
		Elsie Bruggy.

OUR REUNION.

Frank Rigby.

Before it even started, this Reunion was one with a difference - it was born of revolution and controversy. After about fourteen years, Woods Creek had been voted down in favour of a new venue - McArthur's Flat on the Nattai River. To many, the idea was like a breath of fresh air but to others, notably some of the older folk and those with young families, there seemed to be doubts and objections about the walking distance and terrain. It would be fair to say that the controversy didn't end with the Reunion.

A rough road now winds around Coate's Farm and where the cars could go no further, the pack horses came into their own. Pack horses? Was this really the S.B.W. Reunion? Jack Perry had organised the transport, by float, of these six beasts, complete with keepers, all the way from Rouse Hill. Now on this hot and humid Saturday, they grew to know the Starlights Trail backwards, shuttling between road's end and the Nattai with Reuners' loads. Apart from the added colour these horses lent the Reunion, many of the not-so-strong were grateful for the chance to relieve their own backs of the heavy loads.

MacArthur's Flat lived up fully to the claims of its backers - an expansive flood plain in a big bend of the Nattai, surrounded by impressive sandstone walls; wide open grassy spaces for the tents under the trees; a plentiful supply of wood; a deep swimming hole and a fair share of bracken which diminished rapidly in spots as it found a new home under numerous groundsheets. By about 4 p.m. a colourful array of tents dotted the flat and people were doing all those things that people do at Reunions - building the campfire pile, cooking up campfire items, telling and retelling the old bushwalker tales or cooling off in the pool. Not all the oldies had stayed away - Taro was there, of course; the Read and Gray babies had managed the course and there was a fair sprinkling of older children. A rough count of heads showed that the century mark had been passed, a respectable total for any reunion. The fauna comprised six horses, one dog and a black snake which seemed to have its home under the campfire "stage".

The clouds banked up ominously, the humidity closed in and about 7 p.m. we felt the first drops of rain. Would there be a campfire after all? But Old Hughie held off and in due course the newest member, David Constable, set fire to the pile. To the accompaniment of the first bout of singing led by Paddy. But S.B.W. singing isn't quite what it used to be - the fire seemed to sense this for at first it was a reluctant fire;



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however, when we encored "Fires Burning" with added gusto, all was well and the flames leaped and roared. Colin Putt's patent carbide lighting and Jack Perry's screen gave the "stage" a professional touch.

Who can remember the details of Reunion campfires? My main memory is that it was a fine one, with something unexpected always round the corner. To recall some items, there was Jack Perry with his shearers' jokes some humourously illustrated; Taro's reading of a story of the first bushwalk from Katoomba to Jenolan in 1886 was a gem; Paddy's fun and games with the children; a brilliant but under-rehearsed comic opera called "Prussic Pete", which built to a climax when a reluctant Jerry Sinzig appeared in the full rig-out of a N.Z. street girl; some ghoulish songs by Wassiborn, Fitzganderpipe and Co; the traditional ceremonies which embarrass new Presidents (What, only three past Presidents in attendance!); and the old smuggling joke in new guise, the critical goods being rucksacks instead of wheelbarrows. The initiation ceremony for new members was conspicuous by its absence - apparently we have run out of ideas, thank goodness.

When it was all over, two mighty brews of cocoa and coffee soon disappeared into bottomless pits and then some spirited singing began among the group who were left. In the wee small hours, hilarious splashes and shouting from the river could be heard and here and there among the trees little fires glowed - if one listened carefully, one might even have heard the clink of bottle against enamel mug.

Reunion Sunday mornings are great for the kids - they seem to get up earlier and earlier and yell louder and louder. Anyway, they had lots of fun riding horses and running races, which this year was extended to the adult population as well. Betty Farquhar produced the winning damper and after this the growing heat caused a mass migration to the river.

Finally, the loaded horses and their attendants posed formally for the photographers and set off on their last portage to the cars. Reuners lazed, lolled and lunched and it was all over bar the pull up Starlights Trail.

One could sense a general, if not unanimous, feeling that this Reunion could be ranked with the best of them.

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#### SINGING GROUP.

Many people feel that singing around the campfire has lost its vim and vigour, so Barbara Evans and Ruth Constable have plans and hopes of doing something about it. All those interested please contact Barbara or Ruth.

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A VISIT TO THE "LOCAL" IN THE N.T.

Denise Hull.

(Denise was a very active member of the Club until she took up an appointment at Wave Hill Station, as a Nursing Sister about 12 months ago. Her days of adventuring are far from over as you will see in this stirring tale - Editor).

The word had gone around that the Sister would like to visit the village "local" which happened to be a mere 104 miles away from the station in question. Her three drinking mates decided that Anniversary Weekend was a suitable time for this event - their interest being solely to bring some variety into the Sister's life - no thought occurred that that station had been "dry" since New Year. That no one but tourists and idiots travelled in the Wet failed to deter them - and loaded with the customary equipment for a trip in The Territory - one water bag, a big mob of bread and salt beef, tea and sugar and cigarettes. With one eye on gathering clouds they set off after lunch on Saturday in the little jeep with the bore mechanic following in this Land Rover.

Over every rut we bounced - there didn't appear to be any smooth parts - every creek we stalled in - poured petrol over the engine, cranked madly and started off again. In the Cam River we were awash, to be towed out ingloriously by the Land Rover - but onward ever onward we struggled with the grog like a carrot ahead of us. At last at 8 p.m. - 104 miles and 6  $\frac{1}{2}$  hours later we tottered into the "pub". There wasn't anything else there - just the pub - nothing else, anyway, for another 100 miles or more; and it had to be seen to be believed. There were probably no overhead expenses - in fact there was barely no overhead, full stop. The Sister was left decorously in the jeep until the surroundings were surveyed to see all was right and proper. This being found to be suitable on this occasion for the presence of a female, she was allowed to descend, but ordered to sit in a chair in a corner and stay there - she didn't, of course - she had, instead, a very entertaining evening - circulating! At 10.30 p.m. the matter of suitable accommodation for a female was discussed - and the barman, under protest, sent to waken the proprietor for the key of the sleeping quarters. It was felt that the matter of a camp with a swag was not entirely suitable - it had nothing to do, of course with the fact that some of the party had met some mates and the small matter of grogging on was under discussion. There are times in the N.T. when the presence of a female is not altogether desirable.

A room, quite comfortable, was forthcoming - recently built to comply with the licensing laws. But the door refused to close - much less lock - so the most sober member of the party undertook to sleep outside on the vernadah - one is well looked after in the Territory.

After a peaceful night and a substantial breakfast of eggs, sausages and lamb chops - none of these previously seen for months - and supplemented somewhat quaintly by slices of beetroot (perhaps it is a Territorian custom, I do not know) the two vehicles set off - heavily laden. We returned by the same road but the ruts seemed smoother somehow and the going merrier until we reached the Cam River - no mere creek now but a roaring torrent. There was nothing else for it but to camp for the night - 3 p.m. until 9 a.m. next morning, Monday. The load on the vehicles by this time was considerably lighter, the atmosphere one of the lighthearted approach to all problems. So the Land Rover set off first - and in a few yards bogged herself completely, irrevocably and entirely in lovely sloshy mud. Jacks, bogs and shovels were brought into play without avail - the jeep was too light to tow her out so finally returned to the property 10 miles back for help. A wait of 2 hours followed until the manager had returned from some part of his several thousand square miles of property - passed pleasantly by the others under the shade of a tree listening to the cricket scores while imbibing the odd tin of Tarax.

The River Cam was finally successfully negotiated - the opposite bank was a sheer perpendicular mud track. I am not quite clear how we managed that but make it we did about 4 p.m.

And then the fun started - for some reason known only to our mechanic friend every time we slowed, the engine cut out. This occasioned some pushes by the Land Rover and much cranking to somewhat colourful language. We made headway gradually until the Land Rover broke its front axle! We wrapped the bore mechanic in his swag and left him beside his vehicle - one way and another he didn't seem to care very much. And off we set again.

And then seven miles from home and at 11 p.m. we bogged - utterly. The only torch - the Sisters, a well trained member of the S.B.W. - had long ago given up the ghost peering into the engine. After several futile attempts we admitted defeat and it was decided that the mechanic to get help, and the Sister, to administer pills already a day late, should head for home, while the others, one of whom was minus shoes, would camp by the vehicle. All the tattered remains of bread and beef had already been consumed by breakfast time, cigarettes and matches were at a premium and though there were cases of lovely warm beer there didn't seem much else. The Sister had one square bottle she had been guarding almost with her life, but the moment was serious and with a magnificent gesture she bequeathed it to comfort those left behind. So off they set - the Sister again remembering her S.B.W. days - had also put in her walking shoes just in case - and now the moment had come - with every footstep - squelch - with every step forward a shoe was left behind in the lovely rich loamy soil. We ploughed on up the sodden, rutted road; the clouds got lower and lower; the night got darker and darker; only sodden mud to rest in - at last the clouds became so low and the night so dark that we were bending down every few yards feeling for the ruts to see if we were still on the road. Shades of bushwalking days - the only thing that kept me going was one thing I learnt while bushwalking - that somehow one always got there in the end. you had to; and just as the storm broke we made the homestead in a last mad dash in the blinding rain. It was 4 a.m.

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ABSEILING IN CANYONS.

Johanna Hallman

I knew how to abseil. I had been to a Rocky Instructional. They showed me what must have been about five different ways. "No trouble", I said and strode to the edge. I tried not to look over.

I competently wrapped the sling around my waist and reached to secure one of the back ropes to the karabiner. I overbalanced and clutched at an outcrop while my harness fell about my feet.

Undaunted by the sympathetic sniggers I pulled up my harness and keeping it up with one hand, I crept to the brink. I felt ridiculous as if my elastic had broken. But at least I didn't trip.

Now, how did that twisted knot go? With one hand still supporting the harness and hanging onto the abseil rope I struggled to feed the heavy, awkward rope into the choked karabiner. It didn't look right.

I look up in dumb perplexity. "You're right. Over you go." I was scared. I had learnt: lean out, don't let go of the backrope. I chanted it to myself till I hit the cold depths.

"You okay?" the leader enquired of the thrashing and bubbles. I was treading water, drenched in spray and ensnared in a great, intricate tangle. "I'm - just - trying to - get - out - of this - this - " while I thought, "Never again, never again, never again."

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SOCIAL NOTES FOR APRIL.

On April 20 you will have a golden opportunity to hear a tale (illustrated with impressive slides) of raw pioneering adventure, told by one who thrives on the diet. Our own Colin Putt, a member of the now famous 1964-5 Heard Island Expedition, will take us along to the South Indian Ocean in the comfort of our Clubroom chairs.

On April 27 Mick Elfick will talk about "How to go about getting information to see if an area is suitable for a National Park" with illustrating slides of what happens when a developmental authority moves into an area.

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VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE.

Neville Page.

The occasion was an official S.B.W. walk in the Wolgan Valley, but it could well have been a field day of the United Nations, with representatives of Canada, Korea, Scotland, England, Holland, Italy and Australia present. If this walk lacked something, it most certainly was not variety, hence the title of this article.

Present on the trip were Owen (leader), Margaret, Johanna, Judy, Linda, Kim, Roland, Ian, Ken Greg, Alan, Ramon, David, Clife and myself. Late arrivals were Enzo and a friend. There was also a good roll-up of Volkswagons, with a total of five providing the transport.

None but one of our number had visited the Newnes area before, so we were looking forward to our first encounter with this place about which we had heard so much. Of course a visit to the famous 1907 hotel was a must for the weekend.

On the Saturday morning we set out from Newnes to walk along the track, inspecting as we went various ruins of old buildings, some with a fireplace and chimney still intact. As we walked further we seemed to be climbing, where we should have still been following the river, so map consultation time was announced. The party rested while the experts consulted the map. The resultant discovery was that we were on the wrong side of the river, so it would be necessary to go down the hill into the valley and across the river onto the right side, where we should find the track. As we climbed down the hill through the scrub, lo and behold, we came upon an old galvanized iron bath tub. This was the cue for photographers in the group to bring out cameras to capture for posterity the portrait of our fearless leader reclining in the bath. Owen Marks, Order of the Bath, is his new title.

Once on the other side, and following along the track we came upon a line of Processionary worms. These fascinating caterpillars, which are each about an inch in length, line up one behind another in a long row, and in this formation they march (they are also called army worms) along together. The line which we saw was about two feet long but this is by no means a long line. They are considered a pest by agriculturists, and can reach plague proportions, migrating from one area to another, eating crops as they go. As we stood there we became engrossed in a study of the social behaviour of these amazing insects. Someone wondered aloud what would happen if the leader of the procession were taken away, and put on the end. This was duly done, and apparently the leader knew his place because he refused to follow along on the end of the line, and he simply curled up and stayed put. For a moment it looked as if the second worm was ready to take over the leadership,



because the line kept moving ahead as before, but after a few moments panic seemed to hit the front ranks, and the second worm started to lead the line back along itself, evidently looking for the leader. Before the confusion became too great the leader was replaced to his rightful position, and without a great deal of fuss he had the line back in shape again. For a second time the leader was taken away for a more extended time. The front worms started wandering around in circles, completely lost, while further back, they kept moving up, quite oblivious of the confusion ahead. This spectacle put me in mind of motor vehicles on a highway, moving steadily towards a traffic jam, but interested only in moving forward. When all the caterpillars had caught up, they milled around in a big group, with the leader in the centre. Although I am not prepared to vouch for this, though it is stated by those more observant ones in our group, the meeting of the worms resulted in the election of a new leader, who reorganised the masses and led the community once again in a straight line in the direction of their goal. The deposed leader supposedly went to the third last position in the line. It was at this point that we left the worms to go in their direction while we followed ours. I think that a moral can be derived from this episode, so leaders take heed.

Later, we inspected the remains of fifty or more kilns, which we supposed were used to heat the oil shale, which was mined in the district, in order to extract the oil. The Glen Davis-Newnes area was a large oil shale district, and indeed the last commercial oil shale mines in Australia were operated at Glen Davis until they were closed down in 1952. A report was published on the area entitled "Newnes-Capertee Shale Oil Project" in 1934 and it was the result of findings of a Newnes Investigations Committee. The railway to Newnes was closed down some time ago, and the rails have all been taken up.

We followed more or less along the route of the river until we arrived at the junction with Rocky Creek, and it here that we camped for Saturday night. The camping spot was pleasant, but because of the dry weather the river was low, and there was no pool deep enough to have a good swim.

We were rather a lazy group, due to the weather that weekend or otherwise, and unfortunately insufficient adventurous spirit could be raised to return to Newnes via Rocky Creek, so it was decided that we would go back the easy way; that is the way we came.

As we passed the small farm in the valley on the way back, we noticed a magpie caught in the wire netting fence. Margaret and David did their good deed for the day, and their bit for conservation, by giving the bird a hearty drink of water, after which he had recovered sufficiently to hop to the shade of a tree to recuperate fully.

After numerous dips in the creek along the way, we arrived back at the cars for lunch, and a visit to the pub. The hotel is truly a

quaint place, with its four ornate beer taps, coloured pink and cream, standing proudly along the bar. Around the walls hang little signs with witty slogans, not to mention the wonderful art treasures (?) which adorn any free space. In the hall is an old organ, which doesn't work, and a honky-tonk piano, which almost doesn't work. It was here that Owen entertained us with Bach's "Sanctify Us By Thy Grace" and Margaret followed with a rendition of that much-loved familiar classic, "Chopsticks".

A trip to Newnes is not complete without a visit to the glow-worm tunnel, so after lunch we moved off in that direction. It is at this juncture that Fiorenzo Tarlao (ie. Enzo) made an appearance with his friend. To get to the tunnel, one must climb up a very steep hill, so Linda, Roland and Alan decided they couldn't face it, and stayed to look after the cars. The spectacle in the tunnel; in my opinion, is worth climbing up five hills to see. Millions of twinkling lights ... shine out like stars to give the impression that one is looking into ... the heavens, and with a good imagination, different constellations can be picked out. The Australian variety of glow-worms is closely related to the New Zealand variety, which is the larvae of a type of fly. They should not be confused with the European variety though, which is a beetle. No-one seems to be certain just what the purpose of the light is. In Europe it is said that only the female worms shine a light, and it is to attract the male of the species, which flies, but other theories give different ideas, one that the light attracts flying insects into a little net which the worms spins, for food.

After climbing down the hill we found that the ones who were looking after the cars had disappeared in one of them, to who knows where. While we sat down to wait for them, Enzo negotiated with Ramon to buy some petrol from him, since they were a bit low. Not until half of the can had been poured into the petrol tank, did Ramon discover that he had handed over the wrong can, containing water. The petrol tank was drained of water and refilled with petrol. Still there was no sign of the guardians of the cars. Greg and I decided to go since we were not needed and so did Ramon and his crew. Half-way up the hill we passed David and Ramon on the side of the road shoulder deep in a blackberry thicket, thoroughly gorging themselves. A pleasant ending to an enjoyable weekend it seemed.

#### ONE MORE MONTH

By Observer

One of the funniest sights of the Reunion weekend was Alan Round pushing with might and main and curses at a horse's rear and getting nowhere - that animal might just as well have been a statue in Hyde Park.

The unladen beasts were on the journey back from McArthur's Flat to the cars when this one was reloaded and turned around. Well, it wouldn't

budge downhill, was more than willing to go uphill to join its mates; in the end it had its way. Do horses have Horse Sense or can they be just plain stubborn like mules? Maybe Jack Perry is right when he says that you have to talk to horses with horses' talk.

In the small hours of Reunion Sunday, a phantom figure crept stealthily among the slumbering tents whispering "Tiger ... tiger .... tiger". It was spine-chilling, to say the least. We're still not quite sure if this character thought he was roaming the jungles of Assam or whether he was merely looking for the pack-horse man's dog.

"Degenerating in North America" was the title; doesn't seem likely, seeing that Ron Knightley was "surrounded by virgins", as he put it. At Ron's recent slide night, he showed us a picture of a snowfields chairlift, taken just after he had alighted. As far back as the eye could see, the chairlift carried nothing but nuns.

One of the most popular social events in a long time was Marie Byles' "Introducing the Japanese Alps" - the Clubroom was packed. Unfortunately, just after Marie began, a violent electrical storm broke over the city. The thunder roared and the rain drummed on the roof, quite effectively drowning Marie's small voice in the rear half of the room. What price a microphone and loudspeaker? Perhaps then the backseat boys might even know what they're voting for at some of our general meetings!

BOUQUET: So many members performed so many good deeds for the Reunion that it's almost unfair to single out individuals. But let's give Ern and Betty Farquhar a special mention. We were amazed at the quality and quantity of the prizes for the races, to say nothing of the prodigious effort that must have gone into making them; for every single item was hand-made in rare quality by Ern and Betty, from dolls and toy garages for the youngsters to sleeping bag covers and other useful camp gear for the adults.

BRICKBAT: For the merry-makers who littered the Reunion campfire ashes with their empty beer cans - and left them there.

John White's inauguration speech was a beauty - short, sweet and very much to the point.

Jack Perry lost his teeth while swimming in the Woronora River. Despite a thorough search by Jack, Alan Round AND a skin diver, this valuable piece of personal property did not turn up. Concludes Jack, "There's now some big yabby down there wearing a complete set of new teeth".

Have you heard about the proposed bicycle trip from Mittagong to Katoomba? No, it's not via the Main Roads system, unless Scott's Main Range comes into that category. Says Ross Wyborn, one of the enthusiasts, "I'm going up to Wahroonga Dump to find me an old bike". Some people are incurable optimists.

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DAY WALKS

- APRIL 17. Cowan - Porto Bay - Brooklyn. 12 miles.  
The scrub can be scratchy in parts of this area, but the magnificent views of the Hawkesbury River Estuary are well worth the trip.  
Train: NOTE ALTERED TIME 8.30 a.m. Gosford train from Central Steam Station to Cowan. Tickets: Hawkesbury River return @ \$1.22. Map: Broken Bay Military or Hawkesbury River Tourist. Leader: Jack Perry.
- MAY 1. Coalcliffe - Stanwell Tops - Kelly's Falls - Otford. - Jungle Track - Era - Garie Beach - bus to Waterfall. 10 miles.  
A steep climb up the Illawarra Range, thence along the tops through the Garrawarra Primitive Area. Good coastal scenery.  
Train: 8.42 a.m. Wollongong train from Central Steam Station to Coalcliffe. Tickets: Coalcliffe return @ \$1.27 plus \$0.25 bus fare. Map: Port Hacking Tourist. Leader: Jack Gentle.
- MAY 8. Waterfall - Forest Island - Bola Creek - Garie Trig - Garie Beach - bus to Waterfall. 10 miles.  
(Note 2 Day Walks) Right across the Royal National Park from West to East. There is an interesting cave in Bola Creek with the remains of limestone formations in it. The scrub could be scratchy.  
Train: 8.50 a.m. Cronulla train from Central Electric Station to Sutherland. CHANGE AT SUTHERLAND for rail motor to Waterfall. Tickets: Waterfall return @ \$0-60 plus \$0.25 bus fare. Map: Port Hacking Tourist or Port Hacking Military. Leader: Jim Calloway.
- Pymble - Bus to St. Ives (Douglas Street) Middle Harbour Creek - Bungaroo - Lindfield. 8 miles.  
Lady Davidson Park along Middle Harbour Creek is very attractive. Ideal as a first walk with the Club.  
Train? 9.10 a.m. Hornsby train from Central Electric Station via Bridge to Pymble. Tickets: Pymble return @ \$0.45 plus 15 c bus fare. Map: Sydney and Broken Bay Military. Leader: Gladys Roberts.

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MARCH FEDERATION REPORT.

Blue Mountains National Park. Paul Barnes advised that about 65,000 acres had been added to the Park - the major portion being in the Wollongambe Creek area.

Orienteering Competition. Paddy Pallin outline the rules and conditions governing competitions in the United Kingdom and which will be generally adopted in the forthcoming competition which will take place on July 2.

Fire Trails in the Blue Mountains It was learned that a map was in course of preparation showing fire trails in the area shown in the Katoomba and part of the Windsor Military Maps.

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