

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

MAY 1969

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COMMENTATOR.

The enormity of the problem of a long term conservation policy is well illustrated by the current disquiet with the Sim Committee on coastal mining. The sad heritage of colonial emphasis on exploitative use of the land has never been so apparent as in the over-riding Mining Act legislation which can deny for ever legitimate scientific interest in an area.

Pressure for mining rutile is intense in that the industry is geared for complete extraction of all possible areas within thirty to forty years at the outside. It is a unique, "one-shot" operation where increasing technology is not going to affect marginal land or reveal, as in other mining operations, new resources. Despite clever publicity the predominant companies are overseas owned, and practically all of its end products are exported. Virtually the whole of the beach coastline will disappear for the accident of 0.1% of the sand. That the end use, at the moment is decorative and thus competing with changing technology -- a need for dazzling whiter than white -- means that the foreseeable demand for rutile may be overtaken by change; a fact giving urgency to the miner's lobbying. A low cost operation rushing to make its money while it can and demanding the whole of a resource as its right. An "ostrich feather" type of industry.

Titanium, the metal element of rutile, is at the threshold of possibilities of enormous consequence. From a national resource point of view these possibilities would seem to outweigh the immediate, "this generation", gain of painting American houses. It is not inconceivable that by the time we have learnt to fabricate titanium all our resources will be spread thinly over Cape Cod clapboards.

There is an implication in the Sim Committee that because it was presented by conservationists other conservationists should not now complain. That its area of inquiry was incredibly circumscribed and that the committee should not regard itself as a body of expert opinion are appalling, self defeating facts. We give more dignity to and expect more competence from a P and C group mowing a school lawn. We desperately need a body of expert opinion -- when we have such a body it will need more than the generation or less left to them.

Unlike the large scale mining of iron ore in West Australia; where there is no conceivable alternate use for the area and there is in all likelihood an absolute immensity of similar land, the coastal mining embraces the whole of a resource that has demonstratably other uses, and is visually satisfying as it exists at the moment. The demand for this resource in a few generations will be incredible. Mining company arguments that they are forced to spend large sums on replanting are not tenable in that the purpose is consolidation of the beaches, a far cry from conservation. Royalties, local taxes and wages are transitory at best and incredibly low.

Whether a National policy would be effective does not alter the tragedy or its urgency. It merely highlights the irony of having at the one time a conservation minded Prime Minister and Minister for Lands.

OBSERVER.

A little old lady once said to a famous author -
- None of your stories have a wow at the end of them.
- Ah, madam, he replied, It is many years since I found it necessary to have a wow at the end. Or words to that effect.

A contemporary, who is not a little old lady, said to me recently - All the published stories seem to have a broken command at the end. Or words to that effect.

He was having an acute fit of nostalgia for train trips in the days when the slogan "The railway is the safe way" still had a certain pristine beauty and truth. Nowadays tension is taken out of travel with trains/at a suitable distance from Sydney one's tired eyes begin to droop as a luminous billboard extols the clan and savoir-faire of an owl. He's wise he flies. Tension to modern life is as salt to peanuts and there are other birds than the owl.

Well, my contemporary won't like this story even if I put the split by-pass and the blown head gasket first. One has to show a mystical regard for names; "pouring out there is not an adequate description. And no wow at the end.

There were four seats painted in the four primary colours. Very primary primary colours. In a perfect square with a regular path of white gravel leashed in by very downtrodden bricks. The very green grass ran to another leashed in path then a wall of field stone granite, well made, with a rail of galvanised pipe bisecting the flat top of the wall. In the very dry climate every bottom that had tried to sit on the flat top of the wall had added lustre to the rail. We added our lustre. Ten feet from the list of prohibitions an obelisk to a trooper killed at Laagersdoorp or Potgieters Roost, some kraal on the veldt. In another country. A real trooper in those days in country that would be brown and red-earthed feed, with a thousand very blue hills on the skyline and the Boer was in long grass or behind a kopje when he sniped the trooper. Slim Janie Smuts or Davie Craven's grandfather.

The seats would have to be in the story to describe the tree. A dead tree flanked by seats in primary colours. The tree dead perhaps as long as the trooper but kept as its own memorial swathed by wisteria. Whoever planted the park had simple tastes. MAGNOLIA, signwritten then in a less archaic type after the trees had struggled to bloom in a different land, verified, identified, serially as magnoflora, portwine. But no doubt the tree was already dying then unverified, unidentified, and the vine held it up as it decayed. There seems to be a stasis now. The vine growing stronger as the wood decays. Someday there would be a reckoning and the rotten wood would spill out from the clutches of the vine and the vine would leap across the four seats in primary colours, then across the lawn onto the wall of fieldstone and then tenaciously, doggedly pull from off-centre the patina-ed, galvanised, maligned pipe.

If you lay on your back on a park seat, a folded jumper under your head, a wonderful Easter trip completed and about to be contemplated, you don't mind what colour the seat is painted. That ridge will have to go in; a passion for direct descents is as dangerous as "strolling off" after lunch. Walking should be done in the conservative field of physics-energy expended going uphill should be regained coming downhill - it should be that much of an agony go get down. And the trout water. Trout water and whisky. Trout water and coffee. Trout water and warm bodies. Howqua water. Macalister Springs water and nematodes. The dry lunch and the water found ten minutes later. The pagan arrangement of meals so that one had neck chops, which crisp well in foil, on Good Friday and an immense meal of curried prawns and rice on Sunday. The food taken and not eaten (bushwalking as a function of ingestion), the warm clothing carried and not worn (bushwalking as a function of discomfort averted). The strange effects of altitude so that certain people were even less inclined to go for water or carry the tent. The strange encounter at the Bluff Hut with the members of the Melbourne WOMEN'S Walking Club. That was truly in another country.

The fascinating landforms. People feel better being breathless on an unique geological feature. Or a Classic Mountain Formation. Buller and Buffalo are granite batholiths, deep domed shapes formed initially under a tremendous load of horizontal sedimentary strata. As the reservoir of granite is fed the dome pushes up the strata, alters it shales and slates and quartzite the strata cracks, releases tension and the strata covering the dome are easily eroded. What is left is step like cliffs facing the dome and steeply inclined quartzite away from the dome with ragged skylines where the cracks occurred. If the dome is small and the strata doesn't give way completely "saddle reefs" occur in the cracks with suitable mineralisation. Hence Bendigo. Or was it Ballarat. Should have asked the ladies of the WOMEN'S Walking Club. In the brooding Scandinavian nights the Norwegians have an almost antithetical theory on granite formation. It pays to keep options.

The Geomorphology of the Dividing Range in the Howqua Delatite Macalister Watershed. The emergence of a batholith and its relationship to Anglo-Saxon place names on the same watershed. That couldn't go in.

Jim has a green seat which he forsakes for some needed exercise. On his return, Dmitrios rewed with Jason, he says the mechanic has a small mountain of spanners and can't find the metric ones. There should be conservation in it too. The astonishing news, imparted from driver to driver on a tight mountain road that there were deer up there and people with money flew to shoot the deer and flew out with the venison. Someone was firing so.....If deer shooters could shoot red shirted men riding bicycles Ross's orange pack was sure to be riddled. The alpine flowers. The incredibly bright boronia at 5,000' brighter than native rose. And the three flowers of manuka ti-tree espaliered, like the numerous snakes, on a warm rock on the Bluff. The last flowers I saw on a manuka were various dry flies left by trouters. The smell of cattle and the cut-over country with new growth like pastures among the tall trees. Four black cockatoos. And driving very fast at dusk when the twin peaks behind Mansfield held a cauldroning swirl of sunset which Ross caught with the last light on the last frame. And the magpie, exercising his territorial imperative, singing sweetly from an obelisk in another town while lesser magpies hunted grasshoppers late-hatched in the warm autumn under the fluorescent light. The fat cattle on green winter feed, and ploughed earth and new pasture and the lakes and the dams. The new names; Meerijig, Swanpool, Glenrowan. "So much horror in the clear Australian sunlight."

Jim is terrible restless. Two hours. Comfortable. Sleeping. The head is not cracked. Mobility. And the thick ham sandwiches. And the fresh country towns. And the illusion when you are driving very fast and watching the road far ahead that the road begins to move or that you are flying. And the glow of the country in a good season and its immensity.

Sydney to Auckland.

Paris to Warsaw and back.

New York to somewhere in Kansas.

Sydney to Buggery.

(The line "So much horror in the clear Australian Sunlight" from Douglas Stewart's play Ned Kelly.)

WANTED: Typistes for the magazine so that a roster can be formed.
Please see the editor if you can help.

THE CROSS CUT SAW.

Pat Harrison.

And is this Yarrow? THIS the Stream of which my
fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a walking dream?"

The poet Wordsworth wrote these lines after he had first seen Yarrow in Scotland; but there had been other times when he had failed to get to that beautiful place, and on one of those occasions he wrote the following lines:-

"If care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly, -
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in sorrow,
That earth hath something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

The Crosscut Saw is one of a couple of places that have stood in the same relation to me. Once upon a time I invited a chap to come there on a walking tour, but he mucked the proposal up before it got started and I abandoned it. However, the Sydney Bush Walkers are a different proposition and can be relied upon to stick fast to a plan; consequently seven of us (Ray Hookway, Frank Talker, Roger Gowing, Bill Gillam, Ross Hughes, Jim Vatiliotis and myself) made our first landfall at the Paragon Cafe at Goulburn at 10 p.m. on Easter Thursday and our next one at Holbrook at 3.20 a.m. on Good Friday. The petrol stations were still open and were doing a roaring trade.

After a couple of hours in our bags we drove as far as Table Top near Albury where we pulled off the road and boiled the billies for breakfast. The morning was clear and sunny, everyone was in good spirits, and other carloads of bushwalkers tooted us as they headed north. There was also a gorging of fruit and tomatoes - far better for these things to be inside your tummy than inside the Fruit Inspector's hut across the border.

The next landfalls were to be Benalla and Mirimbah, but because of a combination of events we did not see Bill's Toyota at either of these places although we waited at both of them. Ray's car had been in front but had pulled in for petrol while Bill was stuck behind a semi-trailer and consequently Bill thought we were still ahead of him.

We spent two hours in the sun at Mirimbah, having lunch and waiting for Bill, and then learnt from some camper's that a white Toyota station waggon with a NSW plate had been there hours ago, and had asked directions to "The Springs". This, of course, was McAlister

Springs where we were all going, so we threw our gear into the car and set off for the Howqua River, which would be as far as we could drive; but no Toyota had been on the Howqua, either at Bindaree Hut or elsewhere, so we parked Ray's car at the foot of the Howitt Spur after leaving messages for a white Toyota, with campers scattered along the river.

We had driven about 525 miles since we left Sydney, all of it on very good roads. The 25 miles from Mirrimbah to the Howqua were dirt and were up and over a mountain range, but it is as good a road as you could wish for, being wider and with far better grades (for example) than the road in and out of Jenolan Caves. There are bushfire dugouts at the Howqua Gap (or Woolly-Butt Saddle as it is called on the map), which is on the divide between the Delatite and Howqua Rivers, and there are also dugouts 19 miles from Mirrimbah at a place where the road changes direction to descend to the Howqua. As we drove along from Howqua Gap to the 19 mile dugouts we got tantalising glimpses of the titled sandstone escarpment of the Bluff Divide across the Howqua Valley, and these glimpses whetted our appetites no end for to-morrow's walk. The aspect of these mountains is completely different from any of ours such as the Snowy Mountains, the Brindabellas, the Budawangs, the Blue Mts etc. They really looked good. Another splendid sight was of Mount Buller as we drove along the road between Mansfield and Mirrimbah.

We set up camp at the foot of the Howitt Spur and we were finishing off our meal with a pot of tea when a lone-hand walker Barry Woods, drove up and camped with us and helped to yarn the hours away. Barry gave us good information about our proposed route and he also gave us spare maps which we concealed under Ray's car for Bill's use. (I was sure that Bill would turn up eventually, although some opinions were that he had either gone skiing or trout fishing). You can imagine how soundly we slept that night. The four of us slept side by side. You all know how Roger Gowing snores, yet no one heard anything all night. Best sleep I ever had.

On the morrow, we left maps and a note with detailed description of our route, then we all set off with Barry up the Howitt Spur on a very good track which gradually unfolded wonderful views of Mt. Magdala and its Hell's Window (formed by a cleft at the edge of the mountain) on one side while the other gave us our first glimpse of the magical land of the Crosscut Saw, a jagged and spectacular series of bare alpine peaks about 5 miles long which connect Mt. Speculation with the Mt. Howitt plateau. The Crosscut Saw is part of the Great Dividing Range and it is a razorback ridge, parts of it being only 4 or 5 feet wide. Somewhere near

where the Alpine Ash gave way to the Snow Gums we said goodbye to Barry who was off on a solo trip around the Crosscut Saw- The Viking - The Devil's Staircase - and back over Howitt to the Howqua.

A few hundred feet below the summit the Snow Gums ceased and the track zig-zagged up the rocks past odd bushes of flowering Boronia and finally emerged on the grassy plateau which is Mount Howitt (5,715 feet). Mt. Howitt is named after Alfred William Howitt (1830-1908) who was an explorer (he searched for and found the sole survivor of the Burke and Wills expedition), scientist, geologist, botanist, and an expert on the Australian Aborigines. The view from the trig was panoramic - Buller, Stirling, Speculation, Cobbler, Buffalo, The Razor, the Viking, the far-distant Bogong and Feathertop, Darling overlooking the Wonnangatta Valley, Snowy Plains, Clear, and back to The Bluff: but the most impressive sight of all was The Crosscut Saw lying at our feet and presenting a series of ups and downs of a few hundred feet, over which as we watched we could see a party of walkers threading their way.

We followed the cairns and snow poles across the flowery top of Howitt through masses of golden Everlastings splashed with purple daisies, to the edge of the plateau overlooking the Terrible Hollow. On the far wide of the Hollow the Razor and The Viking stood up in the tilted pose characteristic of the area. While Frank was busy with his camera the rest of us lolled about having an early lunch, and finally at 11 a.m. set out for a traverse of The Crosscut Saw as far as Mount Buggery.

Having been consigned to this well-known locality on numerous occasions, we arrived there about 90 minutes later to find it occupied by members of the Melbourne Women's Walking Club, some of whom remembered Dot Butler. On the way out, near the turn-off to Stanley's Name Spur, we also met four boys from Timber-top, and by a remarkable coincidence one of them was from my home town in north-western New South Wales. Small world indeed! On a previous occasion I met a girl on Feathertop who came from the next street! On the way back along the narrow crest there was a most effective scene with The Terrible Hollow in bright sunshine while the Howqua side was gloomy with cloud looming up from Buller. For a half an hour it seemed as if it would snow, but it quickly passed away and bright sunshine returned.

It was about 3.30 p.m. when we got back to Howitt, and whom do you think we saw emerging from that horrible-looking gully between Howitt and the Crosscut? Correct! It was Bill, Ross and Jim who had blithely ignored our note, our directions, our maps, and had pioneered a new route up to Howitt, a route which we others considered could appropriately be called

Retribution Route. However, after we had a look down into the gully, we reckoned that the penance they had performed had cleared away all their sins.

Anyway, we were all together in a good camp at McAlister Springs, which is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Howitt and connected to it by a narrow saddle. A spring gushes out of the Mountainside here and forms the beginnings of the McAlister River. The water must be boiled because of the chance of becoming infected with parasitic worms which emanate from the cattle which are brought up to the high plains in summer. To a New South Welshman, used to pure water and unchurned stream banks in our National Parks, the water supply here is not pristine and this condition is directly attributable to cattle grazing which ought to be stopped at once and the whole magnificent area from here to Kosciusko converted to a National Park forthwith.

Sunday's walk was a leisurely and scenic stroll back over Howitt, Magdala, Lovick, and on to the hut at the foot of The Bluff. We never saw much of Frank, of course, as he was performing prodigies of patience in photographing insects and flowers.

From Magdala we dropped down about 800 feet on a narrow ridge and up about 600 feet to the jeep track near No. 1 Divide, where we left the Great Dividing Range and walked south - westward to a good hut under Mt. Lovick where we used the tank water to make fizz. A nearby dam was filled with a murky liquid.

A steep climb over Mt. Lovick and we were at the Bluff Hut (another good one with bunks and a tank and another murky dam) at 4 p.m. We camped among the Snow Gums, but after tea adjourned to the hut to drink coffee with another group of the Melbourne Women's Walking Club and to exchange information about walking in the two sister States.

On the last morning we set out packless for The Bluff at 7.30 a.m. - that is, all excepting Frank who was dawdling behind in his own inimitable way, compiling a pictorial record of odd botanical and zoological specimens. At the Bluff, we had completed a most magnificent ridge walk since reaching Howitt, even better than the Razorback between Featherstop and Hotham; but from the Bluff we could see other interesting routes such as the one along the Great Divide from No. 1 Divide over Mt. Clear, The Nobs, and Mt. McDonald, the last-named looking particularly enticing with its barish slopes and its three peaks somewhat reminiscent of Mt. Cloudmaker in the Gangerangs. Further away to the east across the McAlister River the skyline was dominated by the bulk of Mt. Reynard athwart the Snowy Plains.

Most of the rock in the area we traversed is sandstone with a decided tilt, said to have been caused by the movement of the granite mass of Mt. Buffalo.

Back to Bluff Hut by 10 a.m. to spend an hour lying in the sun before Frank sauntered back, then off on the jeep track down the 16 Mile Spur which for steepness would be hard to beat. Lace your footwear up tightly coming down here, otherwise you will wear the ends off your toes as a couple of our party did. The track goes down for a couple of thousand feet without any levelling out whatsoever. It is almost as steep as the Gasper Buttress on Mt. Jenolan, with a road thrown in for good measure. There were half a dozen cows ahead of us for some of the way and everyone was amazed at the strength of cow's legs in relation to their small size and the great weight they carry. Bushwalkers, of course, could always obtain relief by turning around and walking down backwards part of the way.

The 16 mile Creek near its junction with the Howqua runs over smooth granite bars, and you should have seen the fisherman's gleam in Bill's eye as he viewed the pools above the little cascades. After lunch at Pike's Flat we followed the brawling, turbulent, white-water Howqua up to Bindaree Hut, arriving there at 2.35 p.m.

It was a beautiful afternoon at Bindaree, just as all the other days had been, and four of us set out at once without packs on the $3\frac{1}{2}$ mile road bash to bring the cars back from the foot of the Howitt Spur. Back at Bindaree for a wash in the icy Howqua, then Bill's Toyota set out for home and we followed soon afterwards. Bill's car blew a head gasket near Holbrook and he finally got home at 7 p.m. next day.

Our car only intended to get out of the Howqua this night and we therefore camped on the Delatite at Mirimbah where the trees were undergoing a most glorious colour change.

After sleeping like a top all other nights I lay awake all this night because of the noisy river and the whine of the timber jinkers which apparently were making the most of the good weather. You haven't seen or heard anything unless you have seen and heard a timber jinker screaming along at 60 m.p.h. with two huge ash logs chained on the back.

We had a scenic drive home via Mansfield, Power's Lookout, Whitfield, Dandongadale, Buffalo River, Myrtleford (full of nostalgia for Roger whose mother was born in the Vicarage there), and Beechworth, and were all home by midnight.

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Colo by Lilo.

Dorothy Noble.

Leader: Joan Rigby.

It was a good start - rather unusual in fact, as all the party (six of us) had assembled at the remains of the Melba by the appointed time of 7.30 p.m.

We set off and within a couple of hours had found the right fire trail off the Putty road. We settled down for the night after a cup of tea and a discussion (argument) about the cause of a small red light. Was it miles away or only a few feet away through the trees? Was it moving or was it not? The dispute was not settled until morning, when we were awakened by a distinctly un-sunny day, and the leader went and had a look. It turned out to be the burning trunk of a tree showering sparks above a large crater of coals, all apparently surviving the weather since the November bushfires.

After breakfast we debated the pros and cons of taking our lilos with us. Doubts about the weather were countered by Phil Butt's assurance that we were in a rain shadow area and so it couldn't possibly rain. This was all right for him because he hadn't brought a lilo anyway (claiming that he intended to swim) and so was spared the mental anguish.

We all took our lilos.

After driving as far as practicable in Bob Younger's almost battery-less station wagon, we walked along the road for a couple of miles before turning off along a ridge to find the right place to descend into Angorawa Creek. With the help of the deputy navigator (the leader) we found the creek which to our surprise contained a good deal of water and so we partook of morning tea. Phil's effort, however, appeared more in the nature of a banquet as loaves of bread, spreads, biscuits and fruit etc. appeared from one large opening in order to disappear down another.

As we walked and rock-hopped down the creek it was sad to note that not even the most sheltered areas had escaped the fires, an observation which was unchallenged during the weekend. No ground was spared. There are still large areas of sterile grey sand and bare sandstone cliffs peeling and cracked by the heat and scattered with rain-washed charcoal debris. The new green spikes of the native grasses and the green and red proliferations dotting the blackened trees have given at least a superficial

appearance of recovery.

Shortly after passing some fishermen on the way down the creek, we came to a waterfall. Balancing precariously above it I held on to a likely branch, only to have it come away in my hand, enabling me to knight the leader who was below me. Although not seeming to appreciate my generous action, she was glad to be spared the doubtful alternative which was to accompany me in a rapid descent to the rocks sixty feet below.

We arrived at the Colo in time for lunch, and after much puffing into, and mending of lilos and waterproofing of gear we ventured into the water, having been encouraged at lunchtime by a couple of five second intervals of sunshine. Phil swam behind his floating pack while Bob and the two New Zealanders paddled their lilos in the conventional manner, heads down, arms across and packs on their backs. Meanwhile Joan and I travelled (we thought) in a vastly superior manner sitting down and leaning back comfortably on our packs, a position which allowed us to admire the passing scenery with ease. The only trouble was that when it came to riding the rapids, the extra balance required made it considerably more hazardous.

The river was sufficiently flooded to make it muddy and full of debris but not fast enough to prevent us being blown upstream if the wind blew when we stopped paddling. The water became very churned up after travelling over the rapids and this provided the surface of the water with swirls of creamy film that one's drifting lilo urged into all sorts of fascinating shapes before it, leaving a transient wake behind it. The numerous sticks and lumps of charcoal offered slightly more resistance to the craft as they bumped and bobbed around the perimeter like jostling hens pecking at grain.

After some hours of this leisurely progression we came upon a suitable campsite beside a small creek and so we drew our lilos up to the bank and quickly rushed around to get a fire started, having suddenly realised how cold we were, as it had alternately sprinkled and cold-breezed most of the afternoon.

Tea was nearly finished when we heard some unaccounted for clumpings through the undergrowth and Joan informed us that it was probably Mike Short who had rung her up to say that he might meet us on Saturday night accompanied by an (unspecified) friend. Conjecture as to who the friend might be was brought to a halt as Roger Gowing's face suddenly appeared in the firelight, followed later by Mike's. And so another tent and a couple more meals later we were all ready for bed.


The next morning again cast doubts upon Phil's rain shadow theory but we nevertheless embarked enthusiastically upon our lilos, blatantly ignoring the fishermen on the bank who warned us about the dangerous rapids just ahead. Sure enough, no sooner had we started off than we were brought to a sudden stop, being confronted with a large drop filled with a great confusion of rocks and flying water. Certainly it was not worth contemplating liloing down, except perhaps for Roger who spent about ten minutes hum-ing and ha-ing at it before remorsefully abandoning it to follow the rest of us around the edge.

It was a passable morning with even a few patches of sunshine to warm us as we paddled, at slightly less than scrambling-round-the edge pace, down the river. This rate was conveniently gauged by using a Phil Buttometer, an instrument invaluable for comparison work at the few points when it could be discerned from the surrounding cliffs and scrub.

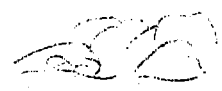
Hungryway Creek was appropriately arrived at for lunch and after a feed and a general drying out, we started up the creek, leaving Mike and Roger to start later and take a slightly different route because their car was at a different place on the road. Differences of opinion between our navigators gave us a very useful supply of rests on the way up Hungryway Creek. The subsequent ridge took us to a point on the road only a short walk from the car.

To our surprise the car started on the first cranking and away we went. Alas, before long, on one of our many detours to avoid fallen trees, we dislodged our muffler and considerable time was spent on removing it altogether. Meanwhile Mike and Roger rolled up behind us and we all waited in the failing light until the muffler was finally secured like some conquered animal to the roof of the car. Making noises like the sound effects in a war film we bounded along the track and eventually made it to the main road and on to Windsor where our vehicle announced to the entire population our arrival at the Chinese cafe where we filled up before the final stretch home.

Those blank spaces in last month's magazine were caused by loaders of day walks, indeed of any walks or junkets not taking advantage of free advertising. It pays to advertise. Last month's notice of the Splendour Rock get-fit for ski-ing trip has enticed The Group from splendid domesticity. In next month's issue no doubt there will be five different versions with corrections - by the editor.



MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT



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The April General Meeting.

Jim Brown.

Actually this opened with the adjourned portion of the Annual Meeting: it was exceedingly brief. Don Finch, occupying the chair for his first General Meeting, outlined how, as the Annual Meeting was being adjourned, George Gray had questioned how the prices for the various blocks of the Kangaroo Valley land had been computed. Well, said Don, some areas were cleared grazing land which commanded a higher price: however, the final figure was not yet fixed - it would be a matter for negotiation with the Club's co-purchasers. Dot Butler should shortly be able to clarify the whole matter. There seemed to be no further discussion, so at that the Annual General Meeting Part II closed and the normal meeting commenced ---

-----as usual with a welcome to new member Tony Danham: another newcomer, Ross Howard, was not present for the investiture.

The minutes of the Annual Meeting were read and during their confirmation there was a suggestion that Part II be treated as "signed as a correct record." Seeing it was still shorthand in the Secretary's note book, and with recollections of bush lawyers he has heard, Don declined to be drawn and that section will be confirmed in May.

However, we were still unable to fill vacancies for a Lady Committee Member and a Magazine Sales and Subscriptions vendor, still outstanding from March: while Phil Hall rose to say he could not be representative to the Nature Conservation Council, as he already spoke for Federation there.

Correspondence contained a copy of the Nature Conservation Council's constitution, a letter from Dot Butler saying the contract for the Kangaroo Valley purchase was being drawn up and could the Club's various contributions be made available please. There was a resignation from Kevin Dean, transfer to non-active status for Jean and Brian Harvey. Arising from a suggestion in correspondence Phil Hall moved a vote of thanks to Shirley Dean for the vast amount of work done for the magazine and other Club publications over some years.

Unfortunately the Treasury report was inaudible but from subsequent gleaning from the official record it seems the closing balance for March was \$556 on the current accounts. There followed a Walks Report covering two months' activities. With one exception all trips had set out as programmed and attendances on the whole were moderate, ranging from three or four to a number of trips with twelves, fourteens and up to seventeen. No highly unorthodox doings were mentioned.

Federation Reports included a S & R request that advice of overdue parties be given on Monday, preferably in the morning, so that the call-up machinery can be made ready to roll: a donation of \$100 is being made to the Myall Lakes Conservation scheme, and Tracks and Access report a front-wheel drive track from the Vines into the Sally Creek area. The annual orienteering competition will probably take place in May. The affiliation fees of the Canoe Club are to be waived because of its very small membership, and it was decided to notify member clubs of the capitation fee immediately after Federation's Annual Meeting.

Arrived at General Business attention was again directed to the Noises Off Group, which, when allied to traffic noise, made some of the meeting affairs practically inaudible. It was suggested that members who remained outside during business meetings denied the Club the benefit of their participation. Don observed that they could scarcely be compelled to enter the meeting, but if the noise proved disturbing, firmer steps could be taken to secure reasonable quiet.

Wilf Hilder reported on maps and information brochures, including mention that the Blue Mountains and Burragorang Tourist map was being reproduced, this time in colour and with contours: also a new edition of the Port Hacking Tourist Map.

Dot Butler reported on the Kangaroo Valley acquisition, and explained that the Trust Deed was being prepared to show one block purchased with the Era fund, and the other with the remaining Club contributions (from sale of securities). In this way, if the land were later resumed or sold the proceeds from one block would go back direct to Club funds. The final amount to be paid for the two blocks was not settled, and as stated by the President earlier, would be a matter for determination with the Society of Friends. There was a suggestion of re-afforestation in some parts - suitable small trees could be provided by Bill Burke, and there was a possibility of making car access into the fourth portion from the Mount Scansi road. In answer to a question by Frank Ashdown, Dot said the rates on the whole area were about \$39 p.a., amounting to say \$18 p.a. for the blocks the Club was buying.

Don Finch said he had spoken to the Club's S & R Contacts, who agreed a third contact was desirable. On a cautionary note Phil Butt suggested parties arriving back at cars late on the last day of a trip should consider resting before driving home - possibly early next morning.

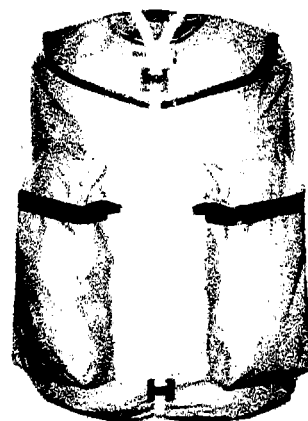
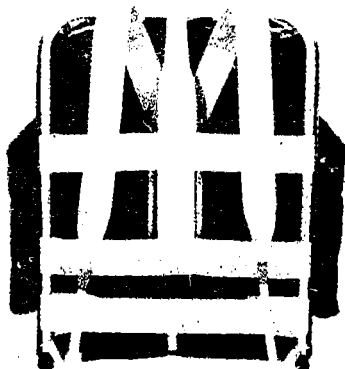
And the April meeting wound up at the quite early hour of 8.45 p.m.

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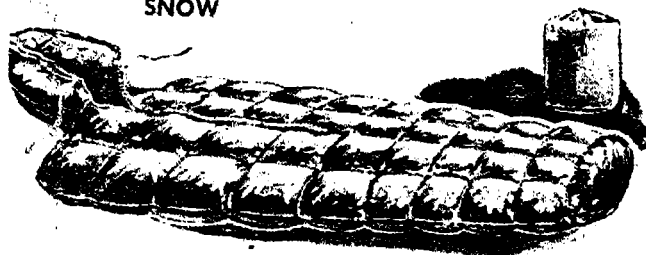
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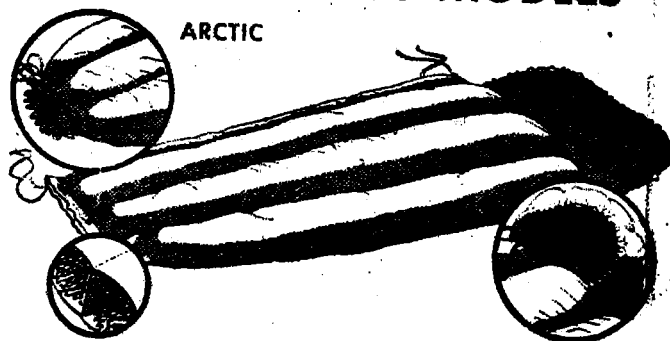


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