

October, 1969

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest
to the Sydney Bushwalkers, Northcote
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THE HALF YEARLY GENERAL MEETING

Jim Brown.

Over the past few months we have become accustomed to unusually docile general meetings, but it was September which broke the sequence, even without a single Constitutional amendment to debate. Not that this trend was evident at the beginning when three new members were welcomed - (Barbara Bruce, Rhonda Willis, Wilf Deck) - and two others were summoned but weren't there - Bob Jones and Ross Hewlett (still not greeted after several months).

Minutes for August were confirmed, with Phil Butt adding to the notes of the Federation Report that a Treasurer was still urgently needed. Very little to do in Correspondence (which contained a letter from Betty Farquhar that she would be unable to organise the children's affairs at the 1970 Reunion. The Treasurer quoted a ready cash balance of \$791, adding that 80 members were still unfinancial, and we may run our funds very close this year.

Walks Report related that, at the beginning of August, Owen Mark's proposed trip to the Kangaroo Valley property lapsed for want of starters, and on the same weekend Sam Hind's day walk to Burning Palms salvaged some scouts overcarried in the train. Neville Pye was joined by six members and nine prospectives on August 8-9th for an Instructional Weekend at Bonnum Pic. At the same time Doone Wyborn's party to Mt. Kelly came to snow only above 5,000 feet. Sam Hinde took 25 on a leisured day walk on the Hacking River.

The middle week end of August the President aimed to go from Yadbora Creek to Currockbilly - only 2 in the party, and it was finally judged best not to aim for the mountain. There were 29 out on Jack Gentle's south coast day walk - 14 of them prospectives.

The weekend of 23-24th August was to be one of Bill Gillam's Ski Instructional trips; bad weather and poor snow disturbed the plan. In the same dismal conditions Mike Short led a party of six from Wanganderry north along the plateau, and down Boloon Gap pas to the Wollondilly. Joan Rigby's trip in the same area, but across to Hill Top brought out 7. On Saturday 30th, about 40 people were at Cooper Park, Bellevue Hill, for Owen Mark's "moon watching and pre-nuptial celebration". David Ingram with 27 went on Sunday to the George's River, just missing a regular cloudburst on the return to Minto.

As a rider to the Walks Report, Bill Gillam voiced appreciation of John Campbell's accommodation offer at Cooma; it had been thankfully accepted on his Kosciusko weekend.

In Federation Notes, Wilf Hilder said the proposed "Snow Survival" demonstration had been cancelled (probably because there's not likely to be snow) but may be held next year. A new fire road extends about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles along the western ridge near St. Helena.

Selection of a Reunion site for 1970 came next. Some one nominated the old Woods Creek venue which has seen us every year (with two exceptions) since 1952, but public opinion came down heavily for our own block in Kangaroo Valley. Bob Younger was voted Reunion Convenor.

In tribute to the late Taro (Walter Tarr) who died just after his 90th birthday, we observed silence; then the announcement that a plaque would be placed at Clear Hill - details to be given later.

General Business - and Gordon Redmond was telling us about the Kangaroo Valley purchase. The S.B.W. share cost \$3860, which absorbed \$1557 from the Era funds, \$1000 from Club funds, and the balance in contributions from members and other interested groups. Certain expenses had been incurred by the Club's Hon. Solicitor, and by the "intermediary" who had purchased the land pending determination of the prices to the Club and the Quakers. When these costs were settled, a final detailed statement would be made.

Now came the question of management, and Gordon proposed a committee of management of five members, preferably not including any of the Trustees. Motion accepted and nominations sought.

Finally it included George Gray, Bill Gillam, Jane Putt, Bob Younger and Spiro Ketas, but before this, there was great argument over nomination of the President. Ah - he was there *ex officio*, anyway. But wait, next year, unless he was president, he wouldn't be. Well then, how long would the Management team hold office? Some said a long, long while; others argued that all offices "spilled" in March - even Trustees were elected annually. Finally a motion that they be appointed until the Annual Meeting; an amendment to make it the September 1970 meeting. The debate raged around - once a motion of dissent from the Chair: someone else attempting to move a motion while the other was still in discussion. Finally, with a fairly general acceptance that new managers should be appointed in March, the motion was "not now put".

No, it wasn't over yet. Bill Ketas moved (separately) two donations of \$10 to (a) Myall Lakes National Park Committee and (b) Colong Committee. In each case Gordon Redmond moved an amendment, one for \$50 and the other for \$25. The Treasurer's face grew longer during the two debates, and he mentioned we weren't exactly flush with money. Finally both amendments and motions were carried. In the second discussion the interesting fact emerged that the Colong Committee was making some progress, and the cement manufacturers were apparently beginning to waver over the absolute necessity for mining limestone in Church Creek.

This was a cheerful note, and, as the meeting closed at 10.0 p.m., there seemed to be an atmosphere of - "Hell, what if we are broke?" - we've got the Kangaroo Valley land and we may be on the way to saving Colong". Perhaps it was as well no one had any other proposals for donations with the meeting in that mood.

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AT LAST - MOUNT POMANY

Jim Brown.

During the winter of 1953, some years before a network of fire trails or military access roads were carved along the main ridge systems of the Northern Blue Mountains, I was out on a trip organised by Alex Colley from Putty via Mount Monundilla, Mount Coricudgy, Mount Uraterer and back to Putty. Somewhere along the bleak wind-swept ridges between Monundilla and Coricudgy, we looked west and north to a group of high basalt crowns, and Alex remarked that it was still country fit for bushwalker exploration. Amongst the most prominent points north from the long crest of Coricudgy were a conical peak (Coriaday) and a flat-top (Pomany).

From that time forward both Coriaday and Pomany became symbolic for me of the places that must some day be visited, and when some rather more informative maps became available, about ten years later, I planned an assault on the two high points, following a route from Nullo Mountain via Coricudgy, Coriaday, down into Widdin Brook, on to Pomany and back along the connecting ridge to Nullo. The attempt was made in heat wave conditions in January 1964, and Coriaday was reached, but the parched march along the ridge north of Coriaday

proved almost too much, and once I managed to get down into the agreeable pastures of Widdin Brook, nothing could persuade me to go up on to the equally torrid dry ridge along the western wall of Widdin Valley. At least there was the satisfaction of being one of the first walkers to enjoy a joust with the approaches to that particularly lovely valley.

However, Pomany still remained: other walkers playing around in Widdin and its flanking mountains discovered the bridle track which runs north from Nullo, across a deep narrow saddle, past Mount Cox to Pomany: they also found a way up a creek on the western side of Widdin which breaches the cliff wall just below and south of Pomany. At least, when I made my August 1969 trip, I knew that Pomany could be reached from Widdin and that the way back to Nullo Mountain was fairly easy going. Which was just as well, because at the outset of the trip I was getting over a singularly loathsome head cold, and had scarcely enough wind to blow out a candle.

Shortly before 10 o'clock on a Saturday morning I drove to the northern end of Nullo Mountain, and at the terminal property gate where the mail box carried a name "The Range", saw a trail turning sharply to the right. I was almost certain this was the way to Cedar Creek and Widdin, but decided to confirm it at the farm. It had been raining the previous day, the basalt soil was soft and sticky, the car's tyres carried a fat greasy deposit of mud, and there was no incentive to drive any further. After all, the further I drove now, the further to walk at the end of my planned circular route.

The farmer said Yes, that was the way to Widdin, but why not leave the car inside his fence, where it may be safer. There were some dog traps to beware of on the first three miles of the Widdin trail. I also asked about the look-down into Benjang Creek on the other side of Nullo, got directions, and spent best part of the next two hours visiting the vantage points. It's quite an attractive view, but was not really worth the two hours lost: having once gone down Benjang Creek a few years ago, I was interested to look into it from above.

Thus it was near enough to lunch when I parked inside the farmer's fence and turned towards Cedar Creek and Widdin. In fact I ate almost as soon as I was really on the way and then followed the jeep trail out along the ridge north from Nullo.

It was quite easy pleasant going with some patches of grass covered volcanic soils and fairly open forest. At one point a wheel track veered sharply right and I was tempted to follow it, but elected

to stay with the westerly trail. About three o'clock, just before the track entered a large grassy area with an outlying shanty, the trail forked again, and I became aware that a new creek was taking its rise in the centre of the ridge. The maps are quite inadequate ($\frac{1}{4}$ " to the mile) but it looked suspiciously like the head of Myrtle Creek, so I tried the right hand branch, found it led down to a dam, and came back to the clearing.

Here I sat down for a brief spell, and went to sleep for half an hour. My barely cured cold and my early morning start from home were evidently catching up with me, and soon after going on at 3.45 p.m., I became intolerably tired. The weariness increased until it was such torment that I decided to stop for the night at the next water, even though my progress of only six or seven miles from the farm was most discouraging.

Dimly through my headache I was aware that I was going west of the supposed Myrtle Creek, and that I should never be able to drop into Cedar Creek as intended. I could scarcely have cared less. The track tilted downward through nice grassy country with light forest, then suddenly began to fall quickly into a rocky ravine where dissected ridges and rock faces glowing gold in the afternoon sun made it seem impossible that even a jeep track could get through. Just before five I came to the first water, threw up the tent, crawled into my sleeping bag and was asleep by 5.15. Apart from a midnight awakening and a snack of sardines and biscuits by torch light, I slept for almost thirteen hours, and awoke feeling wonderful.

On the way before 7.0 a.m., the trail now crept down the gully, at times almost synonymous with the water course. After half an hour the valley widened, and the jeep trail was able to keep out of the creek most of the time, and an hour from camp I emerged into a lovely clearing, hemmed about by broken cliffs, with miles of grassland reaching ahead.

In the next hour before I passed the first farm, I was able to work out that I was certainly not in Cedar Creek which goes almost north until it is close to Widden Brook. This was probably Myrtle Creek (or Right Hand Flat) which joins Widden on an easterly course: the assumption was confirmed when another stream and road entered on my right just before I came to Widdin at 10.0 a.m.

So far the morning had been cool and overcast, but gradually the sky was clearing, and by the time I was moving up Widdin Brook towards Holbrook property, there were wide streaks of blue sky, and sunlight on the lovely shaggy cliffs that flank the valley. The big decision was taken: as a concession to my feebleness, I would not do a recon-

naissance up Blackwater Creek as planned, nor would I walk along the road up to Widdin. I would stay right down by the stream, crossing the paddocks and avoiding the occasional car and the well-intentioned offers of a lift from its driver. Sufficient for the day to reach the point where I was to leave the valley and climb out to Mount Pomany.

Wilf Hilder once suggested that a basalt "spill" on the western side of the valley may give access to the range north of Pomany. I kept a look-out for it, and although I could not confirm that there was a basalt scree slope, there did appear to be at least one ridge that would "go" without rock climbing. I formed the opinion that it would leave a long trudge along the western wall to reach Pomany, so decided to stick to my programme of getting out via the creek.

About 3.0 p.m. the outlet of Blackwater Creek and the big stud property of Holbrook were passed. I was on the opposite (western) bank, and continued on over easy grassland to pass the last farm in Widdin, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles further up. Just north of the property a creek comes in on each side of Widdin; the one on the eastern side was my way into the valley in the 1964 heat wave trip; the western one was to be the way out this time.

Quite early, only a little after 4 o'clock, I went up to the point where the creek issues from the ravine into the grassy slopes, and made a pleasant camp on one of the last level open patches amongst the casuarinas. A very comfortable and leisurely evening, disturbed only by my reluctance to eat anything, and then another long peaceful sleep.

The dawn again was grey and misty, but there was no menace in it - wishy washy blue was visible through the morning haze as I moved off at 6.45. Travel up the creek was very slow, although it was not particularly rough going. Usually one could keep up on the slopes where the vegetation was reasonable. The main stream came from the southerly gully, and this was the one I followed passing through the first cliffy defile about 8.0 a.m. Immediately it was obvious there were other cliffs to negotiate, and the creek which had levelled out a little, would go on to the south quite a long way.

Not far past the defile, a side stream dropped in from my right (west); its bed was clearly very steep and rugged, but immediately beyond it the slope up to the base of the cliffs was fairly open and appeared to have been "scuffed" by the passage of animals. I clambered up to the cliffs - not very far - and there it was, a beautiful chimney, practically a walk-up, almost right on the shoulder of the ridge reaching up from the creek junction. Almost certainly it was the way other

parties had climbed out. Only had to take the pack off at one place and push it up eight feet to the next step, and at 8.45 I was out of the gorge and on the upper slopes.

"Upper slopes" can be a rather ambiguous term in this country. Widdin is about 1200' above sea level, the top of the cliff line say 2400', and the sandstone plateau about 2800'. However, on this sandstone bench the basalt tops are superimposed, rising another 800' or 1,000'. So Pomany, which looked so close at hand across the head of the side creek, stood another 1400' or 1500' above me, and in my debilitated condition, it took almost two hours before I could go any further. The total of four hours to climb up from Widdin Brook must be an all-time record for sloth.

Unlike some of the other basalt tops in the northern Blue Mountains (for instance Coriaday, where the vegetation stops you seeing the view) Pomany is a good vantage point. Thin grasses and some scrub and small forest grow near the summit, but there are many places where uninterrupted views are to be had from the rim. It was still hazy, and the jumble of gorges and ridges to the north were all photographic possibilities, but over Widdin sunlight was glowing on the eastern cliffs.

Visited the trig which is near the northern limit of the crest, and then went over the north western side, down a big basalt scree to the little clearing and the slab shanty which marks the end of the trail from Nullo. A very relaxed lunch there, savouring the satisfaction of reaching Pomany after all those years.

The rest of the tale scarcely needs recounting, but it may be best to describe the route briefly for the benefit of any others who may go that way. There is a bridle track all the way to Nullo, but it does get a bit vague in spots, notably where it skirts the western side of Mount Cox. Phil Butt once said that it "goes downhill all the way to the saddle north of Nullo". Being of feebler physique, I wouldn't call it "downhill all the way" but the undulations are not unduly severe. The track sidles a great deal to get the easiest going and finally twists down into the saddle between Mount Cox and the north-eastern slopes of Nullo. I looked down affectionately into the gulf of Hool 'em Boy Creek (what a cattle-duffers' name) the way out, which I'd taken back in '64, and then made the long gradual climb up to Nullo.

Once on the rich basalt of Nullo and under the canopy of big trees, I felt back at home and was on the lookout for the spring which gave me refreshment in the heat wave. Well, I missed it, as

the bridle trail, still faint in spots, now winds along the eastern rim of Nullo. In fact, it was almost a waterless camp on Nullo, except for the puddle of semi-liquid yellow mud in a hole where a tree had been uprooted.

Tuesday morning was fine, but the valley of Widdin full of mist. Half an hour from starting, I came to the first property on the eastern side of the mountain; the fields were still white with frost, and I broke the sheet of ice to get at the water in a horse trough. Then the clouds boiled up out of the gorges, and as I trudged back along the road to the north end of the mountain, a Scotch mist driven by a cool damp wind settled over the high country. Just three days in elapsed time from arrival at the gate of "The Range" - at ten in the morning - I saw the track junction and the fence and the car emerge from the swirling fog.

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MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR TARO

At the Federation meeting on September 16th, it was decided to hold a memorial service for Walter Tarr at Clear Hill on Sunday 26th October at about 2 p.m.

Transport arrangements are: (1) if travelling by private transport try to make arrangements with friends; however, if you have spare seats please contact Don Finch. (2) train to Katoomba, taxi to the ladder or Narrow Neck, return walk about 13 miles along the Narrow Neck fire trail. (3) train to Katoomba, then to the A.B. Cafe where people will be picked up in a Land Rover, this type of transport is limited and will be reserved for the more senior members.

Please let Don Finch know if you require the third form of transport or for any other information. Don Finch may be contacted in the Club Rooms or via the secretary over the telephone.

THE FALLEN IDOL.

In fairness to Pat, I would have gone in any case. It was my week-end off, September is an ideal time for walking ridges and it had been raining, so I imagined there would not be the stark necessity to find a way off the ridge before dark. I didn't have to be back at work until Tuesday and I had read Jim Brown's manuscript of an identical trip. If Jim, weakened by "loathsome flu" could get out of Widden Brook, so could I. If Harrison could get me into it. When I returned early on Monday morning, I re-read Jim's article and decided that it suffered, as advice to mariners, from the same defect as the $\frac{1}{4}$ " to the mile map; a certain vagueness, what a physicist blithely calls the line of best fit that tells you nothing of the next sixty vertical feet. It is all very well to be able to identify all the major peaks in 6,000 square miles of country, to see from eighty miles away where one suffered twenty years previously, on Cockroh, Losey and Mt. Royal, following a similarly vague map with far less confidence in your leader. It is a feeling like the first sip of something you thought was coffee but turns out to be tea. You can live with it but make a mental note to be more careful next time.

We started well. Pat's transport overtook me and we followed him. No hiding in service stations this time. We camped together, Pat sheltering from a freezing mist under a roadworker's caravan, myself on a mattress in the back of the truck. Billy Burke and Pat wandered around in suits, old style favoured by Bob Menzies, looking like local squires. All the transport crept up Nullo Mountain together. The usual "after you" through the farm gates. We left the cars together.

Mists rising, as Jim described. Cliffs appearing. Pat, wrist compass, chronometer, marsupial map holder all in position names the obvious peaks. This is the country and tomb of my ancestors. Confidence; elation. The rock bridge to Mt. Cox is found - indeed if you don't find it you are nowhere man. It is the most perfect rock bridge - justification for the trip in itself. A long way down on one side to Widdin Brook, ten feet away a canyon that leads out, a long way to the north, past Gluey Gulf. I begin to have the first disloyal feelings, stirrings that we shall be coming back this way.

The track is obviously a cattle track from the Hunter to the west - built up, graded, sufficiently obscure for nefarious activities. It skirts Mt. Cox, passing impressive balancing sandstone slabs, the foliage only slightly scratchy. Towards Pomany the only water is encountered - muddy, barely flowing, incredibly sweet. This is not

where Pat has planned lunch. He is no match for the white ants. Two dried leaves, a flaring match is legitimately the start of a lunch fire. It is, after all, exactly midday. The oranges can wait for more desperate times.

Pat assaults Pomany. Not a difficult task. There is an Alpine flora on top and the aforesaid 6,000 square miles of view. While the rest of us disport ourselves, Pat looks at his map for the thousandth time. There is no ready solace. Beneath the map, in his marsupial holder, there is an aerial photo on which I can't even see the abundant cliffs. Beneath the photo, a last resort, there is a preliminary contour map. The cliffs are really black on this one.

We all descend the basalt scree like the men of the Duke of York. Below the basalt there is scratchy foliage and a cliff. We sidle through more scratchifolia to a ridge. And another cliff. We look with more interest than hope over other cliffs and into deeper chasms. Pat is confused. I am not. I know that I will camp near the Pomany hut, rise late and retrace my steps along the ridges.

It was a beautiful camp site, elevated, a view to the west to catch the fading light. Muddy water still very sweet and a keen wind to make an early retirement acceptable. A cup of special coffee. Tomorrow there would be the same beautiful cliffs, aboriginal rubbing grooves on superb lookouts, a dry lunch but there were oranges left for that possibility.

I pulled my sleeping bag over my head. I had made a separate peace.

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FROM THE WINBORNDALÉ TO THE TURON

by PAT HARRISON

When Alex Colley suggested a trip from Bathurst to Capertee across the Winborndale Rivulet and the Turon River, I knew that the temptation would be too great to resist, although at the time I did not give him a definite answer. My army training had been done in the Infantry Battalion near St. Anthony's Creek (a tributary of the Winborndale - or Winburndale as it is also spelt) and I had very pleasant memories of walks in the area whenever I had some spare time. In fact, the first day after I arrived at Bathurst we were taken on a great 28-miler out along the Western Highway to Yetholme, around the Ovens Range, and then back to camp along the Winborndale. For many years nostalgia had been tugging at me, and consequently it did not take me very long to give Alex an answer in the affirmative.

Friday night before the Labour Day Weekend saw five of us (Alex, John Scott, Gordon Redmond, Reg Meakins and myself) aboard the 7.00 p.m. train for Lithgow, whence we took a taxi to Napoleon Reefs at the head of St. Anthony's Creek, or Green Swamp Creek as it is also known. Although we were in camp here at 11.30 p.m. and had the billies boiling on the fire, some of us stayed up yarning until 1.00 a.m. on the Saturday morning. We were just far enough away from the road not to be troubled by the incessant roar of cars hurtling their way towards Bathurst and the Motor racing there.

Saturday morning was very clear after a crisp night and we were up and on the move by 7.00 a.m. The countryside was a picture of green, and as Spring comes later up here, the occasional Willow along the creek was the merest fleck of green. We followed the creek for a while, then headed north across the foothills of the Ovens Range which rose to 4,183 feet on our right. Reg Meakins knows his flora and fauna, and was able to identify a particularly attractive red *Styphelia* which grows on the slopes of the Ovens. Other wildflowers which bloomed along our way were *Indigofera australis*, *Burchardia umbellata*, and the blue *Dianella*.

The Winborndale is a stream that carries a full head of water, but we managed to keep our feet dry by crossing on a swaying wire fence not far below the dam. The ascent to Winborndale Mountain (4,083 ft.) was steepish in parts but free of scrub, and somewhere near the top we cut across a fire road which came up from the eastern side. There was a superb view of the green and fertile Bathurst Plains and as far away as Mount Canoblas on the western side, but the other side was of ridges around the 4,000 ft. contour, some of which were being got ready for pine plantations. Beds of Spaghnum Moss were growing around the trig. The geologists also informed us that there was sandstone on the heights across the Rivulet and that this sandstone was the very extremity of the Sydney Basin.

We walked across the Big Flat and found water for our lunch on the southern fall of the saddle immediately east of the Big Flat. The fire road thereafter provided us with several miles of walking near the 4,000 ft. contour until we dropped into the head of Coolamigal Creek around 812818. The walk down the upper part of this creek (which means "Good Water" and is pronounced Coola-My-Gal) was a sheer delight. There was forest of Ribbon Gums, no scrub, grassy tussocks underfoot, and the creek gurgling in its grassy channel. At 3.45 p.m. we reached a spot that none of us could resist, four or five big Ribbon Gums with their white upper branches contrasting against the long strips of bark hanging from their trunks, Wattle in bloom, and the clear sweet water of Coolamigal close at hand.

There was rain during the afternoon and night, and we got out of bed at 5.30 a.m. on Sunday to a grey morning which threatened rain. Reg was in his glory as the trees vibrated to a multitudinous chorus of bird songs. He was particularly delighted with the performances of the White Throated Warblers, but for looks it would be hard to beat the Mountain Lowries.

We got away at 7.45 a.m. and in an hour had reached Mr. Eric Smith's "Albany" Homestead. We had intended to walk by the farm on the far side of the creek, but the old bushman (he was born here 70 years ago) was given clear warning that someone was about when one of his horses lifted its head and pricked its ears when we were hundreds of yards away; consequently he had been watching us come down the creek for some time. We spent an interesting half hour talking to him, and no doubt, on a winter's night, with the fire blazing and the pipes lit he could recall many an interesting event. We asked him how far from his place to the Turon and he said 10 or 12 miles. His home was the only habitation we encountered anywhere on our walk.

Below "Albany" we walked through open fertile paddocks until we came to the narrower, uncleared part which lies above and below the junction of Coolamigal and Cox's Creek. We had lunch above the junction. From here downstream we continually camp upon holes that the miners had dug a hundred years ago. The junction with the Turon was reached at 3.45 p.m. and we spent half an hour here listening to sales talk by a chap about the Yanks, and Germans, and others he takes out on High Safaris and other synthetic adventures.

The Turon is a great walking river - it is just like the best parts of the Cox. There are successive horseshoe bends and the result is that there are the largest flats you ever saw, all the way. You can camp anywhere and you can cross the river practically anywhere. You couldn't get a better river for walking.

Our last camp was made at 5 p.m. and we were up again at 5.30 a.m. next morning (Monday) and on our way by 7.30 a.m. for about 8 miles of beautiful river walking before pulling out on a good ridge which got us back to the Mudgee road about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from Capertee.

A brief pause at the hostelry where three indulged fully, one partially indulged, and one completely abstained, then on to the Railway Station where we boiled the billies on the Stationmaster's fire before catching the 5.p.m. train for home.

OBSERVER

After last month's issue your observer was accused of becoming fanatical on the subject of native orchids. The accuser was wrong - I am fanatical. It is better to be vile than vile esteemed. Not that I have yet a definitive collection - orchid books, of which there are now many, illustrate two or three types and then add NOT LISTED - about forty species. Botanically they are probably more prevalent than most other wild flowers - this year on walks between southern Queensland and northern Victoria I seem to have been treading on a succession of flowering terrestrials. I am still picking prickles from a shirt worn in bashing through lantana on a friend's property at Nambour to find a tree with "two or three hundred" of the Brush Box variety of the Iron Bark Orchid (read that again). Obstinance and fanaticism aren't synonymous; there are still two or three hundred somewhere in that lantana.

Local building blocks have been scrutinised for orchids sighted four or five years ago - one patch of a magnificent bearded orchid, a real Brothers Grimm type gnome and beard, poked up its distinctive leaves no more than a fortnight before the bulldozers arrived. Fires in rain forests from Queensland to the south coast have dehydrated and dislodged tree-growing forms which would die on the ground. My children, on long car trips, have ceased fighting each other to "case the joint" for specimens. During the September school holidays, we camped on Carrow Brook, near Singleton. The last dwelling, after 27 splash crossing was a grazier's hut. The boys, after eyeing an orange tree loaded with sweet fruit, hollered loudly to guard against surprise discovery. There was no one there. Called for tea they told of an enormous clump of dendrobiums at the back door, as big as the truck and expounded an elaborate plan to reload the truck to remove the clump in one piece. Juvenile fanaticism, Lord of the Flies and all that.

In the past six months I have discovered, with other nameless fanatics that for twenty years I have only seen half the bush through which I walked; that in some places there is more orchid foliage than tree foliage and trees against which I have rested my weary back have been almost encased in cucumber leaved orchids. I never saw them. The distribution of species with respect to altitude, exposure, tree cover seems amazingly precise, the plant forms endlessly diverse and the flowers astonishing.

In the adaptive evolutionary sense the plants are extremely specialised to ensure reproduction. Some depend on their ability to imitate the form of a specific wasp to induce living wasps to pollinate them, others "trigger" to enclose a wandering insect, still others

have a throat just wide enough for a bee to enter if he brushes aside a pollen platelet before he reaches the nectar. The platelet is carried to the next flower until the bee has a collection on his noggin. Seed pods of the native cymbidium have an estimated several million seeds in their pods of which one in perhaps one hundred million will lodge where conditions are suitable to establish a plant. Who could fail to be a fanatic?

All native orchids have an associated fungus; the epiphytes to convert captured leaves to food, the terrestrials to help the rudimentary roots store energy rapidly in the brief periods the green parts, often a single leaf, appear. One orchid, *Dipodium* or Hyacinth Orchid, has dispensed with chlorophyll altogether. It has a mauve stem and mauve and white flowers. Native *Cymbidiums* only occur naturally in standing decaying logs; in cut over forests they form tremendous plants with roots 30 to 40 feet long. *Dendrobium tetragonum* has four-sided leaf stems, geometrically precise, insists on growing upside down with the shiny side of the leaf downwards - complete contrariness. The bulbophyllums and monophyllums - single leaf or single bulb affairs range in size from a network of matchhead sized almost transparent bulbs to soft knobbly cones with five inch leaves. Among the *dendrobium speciossoma* there are two main forms; a yellow flowered form growing on rocks and a white flowering form growing in trees. They hybridise readily; on the Kangaroo Valley land there is a specimen with alternate yellow and white flowers. Also growing at Kangaroo Valley are a host of the pencil orchid *Dendrobium striatum*, a few weeks ago the flowers of which were like stars against the moss covered rocks. A magnificent scent is not the least attractive part of the epiphytes.

The bright pigmented *Glossodias* or Wax lips in the autumn and the finger orchids, *caladenias* in blues, pinks and whites in spring, are a continual source of wonder. Less conspicuous among the terrestrials are the Greenhoods and the associated green and red flowering forms. These form immense colonies on forest floors and multiply rapidly under cultivation. On the heath of the Kurnell headland, there is a greenhood *pterostylis barbata* or *plumosa*, with a trembling bearded tongue with a pendulum like knob on the end of the tongue. The tongue is about half an inch long. Growing among them is the Flying Duck Orchid, *Caleana major*. When you tire of trembling the tongue you can snap shut the sensitive ducks head. It is an exercise as refreshing as worrying trigger plants.

It is also important to be amusing while educating.

A WET WEEK-END

by "Agonistes".

The proposed trip was Mount Wanganderry (off the Wombeyan Caves Road), along the tops to Belloon Pass and down to the Nattai to camp. Then back up the Nattai and return to Mt. Wanganderry via the Surveyor's Crag.

Friday night was cloudy. After transshipping at Barry Wallace's place we had not gone many miles when a red light showed up on the instrument panel. Sure enough, a broken V belt. (Not fan belt, V.W. TS's don't have fan belts). The retaining nut was not easily loosened but eventually yielded to Barry's determination. Then came the problem of positioning the new belt over the pulley wheels. Somehow or other, this was managed and we drove off in the light rain.

At Mittagong, we stopped at Mike Short's grandparents' cottage where we were plied with tea and toast made before an open fire. After thanking our hosts for their hospitality we set off again, turning into the Wombeyan Caves Road, three miles out from Mittagong. After the tarred road had finished, there was a "New Work" dirt section which Barry thought was going to be fun to drive through on the return journey, if the rain kept up.

On turning off the Caves Road we saw that Joan Rigby's party, which was going via Wanganderry Creek and Rocky Waterhole's Creek to Hill Top, was about to bed down for the night. Joan warned us about the six inches of slush which lay on the road ahead. We were relieved to find that she had been pulling our leg, and after opening and closing five more gates, we eventually came to David Cotton's utility and tent, where we camped the night.

We were up at 6.30 a.m. After much effort we produced a sizzling fire and were able to eat a sustaining breakfast. Then off on the track.

On climbing the big green hill we could see the little green hill from which we entered into what was left after the bushfire of last summer. We made good time until Pat Harrison pointed out that we should not be going west. After finding the right ridge we carried on. (Raining). We then came to a confusing piece of country. Pat headed out along a west-running ridge, Mike in another direction, to see what they could see. Pat returned with reports of the sighting of something vaguely resembling Bonnum Pic, but very obscure due to the mist. If it was indeed the peak, we knew just where we were.

Fifteen minutes' walking confirmed all. We now entered the region of large outcrops of bare rock which made navigation impossible, but happily provided us with an overhang for a lunch spot. Two independent forays for water were both successful so we were able to make a large billy of tea.

(Raining). We set off after carefully dousing the fire. The prospective, Rhonda Willis, was very impressed by our solicitude.

By this stage we had no idea where we were. We came upon what we thought might be the headwaters of Coleman's Creek and skirted around them. Apparently they were the headwaters of the creek before, Douglas Creek, because on heading north we found that we could go no further except by crossing a five hundred foot gully, this being Coleman's Creek.

At three o'clock we reached the spot that we should have reached at one. Another hour (raining), during which we were walking along the narrowest section of the Wanganderry Tableland, brought seditious murmurings from amongst the party. It was being said that a nice dry overhang might be found nearby, where the party could camp, instead of having to set up tents and cook in the rain. The leader pretended that he hadn't heard and pushed on. However, the agitators persisted and at last, Pat, as their spokesman, suggested an endeavour to find a cave before darkness fell. Everyone seeing reason, we searched and, after half an hour found a couple of adjacent overhangs at 341750. Here, most of us spent a very comfortable night.

Not having reached our intended camp site, the Nattai, we decided to go back via the Wollondilly the next day. So up at seven, to find a patch of blue in the sky. It was not there for long, though, so we weren't too optimistic about what weather to expect. After a leisurely breakfast we made our way up out of the east-running gully and out to the cliffs. The mist in the valley cleared to give us a splendid view of Lake Burragorang and the surrounding hills, fading into the Blue Mountains in the murky distance.

After taking our fill of the scenery, we dropped the 400' down to Belloon Pass. No one being enthused by the prospect of climbing up again to the summit of Mt. Belloon, we made our way carefully downwards. It is hard to visualise a horse and dray going up the pass as in years gone by as now only a steep, rocky route remains.

On dropping 500' we came to an old road which led to a clearing. In this area, recovering from the fires of summer, we found a pretty orange and red two petalled ground flower. Travelling cross country and disturbing a few wallabies we eventually reached the Water Board Road.

It was here that we had arguments for and against tubeless tyres. I know not why, the road wasn't all that bad. Barry had had an unfortunate experience with tubeless, Pat with tubed tyres. Despite the discussion, Barry and Pat remained true to their convictions.

Having become tired of the road, we headed down to the river. We didn't go across to Joorilands. Not because the river was up. Oh no! But because it was close upon lunch time. Lunch time was soon decreed by Barry, he rushing off to obtain a bucket of water to give us more incentive to halt. Not much incentive was needed though, as he had chosen a beautiful grassy spot with firewood handy, besides which the sun was shining! Dot didn't feel very hungry because at morning tea, she was one of the lucky recipients of seven ounces of Walnuts "crisp, sweet", graciously provided by the leader.

Reluctantly tearing ourselves away from the lunch spot, we followed the river upstream. It wasn't long to Bonnum Pic Creek and farmhouse "River Lodge" on the other side. We hadn't gone far along the nearby road when we were startled by rifle shots in our direction. Some fortunate (to escape) birds were also startled. Pat arrested the poachers' fire by means of a few earnest 'Hoys'.

It is every bit as quick and much more pleasant walking along the river downstream from Douglas Flat. Also the road is rather uncertain of the direction it wants to go in the vicinity of Bonnum Pic. Pat knew of a gully plus ridge below Fowlers Flat which would bring us on to the road after this wandering section. The reward of our climb was the sight of a beautiful White Box in flower.

Back on the trail for a few miles and then Burnt Flat Creek and up the road which was constructed, I suppose, because of the coal mine, long disused. The road has been replaced by a cavernous gulf at one point. Other parts of it are extremely steep. It eventually led us to the cars at 5 o'clock (still raining).

Pat, who attended to the gates, was subject to an icy blast from the west has his numbed fingers grappled with chains and wires. We let Dave's higher riding Holden Utility carry most of the load back to Mittagong. This was just as well because the mud was quite deep on the "New Work" section of the road. It was a relief to get through to Charlie's Cafe where we had a clean-up and feed. Then down to Mike's grandparents again to tell them of the trip.

After Mr. Lee had shown us some of his bushwalking photos we left for Sydney, having enjoyed our trip to Burragorang and its Walls despite a wet weekend.

PADDY MADE

EQUIPMENT NOTES: AUSTRALIAN ANDEAN EXPEDITION 1969.

From Mike Feller & Ross Wyborn

—ooc—

PADDY PALLIN'S "BOGONG" SLEEPING BAGS: "These were the standard Bogong model sleeping bags made wider to contain our half bags and down jackets. They were kindly donated by Paddy Pallin Pty. Ltd., 109a Bathurst Street, Sydney. At no time throughout the entire expedition did any member have to use his half bag even when the temperature dropped below 0°F. (-3°F was the lowest temperature recorded), i.e. 35° below freezing point. I personally, never had to use my down jacket as well as my sleeping bag."

WE CONGRATULATE:

The Australian Andean Expedition on their success, all objectives were attained including the climbing of 19 peaks in the Andes.

The inspiration and motive force behind this expedition was developed in the bushwalking and mountaineering activities here in the Australian bush and mountains and the New Zealand Alps. This spirit of adventure is in all who love camping, walking and climbing, activities that require tried and tested lightweight equipment, Paddymade equipment.

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THE EVOLUTION OF A UNIQUE PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPE

- A WARNING TO BUSHWALKING PARENTS!

From your Club Psychiatrist.

Is your child normal?

Does he refuse to go bushwalking

- a) because he plays sport on Saturday?
- b) because it's boring?
- c) because he has B.O.?

When made to wear old clothes, does he

- a) try not to be seen?
- b) cook them and eat them?
- c) go naked?

Does he refuse to collect firewood

- a) because his shoulders are sore?
- b) because he has to find a special beetle?
- c) because his hands will get soiled?

When told not to bump the side of the tent, does he

- a) jump up and down?
- b) draw designs in the moisture?
- c) sleep outside to avoid the drips?

If you can answer "yes" to these questions, then your child is relatively normal and you can be confident that he or she will never become a Bushwalker. If however, you answer "no" to any question, then your child may be in danger, and I advise you to observe the following notes.

It appears that we have, for the first time, a phenomenon which has evolved uniquely as a by-product of the comparatively recent minority-activity of bushwalking. That is to say, there have appeared on the scene, individuals with bushwalking parents. This new breed is trying to establish itself in a predominantly non-bushwalking environment, and bushwalking parents should be made aware of the severe psychological stresses which they are putting upon their children.

As a product of the above system, I feel it is my duty to enlighten parents and at least put them in a position where they can recognise the signs in their children which point to normal state, "bushwalker-phobia". Once this stage is reached, the child is quite incapable of becoming a bushwalker.

1. The Sandwich Syndrome:

This condition is likely to be found in any child subjected to the trauma of a healthy diet. At lunchtime, the school playground becomes a centre for hard bargaining for your child as he learns to barter his vitamin-packed raisin and honey or cheese and date sandwiches for another child's yummy (if teeth rotting) jam or lemon spread. But brown bread is, unfortunately, not so easy to get rid of. In fact it will be found to have a noticeable inferiority complex, and indeed, it just refuses to be flogged.

Your child then, will find himself in a dilemma. He may try to overcome it by the method of "swapping centres", but it is inclined to get rather tedious at times - especially if the deal happens to be grated carrot and apple for hundreds and thousands.

2. The Composition Complex:

All bushwalkers' children will come in contact with the composition complex at one time or another.

Our exceedingly unimaginative school system ensures that after nine out of ten school holidays, the pupils will be required to write an essay entitled "My Holiday". For the normal child who went to Surfers Paradise or the Blowhole at Kiama, this presents no problems. For your child however, the situation is different. It makes no difference whether he climbed Pigeonhouse or bludged on the Wollondilly. The reaction of his classmates will be the same, ranging from blank expressions to mild disbelief or the inevitable "where on earth is that?" Your child can either

a) Cheat (This includes calling your Cox-trip "A Holiday in the Blue Mountains")

or b) Refuse to go on holidays

The second choice is obviously preferable and is the more likely for families specialising in Wet Easter Trips.

3. School Bag Schizophrenia:

Typically, the parent will have stated that "no child of mine is going to have drooping shoulders, deformed back or a lop-sided gait"

and, in a grand pack-carrying prelude, will send the child off to school harnessed to a body-building, health-giving satchel. This will bring mockery from the entire district and cause the child to either

- a) lose the satchel, or
- b) lose his parents.

If you fail to observe this phenomenon, the only sure solution is to choose a rainy day when your child has left his rain gear at school, and proceed to send the child off to school in a CAPE GROUND SHEET.

Any child surviving this last treatment is beyond saving and would be psychologically unsuited to anything other than bushwalking anyway.

—ooOoo—

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