

December, 1969

A monthly bulletin of matters of
interest to the Sydney Bushwalkers,
Northcote Building, Reiby Place,
Circular Quay, 2000.

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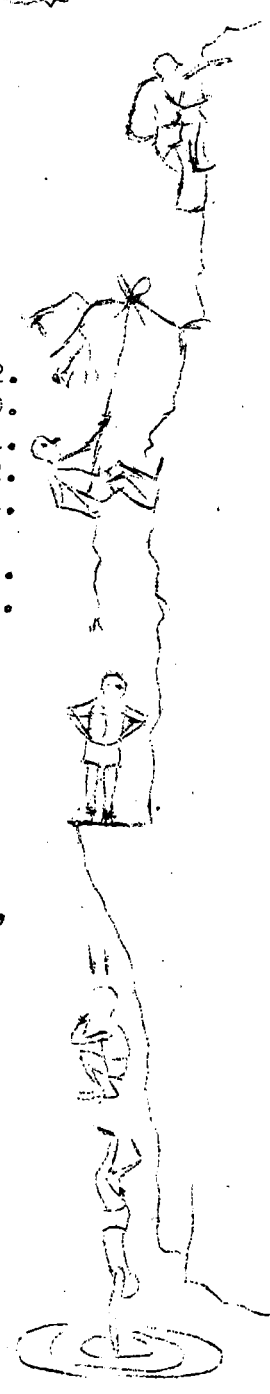
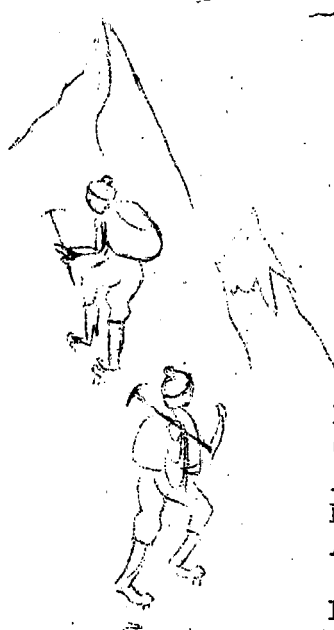
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BEST WISHES TO ALL FOR A HAPPY XMAS FROM
THE MAGAZINE STAFF.



SWAN SONG: or, ANTIDOTE FOR WHITE ANTS.

Pat Harrison.

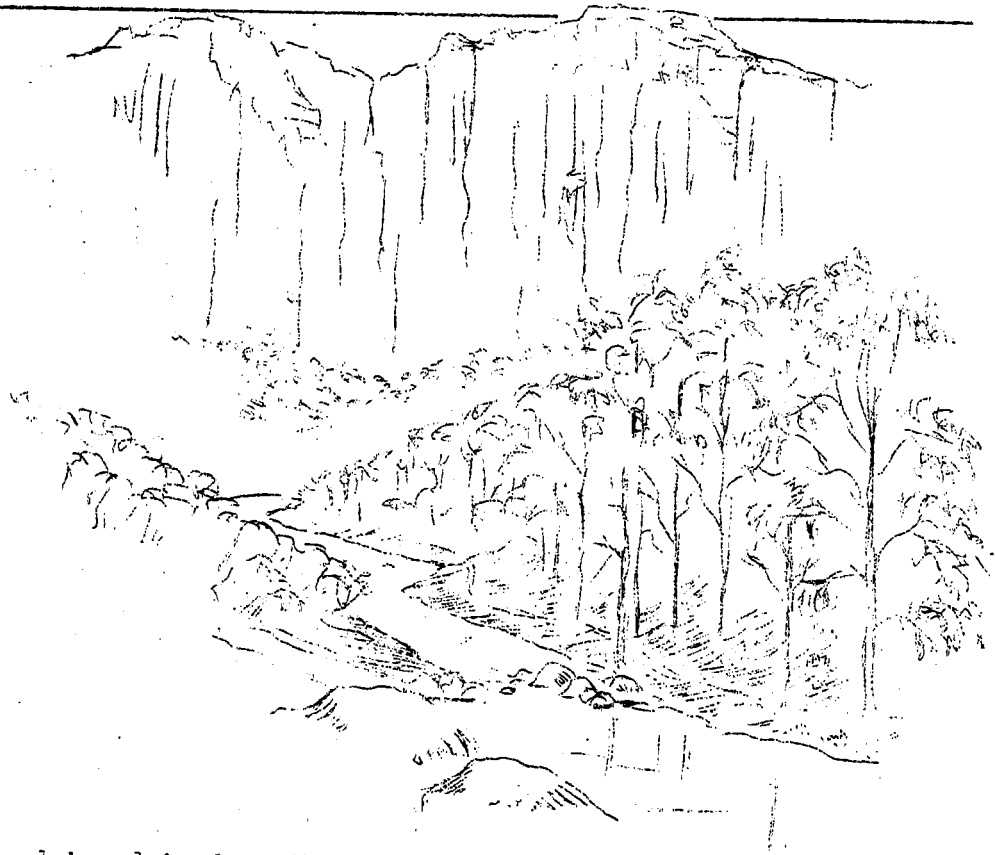
There are some redoubtable and experienced white ants around — real experts whose detection would never come to light but for their own self confessions, such as their acknowledgment of sabotaging their own walks by staying in bed until 10.30 a.m., or those whose skill at lighting fires or whose penchant for Landorin echoes incriminate them when they sabotage other leaders. I think you will agree that anyone who can white ant his own walk is a real bottler, and that suitable evasive action would be necessary by other leaders who wanted their walks to have a reasonable chance of success, if and when white ants as aforementioned were likely to be in the area.

The situation would indeed call for firm action, and thus it was that my plans for the Wolgan-Capertee round trip were well known long in advance. Nothing was secret, and anyone who joined me did so with eyes open. It was a car-swap trip and my leg was starting from Newnes and following the Wolgan and Capertee around to Glen Davis. The plan was to walk the 5 miles or so to Luchetti's Hut on the Friday night and to start walking again at 5.00 a.m. on Saturday morning.

There were 15 walkers and 4 cars in all, but because one car (Don Finch and Snow Brown) could not leave Sydney until about 9.00 p.m. on the Friday and because some of the occupants of another vehicle (which was conveying the Caliphs and the Harem to Glen Davis) did not want to walk at night, I was left with a party of four, including myself. However, Don Finch assured me that he would walk down to Luchetti's Hut in the early hours of Saturday morning or at the latest would join us by 6.00 a.m. on Saturday. In view of these assurances I told Don that we would delay our Saturday morning start until 6.00 a.m. A promise is a promise. After all, what would have happened to Wellington at Waterloo if Blucher had not made that forced march through the swamps to keep his rendezvous with the Iron Duke?

Ray Hookway, Peter Franks (prospective) and myself swapped cars with Ross Hughes, Laurie Quaken, Dot Noble and Marion Lloyd at Lithgow and set out again in Ross's car for the Wolgan Valley about 9.20 p.m.

There had been heavy rain during the afternoon and consequently the road from Wolgan Gap to Newnes was very greasy and dangerous and we were down to second gear and 10 mph most of the way. We were lucky to miss a kangaroo on the narrow part of the road just before the old hotel. Everything was saturated and there



was a drip, drip, drip from the trees when we reached Newnes and found John Scott there, as arranged. John had driven up alone earlier in the afternoon and had encountered the full blast of the rain and the hail. After doing the walk with us, John (who was freelancing in the area) would drive the Caliph's car back to Newnes. A very providential arrangement indeed, for otherwise it would not have been possible to complete the car swapping.

We were walking at 11.5 p.m. but at 11.40 p.m. Ray remembered that that he had not locked Ross's car and he had to walk back to Newnes. The rest of us kept going, dodging the mud and the puddles of water and sliding everywhere, and reached the hut at 12.30 a.m. on Saturday morning and lost no time in hitting the hay, but Ray woke us all up again when he arrived at 2.00 a.m. By the way, when Ray got to Glen Davis and to his own car he found that Ross had left it unlocked!

By 5.00 a.m. when we got out of bed the temperature had dropped and it was a bleakish daybreak with a sky full of wet-looking clouds but the view from the Hut was as good as ever and the great cliff across the river was made more impressive by the gloomy morning. There was no rain, however, and sharp at 6.00 a.m., after cooeeing up the river with all our might, we set down the Wolgan. I cannot understand why some people do not like early starts, for it

out

is the pleasantest time of the day and the birds are at their noisiest and the trees and grasses have their freshest look. It is the time when you can saunter along with old rhymes running through your head. Of course the kind of stuff that would run through my head would not be everybody's kettle of fish. I am not enamoured of those who enumerate their ancestry and pass it off as poetry. This is sorry stuff and is far worse than Homer's Catalogue of the Ships, and of course they are not Homers and cannot make up the deficiencies otherwise. Having browsed my way through several thousand volumes of poetry and religiously eschewed all poetasters (even including modern Australian ones, dozens of whom would be insufficient to make a Campbell or a Hope) I fully subscribe to Byron's dictum that ^{is}

It BETTER TO ERR WITH POPE THAN SHINE WITH PYE.

Quotations having been made elsewhere, I claim the privilege of quoting at length what would have appealed to me on such a morning. For example, the following would have been in keeping with that gloomy morning:-

As when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the north wind dleeps, o'erspread
Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element
Scowls o'er the darkened landscape snow, or shower,
If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.

To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good morrow.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh,
As benefits forgot.

....the river
That makes sweet music with the enamelled stones,
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage.

Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly

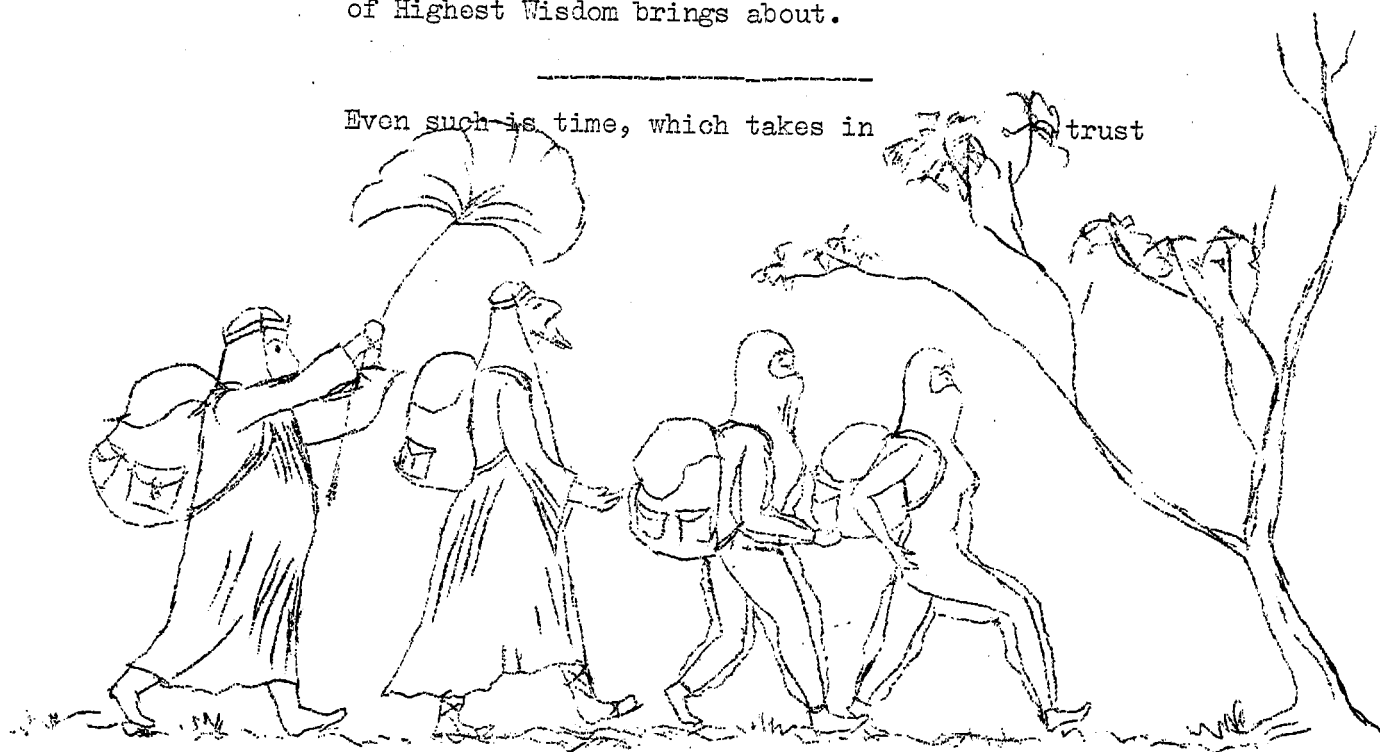
Man, proud Man, drest in a little brief authority

Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are clept
All by the name of dogs.

Fear no more the heat of the sun
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

All is best, though we oft doubt
What th' unsearchable dispose
of Highest Wisdom brings about.

Even such is time, which takes in trust



Our youth, and joys, and all we have;
And pays us but with age and dust.

Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content;
The quiet mind is richer than a crown;
The homely house that harbours quiet rest.

His golden locks time hath to silver turned;
O time too swift, o swiftness never ceasing!
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurned,
- But spurned in vain; youth wanoth by increasing.
Egaty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen;
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

His helmet now shall make a hive for bees.

Having warmed to my subject, I had better cut off here or I shall go on for ever; but before I do I shall quote one poem (and that an Australian one, and in the ballad metre; but it is in good company because notable poets from Tennyson back to Elizabethan times used the poulterer's measure as it was called. Chapman used it to translate Homer, and you know what Keats thought of Chapman's Homer in full. Here it is:-

IRISH LORDS.

The clover burr was two feet high, and the billabongs were full;
The brolgas danced a minuet, and the world seemed made of wool;
The nights were never wearisome, and the days were never slow,
When first we came to Irish Lords, on the road to Ivanhoe.

The rime was on the barley grass as we passed the homestead
rails;
A Darling jackass piped us in, with his trills and turns and
scales;
And youth and health and carelessness sat on the saddle bow——
And Mary lived at Irish Lords, on the road to Ivanhoe.

On every hand was loveliness, and the Fates were fair and kind;
We drank the very wine of life, and we never looked behind;
And Mary! Mary, everywhere, went flitting to and fro,
When first we came to Irish Lords, on the road to Ivanhoe.

The window of her dainty bower, where the golden banksia
grew,
Stared like a dead Man's glazing eye, and the roof had
fallen through.
No violets in her garden bed. And her voice-----hushed
long ago!
When last we camped at Irish Lords, on the road to
Ivanhoe.

But back to the log of our walk. We reached Rocky Creek at 6.45 a.m. and crossed over because the Wolgan was carrying a fair head of water and we were determined to stay on the northern bank all the way to the junction and then up the southern bank of the Capertee. We did not want to waste time in crossing unless we really had to.

At Annie Rowan we came upon 5 Dingoes feasting on a dead cow. They were all the characteristic golden colour, but one of them by its size and shape seemed to have a touch of Alsatian. They were quite ferocious and snarled in a menacing manner and there seemed no doubt that they would have attacked us but for the turbulent river which separated us.

During our walk down the Wolgan we found a dead platypus on a small spit of sand, and we also disturbed several Lyre birds which screeched noisily as they fluttered across the river to the safety of the other side. We also took 10 minutes' rest every hour and we had an hour for lunch (instead of our planned half hour) so that Don and Snow would catch us, but of course they did not appear although we were anxious for them to join us.

The Wolgan narrowed after Annie Rowan and there was a bit of rock hopping on our bank, but at 1.20 p.m. we reached the pleasant spot where the Wolgan mingles with the Capertee. Strange to say, the Capertee was crystal clear and shallower and more placid than the brown and boisterous Wolgan. No doubt the heavy rain during Friday afternoon had not extended to the catchment of the Capertee.

We spent 20 minutes at the junction and we now knew that we could have reached Glen Davis that night if we had wanted to, but for the rest of the day we enjoyed a relaxed saunter up the most beautiful of river gorges, passing Ross's party at 2.30 p.m. We left a message for Don and Snow with Ross, that we would camp not later than 5.00 p.m. and that we were looking forward to seeing them. As it turned out, we camped at 4.30 p.m. in a beautiful bower (the Capertee, by the way, is one continuous campsite) that would have entranced any botanist by the variety of trees that

formed it. There were Myrtles, Blueberry Ash, Melaleuca, Eucalyptus, and two slender Turpentine which were just rightly placed to serve as tent poles. The grass was short and green on the floor of the bower but waist-high bracken formed a protective barrier around it.

The lower Capertee has some notable specimens of Turpentine, not far removed in nobleness from those wonderful ones in Lady Carrington's Drive. We also passed several large and beautiful specimens of Purple Mint Bush in full flower.

We were in bed by 7.00 p.m. on Saturday, up at 5.00 a.m. on Sunday, on the track at 6.00 a.m., and reached Glen Davis at 10.15 a.m., having of course taken our usual 10 minutes every hour to gaze around at the golden walls of rock.

Ever since Friday night we had been expecting rain, to the extent that we had been induced to carry a tent, but by the time we reached the cars on Sunday there were large patches of blue among the grey and the morning was quite nice.

We boiled the billy, had a dip in the river, and hung around until 11.30 a.m. in the hope that Don and Snow would arrive, but they (like the rain) did not appear.

WANTED: One papoose pack, used, cheap. Our son can almost sit and we would like a papoose pack to show our little Aussie this wonderful country - what better way than hiking with the S.B.W.'s.

Please contact Craig or Marcia Shappert
30-2028 (H).

The November General Meeting.

Jim Brown.

Vice President Phil Butt occupied the chair for the meeting, which began with greetings to new members Kateryna Tryhub and Peter Evander.

Following the signing of the October minutes, Wilf Hilder reported on the Nature Conservation Council's annual meeting: there had been much splitting of hairs, he said, but matters discussed that would interest walkers included the extension of a pine forest on to the Boyd Plateau, opposition to the limestone mining near Colong, oil pollution of the ocean, and the disputes between Commonwealth and States on questions of conservation: also debated were the keeping of native animals in captivity and an investigation of the effects of slow burning off of fire danger areas on local ecology, while a donation was made to the Myall Lakes Committee.

Also arising from the Minutes it was reported that about 35 people attended the memorial service to Taro at Clear Hill, and that the position regarding Crown land adjoining the Club block in Kangaroo Valley was still uncertain. Frank Leyden suggested "controlled" burning of bushland could endanger fauna in all areas and Wilf replied that a low intensity fire allowed to cover perhaps one-fifth of a reserve did less damage than an uncontrolled bushfire.

Out of correspondence was a proposal by the Nature Conservation Council that the Sim report on beach mining should be discussed in Parliament. The Club resolved, on a motion by Phil Hall, to request the Premier to take this action. It was reported that, after tabling of the report, it appeared to have been conveniently forgotten.

In the "Reports" department, the Treasurer stated that the on-hand cash at the end of October was \$807. Then Mike Short introduced the walks report, revealing that the scheduled trips in October attracted 73 members, 52 prospectives and 46 visitors. Some of the leaders told their own tales.

At the beginning of the month five members were amongst 27 people at a joint trip on Watson's Crags in the Alps, and Ray Hookway's Budawang trip had 17 -- the area was so crowded it "resembled Pitt Street". Jack Perry's Labour Day trip was attended by 8 people, but no report was available. On the second week-end of the month

Dot Noble's party of 9 members and 5 prospectives were out under showery conditions in the hills near Kanangra, and there were two day walks, one led by Meryl Watman into flannel flower country near Kurnell, while Gladys Robert's trip near Belrose was joined by a S.M. Herald feature writer.

Mid October saw the car-swap trip of Pat Harrison and Ross Hughes on Wolgan and Capertee Rivers and what must be the fastest passage from Newnes to Glen Davis via the rivers. Indeed the tail end of Pat's party never caught up with the advance guard. Sheila Binns and crew of 11 had a pleasantly leisured camp at the erstwhile Reunion site at Woods Creek, while Jim Callaway took a test walk from Heathcote to Bundeena.

For his Instructional walk over Paddy's Peak and to the Wollondilly, Owen Marks had a team of 13, including 9 prospectives. Owen's report of the trip was quite lyrical, in spite of hot weather, but by all accounts there was little time for instruction. Mabel Pratt's day walk to Marley was enlivened by a savage storm which caused the Bundeenda ferry to ground on a shoal. At this point Wilf Hilder commented that Owen's observations of the Aurora Borealis (a northern hemisphere phenomenon) was a truly remarkable feature on the Wollondilly.

Wilf proceeded with a Federation Report, including congratulations to the Melbourne Walking Club on its 75th anniversary. Federation had also debated the Little Bay "wrap up" and decided NOT to contradict conservationists who were opposed to the stunt. This might be construed as supporting the critics. Delegates were wanted for the Conservation Bureau and apparently one volunteer (evidently unknown) was obtained. Wilf also reported the footbridge over Hacking River above Audley was "officially closed".

The Chairman reminded the meeting of Committee's concern over drivers returning late at night when tired and urged caution. Barry Pacey's resignation as Federation Delegate was reported, but no immediate successor could be obtained.

In General Business Frank Ashdown asked what measures were being taken to pay rates on the Kangaroo Valley property. Phil Butt said this was a question for examination by the Management Committee and Sheila Binns remarked that at one stage the neighbouring Quakers had suggested covering our rates if given grazing rights, but apparently did not now seek this for the present year.

Wilf Hilder reported the recent death of Harold Peatfield of the Mountain Trails Club. He had been connected with the walking movement for about 50 years and his name was perpetuated by a side creek of the Kowmung River. He also spoke of booklets on orienteering (available from Paddy Pallin) and one dealing with propo-

sals for National Parks in the Hunter Valley area. The walking track from Austinmer to Sublime Point had been marked.

Also covered by Wilf were brochures on the Royal National Park and Kuringgai Chase now at Paddy's - the Kuringgai publication was notably devoid of walking tracks and indicated the rather negative attitude to walkers that its management had adopted. A map (provisional) of Shooter's Hill area, including Tuglow Caves and Chardon Canyon was available from the Lands Department. Improved varieties of torch batteries were now on sale (see Paddy's item in the September magazine) and the Scout shop was selling a very good and reasonably priced nylon tent.

It was 9.40 by this time, there was no more to be said, and we went our several ways.

OBSERVER PLANTS SOME TREES.

Whenever your observer has to move trees in tins he waits until heavy rains brings the weight of the tins to double the dry weight. This time was no exception. Overnight it rained downpouring rain so that when he set off for Kangaroo Valley with eighty six trees, his older son and a shovel the truck was groaning. Wet brakes, low cloud, waterfall on Cambewarra, a smoky hut. Adventure and adversity are closer than Katmandu.

The trees were carried down, planted in the damp soil and because it began again to rain the rain the tins were left as temporary litter. Your observer and his tree-planting son wanted to go home to electric cooking, the right wine with the right guests and his own non-smoked mattress.

Planted was a catholic selection of potentially big trees, medium trees and shrubs.

Tristania conferta - the Brush Box. Popular as a street tree, growing fairly symmetrically in the northern rain forests. Usually seen in Molnar's cartoons as THE amputated tree. *Acacia rubida* - Red Stemmed Wattle. A graceful form with a distinct difference between juvenile and adult leaves.

Hakea saligna - grows ten to twelve feet, pale pink and white flowers in spring. Not *Hakea scratchifolia*.

Various callistemons. Bottle brushes. *Melaleuca hypericifolia* - you will recognise it when you see it.

The melaleucas and callistemons were in flower when planted and

will certainly flower next spring. Subsequent reports say the trees are thriving.

If you are going to Kangaroo Valley, strongly recommended, call in at and

W. Gillam
19 Old Bush Road
Engadine

and fill your car with grevilleas, waratahs, spotted gums. Next autumn there will be hundreds of trees to take down so please help.

APOLOGY PUBLICLY MADE.

Now fades the last, long streak of snow
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares and thick
By ashen roots the violets blew.

It has been pointed out to your editor that the first line quoted above had words transposed, altering, in the opinion of the pointer-out, the noble association of Tennyson and cross-country ski-ing. There is much of beauty and value in both Tennyson and cross country ski-ing and, though your editor does claim to be literate, scansion and iambic pentameters are like putty in his hands.

By choice he has not read much poetry published between 1614 and 1940 - from the Stratford accent rhyming blood and good and the famous celibate rat. He has promised to mend his ways and widen his prejudices.

While in this humble mood he would also like to state publicly that he did not write the line

"The cruel girls we loved are over forty".

The line comes from a short but beautiful poem called "Mothers and Daughters" by David Campbell. A phone call will put you in touch with someone who supports Australian poets by buying their books rather than filching their copyright.

MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT

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A MOUNTAIN BETWEEN FOUR.

Paddy Pallin.

At the risk of being called a misanthrope I must confess that I enjoyed being one of the only four people who for a week in September occupied that elevated snow capped plateau known as Mt. Bogong.

In March I went with two other Old Buffers, Reg Meakins and Ken Brown on a reconnaissance. We sweated up the 4,200 foot climb of the Staircase Spur with camp gear and a week's food on our backs. We met members of the M.U.M.C. leaving the mountain. During the week the area was visited by Jack Maddison, a cattleman and his two sons plus a handsome character called Ken Mills who looked as though he had stepped right out of a western movie.

On the way down the mountain we got tangled up in the stream of a conquestathon (Who perpetrates these verbal atrocities?). This was a race from Mountain Creek up the Staircase Spur to the cairn on Mt. Bogong, down the Eskdale Spur to Camp Creek Gap then down Mountain Creek to the starting point. Quite a trip - running up 4,200 and then running down again by a circuitous route. Think the winner's time was 3½ hours.

We thoroughly enjoyed our trip on the mountain but we sort of shared it with others.

In early September we watched the snow reports and saw that what little snow there was, was being washed away by unseasonable rains. We actually were so sure there would be a dearth of snow, we took walking shoes with us in case we could not ski. Our film hero Ken had promised to get us up the Mountain road in his four wheel drive vehicle to save part of the climb, as we would be burdened with extra clothing, waxes, skis and stocks. However we got to Tawonga - no Ken. In bed with 'flu'. Having seen the road at Camp Creek Gap in March, I reckoned we had a good chance of getting a car up that far, but alas at Trappers Gap, over three miles short of our objective the road was impassable. At 11.30 a.m. we reluctantly left the car and shouldered packs, skis and stocks. Two hours, three miles and about 2,000 feet (up and down) later we arrived at Camp Creek Gap.

We disturbed the sole inhabitant, a very well fed wombat, who promptly scuttled into a hollow log much too small for him and got stuck leaving a plump backside exposed to our astonished gaze. I prodded him gently with a stock

and the rump disappeared. (I hope he didn't get quite stuck and have to stay there for keeps). We still had 3,000 feet to climb. There was a snow covering of six inches and the skies were heavy and grey. We got to Michell Shelter 5,100 ft. at about 4.00 p.m. after an arduous climb, partly on foot and partly on skis. Progress on both was tiring and frustrating owing to deep soft snow under which lay all manner of obstacles.

The area round the hut was a silent brooding place. The twelve foot gum saplings were weighted down under the snow. Large flakes of snow filled the air, dropping straight from a leaden sky, but away above us on the mountain top we heard the roar of the wind. The scene was beautiful, fairy like, yet somehow sinister. We still had a 1,400 ft. climb to the summit and approximately three miles further to go to Cleve Cole Hut. We decided to camp in the Michell Shelter.

The party consisted of Rex Cox, an experienced cross country skier who had shared many mountain ski trips with me, Martin Pentley a competent downhill skier, but new to ski touring, Robert Pallin and me.

We got the stove alight and after a little work we transformed the muddy, grubby hut into a snug shelter and enjoyed a meal by candlelight. Our only food supplies were bread, butter and meat, but we found a bag of hardened powdered milk and a scraping of sugar which eventually provided us with a comforting hot drink.

Next morning conditions were unchanged, the wind still roared on the mountain top and another six inches had been added to the snow on the ground. We decided to give it a go. Walking was now virtually impossible owing to the depth of snow so we waxed up and set off. Soon we found our blue wax slipping so we decided on drastic measures and took off skis and plastered them with yellow klister wax. This was all wrong according to the book, but it worked like magic and we climbed the 30 degree slope with virtually no slipping. We soon got above the tree line and the wind started. Luckily it was partly behind us. The snow poles were 30 yards apart and quite often we failed to see the next pole until we were half way towards it. At this point I was glad to have been on the mountain before. I know the run of the poles.

It was a long, long climb and pretty tiring as every now and then an extra steep bit made us side step up it. We didn't hurry. We knew we had all day and had no wish to exhaust ourselves. Finally there was no next pole above us and we reached Eskdale Point on top of the ridge. Here we met the southwest wind in all its fury and in the saddle of Hill Gap it was as much as we could do to stand. However, I knew there were poles every 30 yards on the

whole way to the hut $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles away, and so off we plodded. Our skis were not running well; we had too much soft goo on them, but we were thankful for this as visibility was so bad we dare not let them slide. The snow poles were a fantastic sight. They were 24 inches wide with rime they had accumulated in the blizzard.

The last mile to the hut is a gentle run down into trees and here at last we got some relief. The wind eased a little, visibility increased and glory be! We got a fleeting glimpse of the sun. We must have worn off most of the slister by now because our skis started running and as a final bonus, as we came in sight of the hut, the sun shone and it looked just like a traditional Christmas card.

In the hut all was peace - but rather a chilly peace. The thermometer registered 19 degrees F. We soon had a fire going, of course, but it was two days before we warmed that granite walled hut to above 32 degrees F and the washing up water stopped freezing on the sink.

During the summer we had arranged to have some goodies transported into the hut including a bottle of Bacardi rum. They were to have been taken in by packhorse but eventually they were air dropped in. Unfortunately the bottle of Bacardi got broken. Members of the Wangaratta Ski Club were so touched by this loss that they unselfishly deprived themselves of liquor and left us a half bottle of rum to console us. That's mateship for you.



On the second day we thawed out the hot water system with a blow lamp, we had brought for waxing and from then on had H and C running water and H & C showers (mainly H of course).

The snow gums in sheltered places were burdened with snow and it was easy to understand how their branches become contorted and broken. Photographically they were irresistible and for two days we hardly stopped finding better and better trees to record on imperishable celluloid.

On the second day we had wonderful sunshine and the air was so clear we saw and could plainly identify the main range of Kosciusko. We could see the Ramshead Range and Townsend and to the north quite unmistakably Jagungal crouching like a lion in lonely splendour. We estimated the distance as 70 miles. To the south lay Feathertop, Mount Loch (Hiding Hotham), Mt. Mackay with its fire tower clearly visible and the Bogong High Plains. To the west lay the broad mass of Buffalo.

We had a wonderful week as sole occupants of this mountain eyrie. We skied east, we skied west and we tried every ridge north and south. We had only one other companion on the mountain - a fox. Every night he made his rounds and travelled the full length of the mountain over snow, a round journey of over ten miles and so far as we could see with no chance of food, for there were no rabbit or hare tracks and no signs of birds having been killed. There would no doubt have been game in the gullies hundreds of feet below, but each night he seemed to beat the rounds of the tops. We thought maybe he was asserting his territorial rights by this otherwise apparently wasted journey.

In mid week we went to the summit cairn and then down to the summit hut, which is a few hundred feet below the top on the steep north side. In March this hut was in a state of extreme delapidation with sheets of iron flapping in the slightest breeze. In the meantime someone had nailed down the loose sheets of iron and made the place weather tight but scarcely habitable. Just below the hut is a cairn marking the spot where three Victorian skiers died in a blizzard whilst attempting to reach the Summit Hut. In fine weather it is difficult to grasp the fact that three capable skiers perished within eighty yards of shelter and safety, but our memories of our recent climb up the Eskdale Spur in less severe weather made us realise the possibility. Another ten miles an hour to the wind, a little more snow falling and an extra 10 or 20 lbs. in our packs could have made a tragic difference to the end of our story too.

The snow poles nearby are hollow steel with holes punched in them. Under normal conditions with a little wind they act like organ pipes and produce eerie moaning noises as if mourning the dead.

When we visited the spot in winter the holes were plugged up with snow and so they were silent.

Too soon the week passed and on Saturday morning at 8.15 we bid good bye to Cleve Cole Hut silently thanking the Mt. Bogong Club for their work in maintaining and provisioning this place for those who love the mountains.

The mountain was not content to let us go in peace however. As we arrived at Eskdale Point a great mist ascended from the valley of Mountain Creek reducing visibility to 10 or 20 yards. Consequently we fumbled our way down the steep ridge, successfully avoiding the precipitous drop on each side of the spur. Eventually we reached Michell Shelter. Here we took off our skis and waded deep in snow down the narrow track between the trees. We got back to the car at 2 o'clock and were home in bed by 1.00 a.m. on Sunday.

It was good to own a quarter of a mountain if only for a week.



PADDY MADE



The "OLD FIRM" wishes all S.B.W. friends a merry Xmas and, as we pass from the 60s into the 70s a happy New Year.

We thank all our bushwalking friends for their valued custom and look forward to serving you as well in the next decade as we have done during the past four.

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