

THE SYDNEY

BUSHWALKER

A Monthly Bulletin of matters of interest
to the Sydney Bush Walkers, Northcote House,
Reiby Place, Circular Quay, Sydney.

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THE HALF-YEARLY GENERAL MEETING

by Jim Brown

In the beginning there was a welcome to two new members - Lesley Wood and Angela Greenland - and Bill Miles and Keith Muddle (a carry-over from the previous month) were named, but not present.

Minutes - and nothing arising therefrom. Correspondence included acknowledgment from the Lands Department of our plea for recognised access to Coolana, and advice that we should make formal application on the prescribed form. This would be seen to by the Land Management Committee.

According to the Treasurer's monthly statement, the activities for August had produced practically identical income and expenditure, with a resultant balance in the trading account of \$1,493 at the close of the month. Walks Secretary Alan Pike, aided and abetted by some of the leaders who were present, reported on August's trips. To start with there was Craig Shappert's wine-tasting trip in the Hunter Valley - there was a certain dearth of detail, and it was alleged that no-one remembered what happened. On the same week-end Ross Hughes stood in as leader for Doone Wyborn on a trip in the Coolong country, and recorded a pleasant uneventful jaunt with five people, the area being very dry. Sam Hinde was in charge of the day walk from Wondabyne to Pindar Cave, with 33 people, and an agreeable sunny day. The cave was reported as cunningly concealed.

Of the second week-end it was reported that Dot Noble's dash over Guouogang to Konangaroo had a party of five, and the hut at the Kanangra-Cox's Rivers junction was reached well after dark on Saturday. Only one person "almost died". John Holly took the Sunday trip in the country south of Glenbrook, there were thirty-one attending, and the area which is usually a garden of wildflowers was not as bright as it normally is - possibly owing to drought.

Don Finch had a team of 14 in the Capertee Valley, thence to Uraterer Mountain and return on the next week-end. A quite good means of getting out of Running Stream Creek was found, and the return was by Grassy Hill. In the Blue Gum area that week-end was Sheila Binns, deputising for Pat Marson, and party of seven, while Jim Dawson conducted a fairly energetic day walk down Sassafras Gully ... at some stage a member detached himself from the party unannounced, and caused a deal of consternation.

The weekend 21-22-23 August saw two kinds of Instructional trips - Bill Gillam's on the snow, with thirteen people, but not very favourable weather: and President Spiro Ketas' normal Instructional on the Cox near Tinpot Creek, with 21 including eight prospective members in attendance.

On the Sunday Esme Biddulph's crew was 21 - but with 15 visitors on the Barrenjoey Peninsula, permission being obtained especially to light a luncheon fire about the tide level. So to the final week-end, with Spiro and party tackling the knobby ridge from Currockbilly down to Yadbora Creek; party of eight, but the target at the Sugarloaf proved too far. A day car-swap trip passing through Blue Gum had been organised jointly by Alan Pike and Owen Marks that week-end, and was carried out successfully; Alan remarking that some of the littered camp sites near Goyetts Leap Creek having been cleaned considerably in the last couple of months. That Sunday, too Frank Leyden conducted a well-attended day walk which had not been on the original programme, but had been thrown open to all.

Phil Hall remarked that he had seen some prospective members on day test walks with very inadequate gear and clothing, and questioned whether advice was given. The President answered, yes, it is, and it seems that some people don't read the guidance.

Jim Callaway presented Federation Report, including the news that an orienteering committee of four had been appointed to promote this activity. Enquiries for insurance of S & R searchers had not been so favourable - rather high premium rates being quoted, with the lowest in the order of \$6.50 per person annually. It was proposed to rename the S & R Field Officer as S & R "Director" with his deputy as Field Officer, and on a motion by Jim, the Club gave its blessing to the change.

Also originating from Federation was a request that member Clubs write the Minister for Lands protesting against a proposal to construct a road through New England National Park, possibly from Armidale to Nambucca. The Club decided to lodge its protest, even though details of the project were sketchy at this stage. Phil Butt mentioned that Federation was seeking some person of standing as 'patron' of S & R.

President Spiro called for nominations for the annual Re-union, 1971, and received four - Woods Creek, Macarthur's Flat, Coolana and Erskine Creek. On the voting the Club's own ground of Coolana topped the poll, and on the question of Re-union Convener, Sam Hinde accepted nomination.

Came the two Constitutional amendments moved by Jim Callaway, and it was soon evident that the procedure for appointing Federation delegates, substitute delegates, and who should be on the Club's Committee, was a deep mystery to many. Some evidently thought the motion proposed increasing the size of Committee, and there was an amendment that one delegate only take a place on Committee. Finally our reporter suggested that the whole thing was covered by an earlier constitutional amendment which had been missed out in the last re-print of the constitution: this 1962 amendment was traced in the minute books and the

first constitutional amendment then lapsed. Jim Callaway's second amendment - requiring reasonable attendance by delegates at Federation meetings - was adopted.

In winding up the evening, Alex Colley reported on the doings of the Colong Committee, and it was decided to contribute a further \$25 to the cause. Phil Hall also put the case for the Save Kurnell Movement, and a donation of \$10 went in that direction. What with announcements, it was in the vicinity of 9.45 when the Half-Yearly was over and done with.

Owing to the late publication of the September magazine it has been practicable to include the notes of the Half-Yearly General Meeting. At the Editor's discretion the August notes might be published at a later date.

THE MYALL LAKES

The Myall Lakes Committee is endeavouring to raise money for the purchase of 400 acres of bushland adjacent to the Lakes, to prevent private development of same.

Any individual person interested in contributing financial assistance is requested to contact the under-mentioned member of this Committee:

Mr. Wal C. Taylor,
1 Victoria Street,
Greenwich, 2065.

'phone 43-2889

FEDERATION BALL, 1970.

The results of the raffle are:

\$50 donated by Paddy Pallin:

won by Mr. Stan Andrew,
Outdoor Club.

Sleeping bag donated by
Mountain Equipment:

won by Mrs. Avery,
152 Kingsway, Cronulla.

✓

KHATMANDU

by Kath McKay.

This has been a marvellous year.

It began with the post office steps.

Where I live, in a suburb 18 miles out of Perth, the post office had very steep steps, and not a hand-hold of any kind to steady an unbalanced person like myself.

I complained about it when writing to Marie Byles, and she, with her acute legal mind, went straight to the heart of the matter. She wrote back immediately and said: "Why don't you ask the P.M.G. to remedy it?"

I was somewhat awestruck, but did as she recommended and concocted a timid request to the great man.

Lo, he had a pair of gleaming rails installed forthwith, and I go up and down like a bird. Well, like a lame duck anyway.

So it has gone on right through the year, with all sorts of unexpected things happening. One of the most exciting events was the unheralded arrival of Dot Butler, with the snows of the Andes and the Himalayas thick upon her.

Some weeks after she had departed to Sydney, leaving me in a blissful daze, I had occasion to go to the wardrobe in the spare room. To my amazement, there, nestling on the floor, was an aluminium frying pan containing a small roll of toilet paper and a cake of guest-soap, still in its wrapper.

I picked them up gingerly. The frying pan had obviously been much used, but was reasonably clean; the toilet paper, smaller than we usually see, (more in the nature of an emergency ration) bore a Bombay trademark, and the guest soap was stamped with the name of a Singapore hotel. I concluded that they had been left by Dot, and wrote to her, asking if she would like the frying pan back, but I have not heard from her so she is evidently managing without it.

It was a pity to waste the toilet paper, and my Scottish blood would not allow me to discard the soap, which still emits a foreign odour in the drawer where I keep it. The little frying pan is installed in the pot cupboard and is a source of perennial joy to me.

Years ago I read a book called the Laughing Diplomat, by Daniele Varé. When Daniele, whose mother was English, was a small boy in

Italy, he had an English Nanny, and when she went back to England, he besought his mother to post his toy rabbit to Nanny so that she could send it back to him. Signora Varé was rather mystified but humoured the child, and Bunny made the journey in due course. When he returned, Daniele used to take him to bed with him and talk to him for hours, asking him all about his travels to that far country, England.

I feel just the same about the frying pan. I christened him Khatmandu and every time I use him, I think of the brown Sherpa hands that have held him, the cheerful Sherpa faces that have peered at his simmering contents. I sniff the high pure snows and gaze in wonder at this small inanimate thing that has dwelt 'in thrilling region of thick ribbed ice' and known countries I shall never know.

No matter: here in my kitchen I have my very own Khatmandu.

SOCIALLY SPEAKING ---

OCTOBER 21ST -- CLUB AUCTION

This is the chance to get rid of all your unnecessary junk - books - old but good bushwalking gear - cakes and ale - furniture, etc., in fact, anything of value that you think others may have a use for.

All the proceeds are going towards Coolana. Our last auction proved a riot.

OCTOBER 28th -- Sammy Hinde is going to show us the diverse and beautiful NORFOLK ISLAND

He has been there twice, and must know something!!

SAD NEWS: In all my Social Secretary-ing I was always proud that I never cancelled anything. Alas - no more.

The Music Hall Night is now off - due to lack of interest. Only 8 people were interested and I would have gone beserk trying to sell the other 92 tickets. Maybe another time.

MY FIRST BUSHWALK

by Marcia Shappert.

My first bushwalk was absolutely, positively terrible!! I never thought I'd live through it, and then I prayed I wouldn't.

It all began because my husband and I wanted to see something of Australia. We had only been in this country a few months at that time. We went along to a Bushwalkers meeting and met some very friendly people, all of whom assured us we could walk 'only' 25 miles on a weekend.

We signed up for a walk led by Alan Pike going to the Wollondilly River, Murruin Creek, Bindook Creek, Bindook Gorge, Tomat Creek, Lower Tomat Creek, Wollondilly River. Of course, none of these names meant a thing to me and I had to ask someone where we went in order to write this article. The only name I remembered was Wollondilly River, which I'll remember until the day I die.

That fateful Friday night we drove to Beecroft to meet at Shirley Dean's house. We were going to drive down with Shirley, Bill Burke and Snow Brown. Getting to Beecroft was a feat in itself as we had never heard of that place and didn't have a Gregorys.

Finally everyone arrived (we were actually the first to arrive) and we left about 8.30 p.m. I remember stopping in Mittagong for a cup of tea. From there we drove to someplace. We got out of the car wondering what to do next. We were told to throw our sleeping bags down and go to sleep. We found a place almost level, with not too many rocks and did just that.

Next morning about 5.00 a.m. I woke up to some noise I couldn't identify. When I looked around I realised where I was (on the ground, in an open field) and that there were sheep close making all the noise.

Somehow we managed to get dressed and cook our breakfast. I'm sure someone let us use their fire. About 7.00 a.m. the group started off. There was Dot Butler, Frank Taeker, Owen Marks, Spiro Ketás, Barry Pacey, Laurie Mackaness and others I can't remember, besides those already mentioned.

We walked for about 15 minutes down a road and then came to a river. Everyone just walked into the river! Craig and I looked at each other, shrugged, and followed. I thought it rather odd to find the Barralier Post Office on the other side. I thought, "Only in Australia would they put a P.O. on the other side of a river with no bridge".

From there we rock hopped along the river for what seemed like 2 years. By this time it was 10 a.m. and I couldn't walk anymore. My legs and feet were sore and I just had to rest. Someone took pity and gave me a cup of tea - the first of many that were offered during the weekend. From that point on I didn't carry my pack. To this day I don't know who carried it all, but they've been in my prayers of thanks every night since then.

The rest of the day is a blurr. I know it started raining and we were still rock hopping. Finally we caught up with the rest of the group, who were all huddled under a fallen tree waiting for us in the rain. Another cup of tea and then we had to climb a huge hill. I never thought I'd make it, but someone kept encouraging me and I finally made it to the top. Everyone was waiting again. They had started a fire and I remember Shirley Dean telling someone to give me some chocolate for quick energy.

It was still raining and we hiked on for another half hour. By this time it was almost dark so we found a camp site and another fire was started - a huge one! - and another cup of tea for me.

Finally the rain stopped and we all sat around the fire and talked. Bedtime came, but because there were only 3 or 4 tents among all of us, we slept sideways and used the tent as a lean to. There were 4 or 5 or 6 in our tent.

That's when I started praying I'd break a leg early the next day. I figured they'd have to get help and I wouldn't have to walk anymore. The next morning at breakfast I asked what would happen if I did, in fact, break a leg. I was told I'd have to walk anyway; there was no way to get an ambulance to where we were. So, a broken leg wasn't enough. I then prayed to die. It seemed the only way out - and so much easier.

We started off again (I still wasn't carrying my pack) and the way was a little easier, so I was able to keep up with the rest of the group for once.

Then someone got lost and searchers were sent out. It meant I could rest. I guess the lost were found, but I'm not sure. All I know is that we started walking again.

We were headed for a beautiful waterfall, I was told. The whole trip would be worthwhile once I saw it. Somehow we climbed and climbed and finally came to the waterfall. I was too tired and sore to even bother looking at it.

Then we had to climb down again! It was very rocky and we had to 'follow the leader' so there wouldn't be a landslide, but that didn't work. The sight of those huge rocks crashing down was almost too much for me. All I can remember is Alan Pike trying to climb up the hill and not making any progress because the rocks were falling from under him. I really don't remember how we made it to the bottom, but no one was hurt.

We then had to walk along a very narrow, slippery edge along a river. I, of course, fell in! Thank heavens I wasn't carrying my pack or I could have been in trouble. But as it was I just swam to the edge of the river and crawled out.

I guess it was all rock hopping again until we got back to the cars. I kept asking, "How much farther?" and was always told the same thing - 'Not much more'.

It felt so good to get back to the cars at last. Talk about welcome sights!! Another cup of tea and then we started our long drive home.

By this time my legs were so black and blue and so sore I couldn't move. When we did reach Beecroft, my leg muscles had tightened up and I couldn't walk. Craig was only slightly better off, having hurt his knee somewhere along the line. Snow Brown drove our car to our flat in North Sydney. We were not able to drive.

I crawled up the stairs and into a hot bath. For the next 3 days I stayed in bed and recuperated: but come Wednesday night we were off again to the Bushwalkers - we had to return the packs we rented! People were amazed to see us - and said so!! But they were all very friendly and encouraging and said the next trip would be better.

The next walk was so much easier, I kept asking when it would get bad. Who would have thought you could go bushwalking and enjoy yourself too!!!

OCTOBER WALKS

by Alan Pike

October 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th - Long week-end

Laurie Rayner has put a lot of effort into organising his trip to the Bellangry State Forest, which is situated inland from Port Macquarie. He has obtained detailed information on the access roads so that it will be possible to climb four peaks all around 4,000 ft. This area is rarely visited by our club - so the trip can be thoroughly recommended. Apart from the magnificent views from the peaks, the forest is also spectacular. In fact Laurie goes into raptures over the beautiful jungle. All the walking will be done from base camps so that only a light day pack will be necessary.

Julie Frost's walk on the Shoalhaven River should be a very free and easy affair. 16 miles in three days isn't exactly a marathon. However there is plenty to see and do in this area. Apart from Bungonia Gorge it's possible that other little side trips could be done - Barbers Creek with its incredible slippery dip and the fantastic Gillette Ridge to mention a few.

Every year the Australian section of the New Zealand Alpine Club has run an instructional on climbing at Watsons Crags in the Snowy Mountains. This year road access has been cut off. The venue has yet to be decided and depends on the snow conditions. The instructional is intended as a warm up for people who intend to go climbing in New Zealand at Christmas. However anyone is welcome, and if you didn't have intentions of climbing in N.Z.

beforehand, the chances are you'll be booked on to one of Dot Butler's charter flights the Wednesday after this trip. Ice axe, rope and good boots as well as suitable clothing are necessary. If you have to borrow - get in early and see Don Finch as soon as possible.

October 10th - 11th.

A test walk - leaving Sydney on Saturday afternoon will be lead by the Walks Secretary this week-end. Saturday night will probably be spent in the cave at Mobbs Soak, then down Merrigal Creek with its waterfall to the Cox's, and back to Medlow Gap via Black Horse ridge for scenes of the afternoon sunshine on Narrownneck.

For the sea-faring types David Ingram (who was cabin boy on the 'Bounty') has planned a little voyage-cum-bushwalk on Sunday. Church Point ferry to the western side of Pittwater for a jaunt over Commodore Heights to The Basin - a secluded beach from which another ferry is taken to Palm Beach.

Wildflowers should be good, and the seas calm.

October 16th, 17th, 18th.

Five trips on this week-end - ranging from hard to very easy.

Dot Butler will take a party of Sunday strollers through the Muogamara Wildflower reserve. This little reserve is situated on the Pacific Highway just before the Hill down to Hawkesbury River Bridge.

Pat Harrison will gather his bold clan and head for places that no other person has heard of before. If you're not very fit and you'd like to see something out of the ordinary, you'd better start running around the block. I'm sure you'll find this trip well worth the effort.

An easy to medium trip is Peter Franks and Heather Smith's walk to Bonnum Pic and Burragorang Valley. Bonnum Pic is an isolated prominence which juts into the Burragorang - 2000 ft. below, and thus gives some magnificent views.

We also have a camping week-end at Woods Creek near Grose Wold - leader Sheila Binns - maximum distance about 1 mile, and an easy Sunday walk with swimming led by Jim Callaway.

October 23rd, 24th, 25th.

For a nice river bank stroll without any climbing (actually it's all downhill) you couldn't better Ramon U'brien's walk along the Turon River to the old goldmining town of Sofala.

Another walker with salt in his views is Sammy Hinde. (Actually it was Sam who provided Nelson with that brilliant strategy which enabled

the British to win the Battle of Trafalgar!) On Sunday he's taking a crew by ferry boat to Bundeena, for a walk along the beaches and headlands of the Royal National Park.

October 30th, 31st, November 1st.

Ross Hughes is leading a medium test walk this week-end. The country west of Yalwal is similar in ways to parts of the Budawangs and has four mighty gorges - Ettrema, Bun Bundah, Danjera, and Yarramunmun - all tributaries of the Shoalhaven River. Ross intends to have a look at some of these creeks which are not often visited and, from all accounts, are very spectacular.

The Sunday walk is lead by Bob Jones this week-end, in the Royal National Park. Highlights could be swimming, wildflowers and morning and afternoon tea breaks as well as half-hour smokos.

SUMMER IS ON ITS WAY

Beach walks, Canyons, Lilo trips, Bludge Trips-

We need

(1) Leaders

(2) Walks

for our summer programme

which will soon be compiled.

If you have any bright ideas, contact the

Walks Secretary

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RUNNING STREAM - GOSPER'S MTN. - GRASSY HILL

by Pat Harrison

When the wattle trees begin to golden, and the winter days draw out a little longer, and the frosty morns are not so sharp - then is the time to swing your swag upon your back and head for the Capertee country. And so it was that the goodly number of fourteen turned out on Don Finch's walk from the Capertee River up to Mount Uraterer (or Gosper's Mountain) via Running Stream and back via Grassy Hill.

Ray Hookway's car brought five of us to Glen Davis on the Friday night, and we camped in the wrecked and partly roofless house before joining up next morning with the remainder of the party who had arrived later and had camped near the old park where there is a good supply of water direct from a tap.

After all had assembled at about 8 o'clock on Saturday morning, the next move was to find out whether the farmer's wife would let us pass through her land and go down to Running Stream. There was some trepidation whether she would or not; but, as it turned out, we had nothing to worry about, for even an irascible old woman must succumb to such a handsome young fellow as is our Don.

Having negotiated that hurdle, Don continued with his good work by carrying out further Public Relations with the chap who has a leasehold across the river from Running Stream. In fact, Don was in such brilliant form to-day that when we reached the quicksandy crossing of the Capertee he volunteered to be St. Christopher and to carry me across on his back so that I would not have to peel off my gaiters and boots.

The ostensible reason for this act of gallantry was that he had not brought his map and I was to let him use mine. However, I prefer to believe that he would still have carried me across the purling stream even if he had been in possession of numerous copies of the Glen Davis map - in short, he was activated by the same kindly feelings that induced AENEAS to carry the aged ANCHISES away from burning TROY.

Nevertheless, when I went to swing into the saddle I did so with such vigour that Don collapsed on his fetlocks and almost strained his withers; but the next attempt was more successful and soon we were all heading up the Running Stream, marvelling at the apparently undiminished flow of crystal water despite this time of drought. The Capertee was sluggish and murky, in pronounced contrast with Running Stream.

The going up the creek was good, but as we neared our place of escape the sides closed in and we were passing through a fine gorge with handsome

walls of yellow sandstone. Our exit is at Ref. 337096 and the place is indicated by a cairn on a low outcrop of rock on the southern bank of the creek. The cairn points across the creek to the northern bank where the pass begins. The banks of the creek hereabouts are clothed with rain forest vegetation and because of this the pass could be hard to find - in fact, this is one pass that would be easier to find for the first time if you were descending. The pass is a real humdinger, and to get on to it from the creek proceed as follows:

- (1) Cross to the northern bank;
- (2) Scramble through the bushes, and up a mossy slope of rock for about 20 feet, using roots of the rain forest trees as hand holds;
- (3) Follow a faint pad in an easterly diagonal ascent along the cliff base until you come to a break;
- (4) Then head upwards in a zig zag by following the obvious lead through some rock and some bushes until you reach the base of the upper cliff (you will find cairns at the beginning and end of this section);
- (5) At the upper cliff change direction westerly and proceed along the cliff base until you see the long and broken-up ramp that gets you to the top, where there is another cairn. It is worth noting that this ramp could be pretty hard to see if you are not at the cliff base.

The way thereafter is straightforward enough, sprinkled with a few cairns at first, and you eventually come to the plateau top and so on to the airstrip, but before doing so it is worth while to pause on the rim rocks near the top of the ramp for an almost sheer lookdown to the rugged little creek that you have escaped from and which seems impassable from this angle.

The airstrip is somewhat more than the helicopter pad at Medlow Gap - it almost seems big enough and well-kept enough to land jets. There is a rickety old tower there, but not everyone trusted his weight on it.

We reached the foot of Gosper's Mountain a little before 5 p.m. and dumped our packs there before setting out with water buckets for the spring on the rounded grassy slope of the mountain, and we were lucky enough to be on top just as the sun was going down in a blaze of colour through a 360° panorama. The view from Gosper's is among the best in the land - particularly in the west and north where the eye follows a jagged skyline from Tayan around to the Kekeelbons and Monundilla.

The spring had plenty of water, and by getting inside the barbed-wire fence we got a good supply free from the trampling of the few cattle that feed on the bush pastures of Uraterer. Some of our party had stayed at our camp and consequently the fire was blazing warmly for the water carriers when they returned, and the chill of the evening was soon put to rout by the cheery fire and warm food. It was a night of full moon, and no doubt this kept many of us out of bed yarning until a late hour.

We got away about 8.30 a.m. on Sunday and reached the rim rocks above Grassy Hill at 12.30 p.m. and had lunch there. About an hour out from camp this morning we had a minor excitement when we discovered that Bill of the unpronounceable-last-name was not with us! He had wandered off course in a westerly direction, but while the rest of us sat down and yakked Don retrieved him and restored him to the fold.

The plateau is becoming scrubby and Don perforce kept a watch on his navigation. Occasionally through the scrub, we caught a glimpse of our destination, the rugged escarpment around Glen Davis.

The pass from the rim rocks down to Grassy Hill is at Ref. 354040 and the wrinkle is to move to your left if you meet any impassable places on the way down. Grassy Hill is connected to the sandstone by a short and narrow causeway, and being a volcanic mound is littered with angular basalt boulders out of which grows a most pestilential variety of thorny vegetation.

An hour or so was spent on the Capertee, drinking cups of tea and waiting for the tailenders, before we all set out on the last hour's walk back to the cars and the end of a good trip in ideal weather. We even had sufficient daylight to enjoy the magnificent changing views of Crown Mountain as we drove home through the Capertee Valley.

GOUOUGANG WITHOUT TEARS

by Dot Noble.

Leader: Dot Noble

Members: Heather Smith, Alan Pike, Peter Franks

Visitor: Tony Martin

We left Strathfield more or less on time on Friday night and we were ably transported in Don's latest vehicle with Heather at the wheel. The passengers in the back were enjoying the trip until their efforts at ventilation caused the windows to fall in and other adjustments resulted in the seat collapsing and the light falling to bits, whereupon they gave up and went to sleep.

We arrived at Carlons at 9.30 p.m., but it was ten o'clock before everyone was ready for walking, with gear packed and torches tested. Starting off through the farm we set off a chain reaction amongst the dogs and fowls, etc., causing a noise which for some minutes resembled Love 200. However, harmony was gradually restored and the only sound we took with us over the hill was the soft pad-pad of our sandshoes.

We zoomed along Carlons Creek making no concessions to the nettles (I think we all wore long pants) and started off down Breakfast Creek. Zooming was not so successful here as whoever was in front, usually Peter and/or leader, would find themselves more off the track than on it. They'd enthusiastically bound into the water and crash through the undergrowth, leaving the remains of the party to peer hopefully into the darkness beyond the torch beam, for possible signs of tracks on the opposite bank. This more cautious approach frequently got them into the lead, whereupon they would exchange roles and charge off down the creek leaving the previous leaders behind. This process was repeated until somebody sighted a series of lights moving (?) through the trees.

Imagination ran riot for a good few minutes before we decided to press on regardless with the leader leading discreetly from behind. It was a long time before the lights seemed to get any closer, and often they disappeared altogether. But at last when we were nearly at the Cox we looked up and saw that it was a bushfire up on Knight's Deck. It appeared to be stationary but it had previously reached river level, and strangely shaped burn marks were left on the grassy flats at the junction.

It was sometime after midnight when we arrived at the Cox, and most of us went straight to bed.

Alan however decided to make a billy of tea. In the process his new plastic Woolworth's torch, which had been emitting feeble glimmers all the way, finally gave an ominous morse-like splutter. In a fit of fury he hurled the torch into the blackberry bushes and promptly forgot about it.

Next morning was unusually warm for late July, and we started downstream in the early sunshine until we came, at a respectable 9 a.m. to the ridge which would take us to our objective of Mt. Gououogang. The ridge is the start of Gasper Buttress which begins at a point where two creeks meet the Cox within a few feet of each other.

We climbed several hundred feet, pausing only for a jumper stop, and looked across to see Mt. Heartbreaker towering above us. We kept going and after a further 2,000 ft. we were on top of Mt. Jenolan looking at the huge slice of view which was granted us. A breeze was fanning the bushfire, and looking down we could see the insignificant bump that Mt. Heartbreaker had become.

After a good rest, too good perhaps, we hoisted our packs on to our backs and started up towards Mt. Queahgong. The initial enthusiasm had worn off, and by the time we got there we were more than ready for lunch. The leader said "just a little bit further" (she was thinking of lunch on Gououogang) but the party had other ideas and so it was lunch on the next little bump.

It was a dry lunch and we all munched bread and spreads and took occasional furtive gulps from our water bottles whilst keeping an eye on the diminishing water level. After eating we all went to sleep for a while and

awoke sometime later feeling refreshed and ready to continue. That is, except for Tony who was suffering the after-effects of the 'flu' and was under the impression that we had no more climbing to do. Nevertheless we all eventually got to the top of Gououogang together. It was very scrubby on top and we saw neither a view nor a way down.

After the usual ritual of perusing and signing the book, we left at 3.00 p.m. and with the aid of a compass aimed for the narrow ridge leading off to Mt. Bullagowar and Gououogang Buttress.

Going down was worse than going up. We seemed to go down for hours and hours, and it was terribly slow going over broken rock, fallen timber and prickly mountain holly.

It was nearly dark and Mt. Konangaroo loomed before us as a dark mass. I hoped we might make the top in time to see a suitable ridge leading down to Konangaroo Clearing. With this in mind we put on a last burst of energy and hurried to the top. However, the sight of another hill was just too much for one of our party, and Tony proceeded to collapse in a faint on the track. Fortunately he came round in a few minutes and finally made the top, albeit a bit wobbly in the legs.

After resting for a while it was quite dark and after parting Tony from his pack by force, we picked a direction and started down. I don't know whether we were on a ridge or in a gully, but either way it was very steep and there was enough undergrowth to baulk a bulldozer.

Alan was in front, finding it more than a little difficult with two packs and no torch (remember he threw it away). Heather stumbled behind him, trying to light the way ahead with her torch. I came next, crashing down backwards trying to help Tony who was spending more time falling down and getting up than actually walking. Peter brought up the rear and made sure we all kept together.

Most of this descent was made to the accompaniment of a heated discussion as to how far we were from the bottom. Peter was sure we still had 500 ft. to go (or 50 ft.) because he was counting his steps and so he knew. Alan on the other hand was sure it couldn't be far because he could definitely hear the river. Heather and Peter expended much energy rolling boulders into the darkness and listening for splashes and thuds to indicate our distance from the river.

Suddenly there was a commotion up the front. Heather's voice was heard yelling and laughing, and the muffled noise coming from the undergrowth must have been Alan. Indeed, he had fallen head first into a huge patch of nettles and was not to be seen. Eventually he surfaced, groaning, and covered in enough greenery to disguise an army. Insisting that the nettles were living evidence of our proximity to the river, he untangled himself and crashed on down. Sure enough, we soon heard frogs croaking and the river gushing. Then suddenly we were down on the Kanangra River.

Fortunately we were only one bend away from Konangaroo Clearing, and after a long guzzle of Happy-ade, we headed for the hut.

We arrived at the hut at a quarter to eight, just as it was beginning to sprinkle with rain. Some bods collapsed into sleeping bags straight away, while others attempted to cook dinner before the rain could put the fire out.

Those asleep were shoved about like logs of wood to make room for those trying to eat and for the increasing number of leaks in the roof. At last everyone was properly ensconced in hut or tent and nobody had trouble sleeping through the thunder, lightening, rain and wind.

Sunday morning was overcast, and we were able to have a leisurely breakfast before making our way along the grassy banks of the Cox.

Just prior to morning tea (yes, Sunday was a bludge day) we saw a huge trout in the shallow fast-flowing water. It was swimming upstream against the current and it moved so beautifully that we couldn't resist a stop to look at it. We made several vows never to catch fish and continued on until we came to a morning-teaish spot where we stopped to boil a billy.

On reaching our Friday night camp spot, Alan went hunting amongst the blackberry bushes and reappeared later with the errant torch.

At Breakfast Creek we had lunch, but apparently Heather didn't have enough to eat, because all the way back to Carlon's she insisted that we was fainting from lack of food. The party gallantly came to her rescue and she was duly fortified with large quantities of stale bread and other tempting morsels.

At Carlon's we caught up with Peter, and after some liquid refreshment we jumped aboard the van and headed for Blackheath to arrive there well before dark.

ANOTHER LETTER FROM FITZGANDERPIPE

Julianhaab, Aug. 2/1970.

Much has been happening of late, tho' I must confess nought quite as eventful as being stuck in the pack-ice. Left Faeringhavn on 21st July, the pack very broken up, and motored through with no difficulty and then, usually against head winds, or worse, no winds, sailed parallel to the coast about 100 miles out - bound, of course, for Julianhaab, which I'm told has a summer population of 3,000 people. So we're expecting quite a civilised town, especially as it is largely the administrative centre for the whole land.

After about 8 days we were able to zig, zag and zog between isolated and erratic rafts of ice, usually only a mile or so wide, but perhaps 50 or more in length, until after four very foggy and ice-dodging days, at about 8 p.m., the mist cleared a little and behold! huge mountains and mighty fjords. Quite

a revelation! With no sun shots for the sextant in four days and with all the dodging, the skipper's navigation was spot-on; we were fair in the middle of the entrance to the inland fjord route to Julianhaab. Not a bad effort, eh? Rather a tiring time for the skipper, of course (fog is very beautiful but not much help when bergs loom up instantly 30 yards away). So we gave him his 4-hour anchor watch off that night, and he woke double refreshed to lead the sally on once again.

Last night, on my anchor watch 12-3 a.m. I saw the first appearance this summer of the Aurora Borealis! A curtain of white light lancing and leaping, to 'hang' momentarily and then mass into another lance and beam away to pause, flutter and disappear. While it 'performs' one is aware of the silence. Quite uncanny. I'd read of it (i.e. being able to see, feel and hear the silence whilst the lights play) in one of my books of the '30-'33 Watkin's expedition and it was exactly so. Very strange, and of course enormously magnificent.

Called in at Ivigtut, a naval base and cryolite mine, to take on fuel and break and received another grand welcome from the Danes. Actually it's more tiring ashore than at sea! 4 a.m. and 3 a.m. with two parties on the nights we were there. Duckling, Roast Beef, Black Bread, Mushrooms, Sausage, 10,000,000 spreads and dips, herring, etc., and the inevitable couple of gallons of Carlsberg Pilsner. My word they did us proud, and their showers were so good I shaved my beard and changed my underwear too! (First time this trip, of course). In between feasts we were expected to go to lunch and dinner with them as well, but wisely decided against it. It went for a huge walk away over the hills and climbed a nice little snowy peak to have a good gawk at the ice-caps. Took along the ice axe, etc. and had a marvellous time kicking steps, glissading, etc. My boots very comfortable and with the immediate prospect of 5 weeks good climbing as soon as we leave Julianhaab all is very right with the world.

Should arrive at Julianhaab this evening at about 8 or 9 p.m. Alas, the current is against us and our 14 horse power engine is battling to do 1½ knots. 'tis a Sunday, so should be able to do some shopping tomorrow (soap and razor blades once again).

The fjords differ very much. Some are very open and flat with low bluffs of granite, and moorland, while the next are of the glacier-formation type - sheer and very deep, hundreds of fathoms in many cases, with delightful wee bays and anchorages every now and then with a waterfall and stream coming down from some pass or other, probably from the remains of a glacial hanging-valley.

Fell foul of the ice again yesterday, motor-sailed all day to the head of a fjord where was to be found our first climb and a short cut to Julianhaab. Ha, Ha! Right at the head we were totally blocked by the ice and so had to give up - only 4 miles from some excellent Viking ruins, too. Alas! Still, it was our best day yet for weather; sparkling clear and sunny. I got quite sunburnt. As the icecap came down to the fjord edge in a couple of places (shelving extra ice of course) it was a most interesting day.

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