

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to The Sydney Bush Walkers, Box 4476, G.P.O. Sydney, N.S.W. 2001. Club meetings are held every Wednesday evening from 7.30 p.m. at the Wireless Institute building, 14 Atchison Street, St. Leonards. Enquiries concerning the Club should be referred to Mrs. Marcia Shappert - telephone 30.2028.

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JANUARY 1978.

The December General Meeting	Barry Wallace	2.
The Bush	Gordon Lee	3.
Ettrema - The Harris Way	David Rostron	4.
Farewell Peter Page	Grace Noble	6.
Paddy's Ad		7.
Canoeing Cooper's Creek	Wade Butler	8.
Social Notes for February	Christine Austen	12.
Mountain Equipment Ad		13.
Per Adua ad Antarctica	A. Non.	14.
Bits and Pieces	David Cotton	18.
Walk Notes	Len Newland	20.

THE DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING.

by Barry Wallace.

It was around 8.30 when the meeting got away to a smooth start with Helen Gray gonging the gong and welcoming new members Don Andrews and Mark Fowler. There were no apologies and the minutes were accepted as a true and correct etc. without dissent.

Correspondence In bought a copy of the National Trust's Annual Report together with the usual flood of magazines.

Correspondence Out comprised a letter to Brian Harvey re reprinting of articles from the anniversary edition of the magazine, a letter to George Davidson thanking him for the establishment of a Coolana Trust Fund, and of course a letter to our new member.

Business arising involved a discussion of man-made markings in Wilderness areas. Opinion appears to have a healthy level of diversity so I guess the respective sides will go on building up and tearing down cairns just as they always have done.

The Treasurer's report showed a starting balance of \$4,900.99, receipts of \$706.00, disbursements of (gulp!) \$3,898.00 and a closing balance of \$1,078.38. (If you can't work out what that's all about, see last month's meeting notes and the Editorial note which accompanied them.)

Federation Report bought news of a voluntary permit system (?) for wilderness areas. Concern was expressed that this obvious conflict of terms may be resolved in favour of "permit" in the long run.

There was a walks report.

General Business bought news of an annual Federation conference, a request for a delegate for the organising committee for the outdoor recreation course and news that the Ettrema mining lease application has been referred to a mining warden's court.

The meeting then decided to purchase some spoons for the supper club and was declared closed at 9.55 p.m.

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DINNER OUT BEFORE CLUB MEETINGS -

We will meet on the THIRD Wednesday of each month at the CASA NOSTRA Restaurant, 336 Pacific Highway, Crows Nest.

The restaurant is on the western side of the highway on the St. Leonard's side of the main intersection. The food is Italian, prices range from \$2.00 to \$3.50 and it is licensed. Meeting time 6.30 pm.

We will meet for dinner at this restaurant on the third Wednesday of each month until further notice. Please come and make it a success.

PETER MILLER.

T H E B U S H .

by Gordon Lee.

Tension fades as daylight
With a saffron sun.
Calm of mind - our very being -
Descends with evening.
Crackle of fire,
The tasks of bodily necessity
Restore the soul - in
The bush.

A kaleidoscope of colour
Searches the eye of beauty.
Tree, cliff, stream,
Its everchanging composition,
Relieves the dull monotone
Of whence we came.
Friendly, perhaps caring,
The babble of voices
Revive the core of our existence -
Communication - in
The bush.

Hill, scrub, distance,
A boulder blocked creek
Challenge physically,
Ache the muscles,
Regenerate the body.
A symphony of sounds,
A deafening silence.
We learn once more to listen,
We hear, we live - in
The bush.

ETTREMA - THE HARRIS WAY.

by David Rostron.

Seven unsuspecting bodies elected to follow Peter Harris in the Ettrema area on 18-19-20 November, 1977. The walk was marked "Hard" on the programme but Peter had assured us the route could be varied to suit the pace of the party and the weather. One very fit young prospective, Diane Bucknell, sought your scribe's advice as to whether she could manage. She readily accepted my glib assurance of "No worries". I am now not sure if she will speak to me again. The other foolish souls were Ton Wenman, John Redfern, Rod Peters, Rick King and Barry Wallace.

Transport arrangements for Friday evening were somewhat confused but eventually seven of us met in Nowra. Rod Peters passed the meeting place and was found about an hour later on the Sassafras Road. It was the intention to walk for an hour after leaving the cars on Friday night but a cool southerly and rain quickly forced the leader to concede that Major Sturgess' barn was the most desirable place to spend the night. A very comfortable night on the hay indeed. Major Sturgess was in residence and two of the party had a long conversation with him the next morning.

Saturday dawned cloudy and cool but there was no rain. We drove about two miles along the fire trail and left the cars at a point where there is normally a bog. This time no sign of mud or water. We walked a mile on the trail and then headed north across open country to Rolfe Trig - about 2500 ft. Views were almost nil because of the vegetation. From this point we descended 200 - 300 ft to the Plain Creek valley - a wide, open valley typical of the high Budawang valleys. A ? tiger snake was disturbed en route, as were many kangaroos and wallabies.

We entered the creek proper about two miles north at a point where it begins to drop rapidly through sandstone. Shortly afterwards we reached the junction of Moore Creek, which we were to follow to Bundundah Creek. The latter is one of the main creeks in the area, running south to north in the valley parallel to Ettrema, but to the east.

Moore Creek was a delight - dropping rapidly in some sections through sandstone and limestone. The pools and formations in some of the limestone sections were very similar to Davies Canyon (but no abseils). The water level was obviously very low and progress on dry rock was quite rapid. A most enjoyable few hours of rock-hopping with some new delight - a pool, fall or cascade - around most corners.

We came to one fall of about 20 ft with a deep pool below. Yours truly chose an exposed route around one wall but there were no followers. The remainder went over the ridge but were then faced with a 50 ft. bluff. Some then resorted to a descent down the face of the fall and a swim whilst the remainder took my wall route.

With the halt to our progress at this point, lunch was called. At this time the sun came out - magnifying the beauty of the pool and fall -

a better spot could not have been chosen.

After lunch we continued to Bundundah Creek and then followed more rock-hopping to the junction of Monkey Ropes Creek. The programme indicated we were to follow this creek to Manning Saddle and then take the fire trail back to near Rolfe Trig and the cars. Peter had not been in Monkey Ropes Creek (nor Moore Creek) before. The writer had been down Monkey Ropes Creek previously and had encountered large waterfalls, which we had some difficulty in sidling, near the junction with Bundundah. However that was nine years ago and the memory of the precise route had faded more than somewhat.

It was at the junction that Peter gave us various options for the remainder of the trip. Some were anxious to be in Ettrema and Jones Creek on Sunday, and Peter eventually suggested that Monkey Ropes, Ettrema and Jones Creeks was a "soft option". Have you ever heard a walker use such a ridiculous phrase! He then had the hide to abstain from voting on our route. We believe it was a superb confidence trick and there was much muttering in the party about the "soft option" we had chosen whilst walking for eleven hours on Sunday.

Anyway, Monkey Ropes Creek was attempted - or 300 yards and two waterfalls of it. From this point the only route was out on the northern side - over steep rock and ledges. We then continued up 1000 ft. of very scrubby ridge to the base of the cliff line, just below the plateau top. A number of breaks were investigated without success and it was necessary to follow a difficult route at the cliff base for about an hour until we found a break. It was during this period that Diane who had not complained so far enquired "When are we going to have some more straight walking?".

After reaching the plateau top another hour of walking found us on the fire trail and then Manning Saddle, at 6.00 pm. There was only one slightly stagnant pool of water, in the rocks adjacent.

We camped on the trail and were soon revived by Barry's rum and grapefruit drink. Our leader restored some of his damaged reputation at dinner by producing a litre of red wine and this was followed by Rod's apple wine. Everyone was in good - is "spirits" the right word - by the time we retired.

We were away by 7.15 am the next morning and followed the fire trail south for about two miles. We then headed west again - down across the headwaters of Cinch Creek and then up another small creek to the plateau rim above Ettrema, at a point about a mile south of Hamlet Crown and Billy's Head.

The rim was followed for a half mile south to where Peter had recently discovered a new pass down to Ettrema. This involved negotiating a 15 ft tight chimney to the top of the ridge. From that point the drop over the next 1200 ft was on a very steep ridge-face with many loose rocks.

Ettrema Creek meant the luxury of another swim and then we headed upstream to the junction of Jones Creek, 30 minutes walking. Lunch was at the junction, at which point our leader confidently predicted it was

only four hours back to the cars.

Jones Creek is also very attractive as it climbs through bands of sandstone, limestone, granite and - there my limited geological knowledge ends. More beautiful formations and irresistible pools. One last swim and drink below a 100 ft fall and we climbed 600 ft to the cliff base. Foolishly we accepted our leader's confident advice of "a pass just around the corner and then we'll be on the trail". About an hour later we were still wandering around the cliff base and Diane's pleas for "straight walking" echoed our thoughts.

Eventually we were through the cliffs and then to the road. Revived by more of Barry's rum and grapefruit we commenced five miles of fire trail which somehow extended to seven miles. Cars were reached at 6.30 pm - six hours after lunch.

The leader had promised to shout the party dinner in Nowra to pay for his transgressions over the weekend. You've guessed the result - another confidence trick!

In retrospect, a good weekend, with magnificent views and creeks, but a long way - 50% more than programmed.

* * * * *

FAREWELL, PETER PAGE.

by Grace Noble.

We have said our last good-bye to Peter Page, member of the club since the early days, and remembered by many as Pete, the ever-sunny leader of walks of many years ago; test walks in North Shore scrub which never seemed to be irksome - enlivened by remarks such as "watch out for Paddy, he'll secretly scrape your packs on the rocks". Or in the Brindabellas, wading through icy creeks and warbling "My tiny feet are frozen".

Peter however, or rather Peter-and-Ray, really became known when the couple left the city for the call of the country, and made their home at Jamberoo, a haven where, with the aid of large tents and small cabins, they were still able to enjoy the company of their bushwalking friends. A tradition was born and several generations of bushwalkers have enjoyed the pleasures of milking goats, picking flowers for market, watching lyre-birds, walking over the barren-grounds, or simply admiring the view. Jamberoo became "Paradise at Page's" as Kath McKay wrote in the 21st anniversary magazine. "Peter, as all men know, is Keeper of the Gate, but in this Paradise was no curmudgeon of a Peter, peering through the grille. ...A wonderful Peter this, for 'tho his halo was not visible, a Ray of sunshine always hovered about him. ..There was the unforgettable picture of Peter, as he strode towards the henhouse, crying: 'Come along, girls!' to the squad of black and tan hens marching obediently in his wake."

And so, those of us who knew him so well for so long, are still seeing him at the gates of Jamberoo-Paradise, with his faithful dog Brillig, ready to welcome us.

Paddy's

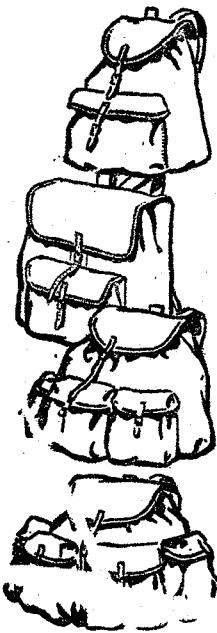
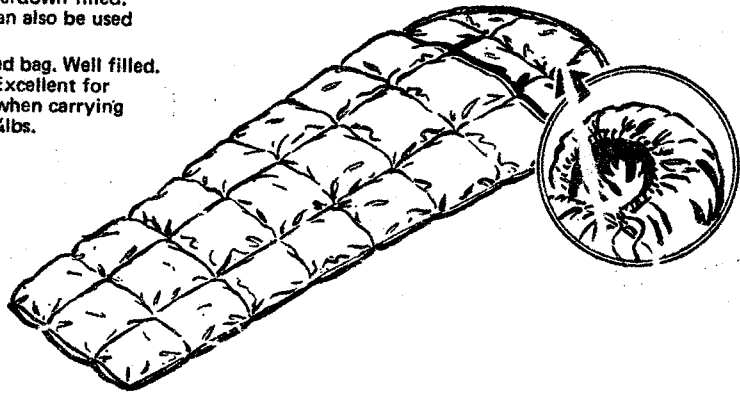
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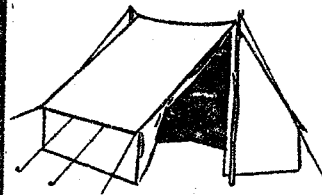
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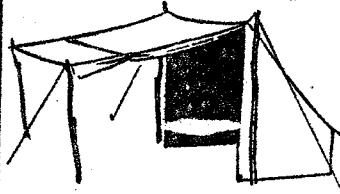
PIONEER RUCKSACK

Extra large bag with four external pockets and will carry about 40lbs of camp gear. Weight 2½lbs.



'A' TENTS

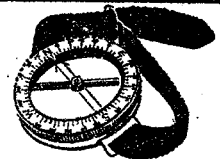
One, two or three man. From 2½ to 3½lbs. Choice of three cloths. Supplied with nylon cords and overlapped doors. No walls.



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Everything for the bush-walker, from blankets and air mattresses, stretchers, boots, compasses, maps, books, stoves and lamps to cooking and dehydrated foods.



Paddy's

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CANOEING COOPER'S CREEK.1,500 miles in two months.

by Wade Butler.

Problem No.1 - How do you explain to your boss that you want to canoe down a river that he's never heard of and you have to leave now because the river is already falling?

Next problem - to build a canoe. I bought a 15 ft fibreglass hull and fitted it out with gunwhales, seats, paddles and a sail.

Next problem was to find a companion because John had chickened out. It didn't take long; Margaret Putt's boyfriend Richard, newly arrived from England, was eager to sample the Australian outback.

Next problem was to get to Windorah in Western Queensland. We had to cut the canoe in half to comply with Railway regulations and wait for a fortnight for it to get to Quilpie. Meanwhile we left Sydney and hitch-hiked through very heavy rain to Brisbane, then out to Quilpie. Here we waited three days for the mail truck to leave for Windorah. Another day and we had reached our river. It was the end of May.

The main floodwaters had gone out about three months earlier, however heavy rain during the previous fortnight gave us a small flood to get us on our way. We bolted the two halves of the canoe together and loaded her up with all our goodies and about 200 lbs of food. The second day we smashed into a log and made a big hole in the canoe. This wasn't too good as we had lost the catalyst in the repair kit. We patched her up anyway, lit a big fire next to the patch and in five hours the resin had set. We occupied the time catching lots of fish and ran down and caught a squealing pig which we let go.

Cooper's Creek in these parts consists of hundred of channels, some with a lot of water and some with very little, and when a channel divides sometimes it is very difficult to know which one to take. The best bet seemed to be to follow the main current, keeping slightly to the west, or follow the bird life which seemed always to be in channels with good current. It took a week before we really knew where we were but we got our bearings when we canoed through fast water and into Eulbertie Waterhole. We soon learned that fast water and sightings of tortoises usually meant we were approaching a big waterhole. Eulbertie Waterhole is about 20 miles long, very deep and full of fish, shrimps, thousands of tortoises and thousands of birds - pelicans, spoonbills, ibises, cranes, ducks and others; we had no trouble living off the land around there. The next day took us through a fast channel into another giant waterhole similarly full of life. We even went for a swim despite its being midwinter with frosty mornings.

The next few days took us through swampy country - lots of very small channels and a few shallow waterholes. The western channel became bigger and better, hills were sighted to the west (we even climbed one), then after two weeks we arrived at Durham Downs, the first cattle station on our way. The people there thought we were crazy but gave us a good

meal, filled our tucker bags and gave us a leg of beef to see us on our way. This was very welcome so we made a point of stopping at all the stations on the way down. That wasn't as greedy as it seems as there weren't very many anyway.

Four days of good big channels brought us into more swampy country south of Karmona. Around here were trees, some of which had thirty birds' nests in them, probably ibises. There were also lots of eagle nests and Richard and I picked up a poor crippled baby kite. It became a good pet. We fed it on spiders and lizards, but mostly on fish guts and it thrived. After two days we tried to head out of the swamp down a channel to the Wilson River. This proved disastrous as the channel got smaller and completely choked with wattle trees, so after half a day we gave up and paddled against a strong current back to where we had left the main channel.

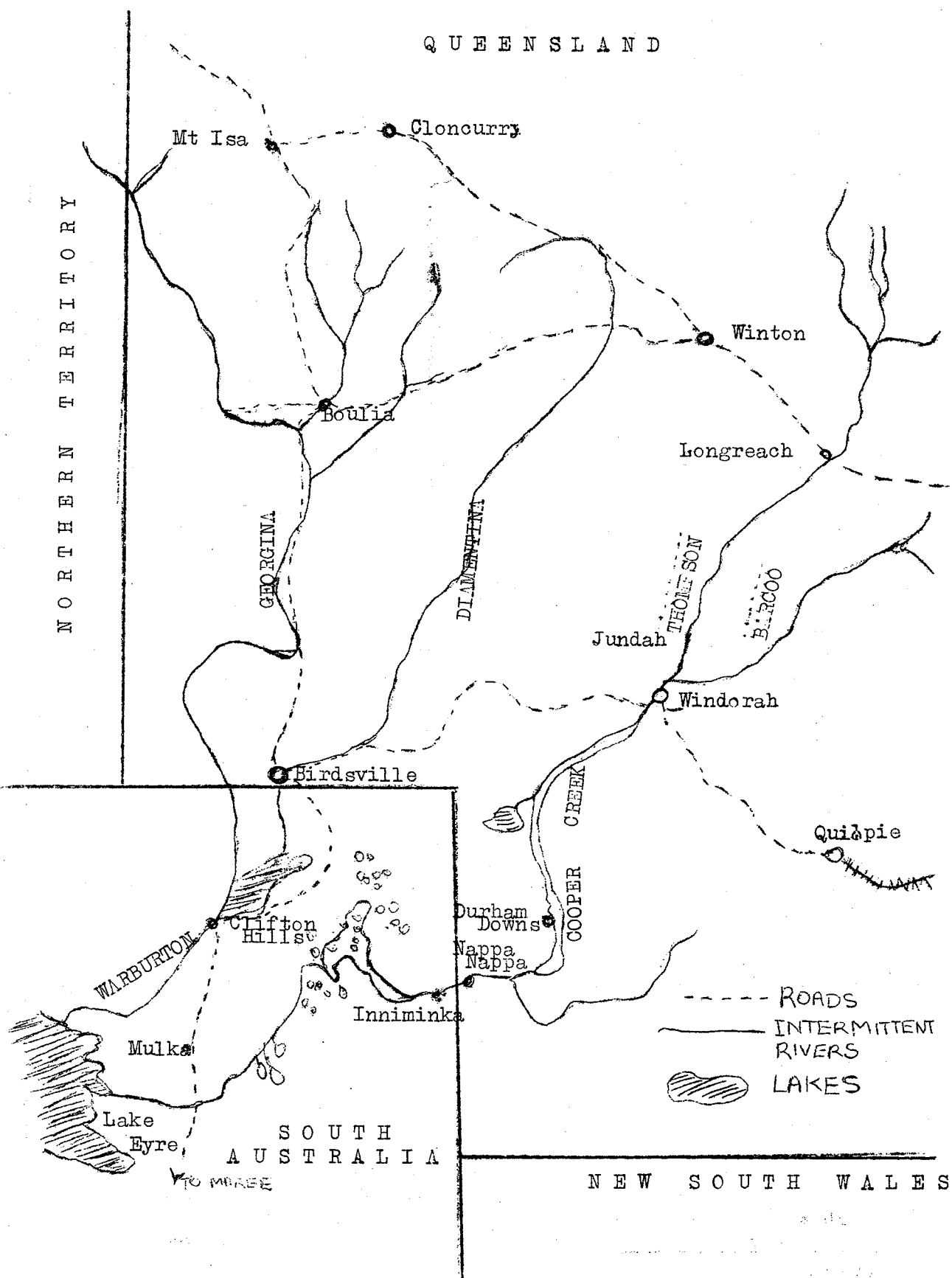
The swamp continued, the current dropped, water weed appeared and everywhere we could see hundred of ducks and native hens. We even surprised a few dingoes stalking ducks through the water. It was very difficult to find campsites in the swamp, there being very little dry ground. Had the river been just a few inches higher we would have had to camp in a tree or in one of the many big clumps of lignum. Finally the swamp gave out and we headed down a fast channel to the Wilson River.

From here the main channel is very wide with a few big waterholes and some ti-tree blocking the way. We had now got well ahead of our small flood and were starting to catch up on the main flood. The river was only 1.7 metres up at Nappa Merrie when we went through, although it had been almost 5 metres at this point. Nevertheless this wasn't a very big flood compared with 6 metres in 1976 and a record of 11 metres in 1974; the locals reckoned we could have sailed the Empress of Tasmania down to Lake Eyre that year.

At Innaminka we learned that the river had reached Lake Hope but didn't look like getting to Lake Eyre. We figured that by the time we reached Lake Hope the river might have got a bit further and as it was withing walking distance of the Birdsville Track we stocked up with provisions and another leg of beef, waved good-bye to the tourists and set off into the sand hills.

By now the Longreach Police had given up trying to turn us back and we were no longer news on the ABC throughout Australia. The police plane stopped flying over us every day dropping rude notes and generally making nuisances of themselves. They either thought we were complete fools as no one had canoed down this river before, or else they realised we knew what we were doing. Local blacks, however, seemed to think it was quite a good idea and told us of all the shortcuts and what to expect in the next month.

The river consisted of one very big wide channel for the next two days and then divided into the North West and the South West arms, the NW going up into hundreds of lakes and taking a very long way round. We took the SW branch which didn't have very much water in it. We



missed the main channel and ended up in a channel about 2 ft wide meandering through a lignum swamp, but fortunately it didn't last long and we were soon out into some nice waterholes with thousands of parrots for companions and lots of mistletoe berries to eat.

One week out from Innaminka and we reached Gidgealpa Station, the last habitation we were likely to see on the river. Old Baldy gave us some meat and a bunny trap and wished us luck for the next lonely 300 miles to the Birdsville Track. Next day took us into Lake Embarka, dry at one end and a few feet deep down the other with lots of gas pipes and valves all over the place. This network is part of the big natural gas field of Moomba-Gidgealpa which supplies Sydney.

Now we were reaching the tail end of the main flood which had started out three months before we did. The flow in the river was getting stronger every day, birdlife was increasing and fishing started to pick up. We passed Cutapirie Corner, across Moonlight Flat, and sailed through Boggy Lake. The weather remained continually nice and fine. The river now widened and there was water just everywhere, sometimes making it very difficult to find the channel from lake to lake. We were now really catching up to the flood. There were lots of cormorants, many nesting with young, thousands of ducks and native hens and a few pelicans. One night, after we had caught and gutted a couple of cormorants, a dingo came into camp. It gave Richard such a fright he just about jumped into the fire. I picked up a burning log and chased after the old dog. He didn't seem too worried at first so I hurled the stick at him and we saw sparks running off into the sandhills.

We passed the channel leading to Lake Hope. We were now ahead of the peak of the flood and rapidly reaching the leading edge. Another five miles and we reached the Red Lake where the water flowed in but didn't flow out. This is the end of canoeing, we thought, unless perhaps if we wait a while the lake might rise and flow a bit further. As we still had plenty of food we decided to go back and have a look at Lake Hope. The wind was from the south which caused waves on the lake and we couldn't paddle across without filling up with water, so we waited a fortnight, catching heaps of fish and a few bunny rabbits until we got sick of them.

We paddled back to the Red Lake to find it had risen 2 ft but needed at least another 2 ft to flow out. This would take another week and we were getting sick of waiting, so we left the canoe under a big Coolibah tree, packed a bit of food, and carrying a gallon of water, we set off walking across the sandhills. We picked up the river again, completely dry except for a few salty waterholes.

As we hadn't walked for the past two months we found it rather difficult, and badly-fitting shoes didn't help much either. Three days of this brought us out to the Birdsville Track with several blisters and minus 50% of our toenails. We soaked in the hot bore at Kopperamanna, washed ourselves and began to think of hitch-hiking. Three hours later

the first truck came and picked us up and brought us to civilization at Maree where we filled up on ice cream and tinned fruit.

Three days later we were in Adelaide. Strolling through a shopping centre with Chompy, our whistling kite, on my shoulder we were accosted by an official-looking gentleman from the Wildlife Service who wanted to know where and why we had picked up this bird. He made us fill in a million forms, then confiscated the bird. Chompy's passport obviously wasn't in order!

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Three months later. The water should be flowing out of the Red Lake by now and with a bit of luck have reached the Birdsville Track, so Phil and I set off from Coonabarabran in my old beat-up Holden to fetch the canoe. We reached the Cooper in the beginning of November. The weather was now much hotter. We drove 6 miles up the river only to bog the car in a deep sand drift and it took four hours of hard work to get us out. We left the car and started on foot. Two days, one of which was very hot, brought us back to Red Lake. We found the canoe, washed all the spiders out of it, set up a sail and sailed up to the head of the lake. The wind was so strong it broke the mast; fortunately we had a spare.

After a lapse of three months the water had just reached the Birdsville Track. However it had almost dried up around Red Lake. We had to drag the canoe some miles to reach the next waterhole. We sailed across this only to drag the canoe for another mile to the next one. But this didn't last too long; the water got a little bit deeper and we could paddle most of the way. The next two days were very good sailing with a mainly NE wind and we arrived back at the car quite quickly.

All that remains to be told is that the car blew its head and rings on the Birdsville Track and we used a helluva lot of water and gallons of oil before we finally limped into Coonabarabran where the old car gave up the ghost completely..... But I'd got my canoe back safely which was a satisfactory ending to the trip.

* * * * *

SOCIAL NOTES FOR FEBRUARY.

by Christine Austen.

February 15th.

We've all heard about Premier Wran's flight over the proposed Northern Blue Mountains Park. Dennis Ritson will show slides this Wednesday of this spectacular area.

February 22nd. For many people the flowers by the wayside are one of the greatest attractions of the walk. John Noble, famous for his slides of insects, is going to show us his slides of flowers in three States.

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PER ADUA AD ANTARCTICA.

by A. NON.

Mascot airport was alive with the Beautiful People with exotic hand luggage and on every breast was a white circle cardboard medallion with every person's name boldly inscribed. It seemed that our local madman Dick Smith was having another flight to the Antarctic. Yes, I was there along with Spiro and Frank Roberts - I did say the Beautiful People.

Well, the plane took off for Melbourne and we arrived at 10 p.m. I noticed that my old friend Jack Gelignite Murray was sitting up front; and wasn't that Nancybird Walton in a ravishing blue suit? What could David Flatman from "This Day Tonight" be doing? He was dripping with cameras along with everyone else. "Everybody out!" shouted Dick Smith and "only 10 minutes walk to the local airport motel for sleepies". For an extra \$20 accommodation was available. I refused to pay and intended to sleep in the terminal building but it was too bright and as I was so sleepy I thought that I would sleep all through the night and miss the plane SO I decided to sneak into Frank Roberts room, which I did. It was so hot and stuffy, that after three hours sleep I had to get up and go away outside. Reveille was at 3.45 am, and deciding not to have breakfast, I walked over to the terminal and wandered around looking at the flotsam and jetsam of the International Set. What a dowdy dull dismal lot they are too. Our mob started to arrive and by 6 am we were all aboard. And by 6.30 am we were off, full of petrol in our tanks and tea in our tummies.

"Dick Smith here, your Expedition Leader" was the old refrain. Every time an announcement was made, he had to have his little spiel, which made Spiro just about boil! That Dick Smith just wouldn't shut up. We were all given a kit which included a map (possibly roneoed from a kid's atlas), reprints from the Current Affairs Bulletin, lots of geographical pamphlets, a form for the competition - (a) at what latitude will we come to the first iceberg, (b) ditto for the ice pack, etc. - and loads of advertising brochures that had Dick Smith everywhere.

All the seats on the windows were taken plus a few in the middle, so there was plenty of room to have a stretch and after such a terrible night (that caused all the sensible bods to winge loudly), sleep was easily come by. Lunch was served at about 9 am so that all the meals could be done with before the icebergs cometh.

As soon as the first berg was sighted and the floes too, chaos reigned. "Dick Smith here, your Expedition Leader. An iceberg can be seen from the left of the plane." A mad rush would occur. I would crouch on the seat, Spiro on the floor where my feet should have been, and on top of us would be two other heads all trying to peer out of the window. We were 6 or 7 miles up and they were huge. The deep aquamarine at the edge of the berg where the sea water has undermined it is unbelievable. "Dick Smith here, your Expedition Leader. Take some photos now, there may be no more windows in the clouds looming ahead." Click, click, click.

Then the floes got thicker and larger and suddenly - "Dick Smith here, your Expedition Leader. We are now approaching the coastline and the French base of Dumont D'Urville in Adelie Land." On a group of islands 400 yards off the coast the shiny roofs could be seen reflecting the sun, which was now out. We were too far up to see the Tricolor but it was exciting to see habitation and on such a spectacular spot. The poor explorer Monsieur d'Urville thought he had landed on the Antarctic Continent but in those days there must have been plenty of ice and he never knew that he missed it by 400 yards, otherwise he would have been the first man to have set foot on it.

Over the continent we flew and beneath us was nothing. As flat as a tennis court with only ice in sight and nothing for hundreds of miles. The outside temperature was - 47 C and the ground temperature was estimated by the captain as minus 8. On the horizon were the Admiralty Mountains and ahead was a blur where the horizon was. The sky was a most brilliant blue and the wind was whipping up the ice particles so that explained the permanent blur.

At this stage I went up to the Flight Deck and was admitted to the sanctum sanctorum. We were in a Jumbo and the amount of dials and gadgets were staggering. Naturally not one of the three pilots was doing anything and the navigator (not normally necessary, but on this trip an added security) was doodling. I was rather awed by the sight through the windows, and by the silence. You'd never believe that the plane was moving; no vibration either. I couldn't think of one sensible question to bamboozle the pilot, so I asked how high we were flying. A safe one that was.

Soon we were descending and were down to 15,000 ft when up ahead was a smoking volcano, Mt. Erebus 13,000 ft. Enormous crevasses were on the lower slopes and the sulphurous deposits could be seen and all around was ice and snow going down the shoulders to the base which was lost in the snow. The plane did a figure eight and we finished up lower than the summit and the plane was on its side and the volcano was rearing sideways and up. Everyone was screaming and photographing like mad. This side, now the other, and all the time the pilot was chattering on about the next manoeuvre. The person who was at the window would take other cameras and click and then return them to the owners who were hanging on to the seats.

We were descending fast now and were down to 1,500 ft when suddenly there was the American Base at McMurdo Sound just beneath us. As the French base, this large base was built amongst huge rocks on the tip of a promontory on Ross Island. The Ross Ice Shelf is right there too. A wide expanse of frozen sea crossed by tracks with miniature rubbish dumps along them. I supposed them to be fuel dumps; here and there could be seen orange snow cats. A few hundred yards from the huts was an aerodrome carved out of the ice; for little ski planes, but Dick Smith our Expedition Leader saw a Hercules aircraft on the runway. We made a number of circles of this base, and we could see people running. They must have been as excited as us.

Then came the great trauma. About ten rows above the wing were given orders to exchange seats with ten rows near the tail. The idiots started to exchange their luggage and the aisles were jammed with lunatics rushing

back and forth. I put my luggage in its new place and realized I was a ball of sweat. The moving, the excitement and me being one of the few wearing a tie (my psychiatrist would say I have a thing about ties) made me smell. I dashed off to the W.C. and with a Qantas wettext, sloshed it with Sandalwood Balm and doused myself all over. The Rustle of Spring.

"This is Dick Smith your Expedition Leader. We are approaching the Admiralty Mountains. Your last look at the Antarctic Continent."

The last view and the best. 8,000 ft mountains all around with glaciers crashing down to the frozen seas. By some sort of magic I can remember when I close my eyes a view of beige cliffs and blue rivers of ice, of crusted peaks glistening white against the deep blue sky. We were now seated over the wing and couldn't see a thing so I dashed up to the first class lounge in the hump of the Jumbo and my last look of Antarctica was a thing of exquisite beauty and I hope a joy forever.

The ice floes started again and soon the clouds rolled in. From here to Hobart there was nothing to see as we were far above the clouds, although when we were passing over Macquarie Island a few of the passengers looking directly underneath the plane could see a shadow of land under a thin veil of cloud.

Then came the movies and all I can say is that the laughing kept on waking me up. I slept for an hour and a half, but Spiro being a Bill Collins fan enjoyed it immensely. Then came the food. Dinner at last. As tasteless as the earlier meal. Luckily I had stowed away in my pack home-made trifle, brandied cherries that a special friend had given me a year ago, some fruit and sandwiches that were all soggy. Alcohol was flowing, and soon everyone was dozing, worn out by the long day, the excitement, the food and the booze.

I plugged into my stereo headset and heard Joan Sutherland warbling away, Alfred Brendel Mozartizing and dozed again. Not for long. Dick Smith was announcing competition winners, but the naming was done by our illustrious T.V. announcer, David Flatman. Also on board was Amundsen's second cousin twice removed and it was he who acted the role of King Neptune. We all received a Certificate of Antarctic Crossing signed by you know who as Expedition Leader, and Amundsen's relation.

We were all awarded a Medallion of a Gallant Companion. A rather ugly metallic crypto-bronze looking thing, with its little stand to grace an executive desk. Professor and broadcaster Harry Black who going and coming read out excerpts from Scott's diaries, explained the diurnal rhythms of the krill, and little snippets of geological and geophysical interest (the ONLY way to fight a fire is by urination!!) This got me chatting with a loud mouthed chap behind me who informed me that buckets of water freeze before you can throw it, absolutely no humidity, snow is useless. He had spent a season down there 30 years ago. The wind blows all the time etc. Even I knew that from those Scott films and the advertisements for Buckleys Canadiol Mixture.

Somehow or other I had to include Iceland in the conversation, for I had worked there during the summer of 1957, and I have learnt over the years that Iceland is a sure conversation stopper. I am an authority on the midnight sun, having done a course in a Readers Digest at my local phrenologist's. But back to Harry Black. "Excuse me, sir," the speaker was the famous aviatrix Nancybird W. "Would you like to donate 50c towards buying a present for Harry Black." "No," I said. Spiro and his friend Cec Hill who I knew from the world of the theatre both gave. Later when we were about to land in Melbourne, Our Expedition Leader informed us that Harry Black refused the gift and donated it back to some charity or other.

There was an official photographer on board who was taking orders and although they are magnificent photographs, the whole atmosphere was of making money. Dick Smith's wife was trying to get rid of T-shirts labelled "Dick Smith Electronics Expedition". Her name was appropriately called Pip. "Enough, no more," I cried and was pleased to hear the pilot say we were going to land at Melbourne shortly, at 6.30 pm.

We were all searched on leaving the plane because I suppose we were to mix with transit passengers, but there was not a single person in the hall so why we were searched will remain a mystery for ever.

Back in the plane at last and we had a two hour wait while a new engine was fitted and free drinks on the house to keep us happy. I don't really imagine a complete engine was fitted; but it was pleasant to open miniature bottles of Scotch and wait until 9.30 departure. At 11.20 pm I was home in bed in Bondi. What a long day.

Incidentally the whole trip was billed as a South Pole thing, but I knew that we would never get there. Just a gimmicky ticket seller. The closest to the Pole was a far distant view of Mt. Marham and that was 400 miles from the pole.

Still, all in all, an interesting day, but truthfully I wouldn't recommend it. For me it was worth it as I can now say I've seen every continent. Maybe in the future if Qantas runs it without Tricks it would be more bearable. Gee, I hope Dick Smith doesn't read this as I could be sued. I know! I won't sign it. Editors please note.

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BITS AND PIECES

by David Cotton.

FOR EASTER - I am running a trip from Newnes - Wolgan River - Wolgan Capertee Junction - Capertee River - Glen Davis - Pipeline Pass - Newnes. A distance of about 70 km.

I led the above trip in reverse order last Queen's Birthday Weekend holiday and have written the story of this trip below

COMEDY CAPERS ALONG THE CAPERTEE.

About 12 people were expected to attend this trip, however only three of us turned up, probably due to heavy rain falling on the Friday (65 mm recorded at Darkes Forest for the day).

Frank Roberts, Mark Lucas (son of Bruce Lucas who was a member of the club during the late 1940s), and myself struggled slowly over the Pipeline Pass after a rather late start. This part of the trip was terrible as we were all out of trim for walking and we were all sporting grossly overloaded packs.

The trip through Glen Davis was slowed a little to allow a quick inspection of the ruins of the abandoned shale oil works and then a steady tramp on to Dingo Creek, a tributary of the Capertee River, where exhausted we made camp for the night.

Sunday morning saw a strange spectacle as a plate of boiling water leapt out of the fire and attacked me, sending me madly hopping and jumping, swearing and kicking as this wretched utensil adhered firmly to my right foot until I managed to kick it free. The result of this strange encounter being a severely burnt leg. A few minutes later, the same plate, empty this time attacked me again, despite the huge volume of bad language raining on this wretched utensil. It looked like an exorcist was going to be required. However, on closer inspection it was found that the offending plate was of the folding handle type and when ever I walked by it the hooked end of the handle was latching onto the instep of my boot and staying there until I had kicked it free. The dull grey of the handle was blending in with the colour of the ground so well that it was almost impossible to see it.

Shortly after moving off on Sunday morning I managed to have an encounter with a blackberry vine, which certainly didn't help matters whatsoever. At this stage I was getting along at less than half speed with a dreadful limp that threw my left knee out of work. I found that I was doing a rather good impression of walking like a wounded crab.

On reaching Gaspers Creek I was feeling a lot better and getting along again with great speed. I found the others and we had lunch and discussed what we were going to do as we were now half a day behind

schedule. Going on was not favoured, although I was quite certain that I could make it as I was walking all right again and the stiffness of the previous day had gone. And I had reduced the weight of my pack by the simple consumption of food I agreed to a suggestion of taking a "short cut" over the top, as long as I wasn't expected to go..... The only remaining alternative was to about turn.

The Capertee River, once evidence of habitation is past, becomes a very pretty river. All signs of the pollution that has built up along the way from Mudgee begins to disappear as the river meanders over sand bars, the deeper pools gradually become clearer. The views and high rocky cliffs are some of the most splendid scenery that I have seen.

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DAVID COTTON'S PHOTOGRAPHIC ADVENTURE WORKSHOP.

My next photographic adventure workshop will be held at Glenburnie Orchard, Darkes Forest, on Saturday and Sunday 1st and 2nd April 1978. The programme will be over the weekend on a continuous basis. A campfire barbecue will be held on Saturday evening - camp overnight if you like.

Everybody is welcome to attend this workshop whether experienced in photography or not..... Children are especially welcome and will be shown how to process their own photographs.

For many people photography is simply a matter of shooting off a roll of film and sending it away to be processed..... unaware that an incredibly richly rewarding adventure in home processing is well within their grasp, firstly with black and white processing and later on with colour.

Black and white photography is a cheap, simple and easy medium to work with, the low cost allows a large amount of material to be worked which in turn brings about an improvement of photographic technique and promotes the development of individual style.

HOW TO GET TO DARKES FOREST:

Travel south along the Princes Highway through Waterfall, follow the old Highway (do not take the Expressway). The turn off to Darkes Forest is about 15 km south of Waterfall or about 6 km past the Stanwell Park turn off. Glenburnie Orchard is the first farm on the right hand side 3 km west from the highway on the Darkes Forest Road.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS AND TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS SEE DAVID COTTON
IN THE CLUBROOMS.

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WALK NOTES.

by Len Newland.

The break up of walks coming up in February is as follows:-

TEST WALKS

February 3rd, 4th and 5th sees Roy Higginbottom's Black Range trip with quite a bit of river walking along the Jenolan, Cox's and Little Rivers in the western section of the Blue Mountains.

Two test walks are due to go on the 17th, 18th and 19th. Firstly, John Redfern's trip to Kanangra and down to the Kowmung River in the western Blue Mountains. For those preferring a more southerly exposure, Rod Peters is to lead a walk to the Nattai River from Coate's Farm.

Finally for this month, Tom Werman leads another trip to Kanangra and the Kowmung. This walk going by a slightly different route.

WEEKEND WALKS

February 10th, 11th and 12th: Cox's River with Snow Brown and swimming (western Blue Mountains). Also this weekend, Long Point Lookout to the Shoalhaven River - southwest with Jim Laing.

17th, 18th and 19th sees Springwood to Glenbrook along Glenbrook Creek in the eastern Blue Mountains with Peter Miller.

Tony Denham hits this month's programme with his trip from Malcolm's Farm to the Wollondilly River, down Mittagong way on February 24th, 25th and 26th.

LILLO TRIP

February 3rd, 4th and 5th. Du Faur's Creek and Wollongambe River in the western Blue Mountains. Leader is Alastair Battye.

ABSEILING

Kanangra Walls on the 10th, 11th and 12th with Barry Wallace. Two trips: Kalang Falls and Wallora Canyon.

INSTRUCTIONAL

At Manly Dam on Sunday 26th, John Fox has organised a practical map-reading session on the Orienteering Association's course. This should be especially welcomed by those who are wary of leading walks through map-reading inexperience.

DAY WALKS

Sunday 5th: Sheila Binns leads from Waterfall to Heathcote via Kangaroo Creek and Karloo Pool (Royal National Park). With swimming.
Sunday 12th: Jim Brown's walk, after a ferry trip from Cronulla, goes from Bundeena down to Little Marley (R.N.P.). Sunday 19th: Heathcote to Karloo Pool and Ulloola Falls with swimming (R.N.P.) - Len Newland.
Sunday 26th: Waterfall to Engadine via Ulloola Falls and Karloo Pool led by Paul Mawhinney (R.N.P.), also with swimming.