

Brenda White

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"THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER"

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Publishing Committee:

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Dorothy Lawry, Rene Browne and Mr. Myles Dumphy.

EDITORIAL

Some people have an idea that Bushwalkers are monomaniacs who can think and talk of nothing else but walking and do not take an active interest in any other pursuit. Admittedly we find our greatest pleasure in walking and camping, but what is wrong with motoring and camping, cycling and camping or canoeing and camping as an occasional variant?

On wandering around the club room of a Friday night talking to people who have just come back from holidays, it strikes me very forcibly that those who have our way of enjoying the bushlands can also find pleasure in an outdoor life conducted on other than "Shanks' Ponies."

At least three parties motored to the Kosciusko region, where trips were made from depot camps either for exploration, mountain climbing or fishing for the elusive trout. This latter is a great way of getting your non-walking friends to exercise their legs - I have never yet met a fisherman or shooter who would admit that he "went walking," but he probably covers as much ground in pursuit of game as we do on a fair day's walk.

A carload of Hell's Belles and others went as far north as the Myall Lakes, with an eye out for any promising walking country, unfrequented beaches, etc. en route. Another very popular method of progression appears to be canoeing - two parties have been out recently and have come safely home from this somewhat hazardous game. It seems to me essentially a hot weather pastime, as the frequent and mostly unexpected duckings would be much more acceptable in January than in July.

Still, there is no accounting for tastes. I have distinct recollections of a certain rowing trip undertaken a few King's Birthdays ago. The start was made at night - the rowers kept warm while rowing, but between shifts they and the "passengers" very nearly froze, and were only kept from despair by thoughts of the hot tea and food to follow on disembarking. But it is all in the game, and I am here going to show my sheer nobility of soul by mentioning another means by which some members of the Club enjoy an outing - my late opponent the humble "push-bike" and its big brother the "motor-bike." We have various exponents of the art of propelling these two-wheeled atrocities, notably our old friend Taro who has written a description of a cycling trip for this issue. The call of the open sea was heard this Summer by several. One party journeyed to the Islands by the "Strathaird", while the magic of the East for once lured "Delilah" away from her beloved Barrier. I have not yet heard of any aeroplane fiends in the Club - but who knows what surprises 1933 holds in store?

THROUGH THE GRANITE GORGES

Jenolan Caves to Yerranderie via Council Chambers Crk., the
Hollanders, Tuglow and Upper Kowmung Rivers.

Three o'clock on the last day of October found us toiling up the road on the Oberon side of Jenolan Caves. On our backs were sixty pound packs containing food, home and home comforts for what we anticipated would be a ten days' walk.

At six o'clock we were sitting by our fire at the old saw mill about three miles out from Jenolan. A typical mountain mist had clothed the gully in a blanket of white, and although but a few hundred yards off the road to civilisation one could almost imagine oneself alone in a world apart. As the rays of the setting sun struggled to reach us through the enveloping mist a score of Kookaburras took up residence in the trees above and took it in turns to laugh, - presumably at us.

A daybreak start had been decided on, but day did not break in the normal sense of the word, it came in the shape of a waterfall and the rain held us up. Just before nine we set off hoping that the rain had not been enough to register a rise in the rivers.

Our objective and the main feature of the trip was to reach the foot of Morong Falls which fall a distance of fifteen hundred feet from the Boyd Plateau into the Kowmung River, and a rise would be fatal to our purpose if not to ourselves. Many have tried to reach the foot of these falls, which, owing to their inaccessibility, have become almost a legend among those who leave the beaten track, but owing to flood waters and the impassable state of the granite gorge into which they fall, the attempt has always been given up and a detour made.

After following the Kanangra Walls road along the Boyd Plateau for a distance of about half a mile, a cut was made off to the right into the head of Council Chambers Crk., and we were at the front door of the trackless country. The going at the start had been more or less easy, but gradually the undulating slopes merged into steep and almost precipitous sides, and lunch time found us in the Hollanders River which is formed by numerous creeks like the one we came down, all draining off the Boyd Plateau. At ten past three we came to the junction of Budthingra Creek with the Hollanders. A little farther down a party of trout fishermen was met but they appeared to be having most indifferent luck.

At the next bend the last of the open spaces was left behind and the Hollander's canyon, a dismal, dank, precipitous place extending for about six miles was entered, the walls in most places sloping right down into the water leaving just a footway, - sometimes.

That night the tent was pitched on a sloping shelf just above the river. I awoke about 2 a.m., feeling rather cold and upon a thorough investigation discovered that my head alone was in the tent and my feet just out of the river. We climbed out of the tent at six as the sun climbing over the steep ridge called the bushland to life and another day. It was a beautiful morning, not a cloud in the sky.

Setting off again the canyon was found to become steeper and rougher still, necessitating a great number of crossings, quite a few of them being extremely difficult. In all, twenty-three crossings were made on the Hollanders, and at eleven o'clock when we reached the granite gorge we were tired and worn. This gorge, which is virtually a rift through a granite mountain, made river walking absolutely impossible and a detour over Bull Ant Ridge was necessary, coming down on to the Tuglow about half a mile above the Falls. Lunch was eaten on the Tuglow River and then two rather weary walkers made their way downstream till one of the masterpieces of Nature - Tuglow Falls - was reached.

The river bends in an S curve through reddish granite, straightens out again and then plunges over the triple falls through a grey and white granite chasm, which appears to be carved from a solid block of stone by some mighty hand. Looking down through these wonderful falls, the Kowmung Valley could be seen far below, laid out like a distant green carpet. The next point was to get down into the valley of the Kowmung River which is formed by the merging of the two streams, the Hollanders and the Tuglow. After a terribly hard climb we reached the floor of the valley and made camp for the night.

Just after tea we were treated to one of the most picturesque sunsets I have ever seen. The dying sun worked around the hillside into the chasm that makes the Tuglow Falls, using this spot as if an outlet from the valley. There were just enough clouds to tinge the walls of the falls a rosy pink as the sun slowly sank in its granite picture frame, lighting the clouds higher and higher till it sank, leaving nothing but the roar of the falls, the murmur of the streams and the cool evening breeze.

Early morning found us out of bed and inspecting the falls of Tuglow and the lower end of the granite gorge of the Hollanders River. At ten o'clock our backs were turned to the campsite and a course set down the Kowmung River. The going was particularly hard owing to the young wattle and kanuka scrub which continually rebuffed, tore and beat us. Just before lunch we reached the Tuglow limestone outcrop situated on the second bend of the gridiron - splendid sight; a mighty lump of stone presenting a sheer face to the river. This outcrop is reputed to be honeycombed to the extreme and most dangerous. As we were most intent on the completion of our trip we admired this marvellous sight from a distance. The beginning of the granite gorge into which the river Morong falls was reached an hour or so after lunch. The river was absolutely impassable and we were forced high up on to a ridge on the right overlooking the river.

A bend in the river brought us down and we came off the ridge at a point which marks a wonderful example of the beauty of Nature's work. The river after boiling and bubbling through a myriad of small cascades, splits smoothly round an immense granite island in the middle of the river. Crossing, it was again necessary to take to the hillsides, but with no appreciable success as we were forced down a most sudden slide ankle deep in granite gravel to miss a sheer bluff.

From the divide between Horse Gully and Tuglow Hole Creeks our first view of Morong Falls was gained, the late sun making the big fall look like a silver thread on a brown tapestry. The walls of the Kowmung gorge, particularly on the eastern side are marvellous. One could not under any pretext call them beautiful, but they are grand, inspiring and immense, dropping in places for easily a thousand feet into the river and but a degree or two out of the perpendicular.

Tuglow Hole Creek is practically as much a gorge as the Kowmung and is like a Dore's illustration of "Dante's Inferno." The walls are bare and barren, the creek small and moving with but a faint murmur. The frogs sang their discordant song, keeping time with the crickets and locusts, and the fire, which was of necessity small, threw only enough light to give the whole business a grotesque air.

The early morning sun found us up and at work again. While we agreed that it would be impossible to make the falls fully laden, there was just a chance that the way might be possible if one went empty handed and was prepared to take a chance. Immediately after breakfast we began the journey, carrying only the camera, axe and scaling rope. The camera was wrapped in oiled silk as we were intent on reaching the falls even if it entailed a swim. When only a few hundred yards down the Kowmung the walls closed right in and a sheer rock climb of several hundred feet was necessary to get over the pinch. The rope was extremely useful and practically essential. With steep granite cliffs above and below we started off around the hillside. The going was horribly tough and rough, to say nothing of being dangerous. The hillside, covered with loose stones and gravel, pitted with slide holes and watercourses, was almost perpendicular.

At a quarter to eleven a descent was made into the river down a steep, treacherous slide of loose gravel. This brought us out on to a stretch of shell pink granite several hundred feet long, over which the water played as it went ever onward to the sea. Continuing on downstream for a little way our eyes were suddenly confronted with the most welcome sight of the trip - the tail end of Morong Falls. The upper fall is not visible from the river and a climb of about four hundred feet had to be undertaken. It was hard work but well rewarded. Falling sheer for hundreds of feet in an immense bridal veil the water gathers again in a big granite basin; then down a series of steep deep cascades to halt, momentarily, in a long pink groove before continuing its course down the last twisted fall of about two hundred feet to swell the waters of the Kowmung River.

We diamond blazed a tree to the left of the big fall and felt mighty proud while doing so, for we believe ourselves to be the first to ever reach the foot of these marvellous Falls.

Camp was reached again at two, and a rather belated dinner partaken of. It then being too late in the day to continue our journey, we decided to stop overnight in Tuglow Hole and start off bright and early in the morning. For the only time on the trip the sun was beaten out of bed, and at six o'clock after a light breakfast we set off up the mountain side from Tuglow Hole. Seven o'clock found us blown and almost beaten; but on top. Shortly after reaching the top of the ridge Morong was sighted away on the left. It was a magnificent sight, but the marvellous beauty of these Falls is not apparent unless close, as we were on the previous day. The ridge fizzled right out about nine o'clock and left us faced with the alternative of climbing about nine hundred feet down into a creek or stepping off what we thought to be a cliff. We took the creek and for two hours had the struggle of a lifetime, fighting and climbing through the almost impenetrable jungle undergrowth, to cover about one mile of country.

The Kowmung was again entered at one of its most picturesque parts. For as far as the eye could see, above and below, the river poured over the everlasting granite in cascade after cascade, now steady, now boiling, but ever working onward through a beautiful avenue of Casuarina trees, the first that had been seen on the trip.

After lunch and a good long spell we started off again, and then the fun began. Our last way out being left behind, the river began to play with us. It was very amusing for a little while; very - climbing up smooth slippery granite slopes anything up to fifty feet high and then hauling the packs up on the rope, swinging round corners on the rope like trained steeple jacks, hopping down the river on giant stepping stones, occasionally slipping in, crossing, wading, climbing, jumping and then commencing the sequence afresh. That was all right for the first mile or so, but then it got past a joke altogether.

High concave walls drove us up for about a hundred feet to find that it was practically impossible to get down again; then up again, up a steep granite slide, I went up first using toes, fingers, knees and ankles. Next step was to climb round the cliff face through a forest of prickly shrubs before a descent was possible down a giant's staircase in the shape of a granite watercourse. Although back in the river once more the gorge was still impassable and another climb out was necessary up a severe cleft in the gorge face itself. This last effort was required to dodge a piece of river about five yards long. The next sight almost justified the effort. The river divided round an immense granite island in the river, forming again in a large rock-bound pool by way of miniature waterfalls, only to split again and join farther downstream.

It was well after four before we struck anything resembling a camp site in any shape, form or description. Then one could hardly call it a camp site. It was low; dangerously low; well below flood or even high water level. It was bounded by walls of granite on three sides and faced a forty foot waterfall in the Kowmung on the other. There was just enough room to pitch the small tent and to light a fire, but as we had no intention of sleeping in a tree it had to do.

Just before dark I climbed round the bend in the river to see if perhaps fate, after buffeting us as it had done, had in any way relented and given us somewhere decent to sleep. It was wasted effort, all I found was a sheer rock wall about a hundred feet high bounding the waterfall. Morning found us without any idea of a plan for getting past the waterfall which completely blocked our passage, and we wound up by making a most difficult detour which took over an hour to complete and carried us about another forty yards downstream. In another two and a half hours we were approximately a mile farther down and completely baulked by sheer walls and about thirty feet of water in the river. This is the dead end of the granite proper and through the cleft that the river uses to escape could be seen clear country, without a sign of a granite outcrop in it. There was no alternative, it was a case of up and over. The left hand side was tackled for no other reason than that the Boyd Range was on that side, and in case of being forced out perhaps we could scale the range which was about three thousand feet above the river level. The first five hundred feet was sheer murder, climbing up a steep granite watercourse filled with loose slimy rocks, giant jungle vines, treacherous clematis, nettles and black thistles. Then it became necessary to leave the watercourse and zig-zag to the top - a thousand feet above the river. We had a waterless lunch on the top and were most cordially entertained by the local blow-flies and bull-ants.

Finding it impossible to make the Boyd Range we set off around the foothills, but were again forced down into the river shortly after passing Hanrahan's Creek, a strong stream which flows off the Boyd Plateau, and enters the Kowmung just short of Misery Ridge.

Checking up it was discovered that we were about four hundred yards downstream from the last gorge and it had taken us three hours and a climb up and down of about a thousand feet to do it. The country opened out rather well and about another four miles was made before camping for the night on another rotten camp-site just above the river level.

At six a.m. we rolled out of bed on what we hoped was going to be the last day of the trip. Setting off we found the going to be more than peculiar - sometimes over nice green sward, then up and over big rocks and bluffs, through dense undergrowth, across the river and then back again, always expecting to find Lannigan's Creek, our way out to civilisation, at the next bend; and never finding it. At noon we struck the most disconcerting point of the day - an absolutely impassable gorge of white slippery granite. There was only one way - up and over - up the steep dangerous hillside through tangled undergrowth, nettles and thistles. It was torture to an extreme. Just before one o'clock we made the other side completely exhausted.

After lunch the journey was resumed and at ten past four, after a most strenuous afternoon, Lannigan's Crk. was reached. The last night out was spent at Billy's Point Hole on the first bend past Lannigan's.

Bed was sought early that evening for we were nearly all in. But although tired out we were happy, for having come through the roughest and toughest part of the mountains we were nearly knocking at the back door of civilisation after nine strenuous nerve-racking days. The last day proved to be the hardest of all. The heat of the sun even at the early hour of six, was unbearable.

Our first view of Yerranderie was gained from the saddle above the coalseam on the range overlooking the Tonalli River. Another three quarters of an hour brought us to the journey's end, friends and Yerranderie - a Mecca in a wilderness.

I have heard this said of the Kowmung country - "the good Lord made a clerical error when measuring up the surface of the globe and as this is the last part He ever made, He had to stand it up on end to save wasting it."

It'll do me for a definition.

HARRY SAVAGE.

"BEND DOWN, RICHARD"

As he walked down the Kowmung
One pleasant Eastertide,
Just five feet high a bough hung -
To pass beneath he tried.
He found no matter how young
Or sprightly one might be,
The "glow" was from his brow wrung
When he was six foot three.

B.S.

This is not a tale of a walk, but a super-walk, to wit - a cycling trip one wintry Thursday in October 1932. Cycling and walking are closely related, perhaps enough to let this tale slip into the S.B.W. Magazine.

Just about 6 on a crisp nippy morning, my feet parted company with Mother Earth to meet the old girl again at Campbelltown about two hours later. One step 23 miles - try that, you longleggers.

Was a glorious day for walking or anything - beautiful roads and perfect silence save for song birds and a very occasional car, in fact all the joys of mid-bush plus a silent speedy gliding through cool scented air.

Rising out of Campbelltown on the Appin Rd. a gorgeous panorama spread out - nearby deep green meadows - grazing cows and sheep - standing crops - lovely undulations merging into thick timber in turn to melt into wonderful deep blue distance. Away west our old pals Tomah and King George falling down to Kurrajong and on to the heights above Parramatta, then on to Hornsby. S.W. showing Gangerang and Colong like two mighty elephants in the far distance. South - Jellore simply jumping up into the sky, and everywhere wonderful sharp detail.

Then, to add to it, light fleecy clouds began to float in - their shadows deep purple moving patches making all the blue still richer. Then a glimpse of Mt. Gilead tower - just the finishing touch.

Campbelltown to Appin is a gorgeous run; much of the roadside is lined with the gums that may have been there when the road was built. For quite a distance they meet overhead making a canopy of rare beauty with the dappling shadows on the red road, then far off ahead that little patch men call the sky. A swaggie was passing carrying the usual M.T.C. whopper pack. Some day I'll have the luck to see one open and in use. 'Tis said that way back in the city, dainty 'triguing typistesses and comely comptometrissitsses pack up bigger loads and barge off into the bush, just for the fun of it.

Appin is a wee village with a big pub. and much wattle in its time. On to the Bulli Rd. and where George's River is 6" deep - plenty of water but no wood - a great motor resort - so naturally - up the hill a bit I carried the water to where wood was plentiful. The programmed allowed one hour here so I had a thrilling grilling filling swilling time. On again to Bulli Lookout, a strong wind now putting life into everything - nice part here - plenty of flowers, trees and water. The Lookout - and what a day for it. Pacific Ocean just a huge deep blue cloth with scalloped edges trimmed with foamy lace and yellow sand tints - every house and shack crystal clear way down Wollongong and on. The Five Islds. as close as five minutes. On again along the top road, now perfect asphalt, more widespread landscape and often the ocean on the right. The wind now a shrieking fiend. Noon with an hour to burn. Pulled up near Waterfall in cosy shelter of road embankment and right by a crystal pool. On again - the familiar spots, Heathcote, Sutherland and Tom Ugly's Bridge. Hurstville and push push through the gale to home, a little after 3.

To those with a liking for stisticks, the distance covered was 90 miles - tucker used, including breakfast: 1 plate porridge, 4 slices bread, 2 scones, 1 lb. steak, 2 oz. cheese, half doz. gingerbuns, 1 qt. tea. Now compare that foodlist with any for a 90 mile walk, and yet it did the job. And then the staggering expenses! with another 20 miles after tea - total 110 miles - expenses - one penny! bridge toll. One glorious day, packed tight with the best of everything, for one little penny. Beat that my S.B.Ws. Says TARO.

Rain! Rain!! RAIN!!!

If only it never rained.

How we could cut the weight down.

We could go trotting round the bush with a blanket in one hand and a billy in the other and brave all perils with impunity. Unfortunately, however, it does occasionally rain (as those of us who read the papers will know) and then we bless or curse the man who made our camping gear.

If gear doesn't stand up to wet weather it is useless. If a tent is all right only until it rains, what good is it? Better leave it at home or cut it up for ration bags. And so with groundsheet, cape and rucksack.

A wise camper is never caught unprepared twice and if the recent rain found a weakness in your outfit, get it remedied now. Do not wait to be caught again.

Paddy Pallin will willingly place his knowledge at your disposal, so do not hesitate to take old gear to him for alteration or repair. If new equipment is necessary a large stock of tested goods awaits your inspection.

The "Improved" Queensland" Tent is proving increasingly popular and no wonder. It is a semi-pyramid tent with a 9" wall and can be completely closed up.

It stands 5 feet high and holds two people and their gear easily, with room for another if necessary. Made in best quality japara, it weighs only $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs and the price is 30/-. Why go homeless when 30/- will buy such a tent.

F.A. PALLIN,
312 George Street, SYDNEY.
(above Hallams, Chemists,
opp. Wynyard Station).

STOP PRESS:

STOCK OF COMPASSES - Prismatic and ordinary, -
PEDOMETERS, PACEOMETERS & MAP MEASURES
NOW ON HAND.

KOSCIUSKO - THE TRAMPERS' PARADISE.

The word "bushwalker" has purposely been omitted from the title, because there is no bush on the tops. There is plenty and to spare a couple of thousand feet down. But those who want to spend their holiday plunging through dense undergrowth need not go as far as Kosciusko to do so.

Further, as there is no bush neither can there be extended meetings round the camp fire at night with the consequent long vigils in bed in the morning and sumptuous meals at all hours.

Kosciusko is not for people who want these things. It is essentially for those who want really to walk and camp - or tramp as it would be termed abroad - those who want to be up and doing with twenty miles behind them before sunset, not for the sake of a record, but just for the sheer love of walking for its own sake. For these the enervating heat of Sydney summer weather is not as a rule ideal, while the invigorating atmosphere of the heights is exactly what they search for.

In Kosciusko we have a plateau 5000 to 7000 feet high stretching about sixty miles. The valleys within the plateau are about 1000 to 1500 feet deep, while from the edge you may look down as much as 6000 feet. Wherever you go on that plateau even in the hottest weather, you will find clear, bracing air, cool breezes, wide views, sparkling streams bordered with myriads of starlike flowers, and the air fragrant with swamp epacris and other sweet smelling things. You can walk for hours on end without tiring and with scenery utterly different from anything you are accustomed to, scenery wild and rugged perhaps rather than beautiful, but with the fascination of far horizons and the grandeur of naked hills.

But in order to enjoy it to the full you need to know beforehand what you may expect in the matter of weather and what differences, if any, you should make in your usual equipment. Generally speaking, Kosciusko weather is good. In fact its dry summer is one of its characteristics. It may occasionally be cold and windy, but usually the sun will shine. The temperature may rise to 85°F. or fall to zero. You should therefore take Sydney winter, rather than summer, equipment, but with provision for wearing summer clothes if it should be hot, as it frequently is. Knickerbockers over shorts may be recommended, and you should put in a pair of warm gloves and a fly veil. There are no mosquitoes or sandflies, and the flies are no worse than on the beaches; still they are the one pest and a fly veil makes all the difference to one's enjoyment. An eiderdown sleeping bag is essential at night for it is usually chilly. In the matter of footwear, rubber or nailed shoes are desirable for the snow grass is even more slippery than the bush. For your tent you must provide your own poles and not rely upon nature, and, while you may camp happily without a tent around Sydney, you would scarcely be so comfortable at Kosciusko. I would therefore suggest a conference with Paddy as to tent poles.

While there are a few scattered clumps of snow-gum on the plateau, they will probably not occur at the spot where you wish to camp. You therefore cannot expect the usual camp fire. There is, however, plenty of small wood from the heathery plants almost anywhere to boil your billy and cook your dinner. Apart from that, a camp fire is scarcely called for, because in summer it is not dark till 8.30 p.m., and it is light again at 4 a.m. Go to bed with the sun and rise with the sun and you can leave both your torch and candle behind, especially if you adopt daylight saving time, as we did.

The only disadvantage of Kosciusko is that even in summer it is subject to an occasional snow-blizzard, when walking is quite out of the question. I have tried it and can assure you that the slushy snow underfoot, the swirling mists, snow and hail round your head, coupled with a piercing wind, combine to make it most unwise for anyone to venture further than he need. In such weather we tried to find our way to the summit along the well-defined bridle track, could see hardly any trace of the track and nothing at all more than three yards in front. In such weather there are three things you may do:- Drop down below 5000 feet when there will probably be only rain, and walk on if you can without getting into scrub. Make for one of the huts, of which there are several and stay there till it clears. If you are near the road, go to the Chalet where you will be received hospitably for small price. Indeed if you should not want to camp, the Chalet would be an excellent centre for walking.

The weather will probably clear in about three days at most and stay clear for the rest of the time, and of course the chances of meeting weather like this at all, are very remote. Generally, camping will be a sheer delight. There are bright, limpid streams everywhere, great boulders behind which you may find a sheltered spot for your tent. The most perfect camping spot I have ever found was beside the Blue Lake. On the hillside above was a large snow rift which melted to form a gurgling brook that ran down beside our tent between flower-strewn banks and fell into clear, deep pools, cold but invigorating. Behind the tent was a huge rock which completely sheltered it, while in front we looked down upon the rock-encircled lake. Across the hills overhead the prevailing westerly wind blew with bitter force, but down in our little valley all was peace and calm, and on beds of fragrant wild thyme we slept untroubled from sunset to sunrise.

MARIE B. BYLES.

LITERARY EXPLORATIONS.

Since you have all been too busy eating Christmas dinners, enjoying holiday trips, and generally "seeing N.S.W. first", to write out any of your favourite poems, or to do any literary explorations for "The Sydney Bushwalker", there's a corner in this issue that I've had to fill. I hope you'll like my choice, and be stimulated to find something even more attractive for next issue.

D.LAWRY.

THE OPEN ROAD

The wide expanse and the laughing wind,
And the open road for me;
With the winking stars in the roof of the sky,
A night-light clear to see.
Into the crimson sunset glow,
Over the rim of the world,
Where the gum trees raise their arms in prayer,
With the banner of night unfurled.

Over the ribbon-like, winding road,
Bridge and gully and hill;
Where the rabbits go scudding into the dusk,
And the birds have sung their fill.
The walls of my house are the distant hills,
And my days and nights are free -
The wide expanse and the laughing wind,
And the open road for me.

Mary Roche.

NINE DAYS' WONDER IN THE MOUNTAINS : NO RAIN!

There were six of us, Rene, Dunc, Jean, Scotty, Keith, and yours truly, and although we were all called various other names also, I will not mention them here as some of the younger Club members may read this article by mistake.

A Friday night early in January about 10.30 saw Katoomba receive us with loud grins - we were attired in "walking scanties" - and, having discovered that the menu was a trifle on the small side, we set about purchasing 1 lb. boiled lollies, 1 mile of string, 1 lb. candles, and a bottle of saccharine tablets; then with poetry in our souls and lead in our shoes we set off briskly for the Explorer's Tree and the Megalong. We had really started, Rene, boiled lollies, and all!

Saturday saw us going wearily - I mean warily - down Black Jerry's Ridge to the Cox River, that stream of streams, that mighty little trickle which consumes the enchanted Kowmung. (Must go carefully; I nearly spelt it wrongly).

Was water ever so grand as on a hot day after several miles without any? We drank, and drank, and drank ----- and then remembered warnings of a polluted water supply higher up. Too late! We couldn't put it back so just hoped for the best, and had another drink.

A delightful day followed: glorious weather, millions of flies, and plenty to eat. The fishermen went fishing --- and caught something! Really, that is. We had eels -- or is it eales, or eles? I think one of them is right, but anyhow we had eales, and very nice they were too, although ----- but I won't go any further as the cook is bigger than I.

At last the Kowmung. Shhh! Can't you see the silvery trickle of the shingle, and hear the big bluffs on either hand once more? (Hold on, that seems to be a bit wrong somehow). But of course you know what I mean; the poetry in our souls at Katoomba hasn't all oozed out yet and I still see in front of me in a misty phantasmagoria - (that beats your 'perspicacity', Rene) - the fairy dells and majestic causeways of the River with feathery casuarinas adding their peaceful charm on every hand.

Mother isn't very sympathetic in these moods; she says it's biliousness. Anyway, I like being bilious.

We spent five days along the Kowmung and saw much of the wild life at close hand. Snakes were there in plenty; kangaroo and wallaby, many kinds of birds including duck, lowrie, wrens, whistling magpies, and even a lyre bird and a black swan, and one day a small fox cub came chasing butterflies to within several feet of Dunc. It is on record that Rene thought it was a calf and was going to milk it.

One evening a tiny possum paid us a visit, as also did a number of blackfish, but the latter came to stay. We fed right royally on fish, rabbits and wild honey, and even had a goodly share of mulberries at Church Crk. where we had a day of rest. Whilst the fishermen fished the never-ready, ever-restless ones, Keith and I explored the caves but missed the alleged turn-off underground and succeeded in only getting dirty and tired.

The following day saw us as far as Caves Creek on Lannigan's Creek and so on Friday the 13th. at 9.30 p.m. five non-superstitious fanatics made their way through the Colong Caves for a couple of hours, with 13 candles, and retired to their various couches tired and more or less pleased with the night's adventure.

Water was scarce there being only a soak in the gully through which the track leads to Yerranderie, and a few small holes over half a mile down stream. We left late on Saturday morning, about 10.30, and after teasing an echidna which Scotty

found, and examining him as far as he would allow, we set off along the range round Colong for the swamp and Yerranderie.

It was very hot and so, some hours later, the plum tree near Zucchetti's proved a welcome respite. Keith counted 105 to his credit while I fell off after three quarters of an hour. Scotty looked pale and the girls just didn't count; they let their belts out. They washed in a large water hole about eight inches wide, and the tadpoles in residence were justly peeved, so Jean and Dunc carried them to another hole, one holding them while the other fanned them with a wet hand to keep them alive. (It must have been the poetry in their souls). All would have been well but for the fact that Keith and Scotty washed in the other hole.

We stayed in the school shed and after getting outside about seven yards of steak the five sane members of the party repaired to the Palais Royale and joined the merry band of locals and Kowmungites, who were clad, so I am told, in a motley collection of old boots, shoes, carpet slippers, and sandshoes. Nevertheless, the dance was a howling success for which no small credit is due to Rene's short shirt which would persist in parting tenderly but most effectually from her shorts, to the great delight of all present.

By the way, in case I should be misconstrued, there were other things worn as well as the varied assortment of footgear; so many people are prone to take me literally.

Yours truly being on the scrap heap with a warped shinbone, he took no interest in local politics that night except to say something rude when the revellers turned up at midnight and woke him up.

Sunday was a day of gloom both in appearance and effect, and collecting our gear -- including the dried onions which we gave away to a poor man -- we wended our way to the Post Office and were met by our car. Followed a long drive into Camden, and so Home. The nine days' wonder was over: it was raining hard.

BARNEY.

"THEY SAW TORCHES GLEAMING - A SIGNAL, OF COURSE,
BUT NO ONE COULD READ IT; 'T WAS HAROLD'S STRANGE MORSE."

Now this is a dreadful thing - I do not mean Harold's Morse - because being Harold's, it was almost certain to have been O.K. - but the fact that no one could read it!

In a Club such as ours we do not make a practice of getting lost - we may be mislaid, delayed or even waylaid, but we usually get there, sometimes rather late, frequently rather hungry, but otherwise very little the worse for wear.

Still, you never can tell, better bushmen than ourselves have been "bushed" before now, and a knowledge of signalling may come in very handy.

We number among our members Rovers, ex-Scouts and men with what Auntie Cora calls the "Military bug," all I should imagine rather intimately acquainted with the Morse Code.

Could it not be arranged for some of these to teach the rest of us the system, and then have a few night jaunts on the lines of Alan Rigby's Search and Rescue Parties to put it into practice?

BRENDA WHITE.

Moss Vale, Meryla Valley, Kangaroo River, Kangaroo Valley,
Bugong, Illaroo, Bomaderry.

Distance: About 60 miles.

Fares: Train, 2nd-class single to Moss Vale, 10/5d.
From Bomaderry, 11/5d.

In June 1930, "The Open Road" reported that one of the N.R.M.A. representatives had succeeded in getting through the Meryla Valley to Kangaroo River by car, and that it was a very pretty trip, though the road was bad in parts.

The South Eastern Tourist Map shows a similar third-rate road running south from Kangaroo Valley to Bugong and Illaroo, and then east to Bomaderry.

The directions are as follows:-

Leaving Moss Vale by the Robertson Road, take the first turn off to the right past Tudor House, ($2\frac{1}{2}$ miles out). $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile further on, turn to the right again and follow west for 1 mile, then turn south on the Meryla Road proper. Apparently this was an old convict-built road, being walled in places with free stone. In another 4 miles the road crosses Bundanoon Creek by a bridge about 50 feet above the water. After this the road is fairly sandy, and the country becomes more timbered. About 1 mile beyond this first bridge there is another over Gum Rock Creek, where there is a splendid swimming pool, good drinking water, and a splendid camp site.

A little further on an orchard and homestead are passed on the left, and here the road passes under over-arching trees; the road then forks. The one on the left soon deteriorates into a bush track that leads to some splendid falls. On the way you cross two water channels and pass through a gate and some slip rails, beyond which you walk near a fence for about $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile, until you can hear the sound of the Falls. There are a series of these Falls on Bray's Gully, also a splendid Lookout. This deviation will add 4 or 5 miles to the length of the trip, but sounds worth while. Where this track re-joins the road, you may notice a tree which Mr. Briggs of the N.R.M.A. marked with three nicks in June 1930.

Continuing down the other branch of the road, you will come to another superb Lookout at the top of Meryla Valley. This is about 13 miles from Moss Vale. Coming down the mountain there are some very sharp hairpin bends in the road - and probably short cuts for walkers.

About halfway down the mountain there is a clearing of about 80 acres with plenty of good water, which is said to be an ideal camping ground. Here a hut stands which is permanently occupied. At the foot of the mountain there is a deep creek, Yarrunga Creek, with a very rough bottom, which has to be forded.

Beyond the next hill going towards Bendiela, you reach cleared grazing country, and the road soon improves and is good into the village of Kangaroo Valley. Total distance from Moss Vale, 32 miles, plus the deviation of 4 or 5 miles. According to the South-eastern Tourist map, the road to Bugong turns south west at the western end of the village, follows down the Kangaroo

River for about 3 miles and then swings more nearly south another 2 miles to Bugong. This country is fairly hilly, the road crossing the watershed between the Kangaroo and Bugong.

About 3 or 4 miles beyond Bugong, and about 4 miles north of the Shoalhaven River, it swings east to Illaroo, (which is probably only a station holding), and so on east until Bomaderry is reached. It appears as though the distance from Kangaroo Valley by this route will be about 25 miles.

BY CANOE DOWN THE KOWMUNG.

Since this account is being written for Bush Walkers, I will leave out the rhapsodies on the Kowmung River and especially the Kowmung casuarinas - only a true Kowmunger can appreciate the country and such a one does not need being told about it.

The idea started in Harry's fertile brain - after time had softened the memories of his upper Kowmung via the gorges trip, his mind inevitably turned back to his first love - for two months on the Kowmung with Jack Debert was his first experience of walking.

I questioned the wild look in his eye at breakfast one morning and he came out with the whole brilliant (?) idea. "Many persons have canoed down the Shoalhaven and even more so down the Wollondilly - but no one had been fool enough yet to try the Kowmung. How about the Savages being the first fools?" Well - I was fool enough to fall for the idea. My experience of the Kowmung did not recall any insurmountable difficulties in connection with the actual canoeing but the task of getting the boat to the river offered some difficulties. The first job was to get a boat - like Paddy "I did not have the time or inclination" to build one, and since none were available for hiring, we set to purchasing one second-hand. The boat finally selected was built by Mr. Spencer of Greenwizh for his own use some five years ago. It was 15 ft. 8 inches long and had a beam of 2 ft. 11 inches, and a depth amidships of $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Built on Canadian lines of $\frac{3}{16}$ inch planking over some sixty ribs, the whole boat was again covered with canvas. The construction was particularly strong, over five thousand copper rivets being used to attach the planking to the ribs and the addition of the canvas skin gave us a boat eminently suited to stand up to the hard knocks of the boulder-strewn Kowmung. The only disadvantage was its weight which was well over a hundred pounds.

Transport was solved by taking a lorry to Squatting Rock Gap near the head of the Colong Swamp. The journey was uneventful until we turned off the Burrarorang - Yerranderie Road and took the stock route to the Colong Homestead. The track is vile, the first mile or so consisting of loose stones which just about shook the inside out of the lorry and did shake off some timber and packing. From the homestead there is a track up the swamp which leads to Squatting Rock Gap and thence to the Kowmung. We succeeded in getting the lorry right to the Gap and

so lightened our carry. Some Rover Scouts and other friends (including Phil Brewster, one of our members and Arthur Webber ("Pinkie") whose name is on the list but we hope he won't be missed) came with us to help get the canoe down to the Kowmung, and after putting the boat on two bicycle wheels we started off for Billy's Creek. The first hundred yards saw trouble for the angle of the hill caused a terrific side leverage on the lower wheel, so bent the axle - this was straightened only to bend again some few minutes later. To ease the work of the canoe party, half of us carried two packs, the loads in some cases going well over a hundred pounds. This gave better results and four o'clock saw the whole party, canoe and all, in the bed of the dry Billy's Creek. This route is possibly the shortest into the Kowmung but the bed of Billy's Creek is far from being a negotiable route for a canoe. This portion proved so rough that we could not get the boat to the Kowmung before nightfall and so it was left in Billy's Creek whilst we pushed on and made camp just above the junction. An hour's work early next morning saw the boat safely transported down the remainder of Billy's Creek (on the shoulders of the carriers) at half past six in the morning the first canoe floated on that part of the Kowmung. After breakfast the whole party - canoe and all - moved up to Billy's Hole, just below Lannigan's Creek and we believe this to be the highest point reached by canoe on the Kowmung.

After lunch our carriers moved off on their steep climb to the lorry at Squatting Rock Gap. Their record of having lunch in the Kowmung and a late tea in Sydney must surely hold the record for fast trips out of the Kowmung. Harry went with them for at the last minute his business required his attendance in Sydney and he had to leave John Hill and myself to do the trip that he had planned.

Next morning saw the start of the actual canoe trip but although the easuarina-fringed reaches seemed to offer ideal canoeing country, the rapids proved so numerous and slow to negotiate that our actual speed was less than a mile an hour, and at night-fall we camped between Manning's and Church Creek. The following day was not much better but we made our objective in camping just before the Bulga Denis at the junction of Christie's Creek. The day was most interesting for we lunched on Hoy's claim and actually saw gold washed from the pay dirt. The labour necessary to win the several small specks of gold we saw did not enamour us to a prospector's life and so our trip was not interrupted. In this part of the river we met several stockmen checking over their cattle, including Mr. Venn and his son from the Abercrombie River who were particularly interested in our venture. So much so, that they accompanied us half way through the Bulga-Denis Canyon. Incidentally, no one on the river has heard of the Bulga Denis - they all know of the Big Bluff and some few have ventured into the middle section, but they are all so confident that cattle could not get past the lower bluffs that no cattleman at any rate, ever tries to get through.

We faced the Bulga Denis with mixed feelings - its reputation was well known to us and we feared a rough time. On the other hand we consoled ourselves with the thoughts that although the going might be tough on foot, the river by canoe might be easier - perhaps it was, but I have no inclination to go through the Bulga Denis again, either way. More than half the canyon consists of falls and rapids, some up to four feet high, but the centre and lower end offers some fine canoeing reaches. The whole day was spent negotiating the canyon and that night we camped a mile or so above Orange Bluff and just clear of the canyon. The ensuing three days were spent on the most pleasant part of the Kowmung - the river was wider and so were the rapids - in a number of cases we found difficulty

in floating the canoe and it had to be lifted and pulled over the loose stones until it floated in the deeper water of the lower reaches. A number of waterfalls between six and ten feet high were encountered and these necessitated a complete portage of the canoe and gear. As we approached the Lower Kowmung Canyon, boulders again became prominent in the river bed, causing much inconvenience. Finally, we camped on the last possible site before the Canyon, a small flat on left bank of the river. The rain which had been dogging us for the last day now came down in earnest and gave us a wet camp. Next morning the Canyon was filled with mist as we pushed off on our last stage to the Cox. From a canoeing point of view, the Kowmung Canyon is a replica of the Bulga Denis - an endless mixture of rapids, boulders, waterfalls and deep holes. We had ceased to worry about the care of the canoe and pulled and pushed it across rocks which in the earlier stages of the trip would have entailed unpacking half the gear.

About mid-day I seemed to recognise Cox's River country ahead but another two hours elapsed before we floated at the junction of the Cox and Kowmung - the first canoe through. We had a late lunch here and after leaving a note for Peter Page, pushed off down the Cox. After the rock-strewn Kowmung, the Cox seemed to have all the attributes that a river should have and we forgot its doubtful ancestry in the various mountain towns. To us it ranked equal with the Jordan of Biblical fame and the Mississippi and Amazon were not to be considered. The Black Dog Canyon offered some thrills for a short time, for the volume of water made the footing treacherous as we faced the canoe down the long rapids. After this, little trouble was experienced as we made our way easily down to McMahon's, who put us up as we were nearly out of food. Heavy rains and the long time taken to do the Kowmung altered our plans of going through the Warragamba to Penrith and we made Bimlow in Burragorang our finishing post. Torrential rains on the last day marred this portion of the trip, but as we lifted the canoe out of the Wollondilly River, we felt satisfied in having done something new in the annals of Bush walking.

BOB SAVAGE.

SOCIAL NOTES.

On December 14th., we repeated the Annual Concert with marked success, some people enjoying the second performance better than the first. There were over 200 present, with the result that the proceeds are £10:10:0 which will go towards reducing the Blue Gum Forest debt.

The Club did its annual good deed and gave 42 children a red-letter day on December 18th. last. Many of these have been the Club's guests for three years running and regard some of the members as old friends. Twelve of the children were residents of Lilyvale and nearby, and we were told the Christmas treat and party were the only taste of Christmas that they would receive, so we feel that there more than anywhere our efforts were not wasted.

Some of us decided that the Walks Programme was guilty of gross falsifications when the day was described as "easy". Those who were there worked harder than on any other day during the year.

The Annual Christmas Camp was well attended, but there were many faces missing that we have been accustomed to seeing at Xmastide.

The weather was good and a happy spirit prevailed. The Cricket Match between S.B.Ws. and Locals caused interest and excitement and resulted in a draw. The Water & Sewerage Board did good work and got the new pump installed in time. Opinions differ as to its success. The camp-fire concerts were particularly enjoyable, and the fancy dress parade on New Year's Eve brought forth some startling effects.

The S.B.W. will soon be a married people's Club, as we have had two more weddings from our members. The Club's first Secretary and Treasurer, Charlie Kilpatrick and Vera Rankin were married on Jan. 15th., last, and prior to that, Enid Greenacre and Alan Rugby joined hearts and fortunes. Alan is the designer of the Club's distinctive and beautiful badge and also the Club's stationery.

We wish them health, wealth and happiness, and plenty of it.

We are happy to be able to congratulate Anice and Frank on the birth of their son and heir. I wonder is he a Pommy or an "Orstraillyan"? Anyway, whichever he is, he should be a good bushwalker and a fine fellow.

RENE D. BROWNE,
Hon. Social Sec.

STOP PRESS:

Sympathy is extended to Edith Griffiths ("Griff") who was unfortunate enough to fracture her right leg last week-end. Willing hands carried her up from O'Hare's Creek - "Griff" set her teeth and did not utter a murmur.

She was attended by Dr. Jones of Campbelltown, who made complimentary reference to the efficient First Aid that had been rendered. She was taken to her home by the Liverpool District Ambulance. Here's hoping that she has a speedy recovery.

Have just heard that two more members of the Club have decided to join forces - this time to the glory of dear Old Scotland - Jean Malcolm and our old friend "Dorman" (Alan Hardy).

We wish to congratulate them very heartily on their engagement.

EDITOR.
