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Brenda White

APRIL 1935



"THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER"

A Journal devoted to matters of interest to Members of
the Sydney Bush Walkers, Sydney, New South Wales.

No. 24.

APRIL 1935.

Publishing Committee:

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Misses Dorothy Lawry & Marie Byles,
Messrs. Myles Dunphy, Graham Harrison & Jack Debert.

EDITORIAL

There has probably never been an Annual meeting of the "Sydney Bushwalkers" in which such keen interest was felt as that of March, 1935. There may not have been a record attendance, numerically, but it was a very representative gathering that voted in the new general Committee and the "brand new" Social Committee.

Tom Herbert was again elected President, and Dorothy Lawry, with Richard Croker as Assistant, has taken on the very onerous position of Secretary - which becomes a bigger job each year, since the Club is continually enlarging its activities.

Little did we dream, seven and a half years ago, that this Club of ours would one day be instrumental in saving Blue Gum Forests from the encroachments of man and flood waters, adding to the parks and playgrounds of the State, and in many other ways coming into prominence.

Our first Secretary, Charlie Kilpatrick, as well as helping to organise the Club, had his hands full, in those far off days, compiling walks Programmes and giving information to those interested in the newly formed recreational walking club. There were plenty of Athletic Walking Clubs and not a few private bushwalking societies in existence, but ours was the first of a more or less public nature, and as such attracted a good deal of notice, with a corresponding amount of work for the Secretary. When the position became too acute an Assistant Secretary was appointed. Now we have in addition a Walks Secretary - all of which tends to show what an increase there has been in the interest displayed by our fellow citizens in walkers and the gentle art of walking.

We announced last issue that the Annual Edition of the "Sydney Bushwalker" was in course of preparation. It will be published in October, and it is desired that all contributions be handed in as early as possible, as the newly revised publishing Committee has a lot of work to get through.

EXPLORING UNCLIMBED MOUNTAINS

On the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand.

MARIE B. BYLES.

When my climbing companion, Marjorie Edgar Jones, and myself arrived at the Fox Glacier Hostel we found that our guide, Frank Alack, had recently cut his arm so badly as to require several stitches. It had brought his previous party's exploits to an untimely end. But, as they had had perfect weather and had bagged fifteen peaks in ten days, probably they were not at all sorry for a good excuse to cease from their labours, for Frank's enthusiasm is such that I can well believe he would never otherwise have given them an excuse for wasting fine weather doing nothing in particular. That was the thing about Frank I admired most. He was just as enthusiastic as an amateur, and with him as guide it required no effort - other than physical of course - to get up as many mountain peaks as possible.

The bad arm was fortunately nearly well by the time we arrived, and we had to wait only one day for the doctor to come and take the stitches out. This gave us an opportunity to visit the "Glow Worms' Den". There was not much of the "Den" about it, for the poor things are molested and raided by every tourist who wants to find out what makes them shine, so that it is a wonder they condescend to shine at all. However, there they were in spite of the tourists, the whole underside of the bank hung with cold diamond lights from which fell long iridescent streamers. Then, if you looked through the bush there you saw them again, fairy lanterns in the darkness of the fern-shade.

The doctor came and went, and in the meantime Frank had hit on the brilliant idea of cutting out the thirty miles horseback ride to Mahitahi, and going by aeroplane instead. I had never been in an aeroplane before, and this, coupled with the fact that riding is not one of my strong points, made me jump at the suggestion, and not till sometime afterwards remembered that Marjorie had not been consulted. But Marjorie could not be found, though I looked everywhere conveniently forgetting that she might be in her bedroom. So Frank and I decided that after all it did not matter much, for she was small and we could easily have carried her to the 'plane by force if need be.

Marjorie did not exactly object, for she is an exceptionally goodnatured person, but I have a vision of the 'plane arriving earlier than was expected, and of Marjorie being hustled to it with one boot on and one boot off or something similar.

As we hopped up in the orange dragon-fly aeroplane and crawled over the far-below landscape, I began to realise why the air-service has come as such a god-send to the West Coast. In a flash of the eye we had crossed over turbulent, grey, swirling torrents which looked bad enough from above, and what they are to horse and rider I was to find out later.

"For the first time I laughed at Cook's River", said Frank as he alighted, thinking of all the times he had ridden over its unbridged waters and striven to find a crossing where there were neither quicksands nor unexpected holes.

In twenty minutes the orange dragon-fly landed us at the mouth of the Mahitahi River. It is only a two-way landing ground, east and west, but as the wind that brings the notorious West Coast rain, is a westerly, there is seldom a day when the 'plane cannot call there!

We were met here by Mr. Condon, Senior, with his horse and dray, rather a come-down after having just patronized the most modern and up-to-date means of locomotion. However, as the dray carried our heavy packs as well as ourselves, we bore its bonebreaking bumps with a stoical grin.

- 4 -

We spent that night at the Condons' farm boarding-house, where we made the most of a first class dinner, the last civilized meal before setting off into the wilds to batten on kea and dog-biscuits.

Horses were practicable for the first five miles or so up the river above the Condons' farm. And we rode partly over grassy meadowlands and partly through bush, crossing the grey-blue rushing river with its grey shingles at frequent intervals, each crossing getting worse as the mountains closed in, and finally we tied the horses and proceeded on foot for the last half mile or so where there was a cache of our stores..

Thanks to Frank's excellent organization, Harry Ayres had been packing stores from this point up to base camp for some days previously, and the arrangement was that he should come back here and take us up the deer-trail which Mr. Condon, Junior, had recently blazed for us as far as base camp. But no Harry appeared. Packing up through the lonely bush and crossing that turbulent stream is not an easy job by any means, and we began to grow anxious lest something had happened to him. Anyhow there was nothing for it but to start off through the bush without him.

It was an exquisitely beautiful bush, a dense subtropical jungle of all varieties of glossy green, above which the tall rimu or red pine dropped its weeping fronds, and the crimson rata flamed against the deep blue sky. Below them were glades arched over with tree ferns and delicate twining plants, while on the ground was a carpet of ferns innumerable, mosses of that deep rich green that rejoices your heart, and the crimson rata flowers that had fallen from above. The walk was like passing from one fairy glen to another more lovely than the last. But I could never quite get used to the idea that New Zealand has neither ticks nor leeches. I found myself unconsciously pulling my hat down to keep the ticks from falling down my neck, or glancing apprehensively at my fingers expecting to see the familiar trickle of blood from the slimy leech.

A short way along Harry appeared suddenly from out of the trees and set our fears at rest. From thence he led us unerringly along the faint trail, but a trail without which it would have taken us three or four times longer to go through that almost impenetrable jungle. It was a long enough tramp as it was, and our packs did not grow lighter as the ground got steeper and rougher, Only the prospect of mountain peaks to come made the hard packing seem worth while, beautiful as was the bush through which we passed.

"Do you realize that my friends of the Sydney Bush Walkers do this sort of thing for pleasure?" I said to Frank.

"Gosh!" He replied, "Send them over here and we'll give them as much packing as they want".

"But we call it bushwalking, not packing", I demurred.

"Gosh"! was his incredulous, but meaning reply. And even to the end I could not persuade him that I was almost the only member of the Sydney Bush Walkers who did not rejoice in transporting a heavy pack through rough country.

It was necessary to cross the river once over and back, and the guides insisted on carrying Marjorie and me, a proceeding which I felt was a little infra dig, since I am accustomed to managing things like that for myself. But by the time I reached the middle of those glacier-cold waters, and found they were half way up my legs carried piggy-back, I was just as well pleased not to feel them swirling round my waist, as they would have done had I been on foot.

About half way through the day the unprecedented West Coast drought came to an end and made not the slightest attempt to return during the whole of the rest of my holiday in New Zealand - so much for those who say that if you will only provide enough water-proof things, you are bound to keep the rain away. I had water-proof garments from head to foot, and they had caused huge amusement when I tried them on at the Sydney Bush Walkers' Club rooms. But the waterproof

equipment did not have the slightest effect. The rain came down in torrents in the usual West Coast style, an inch an hour more or less and generally rather more than less. We were soon to reach the base camp about eight and a half hours after leaving the horses.

This was situated in a open piece of land near a stream with the bush on either side. It was about a mile above the junction of the Edison Tributary and possibly 2500 feet high. Cotton-wood trees with pretty white flowers grew nearby, and, as the leaves of these were said to taste like cucumber, I dutifully ate a daily ration of them in the hope that they would supply the vitamin content which I rather suspect is absent from camp food. Of the latter we had about three weeks' supply, and it included such things as pemmican and hiking biscuits, both of which were voted a great success. Of meat we had practically none, for we had brought a rifle and intended to shoot keas, very tame parrot-like birds which would come within a yard of you either to be photographed or shot; they did not seem to mind which. When we succeeded in stewing them for twenty-four hours without burning them, they were said to taste like chicken. Being a vegetarian the keas were not of great interest to me from this point of view, except on an unlucky occasion when I chose to comment on the excellency of the soup, and it subsequently transpired that it was on this particular occasion that kea-broth had been added to it!

In addition to their culinary attractions there were two other reasons for shooting keas; one is their reprehensible habit of settling on the backs of sheep and attacking their vital organs with their powerful beaks; the other is their equally reprehensible desire to run away with mountaineering equipment, and I have seen them try to make away with a heavy pair of mountaineering boots left out in the sun to dry.

But that was at a later date; for the present there was no sign of the sun. The rain teemed down from a sky of unbroken grey, and we were devoutly thankful that Mr. Condon had selected a palatial rock for our base camp. It was so high that Marjorie and I could stand up in it in places, and its only disadvantage was an underhanging ledge with a shocking propensity for knocking people on the head at unexpected times.

Harry had stocked the cave with grass beautifully soft to sleep upon. The only trouble was that Marjorie evinced a disturbing habit of kicking, and before long I found myself ejected from the grass and lying among jam tins and primus stoves. Marjorie was very conscience-stricken in the morning - which of course dawned with the same teeming rain - and decided that next night she would sleep by herself under a rock near the stream, the bathroom I called it, but as the stream might easily have risen another six inches and turned it from a bathroom into a bath the proposal did not meet with much favour. Indeed in order to wean her from the horrid idea Harry pointed out a much better rock about twenty yards away.

I looked a little longingly at the soft grass, for after all I had enjoyed its benefits for a little part of the night if no longer, and then I followed Marjorie across to the new cave. I soon found out that it was good to be in my own camp again where I could mess about with the fire and endeavour to master the art of camp-fire making out of sodden and reluctant West Coast wood. It was a distinct blow to my pride to find Frank brushing aside my fire-making efforts as those of a mental defective - when all is said and done I have made camp fires in Australia for the last twenty years or so! But the West Coast wood is a law unto itself. The principle of making it burn is to build the fire on the top of a grate, as it were. Once the wood falls to the ground it gently but surely goes out.

For three days it rained without ceasing. Harry had brought up a few magazines and a mouth organ to while away the time, and Marjorie and Frank

tapped a perennial source of interest when they started an argument as to the meaning of a traverse, a complete traverse and a grand traverse. These are mountaineering terms for various ways of climbing and crossing a mountain, but as to which is which I leave to Frank and Marjorie. I had a feeling that Frank got the better of the argument, but Marjorie was a game little thing, and, in spite of her tiny size, never gave in over this or other matters. I once saw her engaged in a rather unequal struggle with Frank as to whether a certain kea should or should not be shot. Frank said it was grossly unfair and that she ought to tackle someone her own size and not a little fellow like him!

By one means and another we whiled away the three days, and on the fourth, New Year's Day, the weather made a good resolution for the coming year and eased off sufficiently to allow us to make our way to the head of the Mahitahi Valley. No trail had been blazed beyond the base camp.

"After that", said Mr. Condon lightly, "you can follow a deer trail".

The deer are one of New Zealand's imported pests, and they are accused of eating out the lovely bush. We failed to see the least sign of their eating-out of the bush, and not an overwhelming number of their trails either. And anyone who has followed, or tried to follow, a deer trail knows that they have a habit of petering out or dividing in two or something. But whatever happens to the trail, the result is the same; you find yourself plunging through undergrowth and floundering ungracefully between boulders and scrub. However, one must be thankful for small mercies, and to the mountaineer the deer are decidedly one of them. They enabled us to cover the remaining couple of miles of bushland in about as many hours.

Above the bush was about a mile and a half of open grassy slopes cut by steep gullies, and we soon arrived on the top of the Mueller Pass (4509 feet high) and looked down onto the Zora Glacier a thousand feet below, a great white serpent with a black medial moraine running down the middle of its back, formed by the junction of two neve fields. It was like Cortez standing on the peak of Darien and gazing down onto the unknown Pacific Ocean. A few deer stalkers had probably penetrated as far as the Mueller Pass, but none had ever descended to that glacier below and none had ever trodden the mist-enshrouded peaks that lay around it. The country had held its secrets unviolated since the days when the earth groaned and travailed in Cretaceous times and left those rocks tilted and twisted as they now are.

It was not a very helpful tramp as far as mapping out our mountains was concerned, for the mist lay heavy over everything down to five thousand feet, but it did enable us to locate a cave for the high camp. Frank was a great believer in caves. He knew from bitter experience the joys of a tent in West Coast rain, and though I guaranteed my little tent to be waterproof, it having been well tested under the garden hose, he was having none of it if he could help it, and before the trip was over we were thoroughly of his opinion. Fortunately the schist of the district often weathers underneath to form caves - on the weather side, a most inconsiderate, but rather natural idiosyncrasy - and we found a tolerably good overhanging rock which, with a little levelling and walling-in, would be weatherproof and high enough to lie in, and in spots even to sit up in. It was situated at the foot of a glacier which came down from a snow col between the rocky peaks above. It was New Year's Day, and it was afterwards up this glacier that we first made our way into the untrodden snows of a new land. We therefore called it the Matariki Glacier and Col, for Matariki is the beginning of the new year for the Maoris, the sowing time after the rising of the Pleides just before the sun.

Having located our cave we made our way down again in mist and drizzle and spent another three days at base camp watching the rain, for the weather had

already forgotten its New Year Resolution, would it ever stop raining? Remembering that we were on the West Coast did not help at all. Frank recalled one time when it rained for forty days and forty nights at Waiho without lifting once. Then there was the story of the West Coast lover who was overheard vowing eternal devotion to the lady of his heart:-

"Darling", he declared fervently, "Darling, I will love you as long as it rains on the West Coast!"

Then, on the seventh day after leaving Condon's, a wonderful thing happened. I woke at 4 a.m. to see a perfectly cloudless sky above, and the first rose of dawn tinting the snow-clad heights which now for the first time stood forth unveiled in mist. I felt all quivery and excited. So the rain had not come to stay forever, and we really should feel our feet upon the snow and ice. Life seemed too good to be real.

But we had to spend that lovely day in packing up to the high camp. It could not be helped, for to have arrived there in the rain with no means of drying - for it was high above the tree line - would have been unforgivable folly. It took the whole day to transport our food and gear, and make the cave secure from bad weather by building a substantial wall on the South West of its entrance.

But the morrow dawned half clear, and after satisfying ourselves that things were getting no worse, we made a very late start at 7-30 a.m. going up by the Matariki Glacier.

After six years in an almost mountainless land I was once again among the snowy heights and with a new realization of their meaning. Still, silent and serene they stood above the morning mists, but they revealed the stresses and strains of a living world that has lived through millions of years and is still living. In their glass, the seasons of the earth's course round the sun seemed lost in the vaster seasons of geological time, where the winters are the glacial epochs that have coated the world in ice, and the summers are the warm, dry eras that have succeeded the great ice ages. "As for man, his days are as grass; the wind passeth over it and it is gone". And that is the secret of the serenity of the mountains. For what are all the petty cares of mortal life or mortal life itself when reflected in their mirror? In the next geological age man and his troubles will be as it they had never been. Small wonder, then, the peace that broods over the ancient hills, and the easing of the heart that is found in high places.

It was a steep pull up the Matariki Glacier, and the ice was frequently sliced by huge bergshrunds. One in particular stretched from side to side of the glacier and we had to cut right down the lower lip and right up the one above it, which was certainly vertical if not overhanging.

We reached the Matariki Col and found ourselves looking across the head of the Zora Glacier. The mists were rapidly covering the mountains and we had only glimpses of the surrounding peaks as we made our way towards the one at the head of the Zora. Fettes Peak we caught sight of to our right.

"That peak has not been climbed, has it?" I said to Frank.

"No, but he is going to be", said Frank meaningly.

It was a prediction that won my heart, but it was unwise, as the morrow was to show.

By the time we reached our chosen peak the mists had swallowed up everything. Still, there was a wonderful thrill in climbing up that last bit of rock and shaking hands on the top of our first virgin peak. Below us we caught tantalizing glimpses of the head of the Makawhio Valley, the next valley north of the Mahitahi, rocky ramparts hemming in a wild gorge, but what lay in the depths we could not see. So we gave up unravelling the geography of the mists, built a cairn and put the peak in our rucksacks, so to speak.

(To be continued in our next.)

EASTER PHOTOGRAPHERS are reminded to increase their exposures, now that the strong Summer light has gone.

Suitable exposures for average subjects on fast ortho or fine grain panchromatic films (without filters) are:-

TIME	SUNNY	HAZY	DULL	V.DULL
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.	f22 s	f16 s	f11 s	f8 s
9 a.m. or 3 p.m.	f16 s	f11 s	f 8 s	f32 B
8 a.m. or 4 p.m.	f11 s	f8 s	f32 B	f22 B
7 a.m. or 5 p.m.	f8 s	f32 B	f22 B	f16 B

s indicates 1/25 second B indicates 1 second

For other subjects and for when using filters, (which improve pictures) these exposures must be increased.

Information re filters, exposures and other photographic subjects, is available free from the Walkers Photo Service, at PADDY PALLANS, after 5 p.m. MONDAYS and FRIDAYS, and other afternoons by appointment. RING. B 3101.

Films may be left at Paddy's at any time for unhurried development by the "fine grain" process; printing and enlarging to exact requirements is also available.

Paddy still has a few sleeping bags available. Get one for the Easter Camp and keep warm.

Believing in "service first" we have as usual arranged to have moonlight nights at Easter and the weather clerk has promised us fine weather, but "just in case" you should have a 'Paddymade' rain hat (or bonnet!) Weight 2 oz. price 2/6.

All other usual gear available.

F. A. PALLIN,
312 George Street,
SYDNEY.

PHONE. B3101.

THE UPPER COX.

It is now some years since we've been able to call the clan together on Anniversary Day and make for green hills and winding rivers for three whole days. It so happened this year.

Some of our party were unable to leave on Friday night, so Mouldy and Richard and I put ourselves into a box carriage on the 7.25 p.m. on Friday evening and arrived at Mount Vic. about 10.30. We made our presence felt at the R.R.R. and at eleven we were on the road to Mount York. Whether it was the moon which was really glorious, or not, I don't know, but both Mouldy and Richard came-all-over-Opera-ish and we had selections (vocal) all the way out to Mount York. With so much melody (ahem!) about it was difficult to refrain from joining in, and frequently I added to the din.

The view from the end of Mount York was very lovely by moonlight. It was almost as clear as day. We camped under the stars, and were out of bed about six-ish to have a look at the valley under the long early morning shadows. It was lovelier, by far, than by the night's moon, or as we saw it later in the day, in brilliant sunlight. It is a scene that will ever stay fresh for us. After breakfast we made our way into the valley by the road cut by the pioneers. We felt that Australia day merited a little enthusiasm and patriotism and we spent the day viewing landmarks in Australia's history. We saw pick-marks made by convicts on the road. At Collitt's Inn we entered our names in the visitors book and were shown all the points of interest by the proprietress of the Mt. York Farm, as it is now known. By road we made for the Lett River where we made friends with Mr. McGarry, who has a strange pet, an eagle which runs loose round the farm. He told us of the "best natural swimming pool in the country" and showed us how to find it. It really wasn't up to standard, but we were quite appreciative as the day was hot. From here we went to the Hartley Courthouse and spent some time hearing all about it. In return, our 'fount of knowledge' was terribly interested in ourselves and packs and we spent quite a long time yarning. We also inspected an old church and the Administrator's house across the road. We tried to get an inspection of another old church, but unfortunately the caretaker was away. We heard that it has a unique feature in a wooden lock and wooden key. From Hartley we made our way along the road, swallowing the dust of South-bound cars, until we arrived at the Lett River, which we followed to the junction of the Cox, where we were to meet Dunc and Rene and Tom who were catching the mid-day train. We made a camp under the casuarinas on the softest grass I've seen for a long time. It was good to be with the river and trees again.

Sunday morning at seven-thirty we left the junction of the Lett and Cox and began a long day. The Cox was really lovely in its upper reaches. The willows broke the sombre green of the casuarinas with near-emerald. There were wild duck and rabbits galore. In several places granite gorges impeded our progress, and we had some fun scrambling through - particularly when Rene flopped into the water occasionally. I think she should be a fish in the next world - or perhaps, a mermaid. The nettles were in fine fettle and we were glad to lunch where the Lowther road crossed the Cox. Before the end of an hour we were away. The river began to widen and occasional cattle tracks made the going easier, though the river lost none of its beauty. I don't know what I really expected; myrtle and fewer flats, I think. It is very Cox-ish all the way through, changing a little as we neared Gibraltar Creek, if anything.

About five-thirty we came to a small saddle, a few hundred yards across, from the top of which we had a good view of the sweep of the river. It was a real "neck o' the woods". Some day the river will break across and we will have an island on the Cox. We made camp a mile or so downstream from the saddle on another lovely riverflat.

We woke, on Monday morning, to find the river oaks wrapped in mist and everything adrip. One just wanted to lay abed and watch the morning's varying moods. But, with another long day ahead, we were up and away at eight o'clock. The river continued between green river-flats lined with a good growth of pepper weed. Above Gibraltar Creek the country changed almost abruptly to sheer granite, golden sand and green and crystal water. It was considerably harder going, but not unpleasant, except that the green pools were very tempting to us in the mid-day heat and we still had miles to cover before lunch. At Pulpit creek we left the river and climbed immediately out. The hillside seemed almost perpendicular and we lost several pounds of moisture on the way up. At Megalong Church we stopped for a break and a late lunch, and dried Rene out once more. We followed the old familiar track to Nellie's Glen and found our way into Katoomba over the Bonnydoon track.

It was a splendid trip, and the river only added to its attraction for us. If you haven't seen the Cox above Gibraltar, add it to your itinerary for a three day week-end. It is a trip you will neither forget nor regret.

JEAN.

WIFF'S TRIP IN THE FOREST 1,000 FEET UNDER THE GROUND.

Now this is a fact. In the first place I was in a prehistoric forest - a coal seam, and in the second place a forest of timber that is used to stop the roof kissing the floor. I would not be exaggerating if I say millions of trees are in that mine, used as props every 2 feet for miles of streets I call them.

Word was left with the wife while I was at the beach to be at the Deputy's bathroom, Old Bulli mine, at 6-30 in the morning, with old clothes and not rubber soledshoes as they slip on the grease. My guide was Mr. Billy Dutton, a well known wrestler, once champion of England and New South Wales in his class, I think Light Heavyweight. I wore a swimming costume and long trousers and sweatercoat, not forgetting my cap as I was sure to bump my head. I only bumped it 7 times, not too bad for a long one. Everytime I got a bit more sense knocked in. My skull must be very thick that accounts for my deafness. It takes a lot to knock a little in. Billy is short and would laugh every time he heard the bang and look around to see if I was alright.

We went to the lamp room and I got an electric lamp about three candle power, while my guide had a kerosene safety lamp as he is a Deputy. His duty when working is to go into the mine first to his section and test for gas. It shows blue around the flame and cannot escape out of the gauze to cause an explosion; also to see the timbers and roof and everything is safe before ringing the outside for the men to come in. The whistle blows "allwell" and we proceed in the entrance to a train of skips with seats 6 inches off the floor, about 8 could squeeze in. I think there were 20 trucks. The signal is given and away we go for a two mile ride - it takes 25 minutes.

I was in a truck next to the pretty boys and they sang songs all the way in. I felt like jumping out and going back, but could not as the roof is only 4 feet from the ground. The further we went in the more I got accustomed to the darkness until the terminus which is lit up, all out and we let them proceed to their work.

The mine is a maze of streets and tramways called "hauling ways" and boards and ways for men to come out, large wooden doors here and there, to divert the air to where it is wanted. These doors must be closed after you go through them. First place of interest was the stable where 40 ponies are stabled, lit up but a bit warm for me, so we moved off for a mile walk to the face. I saw a hole loaded with explosive, walked 50 yards back around a corner, and then the dull boom, and a rush of air passed us, we turned and saw the result and another hole loaded. Great care is taken. A special man called the shotfirer, tests for gas, and then sprays the coal with water, then loads the hole and connects wires. He is the last to leave and does the firing and is first back to see if all is safe. At the next place visited was a miner boring the holes with a big auger. I went to see the air shaft. The bad air is drawn up by a fan at the top 1,100 feet. I was standing right under the Sherbrook school in the Catchment Area, near Cataract Dam. We went through a maze of streets, I wondered how my guide knew the way, all darkness and only our little lamps to see with. I was dreaming of prehistoric days with Dinosaurus and Diplodocus and what I would do if one popped around the corner. Billy opened a door and I heard him speak to something. I knew it was not a man as there was no light. I wondered what it was - a Dinosaurus? I was not afraid because I knew Billy would put a headlock on it and pin it to the floor, or ceiling whichever was the nearest. It only turned out to be a spare horse locked in between two doors in total darkness waiting until he was wanted. We just shut the door and left him there. Then we went exploring and came across two miners filling coal into skips. I told one he was the only sensible man in the pit, working in trunks with his body wet with perspiration and as black as coal. I was introduced to a Mr. Jack Johnson, but he had just started work so was not as black as his namesake. The wheeler had arrived with the horse to take the skips to the hauling rope: He does it all by talking to the horse, no reins and the only light comes from an electric lamp on his cap!

Each section has a station where a telephone and ambulance are kept in case of emergency. I was told all about the section that blew up in 1887 and sent 60 miners into the next world. They worked with naked lights in those days. Now every care is taken to draw all bad air up the shaft. Having seen a good variety of the mine we had a two mile walk out against the wind, which was very cold after the warm places we had been in.

We passed through a mile of natural coke made by the earth cracking in the early days and the fire coming up and burning the coal into coke. The Company had to put a bore down to see if the coal was at the back of the coke before they went through it. Arrived out in sunlight at 1 o'clock - 6 hours we were in the mine and walked about 10 miles underground. We put our lamps in and adjourned to the showers, hot and cold, to leave the coal behind.

The mining game would not suit a Sun Worshipper, so I made straight for the beach. But my guide I pitied - a man could not be happier than he was amongst his mates under there, it was everything to him, yet he has to wait until the mine gets busier before he gets his job back. The waiting gets on good men's nerves and they don't know what to do.
