

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A Monthly Bulletin devoted to matters of interest to
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CONTENTS

Editorial	Page	1
I Learn to Roar	by J. W. Mullins	"	2
Reply to J.D.	by D. E.	"	4
"Paddy" - Advt.	"	5
At Our Own Meetings.....	.....	.....	.....	"	6
Some Notes about the Proposed Greater Blue Mountains National Park	.....	.....	by Alex. Colley	"	8
"Bushwalking & Camping" - A Review	.....	.....	.....	"	9
Epitaph	.....	.....	by "One of the Girls"	"	10
Hints For Canoe-ists	.....	.....	.....	"	10
Introspect	.....	.....	by A. J. Salmon	"	11
First Aid Class to be held	.....	.....	.....	"	11
"Leica" - Advt.	.....	.....	.....	"	12
That's Why	.....	.....	by Dot. English	"	13
Federation News	.....	.....	.....	"	15
Club Gossip	.....	.....	.....	"	16

EDITORIAL

Before we took on this editing game, we used to wonder if there was much extra work involved in making a magazine run in "special" numbers - featuring now this aspect, now that. We have since discovered that there is no work involved at all; specials, like this "Tigers Number", just happen, so don't, please, run away with the idea that it was carefully arranged - or that the Tigers are the only section of the Club that walks, or talks, or writes.

Next issue, and many others, we want to come from the rabbits, hippos, orang-outangs, and other, unnamed, walkers. Come now, all of you, grasp your pens and let us hear what you have been doing, saying, and thinking -- but make it snappy, please, as the Editor is liable to be arrested by the Business Manager at any moment for exceeding the space limit in this issue. If it happens again (too soon) we hate to think what may be her fate.

"I LEARN TO ROAR"

Notes from a Tiger Rag

By "Bill Mullins"

Now, like Bottom, I can roar, roar so that it would do any man's heart good to hear me roar. But, unlike Bottom, I roar like a tiger and not a lion.

Walking with the Tigers is an education, seeing them eat is a sight for the heaven-born, and to understand the functions of their schedule-man is to gain something of an insight into the split-second workings of the planetary system.

To start with we joined the now famous submarine party after its piscatorial pushing through the Upper Kowmung. Church Creek was the rendezvous and it held true. After arriving in a celestial chariot ("ask-the-man-who-owns-one"), which startled the local peasantry at Yerranderie by its magnificence, we pushed down to Water Gully for the night's camp. By the way, all had developed a sneer, a real, snooty one, whilst in the precincts of the chariot, but it faded quickly when somebody reminded the party that the Flying Frigidaire came from the same, but an older, firmament.

So to the Kowmung the next day (after a dawn start), where we met the Tigers. We (the new intrusion) picked our way carefully through the food that was strewn all over the river bank and prepared our own meal, but not before we had cleared away litter in the form of ice-cream buckets. Imagine ice-cream on the Kowmung! These Tigers live well!

Here it might be recorded that, after their efforts on the Upper Kowmung, they appeared to be quite the same old crew. However, our ichthyologist was taken aback at not finding fins or gills in advanced stages of development; they are still normal Tigers.

Breakfasts over, we limbered up for our long day's stage, through the Bulga-Denis Canyon and down to the Cedar Road. Seventeen or eighteen miles is a good stage in Kowmung Country and we looked forward to that camp at the Cedar Road, for was it not New Year's Eve, and had not a whole cake, a big cake, been brought by sweat and salt tears for the feasting? Yes, and some well-known "Port" and "Sherry"! How the smell of that sherry will live! We saw the colour of it, the shape of the bottle, and we fancied we smelt it. There was talk of teaspoonfuls. Somebody must have tasted it. But the first sniff, it will live forever.

The port went round, as it does, with alarming alacrity, and, lo, it was gone. Night's wheeled car passed by and Sleep, the charioteer, leaned out to grasp the weary walkers. And so New Year came.

First impressions were a starstrewn heaven and then, coming from the nearest tent, a dull, rhythmical sound, nasal and open-mouthed. It made one think - Man, with sightless eyes upturned to the glorious stars, making the same chortles of appreciation as does the pig when it snoops through its food with hungry eager eyes. So the sun came up on New Year's Day.

The day's stage was not heavy - thirteen miles or so - down to Cedar Creek on the Cox's River, with lots of swims on the way. But the old Kowmung looked tired. It seemed tired of giving so much pleasure to the eyes of man; tired of juggling and lapping millions of grinding rocks and stones, and tired of flowing. We felt sorry, for it must be hard for rivers to look and feel happy when they have no water to make them gurgle and laugh. It made us tired too, but in the long, shallow pools that still remained, placid and almost sullen, it brought us much joy. Thus we came to the Cox, and, as if to take with us some tangible memory, we drew water from the

tired old Kowmung in our buckets and shuffled along to White Dog Bend for a good lunch, and a long, long siesta.

That evening we camped on the Flat of a Thousand Joys by the side of Cedar Creek. Tents packed about in a natural amphitheatre in abdul fashion made a homely sight with a river view. The original food party was making heavy weather in some quarters but, as related before, to see them eat is a sight for the heaven-born as they do not lack imagination at meal times. However, one of the new intruders was struggling stoically with mixed dried vegetables in soup form. He being a Tiger was able to use his imagination too, so much so that for some hours he segregated himself and just chewed and chewed his soup. Yes, these Tigers have determination!!

And then heaven fell in.

The heaven-born, smugly sitting by watching the eating, awoke with a start.

The first shot went over from the Capitalists. Smiting a Communist in the midriff, it was a foul blow so soon after tea.

It was just a time-worn catchphrase, perhaps so obviously true that it has become a platitude in the careless repetition of its use, but it hit at a strategic moment, i.e. before the process of digestion had finished. Up went the standards.. Social justice, dress suits for the masses, pin money for the proletariat, two-up for the thousands! The whole camp had taken sides; this was a discussion that would last forever in the minds of even Tigers. It waged on back and forth, some saying a lot, others saying nothing!

And all the time a Tiger sat chewing his soup.

But, no, he had finished. He arose from his table, like a prophet from a bed of nails, with a Yogi-like stare. He would have his say.

No, there was no middle course, he said, those who would take a middle course were mugwumps. A non-combatant immediately flew into battle, as is their manner. Him a mug-wump! What did soup-chewer mean,

The S.C. grinned with that jail-breaker-cum-buccaneer leer. He would tell them. A mug-wump is one who sits on the fence; with his mug on one side and his wump on the other.

Well, that was the beginning of the end. Slowly the standards came down. Who could stand crossfire and backchat like this, with such a one in their midst, And as each went to bed on New Year's night he, or she, made a secret resolve for the new year. Yes, never to be a mug-wump.....

The sighing of the trees, the clouds in the night sky and the moon made one forget too easily the world's troubles that evening, and sleep came readily.

Crack o' dawn again, and, as usual, Tigers were up and about! Breakfast over, and then the long yakker up Cedar Creek to Ruined Castle and the Coal Mine. All this passed too rapidly, for here, tucked between Narrow Neck and Korrowal, lies one of our prettiest brush creeks, so full of variety and wild growth, and yet undefiled.

Swims on the creek were a more or less lie down affair, but sufficient it was to cool off and then scramble on again over the granite boulders and along the leaf-strewn avenues betwixt the trees. Lunch on the way, and more stops before the pull up the ridge to the Knife-edge. Only that delightful walk through the tree ferns now remained, but how much it was appreciated! It must be an eye-opened to the tourists who care to adventure out and beyond the shelter sheds! Then that

last item, the cheap thrill on the winch railway, and again the seething masses of Katoomba, crowded trains, and the smells that hang around towns and railways.

All were very hungry and much food was bought before the old train arrived, and so we proceeded to fill the gnawing cavities.

Thus, as is related in the classics, another Tiger trip ended and, although this is told by an intruder, one who was not on the submarine excursion, the difficulties and joys can well be imagined when one considers Tiger standards. So I can roar, not of something to be roared about by myself, but of things seen and things done by others, for it is pleasing to have travelled in delectable company.

REPLY TO J. D.

In response to the Dirge in the last issue re Tim's snoring,
we are pleased to report:-

With gratitude Jack's heart is a-flutter,
Tim has coated his tonsils with butter,
Thus reducing his snore
From a thunderous roar
to a soft oleaginous mutter.

Now the joys of the road are chiefly these:
A crimson touch on the hardwood trees;
A vagrant's morning wide and blue,
In early fall, when the wind walks too;
A shadowy highway cool and brown
Alluring up and enticing down;
The outward eye, the quiet will
And the striding heart from hill to hill;
An open hand, an easy shoe,
And a hope to make the day go through.

Bliss Carman.

THE NON - SUCH



Here's a joyous New Year message to old hands and prospectives alike. All the questions have been answered, all the problems solved. No more worries in 1939. They have all been dealt with in advance.

As the calculating machine is to figure-work, so is Paddy's book to camping.

Are there ants in the jam, Has the damper turned out a sod? Turn up Paddy's book.

Are you wet and cold and your pack at the bottom of the creek? Turn up the book and find what it says.

Are you merely lost and want to find your way? Why - the book will help you.

Has the only girl in the world turned you down, or has your Mother-in-law come for a six-month visit. Turn to Paddy's book for solace.

These burblings are merely to introduce Paddy's new effort in the literary field - the new edition of "Bushwalking and Camping". Paddy has tried to make a good job of it. He has attempted to produce a handbook which in usefulness, looks and character will be worthy of the walking movement in Australia. It does not claim to be exhaustive. (Who could drain the deep well of walking wisdom?) Nevertheless Paddy hopes that it will be of use to those unversed in the art of lightweight camping and may be of interest to old hands as well.

F. A. PALLIN

327 George Street, Sydney
(opp. Palings).

'Phone B3101



AT OUR OWN MEETINGS

A few months ago the president of one of the other clubs was heard to say, "I think my Club will probably give one too, but I can't promise it. We're a democracy, you know."

So is the S.B.W. but the consistently poor attendances at Monthly General Meetings focusses attention on the definition of "Democracy" as - "Government of the people by the people for the people." So many club members, like so many citizens, seem prepared to take the benefits of democracy without shouldering its responsibilities.

Last monthly meeting - after the 29 members present had nearly committed the Club to certain action which, it was discovered, would have made the S.B.W. unpopular in a way the mover had not dreamed of - someone was heard to ask:- "Has democracy failed?" No, not yet, for the twenty-nine deliberately refrained from committing the other two hundred, but.....

One of these days the large body of members who do not attend the Club's business meetings will waken with a shock to discover that the enthusiastic (or conscientious, perhaps) few have committed the Club to action that, possibly, the majority of members would have voted against, if they had been present.

You have been warned.

AND it would be really interesting to know how the two hundred are going to decide who are the best people to vote for next month. Yes, of course, we know they will all come along to the Annual Meeting and have a wonderful time, as usual, electing new officers and a new committee, but HOW will they know which members are sufficiently interested to work for the Club,

.

The stalwart twenty-nine who attended the January meeting in spite of the intense heat had quite an amusing time - thanks to Ken Matthews being one of them. Incidentally, Ken volunteered to give Notice of Motion of "something very contentious" in order to ensure a good attendance at the February, or any other, meeting -- if anyone could suggest any contentious matter! No Notice of Motion was given.

As President Maurie Berry was visiting the Rootses in Brisbane, Vice-President Jack Debert was in the chair. This is getting quite a habit, Jack! He opened the meeting at 8.21 p.m. and closed it at 9.15 p.m. after the following business - and much more - had been dealt with:-

From the Correspondence the Meeting learned that the Committee had accepted, with regret, the resignations of Jim Cranitch, Arthur Austen, and Alton Chapple.

From the Social Secretary's Report, as amplified by Rene Browne, it was learned that the 1938 Christmas Treat at Lilyvale was a great success. £7.18.6 towards the cost was contributed voluntarily by individual members; many helpers made light work; and 76 children enjoyed the Treat.

An item of special interest in the Treasurer's Report was the payment in December, 1938, of the Annual Fee for 1939 on "Morella-karong" -- rental £5.0.0 plus

instalment on account of survey fee, £2.4.8, making a total of £7.4.8.

Mr. Perce Harvey volunteered to act as Room Steward for the ensuing month.

The meeting then considered, and adopted, the motion of which Mr. Alex. Colley had given notice to the December meeting, namely:- "That the Federation Delegates be instructed to move that the Federation Council adopt as its principal conservation project the Greater Blue Mountains National Park as planned by the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council." Mr. Colley has supplied some notes on this scheme which are published elsewhere in this issue.

Mr. Charlie Pryde drew attention to the shortage of drinking water on the Narrow Neck Peninsula and it was decided to get in touch with Katoomba Council and request them to have a well dug in Corral Swamp.

The Honorary Auditor having resigned, owing to pressure of business, we understand Mr. Tom Kennyroyal accepted nomination and was elected for the remainder of Mr. Eric Moroney's term as Auditor.

The Chairman announced that a special Reunion Committee had been appointed consisting of Miss Flo. Allsworth and Messrs Pallin, Herbert, Yardley, Duncan, Malcolm and Debert, and that they are asking for NEW ideas for exploitation. The Re-union is on March 11th, so don't delay with those ideas of yours!

By the way, the Swimming Carnival on February 25th and 26th will be held at a new place - on the George's River. Several members have inspected the pool and guarantee its suitability. They have also promised that a map showing how to get there will be prepared and displayed on the blackboard so that we shall all be able to find the spot and enjoy the Carnival.

Make a note of those dates -- Swimming Carnival, February 25th and 26th;
Re-union, March 11th and 12th - at our own
camping ground, "Morella-karong", of course.

We have been asked to publish the following:-

Will anyone going to "Morella-karong" please water the oak tree planted on the site of the 1937 re-union camp-fire.

We have heard it rumoured that the oak tree may shortly be moved to another spot, but, anyway, please water it.

We also suggest that it would be a sound scheme to take along a few runners of buffalo, couch, or other suitable grass on each visit and plant them on the camping-area. Any grass planted should also be watered by all those visiting "Morella-karong", as, unless we can get grass established on the area, the camp-site will soon be horribly bare.

E P I T A P H

(2,000 A.D.)

Collected by "One of the Girls".

Here lie the bones of poor Debert
He loved the girls -- a shameless flirt.
Of course the girls they all loved him,
The tall, the short, the fat, the thin.
He taught the young and old to walk,
But gained more lasting fame for talk.
He talked from when he rose at dawn
All through the day and night till morn.
He solved the problems of the world,
Put Hitler in his place, and curled
The whip of scorn round Mussolini.
You'd think he would grow thin and "leany",
His vocals working overtime,
Yet sixty found him in his prime.
At forty -- he said -- life began;
That's if you stuck to pemmican.
But when he took to selling light,
Then folks began at last to bite.
T'was coldness broke his heart at last,
That cold more chill than icy blast,
For someone called his talk "hot-air"!
He really felt it was not fair,
And so he laid him down and died,
And all the girls they cried and cried,
Then drowned themselves in their salt tears;
No sadder sight was seen for years.
Now on his tombstone carved in wood
Are these sad words - "Not Understood".

HINTS FOR CANOE-ISTS.

During the hot weather more and more of our members are taking to the gentle art of canoeing. It is so much more pleasant in the water than on the track.

Each and everyone of these enthusiasts will be interested in the sheet of Recommendations recently issued by The Search & Rescue Section. We had meant to publish them in this issue, but they have been crowded out by walking items. However, we take the opportunity of congratulating the S. & R. Section on the production of these clear and concise "safety first rules for canoe-ists, each of whom should secure a copy and study it carefully.

I N T R O S P E C T

by A. J. Salmon.

A party of civilians deciding to make use of a holiday week-end to see as much as possible of the Blue Mountains had, what they considered to be, the misfortune to choose much the same trip as some Sydney Bush Walkers and the impressions our club members literally left behind I found rather interesting.

Along quiet river banks these people first suspected the presence of other beings inhabiting their new found solitude when two individuals slinked softly past at a pace which might easily have been accelerated for the purpose of having the effect which, in fact, it did have, on a party obviously not bent upon progressing very rapidly.

Now this treatment makes a casual walker feel not only conscious of some superiority but no small measure of resentment. One who wanders along mountain rivers for the first time might well wonder why others should desire to rush through such country with their attention focussed on the ground immediately in front.

When several more had passed in the same strain the comments which followed certainly doubted the mental stability of those who would engage in such sacrilege to their surroundings.

Having been so decidedly overtaken they were very surprised a little later to find the marathon party just a short distance ahead of them and proceeding at much the same pace. With what vigour did they then slate those in front with physical hypocrisy, the previous accusations remaining unmitigated.

The bush walkers camped early and our friends found that they were able to push further on without any difficulty. Having gained an early start, many hours of the next day had passed before the weary party were again overtaken, but this time in much rougher country and in the heat of a midsummer day. Finding the going hard they were exasperated when the "enemy" flashed through once again making light of all the obstacles. Under these circumstances perhaps they could be forgiven for a primitive desire to plug an arrow into the intruders as they scrambled into the distance.

The next scene is set in the upper haunts of a peaceful creek one day later. After a long rock-hopping morning the now footsore beginners, who had not acquired the balance essential to negotiate slippery rocks, were sitting down to lunch. Several stalwarts were then seen rapidly approaching up the bed of the creek. But suddenly trees and rocks on either bank were heard crashing and breaking as other club members pounded through from all sides, dashing along in cruel delight at the indifference they could show to all natural resistance which they bashed contemptuously out of the way.

Prior to their coming the harmony of the creek had rendered a tranquillity which once disturbed did not return, for even the running water seemed to suffer a shock at the terrifying invasion which almost sent it scampering back upstream.

N O T I C E - F I R S T A I D C L A S S

All those interested are reminded that arrangements have been made with the St. John's Ambulance Brigade for a First Aid Class to start on the first Wednesday after Easter -- April 11th is the date. Those who intend joining this class are asked to give their names to Mr. L.G.Harrison (generally called "Mouldy") without delay.

If you have not yet mastered the essentials of this branch of bushcraft, we strongly recommend you to enrol at once for the class.



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T H A T ' S W H Y

- Dot English.

"What is it that attracts you to the mountains and bush every week-end?" they asked.

"Well," I said, "I will tell you a story. This is a strange tale, half in and half out of the world, for it has to do with a life that is past and gone, yet is as truly present now as to-day is. I shall never cease to wonder at the way the past colours the present.

"It started when I was a little over a year old. Exigencies of circumstances took us from Sydney to Queensland, where an exceptionally torrid summer, together with an epidemic of some description, so wasted the infant frame that my life was despaired of.

"You've got four", said the doctor, a heavy man with a bull neck. "What are you complaining about. You can't expect to rear 'em all."

However, my mother, with that unaccountable stubbornness mothers have, refused to give up hope. Every morning in the quiet grey silence before the dawn she would set out with me for the bush. We went early to avoid the heat of the day. From the top of the highest hill we would watch the sun arise in a glory of splendour. Trees would rustle with a cool stir in the soft dawn breeze as the world awoke.

"The world is very beautiful", my mother would say, wise brown eyes looking into infant eyes of a misty, unspeculative blue; " - the moving whisper of great trees, the deep blue sky, the ripple of bird songs, the scented fairy flowers. You won't leave the world that loves you, Jeanny-Bell. It's a wonderful world to explore. You will grow up as strong and beautiful as the lovely natural things all about." ---- and looking now at my mother, and now at the bush, the two became interwoven, and the life which was my mother became the life of the bush. Then from out the shadowy softness of trees and bushes little friendly faces showed, and a little man, with eyes tender and kindly as a lover's smile, beckoned to me, "Stay". So the little seed that was set took root and grew, and a shy and shadowy soul, wavering in uncertainty on the brink of two worlds, was won over to a play of light and shade, the whisper of leaf on leaf, the softness and colour of a butterfly's wing, the healthy, virile smell of the good earth. Life was good, after all, and it decided to stay.

There were happy puppy days in the bright clear Queensland weather, when the five little brothers and sisters lived and loved and laughed and were riotous in the sun. They danced and hunted through the bush; they lay sprawled on the hot, sun-dazzled earth, warm in the sun and delightfully cold in the shade, and watched the white islands of cloud heap themselves pile on pile and fill the upper air with movement and colour; they speculated on the infinite blue of the sky as seen through the riot of green and silver which was the gum trees. There was the joy of responding to the strong vibration of the earth, - of trying to unravel the myriad tiny noises that made up a noise, and who can explain the deep, soul-satisfying joy a child knows on feeling the silky-soft dust of the white road go puff between bare toes, or in squelching knee-deep through the thick black mud of tidal mangrove creeks. In the trees were koala bears to be enticed with gum leaves, and if you stayed in the bush when the sun had gone down you might be lucky enough to see a 'possum.

When I was five we came south again to live at Epping. Still the friendly grey-green bush was all around, and sometimes it was all splashed and painted with gold. On these days when the wattle bloomed a child could wander through the perfect sweetness of a world of green and gold, permeated with a wild-honey smell, and become

friendly with the horny, clinging splinter-pullers on the wattle bark, and the iridescent beetles that got in your hair, lifting their wing-cases and saying "p-s-s-s" in strident defiance when you tried to pull them off.

There were days of hot, singing silence, and days when the locusts droned deafeningly through the pulsating air. If they ceased suddenly it was as though Life had been snapped in the middle.

Some time about my tenth birthday we went to live on the western line, in a place of great, wide paddocks which stretched and rolled away as far as the eye could see. All around was a blue perimeter of sky, but over there where the sun went down, standing out in bold permanence against the sky, rose the mountains of the West, of a more entrancing, beckoning blue. How we children longed to go there. What stories we wove about the great hills and greater valleys where the dulcet air drifted lazily in deep, silent gorges walled in by tall gaunt ranges - - where the dingos howled at night beneath a sky freckled with stars, and quiet, round-eyed things prowled through the growth and sniffed in the dark. O the vastness of it! the solitude and the mystery!

Of course it was great fun to play down in the creek-bed near home where the ti-trees danced all in green and white, and the brown flood sang along between mossy banks rich in unexpected fungoid treasures of orange and purple, whites and browns and reds. It would act as a palliative for a time, and the insistence of the still small voice urging us to the mountains would be somewhat dulled, but in my mind a faint pain would remain to haunt me when alone.

Early one Autumn morning when the wind bore a scent of other worlds - urgent, tantalizing, prickling with adventure, and life courses like a white-gold fire through our veins, we set out across the windy paddocks, following the long streamers of cloud streaking across the infinite expanse of blue, pointing straight to the mountains.

We walked a long time. The wind dropped; the sun rose to the mid-sky and the hot hush of noon lay over a sleeping world, and we, too, lay down and slept. And in that half trance, which is the state between sleeping and waking, the doors separating this world from the next opened. I rose up and left my companions, and in a rainbow mist I entered the Shadow Land - the domain of the Little People. Here, out the corner of one eye, which is not the eye of day, you might catch a fleeting glimpse of an odd little man, his clothes as dun coloured as the trunks of the trees, gazing from under beetling brows, and beckoning, beckoning towards the mountains, with a laugh on his lips and an ironical twinkle in his cider-coloured eyes. But it would be useless to stop and call to him, "I remember you, little man. Take me with you," because when you looked at him he would not be there, or only a dead bush would be standing there with its branchy arms akimbo, and the laugh and chuckle you heard might not be anything but the dead bark rattling against the trunk.....

Even as I looked the colours blurred, the light faded and the shade of evening closed in. The mountains softly withdrew into the dark hollow of night and a little evening zephyr fanned the scented air.

I don't remember how we got home, but for a long time afterwards I went around in a brown haze of reminiscence, and when I looked I looked with but half an eye, and when I listened I listened with but half an ear, like one who has been bewitched, and indeed I was for the Little Man of the Mountains had cast his spell over me, and I knew that the bush and the mountains formed part of the heart of me for ever.

However, the mountains remained as far away as ever. School work and

suburban interests filled my days till, at the age of 19 or 20, a wonderfully new and exciting world opened to me. I joined up with the happy, friendly company of people whose hearts belong to the deep solitudes of the bush, the rugged sun-kissed ridges, and the shining watercourses. Together we go out into quiet places, and at odd moments we may catch a glimpse of a little fleeting form from the Shadow Land, and as we lie by the camp-fire at night, watching the red sparks fly upwards in a rush of light toward the cold white radiance of the stars a deep peace steals over us in the realisation that we have at last come home.

FEDERATION NEWS

Through a circular issued to the Clubs, the Federation has made the following request for your assistance ...

PUBLICITY

It is desired to compile a list of persons who, whilst not now members of an affiliated club or associate members of the Federation, might be induced to take an interest in our movement with beneficial results to our activities. By contacting these people it is hoped to increase the numbers of organised walkers and at the same time to obtain the practical support of many who, though not walkers themselves, are likely to be sympathetic to our objectives and are in a position to assist us. Contact would be established by means of the circulation of pamphlets, reports and the like.

The compilation of the list involved difficulties which can, I feel sure, be overcome by the co-operation of the clubs and their members. Every member must know of at least two or three suitable people, and it is asked that each club should collect a list of names and addresses from their members. The way of doing this is, of course, left to the clubs themselves, but it might be found convenient to arrange for one or more of the members to be responsible for the work. The lists can be forwarded to either Mr. G.B. Loder, 41 Douglas Street, Ryde or myself.

I feel strongly that our objective and accomplishments should interest a great many people, and I am equally sure that we can accomplish far more than we are now doing if we obtain greater support from the public. To achieve this end, I would ask for the co-operation of all members."

The circular is signed by C.D'A. Roberts, Hon. Secretary of the Federation.

There are trails that make you weary,
There are trails that make you tough,
There are trails that ever lead you nowhere,
There are trails that leave you in the rough;
There are trails of all degrees of badness,
There are trails that take you up and down
But the trail that fills you full of sadness
Is the trail that leads you back to town.

— Anon.

From the Song Book of the Alpine Club of Canada.

CLUB GOSSIP

The first item of interest this month is the safe return from her Western China adventure of Marie Byles. What tales she will have to tell us! And how glad she will be that she arrived the week after our local thermometers broke all records. Welcome home, Marie! And congratulations on a notable achievement - even though you did not "bag" the highest peak.

We also extend hearty congratulations to Jean and Bill Johnston; the stork brought them a son on January 19th.

Ex-member Evelyn Millard and Ninian Melville of the Coast & Mountain Walkers are being married on February 18th; we wish them both, "All the Best".

"Pinkie" Webber, who still faithfully pays his sub. although no one has seen him for years, is said to have been married lately, so probably he won't even pay his sub. next year.

Most people reckon the year from January 1st to December 31st, but Maurie Berry, who recently visited the Rootses in Brisbane, reports they count each year from March to March. Yes, of course, they'll be down to this year's Re-union.

Norrie Macdonald is in town, nursing a crushed foot. You know how these farm animals love to rub themselves against a post; we understand Norrie was in the way when a Bedford Truck decided to rub against the shed doorpost, and, although he jumped when he saw the gleam in its eye, he did not quite get clear. Tough luck, Norrie, but we are glad to see you on Friday evenings, crutches, and plaster and all.

We also extend our sincere sympathy to Geoff. Parker, who has been in hospital for over a month suffering from poisoned legs as a result of scratches received while searching the Colo Valley for two men who were overdue on the way to Newnes towards the end of November last. Apparently there are some particularly poisonous vines and plants growing beside the Colo, and their special kind of poison is baffling to the medical profession. When Ninian Melville and his party - which included Dunk, Rene, Roxy, and Ray - came through the Colo in 1934 Roxy developed a badly poisoned hand from a cut thumb, and Ninian a poisoned leg. When he went to the doctor he was asked if he could provide a specimen of the plant which had scratched him! It would have helped the doctor lots if he could have isolated the poison from a similar plant, but Ninian was not going back for a specimen! Still, he did not have such a bad time as Geoff. Parker is going through.

Will any walkers venturing into Colo country in the future, please remember this warning, and bring back specimens of any strange plants that may scratch them, This precaution might save them weeks of suffering.

Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs -
To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not repress
Its music, lest it should not find
An echo in another's mind.

-- P. B. Shelley.