

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A Monthly Bulletin devoted to matters of interest to
The Sydney Bush Walkers, 5 Hamilton Street, Sydney.

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EDITORIAL

As you can read on Page 5, the Committee has re-elected us to the job of running the Club Magazine; who we are you can see from the top of this page; and how we do our job you can see by reading the whole magazine.

We hope you will enjoy our work as much as we do, and we believe our Constant Readers will agree with us that we all know a lot more about the job now than we did this time last year.

We intend to make "The Sydney Bushwalker" an even better magazine this year than last - if we can have the co-operation of our fellow-members. Yes, articles, paragraphs, accounts of trips, verses, jokes and "items of interest" are what we mean. Without them we cannot produce a magazine, so send them along please, all the bright and breezy tales, all the pithy pars, all the concise and interesting articles. Send them along and have your name, or nom-de-plume, included in the list of those who have helped to make the magazine.

"With these few words".....as Chairmen say we introduce "The Sydney Bushwalker" to you once again.

MOUNTAIN WALKING

by W. Henry Lewin.

Some Extracts from an Article that appeared in
The Canadian Alpine Journal, 1937

It is, perhaps, an open question where mountain walking ends and mountain climbing begins, for many devotees of the former are sometimes inclined to mistake the two terms. But as a general proposition, the line of demarcation would appear to be at that point where the raising of the body requires the assistance of the hands or where the negotiation of ice and snow is concerned....

Similar to mountain climbing, however, mountain walking also possesses its own special technique. It may seem a mere platitude to state that the first half-hour of a long steep walk should be conducted at the slowest possible speed, a crawling start up the first few hundred feet being the only method by which ultimate rhythm of movement can be maintained. Once this rhythm is established speed should increase automatically without any corresponding increase in the rate of pulse or breathing. With careful attention to this slow start, the walker should find himself going stronger at the end of the day than when approaching the luncheon halt.

But perhaps the primary law of walking up a steep track is that THERE SHOULD BE A MINIMUM OF CONSCIOUS EFFORT IN LIFTING THE LEGS FROM THE GROUND. A slight swing of the body from left to right, alternately, which, with practice, becomes almost unconscious will bring up each foot with a minimum of energy expenditure. The length of the stride being, of course, determined by the angle of terrain: the steeper the angle, the shorter the stride. To travel uphill behind a Swiss guide is an education in this direction, his footmarks leaving almost a single instead of a double track. His legs will seem to swing from the hips upon automatic pivots, and once this method has been mastered it is found to be entirely lacking in concentrated mental effort upon muscular centres.

It is thus the weight of the body, correctly applied, which is the all-important factor in ascending a fairly smooth track or path. With rough bed rock tracks, where many steps may be several inches higher than the preceding ones, some conscious lifting of the feet and bending of the knees will be necessary. But even over that class of track the swerving roll of the body will have its influence both in ensuring normal breathing and also in minimum energy expenditure. This method of travelling, if perhaps unbeautiful, is really the only effective means of covering long distances uphill with very little more effort than when travelling upon the flat.

One of its minor results, also, is that it assists in bringing the complete lower surface of the boot into a perfectly flat contact with the ground at every step, and thus tends to avoid the temptation - so prevalent on severe angles - of ascending only upon the sole of the foot, with the heel an inch or two off the ground. The latter should be strictly guarded against, causing, as it does, a severe strain upon the ankles and not improbably a damaged cuticle upon the toes. Upon certain tracks where the angle slopes to left or right a similar flat-footed tread should prevail. Soaping the heels and toes of stockings is

also a good idea under all conditions.

Straight-line short cuts across a zigzag track when ascending tend to upset rhythm and throw the breathing apparatus out of gear, but every short cut should be utilised during the descent.

Frequent halts under the well-known camouflage of "admiring the scenery" should be avoided as also tending to destroy the rhythm. Given an average surface of track with speed carefully regulated during the initial stages, two thousand feet of altitude over an area of three miles of ground should be easily accomplished, non-stop, in an hour and a half. Stopping to admire the scenery seems unnecessary, for it is the writer's experience that the most intense quality of scenic beauty is realised more completely when glimpsed instantaneously under conditions of physical and mental effort rather than when viewed during a state of bodily inertia.

But all rests must be dominated by considerations of maintaining that somewhat elusive term "form". It is difficult to diagnose this term with any exactitude, but in the lower part of the abdomen, about five inches below the solar plexus, there is a location, perhaps partly physical and partly psychological, which appears to be the central fulcrum and initiating machinery of all physical and mental effort. It is probably an intense and continuous grasp of this centre which denotes the maintenance of "form". Some ancient once described the spot named as the seat of the soul, which, in the absence of all evidence, seems a plausible diagnosis. Whenever a personal grasp of this centre is relaxed, owing to exhaustion or lack of concentration, form and style will be lost and the continuance of physical effort under such circumstances may be more harmful than beneficial. A bodily condition will have been reached which may also be described as "walking upon one's uppers," and a long rest may be necessary to restore the old grip.....

Descents of mountain tracks are usually conducted at a fairly high speed, the rolling method being less necessary owing to the momentum of bodily weight at a descending angle tending to carry the legs with it. What appears to be the correct movement, given suitability of angle, is a sort of jog-trot

... To descend an average angle slowly, however, with the body in too upright a position, means that a check is being placed unduly upon the work that the body will perform automatically by its own momentum. And this bodily check, owing to a too slow and cautious descent, will also impose a greater strain upon the tibialis anticus muscles and knee caps than will be the case with greater freedom of movement and longer strides. That suspicion of crooked knees upon the day following a long descent will be much less apparent under the latter conditions, and will also tend towards good balance, a quick eye and increases activity.

.....

(Note. The Canadian Alpine Journal, 1937, is available in the Club Library)
(if anyone wishes to read the whole article - Ed.)



AT OUR OWN MEETING

The initial duty of our new President at his first monthly meeting (April) was the very pleasant one of presenting the Cups and Certificates won by various members and their friends at the recent Swimming Carnival.

From the correspondence we learned that Eve Turnbull (nee Eason) had tendered her resignation and it had been accepted with regret.

Also that the Tasmanian Govt. had forwarded to the Club twenty copies of a sketch map of "The Scenic Reserve" (Cradle Mountain) -- if any of you folk are planning a trip to the "Apple Isle" one of these maps may be yours for the asking.

A letter from the M.T.C. regarding a suggested reserve on Heathcote Creek was amplified by Myles Dunphy who told the meeting of the reasons that led the Mountain Trails Club to lease "Myarra", and of the M.T.C.'s plans, and hopes, for the preservation of the valley in its natural state. He suggested that those present who also belonged to other clubs might talk of the plans and suggest that those clubs also take up special leases along Heathcote Creek and so form a chain of protected areas which might later form the nucleus of a Primitive Reserve. Myles also asked for assistance in extending the foot track that the M.T.C. is making along the valley.

The Federation has published a booklet entitled "Introduction to Bushwalking", copies of which may be obtained from the Club on application. Why not pass one or two on to your interested but non-walking friends?

Retiring Room Steward, Maurie Berry, called for a volunteer to fill the vacancy, but as no offer was forthcoming Maurie agreed to carry on the job for another month.

It was resolved that letters of appreciation be forwarded to Charlie Pryde for the very fine "Roll of Presidents" he made and presented to the Club, and to Harry Savage for the splendid set of "Symbols of President's Office" which he carved so beautifully and donated to the Club at the Reunion.

As the first birthday of the Bunyips' Walking Club is approaching, their Secretary, "Topsy" Ankersen, suggested that it would be a nice gesture on the part of the S.B.W. to make a birthday gift of Bunyip badges to the first twenty members of that Club. The Committee is thinking it over.

The Federation is again considering a scheme to procure a separate room or rooms for its own meetings, and which could be sub-let to clubs and other organisations for meetings, small functions, rehearsals etc.

Owing to the increasing amount of work to be done by the Federation Secretary and the difficulty of finding a suitable member with sufficient time to devote to this important task, Alex Colley proposed that a paid secretary be found to handle this position as a part time job. After some discussion the meeting agreed to support the proposal, provided that a secretary could be found with the necessary qualifications and that the amount paid would be one which the various clubs could afford to support.

Towards the end of the meeting Tom Herbert came along from the Garawarra Park Trust meeting and informed us that the motion to merge Garawarra with National Park had been carried by four votes to three. It is understood that when the recommendation of the fusion comes before the Minister for Lands, the Federation

will do all in its power to assure the Minister that it is in the best interests of walkers and the public generally, both now and in the future, that Garawarra be rededicated as a Primitive Area and not merged into the National Park.

Just before the meeting closed at 9.50 p.m. it was announced that the Era Surf Life Saving Association and the Era Camping Club are jointly petitioning for the resumption of the Andrew Byrne Estate and its addition to Garawarra Reserve as a Primitive Area.

ASSISTANT OFFICERS 1939/1940

At its first meeting the new Committee elected the following Assistant Officers:

<u>Librarian:</u>	Miss W. Duncombe
<u>Asst. Librarian:</u>	" Sheilagh Porter
<u>Asst. Walks Secretary:</u>	Mr. Harold Rolfe.
<u>Asst. Social Secretary:</u>	Mrs. Thel. Hellyer
<u>Hon. Solicitor:</u>	Miss M. B. Byles.
<u>Hon. Editor</u>	Miss D. Lawry.
<u>Business Manager. (Magazine)</u>	Mr. Brian Harvey.
<u>Curator of Maps & Recorder:</u>	Mr. Gordon Smith.
<u>Historian & Scrap Album.</u>	Mr. Chas. Pryde.
<u>Photo Album:</u>	Miss W. Duncombe.
<u>Hon. Asst. Treasurer:</u>	Mr. John Woods.
<u>Social Committee:</u>	Misses Doreen Harris, Joyce Trimble, May Boyd. Messrs. Ossie Brownlee, Jack Debert.



THE LEICA PHOTO SERVICE

is NOT a mass-production unit - we are NOT Street Photographers. You can rest assured we will give you the personal attention you demand: we appreciate the trouble and hardship often undertaken by Bushwalkers to secure good photographs - of unusual angles on familiar scenes - of places seldom visited - and accordingly we process your work with the care it deserves;

A N D

we allow 10% special discount on all work, and films purchased, to members of all Bush-walking clubs.

Call and inspect our wide range of used Cameras of all makes -
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THE LEICA PHOTO SERVICE

"Kyle House",
31 Macquarie Street,
SYDNEY

SYDNEY BUSH WALKERS :

ARE YOU REALLY DISPLAYING AN INTEREST IN CONSERVATION ?

asks Bill Mullins.

This provocative question, impertinent many of you will say, is something which springs from the presence of a certain apathetic attitude discernible in the outlook of not a few members. Why this is so is a question which concerns individuals themselves; something which cannot vanish merely on its being exposed and explained away. Material in which we can be well interested is ever present, for Conservation is a continuous task. In the February issue of the Club Magazine Alex Colley outlined the programme which Club delegates to the Federation have been instructed to pursue. It is most complete and comprehensive and could well be issued in pamphlet form for the information of all Club members, particularly for the enlightenment of the more recent additions to Club membership.

Thus, in this programme, is defined something in which, it is contended, interest is lacking, and it is now necessary to point out how this conclusion is reached. It should be remembered that the question implies a "display of interest" in the present tense and takes into no account past achievement in Conservation work, for although the good work of the past is recognised on all sides, surely no one will say in good faith that these past accomplishments are laurels to be rested upon and that, "Oh! the future will look after itself."

The best way to judge whether or not a display of interest is present is to look for various features in outlook and demeanour in the Club Members.

The first point taken is as follows:-

(1) How much interest is displayed by the Club Members in the monthly Federation report submitted at each general meeting? This report serves as the only official memorandum received by the Club concerning the previous Federation meeting and deserves every attention. It means that if this single communication line is trodden underfoot by a hard-riding meeting of members who, in their thoughtlessness, reject the only means of contact of expression with the Federation, then the interest of the delegates must wane. Their enthusiasm, if they are normal men, springs from the inspirations and impulses received by them from their fellow members. If interest is lacking, how can the delegates be expected to display the right kind of enthusiasm, the particular brand which accomplishes and overcomes apparently insurmountable tasks. Consequently for this reason alone, bigger and better attendances are desirable at Club meetings.

(2) How often have we heard it declared in General Meeting, "Oh, that is a Federation matter", and thereupon the discussion is shut up as quickly and almost as furtively as a contentious motion meeting its death in Tammany politics.

If any member wants to speak on conservation, whatever it is, let him! It at least shows that he is interested.

The reason for these disparaging tactics appears to be that the members do not want these discussions and the chairman, their elected mouthpiece in quelling apparently irrelevant discussion, is but expressing their wishes.

(3) What are we - the general body of members - doing in the way of example to new members? What an apathetic lot they must think we are in conservation politics!

It is the duty of established members to display an active interest in vital matters such as conservation so that they may be more able to keep their worthy objects in view and at the same time inspire new members with a really enthusiastic outlook. For new members to acquire any knowledge of the objective and to be able to assimilate any education and propaganda about conservation, there must be this enthusiasm so well made, or broken, through real enthusiasm or its absence.

(4) It might well be asked, In what other avenues must members display an interest in Federation?

Again we take the February issue of the Club Magazine. In this there appears a letter by the Secretary of the Federation appealing to all members of clubs for co-operation and certain lists of names. This is not the place to reiterate such appeal, but sufficient it is to say that if you have not rallied to this appeal, atone and rally round to justify your arguments that you are displaying an interest in Federation and Conservation affairs.

RIVER MAPS

In January issue we announced that the Mapping Committee of the River Canoe Club had completed seven Maps and had advised us that they were available for inspection by any member of any affiliated club.

We now have pleasure in announcing that this energetic Committee advises that three additional Maps are now available, namely;

- Map No.8. South and Eastern Creeks (Hawkesbury River System)
- Map No.9. Canoeist's Chart of the Navigable Portion of the Lower Cataract River.
- Map No.10. Barrington River (from Rocky Crossing, Upper Barrington to junction with the Manning River.)

The River Canoe Club is to be congratulated on its Maps, and on the members of its Mapping Committee.

S E N S A T I O N !!

WHAT ? YES - another famous PALLIN PUBLICATION, and its F R E E !

It's enclosed as a free supplement in this issue - what can be more generous ?

Paddy has gone away to enjoy a well earned holiday, but the Pallin House Flag is still flying at 327 George Street. Roll up !
Roll Up!

"PADDYMADE" is "BETTER MADE".

F. A. PALLIN,
327 George Street
(Opp. Palings)
SYDNEY

Tel. B3101.

From the APPALACHIAN TRAILWAY NEWS published by the Appalachian Trail Conference, Inc. Washington, U.S.A. - January, 1939.

BEARDS ON THE TRAIL

The oft-mooted question, "To shave or not to shave" is usually felt to be, after all, a matter of personal preference. Another aspect appears in a report received from Harold Pearn, President of the Roanoke Appalachian Trail Club.

On a recent trip over The Appalachian Trail from the James River to Rockfish Gap, he had opportunities to meet a number of the inhabitants of this region, about whom he says, "The people are some of the finest I ever came in contact with. The membership of the A.T. stand well with them. That shows that the ones that have hiked the Trail have left a good impression". But he was told they liked clean shaves instead of beards on hikers, as they "like to see a man's face".

Beards appear to be associated with tramps, not with trampers, and to raise doubts and suspicion.

Possibly, for the reputation of the hiking fraternity, a man on the Trail should shave even though he would prefer to take a vacation from that duty also.

E A T S

by E.A.T.O.R.

The Editor said, "Write a short article on eats and make it snappy." Now, most of you will agree that a problem was set right away, because one of the cardinal rules of bushwalking is not to be short of any article of eats, and no wellbred walker would snap his food.

Probably all of you have memories of meals that stand out. You don't know and don't care what percentages of proteins or vitamins, etc., were in them, but you do know how you felt afterwards. I'm going to give you some of my recollections which go back many years.

About twenty miles over "the hills of home" lay a little village which had a small eating house. The proprietress understood our capacity and if we sent word beforehand that we would be along about a certain time, we were always sure of something special. I can still picture that little room with its brightly-glowing fire and the table partly laid when we arrived tired, hungry and probably wet with snow after a long day in the heather. Then there would be a bustle and a substantial meal would appear, to be followed by hot scones, homemade butter, jam and cake. Of course we had to show our appreciation, and stoke up for the long trip home.

Exactly opposite was the reception we got one time in another place. It was at an old hotel (a very big and well known place in the coaching days) but the main road had been diverted and, although the license was kept on, it did not cater for meals. However, as travellers, we said we must have food for the next place was too far away. After a long wait in a cold room, we sat down to one boiled egg each and luke-warm tea. Later trips in that direction were planned differently.

One Easter three of us were cycling in County Donegal and had written to various hotels booking accommodation. One day we were badly delayed and, as we knew we would arrive at the hotel very late, we had a huge meal in a town we passed through. When we got there we found the hotel was not yet open for the season but there had not been time to advise us so, rather than put us to any inconvenience, the proprietors invited us to be their guests, and had been keeping back a beautiful dinner! We did not want any dinner after the meal we had recently eaten, but had to do our best to acknowledge our hosts' kindness. That is the only time I've been really "chock-a-block".

Another Easter a few years ago a party was camped in Medlow Gap. Most of us went down White Dog to The Cox's River and back by Spotted Dog, Warrigal and Dingo, but got caught in mist, rain and darkness. On reaching camp several hours overdue, we found the cooks had kept the fires going and had billies of "kedge" and strong coffee waiting. We were all very tired, wet, cold and hungry, and what a feeling it was to get that hot coffee and "kedge" inside!

A somewhat similar experience befell another party the following Easter but then our good friends "the Carlons" acted as hosts.

The Editor is growling about waiting for this, and about its length, but, if you can digest some more, perhaps there will be another course later.

FEDERATION NEWS

On the 24th March the Federation held another four-hour meeting mostly devoted to conservation matters.

One break in the proceedings was afforded by the presentation to Tom Herbert of a Wedding Present from his fellow delegates.

The ranks of the Federation were increased by the election of another Associate Member - Mr. G. Gabelle of Hurstville.

Several minor matters of conservation value were considered but the two main items were the suggested fusion of Garawarra Reserve with The National Park and the proposed reservation of the Valley of Heathcote Creek for public recreation.

Circulars had been sent to the affiliated clubs and to various conservation and other organisations asking them to write to the Garawarra Trust and add their protests to that voiced by the Federation. Further action of various kinds to combat the proposed fusion with The National Park was considered and several decisions were reached, the most important being the resolution to write to the Minister for Lands requesting that the Garawarra Park be rededicated as a Primitive Reserve, as defined in the letter, and that the Garawarra Trust be reconstituted so that it would consist of one representative from each of the following:-

- Lands Department.
- The National Park.
- Bulli Shire Council.
- Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia.
- Parks and Playgrounds Movement of N.S.W.
- N.S.W. Federation of Bushwalking Clubs
- National Parks & Primitive Areas Council.

Mr. Roberts disagreed very strongly with the resolution as he considered there is at present no provision for declaring an area a primitive reserve. He therefore tendered his resignation as Honorary Secretary of the Federation, but was asked to reconsider it.

The Mountain Trails Club protested that it had had no advice before the letter was written to the Minister for Lands asking that the Valley of Heathcote Creek be reserved for public recreation, its delegates not having been present at the January meeting. This was a very serious matter as, if the reserve was gazetted, in all probability the M.T.C. and S.B.W. leases in the area would be cancelled and legally those two clubs must protest at once against the proposal unless they were prepared to surrender the leases. Both clubs were definite that they were not prepared to surrender the leases which had been taken up partly, at least, with the idea of preserving the areas in their natural state so that on the expiry of the leases they might form the nucleus of a primitive reserve. The M.T.C. and N.P. & P.A. Council hoped that other clubs might also obtain special leases in the Valley with the same object in view, but the Federation's proposal for a public recreation reserve threatened to wreck the plan which was already operating. In view of this information and after considerable discussion the meeting decided to write to the Minister explaining the position and revoking its previous suggestion.

As it was learned that the responsibility for protecting trees on Crown Lands is vested in the Forestry Commission and not in the Lands Department, the meeting resolved to ask the Commission to appoint an officer to patrol Heathcote Creek at holiday week-ends when most of the damage occurs.

Just before the meeting closed at 10.45 p.m. Mr. Roberts again tendered his resignation, which was accepted with regret, and Miss Dorothy Lawry was appointed Acting Honorary Secretary to carry out the necessary work of the Federation until a new Honorary Secretary could be elected at the April meeting.

OF INTEREST TO WOMEN

GIRLS! Keep fit for Walking and prepare for the next Bushwalker Concert by attending the Special Body Culture and Dancing Classes at Irene Vera Young's School of the Dance, Pitt Street, (opposite Palmer's Store). Classes from 6 p.m. till 7 p.m. on Friday nights. The fee should appeal to Bushwalkers, being only 1/- per lesson, for classes of 10 or more.

SPECIAL FEATURE - Something different in dances for the next Concert, Anyone interested see Yvonne Douglas or "Topsy" Ankersen.

(Ed. Note:- This is not an advertisement-unless the Business Manager can do something about it - but the girls are anxious to get a class formed so they can enjoy themselves from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. each Friday evening, and we decided to test the pulling power of "The Sydney Bushwalker" by publishing their call for dancers.)

OF GENERAL INTEREST

Have you seen the April issue of A.P.R. - the Australasian Photo Review - published by Kodaks? It contains two articles about Bushwalking and several pictures which you will probably recognise.

FROM HERE, THERE & EVERYWHERE

From the "Bulletin" of the Mountain Club of Maryland, Baltimore, for January-February-March, 1939, we are interested to learn that :-

"At the 1937 Appalachian Trail Conference...a definite suggestion was advanced .. by Edward B. Ballard, of the National Park Service...which has now become an accomplished fact. It has resulted in the creation of a new and broader project - The Appalachian Trailway. In all Federally-owned lands, namely some 800 miles of the 2,050 mile route, there has been established a narrow area of a mile in width on each side of The Appalachian Trail which is entirely devoted to the interests of those who seek their recreation on foot. This is to be the domain of the hiker alone. Within it are to be built no paralleling motor roads or other developments incompatible with the existence of this zone. The problem before the (annual) Conference (now) and one perhaps impossible of complete execution and which will, in any event, occupy a long period of time, is the spreading of the protection of The Appalachian Trailway zone over the entire route....."

Here is a new idea for a walk! It comes from New York, from the Hiking Trips Bureau of which our old friend, Ernest A. Sench, is the Director, and evidently they are not a superstitious crowd for it was published on Page 13 of their walks schedule..

"Sunday, March 19 - Southfields Circular. Leader: Harold E. Bennett.

This 'Flip a Coin' hike is in the Wild Cat Mountain and Spruce Pond terrain, west of Highway No.17. No matter how obscure it may be, every time an intersection of trails or wood roads is reached, a coin will be tossed to decide which way we go. This ritual will continue until the campfire luncheon at noon or thereabouts. The afternoon will be fully occupied getting straightened out on a compass direction

back to Southfields station. It should be lots of fun, as those who were present on our Semi-Get Lost Tuxedo trip last September will agree. This unconventional type of trip is what our leader rejoices in conducting. 'Bushwhacking' should be his middle name."

We should imagine the afternoon of March 19th would be very fully occupied! If our new Committee wants to be even tougher than its predecessors, it could try out this idea on some prospectives, say in the Rooty Hill district!

CLUB GOSSIP

During Easter many of our members undertook hazardous trips made more difficult by the many weeks of rain prior to the holidays. The rivers being swollen and the walking generally wet and slippery, many adventures were experienced; however, everyone seems to have had a jolly time and come through safely, with one exception. On the third day of the official trip, when walking down the Kowmung, Muriel Hall slipped on a wet rock and broke one of her wrists -- Hard luck, Muriel!

Wedding bells will be ringing on May 6th, for on that day Ian (Scotty) Melcolm will be married to Miss Betty Kirwan -- also, ex-member Gladys Parsons will become the wife of Colin Barbard of the Coast and Mountain Walkers. We wish them all the best of luck and every happiness in the future.

It was a pleasure to see Bert Carlon at our meeting last month. Although this young man is well known to many of us, it is seldom we have the opportunity to welcome him to our own Clubroom.

We believe that Kath Mackay and Reece Caterson have applied to have their names transferred to the non-active members list. It is most gratifying to know that members take an interest in the Club even when they are prevented from joining us in walks and other activities. We hope to see them in the Clubroom whenever the opportunity permits.

A little bird told us that Tom Donnelly is in Sydney on six months leave and hopes to be "hitting the high spots" with some of his old "cobbers"!

"Buster" Furnell is also back in town - to live, we believe - so should be renewing old acquaintances very shortly..

PIJARROTS!!

A Glimpse into the Future

by Dorothy Lawry.

One wet Saturday night the Secretary of the S. & R., the Room Steward, and I reclined beside a smoky fire awaiting the arrival of the rest of the Pirate Crew. Said Jean,

"Here's a paragraph for the magazine, Dorothy. Did you know the S.&R. is talking of crossing pigeons and parrots? Then the birds will be able to say where the lost party is, instead of bringing in illegible messages..."

Maurie's contribution also was news...

"Did you know it has recently been discovered that when homing pigeons fly close to a broadcasting station they lose their sense of direction?"

"That's where the 'pijarrots' will come in! When one comes under the influence of a station and gets dithered it will just drop down and ask,

'Which way did I come?'"

.....

Scene: The control room of the National Broadcasting Station 2SEW.

Time: A dark night in the distant future (well, maybe not so very distant).

Enter Pijarrot, staggering, but addressing Operator politely.

P. Which way did I come? Where am I? I am sorry to trouble you, sir, but your "field" is so strong that I am dithered and don't know which way I am going. Could you please tell me; it is most important.

O. Who the ...? What are you? Where did you come from? Gosh!

P. I'm a pijarrot, and I've got an urgent message to deliver for the S. & R.

O. A pijarrot? The S. & R.? Never heard of them.

He turns away to attend to his instruments.

P. Won't you please tell me where I am? And which direction Sydney is? My message for Bob is very urgent; the lost party is in a bad way.

O. What lost party? Who are you anyway, and what are you talking about?

P. I'm one of the pijarrots that the S. & R. bred by crossing homing pigeons and parrots, and I'm on a very important job. The S. & R. sent a party out to search for those three chaps that have been lost in the mountains for a week. We have found them and I'm bringing in word where they are and that they are in a bad way and need an ambulance party sent to them, but I flew too close to your station, and all the electricity has upset my sense of direction and I'm lost. Won't you please tell me where I am and which way to go.

The pijarrot was so very earnest that the Operator was convinced --- and he saw he could make a "scoop" and get ahead of the newspapers, so...

O. I'll do better than that, Pijarrot, I'll put you right on the air and you can send your message through without flying any further tonight.

P. Oh, thank you! But do you think Bob will be listening? Do you think he will recognise my voice? What if he thought the message was just a hoax!

O. I'll put you over the television, then he will know it is you all right.

Just a minute, though, who did you say your sponsors were? This is not a commercial station and I have to be careful. Who is this S. & R.?

P. The S. & R. sir? Why, that's the Search and Rescue Section of the New South Wales Federation of Bushwalking Clubs!

.....

So the pijarrot got his message through; but he did not get the good night's rest he had earned for, unfortunately, Jock Marshall and some other ornithologists had the television turned on, and when they saw the strange bird the hunt was up. If Pijarrot had not been warned by an ardent conservationist who happened to be with them at the time, his number would have been up. He is still flying for his life, and appealing to the S.&R. to hurry up and breed lots more pijarrots so he will no longer be a rara avis.