

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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

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Editor: Dorothy Lawry
Subscriptions: Doreen Harris
Special Reporter: Merle Hamilton

Business Manager: Brian Harvey
"On Service" Copies: Grace Jolly
Production: Mary Stoddart.

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A NIGHT OF NIGHTS

Friday, 14th March, 1941, will be a great night for members of the S.B.W. for then the Club will hold its thirteenth Annual Meeting, but the night of nights will be Saturday, March 15th. All the Sydney Bush Walkers, both past and present, who can make it will come together in the grand spirit of re-union and ensure that the Club's new year starts off in an atmosphere of rejoicing and good fellowship.

All members of the human race, whether white, black, brown or brindle, love a certain amount of ceremony and ritual and, whether or not this is a primitive urge, it has become a tradition with the Club to light the re-union campfire ceremoniously, to induct the new President and formally deliver to him the "hallowed bone" which is the mace of his office. This has not been allowed to devolve into a dull formula as each year's ceremony is different from those of other years, and we can be assured of something fresh and intriguing for the night of Saturday, March 15th.

Choruses, solos, recitations, plays and sketches will take us far into the night, with a break only for the traditional community supper.

Next day we can swim, laze, and yarn, and meet again some whom we have not met, perhaps, since last re-union.

Our enjoyment will be tinged with regret at the absence of those of our members who are on war service. They will be missed by us and they will no doubt regret missing the re-union, but we are confident that their sacrifices will help to bring happier days when we can be all together again and re-une in the care-free, happy spirit of bushwalkers.

Though those days are not here yet, the spirit of re-union will be in possession of Acacia Camp, Leona, Nepean River, via Emu Plains, on March 15th, when there will be a full muster of the S.B.W. as all members will be present in the spirit if they cannot get along in the flesh.

NEW BOOKS IN LIBRARY.

"Aust. Meteorology." A book on Forecasting, Cloud Forms, Rainfall, Clouds and their origin.

"Weather and Instruments." How Thermometers are made. How to read the different weather instruments. Good pictures of cloud forms.

"Canoeing Handbook of the Boy Scouts of America." Best book on how to rail and manage a canoe and how to repair it when broken.

"Yachting on a Small Income". Another book on small boats. Explains how to sail and run a small sailboat.

"How to Use the Microscope". A book for the novice showing what to look for and how to mount specimens. Explains all the parts of microscope.

"Back of Beyond" by Stewart Edward White. African tale of big game shooting and explorations in British East Africa. Fact and fiction. Good reading. (All S.E. White's books are outdoor tales and make good reading for walkers.)

"Ralph in the Woods." by Ernest Thompson Seton. This book is NOT a kid's tale, but a darn good yarn of the life of one of the early American Scouts and there is a lot of woodcraft to be learned from it. Recommend all Bush Walkers to read it.

--- John Manson.

Our librarian says that John Manson donated all the above books, "Because they were just doing nothing on his bookshelves" and he thought they might be of interest to his fellow members. Would anyone else like to follow his example?

GREETINGS TO THE BUSHWALKERS FROM THE NEW ZEALAND SNOWS.

Dot English.

This is being written on the first day of rest we have had during the past fortnight. For two whole weeks the weather had been perfect, which suited us down to the ground. We came over the Copeland Pass and arrived in at the Hooker Hut with the first of the bad weather. The next day it rained and blew hard enough to shift the hut down the moraine rocks to the glacier hundreds of feet below. Bad luck that the weather should have broken just then, because one of the boys and I had designs on Mt. Cook, and with only three days of his holidays remaining things didn't look too bright. Once it starts raining in these parts it can go on for weeks. Still, as one of the guides continually remarks: "These things happen", so we turned in for the night hoping for the best.

The next day the weather cleared somewhat, so we packed ourselves off to the Gardiner Hut, some three hours further up the Hooker Glacier, at a height of 5000 ft. on the lower western slopes of Cook. This hut is in a most exciting location on a huge mass of rock called 'Pudding Rock', and to get to it you climb almost vertically with the aid of a wire rope while the wind tears round about your trouser legs and a waterfall splashes on your head from above. Merely to get as far as the Gardiner Hut, let alone Cook, calls for a spot of prime mountaineering technique.

We esconsed ourselves in the hut, what time the weather worsened - a roaring blizzard that shook the hut to its foundations and threatened to lift it skywards, hail that dashed on the tin roof and walls like a spatter of bullets, and snow that swept horizontally down the Hooker Valley in mighty swirls. "This kills our chances on Mt. Cook tomorrow" said we, as we concocted the large and customary bully-beef stew and settled in to our bunks for an afternoon's riotous reading of the hut literature. This is of a particularly high standard; it reeks of the Wild West and the detective atmosphere. Two I lingered over a little longer than the others were: "The Mystery of the Heaped Corpses", and (O most euphonious title!) "Say it with Slugs" - and slugs being the gunman's, of course, and not the herbivorous variety. Still I was not rendered despondent by this literary feast as I had with me a Penguin book of Poetry from Chaucer to Rossetti, which was a good thing.

We went to sleep early, with a watch on the table and a torch close by so we could refer to it at intervals throughout the night, having no alarm clock, and hoped that the storm would abate before midnight - which sure enough it did. At 2.30 we arose on a beautiful calm starry night, heated up our rice and apricots, had breakfast while we pushed our feet into our boots, and before 4 a.m. we were away. Several hours up steep, deeply crevassed snowfields brought us to the rock face of which the south peak of Cook is mainly composed, and from then on there were hours and hours and still more hours of upward progression, clearing the plastered snow and chipping ice off every single foothold and handhold as we went. We only had one watch with us, and what with the cold and the continual jarring caused by step cutting, the works gave up the unequal struggle and stopped. So from 8 o'clock onwards we guessed the hour by the sun. Some time after it had passed from the mid-sky we reached the summit ice-cap, after several false alarms when we thought we were there only to discover a higher snow slope above us, and when this was surmounted yet another leading upwards.

The view from the top was magnificent, embracing all the west-coast bush country to the sea stretching very blue and soft to the far horizon, while to north and south and east lay range after range of snowy peaks and glaciers and misty valleys. We took some photos but didn't linger too long as the atmosphere at that height is somewhat chilly.

We had had hopes of doing a traverse of the three peaks of Cook and coming down on the other side in the Tasman Valley, but as step-cutting up the iced rocks had taken up so much of our valuable time we decided to call it a day and return the way we had come.

Accordingly we set off on the descent, quite confident of being off the rock face by dark and so down the snow slopes and glacier by moonlight, arriving at the hut certainly no later than 10 p.m. So much for our hopes! We were still toiling slowly down the rock when the sun broke in on our concentration with, "Well, Goodnight folks."

"Eh, Wait on!" cried we in some alarm, clinging on the rock face by one clinker and a couple of finger nails.

"Sorry", says the sun, "Whistle's gone; we don't get paid for overtime", and with that he winked his other eye and dropped down behind the mountain top.

"So ho", thought I, "Another night out like the one we spent on Malte Brun at Easter", and hastily taking a few bearings in the last remaining gleams of twilight we continued our downward climb. Hours slipped by as swiftly and noiselessly as a stream on the glacier ice, and now the moon was with us, suffusing the rocks with its full white light.

At length we reached a ledge a few degrees nearer the horizontal than the vertical, and here we huddled close under a projecting rock in a vain endeavour to escape the wind, while we held on and ate a handful of sultanas and some cheese,

"Howarey'r feelin', son?" I asked, articulating with difficulty as my face and lips were frozen stiff as a board.

"Pretty Gristley", says Pat, still not without his infectious grin, "And you?"

"Cold as blazes", I replied, unaware of the lack of logic conveyed by this expression. "Let's get going before we freeze to death" - which we accordingly did with as much speed as our stiffening frames would allow.

There was a bit of delay while we deliberated as to which of two rather similar glaciers was our one, and thanks to our guardian angels exerting a little more than their customary solicitude on our behalf we managed to choose the right one; otherwise we might still have been coming down.

An hour or so of cramponing down remarkably steep snowlopes brought us to the badly crevassed area, and right in the thick of a maze of deep cracks the moon, with even less warning than the sun had given us, whispered "Time's up", and softly withdrew.

"O well", we thought, "We got on all right without the sun; now we'll get

on all right without the moon" - and that was just how it was.

Dream-walking down the final slopes of the glacier, yawning like a tornado every 20 paces..... A sleepy voice enquires, "Do you see what I see?"

"It's the dawn?"

Yes, it's the dawn right enough.

"I don't think that's a funny", said an aggrieved voice addressing the sun, still bearing a grudge against him for the practical joke played on us yester eve. This sunlight-moonlight-no-light-sunlight sequence played strange tricks with one's sanity. "Life is a chequer-board of nights and days....of nights and days....of night and days....."

"Are those rocks our rocks?" asked Pat, in that strange possessive attitude one tends to adopt in the mountains towards any familiar bit of scenery.

With difficulty I forced my heavy eyes open another fraction of an inch and surveyed the dim rugged outline of rock outcrop.

"They'll do", I murmured. "One heap of rocks is as good as another I suppose".

"It's not the rocks we want!" Pat reminded me gently, "It's the hut wot stands thereon".

"Eh?" I said....but I was asleep again, meanwhile my legs carried on mechanically towards the rock as steel is attracted to a magnet, or - a better simile as regards speed - as a slug is attracted to a lettuce.

We kicked our campons off and plodded slowly up the rocks till we reached the top - barren of any sign of habitation, alas.

"Pat", I said, "The hut's gone". But he, knowing that huts don't 'go' as easily as that, had another glimmer of an idea.

"We're on the wrong rocks", he said, and there, sure enough, half a mile further down the glacier was another indential heap of rock, and in the pink dawn we could vaguely make out the tin roof of the little Gardiner hut.

So we climbed down off our lookout again, and took a few steps out on to the snowfield only to discover that we slipped and slid in all directions without our crampons, so we were obliged to don them again for the last lap.

And now we really were on our own rock -- and now we were inside the little gret hut. The kettle stood on the stove waiting, and Pat lit a match and put a light under it, while I sank on to a bunk and made heavy work of pulling my boots and socks off. Then as I swayed and rolled into my sleeping bag there was a voice asking, "Will you have a cup of tea, Dot?"

A drowsy response, that trailed away to a sleepy whisper - "Tea is a drug... bad for you....tans your inside....shatters your nerves...."

And then deep oblivion for six hours.

CLUB PHOTOGRAPHIC ALBUM

The new club album is now ready and photographers are urged to roll along with their prints to members of the Photographic Committee (Ira Butler, Bill Cosgrove, George Dibley, Reg. Alder or Maurie Berry).

Prints of any size may be submitted for consideration, but only whole plate or 8" x 10" pictures will be mounted in the album.

It is impossible for us to build up our album unless we get prints - so bring them along by the dozens or ones or twos if you haven't got dozens - they will all be given the most careful consideration.

"BUSHWALKERS' 'SERVICES' COMMITTEE".

This is the name adopted by the newly appointed committee which is to act as a link between the boys of the federated bushwalking clubs who are with the Defence Forces and their respective clubs.

The S.B.W. decided to forward to the lads club magazines, periodicals, photos of bushwalking interest, letters, and various little odds and ends dear to bushwalking hearts. Other clubs of the Federation were invited to send representatives to this committee and to submit names and addresses of their members who are out of touch with their clubs through being on service. The scheme is well in hand now, plans are laid, and the committee hopes to commence fortnightly postings very soon.

Now YOU can do quite a lot to help this committee -- firstly, let Win Duncombe ("Dunk") know the name and address of any bushwalker you know who is with the Forces. Also let her have any little bits of gossip you would like passed on in one of her letters. ("Dunk" is the official letter writer).

When you write to your bushwalking friend ask him if there is any particular subject or hobby he is interested in, then let the committee know and, perhaps, they will be able to let him have some interesting scraps concerning that interest. Also ask him if there are any little extras he specially favours, such as toffee, or perhaps popcorns, etc. In short, give the committee all the information you can regarding your bushwalker pal who is away from his club -- help them to send him the things he likes.

Now, about those "Digests" and "Penguins" you have finished with--there will be a proper receptacle provided in the Clubroom into which you may pop these very welcome items for despatch - also short stories which may be cut from weeklies and enclosed in a letter.

And you Photographers -- Will you run off an extra print or two next time you are on the job in the darkroom? About quarter-plate size, please. A picture of the cool Cox, for example, would be very welcome when received by a chap on duty in the desert.

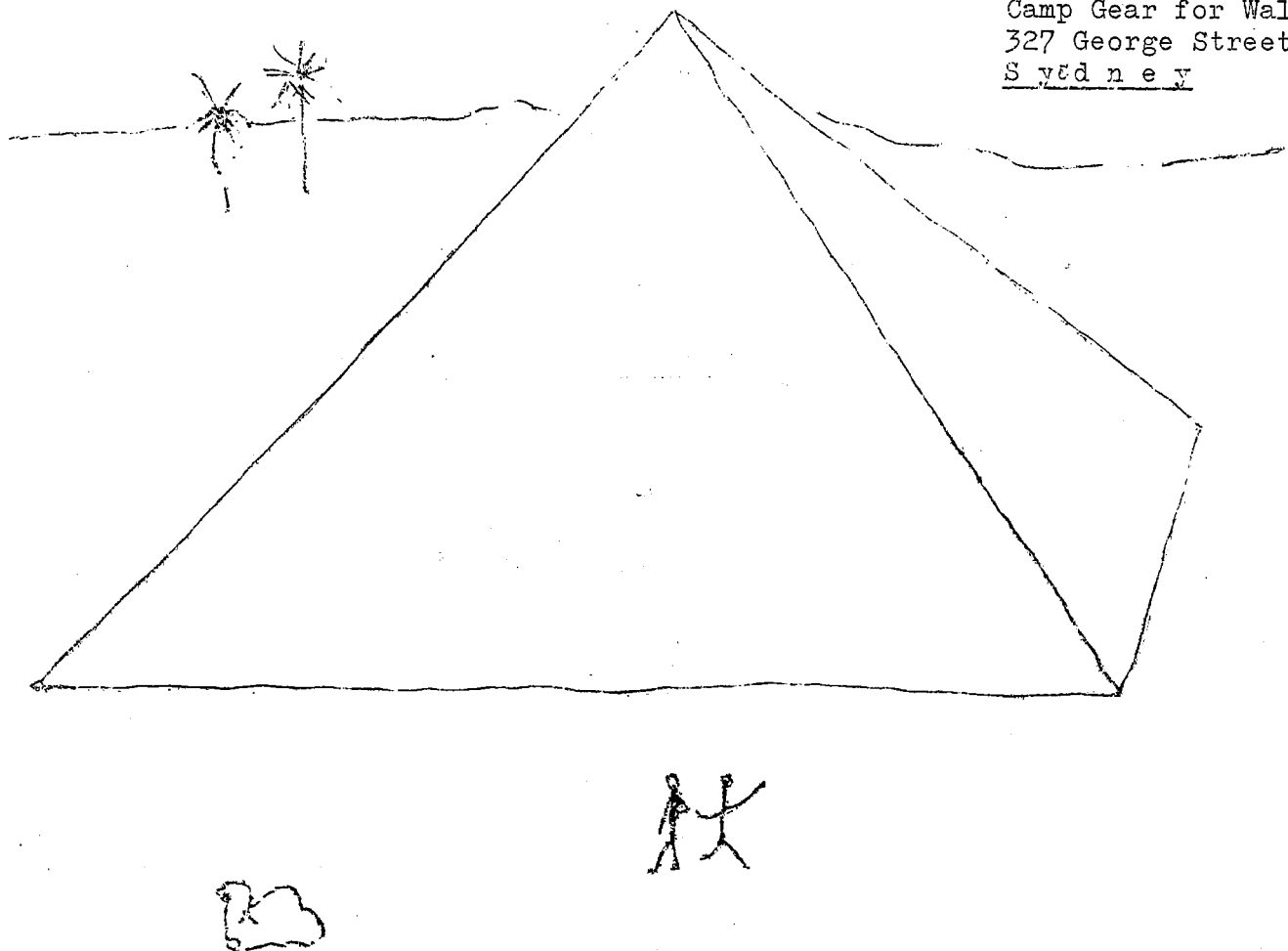
Joan Savage or Maurie Berry will be very pleased to receive suggestions as well as the above mentioned items and information, just any time you are in the Clubroom.

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FAMOUS WALKERS PHANTACIES

(Jot down your idea and send it into the editor)

Paddy Pallin
Camp Gear for Walkers
327 George Street,
S y d n e y



This is Mary Stoddart's idea of illustrating the expression -

NO THANKS ! I'D RATHER HAVE "PADDY-MADE" !

STOP PRESS: Jack Debert has been moved from Brisbane. On Saturday 27th he passed through Sydney and during that day he managed to re-une with 30 or 40 of his S.B.W. friends. No, he did not have his Wife with him, as he did not know whether his move really was to Melbourne or elsewhere.

Shall we, or shall we not, sack our Special Reporter? She turned in this month's club gossip without including her own engagement ! It was Jack Debert who told the Editor and others "I hear that Merle Hamilton and Ken Iredale are engaged". We congratulate them sincerely and wish them continued "good camping."

FUN AND FROLICS ON THE ENDRICK.

by Alex. Colley.

For two and a half hours our car seemed to have been going at over 20 miles an hour, in which case we had gone nearly 60 miles from Bomaderry, and this was odd, because the Endrick was only 40 miles away. We were sure the river valley must be round the next bend, and eventually it was. The last two miles into the valley were covered at the breath-taking speed of 10 miles an hour, down a steep incline, the hairpin bends lit only by a sickly glow from our feeble lights. We arrived at the River, shaken but complete, and, in about a quarter of an hour had found a space flat enough to pitch our tent.

Next morning we set off down the river. We had not gone far before someone shouted from a hill nearby "Where are you going?" "Down to the Shoalhaven", said we. "Yer can't git down there." "Cant we?" we replied, knowing that the locals always say this when you are starting a trip. "There's a 300 ft. drop just ahead," "Well, we'll have a look over it anyway." Just ahead we came to the fall, which looked about 150 ft. altogether. We couldn't get over it, but we did get round it, and about half an hour later we were swimming in the deep waters of the "V" shaped rock pool at the bottom.

After that the going was fair. There were no banks to walk on, but we could usually get along on the large boulders in the river bed. The mountains on either side were very steep, and there was a rock face on the outer side of every bend. The rock strata were twisted in every direction, as in the Shoalhaven valley. Sometimes vertically inclined masses of rock projected in the form of a pinnacle to which clung branched and bearded grass trees of great age. Where there was no solid rock the shaly slopes were arranged so steeply that, had they been the slightest bit steeper a lot of them would have slid down (There is a geological term for this - it is called the angle of equilibrium, or stability, or something or other - ask Grace Edgecombe). The stunted trees clutched desperately at these slopes.

These phenomena caused our pseudo-geologist to reflect, A fairly wide bed covered with large boulders. The mountains rising straight from this rocky bed without any silt or gravel or even small stones to form banks, and the slopes on either side as steep as gravity would permit. This meant that the river must carry a fair volume of water for a good part of the year, and was probably subject to violent flooding, the waters sweeping away everything but the largest boulders and carrying away the loose material which slid down the slopes. But to-day it was a small clear trickle, which often disappeared in the stones.

Such was the nature of the country that we didn't come to one camp spot till nearly 5 o'clock. This was on a sharp bend by a big pool surrounded by boulders. Somehow a little silt had collected here in a flood backwater. Just as we stopped a thunder storm which had been gathering broke upon us and we hastily pitched our tent and sat in it for nearly an hour.

At tea time it started to rain again and kept it up all night. But by next morning the stream was still a clear trickle. We prepared our breakfast in light rain. As we were eating we heard the river change its note and looked up to see a long angry tongue of yellow mud shooting into the middle of our placid greenish-

blue pool. We watched the waters intermingling and rising steadily, wondering when it would stop. Inch by inch the rocks around the pool were covered, but after about an hour it did stop. By this time the river was flowing swiftly and covering the whole of its bed, so that when we set out again we had to keep to the steep slopes or crawl slowly over the large boulders and jagged rocks piled at the bottom of the mountain side. Every quarter mile we would strike a rock face and have to decide whether to wrap our packs in our ground sheets and swim, or to struggle over the shallower parts holding our packs over our heads, or to walk up the slope round the top of the rock face and down again on the other side. We tried all three, the slope climbing being the most dangerous, specially as the rain softened the shale and clay. And all day as we dived in and out of the muddy stream or clawed our way round the muddy slopes it rained and rained and rained. Inevitably we knocked off bits of skin here and there and the busy flies buzzed (Ah Doreen, Ah Grace, Ah me).

All day long, in the whole three miles, we saw not a single camp spot, but luck was with us again, as, late in the afternoon, we happened to notice a bank about 30 ft. above the river and found it extended over 2 or 3 acres of excellent flat camping ground. It was a work of art getting the fire going, but we succeeded eventually and soon a delicious pot of unpolished rice was boiling appetisingly. We ate and went to sleep in the rain. Everything was damp or wet by this time, as our groundsheets were none too waterproof and some of the swims had been fairly long. We kept the fire burning all night. About three in the morning it stopped raining for the first time in 36 hours. We immediately hung all our things round the fire to dry. It wasn't till after breakfast that it started again and by that time most of our stuff was dry.

Now had come the hour of decision. We looked at the swollen river, at the rocky canyon ahead into which it rushed. We pictured the flooded Shoalhaven. The elements, we decided, had won on points. We started back to the road. Slowly we climbed up the greasy slopes in the rain, leaving the swirling yellow torrent of the Endrick far below. On top we stretched our legs once more - what a marvellous feeling it is sometimes just to walk!

We had lunch half way up a cliff in a cave importing wood and making a fire on the outside of a ledge and making tea from the brown water which dripped over the moss-covered rocks. From our snug cave, warmed by the fire, we looked through driving mist and rain over the trees to the dim valley below. Soon after lunch we struck the road again - at the very spot where we had left it. The bridge was now just above the water level. The water was almost clear, except for the deep brown peaty colouring. We wondered how it became muddy and yellow a few miles below.

On the road we met the service car driver and arranged to go back with him to Nowra the next day. He told us where there was a cave a couple of miles further on. We spent some time looking for this cave, but as we didn't find it we set out along the road looking for a camp spot. Grace soon saw a nice grassy spot near the road, but it would have been too easy to stay there so we went on. Then we came into a "singularly blighted"(x) region. Much of it was bare rock and the rest swampy country. Water oozed and gurgled everywhere. The misty rain swept through the stunted and fire-blackened trees to our great discomfort. For miles and miles we walked looking for a camp spot. The light began to fade, the rain poured. At last we saw a place where the rain seemed to soak in rather

than run over the surface, and we decided to stop. Everything was soaked. There were no stringy barks or dry leaves under the rocks, or anything properly dry in our packs, and although we carefully coaxed a smoking pile of damp leaves, paper etc. till dark, it simply wouldn't burst into flames. So we crept into the tent, took off our wet clothes and put on damp ones, ate a tin of bully beef and some biscuits, and got into our sleeping bags. All night it rained heavily. Several times we felt sure the water must have started running over the surface of the ground into our tent and flashed the torch around to see; but we kept dry and slept well.

In the morning, despite the rain we were able to get a fire going. We found that we had chosen the last resting place of a wombat for our night's repose. Saddened by the discovery, Grace, who had regained her oriental calm at the prospect of more boiled rice, fell to meditating on the marvels of nature. "I wonder," she said, "whether wombats, and wallabies, and things, ever get together? They always seem to be alone."

Before breakfast it stopped raining for the second time in 2½ days. The sun came out, giving us a chance to spread our things out to steam in its rays. We washed in the sparkling waters of a nearby gutter.

After breakfast we had only gone a short distance when we came to open country. It was a fertile chocolate volcanic patch covered with luscious green grass. We walked under a sky alternately misty and a soft blue. A fresh breeze kept us cool and we could see distant ranges along the coast, and the sea.

When the service car overtook us it already had three passengers - Grace Edgecombe, Bev Druce and Geoff Higson. They had spent the night before last in the pub at Braidwood, then started down the Endrick. They knew their Endrick and had walked along a ridge alongside it, then, as the rain became worse they had decided to come back and go on with the next stage of their rivers tour - to the Kangaroo River. Our appearance in Nowra was quite a break for the natives who seemed to regard us as fierce mountain tribesmen. We celebrated together in a hamburger joint.

From there we three went on through Bomaderry along an avenue of English trees between fertile dairy pastures in which grazed well bred Illawarra Milking Short-horns, while here and there were sleek bulls of different breeds.

We camped in a swarm of mosquitos on the slopes of Mount Coolangatta where we had a lovely soft misty view of silvery waterways and green flats, with the lights of Nowra shining dimly in the distance under the low clouds.

Next day we went on to a village called Jerry Bailey. This was the mouth of the Shoalhaven and the start of 7 mile beach. It was a beautiful sweep of sand and surf, though there was a little too much of it and we were not sorry to reach Gerringong that evening.

And so, in the words of the great diarist, to bed. Some of us were there for some time - with poisoned legs.

LETTERS FROM THE LADS

Way back in December Bill Burke wrote to a couple of the girls, who have allowed us to pass the latter on to you. Here it is.

"The trip over was marvellous and I enjoyed every bit of it, more so, I suppose because I had never been outside the Heads even before. I didn't get seasick chiefly on account of the amazingly calm weather and brilliant sunshine that continued throughout the voyage. I had a very easy time on the trip, about five hours a day was put in on physical training and deck games and the rest of the time was spent lying around in the sun reading, yarning and gambling with the rest of the chaps. It began to get monotonous towards the end though and everyone was pleased when we finally disembarked. The conditions were fairly good, the food was all right and everyone was allowed to sleep on deck if they wanted to.

I arrived in Palestine early in November and my camp is quite all right, although it wouldn't suit the club members, as the ground is too flat and the water doesn't drain off it quickly enough.

Winter and the rainy season are just commencing now and the camp is like one big duck pond with us for the ducks. As I write it is blowing a gale outside and most of the tents are leaking. Several of the tents have been flooded out so far but we are gradually installing a drainage system which is saving the situation. Fortunately my camping experience stuck to me and my tent is one of the few on high ground.

I've had leave to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem already and am looking forward to going again. The residential quarters of Tel Aviv are ultra-modern, but the shopping centres are very backward. Jerusalem was much more interesting and I had a wonderful time exploring the Old City and seeing a lot of places mentioned in the Bible. After I'd been through the Old City I hired a car and with several of chaps, went to Bethlehem, Mt. of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Jericho, the Dead Sea and the Jordan Valley. The whole party of us went for a swim in the Dead Sea just to see if it was true that one couldn't sink.

Club members that came over here for walking would be very disappointed as the only scenery is ploughed fields in the desert or plain country and barren rocky mountains with an occasional olive tree on them in the hills around Jerusalem. Practically every mountain has been terraced by the natives to prevent soil erosion and, just at the moment, every little piece of land is being tilled in preparation for the rain.

I hope you've been keeping up the walking since I left and that the Club is still going as strong as ever. Remember me to the club members and tell them that I'm still interested to hear what's doing. Let Arthur, Jeff and Bev. know that I often think of the good times we had and that they are about the only thing I miss over here."

If you want to write to Bill, his address is:-

NX 31070, Private Burke, W.H.,
2/1 Ordnance Stores Co., A.I.F. ABROAD.

AT OUR OWN MEETING

This is not a section of "Club Gossip" set up in the wrong place. It is really the news gleaned at our very brief meeting in February, when Maurie Berry appealed for magazines and short stories for sending to the boys on service. Maybe he did not mean this sort of short story, and they get the Club Magazine anyway.

Two new members were welcomed - Betty Isaacs (sister to Elsa) and Russell Roxburgh - and also two old ones on a fleeting visit - Jeanne and Gordon Mannell.

We had word of some other members whom we shall not see for some time. John Harvey is now working at Casino. Gwen Clarke is teaching at Kandos this year. We were sorry to hear that Geoff. Parker of Richmond has resigned from the Club.

This month we have three Room Stewards because we had three volunteers - Edna Garrad, Mewle Hamilton and Russell Roxburgh - so the Club Room should be looking particularly well kept.

FEDERATION NEWS

Next time you go to Kanangra Walls you will rejoice to find half a petrol drum sunk under the drip of the Platform Cave to provide a supply of drinking water. This good job of work was done by a party from the Warrigal Club at Christmas time.

When the drought broke last December, Govett's Leap Creek flooded and carried away the barricade - one could hardly call it a dam - erected by the working bee in the Blue Gum Forest at the beginning of November. The Blue Gum Forest Trust has now delegated to Maurie Berry of the M.T.C. and S.B.W. the task of getting each party of walkers that visits the Forest to do about an hour's work on the diversion channel so that the stream will cut its way through there even without much of a barrier across its present bed. So far as possible Maurie sees each party off at the train, hands the leader a sketch map, and explains just where and what the spot of work desired from that party is.

Rae Else Mitchell of the Warrigals has been appointed Editor of "The Bushwalker" No.5, and Jim Summerville of the C.M.W. is Business Manager of the Publications Committee for 1941.

Marie Byles has been elected to fill a vacancy on the Conservation Bureau.

The Federation has lodged its application for a special lease of 130 acres at St. Helena in the Blue Labyrinth for a camping reserve.

Before leaving camp always EXTINGUISH your fire and leave the campsite clean. To save time, don't leave these jobs for the last to be packed. Do the work while you are waiting for them to be ready.

THE MIDDLE OF THE MOUNTAIN

By Stoddy, Junior.

This is a story with a moral in it - heaps of morals ! Won't 'ah Jack' laugh if he reads it? Its no use putting a 'nom-de-plume' to it - these things always leak out anyway, now its all over it seems a most exciting adventure to remember, not to repeat.

It all began with Reg. finding an entrance to Colong Caves halfway up the hill-side and imperiously insisting that we scramble up the slippery steep and eagerly explore its musty mysteries (excuse the alliteration, it just crops up regardless). Armed with sundry torches and candles and a ~~and~~ a fishing line(?) we dived down into the bowels of the earth and cautiously made our way along winding passages dim lit to changeful shapes by our feeble lights. It was discovered that my candle, held aloft and carried ahead - threw the most satisfactory light. Anon we placed it behind some towering pillar or translucent overhang and stood back to admire the effect.

O lovely, colourful, tricksome, fanciful, treacherous candle !

On the whole, to me, the formations were disappointing, for I had been through the caves previously with one of Ninian Melville's parties, and I believed we should have gone in the lower entrance to see the best portion.

So after half an hour's uneventful wandering I squeezed through a hole leaving my green billy bag, containing matches and more candle, behind, and held my lighted candle, now about two inches long, in the midst of a set of exquisite crystal stalactites.

Doris, with her head through the hole, duly admired them, but prudently declined to come any further.

Everyone was beginning to wonder how they were going to get back through the maze of passages, and, after a few fainthearted protests from the others I scooted off round the bend of my own little passage saying I would be back in a minute.

Cursing my insatiable curiosity, the others sat down to wait, and when their torches got dimmer and ~~dimmer~~ and three-quarters of an hour had elapsed without a reply to their yells, they struggled out, nearly losing their way once or twice, to blessed sunshine.

Sunshine! What wouldn't I have given for a ray of it! Three and a half minutes after I left them the passage I was following forked. I stopped and looked round me. A green twine led over the uneven, damp floor to my right, and to my left an inviting hole showed dim vistas leading down.

"Pity!" I said aloud, "But I'd better get back to the others now."

Looking along the branch off to the right I noticed the floor had sunk about three inches showing fresh looking cracks along each side wall.

Turning hurriedly back to the passage I had come from I began to think this

phenomenon over when suddenly my candle went out! I fastened my incredulous gaze on the red spark of the wick and then saw nothing more. There was absolutely no distinction between having my eyes open, and having them shut. Pitch blackness on all sides, rough damp walls and floors, ceilings stretching away out of reach and hitting one on the head within a few inches. I took three steps forward and realized I had no sense of direction.

Then I yelled. The walls reverberated and it seemed to me the mountain shook with the unearthly din.

Skipping the first unanswered half hour, one o'clock midday found me sitting on my straw hat and doing some systematic thinking.

That green string couldn't be found - and if it could? I might go following it the wrong way! Those cracks? Minian had said some parts of the caves were dangerous - subsiding floors, and whatnot! Supposing I crawled forward on my tummy feeling for cracks? I thought over the topography of the passage I had come along - sudden drops, slippery bits just skipped over by blessed candle light, and, oh horror! - that bit where the ceiling came down to within sixteen inches of the floor - surely they would never think I'd gone past that?

Here I discovered I could see the luminous dial of my watch - how I blessed that dim green circle of reality in a universe of inky blackness!

Sounds - the only ones to break the blanketed silence were bats flying over or loose earth falling down the slope in front of me, and the comforting tick of my watch when I put it against my ear.

With conscious effort I made myself relax as much as possible and began filling in eternity with mental arithmetic.

Yerranderie - $8\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 miles away. Suppose they got out of the caves by 1.30 p.m. have lunch - then Long-legs sheers off to Y., gets there about 4 to 4.30 (I must here record that it took him 1 hour 50.) Rustles up a posse, Ropes, candles & so forth and comes hot foot back again - gets to caves about 8 p.m. - I should be found about 9 p.m.

As a result of all that intensive brainwork I decided to worry at 10 o'clock meanwhile - I took off one boot and, holding a bit of my straw hat handy tried striking one sprig against the other with no result except that I got very warm. Tired and disgruntled, I actually dropped off to sleep for a full hour.

When I woke I felt like an icicle and wanted to scream my head off. I let off steam in one mighty coo-ee and wondered just how long I could sit in one spot like patience on a pedestal or Buddah on a box or something. The temptation to get up and wander about was almost insupportable.

Standing up I bumped my head, chafed my cold arms and legs and sat down again. I couldn't have moved more than a foot, but there was no trace of the spot I had been sitting on, no warmth or familiarity of shape. This steadied me considerably. "No wandering for you", I told myself and stared, wide-eyed, into the blackness

as for the first time, the enormity of my plight dawned on me.

"Suppose they never find me?" "How long does it take to starve to death?" Death! I certainly wasn't ready for the old gentleman with the sickle yet, so with feverish energy I set to rubbing a handful of straw hat along my boot. The straw got red-hot nearly and burned a blister on the palm of my hand, but, of course, it didn't ignite.

Being warm, though, I dozed again - you'll think this is endless. So did I! And promptly at 9.5 p.m. I looked at my watch and heard rumbles in the passage ahead - Then a flicker of warm, reddish-orange light and an angelic trumpet call of Deliverance.

Just for a moment I didn't believe it all - though it seemed just as natural as a pre-arranged rendez-vous. I stumbled hilariously forward and shock hands ---

So ended my eight and a half hours vigil in solitude - more terrible and more unbelievably wonderful than any other event in my life.

I am, I hope, the wiser in many ways, and the sadder for the anxiety I must have caused everyone.

But I am very glad my Mother was not in "Dunkie's" shoes - standing in the precious firelight in the creek bed like the incarnation of a guardian angel yet with all the warmly comforting and calming tangibility of human kindness.

AN APPEAL

Quite suddenly I have become a collector of antiques. This irrespressible craving came upon me unexpectedly, tearing at my very soul and darkening the sunlight of my young life. The sight of an old spoon, or a fork, or a dilapidated knife, arouses a terrible yearning in me and I long to acquire some for my hoard.

The only way to satiate the demon and free myself from its power, is to gather unto myself every piece of cast off camping gear that exists. This is where you can help me, comrades. I appeal to your generosity. Would you see this evil thing sapping at my strength when you might lift a hand to prevent it? Think of the miserable canker clutching at my vitals and say to yourselves "Thy need is greater than mine." Thrust all your antiques upon my head ---- I can took it ---- Anything, and everything in the way of gear. Extra dilly bags, odd billy lids, tent pegs, billy hooks or plates. No matter whether you think they are useless or priceless. Please sacrifice them to save a poor girl's soul from torment.

I shall hang a bag on the back of the library chair each Friday night and trust this appeal will stir your sympathies and the bag will overflow.

"Gimme Girl" Savage.

FROM HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE.

From the "Tararua Tramp" for January, 1941, comes this extract from New Zealand's new "Forest(Fire Prevention) Regulations, 1940":-

"Any person discovering a fire burning unattended in a State forest or in a fire district, whether in a privately-owned forest or not, shall do everything reasonably within his power to extinguish such fire, whether or not there is an immediate danger of its causing damage, and shall cause the nearest Forest Officer to be notified of the outbreak".

So far as we know there is no similar regulation in force in Australia, but we commend to every bushwalker the idea of stopping for a while and "doing everything reasonably within his power to extinguish" any fire he comes across in his wanderings. Even the largest fires come from small beginnings. A small fire can be extinguished.

CLUB GOSSIP

News comes from Dorothy Hasluck in New Zealand. She has been climbing in the Southern Alps and met Dot English, so they exchanged S.B.W. news.

Reg Alder is to be congratulated on an excellent impromptu evening of colour film pictures which he gave us recently - not in the kitchen this time.

All those Bushwalkers fortunate enough to have visited Bett's Camp, Kosciuszko, will be interested to hear that Mr. and Mr. Corney called to see us one Friday last month and promised to come again some other evening.

The Mannells paid us their annual visit one Friday night in February. It was great to see Jeannie and Gordon and Graham. Master Mannell has inherited the adventurous bushwalker spirit; he poked into every corner of the club-room, even into the Editor's bag to have a preview of the news.

Other recent visitors were Harold Chardon and Dick Jackson, both home on leave. Although we have not seen Dick for some time, his ship must have been in port now and then for his engagement is announced to an Albury girl named Paula Henderson.

Hon. Secretary Jean Moppett has been having fun lately pinning up a notice from the "Brisbane Courier" of 10th February wherever she found a group of bushwalkers, then listening to the various comments. Flying-Officer Jack Debert and his wife left by car for a motoring honeymoon !!!

Congratulations to the O'Halloran family on the birth of a son, and greetings to Max Junior! Our lucky pal Max now lives at Wentworth Falls, right in the heart of the walking country.

"From folly to folly", said vegetarian Frank Duncan of the County Council Electricity Undertaking, hearing that Tom Herbert had left the Gas Company and is now "in meat".