

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER.

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TREE WISDOM.

Lesbia V. Harford.

O you dear trees, you have learned so much of beauty
You must have studied this the ages long!
Men have thought of God and laughter and duty,
And of love. And of song.

But you, dear trees, from your birth to your hour of dying,
Have cared for this one way only of being wise
Lovely, lovely lovely, the sapling sighing.
Lovely the dead tree lies.

MAY DAYS.

by "Ubi".

What thoughts of possible disasters run through your mind when you are on Strathfield Station waiting for the train to bear you away on a week's walking and that train does not arrive! The notice cryptically says "South" which, you think, may mean anything, so you fidget nervously, become slightly terrified every time a train pulls in at another platform, wonder whether you shouldn't enquire of someone, yet hate to show your anxiety until finally it does arrive - just late. For it would have been an indescribable catastrophe had a day of that precious week been wasted - the first for eighteen months. Moreover, the auguries were not particularly favourable for, for the first time, I had had to enlist help in order to get away and while Mother was packing food Father was hammering into my boots those hungarian nails which did not fly off at a tangent into some corner of the kitchen.

Care-dispelling sleep fortunately covered most of the interval until I arrived in Canberra in the dark of the early morning and sought out the Post Office where I left my pack. Even in the dim light I could see that the trees were all clothed in the vivid reds, yellows and orange of Autumn and I lost not a moment in walking through the terra-cotta avenues of variegated oaks, the darker groves of Prunus Pissardi, the poplars equally golden in formal rows or, in more homely fashion, following the meanderings of the river.

I was not less interested in the journey to the Mt. Franklin turn-off on account of having been there with the mailman on a previous occasion. Driving once through the sombre pines on Stromlo, seeing the lofty, blue mountains in the Brindabella Range, standing under the golden showers of the poplars and elms along the Cotter or experiencing the thrill of lots of rushing, crystal water only whets the appetite for a repetition of those pleasures. But, having crossed the range I awaited more eagerly my first glimpse of Brindabella about which all visitors have written and spoken so glowingly, not pausing to think how high expectation calls forth an imaginative picture against which reality often bitterly disappoints.

After dropping several thousand feet and obtaining one or two promising glimpses, we crossed Brindabella Creek and stopped at the Post Office which is at the foot of the mountain. As I had only twenty four hours notice of my leave I had not time in Sydney to enquire about routes so I relied upon information from local people and the vague Southern Tourist map; consequently my itinerary was the result of constant improvisation. Gleaning now as much as I could of the locality from one of the inhabitants, I set out for the river bank for lunch and the actual beginning of my trip to Tumut.

It was a still, cloudless day and the fields green after the recent rains though the paddock below was tawny with ageing corn and the orchards here bare, here brilliant with red and yellow. The willows along the river were touched with only a dash of yellow and presently a stretch of grass led me through briar roses covered with red-enamelled hips to the river where the water danced in the sunlight - a perfect foreground for the thickly wooded hills along the valley crowding upstream into fold after fold in every shade of blue. Further up the road poplars, golden as I have never before seen them, clustered around the farm-houses; viewed from above they merged with the farm buildings into cheerful homeliness, from below, against the dark mountain-side, they soared detached, sublime.

3.

I had been advised to enquire further directions of Mr. Bluett his being the last house in the valley. When I arrived at his home it was deserted but I espied him returning on horseback over a saddle down the river. With him I stayed the night - his hospitality would not be denied - and was enriched with a great deal of information about the locality and perused several maps of the neighbourhood. We pooled our food resources; Mr. Bluett was pleased to share my chops and sausages and to be re-introduced to chokos while I was regaled on home-made butter and on cream. Before I left on Sunday morning for Coolamon Creek my host showed me his collection of aboriginal weapons and implements mostly turned up by the plough on his property.

The track up Coolamon runs along this lovely creek for some time before it takes to a ridge and steadily climbs upwards through timber until it suddenly debouches onto the plains near Peppercorn Hill. Due to a late start it was already four in the afternoon before I crossed the many heathy streams to a dilapidated hut under the hill. I decided to go onto the clearing on the side of the hill for a view of the surrounding country but was beguiled further and further until I was on top. You felt you could reach out and touch the Brindabella Range the outline of which rose in ever sharper peaks from Brindabella. The eastern horizon was icy blue but the clouds overhead and the mountain tops were both salmon pink. Far to the North, Corrie, the jagged peak below Brindabella, stood out among the many rolling ranges but from the western slope no-one could have suppressed a quickening of the pulse at sight of the rock masses crowning the Bogong Range.

Though I was camped at about 5,000 feet the night was perfectly still, brilliant with stars and almost warm. I was thrilled when a constellation which had eluded me all the previous Summer just "came" to me, bearing a much stronger resemblance to its name than is usual.

Walking over the upland plains around Coolamon and Currangorambla could be most pleasant but a fairly strong and cold wind was blowing from which there was no escape until I was well down in the valley of the Murrumbidgee below Long Plain. A number of the streams running in here from the Fiery Range have been harnessed and are being used for gold-washing. Along the road from Rule's Point to Yarrangobilly which I traversed there is a splendid view of the valley of the Tumut River and the mountains about it.

I originally had no intention of going to Yarrangobilly and now began to regret that I had not delayed the purchase of some of my food-stuffs. However, some local boys informed me that there was no shop in the town which put quite a different complexion on the matter. These same boys accompanied me a mile or so out of the town to the place where I thought to camp for the night and I was soon disillusioned of any idea I entertained that country boys are naive, shy or uninformed!

I would never have believed, considering all the water through which I had trudged during the day, that I could be somewhat desperately searching for water for tea. Yet so it was. A small, shallow pool saved me but, much to my surprise, it had disappeared in the morning. Apparently the water soaked away during the early part of the night when the freezing of the ground prevented further percolation until the following day's sun had warmed the earth.

There was a heavy frost as I climbed the fire-break beside the pine plantation over Yarrangobilly. The forester had told me of a track leading directly to Mr. Jounama but, failing to find it, I decided to make for the summit of Michelago which towers over and is visible from the town.

I passed through many stretches of gums only a little less beautiful than our blue gums and followed a ridge right to the top which is itself a long ridge covered with huge rocks. The head waters of the Goobarragandra rising up to the Fiery Range were spread beneath. Over Kosciuszko way the range was plastered with thick snow but the valley of the Tumut was full of comforting blues. The going along the top was rough enough but the southern slopes of Jounama, the next mountain in the range, so very rough and the undergrowth so thick that the top of the ridge was a welcome relief. Further rock scrambling brought me to the summit (5628') on which a trig. station has recently been erected.

A mile from Jounama is the Big Plain Peak, the most spectacular peak I have seen in N.S.W. - about a hundred feet of vegetation-free, granite blocks rising almost sheer from the ridge. Between this mountain and the next lies a natural meadow-like flat into which I dropped and where there was no Lot's wife's penalty for looking back for one was rewarded by glimpses of the rocky massif framed in trees. I discovered that I had erred in descending so deeply so I decided to climb over the next peak before making towards the Goobarragandra for the night. By this time I was tired and the last ascent was an unremitting struggle.

"Down, down, down" - these words of Matthew Arnold applied to the depths of the sea could equally well be used to describe the interminable climb down to the banks of a large stream. Could this be the Goobarragandra? It was such open country with a well defined, wide track running past my pitched tent that I was forced to believe that it must be.

I soon suspected my mistake when the next morning with day pack only I started down the river. After a couple of miles of open valley the river plunged into a wild gorge in which walking became exceedingly rough. It did not improve so I turned back, lunched at my camp spot and then set out again, with all gear and with more humility, to find out where I was. From an old hut shaded by several brilliantly coloured trees I found a track which avoided some of the worst country and, being high above the river, afforded splendid views of the forbidding mountains flanking the other side. About three in the afternoon I caught a glimpse of a little clearing up a side creek and as I approached it could see a hut from whose chimney smoke curled while two horses stood under the usual vividly golden tree. The two young stockmen had just arrived from "town" and I shared in the freshly brewed tea. They told me that I was on the Peake River only a few miles from the Goobarragandra and I was grateful for the gently falling track which led me from the hut and brought me suddenly onto the valley of the latter river. It was now late afternoon and around the green basin of valley rose deep blue mountains. In the centre curled the friendly, warm smoke of the eucalyptus burners! fires and from the sides of the hills resounded the strokes of their axes. Sweeping across the picture was the Goobarragandra bordered by huge poplars in their heyday of colour. The contrast of gold and violet-blue was incredible.

A few miles walk brought me to Goobarragandra Station where I met the owner and spent the night in his wool-shed. On the menu for dinner were quinces - or rather a quince for they were huge - which I had gathered along the river where cart loads of these ripe fruits were going to waste. Anyone watching me this night or any other night on this trip would have been surprised to see me washing up with great ardour, at the least provocation employing even soap and pot-mit. I have decided that, in this respect, virtue is its own reward. I was now within half a day's walk of Tumut with only about half my time expended so little wonder that memories of Canberra and Brindabella urged me to return via Laemalae and Argalong.

From Goobarragandra the road follows the river to Laemalae which is a fertile flat then a sheet of gold. Here a kindly lady offered me a lift in a sulky and I gladly climbed in with the bag of chips, the kitten and the bunch of flowers going to town, she providing a coincidence in that I should get a lift over the only portion of the walk over which I would have had to retrace my steps. As we rounded the rises along the road we looked over the valley in which lay Tumut surrounded by light blue hills. Many people have been fortunate in seeing Tumut in the autumn. I cannot add anything but that I know of no place to equal it - even Canberra, by comparison, is yet too consciously beautiful and New Norfolk, Tasmania, not such a riot of colour.

Some people of whom I enquired the way via Argalong assured me that there was a graded track to Brindabella which I found to be correct. Others, however, were just as pessimistic in describing to me the type of maze styled by country people a track so that I had visions of getting half way and having to recoil before the impassible. All the afternoon I walked the road struggling up several thousand feet of barren hillside to the higher country. I was rewarded by several exceptionally lovely views. The first, presumably that called "Laemalae Lookout" on the map, covered the whole of the Tumut Valley with Laemalae immediately below; from the second, upon which you come quite suddenly, you look right into the Goobarragandra with two of the most prominent of the Bogong peaks in the background. That night I camped near Argalong and about twenty five miles from Brindabella so I determined to be in Brindabella the following night in order that I might spend the whole morning in that idyllic district. The first ten miles from Argalong were through timbered country occasionally cleared. The few houses were deserted and the mist, ring-barked trees and cold, marshy streams created an oppressive feeling of desolation, though country and timber improved as I neared a timber mill. Lorries are constantly returning from Tumut to this mill and it is astonishing that one did not pass me on the whole of this road. Looking back I am pleased that it happened thus for had one of the vehicles offered me a lift, which it seems is usual, I would not have had the will power to refuse and would thus have missed a portion of the trip admittedly the least beautiful but just as evocative of feeling though of a different kind.

After leaving the timber mill, where I lunched, the country was worse than dull until the first glimpse of Mt. Corree flushed by the sun. Mt. Corree in sight means that Brindabella is not far away and, after crossing the river, I hastened in the gathering darkness to the same delightful lawn by the river on which I have lunched a week before. Once again it was such a perfect night that I wondered whether I had not received all my share of blessing together and, knowing that the physical effort was now over, I looked forward to an evening of chores performed andante followed by a night of carefree sleep. As I sat at my fire I could see the new Moon, Jupiter and Venus together over the black outline of the mountains and so bright, even among the bright stars, that the tumbling water in the river sparkled with a gaiety rare in the night-time. The clear night ushered in a perfect morning through the growing warmth of which I was able to wander along the river and up the valley where, though the Autumn leaves had faded and fallen, Winter was still flouted by the gladdening sunshine.

ROCK CLIMBERS.

Several members of the Club have recently enjoyed reading Thomas Firbank's book "I Bought a Mountain", and there are a few chapters on walking and climbing that are of particular interest to Walkers. The author expresses the opinion that rock climbers have mastered the use of understatement as a medium for exaggeration, and the following is his idea as to how the leader of a party would describe a particularly hair-raising and dangerous climb:-

"On Sept. 8 I led a party up Holl's Punchbowl. Tumbler climbed second and Excelsior Jones third. Owing to the length of the pitches we used two ropes of a hundred and twenty feet in half weight. We wished to decide whether a variant which lies to the east of the ordinary route was practicable. There are no holds on the first pitch of a hundred feet. Progress is made by jamming the fist in a crack and proceeding thus hand over hand. At the end of this pitch is an ample stance the size of a saucer. I belayed Tumbler's rope with a knob of rock, and shared mystance with him when he arrived. I then moved upward over a vertical slab of sound rock, which was distinguished by its paucity of holds. However, there are several large fissures at convenient intervals in which the climber may place the top joint of the little finger. I took out the rope to its full length before finding a suitable belay in two huge flakes of rock which sprang from the slab. I was able to insert a bootnail between the lower flake and the slab, while there was room to slip Tumbler's rope behind the upper flake. Tumbler brought Excelsior Jones up the first pitch and left him comfortably ensconced, while he himself came up to me.

This sort of thing goes on for several hundred feet, until:

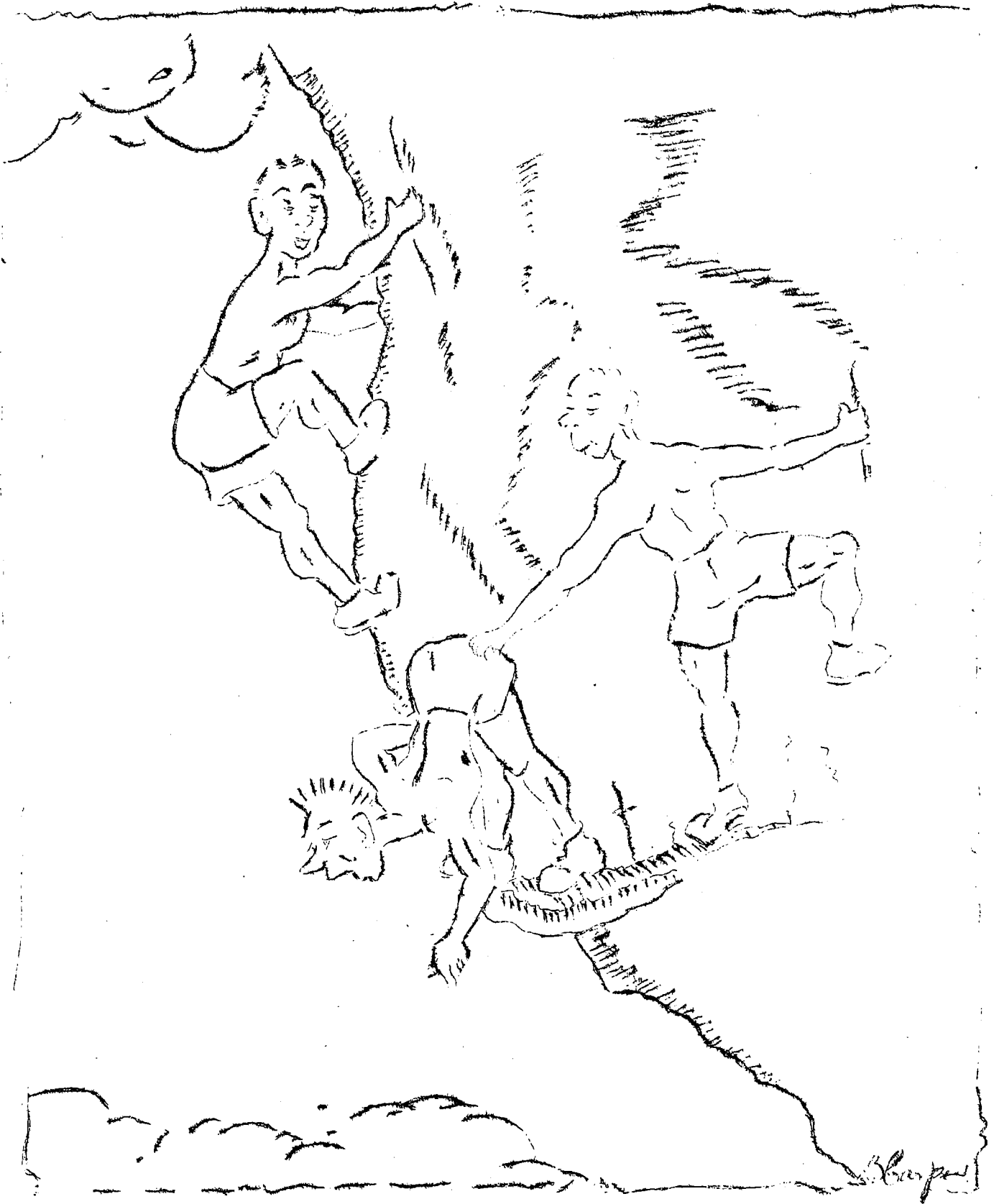
The face now took an angle away from me like the corner of a house. There were no holds. Progress was continued by embracing the angle with arms and legs. The members of the party lost sight of one another in mist, and it began to drizzle. The pressure of the water which was coursing down the rock face occasionally swept an arm or a foot out of its position. The pitch was somewhat exposed, and caution was necessary. At this juncture a pebble loosened by the rising breeze struck Excelsior Jones a slight blow on the shoulder breaking his collar bone. He had a little difficulty in completing the climb, which we did in two hours and ten minutes. I understand that this interesting route has not before been attempted.

Signed Cholmondeley Upjohn
Thomas Tumbler
Cholmondeley Upjohn p.p.
Excelsior Jones. "

WHY CULTIVATE FOREST LANDS?

By Arbores Australis.

Last month we saw that trees should not be promiscuously cut down because (among other things) their destruction leads to soil erosion and drought, the water being no longer retained by the spongy mass of roots and running off carrying the soil away with it and also removing the source of permanent moisture from which the smaller streams are formed.



The same facts are a reason why forest lands should be cultivated when they have deteriorated or been destroyed. Unfortunately, too often the damage has been done, and governments have to spend enormous sums of money to reclaim and replace under forest, lands which have become virtual deserts.

This is the first reason for the cultivation of forests. The second is the need for conservation of our timber supplies. Too often, the rapacity of this age of materialism causes the timber-miller to rush into a forest with his timber mills, to take out the best trees, and then leave it without any thought of the future generation which will require timber. On the west coast of New Zealand hundreds of miles of marvellous forests have in this way been transformed into deserts of gorse and blackberry. Until recently our Forestry Department had been largely concerned with collecting royalties from timber millers rather than with (1) conserving the forests until their maximum value is attained, and (2) replacing the timber taken out by the saw-millers. Today it does its best to conserve the forests and re-plant or regenerate the timber. But it is an uphill task, for under the cry of "war work" timber millers often think they are free to destroy the timber resources of the State. The conscientious forest officer has to be on his guard the whole time against the saw miller who under the cover of patriotism, (which cloaks so many sins) finds a golden opportunity to take timber before it is fully grown. However, although the Forestry Department may be successful against the patriots, it is unfortunately too late to restore the valuable cedar and hoop pine forests which were destroyed long before the present War.

The difficulty about forest cultivation from the point of view of the ordinary individual, is that trees take so long to mature there is seldom a worthwhile return during the lifetime of any one person, and few people are willing to outlay money in the hope that their children will reap the benefit. Forestry is obviously one of those public services which only a State or Local Council can usually undertake successfully. We have State Forestry Departments in Australia but the possibility of Local and Community forestry enterprises has not been exploited, and yet this is something that the ordinary citizen like ourselves could take up successfully.

Miss Jocelyn Henderson has drawn up a forestry scheme which she hopes to persuade country local Councils to put into practice for the purpose of supplying timber for local building purposes and firewood, creation of employment, controlling erosion and regulating water flow, and providing recreational centres, beauty spots and bird sanctuaries. She has gathered together many facts as to the success of such community forests in U.S.A. and Europe. For example, before the War in the Jura district community forests freed the local inhabitants from payment of rates and provided them with a yearly dividend of 100 to 200 francs. In La Chaux des Crotenay not only were there no local taxes but the forests paid each individual, including infants, a dividend of 150 francs while each family received free firewood on such a generous scale that usually half of it was sold.

If any individual wished to build a house he received free ground, and free stone and sand. And this was all out of the dividends from the community forests which have also provided recreational facilities and bird sanctuaries.

The cultivation of forests on a small scale may seem to have little to do with bushwalking, but among the objects of bushwalking movement is the conservation of the bushlands, and when these have been destroyed, con-

servation must include restoration. Anyhow, when we think of camping near to towns, as we often have to do, what a world of difference if there was always a local community forest which offered camping facilities as well as other benefits, in return for a small fee.

TALBINGO.

by Stoddy Senior.

Bushwalkers who are looking for a delightful place in which to spend a holiday, cannot do better than to take train to Tumut and Mail Car to Talbingo, 20 miles out on the road to Yarrangobilly. There are good sites for a fixed camp on the grassy banks of creek and river, or one can stay at the Hotel and enjoy perfect meals and unlimited hot baths.

Mary said "Come and meet me somewhere on my next leave so that I don't have to make that awful train journey from Wagga to Sydney". So we met at Tumut on the first of May, and Lisle Matchett called for us in his car and drove us around the town to see the trees in the glory of their autumn colouring.

The drive along the Tumut river provided every new vistas or delightful scenery where willow trees and gums framed the swiftly flowing streams. Each bend of the road reveals something different, and one feels that the car travels much too quickly through the beautiful valley. On the right hand side of the road the steep wooded hills hid the Bogongs from sight, and on the left the land sloped down to the river and beyond farm houses appeared tucked away in the midst of orchards. Passing through Blowering we saw the men employed by the Irrigation Commission drilling for rock bottom. A dam may be built here some time in the future, and the waters of the Tumut will cover the valley as far as Talbingo.

Round a bend in the road we came suddenly to the little hotel. It sits right on the road at the foot of the mountains, and in the back garden the Tumut river and the Jounama Creek meet. The high rocky banks are good places to fish from, and below the rapids there is a swimming pool. A flying fox is the only way of getting across the river dryshod since the footbridge was swept away in the last flood.

We spend a happy time here climbing the hills around and fishing unsuccessfully. The days were warm and sunshiny, but early morning and evening were very cold. Every two or three days a flock of sheep came from their summer pasture up Rulo's Point way, going north to winter quarters. 5,000 sheep on a mountain road escorted by dogs and drovers and covered waggon against a setting of giant gums, sent the Air Force Photographer rushing for his camera.

To reach the best viewpoint one should take a day and climb Little Talbingo Mountain. It is reached either by going through the station paddocks, keeping one eye on the hereford bulls, and the other on handy trees and fences, or by following the river up till one comes to the spur that runs to the top. There is a pool of water half way to supply the billy tea. After reaching the top of Little Talbingo, we descend a little way and climb Big Talbingo where a glorious view is seen of the southern ranges.

Buddong Falls on the creek of that name is a long days walk being about 14 miles there and back with some rough climbing. Jounama Creek is easy

to walk along as far as the Falls, then it is as rough and touch as can be. Way up near its beginning there is a big smooth rock mass known as Black Perry. It can be seen from the valley as well as from the Yarrangebilly road and looks like an elephant's head.

A good two day trip would be to go along the left bank of the Jounama Creek and ascend the mountain by the Bridle Track. On the tops the country is strangely fascinating. There is open country and little streams and pools to fish. There are Peaks to climb also before returning by Black Perry and down Jounama Creek.

A trip to Yarrangebilly Caves can be easily made while staying at Talbingo. One can go by car and back in a day. But it is better to go up in the Mail Car which comes out from Tumut on Tuesdays and Fridays, and returns on Monday and Thursday each week.

We were invited to a wedding at the hotel. Mine Host's charming daughter was married to the son of a Pioneer family in the district. We decorated the little Dance Hall which is used as a church on Sundays, with chrysanthemums and dahlias from the garden and Autumn leaves and Berries and great branches of Poplar. After the ceremony we were invited to the wedding breakfast and the dance which ended at midnight. We very much enjoyed the turkey and ham and chicken and fruit salad, and also the contents of a large array of bottles which had been saved for the occasion.

Autumn is certainly a lovely time to go to the Tumut Valley. Could there be a more beautiful sight than these huge poplars whose leaves have turned golden? Yes, they tell me that the wildflowers in Spring beggar description. So I think I'll go.

LETTERS FROM THE LADS AND LASSES.

Letters were received from the following during July:-

H.J. Thomas	-	Rucksack	N. Melville	-	C. M. W.
Alan Hardie	-	S.B.W.	Bill Burke	-	S.B.W.
Geoff Higson	-	S. B.W.	B. Evans	-	Rucksack
		Ron Boakes	-	Y.M.C.A.	

Harry Thomas - From Tennant Creek. Whilst here in the north I am not neglecting my walking. At least once a week I go for a walk in the surrounding country with a cobbler, one "Angus" Coote. There is one torment to ideal walking at this time of year and that is a small shrub called Spinifex. It is a small spring shrub that penetrates the thickest of sox, puttee, gaiters and what have you. The country itself is the strangest that I have ever seen, quite unlike the Blue Mountains sandstone country. Small hills, quite disconnected with one another, the tallest under a hundred feet, rise up abruptly from a perfectly flat plain. There are unworked gold mines everywhere (this is a very rich gold bearing area). The weather is ideal for walking here at the present time, mild days with cool to cold nights, quite unlike what one would imagine for a tropical centre, but wait until summer is with us again. Temperatures of well over 100° in the shade with night temperatures not much better. Then I am afraid my walking days will be cancelled until I either reach Sydney again or the winter is with us again. Would you mind sending me a few photos of various places that the Walkers frequent, notably, the Blue Gum, North

Era, Marley Beach, Kanangra etc., I will reciprocate with typical photos of the country here of which I have taken many.

Ninian Melville - New Guinea. Life up here is very interesting and the boongs make a lifetime study. I am learning MOTU - the official language here. My "line" of natives consists of 40 of all shapes and sizes. I have two personal servants who also do odd jobs round the camp, make my bed, do my washing, prepare my bath (in $\frac{1}{2}$ a 44 gal. drum cut lengthwise) polish my boots etc., this is the life. Our Colo trip is in my opinion equal to the average rough mountain country up here.

Alan Hardie - North Australia. The entertainments and hospitality (where such exists) arranged for us cannot compare with the humour, good cheer and spontaneity of our old bushwalker gathering. I watch with interest in the "Bushwalkers" you send me each month what matters crop up at the monthly meetings to occupy the minds of those given to dialectics and argument. The Youth Hostels, I see, are causing a fair amount of uneasiness and disputation. When I used to be able to participate in the debates we were chiefly concerned with the shacks in National Park or else, in trying to curb Wiff Knight's expansionist ideas of founding male-nudist colonies. Your magazines and photographs provoke those thoughts of old times together, and this is the chief reason why I am thankful for them. "Peter" Page I see fairly often. He is still my link with the past. Since writing the letter which you partly published in the Bushwalker, he has changed the site of his location. Whereas I last described the watercourse near which he was camped as very much like the Cox, the one he and his men are now camped alongside in certain respects resembles the Kowmung. It has the grassy banks (howbeit the prickly grass irritates one's bare feet) parallel banks and clear water fast moving over the shallow cobblestones, somewhat like the Kowmung. "Peter" has a team of sprightly, happy-go-lucky youngsters under him; they are full of life, and do not quite understand his more mature point of view. They speak of him as "Old Peter" and "Mountaineer Page"; and I think at times they get somewhat obstreperous for him. They are camped under a gigantic fig tree with clusters of figs hanging down just outside the tent. Here all the birds of creation congregate, and sunset and sunrise are accompanied by all the chirping and chattering imaginable. When I went there, it was to deliver ammunition, and I had to bring "Peter" and all his boys across the river to our truck, necessitating their re-crossing the river in real, portorage fashion.

When I have a day of rest, I walk round about our camp. The long grasses now are dry and dead, and near the roadside are discoloured with the red dust stirred up by the Army trucks. You can hear the dead grass crackle underfoot, as you walk through it. There are some good panoramas to be gained by climbing the neighbouring mountains which are studded with huge monoliths and bare weatherworn rocks. What I do not like about climbing those mountains, however, is the long grass you have to wade through, although it is now dead or dying. You are fearful about what you are treading on, imagining some rock-python or tiger-snake under your feet. Moreover, grass seeds with barbed points as sharp as needles get into one's clothes and socks, making things very uncomfortable for some time after. I have known the seeds still to be in my socks after all my washing and scrubbing, and for weeks afterwards. A consoling feature about wandering these mountains is, however, that they form part of the same Great Dividing Range that the Blue Mountains belong to. I feel that I have a connecting link with the Gingra and Gangerang Ranges of happy memory

A remarkable feature about the bush up here is the peculiar species of gum eucalypt that predominates. It seems to be altogether out of keeping with the hot climate, bearing vividly green leaves, instead of parched dry ones, that one would naturally expect. Moreover, the trunk and boughs do not betray the slightest mark of any bush fire, although growing in regions where bush fires should be rampant. They are silvery-white in colour and remarkably clean. The leaves are rounded in shape like the fig-leaf. Leaves, boughs and trunk glisten in the sun's rays; and to look upon them is to make the observer feel fresh and to forget the enervation that comes of tropical heat. The strangest part about it all is that these gums seem to thrive best in the sandiest places. I wish I knew the correct botanical name of these trees. Just now the nights are miserably cold, while the days are hot. We are glad to see the sun come up over the hills, and a cold tremor goes down our spine as we watch it sink beneath the western horizon. The irony of it all is that our greatcoats were taken from us before we left Wollongong; they have never been replaced, evidently we were the victims of some hasty generalisation. An interesting feature of the cold, misty nights, however, is the faint rainbow effect made by concentric circles around the moon. The reason for this is, I think, that the moon is much brighter than down south, because it reflects more of the sun's rays. As the morning sun ascends, shafts of light are seen protruding through the trees and permeating the cold, misty air, and I am reminded of the concluding scene of Walt Disney's "Fantasia", wherein Schubert's "Ave Maria" supplants at dawn the horrors of the previous night.

Geoff Higson - New Guinea. We are all hoping, praying to get out of here but so far to no avail. On Monday we did a stunt with ----- it was quite good in spots and very fast. By the time it was over we were fairly knocked up. A good nights sleep fixed that, we are now as good as new. (Oh Yeah) Well anyway we are good which is no fault of ours. I'll look forward to the photograph you will be sending, as far as I am concerned they are definitely a morale booster of the first rate. The way George Archer's letter reads and the way conditions are here I'd gladly change him although I daresay it would have its disadvantages also. The ice skating appeals to me. The only ice we get is in the glances of the Officers on occasions.

Talking about going pea picking reminds me of "The Pea Pickers" by Eve Langley which I enjoyed so thoroughly not so long ago. I hope it swells the B.S.C. funds quite considerably. As I am on duty in the kitchen today I must leave you for a while.

Here I am back on the job looking for inspiration.

The nights up here are very cold and very clear. The sleeping bags are not adequate, not being a patch on the genuine "Paddy-made" but, even so, they are better than blankets. The days are perfect without a cloud in the sky and a nice cool breeze. I wish I had the gift of the gab to be able to describe the countryside here. It is something like the Blue Labyrinth on a larger scale only much greener and not so scrubby. Its rather pretty if one could only get the thought of the Army out of one's mind for a while. The vast majority of trees just here are mostly gums, Blue Spotted etc., but I haven't noticed any red. There are also quite a few Acacias but the Paper Barks are far more numerous. Thank all the B.S.C. for the various books etc., that they have sent me in the past.

G O S S I P.

We haven't seen Max Gentle for a long time, but you know how he chatters, and we hear indirectly that he is still getting soft in the Army. As this is not the first time we have heard this complaint, we are wondering if Max is trying to convey to us that he is getting soft mentally and not physically, as we so charitably assumed.

One of the Bushwalker members of the Silent Service has indeed been working silently lately, we hadn't heard a thing. The silence is now broken and he is engaged to be married to Miss Reek. Fortunately the "W" is also silent.

More congratulations. We really need a special page for these announcements with a charge of 1/- per line. This time the congratulations are for Perc. Harvey who has gone over the brink and is now a married man of some weeks' standing.

You may have read this one in the "Herald" then again you may be one of those who prefer to wait for the "Bushwalker" for their news. And rightly so. Joyce Trimble and Arthur Brophy have announced their engagement. The Herald didn't offer good wishes. We do. That is service.

Now are there any more? Well then.

It is terrible the way Flo Allsworth loses her voice every few weeks. We feel sure she was trying to tell us something last week and it must have been good, by the way she was struggling.

The Clubroom may seem rather empty for the next two weeks and for why? Well, quite a few people have gone North of 53°. For those who like it cold, the weather is according to all weather reports just what they want. Mt. Franklin hasn't had so much snow for years.

Another party is leaving in a fortnight's time for the Alpine Hut, but as these people are well known argufiers, conditions will be quite hot, inside the Hut at least. Imagine being isolated in the snow with those maniacs.

More next time. Perhaps we'll have the inside story of the snow trips for you.

OUR OWN MEETING.

Bang! Bang! went the President's bone at 8.15 p.m. precisely and the uninitiated rushed for the exits. Those who preferred gossip and giggles accompanied them, while twenty-six of the more dignified sank into the cushioned seats and the meeting began.

New members welcomed were Norma Bowden, Christa Calnan, Doug. McGuire and Ron Perrot.

The Hon. Sec. had apparently had a busy time writing letters to various people but it was not until she mentioned correspondence with the Commissioner of Police that any startling effect was noticeable among the listeners. The word "Police" stopped the clicking needles, the puffing pipes and roused the somnolent from their dreams. With bated breath the twenty-eight waited hopefully for news of a body found in the lift-well or the discovery of a blood-stained bread knife --- but alas! there was only a protest to the Police Commissioner about the developing rowdiness round the environs, on the stairs and in the lift on Friday nights.

A letter was recieved from the Editor of "The Bushwalker" appealing for articles, poems, photographs sketches and advertisements.

The Federation Sec. told of a proposal to buy for \$400, Lot 7 at Era (Nth. Nth.Era); The Fed. to supply \$200, the remaining half to be raised among the clubs. The proposer argued that if the lands were resumed the money could be refunded; if not resumed, the place would always be valueble and a good return would be assured if it were sold.

Voting on a motion of Edna Garrad's, the meeting showed that it viewed favourably the purchase of this block. Miss Garrad also moved that if necessary, private members should be approached for contributions. John Johnston suggested that our little "nest egg" which just escaped the last war-loan, should be used as part of the S.B.N. 's contribution but Malcolm McGregor pointed out that our Fiscal Policy should not be decided by such a small gathering of members, all that was necessary at the moment was that the Club's approval be sent to the Federation.

The Hon.Treas.'s report disclosed that our finances are still satisfactory. Just \$61 in the current account of which \$30 goes into the Savings Bank Account.

FEDERATION REPORT.

It was decided to ask the Youth Hostels Association to suggest that the proposed restriction of camping at Little Marley be altered from -"within 80 yards of the hostel" to "within the immediate vicinity of the hostel".

Word reached the Federation, through Paddy Pallin, that Mr.Hodgson, President of the Blue Mountains Shire, was interested in about 500 square miles of Crown Lands in the Blue Mountains that have been earmarked for a reserve. He is anxious that it should be restocked with wild life and native plants. There was a suggestion that this area was between the Colo River and the Main Western Highway, but it was thought likely that it might actually be the two areas asked for by the Federation last year, namely the Mt. Hay Highlands and the Blue Labyrinth, which lie between the Grose River and the Warragamba, and are separated by the Main Western Highway

and settlement along it. Inquiries are being made and Mr. Hodgson will be written to for any maps he can supply.

Mr. Eric Easton, President of the Rucksack Club, was elected Technical Adviser to the Publication Committee for 1943.

The National Fitness Council is calling a conference of all interested bodies to consider the classification of reserves and the definitions recently submitted by the Conservation Bureau of the Federation. Miss Byles and Mr. Whaite were elected as Federation delegates, with Mr. Blom as substitute.

The National Fitness Council is planning to establish a Fitness Camp as well as a Youth Hostel at Kosciusko, when conditions permit. Regarding the suggestion for a Youth Hostel at the foot of Nioka Ridge, National Park, it was decided that that position would be unsuitable. Instead, Federation recommends either Kingfisher Creek or where the gatekeeper's cottage used to be in National Park near Waterfall, with preference to Kingfisher Creek.

The action of the Hon. Secretary in writing to the Lands Department and the Parks & Playgrounds Movement protesting against a suggestion from Woy Woy Shire Council to place a sanitary depot in Varrah Reserve was heartily endorsed.

SOCIAL EVENTS FOR YOUR CALENDAR.

AUGUST	20th	8.15 p.m.	"Old Tails" retold again by Reg. Alder and Malcolm McGregor.
AUGUST	27th	8 p.m.	Clubroom party. Dancing etc. - supper.
SEPTEMBER	17th	8.15 p.m.	Lecture by Dr. Ian Hogbin "The Development of New Guinea and the future of the native".
SEPTEMBER	24th	8 p.m.	Services Committee night.

Y O U R O P T O M E T R I S T

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THE OVERWORKED ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind. Those of us who are suffering from overwork can maybe find it in our hearts to sympathise with an overworked word which we all use constantly when thinking of camping gear.

The less a person knows of the art of lightweight camping the more likely is he to overburden this poor word with a multitude of meanings. The word is WATERPROOF. It is used by campers to describe

1. A cloth or an article which is completely and absolutely resistant to percolation or penetration by water.

2. A cloth or an article which is water repellant (often called showerproof).

3. A cloth or an article (such as a tent) which when tightly stretched and pitched at an angle will successfully run off water.

4. All above definitions blended in varying proportions according to the users imagination.

When used as above it is of course an adjective but is it just as frequently used as a noun when it means

5. A sheet or a garment with the properties described in any or all of Nos. 1, 2, 3 or 4.

And it can also be used as a verb in which case it signifies the process of so treating a piece of cloth or an article so that it acquires the properties described in 1, 2, 3 or 4 or any combination of them.

Next month we shall examine this subject further.

In the meantime Paddy still tries with some measure of success to supply walkers with camping gear to suit their needs.

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