

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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Editor: C. Kinsella
Asst. B. Jolley
Bus. Manager: J. Johnson

Production: Yvonne Rolfe
Asst. Alice Wyborn
Sales & Subs. Betty Dickenson

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NATIVE POET - NANCY CATO

Each magpie sits on his own post
And sings his song, and does not care
What others sing - the starling's croak,
This lark that trills in the blue air,

But is he right not to rejoice
In the alien blackbird's voice?
For myself, I'm not above
Liking the mournful Indian dove;
The goldfinch has a pretty wing
And there's no doubt the lark can sing.

But, "Give me a crimson bird to chatter
Bush-silence with his parrot-clatter,
Clack of wattle-bird, cockatoo-screech
Echoing along the reach",
Sings the magpie. "Woods and dales
Are proper haunts for nightingale;
But here, by claypan, flat and creek
And gully, native voices speak."

BUSHWALKING BABIES

Marie B. Byles.

Bushwalking, or tramping as we called it in the Old Country, commenced in our family as soon as we could walk. I suppose I was six when we attempted Snaafell (2000 feet high) in the Isle of Man. In memory it is still the grandest mountain I have ever seen, and not even the dragon mountains of Yunnan, ten times as high, were half so lonely and inaccessible. So too the primrose-bordered brooks of the Isle of Man will always be far more beautiful than the woods of Norway carpeted with lily-of-the-valley, or the sapphire lakes of Canada with their asters and columbines.

Down through the years of childhood the tramps stand out as the highlights, and this, even though they were often only along the banks of the Mersey canal on Saturday afternoon where we watched the slow-moving barges taking the cotton up to Manchester, or stood on the railway bridge waiting with bated breath and beating hearts until a train came underneath and gave us a "puff". When one of the senior girls at school announced her intention of getting a "puff", I agreed enthusiastically with the proposal connecting it at once with the Saturday afternoons by the canal, and not with the latest style of hair-dressing!

What is a Spring ?

But the cream of the tramps was in the Peak District with its grassy hills and caves where perhaps Crab, the Caveman, lived. On the top of one of these hills was a little spring that gushed out of its peaty source like a water-tap. My Father had a collapsable brass drinking cup, and brass is perhaps the most evilly-tasting material ever invented, but filled with water from that spring it was a goblet of the gods. That spring set my standard in springs for ever after. Years later when I was shown a bit of damp earth in the Warrumbungle Mountains, and told it was a "spring", I just did not believe it. Springs have got to spout out like that one in the Peak District or they are not springs!

Another thrilling tramp was one frosty New Year's Day when my Father took us to Rosterne Mere, a lake owned by a wealthy family, which did not permit members of the proletariat like us to approach its shores. My Father, who was both an ardent Christian and an ardent socialist sat us up on a style overlooking the lake and made us say after him, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof - Cursed be he that addeth field to field - Down with the blasted land-owners!" It is said that the adult life may be made or marred by such teachings in infancy. But it was on St. Boniface Down in the Isle of White that my fate was settled, for we came down "by an original descent which would make Auntie Olive green with envy". Surely it was then that the lust for virgin peaks was sown, a lust which has driven me into most uncomfortable situations in New Zealand and China.

And then to Australia

Then we came out to Australia where people lived on the tops of the mountains instead of in the valleys. It was most exciting especially as no one seemed to have heard of tramping. My Father tramped Sydney vainly trying to buy a rucksack, and when we went to the Blue Mountains every winter we were curiosities. True, there was a list of "beauty spots" on a notice board near the station, a list which we had always dutifully ticked off before we returned home, but apparently no one else ever walked to beauty spots, anyhow, no one except an objectionable man called "Razbury", who had walked to them merely to defile them by painting his name on their rocks. As for the various "original descents" we tried, no-one would have known what we were talking about. One of these took us down to the "Forest of Arden" and back in one day. When you remember that this is now called the Blue Gum Forest and that there was then no track to it, but many river crossings, you will agree that it was not a bad effort for my younger brother who could not have been more than nine.

But the place richest in "original descents" was Mount Irwin, where we wanted very badly to find a way down to the Wallongambi River. We had brought some "smooth-eating chocolate", which was not to be eaten until it could be washed down with the waters of the Wallongambi, flavoured doubtless with the brass of that evilly tasting drinking-cup! After many attempts we got down, only to find the sacred waters flowing in the depths of an inaccessible canyon. I don't know what happened to the "smooth-eating chocolate"; I suppose it returned sorrowfully home with us.

Revolvers and Villains

It was my Father who took me on my first camping trip. It was to Mount Hay, and thereafter I dragged out unsuspecting University friends on camping trips every holiday week-end. Bush-walking was a very dangerous pastime in those days; there were villains lurking behind every bush, and the hop of an innocent kangaroo was interpreted as the step of a prospective robber. No wonder we found it necessary to have at least one revolver in the party, carried conspicuously on the hip. And no wonder people used to stare a little - revolvers and long skirts and billies and frying pans draped about the person must have looked a trifle unusual. If we were so frightened of our fellow men, I cannot imagine why we found bushwalking so attractive. But if we are conditioned in childhood that explains everything.

When I look back on the highlights of my childhood, I feel very sorry for the boys and girls who do not have parents to take them bushwalking, and if fitness camps and youth hostels can be foster parents to such children, then as bushwalkers we should in turn be foster parents to the fitness camps and youth hostels.

WHO DO WE WALK ?

Well sir, that's a big question you've asked. It's all very well to say that we walk for pleasure, but that doesn't explain where the pleasure comes from, does it?

Again, it's all very well to say we walk for our health, but we are ready to question this statement when we find ourselves miles from shelter, sopping wet and shivering, and/or exhausted, and/or half starved - as we are at times.

Some of us will tell you that we walk to see the country. But how little of it we really do see when out walking. Very often our eyes are glued to the ground immediately ahead of our feet, carefully watching each step, in case we should fall over in our struggle some, heavily weighted movements over the countryside. Certainly we stop now and again when the leader gets puffed out and says the view is worth looking at; but if we'd been riding a horse, or a cyclo; or merely sitting at home in an armchair looking at an illustrated Tourist Bureau pamphlet, we probably would have seen much more of the view without half the bother!

A few of us think we walk for the enjoyable companionship. Admittedly we seem happy enough to be out together; but what about those wives, and sweet-hearts, and mothers, and maiden aunts of ours, who sit at home knitting our pom pom caps, and socks; and wondering all the while when we'll get sense, enough to find out that their company can be even more enjoyable than our own. No sir! It's not the companionship which attracts us - it's the lack of it more likely.

"It's a great spell from hard work," others will say; and even as they are speaking the sweat will be pouring down their foreheads, and they'll be breathing like asthmatic elephants in the last stages of dither.

"It gets you away from life's dull routine", still others will claim; and even as they utter the nonsensical, empty headed remark, they'll be putting up their tents, spreading out their groundsheets, gathering in their firewood, and frying their sausages (and perhaps cursing at the rain) in the same old, dreary, monotonous, routinish style which they've been doing for years.

"It's nice to see the trees, and breathe the fresh air."

"It's nice to feel the wind in our faces."

"It's a joy to hear the birds sing."

We walkers have been saying these things so often that we're actually beginning to believe them!

But why walk to get these questionable pleasures? Your own back lawn, or the nearest public gardens, will provide the first. A cycle ride into a stiff northerly along St. Kilda Road, will provide the second. And anybody with a canary in a cage, or a parrot, or a white cockatoo, can have the third turned on whenever they wish, just like getting water out of a tap.

No sir! I cannot tell you why we walk - I'm sure none of us can; but please don't delay me any longer. I'm in a devil of a hurry. I want to get home to pack my rucksack for the week-end walk. I wouldn't miss it for the world!

The Editor, "Walker's Rag."



SALE OF NATIVE FLOWERS

Ray Birt.

Readers will have gathered from the newspapers, there has been a definite stir following the deputation to the Minister for Local Government to present the petition asking for the prohibition of the sale of all protected wild flowers, with the exception of Christmas Bush.

However, legislation is one thing and another thing is the enlightened growth of public opinion which will not tolerate the sale of wild flowers and which will refuse to sell or buy our National heritage.

With this in mind we wrote to the leading stores which sell wild flowers and asked them if they would be public spirited and stop the sale of same in their stores. Two of them responded, Messrs Woolworths said they would stop the sale altogether and their Managing Director and Secretary signed the petition and Messrs. Anthony Hordern said they would stop the sale for the time being. It is now up to all bushwalkers to go out of their way to shop at these stores and tell the sales assistant why they are doing so.

BOOKS!

B O O K S !BOOKS!PENGUINS !DIGESTS!MAGAZINES !

The Services Committee needs more and more BOOKS, PAPERS and MAGAZINES to send to the lads and lasses. Their supplies are very, very low.

What can YOU do to help?

Bring what you can into the Club, or leave with

PADDY PALLIN.

G O S S I P

We do wish the Butlers (Ira and Dot, - Rhona: can't do anything about it) would stay "put" long enough for us to say with certainty where they are or are going to be, for a few days. We hear that Dot is in Melbourne and very caustically, we say so. Next time that we are in the club room we see Dot, who appears very amused when we show surprise and try to conceal our annoyance.

Dot tells us that Ira has departed overseas, not for a photographic ramble as we supposed, but on business. Ira, having to leave at very short notice, left our Dot with a beautiful but unfinished sweater for Ira. This garment was Dot's idea of what the well dressed gent should wear in the stratosphere. Anyway, as Ira swung himself on board the plane, Dot started on the neck-band. Mr. Butler sewed his sweater up, on the trip over.

After a round of visits, Dot and Rhona are going to look after the Iredale children while Merle does some Kindergarten work. The evenings, we imagine, will be fully occupied with Kindergarten stories from both of them.

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Bean allowed us to look at their lovely baby last week before they took her round to the River Canoe Club. The Bushwalkers certainly do themselves proud when it comes to babies.

Dunc, also made an appearance in the club room after a few weeks absence and we are all glad to see that she is well again.

We heard of a kind hearted shark the other day. A small party of Bushwalkers, Arthur Gilroy, Fiffille Kinsella, John Wood and Lauris Greenacre were down at Garie contemplating the water and doing nothing about it. Tif, braver than the rest, made up her mind to swim, went in and enjoyed (?) herself, wondering vaguely about the calls she could hear in the distance. Fiff turned, picked her wave and came in. Later people came along and expressed their thankfulness that she had heard their shouts from the cliff top. The shark, they said had practically decided to attack when Fiffille turned to come back.

Tuggie has done her last Test walk. She says Paddy led her first test walk and now he has led her last. On this, her last test walk, Tuggie complained bitterly that she had always thought that T & R on the programme meant Track and Reasonable. To which Paddy smartly retorted that No, it meant Tuff and Ruff.

OCTOBER WALKS6th, 7th, 8th MT. VICTORIA-GROSE RIVER-BLUE GUM FOREST-
GRAND CANYON-BLACKHEATH.

Doug McGuire will lead this walk and says that the Bluegums have lost none of their appeal, especially at this time of year. A search may be made to preserve any saplings. That great fissure, the Grand Canyon, will be seen on the way back. It is a unique spot containing beautiful ferns and lovely pools and should not be missed by anyone who has not seen it.

14th, 15th ROBERTSON-YEOLA-CARRINGTON FALLS-JAMBEROO-KIAMA.

Yeola has always been a favorite spot with Bushwalkers, tucked away in the fastness of the Upper Kangaroo River. The Carrington Falls provide a sheer drop of 270 feet into a rocky chasm, but don't be alarmed, Elsa Isaacs is going back another way, by a new route with coastal views, to the beautiful rural district of Jamberoo.

21st, 22nd. PARRAMATTA-GLENORIE-DURAL-GLENOFIE.

Here is a new area for most walkers, even though it is so close to Sydney. It consists of some of the richest orchard and dairying land near our city. That does not mean that fruit and cream will be on hand for members of the party, our Social Secretary John Woods, is taking this walk, but there is always a possibility.

28th, 29th. FEDERATION RE-UNION

The walk this week-end to the Wild Dog Mountains has been cancelled, so everyone should be available to go to our Annual Federation Reunion, there to meet our friends from other clubs, and so foster the inter-club spirit. The site and other particulars will be made known as soon as they have been decided.

ARE YOU COMING ?

THE WALKER'S BLEAT

You hear it not while at your work,
Now in the busy street;
But when the walkers rove about
There comes a plaintive bleat.
The careful leader stalks ahead
In rain and summer's heat,
And little heeds the anguished souls
Who cry: "When do we eat?"
Oh, many of our walking friends
Thus hunger on their feet,
And know that ease for it depends
on This "WHEN DO WE EAT"?

F.A. BLACKMAN
in the "Melbourne Walker"

LETTERS FROM THE LADS

Since our last list we have received letters from the following members of the Walking fraternity:-

Rob Morrison	Vic Aubourg
Alan Williams	Dick Smith
John Green	Les Douglas
Peter Page	Frank Freeguard
Doris Allden	Jack Adams
Gordon Mannell	Bill Burke.

DORIS ALLDEN - 12.6.44 Last Friday week I ended up in Sick Bay with dengue and have been in since. Its an unpleasant affair and we have had a lot of it here. I thought I was escaping but it seems that conceit does not pay after all. I appear to have lost considerable weight judging by my dressing gown which hangs in folds. However the consolation prize for all this is a week's convalescence on the Island. I hope to go across on Wednesday and if the weather holds expect some sun basking.

Our Sick Bay is quite new so I expect there is no harm in sampling it. When I became well enough to appreciate it, I decided it really was pleasant with its egg shell blue walls, cream ceiling and blue bed covers, and the most charming of all Naval Nursing Sisters to go with it. All this sounds as if I might be better. Add to the above, a clear view right across to the Island. A nice place to rest with a sore knee or a headache but no! not dengue.

Apart from this little episode life has been proceeding interestingly and enjoyably. Still have much to learn of Naval ways and customs. Work is extremely interesting and I do regret these wasted weeks in sickness when there is much to do. Have been moving on to some new work, the break was a pity.

Have been enjoying a spot of social life as well. We had our first dance in our recreation hall and it was most successful. We had invited 10 AWAS and 10 WAAFS to come as well as A.I.F. and RAAF - they have been very hospitable to us in their functions - but the WAAFS were unable to come. One thing and another the males preponderated and it threatened to produce a number of male wallflowers - extraordinary sight! I had a temperature running but decided nevertheless I couldn't leave under the circumstances and ended up exhausted but still on my feet. The week previously the Petty Officers entertained a party of WRANS at a picnic over at the Island. It was a good day. Swimming, cricket and eating. The cricket match was good fun. We won(?) mostly due, I fear, to the ingenious methods of the scorer who seemed to be able to collect extra runs out of the air. It all helps to make a pleasant break from duty. Our hours of duty and regulations don't allow of too much mixing outside the Services but they do some very nice things for us and we can make no complaint.

GORDON MANNELL - ENGLAND. I have just returned to my station after spending a very enjoyable leave amidst the Southern Scottish Highlands. I have been on several visits to this grand little country and each time I have come away with a greatly enhanced opinion of it and its people. This last time I was the guest, together with another member of my crew, of a Mrs. Locke who lives in the charming little village of Dollar situated in the Devon valley in Clackmannanshire. Our hostess placed bikes at our disposal to enable us to

view as much of surrounding countryside as possible in the short time available, we certainly did make good use of them. However the highlight of our trip was an 8 mile walking trip into the Highlands. Yes, Dunc, I said 8m, not 28. The first stage was to the Castle Campbell, hereditary castle of the Campbell Clan, via the Glen of Sorrow. It reminded me very much of some of our Blue Mountain streams. From then on it was over open moor country covered with bracken and heather. There were many of those black faced sheep with lambs grazing. We were reluctant to leave this great spot but A.W.L. does not pay, so back to work. I am now flying in 4 engined bombers and liking it.

BILL BURKE - 26-7-44. Home sweet home once more and as yet, don't know whether to be glad or sorry. I've had life too easy the past five months and that's not good for the morale of an infantryman. The C.O. of the Warwick Con. Depot finally woke up to me and handed me my walking papers. A calamity it was as I was just beginning to get some place with a daughter of one of the town's many publicans. Alas! the Gods still frown upon me, my Guardian Angel is still lost amidst the jungles of N.G. and just when I thought that it was on the up grade again too. A civvie spotted me limping along the street and bought me a couple of beers on the strength of it, so I've decided to acquire a stooge. In a loud voice he shall inquire about the knee I shall mumble a cheerful reply and then he shall insist on telling the chap next to him (again in a loud voice) all the horrifying details I, or should I say we, anticipate many beers. One of my many failings a tendency to blush easily, will be very handy in my new career. Anyway to get back to my exit from the depot. The squad marched forth to the beat of the drums, I rode forth to the roar of the engine. Again the knee. Most of the chaps I had honoured by classifying them as my friends made some disparaging remarks, in fact some were plain nasty, but, when they arrived at the station looking weary and much the worse for wear, I could do nought but forgive them.

The station, the train, a hospital one - a blast of the whistle and I said farewell to that fair town. I must return to the Downs one day, a beautiful country, a rolling black earth plain where the slightest shower sets the grass springing forth to greet the sun. And so it was I left it, one vast panorama of green through which the willow banked Condamine staggered its way. No wonder "Downsmen" are forever enthusiastic about it.

A few days at G.D.D. awaiting draft during which I met an old mate of mine "Sykes" Bryant. Used to be my No.2 on the Bren at Alamein until he grew careless and stepped in front of a slug. You may remember me writing about how we all hopped out for a cup of tea one day, well Sykes was the unlucky one. Got over that, but the Nips at Finch made a much better job of it than Jerry? He still has the leg, but won't be going back again. Sounds like a warning for me doesn't it? Wasn't sorry to leave when my number came up. The bullion was light on and besides there were too many "animals" - both two and four legged - round the place. Both kinds fatten on the likes of me, although the first missed out this trip. I must hand it to the place for its breed of fleas, undoubtedly the very best class and that's from one who is by way of a connoisseur on such matters.

Another station, another train and we were off again, not forgetting of course, the customary two hour wait. No sleeping berths this year, nevertheless we weren't too badly off, with only six to a compartment. I

wasn't too proud to take the floor the first night. Next day we were flooded out due to a leaking pipe, which didn't exactly help matters any. We soldiered on, the hours and days passed, we played cards, we ate, we slept and ate again and then had some more to eat. We took a risk of ruining our insides and drank the only two bad beers on the market - ginger beer and hop beer. Piled out of windows and doors in a mad rush at mess halts as of yore, but no one threatened to throw any of the R.T.O'S off the station this year. A well behaved crowd comparatively speaking. The weather persuaded us to keep our clothes on. Watched the kids diving for our pennies as we passed through a town. Kissed every pretty lass we passed (Speed Gordon style) and day dreamed of other lasses in other places. The train just rattled on, as only Q.Rs can rattle.

Lonely paddocks, lonely homesteads, lonely women and a wisp of linen waving as we go by. Cries of pa-er, pa-er from the fettleers and an enterprising urchin with a bucket of tea. Shades of the M.E! "As you wish" when it comes to price. I mind the time I gave a taxi driver 5 mils (1/4d) didn't he scream. The swamps lacked the blue flower covering, nor were there so many birds about Native Companions and ibis looking as lonely as the country itself. The cattle runs gave way to the canefields to the pineapple and banana plantations, Unchanged save for the russet gold leaves of the pines. Patches of rain forest and bitter sweet memories and so the end of the line arrived.

Another few days in a town in which I run into my elder brother - the second time since Adolph decided to have some fun - and a few more drinks of ale. Had busted his hand in a scrap, love to see the other chap, and after a month ashore was keen to get aboard his ship again. One fight that did do someone some good.

Aboard another train, up and over the hills and that night I slept on an arrangement of wire and boards called by the company a bed. A stack of mail awaited me including a snap of the Reunion. I notice you and Bill Hall both occupy your usual commanding position.

Received a great welcome home. The first question the company commander asked me; "How many crime sheets against you?" and so it was for every one I met. A look of awe spread over their faces when I proudly proclaimed a clean sheet. It just wasn't possible. That's what comes of having a bad record. It's time I changed homes again, get some place where I'm not so well known. I have to see a man about a cog. Cheerio, Regards to all,

Bill.

FEDERATION REPORT

On Tuesday 18th July, 1944 the N.S.W. Federation of Bush Walking Clubs held its Twelfth Annual Meeting.

The Affiliation Fee was again fixed at 5/- for each 25 members (excluding those grades not bound to pay full membership fees) and the Subscription for Associate Members of the Federation at 2/6 per member. The constitution requires Affiliation Fees to be paid within three months of the annual meeting; otherwise membership is forfeited.

Under the constitution each club is required to notify the Hon. Secretary within 28 days of the Federation's annual meeting (a) its membership at 30th June on which its affiliation fee and its number of delegates will be based, and (b) the names of its delegates for the ensuing twelve months.

At the July meeting the W.W.C.A. WALKING CLUB was admitted to membership of the Federation.

Advice was received that the ROVER RAMBLERS' CLUB has a New Secretary - Mr. J. Hicks, 4 Hurstville Road, Hurstville.

BEA LANDS. Miss Byles stated that it was desired to offer the State Government £250 towards the cost of resuming the Bea Lands, and that the S.B.W. had in hand and in promises approximately £500. Federation voted a contribution of "not more than £50" towards a total of £350, such donation to come from general funds.

KARLOON PENINSULA A letter was received from the District Surveyor repeating that no decision regarding reservation is possible yet owing to lack of surveyors.

ORGANISING OF PLAYGROUND WALKS For about two years Mrs. Emilie Livingstone of the Rucksack Club has been organising the walks programmes and arranging for leaders for the children from several of Sydney's supervised Playgrounds, but she has now resigned. Federation is seeking some other bushwalker to carry on this important work. Walks leaders will also be welcomed, but the organiser is the most urgent need.

BOUDE NATURAL PARK. As a Trustee, Miss Byles gave notice of another working day - to be held on the first moonlight week-end in May, 1945. Walks Secretary and all other members please note the date.

FEDERATION'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE of members of the affiliated Clubs will be held on October 17th at 3 p.m.

SEARCH & RESCUE PRACTICE WEEK-END, is being organised by the C.M.W. for September 2nd and 3rd next. Everyone is asked to note this very important date and to arrange to join the party for a most interesting week-end.

BARBECUE The Rover Rambler's Club is arranging a Barbecue for the week-end 16th and 17th September at Long Angle Gully - in aid of the Bushwalkers' Services Committee - and extends an invitation to all members of all the affiliated Clubs.

FEDERATION RE-UNION this year to be held on October 28th and 29th and an organising committee is to be appointed at the August meeting. Has any member any suggestions? The site has not yet been decided upon either.

FEDERATION SCRAP BOOK. The Federation used to have a scrap book that was kept up-to-date by a member of the Publicity Bureau but this bureau has lapsed for the duration. At the July meeting it was decided that something ought to be done about the scrap book and Miss Millie Horne of the Rucksack Club volunteered to take charge of it and keep it up to date. All members are asked to note this fact and to clip from the papers or magazines any items of bushwalking interest they see from time to time. These can be sent to Millie Horne direct or through your Federation Delegates.