

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A Monthly Bulletin devoted to matters of interest to
The Sydney Bushwalkers, 5 Hamilton Street, Sydney

No. 123

MARCH 1945

Price 6d.

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"WHERE BELLS DON'T RING"

It seems to me I'd like to go
and Where bells don't ring nor whistles blow,
Nor clocks don't strike, nor gongs don't sound
And I'd have stillness all around.
Not real stillness, but just the trees'
Low whisperings, or the hum of bees.
Or brooks faint babbling over stones
In strangely, softly tangled tones.
Or maybe a cricket or katydid,
Or the songs of birds in the hedges hid
Or just some sweet sound as these
To fill a tired heart with ease,
If it weren't for sight and sound and smell
I'd like the city pretty well,
But when it comes to getting rest
I like the wild woods lots the best.
Sometimes it seems to me I must
Just quit the city's din and dust,
And get out where the sky is blue -
And, say, how does this seem to you?

- Author unknown.

NOTES ON DANGEROUS SNAKES.

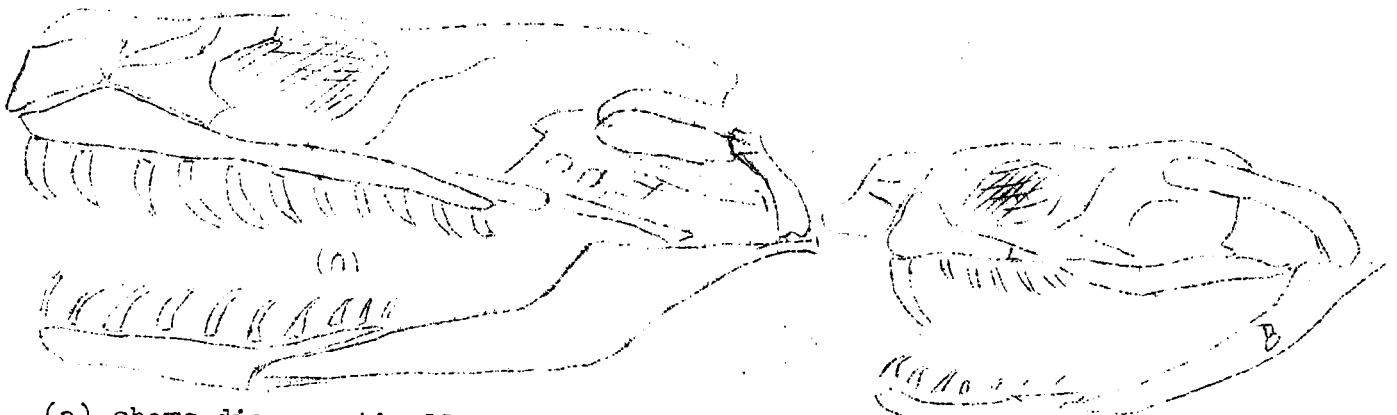
By David R. Stead.

Our last instalment described, amongst many other things, the fact that our snakes proceed from place to place by means of their scales. Since then I have been to Melbourne and a member of the Metropolitan Tramway Board said to me "They'd never get away with that in Melbourne". While flying over the Southern city on the way home, I said to a man sitting alongside me, "Beautifully laid out, isn't it?" "Ought to be", he growled, "been dead long enough."

But to return to our reptiles - I want to include a few notes about our dangerous snakes. They are the Brown, the Black, the Tiger, the Copperhead and last but not least the Death Adder,

In These five, the two front teeth of the upper jaw are longer than the others and are grooved, with the exception of the Death Adder, in which they are perforated. These poison fangs are fed from venom sacs in the head through connecting ducts.

Although there are a large number of other venomous snakes in New South Wales, they are probably no more dangerous than bees or wasps, the amount of venom secreted being insufficient to kill a man.



(a) shows diagrammatically the skull of a Carpet snake and (b) that of a typical venomous snake such as the Brown or the Black snake. The prominent fangs in (b) are clearly shown.

The Brown snake may grow to a length of six feet and is fairly thick in the body - uniform light to dark brown colour above and a dirty white below, although the very young ones usually have black bands. They are hatched from eggs which number up to about twenty - fairly common on the Coast, but widely distributed.

The Black snake is the commonest snake in South Eastern Australia and occasionally grows to a length of seven feet, although specimens four feet to six feet are most usual. This reptile is so well known to bushwalkers as to require no description. Some of them are quite thick, though they vary a great deal. When the skin is new or in good condition, the back is a lovely glossy black, with the underside from cream to dark red. They are fond of water and are often found swimming rivers and are seldom far from swamps or river banks. When angry, they raise their head and flatten the neck into a hood like that of the Cobra, which is a distant relative of some

of our snakes. It is viviparous and produces as many as twenty young at a birth. It is not nearly as dangerous to man as is generally believed and the chances of a bite proving fatal are quite small. It feeds on frogs, lizards and smaller snakes.

The Tiger snake is by far the most aggressive of our local snakes and should be treated with respect when encountered in the bush. It usually frequents drier places than the Black snake and is found near logs, rocks and stumps over most of the State. It grows to five or six feet in length and is light to dark brown in colour with numerous darker bands along its entire length. Its poison fangs are slightly longer than those of our other poisonous snakes. It is viviparous and produces as many as fifty young in a litter. Like the black snake it can erect its hood when aroused, at which times it gives the impression that it really means business.

The Copper-head or Superb snake is not nearly so well known to bushwalkers around Sydney, although not uncommon in Southern parts and in the Monaro district. It grows to about five feet in length, varies a good deal in colour from almost black to slaty grey, sometimes even being a very dark red. In young specimens the head is quite coppery, but usually darkens a good deal in the adult.

The Death Adder is short and stumpy tailed and is a clumsy and repulsive looking reptile. Although it seldom grows to more than two feet in length it is our most dangerous and deadly snake. Its colour may vary according to the ground on which it lives, being from grey to brown with darker bands. The bands are neither as numerous nor as prominent as on the Tiger snake. The tail is pointed and ends in a spine which, as mentioned previously, is not a weapon of defence and has no sting. The snake frequents sandy places and relies on its protective colouring to render it invisible to its enemies. Because of this, one is liable to step on a Death Adder without seeing it.

Of the venomous but harmless species, the best known is the Grey Whip snake, which grows to a length of three feet or a little more, is exceedingly slender in build, being in shape, not unlike a whip. Its colour is grey to olive green, with a yellow spot near the eye. It will bite, but the effect is no worse than a couple of bee stings. It is likely to be found in any of our local walking country.

The two others which may be easily recognised are the Black and White Ringed snake, which has alternate bands along its body and the pretty little Red-naped snake, which has a dark body, black head and neck and a scarlet spot or collar on the nape of the neck.

The Sea snakes are all poisonous, but are not indigenous, though the Yellow-bellied sea snake is sometimes washed up on our coastal beaches. They grow to a little over three feet in length. All the sea snakes are, of course, good swimmers, and propel themselves through the water mainly by means of a paddle shaped tail. The body is quite different from the land snakes in shape and has a comparatively deep keel on the underside, like the keel of a boat. The most interesting feature of this reptile is perhaps the marvellous colouring. The upper half of the body is a dark brown to black and the underside is bright yellow. As it swims at the surface of the ocean, (it breathes air, like all other snakes), the dark upper body is virtually invisible from above and so protection is afforded from sea birds, who would enjoy nothing better than a snack of snake. Viewed from below the yellow underside harmonises with the colour of the sky above the sea and many unsuspecting small fish swim close to the sea snake and provide it with its staple food.

Cheerio till next time.

THE IDLE THOUGHTS OF AN IDLE FELLOW

Ray Bean.

I am one of nature's whims; an oddity of evolution. Perhaps a throwback to paganism caused by a too high concentration of civilization.

That is what the public thinks of me because I go Bushwalking. They are right.

When I call to mind that in a frenzy of Bushwalking enthusiasm I hashed, slashed, brawled, and cursed my way down the Colo River from Newnes to Upper Colo a few years ago, I say grimly, "They are right, dead right!"

The years have (as years will) brought a little wisdom to my outlook on Bushwalking. I shake my head in tolerance at the spectacle of petulant "Tigers" and other cults whose aim in life is to put scores of miles behind them in the least possible time.

Ah youth!

My attention to Bushwalking has become more abstract, being an essential part of me, but not all consuming. Whereas in the past Bushwalking completely encircled me, I find now I am on the outside looking in: I think with better perspective.

I am sufficiently interested to know what is going on, and occasionally caught up with the whirl of enthusiasm I go Bushwalking when it appeals to me more than other activities.

My outlook undoubtedly appears indifferent to those newer enthusiasts, and so I suppose it is.

Imagine my consternation then, for here I am somewhere west of Wondabyne with no less an illustrious group of walkers than that which contains four S.B.W. ex-presidents and the president!

What a camp fire! Reminiscences, wit, stories of ambitions, follies, criticisms, fetish, and clap trap.

Have you ever heard Myles Dunphy tell a story?

Myles tells a story with infinite attention to detail and accurate observation of nature, without the slightest sign of tedium: just vigorous spontaneity . . . and color.

And Tarro! Have you heard Tarro play his flute in the quiet of night? As you stretch before the fire which reflects on the slender trunks of beloved gums towering beyond the circle of light until they seem to support the very firmament above?

Across the fire there is Charlie Pryde, at least I can see his face, for its lighter tones reflect the fire's glow whilst darker clothing absorbs the light and merges into the background.

On that face is an expression of sheer joy and contentment, and he sits inanimate except for an occasional draw on the beloved weed; his face, by its lines and wrinkles shows every emotion through the passage of years, but at present is passive and un-quickenened like time in human turmoil.

I am jerked out of my contemplation by much laughter, and I realise I have missed a good story, but the competition is running high and another is on its way.

So it goes on as you have also experienced it; good fire, good camp, and after partaking of good food, the company of good fellow.

One by one sleep claims my companions, and all but Tarro have gone to their sleeping bags, and as those who know him must also know that the conversation inevitably turns to music.

Time we put in its proper place by promptly forgetting about it, and deeper and deeper we delved into music and musicians as two people will with a favourite subject when unfettered by time and circumstances.

Tarro is eloquent on the beauty of Beethoven's slow movements and by some strange convulsion of the imagination (probably caused by the recollection of Beethoven's love of contrast) my mind hits upon a tram, for at this time last night I was homeward bound on a tram.

A tram! That fiendish Inhuman contraption; a moving monument to man's folly. What greater miscarriage of logic could there be than expecting man to find comfortable transport in a thing of steel running on steel?

Have you ever travelled from the city on an all night tram?

Look at the sordidness of it all. That bleary eyed profligate in the corner, whose alcoholic advocates air conditioning, and the Y ---, Allied Serviceman with the maudlin, synthetic ----.

That pathetic opposite, with the dissipated eyes and too highly rouged cheeks in a futile attempt to cling to long vanished youth.

There is a lad who looks as though he has come off a late shift, he will never know youth, he is terribly tired, he will be boy, and then man; old man.

It's the feeling that all is spent force, the seeming hopelessness of it all that depresses me, and the crazy tram rolls and lurches its noisy way, sighs, hiccoughs, and continues on again.

I think of a moron's picnic. Turning away from it all I look out the door to see my image reflected in the glass, whilst outside houses, shops, lights flash past and through my image like thoughts through my mind, and I look at my image and say, "Cynic, who are you to pass judgment"?

I am back at the fire again listening to Tarro, and I see his face, his boyish smile, and look into his eyes and see the sparkle of eternal youth.

We sit a long time thus, perhaps we talk, or just drink in the beauty of the night, watching the clouds cross the moon and the moon glistening on the wet leaves above. This I think, in terms of Beethoven, is the "slow movement", the profound, the beautiful, the lyrical, and the tram, the "scherzo" the jest.

I lie a long time in my sleeping bag, and silence comes in out of the night and settles by the fire. Peace, what glorious peace.

Peace, like tragedy, appears to come in such completeness to man the individual. The tragedy experienced by the masses is small compared to that suffered by some individuals, and I think that such peace as this can only come to the human and not humanity, and were it not for sleep I would be sad.

To the readers, on behalf of the tripewriter, I apologise, as all errors in spelling etc. are due entirely to it, I regret that it has never learned to spell-----cr-----spell.

HAVE YOU PUT OUT THAT FIRE ?

Marie B. Byles.

"Yes", replied the leader of some scouts. And to outward seeming he was right. His was a model camp - small tents, no trees cut, exquisitely tidy, and a camp fire in a wide cleared space. The fire was now a heap of ashes with perhaps a couple of bits of wood in it, but no suspicion of red embers. This was about 4.15 a.m. the morning after. It was a bit warm, but quite dead. My forestry brother and I visited it again about 9 a.m. and the dead wood was burning brightly and the embers glowing red. He gathered the boy scouts around him and as an old scout told them his experiences as a forester of fires which had come to life again after they had been dead for many days and even weeks. The scouts then filled their billies and poured gallons and gallons of water upon their fire. It sizzled and boiled; the dead charred wood was turned over and soused with water. Who was now game to put his fingers in it? They held their hands close to it, and went off for more water. After perhaps ten minutes they took off their shoes and paddled in the black mud.

At midday there sprang up that hurricane reported to have reached 68 miles an hour. If it had not been for that timely lecture and demonstration the bush around would have been ablaze. Yet how many bush-walkers take any more trouble about putting out a camp fire than did those boy scouts?

NEW MAPS

Kindly note that the following maps have been completed by this section:- Canoeists' Charts of

No. 26 PATERSON RIVER (Gresford to Paterson)

No. 27 Forbes River (Birdwood to Hastings River Junction)

SUPPLEMENT TO MAP No. 20 (Warragamba and Nepean Rivers--(Cox Junction to Penrith); map has been completed showing the extent of damned water in the Warragamba Dam; this illustrates the position of limit of banked-up water when river level is even with the dam spillway, and from which, canoeists may fairly accurately judge the extent of "flat-water" when river level is higher or lower than the spillway; it accompanies Map No. 20 which shows this section of the Warragamba in its original (pre-dam construction) state.

THE LISTENING POST TALKS

The Social programme distinctly stated (we thought) that Friday 23rd February was "A Night with the Boys" or something just as intriguing. In our excitement, we could not have read it properly. For Friday 23rd February, was plain lantern slides. Photographic and lantern slide nights are the only occasions when members come along in large numbers, are punctual, and show no desire to gather outside on the landing making as much noise as possible. It might be suggested therefore, that all monthly meetings be preceded by a display of photos or slides and a small charge levied against those who stay outside. As an alternative, choice photos might be cunningly concealed round the room on meeting nights. This might entice more members in, but the meeting would suffer we feel sure.

To get back to where we started. The exhibitors, between them, had a large collection to show of coloured and black and white slides. With good showmanship, coloured ones were displayed first. The front stalls, who probably had been waiting all night for this, seethed with excitement when glamorous females in gorgeous colours came on the screen and quietened down considerably when pastoral scenes came along.

Most of the snow scenes were new to us and judging by the number of these shown, Kosciusko must have been pretty well over-run this last year. Well, all of us enjoyed our night with the boys. And we hope the front stalls enjoyed their night with the girls.

Men in uniform seen in the club that night, Geoff. Parker and Alan Hardy. We know these two were at the back of the room. They were too late for the front seats.

It is just murmured round the club that Tim Coffey takes the plunge shortly. He should have been there when certain slides were shown. Brian Harvey is becoming a "regular" in the club Friday nights. He is we believe a "day boy".

Jean Moppet is away again on her bi-weekly holidays and so it appears are most members of the committee. Just try and find anything in the club. Where did Dave Stead go for his holiday? there are just as many snakes around.

Another rumour is that the Annual Meeting will be very exciting. But we don't believe it. Sheer propaganda. Bet it will be finished by 10 p.m. But everyone will be there you'll see.

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LETTERS FROM LADS

Charles Jones 16/2/45. After chasing me for about three months a batch of mail arrived a few days ago and it was a very excellent tribute to the work of the Services Committee for I received 1 parcel, 1 Christmas card, Womens Weekly, Pocket Books and three club magazines. A very pleasant mail bag to collect, I think you will agree. Please convey my appreciation to the committee Dank for their efforts in regard to Xmas parcels. I was fortunate this year to spend Xmas at home, my first for three years, but had I spent it as I expected, then your parcel would have been even more appreciated.

I think I wrote you after my arrival down here so I may have told you how, when all packed up for the now "famous" Jacquinot Bay "invasion" I was told I was southward bound. Boy, was I hostile! Here was a show about to begin

and I was being lugged out even before the overture began. However, the hostility of some unknown "2 piper" did not disturb the brigadiers and colonels so they had their way (they usually do) and so the day the "crew" sailed for New Britain I took off for Townsville. Now I know how it feels to be "drummed out" for that was the feeling it was. Still I was carrying many wishes with me from those who would have given much to be in my shoes - Xmas in Sydney, a school and six weeks leave! Why it sounded like heaven to those in our unit who were in their 22nd month away.

As if to pacify me the army opened its heart and marked my travel "by air". High hopes had I of a Nadzab - dawn Sydney that night schedule but no such luck. Hauled out of bed at 0130 I was bundled off to wait about 4 hours for a plane - usual show in the army - and had the pleasure of boarding a Douglas Transport. I say the "pleasure" because even if I had to wait 44 hours it would be preferable to a troopship journey south.

As if a token to my farewell of New Guinea the plane flew over all the country I had worked in during my stay on the island and finally on a beautiful day in November I saw Moresby disappear in the clouds behind us. Probably my last sight of New Guinea but then who knows, I may be back there far sooner than I expect.

My "millionaire" mode of travel ceased at Townsville from whence I travelled by train. I feel that here I should enter a word of defence for the Queensland Railways. A copy of the Bushwalker - October issue I think - includes an article "Evolution" dealing in part with the Queensland railway system and now I know Ubi's tongue as well as his pen - both capable of very critical but just remarks and so I feel sure he would have me enter a word of credit when it is due. We all know the problems Queenslanders face attempting to open large spaces which are only sparsely populated so I feel I should commend them for their organisation of troop trains from Townsville south. Of course we all were covered in soot and cinders and we felt aches in joints we never knew existed but for all that for well nigh two whole days the old carriages and engines "belted out" a steady 25-30 and even an occasional 45! All things considered that antiquated single line north with its rickety old rolling stock has been Australia's lifeline for without it I fear what chances we would have had of supplying the forces in New Guinea. However if I pursue this much further someone will say I am an agent of Q.G.R.!

Spent a week at Era as soon as I arrived but of course it failed to come up to my expectations because of the fires, drought and lack of water, still we had a good time, meeting only for a few moments on the Sunday afternoon our new Secretary Bev Druce; a new comer to me but not to the club - my namesake Peter Jones was also there, Frank Duncan, Edna and many others.

By now the rains will have replenished Era I hope so we shall see Era in the very near future. It was disappointing as you well understand after dreaming of Era and Blue Gum for over a year to find the places dry, burnt out and smoke laden. Still nature is resilient they will "blossom" again.

Xmas Day Grace and I plus two "hiking" relatives spent at Blue Gum. Our stay was not as pleasant as could be for we were under threat of fire for our three day stay. On the track back from Blue Gum we met some intrepid walkers whom the drought and fires could not deter, recognised Dot Christian and found myself telling a somewhat bearded personality that I was a member of a club, the Sydney Bush Walkers. Who was the bearded personality? None other than the President David Stead whom I had never met. We were to visit Syncarpia with him but time was our enemy so we had to push on and so missed him.

The Grand Canyon was a sight for sore eyes, it alone of all the places I have seen since I returned, came up to expectations - cool green with the big

damp rocks, the sparkling water, just as I hoped it would be. It will be good if the Federation meet with success in their effort to have the track taken through to Medlow though with the present limits on man power I am inclined to be pessimistic.

By the way Dunk I have a suggestion which you might pass on to the Magazine Committee if you will. The Oct. issue of the Bushwalker has been posted to me without a cover in just the roneed sheet and it occurs to me that as cover sheets are probably hard to buy (I remember some committee meeting discussing this problem) then as an economy measure the cover might be omitted from those copies posted to chaps in the Services. One does not like to see the absence of the old familiar cover but as a war economy measure, I for one, would not mind. It's good to receive the magazine and its news when one is away from the Club, it is an old tie and I for one am agreeable to any measure that would assist in its production.

Also in the same copy was the report on Allan Wyborn's motion. I wish I had been there for as one who has had the same problems as Allan's - those of a Walks Secretary during the war - I would have been an enthusiastic supporter. As the motion reads it invests in the Committee the right to waive the rule in special cases which was in my mind sufficient answer for those who feared that many busy people working for the club would be jeopardised.

Perhaps the most apt summarisation of the whole matter comes in a sentence in the magazine. "Old members who perhaps haven't seen a track for years emerged from their hideouts (marvellous service D.M.G.) and entered the ring to do battle in the war against regimentation".

That is a tendency which exists in every association, society or club for the old 'uns' to sit back intolerant of the new generation, of the new order, of course there is also a measure of intolerance on the part of youth and for the progressive growth of the club youth must always strive to ---- this intolerance but always be alert for any evidence of the "heavy hand" of "old members." This does not mean all "old members" of course - I expressed myself wrongly for some of the "youngest" are club members of many years standing.

As for the "regimentation" I disagree, for like the word "socialisation", "regimentation" is being used at the slightest provocation these days. If the mere inclusion of a rule that members must lead one walk per year i.e. one Sunday in 52 must be devoted to the club, or else become non-active members is regimentation then I envisage the President as a Dictator, the Secretary as Dr. Gobells and the Committee a gang of Nazi Party Officials.

I think this is a logical conclusion to draw from the alleged threat of regimentation but most members will agree, I think, that the real crux of the matter was to place within the constitution a means of ensuring that the S.B.W. always remains a walkers' club and could not be ruled by any clique of non-walking members such as those that are hurriedly summoned from their firesides when any virile progressive motions are before the club.

But then Dunk I did not begin this letter with the intention of "bashing your ear" about a matter past, however, you will realise I am sure how one feels when such a measure is before the club and one is not there to support it, still it will come again I am sure and I will be there I hope. Actually though I have given you an assignment, haven't I - for reading 8 pages of my scrawl in an effort for anyone so while on this repentant strain I had better sign off. Hope you are well and enjoying life, please convey my good wishes to the Services Committee. I will be proceeding on leave soon and hope to see some club members down at the club some Friday night, so till then Cheerio Dunk and keep on with the good work.

FEDERATION REPORT

Monthly Meeting held on Tuesday, 18th January, 1945.

ERA. Two replies had been received to the Federation's circular. The Coast & Mountain Walkers and the River Canoe Club each sent £2.0.0 towards the rent of Lot 7, if the agreement can be renewed by the S.B.W. The Hon. Secretary was instructed to forward the cheques to the Sydney Bush Walkers.

PROPOSED PRIMITIVE AREA in KOSCIUSKO STATE PARK. Delegates were advised that there is a strong possibility that at some future date a tourist road will be constructed from the Park into Victoria, if so, it will certainly run along the divide between the Snowy and the Murray Rivers, and would thus bisect the Primitive Area suggested by Myles Dunphy. After some discussion, delegates agreed that even under those circumstances they still favoured the area in question.

SUNDEY PROPOSED RESERVES AND NATIONAL FITNESS CAMPS. Advance advice was received regarding a number of areas north of Sydney in which the National Fitness camps and hostels are proposed. No objections were raised, and Federation decided to support the Stroud Shire Council's suggestion for a national park, with access roads, between Pt. Stephens and Forster on the coast side of the Myall River and Lakes. Further information is being sought about a small reserve on Carrow Brook and a proposal to build a road from there via Mt. Pirie to Barrington Tops. Other areas mentioned were Wattagan Forest and 200 acres of Crown Land at Waterfall Bay at the head of Woy Woy Creek, which the National Fitness Council proposes to acquire for a camp.

FINANCE. The Treasurer's Report showed that at 1st July, 1944, the Federation's general funds amounted to £92.4.2 and that by 18th December, 1944, they had decreased to £80.4.5. Considerable discussion of ways and means of raising extra revenue took place. Several suggestions are to be followed up.

"THE BUSHWALKER" No. 8. The Editor reported progress, and stated that it would probably be at least another month before the magazine was available. She drew attention to the need to elect a new Publications Committee at the January Meeting of Federation, stated that she was not prepared to stand for a fourth term, and recommended prompt election of the new editor and committee so that an early start could be made on the preparation of "The Bushwalker" No. 9. However, the appointment was deferred until the February Meeting and nominations are called for.

A number of other reports were received, and then the meeting discussed Miss Lawry's suggestion for a sub-committee for research and propaganda work, etc. in the PREVENTION OF BUSH FIRES. Miss Byles was able to give the meeting some very valuable information learned recently -- that Bush Fire Brigades only operate in the outer areas; that where there are ordinary Fire Brigades no other organisation is permitted; and that Fire Brigades are only allowed to turn out to save lives or property -- not bush -- which explains why various fires recently have been allowed to burn along the gullies and have been fought day after day in suburb after suburb. It looks as though amendments of the various Acts are needed.

A volunteer is wanted for next meeting of the Federation who will undertake to organise a committee and to be a spearhead for bushwalkers in this most important work.