

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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

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DROUGHT.

The burning skies are steel,  
The parched earth is dry,  
And we die,  
The little children die.

The mealies cannot grow,  
The grass is burnt away,  
And grim death  
Is haunting us alway.

The God who lives on high  
Is no Father to us now,  
For we die,  
In agony we die.

The cattle all are gone,  
The children reel and faint,  
And they die,  
O Father God, they die.

David John Barlow.

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A NEW CHUM'S MISADVENTURE ON MT. EGMONT

by Dorothy Hasluck.

Being the middle of winter and unable to get a car to the mountain, I decided to walk (plus suit case) the ten miles from the little village where the bus dropped me. As the last four miles ascended 3,000 ft., I was ready to sing a hymn of hate to said case, but on the appearance of a lorry changed to a hail of delight and unblushingly rode the last mile.

Having made up my mind to go to Bell's Falls, on arrival at the Hostel I persuaded the manager to allow me to go alone as there was no one to accompany me. So, together with the guide's dog, I set forth clad as for town in frock and rose-coloured coat and ordinary walking shoes, such things as matches, torch and maps being quite beyond my ken; the only concession to bush and mountain being an alpinestock!!! How my present walking friends would have looked aghast at such a spectacle!

We had to climb up to the 5,000 ft. level and then the track led round the mountain. All went well till we reached the signpost where the track divided - one to the Falls, the other to the ranges. My four-footed friend trotted off, on seeing which direction I was taking, across two miles of boggy moss into which you sank up to your knees. I thought it strange that this had not been mentioned in the directions given me but, seeing the river some distance below, concluded it was all right. However, to my confusion, the track led across the river and, worse still, commenced rising steeply. I thought it might cut across a ridge and descend higher up the river, but no, it still went on aspiring. By this time I was beginning to rebel against its ascending tendencies. The weather was deteriorating and I had been five hours covering (supposedly) five miles, so I came to the bright - or should I say "brilliant" - conclusion that there was something wrong.

Calling to the dog, who did not return, I started back across the bog, lost my direction and landed into a lot of heavy scrub, trekking round for three hours trying to find the track. Master dog, on his return, was no help whatever as he just dashed about in circles, thinking it all fun and games for his special benefit. By this time my temper was rather agitated as to spend the night out there was not a very enviable prospect. However, rather belatedly, my head came to the rescue and I sat down to calmly think out the position, which thought resulted in my finding the track in twenty minutes. In spite of clothes being somewhat the worse for wear and both legs streaming with blood, life presented a much more cheerful aspect.

On the return trip a snow slope ending in a precipice had frozen hard so I had to cut some steps and balance across in nail-less shoes, a very ticklish enterprise, but worse was to follow. A steep shingle slide with a narrow track across collapsed beneath my not so light tread, precipitating me ten feet, and only by the grace of the gods was further progress down five hundred more feet prevented. As I was surveying the possibilities of getting up again, I saw a hairy face looking over the edge with a surprised expression which said plainly; "Well, what on earth are you doing down there?" But this was no time for answering doggy enquiries. I had to get up, so, by dint of getting my foot on a small rock in the shingle bank and springing up I was able to throw myself on to the track, emerging triumphant from the depths which almost claimed me.

Alas for the town garb! Not only had it lost its pristine freshness, but it now looked ready to be relegated to the ragbag. However, nothing daunted, I plodded along the snow-clad track, measuring my length once or twice

as I caught my feet on rocks and - when within a mile of the Hostel - met up with a search party, equipped with ropes, axes and all the doings for a rescue. After due explanations, we found that the sign-post was the wrong way round (how or why nobody seemed to know), so I was exonerated - to my relief.

Arriving back at about 10 p.m. I made an ignominious entry through the back regions, only to run into a party of guests whose faces all had an "I told you so" expression. This was too much, so I turned tail and fled - to the éclâmour of shocked exclamations at my appearance.

So ended a new chum's mountain trek.

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We are pleased to be able to publish the following letter bearing date 23rd February 1945 received from Mr. Swain, N.S.W. Commissioner for Forests:-

"In your issue of 22nd February, I have read, with considerable satisfaction, Mr. Alex. Colley's account of a visit to Kioloa State Forest.

It had been difficult for the Forest Service of this generation to live down the limited attitude of a previous generation, which saw no more in our forests than the opportunity to "cash in and get out".

Mr. Colley, however, has been able to recount that he found a State Forest being managed for the multiple service to the community which forests alone can supply - and within that multiple service the realisation of beauty and recreation.

It is our ambition that all our State Forests should be so managed.

Unfortunately, there are still large areas of our bushland just as fire-ridden and just as despoiled as those which bushwalkers of this generation are too often condemned to walk in. Someday, perhaps, when the Forestry Commission has its due share of men and money, we shall be able to present to bushwalkers forest pilgrimages in all quarters of the State in which they can find their heart's desire - and ours.

For even foresters love their forests - But too often have to grieve for them. "

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WHY BUSH FIRES DO NOT DO THE BUSH GOOD.

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Marie B. Byles.

It was at one of our monthly meetings that I was horrified to hear the whispered remark, "Oh, but bush fires do the bush good." It made me realise how widespread is this appalling ignorance and how hopeless the task of eliminating bush fires as long as it persists.

Bush fires - in moderation - do good to certain types of flora, those whose seeds generate as a result of heat and which can grow more rapidly and robustly. The others suffer often irreparably and the balance of nature is hopelessly upset.

One lovely thing which delights in bush fires - in moderation - is the flannel daisy. Another is the wattle. The foresters at Bateman's Bay showed us examples of the abnormal growth of hickory (a kind of wattle, I believe) following bush fires. It formed a dense jungle which allowed nothing else to grow. In one spot they had cut it down and at once the young gum trees had come up of their own accord and were already six feet high. If the hickory is not cut its span of life is fortunately short and it will, if there are no further bush fires, automatically die in time, allowing the gum trees and other things to grow. But if there are periodic bush fires, hickory and not a single gum tree will be the result. We were also shown forests where there had been no fires for twenty years; in these the hickory had taken its natural place as simply one tree among many others. In other words, owing to the absence of fires something approaching the natural balance had been restored.

In forests in which there have been no fires - and one must usually go to State Forests to find this rare phenomenon - there is a tendency to openness and absence of prolific undergrowth. And it is reasonable to suppose that, if we did not have the periodic devastation of bush fires, the forests around Sydney would be far more open than they are.

Further, given conditions of natural growth, gum trees do not as a rule grow gnarled, twisted and festooned with dead wood in the manner to which we are accustomed. They are tall and straight. In the outer suburban gardens one sometimes sees a gum tree that has grown naturally but in the bush practically never, because they are swept by bush fires so often.

The eucalyptus is a tree of remarkable vitality and recovers after a bush fire as trees in Canada and New Zealand never do. But that is not to say it does not suffer and, even in the rare cases where no outward mark is left, it bears gum veins and other internal marks to the end of its day, while many years of growth have been taken from it.

Bush fires upset the balance of nature, some times irretrievably; they injure the trees to such an extent that they are often unrecognisable as belonging to the same species as those that have grown naturally.

So don't let us hear any more of this horrible heresy. Perhaps next month someone will tell us of the injury to the fauna caused by bush fires.

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HERE, THERE AND IN THE CLUB ROOM

The Annual Meeting was held in the club rooms on the 9th March. There was not the large number attending this meeting as at previous meetings unless it was that the noisy ones had lost their "pep" and, in spite of the President's impassioned appeal to those present, the positions to be filled on the committee etc., just didn't seem to attract any one. The hard working Secretary fell for it again but the Walks Secretary painted a beautiful picture of his job and was able to hand it over. The new President is Edna Garrañ, our second Lady President, who we know will continue the good work she has been doing for the club on the committee.

The Re-union was as good as ever. Fine weather and beautiful surroundings, the night just cold enough to make the camp fire a necessity. There was plenty of variety in the items put on for our amusement and everyone seemed in good voice. And the supper was excellent and plentiful.

Sunday was spent visiting and swimming, admiring the hats worn by the new President and the ex President, toying with dampers and sitting around. Dave Stead, the ex President, was made very happy by the capture of a black snake (a lovely snake, Dave says) and the snake was made a little less happy by sudden death by drowning. Really not quite so sudden, the process took some time.

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Mr. and Mrs. Tim Coffey were in the club recently, after spending a honeymoon at Forster.

We congratulate Lieut. and Mrs. Basil Dickinson on the birth of a daughter. Betty and the baby are doing quite well.

In the last magazine we congratulated Wal. Roots on his engagement to Miriam Lennox. This time we report their marriage and congratulate them on this event also.

Jack Rose and Betty Brewer also chose Easter time to get married.

Still another "Club" wedding was that of Ron Baker to Betty Noble. The well known Stangfanger Bullproonza Stangaranga (Ted) Fitzpatrick is reported to have been best man.

Our old friend "Mouldy" Harrison has just skipped off to England and America. We can understand his visit to the latter on account of the improved food situation but England? No.

While on the subject of food did you hear that Grace Noble presented some friends with delightfully and tastefully (?) decorated Easter Eggs from a hen? Much to her surprise, of course, they were discovered to be bad. It is a bit thick, anyway, expecting to receive good eggs as presents these days. John has officially denied the report that Grace's housekeeping is so bad that she is unable to tell fresh from rotten eggs.

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THE SWIMMING CARNIVAL

After a lapse of 2 years this event was held again on 11th February 1945 at The Bend, O'Hare's Creek. The attendance of only 17 from such a large club as ours was to be regretted, but did not prevent an enjoyable day. After doing what was almost a test walk looking for the site one large party arrived, and everyone assembled for the events, which were organised by Bill Henley. The pool proved ideal, as even Bill admitted, and the clear water at a time of drought proves that O'Hare's Ck. is a good spot.

RESULTS:

"MANDELBURG CUP" RELAY	(Betty Brewer (Laurie Raynor		
MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP	1. Kevin Bradley	2. Jack Rose.	
PROSPECTIVES CHAMPIONSHIP	1. Claude Haynes	2. Douglas Johnston	
BREASTSTROKE (OPEN)	1. Kevin Bradley	2. Laurie Raynor	
BACKSTROKE (OPEN)	1. Eric Pegram	2. Kevin Bradley	
DIVING	1. Clem Hallstrom	2. Claude Haynes.	
LADIES CHAMPIONSHIP	1. Betty Brewer	2. Edna Garrad	
LADIES BREASTSTROKE	1. Alice Wyborn	2. Betty Brewer	
TIME JUDGING SWIM	1. Mirian Steinbohm	2. Douglas Johnston.	

NEW MAPS

The Convenor of the Topographical Section of the River Canoe Club of N.S.W. Ted Phillips writes as follows:-

"Please note that the following map has now been completed by this Section:-

No. 28 COX'S RIVER (Black Jerry's Ridge) (Little River) to Burragorang Valley (Wollondilly River Jctn) section.

This is now displayed at Paddy's and should be of interest to walkers as well as canoeists, due to the fact that such is popular walking country.

Many thanks for notifications of our productions from time to time.

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@                               @
@          YOUR             OPTOMETRIST          @
@                               @
@           F. GOODMAN,    M.I.O.              @
@    Optometrist and Optician                   @
@    20 Hunter Street, Sydney                   @
@    Tel. B3438                                  @
@
@    Modern methods of Eye Examination and Eye Training @
@    Careful Spectacle Fitting.                  @
@    - - - - -                                     @
@
@    Fixing an appointment will facilitate the reservation @
@    of time for giving you proper attention, but should you @
@    be unable to ring us beforehand, your visit will be @
@    welcome at any time you may chose to call. @
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LETTERS FROM THE LADS & LASSES

Letters were received during March from:-

Les Douglas	(S.B.W.)	Gilbert Taylor	(S.B.W.)
Rob Morrison	(S.B.W.)	Bob Savage	(S.B.W. & R.R.C.)
Harry Black	(Y.M.C.A.)	Jack Adams	(R.R.C.)
Bill Burke	(S.B.W.)		

Bob Savaga - 15-3-45 - New Guinea. Will you please note my new address which as some of you know is off the mainland. The country is most interesting but far too up and down for a gentleman of my advanced years and extending girth. I find that the best way of appreciating the scenery is from an airplane, preferably a slow one. I have been doing a fair amount of flying in a Piper Cub or an Auster which are small two seater machines - high wing monoplanes standing about six feet from the ground to the top of the wing - weighing about 245 lbs. I am a total load for the plane and getting in and out is as bad as moving around inside a tank. The planes are very slow which makes them ideal for my work for they can cruise along about 20 feet above the jungle whilst one has a good look at telegraph lines etc. I have also had to do a bit of walking in the jungle but not too much. They say that in New Guinea one is always imagining that something is crawling on you and in 90% of the cases this is right.

Ninian Melville is also on this Headquarters as D.A.D.W.G.S. which means Deputy Assistant Director War Graves Service. Actually his show is doing an excellent job and the War Cemeteries are a credit to them - probably the most important side of their work is the tracing of missing soldiers, sailors and airmen and in this their deductions would do credit to Sherlock Holmes or the Thin Man. The Bushwalker continues to arrive per the kind attentions of the Services Committee and the Army Postal Service for which a gain many thanks.

Bill Burke - 18-3-35 - Northern Australia A typical Sunday in not so sunny Queensland - nothing to do and all day to do it in - and on looking over the records I find an answer to your last news bulletin is long overdue. Here goes. The new unit continues to meet with my approval, even though I have had to forsake my "gentleman of leisure" existence. Now possess a license, and a truck of my own in which to career round the countryside, subject to the Army's approval of course. Haven't named the bus yet as it is only an old three ton Ford flat top and----- censored-----been carting wood to keep the kitchen fires going all this week, much to my sorrow. The roads never much good at the best of times, haven't been helped any by the sun hiding his face for the past fortnight. To date have only been bogged five times.

This getting bogged business is quite an interesting and intricate experience. With a bit more experience will be able to write a book on the subject. The best and surest method is to go off the roads and/or beaten tracks. This never fails. The first time I was assured by my wood cutting friends that the ground was sandy and quite firm enough to take the truck. My only consolation was that they had to spend the next half hour cutting bushes to build a road out. Another day the C.S.M. came out for a run and being a C.S.M. and knowing all about such things, I didn't argue with him. Down we went again. Getting wise to myself by this time, but nevertheless fell again. The road was impassable, I tried, got bogged, backed out again and after a lot of argument agreed to try and go round. Agreed more to stop the abuse I received after my attempt to get through than anything else. Another hour and I sent to camp for the breakdown.

Thought I had given the foot slogging away when I joined this crowd. Alas! for all my hopes, was sent out on a five day bivouac. However it turned out to be quite an enjoyable turnout - to me that is, the rest regarded the stunt as concrete proof that the C.O. hated the platoon. Second day and a flooded river barred our progress. Wrapping your pack in a groundsheet may work when floating down the Kowmung, but it doesn't up here when the rivers are in flood, as one of the party discovered after all his gear had gone to the bottom. Eventually crossed with the aid of a line of fencing wire. Our three non-swimmers didn't enjoy the party especially after they had seen the line break twice when we were getting the gear across. A tree saved the first lot and the second time I clung to the line and was washed ashore. The rivers rise up to fifty feet at times.

Continued on our way all greatly concerned over the pedigrees of those responsible for the trip in the first place and later for the respective section leaders as they proceeded to lose themselves. That night the brain trust had practically a stand up fight as to whether we were in the right place or not. We weren't, but the O.C. said we were, and so the map must have been wrong. The ration truck bogged; another six miles to get the "monger" in. I love these Army shows; the organisation and brain work behind them is an inspiration to all. Heaven help the Bushwalkers if they didn't put a little more forethought into planning their trips.

Tiring of a steady diet of bully beef and biscuits - we were supposed to go five days on that alone just to see if we could do it - I wandered over to a station in search of bread and some eggs. It was just like stepping back into a page of the past. Dad, eighty eight and seven months, was the boss with one (fifty) who had to ask if I could have the eggs, and "Black Bess" in



charge of the kitchen. It was like a circus; Bess telling Dad to shut up as she wouldn't count out a dozen eggs while he was talking and Dad talking about new fangled things like telephones and trying to hit his spittoon between sentences. He used to crack the jackpot about once in a dozen tries.

The house itself was a real "back blocks" show; low, with red clay floor, bits of harness and trophies scattered everywhere. Situated on the river bank above flood level and hidden by trees it had a charm all of its own. I liked Carlons, but I loved this place on sight. The river flats will grow anything as witness the watermelon I massacred, there is quite a thriving little orchard and a ready market for fresh vegetables and fruit in the local towns; I believe I could settle down in a place like that. Would have liked to have spent more time looking over the place, but had too many miles to put behind me before darkness set in.

Took part in the sprint handicap I mentioned, but was more intent on keeping an eye on the other runners than on the course, with the result I bit the dirt in a dive, beautiful to behold so I was informed. Later I skidded about ten yards although judging by the skin I was missing it must have been at least twice that. I was red hot favourite for the heat so there were a lot of disappointed punters about. Bookmakers were barred this time and a tote operated instead. An improvement if anything. One outsider came home with a pay out of four fifteen for two bob.

My thanks for the magazine and the papers which continue to roll in. Have you heard anything of Geoff Higson of late? He should know what war is all about by this time unless his luck is dead out. Must be rotten to be in the army so long and miss out on all the fun.

You run true to form Dunc in thinking this show is better than the infantry. Everyone does. What is wrong with infantry? The risks are great certainly but one has the satisfaction of knowing they are really doing something. Hope to have better news by next letter.

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BACKYARD BUSHWALKING

The season (so the calendar says) is Autumn, but the bush looks like spring. Australia truly lives up to her tradition of topsyturvydom. We climb down our mountains and make our roads and railways along the mountain tops. This season of Autumn (or "Fall" as our Yankee cousins say) is traditionally the season of the falling leaf and preparation by the vegetable world for the coming rigours of Winter, but since the recent rains new leaves are sprouting everywhere and bush plants are taking swift advantage of good conditions. Boronias are in bud and the Queensland and Gootamundra wattles are preparing for their annual show. By the way. Have you ever noticed how long these wattles carry their flower buds. Within a few weeks of the seed pods opening the next years flower buds appear and remain on the tree for nearly nine months before bursting into golden splendour.

The Casuarinas are in bloom too and these usually drab trees are clothed in glorious russet suits and the sight of a well grown tree in the rays of the westering sun is one not easily forgotten. This show is confined to the male trees as the flowers on the female trees have to be looked for. The male flowers which cover the end of practically every "needle", though in the mass they make such a rich feast of colour are individually not much to look at until they are examined under a lens when a tiny spray of delicately tinted flowers is revealed.

Returning home (as it were) we have a yellow everlasting just bursting into bloom. We got the seed from the roadside of Barrengarry Pass. Everything else is making good headway except alas! the woody pear seedlings which have all died. More seeds have been planted and we are hoping for better luck this time.

PADDY PALLIN

327 George Street,

Phone B.3101.

SYDNEY

CAMP GEAR FOR WALKERS