

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER.

A Monthly Bulletin devoted to matters of interest to
The Sydney Bushwalkers
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T H E K N I F E.

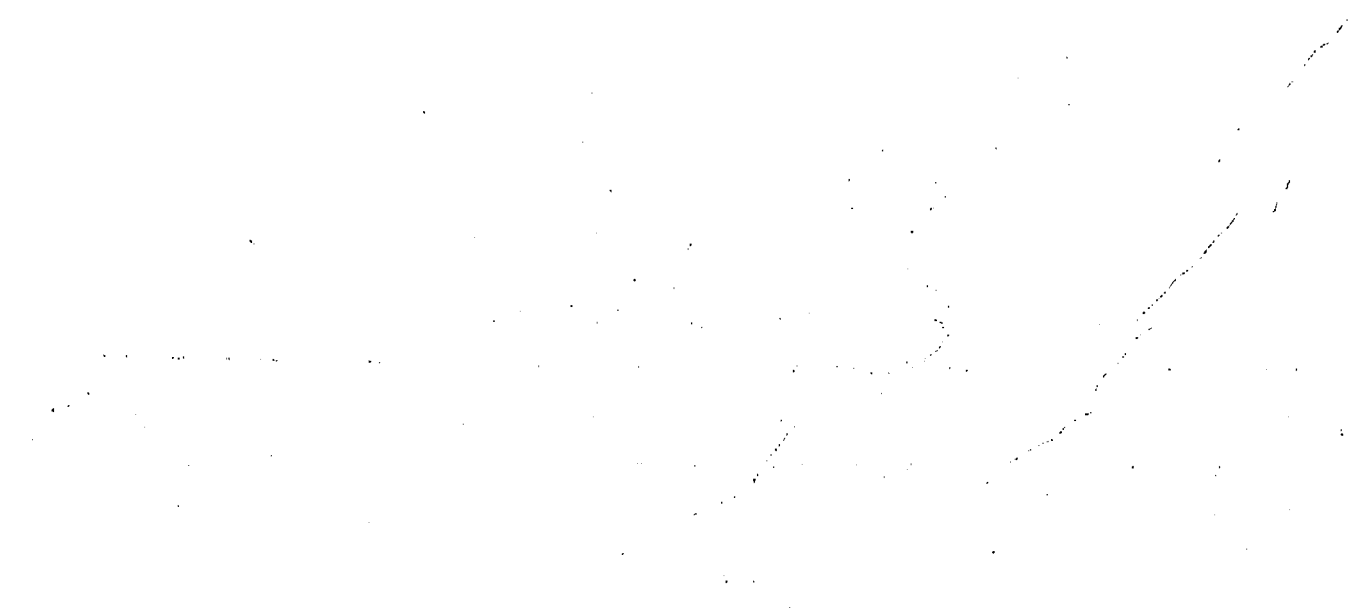
Kenneth Slessor.

The plough that marks on Harley's field
In flying earth its print
Throws up, like death itself concealed,
A fang of rosy flint,

A flake of stone, by fingers hewed,
Whose buried bones are gone,
All gone, with fingers, hunters, food,
But still the knife lives on.

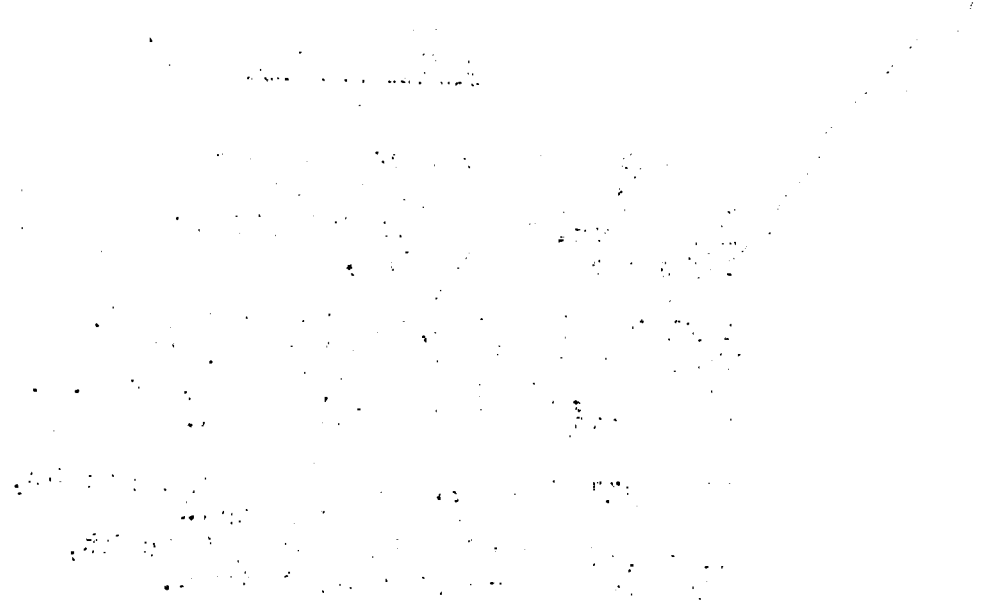
And well I know, when bones are nought,
The blade of stone survives -
I, too, from clods of aching thought,
Have turned up sharper knives.

ARTICLES AND PHOTOS ARE URGENTLY REQUIRED FOR THE FEDERATION
ANNUAL.



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BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY.

On Friday, the 12th. of October, the Club decided to alter its meeting night to Thursday of each week provided suitable premises could be obtained. At the September meeting the constitution was altered by the requisite two thirds majority in such a way that any night of the week could be chosen by members should a departure from Friday, as previously stipulated, be desired. That a large body of members welcomed an alteration was shown by the immediate appearance and passing of the motion mentioned. Needless to say, the method adopted in effecting both these changes reflected the principles of democratic procedure in which, it is assumed, we all concur.

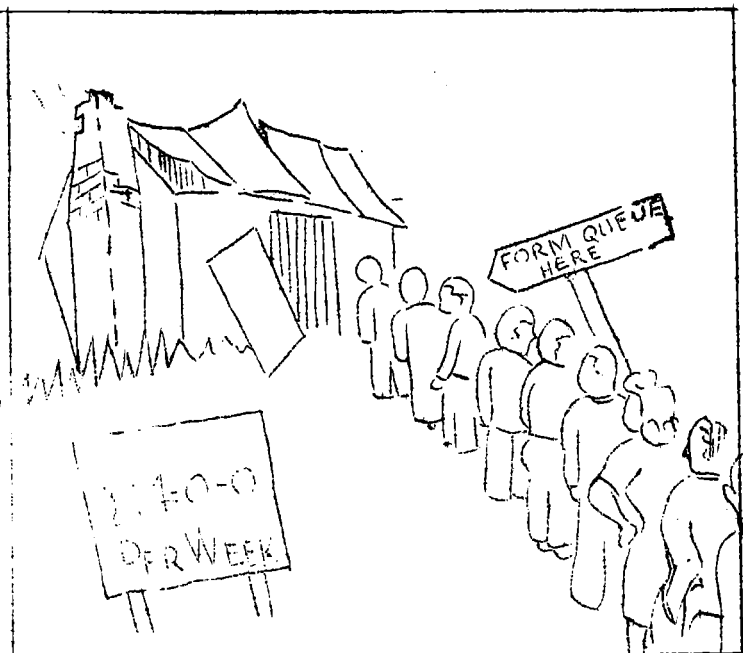
It must be admitted that the reasons put forward by the protagonists for Thursday are cogent. They claimed that, even now, many people leave the city on Friday to go on trips and are thus prevented from holding office in the club and attending meetings as they wish. If, on the other hand, a member does accept office or in any other way endeavours to fulfil his obligations to the club he is frequently unable, as a consequence, to enjoy long weekend walks. When conditions return to normal it is certain that more people will wish to leave the city on Friday night than was usual during, and even before, the war.

The main argument put forward on behalf of Friday was the personal one that some members are unable to attend on Thursday. That Friday should be inviolate solely because of tradition was not a claim likely to appeal to a progressive club nor to one where, it is hoped, "the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit".

That a number of members are prevented from attending the club because of the change is very serious both for the club and the members. However, we must not forget that, on the principle of "all those away please put up their hands", no voice was raised on behalf of those individuals unable to attend on Fridays or on behalf of those potential members who decided not to apply for membership for the same reason.

The interests of the majority are generally claimed to be the deciding factor in a matter such as this and, as a rule of thumb, it works very well. However the true democrat is known not by his observance of the letter but the spirit of the law. It is in this regard that members may not have given sufficient attention to the problem which should not degenerate into the simple question "Which night do I prefer?" posed by each member to himself. The question should, at least, be "Which night suits me best and is also most suitable for other club members?". The inability of some members to ever attend on a particular night should cause a searching scrutiny of one's motives for wanting that night and only when one has honestly satisfied one's conscience has the spirit of democracy been observed. That no night could be found which would not be inconvenient for somebody is quite certain. Let us hope, however, that we have not created a completely dispossessed minority when charity would have called for the exercise of only a little consideration from the majority.

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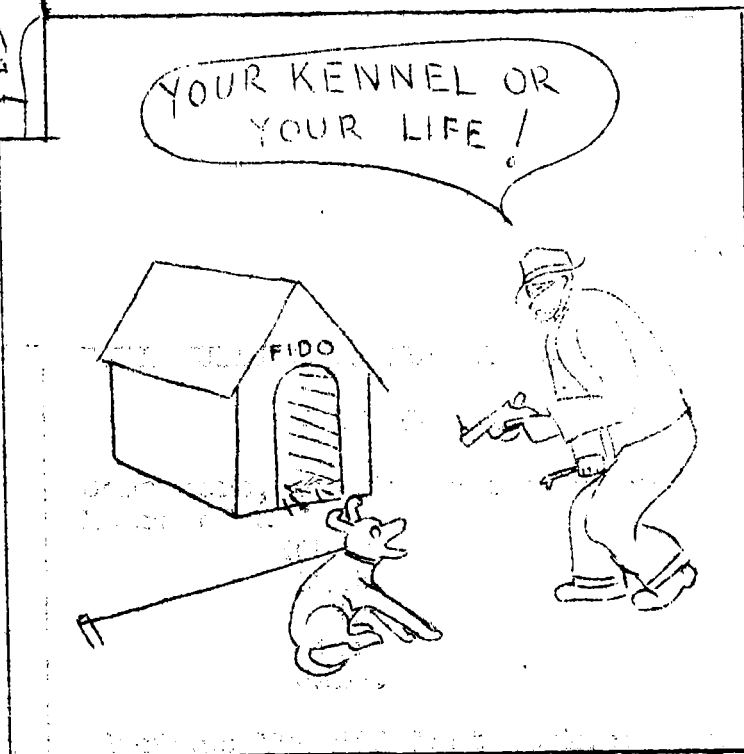
BILL MULLINS is HUNGRY -

VERY HUNGRY.

Somewhere, sometime one sees or
 hears of a

HOUSE
 that
 is
 for
 SALE.

Perhaps YOU did last week, or even
 this very day. If you did and are
 not yourself numbered amongst the



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In the issue of a recent month my friend, Prolix described our trip to Kanangra by car and his effort has prompted me to take up my pen and continue.

Sleep came easily to us after our 4 a.m. "late supper" and by the time the crackle of sticks heralded the coming breakfast five hours had passed.

After a week's heavy rain we had felt grave doubts about attempting the trip but the rays of sun which filtered through the mists and lighted the valley opposite the bag cave made us hope that we might complete the trip planned. A few less sleepy members of the party ran out onto the tops and came back with wondrous tales of falling waters and filmy mists streaked by the sun. Soon the whole group packed and set out to view this magnificent scene.



YOU SANK UP TO
YOUR KNEES IN MUD.

A dull roar came up from Murdering Gully and when we reached the top our eyes feasted on Kanangra Falls hurling foaming whiteness in innumerable lace-like patterns down the side of the gorge. Patches of mist floated by, first screening, then unveiling this scene of sublime beauty. But Cloudmaker had to be reached before nightfall so we reluctantly turned our backs to Kanangra. Everywhere we looked little crevices in the cliff faces spouted white foam into the valleys below.

Lunch was taken just before crossing Gabes Gap but now the sun deserted us; at first the weather was dull but later, as we approached Cloudmaker, drizzling rain made

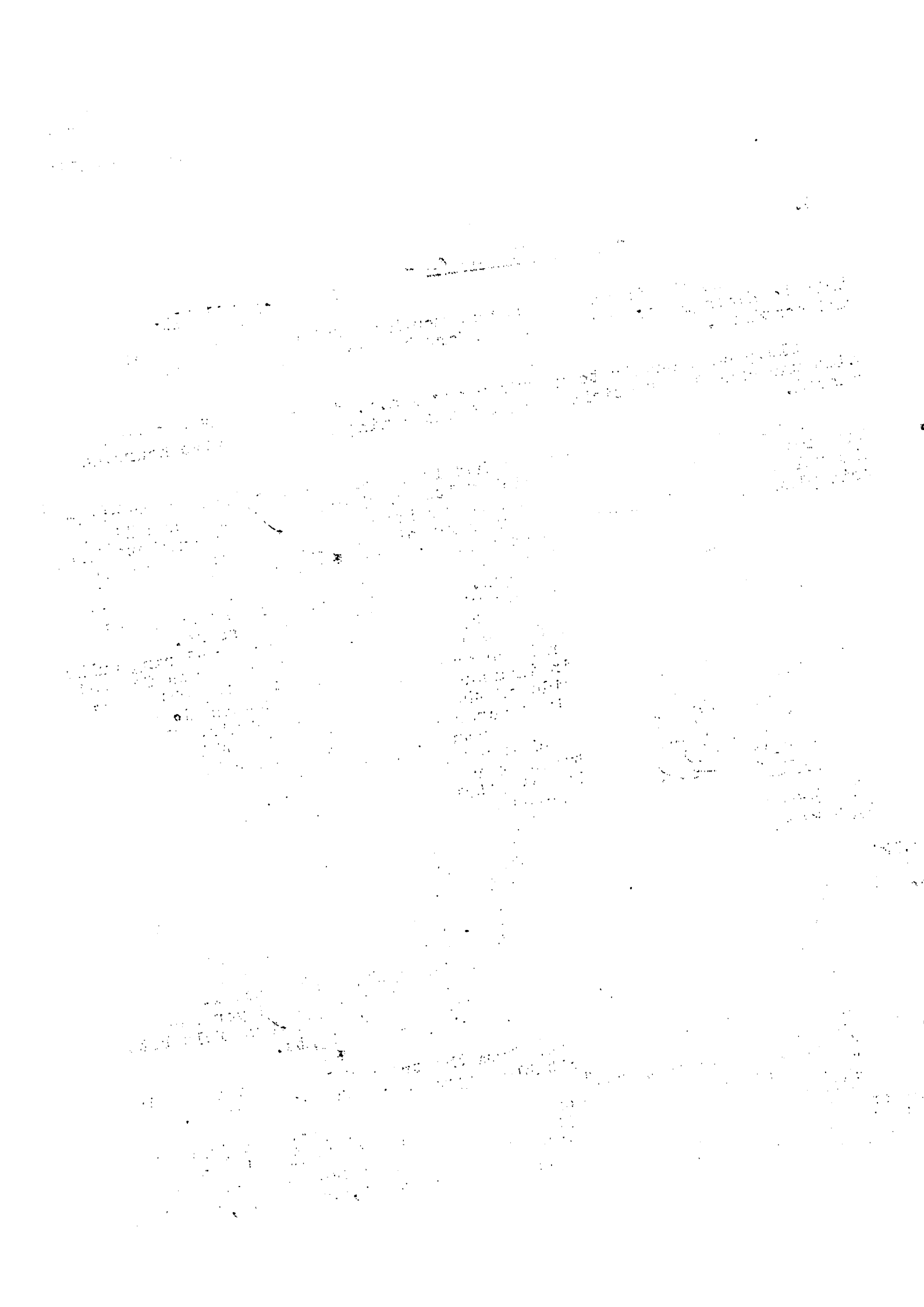
walking very uncomfortable. Visibility was nil on our goal and, after a brief respite the rain came on in earnest. At Dex Creek the only spot not covered by running water was right on the bank of the creek, Sand had to be shovelled (by means of a plate) to make a "sleepable on" place for the rains had so washed the banks that if you stepped on the sand you sank up to your knees in mud. However, when our tummies were filled we felt better and the night passed with solid rain battering on the tents.

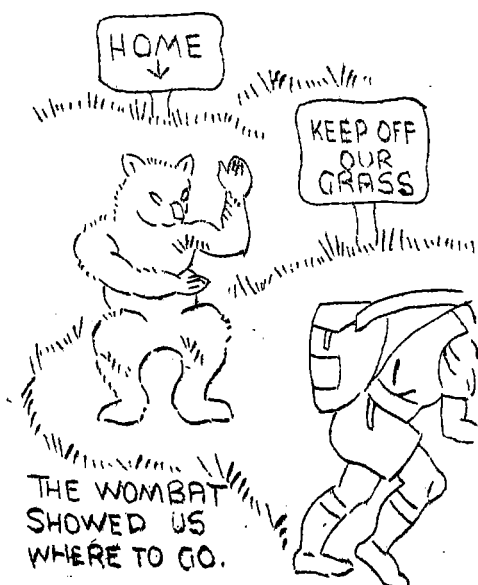
In the morning only big drops from the trees fell to wet us again and thus we progressed to the inevitable argument on the right ridge.

"That is it over there."

"No, I don't think so. I don't remember that knobby bit just there!"

"Perhaps you're right." All consult map, decide that it's not the right one and set off on the next ridge to it. This is not correct either but it is not entirely the fault of the map-readers as, once again, the mists hold everything in their grasp.





"Look, a wombat." Some of us had never seen one before. "There goes another". We turned and watched him go into his hole. We started off again and - you've guessed it - found ourselves on the right ridge. The wombat showed us where to go.

By 2 p.m. we were lunching at Konangaroo Clearing but the sight of the Cox worried us not a little. It was a swirling mass of brown, racing water. From the opposite bank a group of walkers asked verification of their location and informed us that there was no hope of crossing between that spot and Breakfast Creek. This challenging statement had to be investigated. Twice Arthur and I tried to make our way across where rocks could be seen through the water but our attempts were unavailing. There was no alternative to

swimming. It was certainly not a pleasant thought though perhaps exciting - it was 4.30 p.m. and cold, dreary weather. We found a fairly narrow section of the river and, after I had gone across without gear, we decided to "give it a go". "Wrap up the packs in groundsheets and tow them across" is easily said but, in a flooded river, it is not so easily done. Eight crossed successfully but when Ray recrossed with two groundsheets for the last pack he struck trouble and had to sacrifice the sheets in order to make land. He looked so apologetic standing there without the groundsheets that we all forgot to shiver for the moment to laugh at the incongruity of the situation.

A camp site was selected a few hundred yards up the river and it seemed an eternity before the acrid wisp of white smoke changed to the beloved orange glow. It was impossible to do anything until our fingers, our toes, in fact our whole bodies regained their lost warmth.

Tea was a crazy affair. Three different food parties amalgamated their resources and billies boiled, were moved and cooled alternatively until it seemed that we should never be able to have any two items at the same time. Yet eventually we were able to eat heartily of the best we possessed.





BUSHWALKING - DOWN SOUTH.

by "Antarcticus".

Those bushwalkers who are fortunate enough to include interstate trips in their holiday or business itineraries may perhaps find these words of some assistance when they come to plan weekend walking trips around Melbourne; to the enthusiast who is intent on organising Sunday walks in Footscray or Collingwood districts, however, I must point out that splendid road guides are available, and should be adequate for such purposes.

First of all, the visitor to Melbourne is warned against looking around for sandstone cliffs and rugged rocky valleys. Many Sydney visitors have acquired sore feet in this way, so remember, you're not in the race. Once again, when you alight from a train, don't expect to find yourself on the top of a mountain for you will most certainly be disappointed. In most cases, settlement has spread along the river valleys rather than up the slopes of the mountains and the railways have followed suit.

If one considers the belt of country within about sixty miles of Melbourne, (corresponding to the distance of the Central Blue Mountains from Sydney), the best walking country will probably be found in the Healesville-Marysville ranges, in the headwaters of the Yarra in the Warburton ranges, in the Kinglake district, and in the Macedon-Woodend district.

Warburton and Healesville are both good centres for walking trips, but if the bushwalker wishes to establish a fixed camp for day walks, he (or she, needless to say) will probably find Marysville more suitable. Within ten miles of here stand the tallest hardwood trees in the world; the highest tree allegedly stops at the 301 feet 6 in. mark, and is one of a number of huge mountain ash trees (eucalyptus regnans) which are preserved in a one-acre reserve. An outstanding attraction of the Marysville district is the Cathedral Range and Sugarloaf, constituting a rocky knife-edge ridge which provides some scope for rock-climbers. Lake Mountain, which is being developed as a ski-ing ground and is near the 5000 ft. level in altitude, is also accessible from Marysville.

Mt. Donna Buang, at 4000 feet, is well-known as a midwinter ski-ing ground and as a scenic viewpoint. The lookout tower on the summit is less than six miles from Warburton railway station and is well worth a visit.

The Kinglake ranges, extending roughly from Whittlesea to Toolangi, contain some excellent material for bushwalkers. The national park area of 14,000 acres is within easy walking distance of the Whittlesea, Hurstbridge and Healesville rail terminals.

The Macedon-Woodend ranges have attracted many wealthy city folk to their slopes with the result that numerous elaborate country residences have sprung up. Fortunately, the scars of civilization have been

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alleviated very considerably by the introduction of large numbers of English trees which present a thoroughly attractive picture in Autumn. The forested areas of the Macedon ranges are extensive, and there are two rather remarkable rocky outcrops at Camel's Hump and at Mount Diogenes (Hanging Rock), respectively.

Last, but not necessarily least, must come some mention of the Dandenong Ranges, which have become very popular with hikers as a result of the fact that they can be reached in less than an hour's run by electric train from Melbourne. Although settlement, chiefly in the form of guest-houses and week-enders, has taken heavy toll of the natural attractions of this area, there are still many extensive forest reserves containing impressive timber and fern gullies, not to mention lyre-birds. Any mention of the Dandenongs might be considered incomplete without mention of "Puffing Billy", that not-so-streamlined spirit of protest which chuffs its leisurely way along the thirty-inch gauge railway from Ferntree Gully to Gembrook.

In conclusion, the hope is expressed that any bushwalker who has read as far as this point (and this will disqualify a large number, no doubt) and returns from his next stay in Melbourne to exclaim: "Yes, Melbourne is still flat, and still utterly devoid of scenery and good walking country" - may do so not without some hidden feeling of doubt in his mind; some feeling, perhaps, that other states may have some attractions lacking in our own; some thought, indeed, of implementing the policy of "See Australia First" before starting off on that post-war trip abroad.

WHEN IS A SAUSAGE NOT A SAUSAGE?

A sausage - what is it? According to Pear's "chopped meat stuffed into a skin." Another authority describes it as "chopped or minced meat seasoned with sage pepper, salt etc. and stuffed into properly cleaned entrails of the ox, sheep or pig, tied at short intervals with a string." The ancient Romans used to examine the entrails (unstuffed and not properly cleaned) of animals for revelations from the Gods. But have you heard of the Dunphy salami sausage? In the interests of science Myles suspended one by a string from the bathroom ceiling. Ten months passed and it became withered and wrinkled, but still, we are assured, an edible victual.

Then it happened. The sausage developed hygroscopic qualities. It foretold the weather by dripping before rain. Here the experiment ended when Mrs. Dunphy, who disapproved of the exudations in the bathroom, removed the sausage to the dustbin. Who knows what other properties it might have developed? It might have reacted to sunspots, foretold droughts, generated atomic energy. For the intrepid experimenter who will carry on where Myles left off there waits fame, perhaps martyrdom, even divorce.

ONE SUNDAY IN SAMOA

It was Sunday when we nosed our way up to the reef at Apia and made fast to a buoy just outside the lagoon.

It had been Sunday the day before but that didn't matter. Time is no object near the equator and one feels only a mild surprise when days of the week double-bank or drop out of the calendar altogether.

A Sabbatical calm brooded over the straggling little town and there was not much to see when the husky Samoans had rowed us ashore.

Campbell from down south New Zealand way, Barklie, a Dublin man and Klein the American wandered along the street with me, debating as to how we should spend the afternoon.

"I tell yew" said Klein in his sleek well-fed tones, "there is only one thing to do. We've gotta climb this hill where Rarbert Louis Stevenson is burried. My lil wife back home would never speak to me again if I told her I hadn't seen the tomb."

"It's a deuced long way" said Campbell, who had been there before, "and it's deuced hot."

"One can drive part of the way I believe" said Barklie.

Sundry Samoan taxi-men in white cotton skirts and singlets had been hovering round us, and on hearing this remark they began to solicit our custom at the top of their voices. (Needless to say this was before the war).

After some argument we selected a car and subsided on to seats spread with snowy antimacassars. Our Jehu seized the wheel and we hurtled at a furious pace through coconut groves that shaded thatched wall-less huts, oval-shaped and cement-floored. We roared up a slight incline and came to rest, whole but gasping, beneath a red-bean tree at Vailima gates.

"From here - walk" said our charioteer; and we descended, charging him to return for us after a suitable interval.

Another cotton-clad figure edged forward from where it had been squatting on the broken stone wall.

"You go Steve's tomb?" it inquired earnestly. I must say that this flippant abbreviation of the revered Tusitala name jarred on me; but that was before we had climbed the hill.

"I come" pursued the white-clad one, and we gathered that he intended to guide us.

No one protested so we fell into line, carefully avoiding the stinging nettles that bordered the path. We crossed a babbling brook and started on the upward way. The splash of a waterfall came from somewhere below; ferns and lianas formed a tangle of undergrowth on either side of us, and the path was strewn with beans, black and scarlet, such as the native women thread into necklaces. To our left, open spaces in the trees showed Vailima, white in the sunlight, with patches of orange bignonia and rosy antignum bright against the green of its lawns.

"It's sure beautiful" said Klein, "I'm right glad I came."

The path steepened here, and our fitful conversation ceased. Presently by mutual consent we paused for a breather on the root of a tree, but our respite was brief. Clouds of mosquitoes descended upon us with whoops of delight and spurred us on.

We toiled upwards for another fifteen minutes, oozing at every pore. "Say" protested Klein as the bush still towered thickly above us, "how much further to the top?"

Our guide, cool and serene, made gestures indicating smallness. "Little way" he said, "maybe two yard."

"It may be in some methods of reckoning" said Barklie, "but it looks more like two miles to me."

"Oh we're over the worst I think" said Campbell optimistically. "As far as I can remember, this seat by the path here is quite three-quarters of the way up."

"I guess they hated to put it there" said Klein. "There's none further down, you notice - they just wait till you are at your last gasp before they help you." He sank down on it, mopping his brow and braving the mosquitoes for an instant.

"You know" I said reflectively, "it must have been a very difficult business getting the coffin to the top of this hill. I wonder how long it took them to do it?"

"Ask little Solomon here" said Campbell, "he might toll you all about it."

Klein hailed our guide in what he fondly believed to be Island English.

"This fella Steve" he said, "him dead. You put him on top of hill. How long it take you, carry him up this dam-steep path?"

"Yes" said the youth gravely. "Steve's tomb," and he pointed through the trees above us.

Klein tried again.

"When Steve die, you put him up top, in tomb. How long it take you get him up this hill?"

Blank silence for awhile. Then, "Twenty year" our guide said solemnly.

A guffaw of laughter broke the stillness of the bush.

"That's right" said Klein, "I guess the laugh's on me. Twenty years - gosh! I shouldn't wonder if it did. What I want to know is, why in hell they couldn't have burried him down below."

He heaved himself up with a sigh and we trudged to the top of the hill.

On a little flat knoll, about ten yards across, hemmed in by palm and hibiscus, is a long slab of plain grey stone. Along the ledge at one side of it a recent pilgrim had traced "Robert Louis Stevenson" with the red and yellow palm nuts that lie scattered amongst the grass. A jar of scarlet hibiscus flowers glowed against the stone.

Below us stretched ridge on ridge of tropical forest, sombre, omnivertent, with here and there the flash of white "birds in a dark ravine." To one side, a cleared space of cultivation marked Vailima garden. In front of us, infinitely distant, lay a strip of honey-coloured sand; the blue peace of the lagoon: the roof, like a white ruffle on the sea's blue gown, and beyond, the Pacific, smiling and sparkling in the sun.

"Here he lies where he longed to be" - this child of the dour north, with its grey skies and its piercing winds and its rain - here, at peace, in the warm silence, shaded by hibiscus and palm.

Hail and farewell, O Tusitala, for we shall not pass this way again.

THE MAN WITH THE TAR BRUSH.

Though not decided, when this magazine goes to print it looks as though the majority favour Ingersoll Hall, Crown Street, just off Oxford Street, as a meeting place for the club. But remember that the night is Thursday. String for tying around the fingers and helping the memory is obtainable at all stores.

Who are we to complain? It is really a wonder that we were not thrown out of O'Connell Street for, apart from the noise for which a justification might have been found, we had booked only a room not all the contiguous corridors and stairways in the building also.

Will the enthusiastic collector of autographs please revisit us so that we may attach the requisite sentimental or admonitory poetry? When receiving a walks programme these days one is asked to sign on the dotted line - and one's own name at that.

Could you credit that behind such a frank, boyish countenance could lurk such horrible duplicity? Do you not tremble for the countryside in which such a monster of designing cynicism is roaming? John Burrows - that wolf in Army clothing - left Emu Plains station bound for the Federation Reunion but did he turn up? Well, yes, but only after an excessively long time which took some explaining. John Fidus Achates, Peter Gracie, rushed over the landscape like a clucky hen looking for his protege and probably wondering what he was missing.

However John appeared next day with calm effrontery in white shorts.

There is still no word of encouragement in reply to the request for a copy of "The Sydney Bushwalker Annual" No.1 1934. Perhaps if we offer in exchange a silver-plated ear trumpet?

One of our absent members is wondering why we left "5, Hamilton Street." Has he never been thrown out in the cold, cold snow for any reason at all? (If answer in negative, addresses can be supplied). Briefly, the landlord of the tenant of whom we were sub-tenants said "Go" to the tenant who was forced to say "Ditto" to us.

After the war, what? Anarchy, chaos, rebellion, refusal to "Keep off Grass" etc. And it is here with us - NOW. Recently, when an official party showed a tendency to crawl out from under the thumb of a certain leader, he is reported to have declared of the trip "It is cancelled" and to have stridden, strodden, hurried off. The party continued to enjoy itself but in an unofficial sort of way and eventually obtained an unofficial lift. However, they came upon the leader striding along and legalised the whole position by giving him a lift also.

Another Reunion visitor was Colin Lloyd in blue trunks - very attractive when new - and dark glasses. I think he may have been practising for a gate-crashing on the Clive wedding.

Yes, that loud laugh you could hear when every one else was trying to look as though they did not understand, was Grace Jolly.

The large number of people at the Reunion was increased by a considerable number of halves. I believe that if one went to the right spot one could learn, during the day time, a whole lot about the conducting of creches. During the camp-fire you could pull a baby out of any rabbit burrow within a hundred yards. As I have had no frantic advertisements I presume each person recovered the correct baby,

IF WE LET IT

By Bona Dea.

We work very hard for the preservation of the bushlands and the encouragement of bushwalking. Why?

Of course the bush prevents soil erosion, protects the water supply, increases one's opportunity for knowledge of the wild life, gives good health to bushwalkers, and then, we add in airy and rather superior fashion, "It has a spiritual value to mankind."

It was this so-called "spiritual value" that I questioned as I sat alone in the bush one day. After all, when bushwalkers come up against the really basic problem of facing suffering, do they face it any more successfully than anyone else? On looking round among my bushwalking acquaintances, I had to confess that they don't. And if the bush and bushwalking do not help people to live-and to live means primarily to face troubles with a smile-of what real "spiritual value" is the bush and why bother to preserve it?

You young ones, who dash gaily through the bush, may think that suffering is a phantom you will escape. But you won't. Sooner or later you will be up against it. Your sweet-heart goes off with someone else: your baby contracts an incurable disease and dies: your wife deserts you: you nurse your mother through her last illness and see her die in agony: you injure yourself and can walk no more so that every picture of bushwalking brings a misery of longing: you fail in life financially: your pride and honour receive an irreparable blow; you suddenly realize the horror of old age which not one in a hundred escapes: or you just simply want something desperately badly and you can't get it.

I remembered that 2500 years ago the wise Buddha also had sat alone in the forest and pondered over this same problem of the inevitableness of suffering and how one could be freed from it. He discovered that the first step towards freedom from suffering was to accept the fact of suffering. That is a very bitter pill to swallow but, if you don't swallow it, you embitter your own life and make yourself a nuisance to others. And the second step he found was to give up "wanting." If you would only give up "wanting" the dead wife, or the good health, or whatever it is, you would have taken another step in the right direction. Ultimately he found one could be freed from the misery of suffering; and he himself left behind a memory of unperturbable happiness and a long life showing other people how to be happy also.

As I sat alone in the bush I wondered whether the forest had helped him find that wisdom. Perhaps it had. For natural things accept what life brings; they don't "want"; they play their part and pass on. And perhaps too, amid the vastness of nature the pettiness of our troubles falls into proper perspective. I don't know. But I do think that if we relax and let go and seek harmony with the natural things around, then Nature may be the goddess to us.

"It is easy enough to keep smiling
When life flows by like a song,
But the man worth while
Is the one who will smile
When everything goes dead wrong.

Can the bush help us keep smiling? That is the test of its "spiritual value." I think it can - if we let it!

MORE TAR.

Just peeped into the Ingersoll Hall last week and received the shock of my life - Sydney Bushwalkers apparently enjoying themselves and amid scenes of wondrous splendour. Dancing, yea, dancing. It was unfortunate that Ted McKiernan was not there because his critical eye damns every work of man (including the Eiffel Tower and the Taj Mahal) but I am sure even he could not have disapproved of the interior decorations. What a sadness will fall upon us when the open season for new moons arrives and the birds migrate.

For the unsophisticated there were bobs and table tennis while the complete social failures could admire the view of the harbour from the windows. There must be quite a number in the latter category judging by Phyllis Ratcliffe's remark that the male members are a lot of dumb-bells (or words to that effect).

The Grand Organiser of all the excitement, Phil Hall, seemed to be too busy to dance or did he fear the weight of one of our "girls" on his sore toe?

The Band Leader did his best to cheer us and showed considerable ingenuity in introducing us to one another, "Little does he know," said one hussy, "that we have all slept together."

We could not better describe the effect of the music on club members than by saying that, when the dance reached almost bacchanalian frenzy, several of Rolcy's most cherished and rare females were seen to fly from under his protective wings. No harm resulted so far as is known.

And of course something sensational is needed to bring people like Peter Jones, Frank Ricketts, Freda Newman into the club.

One breathless and breath-taking matron told me as she whisked past (alas!) "This is my three-monthly night out."

And mere youths of only twenty, such as Denis Gittoes, danced just like as if they were twentyone.

Wives brought husbands (e.g. Mary Eastoe, one husband) and husbands were so reckless as to let wives (e.g. Betty Dickinson) out alone.

Other people just worked hard for what they could get (e.g.....)

There was general approval of the dance but perhaps (some people are never satisfied) at the supper at these orgiastic affairs the coffee could be partnered by some soft drinks.

Once upon a time the camp-fire at a large official walk was in progress and while the singing was proceeding some wicked people were making coffee and surreptitiously putting a drop of rum in it. The crowd started to sing "Cocaine Katey and Morphine Sue" the verse of which goes:-

"Oh, lady, lady, have a sniff on me, have a sniff on me,
and while accompanying the word "sniff" with the action there was a sudden cry of "I can smell rum!"