

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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EDITORIAL

Tragedy at the Kiddies' Christmas Treat

Every year since 1929 the Club has provided an annual Christmas treat for some of the children who live near the centre of the great expanse of buildings, asphalt and concrete that makes up our city. These children have few, if any, opportunities of seeing the bush and it has been a happy event for them and for the helpers too, until this year, when little Richard Geyer, aged 8½, was drowned in the deep water of the Lane Cove River at Fuller's Park. It was a sad and terrible ending to a day of sunshine and joy. To Richard's parents and to his brothers and sisters we extend our deepest sympathy.

It has been clearly realised that the care of 50 to 100 children while travelling on trains and buses, running round and playing in the bush and swimming, was a big responsibility. That was why

the organisers insisted on having a large number of helpers, some of whom could be with the children all the time. This year there were 27 helpers and 71 children, and the helpers kept watch over the children to the best of their ability. Perhaps the main difficulty arose from the large number of other children at the park that day, a fact which made it difficult to identify those with our party. Richard Geyer must have entered the water unknown to the helpers, perhaps while the sports were being held. This would probably have been noticed if it were not for the number of other children about.

As every scout-master knows there is always danger in taking children into the bush. But should the danger prevent us from taking them? It is to be hoped not, since the danger is probably less than that of playing in the streets of Surry Hills, and the children obviously love their day out. At the same time it is elementary common sense to consider carefully the causes of this fatality and decide how the risks can be minimised next time. Another good reason for such an inquiry is that it broadens the basis of responsibility. No one would suggest that the able and hardworking organiser Rene Browne is in any way to blame, and the Club should make it easier for her by taking a more active part in the organising of the treat.

AT OUR DECEMBER MEETING.

Reported by Jim Brown.

The President was in the chair, about 60 members were present, and seven new members were welcomed - Misses Pat Langworthy, Vera Matasin, Helen Brooks and Kath Eastwood: Messrs. Ernie French, Alan Mayblom and Frank Young.

From an early stage in the evening the meeting gave promise of being uneventful. It appeared that Frank Leyden had declined the convenorship of the Ski Section Committee, wished upon him at the previous meeting in his absence, and this re-awakened the disputed value of the Committee. The matter was debated without rancour, Dormie urging that it be maintained as a sort of Dorcas (or did he say Dormouse) Society, with nothing much to do, but nice to have around. Then Len Scotland accepted the duties of convening the Committee as seemed required.

It was agreed to provide £6:10: 8 from Club funds to cover the expenses on the Club's 21st Birthday Celebrations.

Among numerous announcements, Dorothy Lawry mentioned that a new Trustee would be required for the Blue Gum Forest Trust in succession to herself: also that engineers had investigated the erosion situation in Blue Gum and considered that proper corrective measures would cost about £360. She suggested, however, that parties

camping in the Forest might busy themselves removing some of the fallen trees from the river, which would be a step in the right direction.

When the urgent matter of permitting liquor to be brought to the Club for the Christmas Party was mentioned there was some indication of revived controversial thought: the motion was lucid and brief, and was given strong support by several speakers before the more addle-pated drinkers could muster a counter blast. Kevin Ardill, whose physique no doubt had resisted better the paralysing effect of liquor, was the first to arouse himself in support of the good old demon. Bushwalkers were ladies and gentlemen, he opined, and were not likely to allow the dance to become an alcoholic revel. Dormie, who was in very good form, but lacking in opportunity to sparkle, thought the effect would be the same, but the cause less elegant - bushwalkers were too mean to get drunk. Eric Rowen merely wanted it left to individual discretion, and it was so.

With sundry appeals for more walks and social items for the next programme, mention by Dormie of a re-afforestation project of the Water Board, and of timber cutting in the Kosciusko area from Gordon Ballard, the meeting drew to an amiable conclusion at about 9.10 p.m.

SOCIAL NOTES FOR JANUARY.

I hope you all enjoyed the Christmas Dance. The success of this function I owe to a group of willing helpers who moved seats, swept floor, arranged supper, washed up and arranged entertainment. Many thanks to Ray and his ballet for putting on such a fine show.

With so many food cranks in the Club, we should have a good audience on 21st January when Clem Hallstrom will favour us with a lecture "We Are What We Eat". You members who are worried about your diet and who want to brush up on vitamins, calories and roughage, don't deny yourselves this splendid opportunity! Free consultation will be given after the lecture.

20th January - Free night.

SWIMMING CARNIVAL. 19th-20th FEBRUARY. SANDY BEND, GEORGE'S RIVER. Remember, we want your help this year.

RE-UNION. 12th-13th MARCH. Have you any ideas for camp fire entertainment? If so, let either Alex Colley, Bill Hall, Ray Kirkby or myself have your suggestions.

- Edna Stretton.

UPPER CLYDE - SECOND ATTEMPT.

Jean Kirkby.

With sinister warnings and pessimistic utterances reverberating in our ears, we dug out the darkest recesses of our packs and tossed out many an oddment that had accompanied our wanderings even as far afield as Frenchman's Cap and other Tasmanian haunts and prepared for the worst. We were somewhat cheered, however, when the leader himself (Alex Colley) showed evidence of weakness for when he saw the hordes at Central, he prepared for immediate flight; but somehow he was mollified and lured on to the train.

We arrived at Sassafra next morning - still in one piece - and there we encountered a lorry load of youth and formidable weapons. Being in my usual spot at the rear of the party, I earned for myself the best seat in a timber lorry which appeared after we had been walking for five minutes, but nevertheless was sorely distressed at the plight of the less fortunate who had to balance in some very precarious spots. At the appointed place we left the lorry and there awaited the hardy males who had walked. They duly arrived after about half an hour bringing the rain with them. This lift of about seven miles conserved the strength of the weak for the trials and tribulations which lay ahead.

After lunching in caves just off the roadside, we plodded through the rain into the Vines, where the fine stand of softwoods growing in this volcanic outcrop looked very lovely, drenched in soft gentle hues of brown and green. Climbing the rise beyond the timber camp we made a sharp turn left through thick undergrowth down a ridge and over into a steep sided creek. Squelching happily downwards, I remember discussing the merits and de-merits of Bendix washing machines.

By a process of sidling across fairly steep slopes through thickish scrub in order to keep under the tops, we eventually emerged into a valley running more or less north-south. When the mists lifted occasionally dim outlines of towering walls of rock broken up into fantastic shapes could be seen standing guard over the valley. The leader, a trifle hesitant at this stage, thought he recognised this valley for one we had been in two Easters ago, but not receiving enough support he dropped the subject for awhile. Here the going was squelchy and reminded one of Tasmania. The grasses were colourful, and dainty Gentians (I think) were startling in their bright hues. Our coming surprised the only inhabitants of these hidden places - in the uneasy light white jacketed kangaroos and wallabies stood erect and watched us till Clem's raucous cries sent them bounding off into the mist.

Fading light set us looking for a camp spot, a rather miserable prospect in so much mush underfoot. At this point we had turned back from a gap in the southern end of the valley. If we could have seen the view here, as we did on the next trip, it would have revealed a splendid sight of the sheer walls of the Clyde and

Endrick to the left, chopped off at the top by the usual flat plateaux, on the right fairly close, some unscaleable looking rugged heights and in the distance set in this spectacular frame, the ocean looking very serene, whilst at our feet the ground fell away sharply into deep timbered gullies - altogether, not exactly walking country.

But to return to the trip on hand; after a little prowling around Bill Hall waved his magic wand and a magnificent cave plus extras (i.e. smaller compartments) sprang into being. What joy, comfort, and bliss! All the same, it must be recorded that the leader gathered his flock unto him and left - for he is a firm believer in the one cave-one fire theory. However, Clem, feeling sympathetic for him in such a sorry plight, read poetry to him whilst he put up his tent in the wet and dark.

As this was only a three day trip, on the morrow we were forced to turn our backs on the Castle direction and retreat back along the valley, where even I was beset by a sense of familiarity. So after discovering our lunch spot of the Easter before last, it was unanimously decided without further argumentation or speculation that we were in one of the valleys of the Endrick. We climbed out of the valley by a new and easier route which for the benefit of future explorers of this region, has been marked by a cairn of stones a quarter of a mile south of the trig. From the trig a flat topped ridge, mainly of bare rock, bearing west, will lead you to the Vines.

Lunch was had in the "White Hand Cave", a discovery of the Six Hour weekend party. During the afternoon, which was wet and cold, the cave dwellers gossiped and the more hardy tried to re-trace the doings of the famous walk on the aforesaid week-end. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that this particular walk was spent within one half mile radius from the trig. The next day the leader, very satisfied altogether, led us victoriously across ridges in the mist back down to the Vines.

One month later Ray and I retraced our steps in similar weather, back to the valley behind Endrick Trig. Until we had left parts previously trodden I had an eerie feeling of being accompanied by squadrons of bushwalkers and could almost hear the familiar chatter of the party. I was rather pleased to drop these cheery ghosts and go off on our own into new country.

PASS THE FRUIT PLEASE: The lady made out the food list but the gent, being a gent, insisted on a little extra. He quoth "We must have a pineapple even if I carry it myself". The first day out the rest of the party were tantalised with glimpses of the fruit and at least seventeen references to the object. At lunch the second day, with much ceremony he produced the pine, but alas and alack, only about one third was edible. It may or may not be true that spec pineapples were going cheap out Malabar way, but we prefer to think that Bill Gillam is just a bad judge of a pine.

TWENTIETH CENTURY PARADISE.

By Ray Kirkby.

A brief account of the earlier trips into the country between Sassafras and Wog Wog Creek, in the Pigeon House region, will show how our appetites were whetted. The trips mentioned are the only ones I have heard of.

The Easter before last I took a party between these two points and saw enough of the country to immediately fall under its spell. The country was not mapped and I knew it to be difficult so we cut across the valleys below the main ridge which promised to have on it many difficult cliff faces. We had such good luck that we flew through and did not make a single mistake. After knowledge gained from later trips I am still amazed at our good fortune on this occasion.

The next trip was led by Alex Colley and experienced heavy mists all the time so that the party seems to have spent the whole weekend wandering around on a sandstone flat top of a few miles in extent. Alex led the next attack also on this country and once again the weather was unhelpful. However we gained a little more knowledge of the layout and retraced our steps over some of the ground covered on my original trip. Despite the poor weather I could see on this occasion that others in the party were not unaffected by the attractiveness of this area.

My determination to spend a week of my holidays ferreting out its secrets was, I admit, occasioned by my fear that, if I did not act quickly, I should be forestalled. And I felt that this bit of country was mine.

The possibility of a lift on a timber lorry out to The Vines had been investigated so that is why Jean and I spent our first night in the saw dust under a paper bark in a Berry saw mill. In the morning we discovered to our chagrin that our friend's vehicle had broken down only the day before so we sprinted to the station just in time to catch the train to Nowra. The Braidwood car took us out to Sassafras so we found ourselves once again trotting out to The Vines along the timber road, which is pleasant enough - but we were doing it for the fourth time.

Our first night was spent in the cave beside the creek just short of The Vines. This is remarkable country in so far as caves and overhangs are very plentiful and, if you know this, wet weather need not hold such horrors. Next day on the ridge near the aboriginal bora ground the rain pelted down with as much fierceness as it had on the trip a month before. This strongly reinforced a feeling of *deja vu* and I am sure that we both felt "It's on again", but after one or two more short and violent storms the weather was urbane.

In the early afternoon we saw the view from the gap between the Endrick and the Clyde where on the previous trip there had been only

thick mist. Even on this occasion our stay was interrupted by a most fierce rain and wind squall. We then climbed up what appeared to be a low gap between the two branches of the Endrick but I decided that the creek on the other side ran into the Clyde and was not our way. Unfortunately I was mistaken, and we lost half a day through this error. While endeavouring to find a way up on to the tops we walked along hundreds of yards of overhang after the style of Wombat Parade in the Blue Mountains and would have camped there had water been available. We were forced to drop down into the creek where we found a cave without delay.

On previous trips signs of the use of this country by aboriginals had been discovered - first the remarkable bawra ground, then the caves with "hands" in them. In a wind cave off our large cave this night there was a perfect axe head which excited Jean so much that she wanted to bring it back. I felt its weight and declined. I could, however, without any difficulty find this cave again and I returned the axe to its position which was probably the reason for its excellent preservation. Whether the aboriginals did use this country a lot I do not know - it may be that it just is country where evidence would survive - but the number of wallabies and kangaroos in it is tremendous. Even this may not always have been so; the poor animals may have been driven here beyond the pale of civilisation. For it is beyond the pale. There appears to be no worthwhile timber and no grazing so the area is practically untouched. The valleys are heavily grassed with no signs of erosion and water is abundant, even in a droughty time, in crystal streams. I could only assign the good flow of the streams to the country being in its pristine state. The area is covered with animal pads of such size that it is difficult to remember that they are not made by domesticated animals.

The long valleys leading up to the divide are entrancing. The walking is easy for the valleys are shallow, covered with grasses and heaths with clumps of gums usually with white trunks. We followed the farther branch of the Endrick to the divide expecting to find the Clyde watershed this time but looked into still more delightful valleys running up to sandstone cliffs - the Corang River. The headwaters of the Corang were even more beautiful and we were staggered to find, growing freely along its banks, numerous bushes of what we were accustomed to call the Tasmanian Waratah - a shrub covered with flowers like large red grevilleas. After referring to Sulman I presumed these to be telopea oreades, "Gippsland Waratah", which she describes as "growing as far north as Moss Vale".

All this country is very bountiful in wild flowers. In the October weekend we had plenty - particularly eriostemon - but the exciting part was to find so many just a little different from their Sydney fellows. Tetratheca was a giant of a plant, one kunzea was quite orange and there was a contrasty cerise and black grevillea. This time the publicity hunters were the sowerbaeas, the boronias (including a couple of varieties I had never seen before), purple conosperma, tetratheca still showing off and purple Pattersonia.

At the head of Corang you get a spectacular view of the Clyde valley and the ridge running out to The Castle. Indeed we decided that one separate rock formation was The Castle and we determined to go out and investigate it. The ridge was very thick and looked a long way down. In fact it was not far and here let me shamelessly state another attraction of this country - the comparatively little ups and downs unless you decide to dive down into the Clyde or Yadbora Creek. The cliffs infuse a satisfying feeling of height though they are not very high but frequently fantastically shaped.

We sidled along the Castle ridge at "overhang" level and eventually arrived at the chimney we had espied from afar. There was water in this very high up and there we camped. No difficulty was experienced next morning in getting on top of the ridge but we were bewildered by its size. It is rather of the proportions of the Narrow Neck Peninsula and the surrounding sandstone formations are certainly among the most unusual and beautiful I have seen - great domelike formations like some Eastern temples. On the Yadbora Creek side we looked on to a most striking rock mass - even for this unique country - and decided that we were looking at the back of the Castle. We may have been able to get from our ridge out to it but I think this doubtful. It would have been exhilarating to probe further into this area but the effort may have been very uncomfortable.

We retraced our steps to the main ridge with The Peak now our beacon. What a symmetrical shape this large pimple is! Many a time it has been our guiding star when there was no map or the latter was a snare and delusion.

The top of this particular outcrop had an attraction all of its own for it was covered with grasses which were now a bright yellow like ripe wheat and the contrast over its rim of the blue ridges of Currockbilly was vivid. For several miles the ridge is parklike - on one side the green meadowlike effect of the upper Corang, on the other the great drop down to Yadbora Creek with innumerable blue ridges sweeping up to the floating Currockbilly while a backward glance shows perky Pigeonhouse itself. Along these ridges there is an almost continuous animal pad, like a path.

Though you are forced soon to leave the main ridge, there is a maze of ridges leading up to The Peak and with a little pottering around a way up will appear. Nevertheless it is as well to allow some time for delays of this kind unless the country is well known. Often innocent looking ridges are flanked by overhangs hidden by trees and most continuously continuous.

Why bushwalkers have not explored this country years ago and extolled it I am at a loss to understand, especially as it is comparatively close to Sydney. To use a modern phrase "It has everything".

PRACTICAL CONSERVATION.

By H.A. Lindsay.

Bushwalkers say of themselves "Some walk, some walk and talk, and some only talk". In regard to conservation, there are also many who only talk and as their talk consists mainly of verbal tripe and purple frogfeathers, its value to the cause is a minus quantity. No good purpose is ever served by airing theories based upon pious hopes; a fallacy is still a fallacy, no matter how earnestly it is stated. Only work based upon sound, scientific lines can achieve those results which are the irrefutable proof of success.

From the dawn of the age of reason until some 700 years ago, learned men fooled away their time in discussing and in theorising. Virgil stated that swarms of bees bred in the rotting carcasses of animals - he never went close enough to the stinking mass of corruption to see if the buzzing insects were bees or blowflies. Aristotle stated that the heavier a body, the faster it would fall - he never made the simple experiment of testing it out. No wonder that Omar Khayam, the possessor of a fine mathematical brain, said that he learned nothing from this "Great argument" of the doctors and sages. It holds good today; arguing and theorising leads but to the blind alleys and is a sign of mental darkness.

Roger Bacon set men on the right road when he told his pupils to adopt experiment and observation and to build upon the rock of the facts thus ascertained, rather than to try to stand upon the quicksands of twisting facts to fit theories. Science has gone forward with strides of ever-increasing length since that day. The most successful conservation schemes in the world have had sound foundations in the form of facts and have been carried out by practical people who had some personal interest in the work. One example comes from America and what I have to say about it is not taken from the book written about it, nor from the film which tells the story, but from what I was told by Americans who had helped to carry it out.

Some 20 years ago the American gun clubs - you know, those dreadful people who go out in the open season to shoot game birds and animals! - became aware that the numbers of wild ducks and wild geese were decreasing every year. The bird lovers - the people who want to protect anything which grows feathers - had noticed the same thing and they put forward the theory that if those wretched hunters would only stop shooting, everything would be all right. Sad to say, the ducks didn't collaborate, for they went on decreasing in the spots where they were totally protected. Then the duck shooters decided to DO SOMETHING. They enlisted the aid of scientists who spent years in the painstaking research work which alone can reveal the truth, and finally they were able to announce that the chief cause of the decline in duck numbers was lack of breeding grounds. Swamp reclamation, the building of levees to control floods and the spread of settlement had spoiled most of the breeding grounds; the cure was to turn seasonal waters into permanent ones.

Then the duck shooters formed the syndicate known as "Ducks Unlimited" and set to work. With the use of earth-moving equipment they raised the outlet levels of swamps in waste lands and thus turned them into permanent lakes which would no longer go dry before the ducklings were old enough to fly. The bird lovers had no hand in it; they were not going to "help breed ducks to be slaughtered and refused to assist, but the fishermen did lend a hand, because more permanent waters meant more places in which they could catch fish. Today America has more wild ducks, wild geese and other aquatic birds than at any other time within living memory - because of the practical work of the duck shooters.

Fish acclimatisation societies in Australia give us another example close at hand. They have to do more than breed trout in hatcheries and liberate them; these fish can live only in clear, cold and permanent streams. There must also be a food supply and these conditions exist only where there is no erosion to muddy the water. So these fishermen must also strive to preserve the timber on the watersheds, aid in bushfire control and afforestation.

In your November issue it was stated that the parks in America are treated as game preserves and this creates in the mind of the reader one of those distorted pictures which do such harm. What actually happens is that the deer in these parks have a big natural increase and there is a limit to the number of grazing animals which any area can support. If the deer are allowed to become too numerous they leave the parks to seek food and break down fences to get into crops; they cause a fearful destruction of young pine trees by ringbarking them when they rub their growing antlers on them. Any New Zealander will tell you what a destructive pest the deer can be; only by shooting the surplus can their numbers be kept to reasonable limits in American parks.

It is a bad policy to tell people that they should not do a thing. It is bad from the psychological angle as it raises resentment; it harms your cause because you are liable to be classed as an impractical crank and it isn't constructive. Best results are achieved by encouraging people to take positive action by doing something. There are no lack of sound conservation activities to be started in this way. We can stop talking about timber destruction and turn to planting trees; I am now writing an article for an agricultural paper, based upon 20 years of practical experience in which I planted 4,890 trees, which sets out how it can be done by planting economically valuable trees. It deals with S.A. conditions, of course, but I'll forward a copy of it to the Federation in case some of the hints in it will be helpful. One of the species mentioned in it is that botanical miracle, the athel tree, which will grow on a rainfall of a few inches a year and flourish almost anywhere, including the margin of a salt lake.

There is endless scope in Australia for a Ducks Unlimited scheme, modified to suit our conditions. The first step is to enlist the collaboration of landowners who have suitable permanent waters on their properties. You attract ducks to them by sowing seed rice

in the shallows; for nesting places you collect hollow logs about four feet long and with an internal diameter of about nine inches. One end is blocked with tightly packed brush and the other is cut away so as to leave a shelf on which the nesting duck can alight - a mighty important point. These are then put up in the Y forks of smooth-barked trees which foxes can't climb, some 9 feet from the ground, and lashed firmly in place with fencing wire to serve as sites for wild duck nests. Be sure that they can't rock about as ducks won't use them if they wobble. I've put up over 200 of them in my time and they are used year after year. There are miles of coastal sand dunes which can be planted with the Norfolk Island pine, which will grow with its roots almost in the sea, gives good shade for campers, helps to hold the sand and is the only tree in the world which the prevailing winds can't distort. The list could be extended indefinitely and everything is tested and practicable.

But it is a job for those who work on conservation; those who do nothing save tell the other fellow what he mustn't do or who confine their activities to talking and airing theories can go on in the same old way, while those who want to see results will get the blistered hands, the backaches and the tired legs inseparable from doing the things which really count.

(We cannot agree with Mr. Lindsay's views on the ignorance of bushwalker conservationists, most of whom know both the philosophy and practice of scientific method. Some have had long experience in conservation work. The S.B.W. would certainly oppose the breeding of animals for use as targets. Nor would the Club, which is primarily a recreational walking Club, exhort its members to continuous hard labour in the cause of duck breeding. But because of the numerous criticisms which have appeared in these pages of Mr. Lindsay's writings we think it only fair to publish his views. Ed.)

THIS MIGHT HAPPEN TO YOU.

By "Mumbedah".

"Old Hands" in the Club will remember the occasion the Bill Piggott's camped down on the Cox at Dyson's, when not long before tea they took a sunny stroll downstream whilst their stew bubbled merrily on the fire. Returning to camp, they found the fire had run along the pine needles, ignited the tent, and all the inflammable possessions were burnt to a frazzle. One bright spot remained - their stew was cooked, and after its consumption they beat a hasty retreat up the now frosting-up Lower Megalong to Kirby's, Bill, in his athletic singlet, not enjoying the situation one bit.

In borrowed plumes they returned to Sydney and ascended the stairs to the first floor of 327 George Street, and re-kitted up. (At this stage, Paddy may be permitted to smile at the misfortune

of others.) And so back to the Cox to resume their interrupted holiday trip. This disaster cost them quite a few pounds, even at pre-war prices. We won't dwell on the fact that they left their fire unattended - anyway, they paid for the indiscretion the hard way - through the pocket.

Again, more recently, on emerging from the depths of Yarrangobilly Caves, a party of Boy Scouts found to their dismay that a bush fire had swept through and some of their rucksacks had been consumed in the flames.

The moral of these episodes lies in a fact interesting to walkers. Under the conditions of the fire insurance policy now issued by the associated insurance companies, a policy covering the household furniture and personal effects of a residence, flat or guest-house automatically extends to cover walking gear against fire whilst temporarily removed (including in transit) to anywhere in the Commonwealth, up to an amount not exceeding 10% of the interest so insured. Under the Householders Comprehensive policy this extension is 20%. No additional premium is chargeable under either type of policy for this extended coverage.

So if such a misfortune should come your way, don't forget you're eligible to make a claim under your policy. Single members living with their people can claim under their parents' policy if not otherwise covered. Naturally articles undergoing heating or drying processes are not covered, so if you burn the soles out of your sodden footwear or a hole in your favourite towel, you're not in the event. But if your pack is burnt, say, in a service car, you're O.K. If in doubt about it, consult your insurance office. In conclusion, Paddy, being an ex-insurance clerk, may again be permitted to smile. (N.B. This is not a free ad. for Paddy.)

THESE CARNIVEROUS VEGOS: Being a walk of Max Gentle's you can imagine the party lunching at the preselected time and place. You can also understand Max producing his now famous fruit lunch. To the thinly disguised horror of the party Don Frost also produced a collection of fruit. No doubt the idea was to curry favour with the leader but Don naively explained that he had made a last minute decision to join the party and all he could lay hands on was the aforementioned fruit. Skipping the walking section of the day, which wouldn't interest you anyway, we return to Cowan Station. Nearly opposite the Station there is a cottage with the sign "Cakes, Pies, Pasties etc." A few minutes after our party passed four meat pies had transferred from the establishment to the fruit lined interiors of Max and Don. This sorry fact might yet have been undiscovered but that some keen eye detected gravy on the chins of the culprits - and there ain't no gravy in fruit.

THE FOX ON THE COX.

(From "Alice in Wonderland")

The Old Red Fox put his receipt book away and said, "My son, you'll be eating with two women".

Little Billy gulped and went very pale in the face. "No, no, I mean you will be food listing with them not really eating them. Since the Faery Queen cracked a wing I've been plagued with women offering to cook for me. Too many of them, in fact, my son, and I want you to look after some. Two of them, in fact." The Old Red Fox twitched his tail as though there was fowl play abroad and then skipped off after a young chicken.

Little Billy retired to a dark corner of the Hall to think things over. The last time he went in a food party with some girls they did not turn up and he was left with nothing but porridge for two days. Then just before that he was caught with those people his fairy Godmother had warned him about, those vegos. If only the Fox had told him who they were before he had given the Fox that golden sovereign. It might be Mother Hubbard who had boiled the food list and then brought a pound of dates and curry powder. He shuddered at the thought of curried dates, even from such a good cook as Mother Hubbard. He had seen Mother Gooseberry floating away in a canoe so he was safe from that quarter. Who could they be? Little Billy was deeply worried by this time and had nearly made up his mind to lose his deposit when the Old Fox skipped back again with Threepenny Bett and Arnt you Glad.

"Here you are Son", he said, in that yappy laugh of his. "If they don't burn you off they should have the tea ready by the time you get into camp".

The Old Fox saw his crony The Gent in the Tent come in then and with a dive for his receipt book he trotted away, his bushy tail wagging as though it was a great joke.

Not being the talkative type Little Billy was soon standing on the sidelines while the lists were drawn up. Ah, how cursed the day he had fallen in with the Fox. Now that the Faery Queen and Sally in the Galley had gone he was worse than ever. No one was safe. Even the Goat in the Boat had been heard to complain that a sore back was infinitely better than the Fox's plans, plots and perigrinations.

"We simply must have Wiener Schnitzel on Saturday night, even if we do have to carry the Wien all that way", said Betty. "Nonsense", said Glad, "I am going to have Sweet and Sour Looks for Dinner".

Little Billy thought he was back among the Vegos but they were not such odd sizes.

"And on Saturday we must have "Spaghetti Polonnaise". This

really gave Little Billy a shock because he thought that a 'Polonaise' was a dance written by Chopin and not by Spaghetti at all.

However, "if music be the food...." he thought, and let it pass.

"Stewed apricots and steamed pudding for dessert on Saturday" said Glad.

"Oh, I was counting on stewed pineapple and custard" said Bett. "We could always use the green end for salad on Sunday".

"I like my meat rather fresh, you know. Do you think Little Billy could take that lamb that follows him everywhere, and if I took some dried apples we could have apple sau---".

They both jumped up and looked round in mild surprise.

Little Billy was lying on the floor and saying in short sharp gasps "Curse the Fox! Curse the Fox!"

THREE MISTERS AND ONE MISS IN A MIST.

By "Straggler".

Everything had gone very well on Ken Meadows' recent Colong Caves trip. It had been a comfortable, if dusty, bus ride to Yerranderie, a good camp site on the river track, and a leisurely walk to the Caves, where the younger members had exhausted themselves tearing through caverns and squeezing through "squeezeholes".

For the return trip "The Rabbits" checked out as usual, the moderates a little later, leaving the leader and a couple of his mates to bring up the rear and collect any of the folk who might sag by the wayside. All was well until Colong Saddle where "The Rabbits" decided to go by the River Track and four others decided to go by the vehicle track and Byrnes Swamp to Yerranderie. It is the latter four on whom this story centres.

In Colong Swamp, the rabbits (real ones) and 'roos were plentiful and created quite a diversion. So much so that the four breakaways missed the Yerranderie turn, and, having no landmarks in the mist, went South on to the Oberon Stock route. Then followed the long trek seeking Yerranderie through the mist. It seemed that we would reach the Wollondilly before we would reach Yerranderie.

John Broughton was the first to come out at the Yerranderie Road Junction and was in the act of climbing over a fence to seek confirmation of our position and, perhaps, a cup of tea from a nearby house, when a sharp-eyed member of the party, passing in our

special bus (which we should have joined at Yerranderie) spotted John and, of course, stopped the bus - to find out what he was doing there, no doubt! The general rejoicing at the re-union with four "certain to have to spend Sunday night out's" was shortened when Gladys Martin neatly threw a spanner into the works by sweetly reminding us that "Bring 'em back Alive Meadows" had remained in Yerranderie in an effort to locate the four wanderers, who had been now located by such sheer co-incidence.

It looked like the party returning to the Metropolis without its leader. However, it didn't take a great deal of discreet hinting to coax the bus driver to return to Yerranderie and pick up the leader.

And after all that we reached Camden in time for 7.25 p.m. train - the one we intended to catch, anyway.

SWIMMING CARNIVAL - FEBRUARY 19 & 20

This used to be a very happy and popular annual event, about fifty to sixty being the usual number present. One year eighty turned up.

The first few Carnivals were held at Bushwalkers' basin and later we changed to Mosquito Camp on the Woronora, below Engadine. The building of the Woronora Dam made this place unsuitable, so we went to Sandy Bend on the Georges River, out from Minto.

The distance of races was regarded rather lightly; for example, the 50 yard championships we swam across the river, whether the real distance was 40, 50 or 60 yards but the races were well run and there were lots of enthusiastic competition. We have an experienced organiser of races in Bill Henley.

The list of races usually was:- 50 yards men's and women's championships and handicaps, rescue race, breast-stroke, underwater swim, diving, plunge, Mandelburg Cup, peanut scramble.

Certificates are given to all winners and the famous Mandelburg Cup is the trophy for the mixed relay handicap. The Cup was presented by Tom Herbert, a past president, the name being derived from Tom's system of carrying various bags and utensils swinging on the outside of his pack. The joint winners may each display the Cup on their mantelpieces for six months.

This year the carnival is to be held again at Sandy Bend, only about four miles easy walking from Minto Railway Station.

Come along and enjoy yourselves, dispel the hoodoo and make the carnival a bigger success than ever.

Tom Moppett

IT DOESN'T GO ON FOR EVER

Yes, it's come to an end. You good folk who subscribed to this Magazine last year are again reminded that your annual subscription expires with this issue - in other words, it's fizzled. Let us know by remitting promptly, if you want to renew. If sending by post, please use the form inserted in this magazine. And have you told us your new address? Make certain of your copy by subscribing. The first copy starts with the February issue. Be in it with the latest!!
 ANNUAL RATES: Posted 6/6d. Held in Clubroom 5/-.
 Subscribers joining during year will be charged pro rata until January, 1950.

BRIAN HARVEY
 Business Manager.

FEDERATION NOTES

by Brian Harvey

NATIONAL PARK: Proposed date of meeting of conservational bodies meeting has not yet been fixed. Any information concerning destruction of Park bushlands will be welcome.

BUSHWALKER ANNUAL is still in the hands of the printer but should be on sale this month.

BOUDDI NATURAL PARK Working Bee is set down for weekend of May 7/8.

BRISBANE BUSHWALKERS have been formed with present membership of 85 in a period of four months, showing live interest in the North. Club has intimated desire to affiliate. Jack Whitton, 21 Upfield Street, East Brisbane, should be contacted for Queensland walking information.

CARRYING OF RIFLES: The C.M.W. supported by the S.B.W. made an unsuccessful attempt to place a motion on the books condemning the carrying of rifles by members of any affiliated club. A motion was carried "that the Federation regards the use of rifles and other firearms in the bush, other than by bona fide country dwellers for the extermination of imported pests, with considerable alarm." I also view with alarm that delegates from affiliated clubs cannot read their constitutions whereby they gained affiliation with the Federation.

CODE OF BUSHWALKING ETHICS is being prepared by Federation President, Stan Cottier. Knowing Mr. Cottier's high regard for conservational objects and high ideals in bushwalkers' behaviour, I foreshadow some lively objections by some of the newer clubs, who have no ideals to maintain (except on paper).

ANNUAL FEDERATION REUNION: The River Canoe Club has recommended a spot on the Nepean, opposite Fitzgerald's Creek for the next reunion. The spot has good camping, swimming and canoeing and the Camp Committee would like to hear our Club's reaction to this suggestion.

BIRTHS MARRIAGES AND ENGAGEMENTS

Our hearty congratulations and best wishes to -

Joan and John Hunter, who are the proud parents of twins.

Betty and Jack Rose, who now have a son.

Norma Phillips and Russ Wilkins, who were married last week.

And to the two recently engaged couples - Kath Hardy and Jim Brown; Norma Barden and Eric Rowen.

Mounting a spur on the divide between the Clyde and Endrick we came upon an open expanse of flat sandstone. On the rock lay a number of large stones. Strange to find them there on top of the range; stranger still to find they were arranged in rows. Then the significance of the place dawned upon us. We were looking upon an aboriginal Bawra ground, perhaps undisturbed since the last initiation ceremony somewhere in the early part of last century. No, not quite undisturbed - the outlines of a kangaroo were too neat for the aboriginals - this symbol had been rearranged by whites. But the rest we were sure was genuine. The central pattern was a large oval, perhaps 20 yards long, divided by a partition running down its long axis. The situation was magnificent - high above the great gorges and sandstone walls of the upper Clyde - a place that could not be overlooked, so that the women, and members of other tribes, could not witness the secret and solemn rites of initiation. The scene was unchanged since that last sad corroboree. Only the people were missing.

Mr. E. Caines Phillips advises that canoeing map No.46 of the Fish and Macquarie Rivers (Tarana to Bathurst) is now available.

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO

Fifteen years ago a small yellow-backed booklet, not very well printed, appeared. Its title was "Bushwalking and Camping". The second edition, published in 1938, was a much more ambitious book and each succeeding issue has seen amendments or improvements incorporated. The fourth edition is now ready and, despite the rise in printing costs, the price is unchanged at 2/-. I wish once again publicly to thank those walkers who, by their contributions of articles and photographs, have helped to make this book the success it has been. I feel it has done much to establish a code of walking standards throughout Australia.

News on the Rucksack Front: Paddy is pleased to announce that he has secured supplies of special alloy steel, which will reduce the weight of a steel frame by eight ounces and yet give the same strength as a standard steel frame. Supplies will be available this month. No change in price.

Proofing Nylon Groundsheets: Paddy is pleased to report that proofed nylon groundsheets can be recoated at a small charge.

Ponchos - Special lightweight variety, weighing only 2 lbs. 2 ozs., still available; price £1/-/-.

PADDY PALLIN

CAMP GEAR FOR WALKERS

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SYDNEY