

# THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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## CONTENTS

	Page
Editorial - A Dying Continent?	1
At Our January Meeting	3
Social Notes for February	3
Some Activities of the Fauna Protection Panel, by Allen A. Strom	4
The Davey Trip, by Kevin Ardill	6
Notes on Era, by Kath McKay	15
Letter from the Wild Life Preservation Society	17
Federation Notes, by Brian G. Harvey	18
How to Get to the Swimming Carnival	19
The Mail Bag - Paddy's Advt.	20

## EDITORIAL

## A Dying Continent?

Many years ago, in the early twenties, and even before that, bushwalkers were talking and working for conservation. In the early days the emphasis was almost entirely on the reservation of primitive and recreational areas, but it was soon realised that reservation of land was only a start. It prevented ringbarking and timber-cutting, but not fires, rabbit infestation, shooting, and other destructive agencies. Long before conservation had become popular with publicists, before we had Departments of Conservation, and before the intelligentsia placed it at the forefront of their "problems," bushwalkers were gaining a practical, if not entirely scientific, appreciation of the wastage and destruction of our native flora and fauna.

It was not surprising, therefore, that amongst the hundred or so people who attended the Summer School of the Australian Institute of Political Science to discuss the provocative question of whether Australia was "A Dying Continent", there were 5 members of the S.B.W., one Adelaide Bushwalker and several non-attached walkers.

The word "conservation" which we have been using for so long to describe our ideals for the preservation of bushlands, now has a very wide connotation. It covers erosion control on agricultural and pastoral land, forestry and even mines and fisheries. But bushland conservation is still a neglected cause. Bushwalkers and a few nature lovers are still the only people who are working for the preservation of our natural flora and fauna. It is well that as bushwalkers we should confine ourselves to this aspect, because we have more opportunities than others of gaining first hand knowledge of the subject and may therefore express ourselves with some certainty and confidence.

Though the main emphasis of the Summer School was on the conservation of agricultural land and timber, the preservation of native flora and fauna for recreational and scientific reasons received quite a lot of attention. Some of the areas which we want protected for such purposes will, at the same time, serve other very important needs. Mr. Clayton's paper, for instance, described how conservation should start with catchment areas in the mountain ranges. These areas are very often scenic regions ideal for the creation of national parks. Mr. Lane-Poole proved that the reason why we are using our timber at a rate far beyond its rate of re-growth is not that forest areas are insufficient, but because bushfires are preventing regeneration and growth. Later on he advocated the creation of a large national park, away from the main tourist areas, where a tract of country could be kept as nature made it. In his paper entitled "Education for Survival" Mr. Crosby Morrison stressed the need for national parks in which "the public could see stretches of our country as it was before it was eroded and messed up." He urged the teaching of nature study by competent instructors in schools and universities. Mr. Allen Strom made a strong case for the inclusion of nature study in the curriculum of The Teachers' College.

Not everybody thought that erosion was primarily man-made. Mr. Boyer, for instance, defended the grazing practices of the Western pastoralists. His defence didn't look so convincing in the light of Mr. Crawford's statistical evidence that the Western Division now carries 7 million less sheep than it did at the end of last century.

There were lots of figures, plenty of expert opinions, and some very disturbing facts presented to the School. Did they prove that Australia is "A Dying Continent"? Probably not. As bushwalkers we don't need to form an opinion on this. We need only rely on the evidence of our senses to realise that our bushlands are being despoiled, and will continue to deteriorate, until they are reserved and protected.

### AT OUR JANUARY MEETING.

The January General Meeting vied with its predecessor for the doubtful virtue of the most tranquil on record. Barry Frecker was welcomed to membership, and the familiar routine of Minutes, correspondence and reports followed. The meeting just couldn't be provoked - there was no business arising.

The President reminded would be jugglers with the Constitution that their amendments should be to hand by the end of January if they were to be considered at the Annual General Meeting.

In stillly silence two valiant types, Roy Bruggy and Bruce McInnes succeeded to the uncherished duties of Room Stewards, and we reached the only item which stirred the meeting, selection of the site of the Annual Re-Union.

There were five successful nominations, Euroka Clearing, Moorabinda, Menangle, Era and Bare Creek (at the head of Middle Harbour). A further nomination - the loathsome, overcamped, dingy scrubland of Macquarie Fields - failed for want of a second. We almost proceeded to vote on the question. Indeed hands had been raised in support of Euroka, when Rene Browne requested a stay of proceedings to point out that the old members and those with families should be given some consideration. Was Euroka too inaccessible? What was the position concerning Bare Creek? After discussion the decision was shelved, and various members offered to investigate the possibilities and report to the next general meeting.

It was resolved that the Annual Report this year would be disguised with a cover, a respectable attire similar to the magazine cover, provided that the expenditure would not exceed £4.

Brian Harvey reminded all and sundry that the annual subscription for the magazine was due, and Rene Browne added that she held a billy lost by someone at the Kiddies' Treat. After which the meeting closed at 8.37 - about 3 minutes later than the December effort, leaving members to talk in large numbers instead of one at a time.

### SOCIAL NOTES FOR FEBRUARY

by Edna Stretton.

The slide night on 17th is your night. The response to a similar night on a previous programme was very disappointing, so we appeal to those members who have slides not to be bashful and let us see some of their good work. Even if three or four members brought twenty slides each, we would have sufficient entertainment.

There will be a dance on the 24th with the usual good music, good floor and good fun.

The Swimming Carnival will be held on the 18th and 19th. The camp site is a great improvement on Sandy Bend with plenty of wood and a good expanse of water. See page 19 for full details.

## SOME ACTIVITIES OF THE FAUNA PROTECTION PANEL.

By Allen A. Strom.

The Fauna Protection Act was pushed through both Houses of our State Parliament at the 11th hour of the last 1948 Session bringing with it the establishment of the Fauna Protection Panel, and, as Chairman of the Panel, the position of Chief Guardian of Fauna.

The Act was gazetted on July 1st, 1949, and the Panel met for the first time a few days later when the writer represented the S.B.W. and the Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia. Since then the Panel has met at regular monthly intervals and two sub-committees (on which you have representation) - one to deliberate on Koala Preservation, the other on Faunal Reserves - have had meetings.

The Panel is made up, largely, of persons representing various Governmental Departments interested in the Protection of Fauna - Education, Agriculture, Tourist, Conservation, Lands and Chief Secretary - but there are four seats for "outsiders" - one for a representative from the University and three for organisations interested in Nature Protection matters. I have been surprised at the sincere interest manifested by the government officials and their readiness to see eye to eye with our points of view. Whether this will continue as "the plot thickens", is of course another matter.

One should mention that Mr. E.J. Hallstrom is Deputy Chairman whilst Messrs. Kinghorn and Troughton, both of the Museum Staff and avid fighters for our Native Fauna, are members of the Panel. The Chairman and Chief Guardian of Fauna is Mr. F.J. Griffith, a member of the staff of the Chief Secretary's Department.

The first important matter that the Panel had to deliberate upon was this direction from the Premier's Department :-

"The Premier and Colonial Treasurer desires that the question of providing Government Assistance for the development of Koala Park as a medium for the preservation of Koalas and as a tourist attraction, be referred for consideration by the Protection Panel".

The special sub-committee investigated this matter and decided to recommend the use of a portion of Ku-ring-gai Chase (in the vicinity of Mt. Colah) in lieu of the site at Pennant Hills. It will be under direct control of the Chase Trust, but the Panel will be responsible for the safe keeping of the Bears. Of course, from the angle of Koala regeneration, I can hold no optimistic opinions about the new sanctuary. It will serve to keep the Bears from fires and predatory animals and supply them with a sure food source. The public will, maybe, want to have money expended upon the animals when they see their unique importance; this is being done at Taronga as well. But I was pleased to notice that other members of the Panel realised that this sanctuary (and others too of a similar kind) was no real answer to the problem of the Koala's imminent extinction. It was merely a reply to the direction from the Premier's Department. Subsequently these steps have been taken in the real path of

regeneration :-

1. A Koala Census: has been commenced in an effort to determine where stocks of Koalas are not located, the extent of the colonies and where Koalas once existed in numbers. Wireless broadcasts, the assistance of various government officials and the co-operation of the general public have been brought into this field.
2. Breeding Koalas: Mr. E.J. Hallstrom has established a private sanctuary for Koalas at Mona Vale where he has been carrying out experiments in breeding and food habits. Scientists from the University and the Museum will continue this work for the Panel and if stocks are increased, such increases will be taken to controlled reserves and natural sanctuaries particularly where the animals once existed and where fire and predatory animals can be reasonably controlled. The Forestry Commission will co-operate in raising suitable food trees.

It has been agreed amongst members of the Panel that our fundamental tasks are :-

1. The establishment of Faunal Reserves (called Wild Life Refuges in America) which should be properly managed and controlled.
2. Education of the Public generally, to the appreciation of our Native Fauna.

The latter question has not yet been broached and it will be a tremendous task, nobody denies. On the matter of Faunal Reserves we have had some discussions. These Reserves must be large and varied in their representation of ecological habitat. They must be well managed. Numerous organisations have been asked to make suggestions as to suitable areas such organisations including the Federation of Bush Walking Clubs. Members of the S.B.W. are asked to give consideration to the matter. Type areas could be :-

1. To represent Snowline and Rain Forest Habitats: The Barrington Gloucester Tops Area.
2. To represent Open Forest and Allied Features: The Morton Primitive Area extended south of the Shoalhaven through Yalwal and the Budawang to Clyde Mountain.

The matter of Faunal Reserves is very extensive and cannot be fully discussed in this brief treatment of the work of the Panel.

Numerous other matters have come up for discussion, with decisions made or pending whilst awaiting enquiries. These include :-

1. Open Seasons,
2. Fixing Royalties on Skins,
3. Review of Schedule of Unprotected Fauna (particularly the Wedge-tailed Eagle),
4. Services of a biologist,
5. Exportation of birds.

One other point in recent activities requires mention. This is the Interstate Conference on the preservation and protection of native fauna which was held at Hobart from 7th to 10th December, 1949. N.S.W. was represented by Messrs. Griffith and Hallstrom of the Fauna Panel and there were representatives from S.A., W.A., Vic., and Tas. An extensive agenda was covered; I can do little else but mention some of the eighteen matters discussed:-

1. Uniform policy regarding control of Marsupials in portions of States which adjoin.
2. Co-operation with International Organisations.
3. Re-afforestation Projects and their influences on Bird Life.
4. Co-operation of States with the C.S.I.R.O. Wildlife Section.
5. Relation of Fauna to Agriculture and assessment of actual damage.
6. Game Management.
7. Steps taken to conserve Native Fauna.
8. Sanctuaries and National Parkes.
9. Faunal Reserves.
10. The use of Traps and other means of taking animals.

A further meeting of the conference has been planned for Adelaide in 1951.

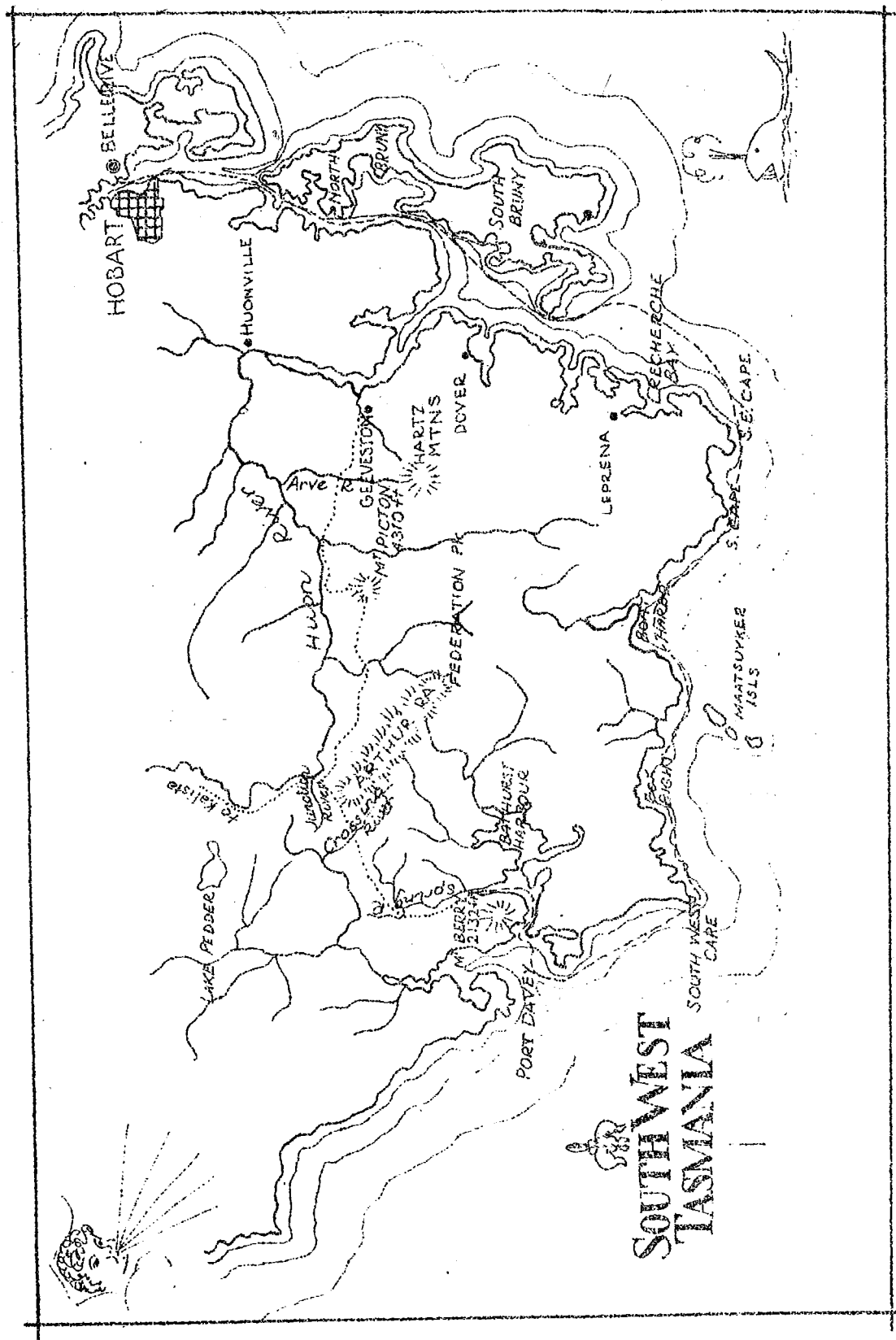
Finally in this very short review I must stress the importance of the task undertaken by the Chief Guardian of Fauna (Mr. F.J. Griffith) and to draw your attention to the weakness of the Act. No provision is made for an Annual Grant to the Panel from the Treasury. All finance I should imagine will have to come from special grants made for specific purposes or from the long list that already is made to the Chief Secretary's Department.

#### THE DAVEY TRIP.

By Kevin Ardill.

George Dibley, Roley Cotter and the various airways are responsible for a group of seven walkers parading in Hobart on a sunny Saturday afternoon in December. As well as the two mentioned the party consisted of Gladys Martin, Marie Walsh, Peg Bransdon, Len Fall and your raconteur. Most of you would have been surprised to see a fearsome object included in the group, to wit - a half axe.

I felt rather out of place with the axe but my friend John de Bavay of Hobart Walking Club had practically insisted on its inclusion, and, though I assured him by letter that I had a tomahawk lined up, he wrote rather a blunt reply warning me that a tomahawk "was only an abomination and can only exasperate, besides proving inadequate most of the time". Strong words, you'll agree, so, startled out of my usual coma, I sallied into town and, I would say, was one of the few shoppers looking for an axe in the Yuletide period.



The axe explained, we still find our group in Hobart, but by this time all ferried across the Derwent to Bellerive. There we are introduced to Mr. Dale, his son, Sid, and a very neat fishing boat, the "Derwent Hunter," which we hoped would take us to Port Davey, the starting point of our walk. For the benefit of those who, like myself, have vague notions of the whereabouts of Pt. Davey, I'll give you a rough idea of its location. Davey is situated a little to the west of the southernmost part of Tasmania and is the most accessible seaboard entrance to the area known to walkers as the "south west". The only residents are a family named King who operate a tin mine. Apart from periodical visits by fishing boats and mad walkers, the area is virtually deserted. Our object was to spend some time at Port Davey and then walk some sixty odd miles in a rough semi-circle to Kalista, the rail head of a line into Hobart.

Before describing the walk, I'd better get the party down to the starting point, so once more back to Hobart where we had changed clothes and were pacing the deck of the "Derwent Hunter" like born sailors and fishermen. I suppose sailors could, at a stretch of imagination, be equipped with hob-nailed boots. We left the safety of the wharf at 6.30 p.m. and had our first meal at sea. For some it was the last, but that's half the fun to us seafaring folk, and, as I fancy Roley is going to describe the voyage, we'd better skip through to Davey with a fleeting remark that some were good sailors, some indifferent and some were, well, most indifferent.

We arrived at Long Bay, in Pt. Davey, and had landed with food supplies by 1 p.m. next day. It was drizzling rain and on Mr. Dale's suggestion we made camp alongside a creek. Please don't imagine a pleasant camp site, but we had wood and water and, if the selection was rather wet and boggy, on a slope and a likely home for leeches, at least it afforded us some protection from the wind. We had an early tea and George and I had a look around for a better camp spot. We saw a couple of places but those of you who know Roley will not be surprised that he was "happy" where he was and "had no intention of moving". (N.B.) Don't wonder that we were in our sleeping bags at 6 p.m. Most of us had had little sleep the previous night and though the rain had ceased we were happy to turn in. A couple of leeches intruded on our privacy and after removing one from my forehead I went to sleep.

Next morning promised a fine day. We had the respective eating parties' food in cases, and taking advantage of the weather, we opened our case and proceeded to check and divide the food. Gladys, Len and myself were sharing nose bags and the division of food went smoothly until that part of our list that read - seven onions. The obliging grocer in Hobart who packed our order did a great job, but when he packed seven POUNDS of the smell y fruit, did he wonder what sort of walkers he was catering for? In any case we got more than our moneys worth by looking at Gladys' face while she inspected the bag.

Later we walked around to the next creek where we saw the grave of Critchley Parker, with a brief inscription to the effect that he



died on a walking trip in 1942. I am getting sidetracked on the relating of this trip but so many things intruded that it's darn hard to write a decent record of it. I'd better tell you what Mr. Dale told us of Parker. He was staying at the King's place further up the Port and on the other side of Long Bay. After doing some trips around Davey he decided he would like to do the walk to Kalista. Mr. King boated him across to where the track commences and supplied him with gear. Several months later Mr. Dale came ashore at Long Bay and found the remains of Parker in a sleeping bag by the creek. His diary told the story. He journeyed as far as the Crossing River. After rain the river was up and he sat there for five days unable to cross. Then he decided to return to Long Bay, having a prearranged plan to light a signal fire and the King's would bring the boat across for his return. You've probably had it happen to you. Parker left his match box open, struck a match and up went the lot in flames. No signal fire, no help. A river to the north that was impassable for him; Parker ate what food he had and then lay in his sleeping bag where Dale found him some time later. While we were thinking of Parker's misfortune the "Derwent Hunter" was observed returning down the bay from the direction of King's. Mr. Dale came close inshore, queried as to our well being, posed with boat for George's camera and then around the bend went the "Derwent Hunter" - and comparative safety.

George and Marie were first to return for lunch and by the time we returned George had on exhibit a decent specimen of the Tassie tiger snake. Marie had first located the snake half way into George's tent and a typical feminine squeal presaged the finis of the intruder. That tiger snake should have been bottled and placed in a revered spot in the clubroom. Suggested title - 'The only thing that moved Cotter'. Before the echoes of Marie's squeal had died away, Cotter plus tent was on a ridge about sixty yards away. George was about two snake-lengths behind and when Gladys "thought" she saw another snake, there were three tents on the ridge. Comfortably settled on a spot where the only thing that could creep on us would be a gale, we decided to climb Mt. McKenzie, a relatively small ascent which we completed in about an hour. The views of the waterways and surrounding mountains were magnificent, and at this stage I warn you that you will be deluged with superlatives, a number of "magnificent's," "oddlies of beautifuls," a couple of "glorieties" and at least one "colossal." The clumb on to Mt. Misery and Mt. Berry looked easy from where we were, but time was against us, so we returned to camp, had a swim, tea, and after waiting for a sunset that didn't appear we went to bed.

Rain spattering on the tent heralded the dawn but by 6 a.m. the sun was shining and we proceeded north across sloppy button grass to a likely ridge for the ascent of Mt. Berry. Though steep in parts the climbing was easy and we arrived just below the summit in time for lunch before the final climb. I had noticed large lumps of a jellylike substance scattered about and when Roley shot to his feet half-way through the meal I wasn't surprised to see a jellied backside to his pants. As Peggy hastened to remove the mess we were indiscreet enough to laugh, which moved Roley to retort that "it may

( 10 )  
be funny to you but its damn uncomfortable for me". Clouds were now drifting across the peak, but we continued the clumb. I would like to record that we reached the peak but about 20 yards from the top we came across an amazing series of caves and crevices, and as cloud was now obscuring the view below we didn't persevere to the ultimate peak. I could nearly make you cry with the story of our descent. The wind had increased and the mixture of hail and rain beat us with gale force and several times we almost wandered off the ridge. Apart from being wet to the bottom of our raincoats, we returned without further incident to the camp and, to my amazement, the tents were still standing. For the first time the axe was used and we built some sort of a breakwind to shield our tents. The wind was terrific but we managed a fire in a hollow by the creek and a hot meal practically revived the party.

Rain and wind persisted through the night and by some miracle the tents withstood the blasts. Being so far south the light comes early and at 5 a.m., with the day well advanced, we crawled from our bags. With the aid of the axe we promoted the breakfast fire and the company was beginning to regard the implement with a more favourable eye. After breakfast, surplus food was made as weatherproof as possible, and after attaching a "help yourself" notice to it we were on our way up the valley. There is no track but we kept a reasonably straight course parallel to the shores of Long Bay. After more or less successfully traversing several pockets of bauera we followed a ridge to the end of Long Bay. There we found first signs of previous walkers, a log across a creek.

The track commenced at this point and one pocket of bauera encountered left no doubt that a previous walker's advice, to go round such pockets, was very sound. Such pockets are terribly thick patches of scrub laced with vines and cutting grass, at least head high. It's tougher going than the Colo. We lunched about noon but rain drove us on our way soon afterwards. We lost the faint track several times but always managed to recover it. The rain cleared but numerous creek crossings denied us the pleasure of dry feet. The evening camp was a vast improvement on Long Bay and there was even bracken fern to cushion the couch.

The promise of a sunny day had the photographers astir early and thoughts of porridge had the same effect on the carriers of the axe. However, our spirits, and lower extremities, were dampened with more rain accompanied by the southerly wind. Two of the party had equipped themselves with New Zealand parkas, a hip length waterproof garment with separate cover for pack, and the rest of us had garments on similar lines. Those intending to do trips in the area would be well advised to follow suit as ground sheets would have been a hindrance rather than a help. We carried them for camping purposes but the howling winds we encountered on this trip made them useless as rainproof covering. On the subject of clothing, we all wore long pants through the trip, and as at least two trousers went on the scrap heap at the end of the trip, you can imagine how our legs would have fared in shorts.

The track was most difficult to follow, and after losing it for some time, George found it just in time to lead us from the plateau up through a range of mountains. Up and up we went with views obscured by what George described as "mist". Someone suggested that whatever it was, it wouldn't be missed. The rest of the day was rotten. No apologies for the description, and leaving the mountains we slopped across button grass plains once more. A camp spot looked pretty hopeless but Len tried a look at a clump of trees and happily found a small elevated spot in the lee of the trees. That evening we slept on Tassie style beds, three or four long poles crisscrossed with sticks and then spread with gum leaves. With the tent pitched on top we spent a most comfortable night with the one fear that a change of wind might carry tent and bed into the surrounding ponds. Making of such beds is tolerated in these regions as the wetness promotes leaf growth very rapidly and conservation of one's health is essential.

The track continued through button grass next morning but the weather was clearing and the mountains on all sides began to impress us. By the time we approached the Crossing River the day was fine and the scenery kept improving at every step. Arrival at the Crossing River gave us another shock. It really was a river and after the rain was running a banker. A search upstream failed to show us where we were advised we could "jump across" so we decided it was swim or sit. Though running fast we decided to cross at a bend and I went over first with a cord. With this cord and a similar length in the hands of the blokes on the other side we ferried our packs over wrapped in groundsheets, and then the human baggage wrapped in underwear.

Crossing the Crossing River took us three hours and we had lunch on the other side. Remembrance of Parker sitting at this barrier for five days brought a great feeling of sympathy to us all and an understanding of his predicament.

The afternoon walk was a memorable one. Magnificent mountains on all sides and the sun shining. I consider the mountains in this area far superior to those in the whole of the Cradle Mount - Lake St. Clair reserve. Making camp was a pleasant affair and this one day of views made the previous day's discomfort well worth while.

After tea the sky became cloudy and shortly after crawling off to bed the wind began to rise. A spot of tent pegging was indicated so we crawled out of bed, cut some stakes and did the job. George and Roley had similar tasks but George applied just that extra pressure on the guy ropes and down fell the tent on top of Marie. Someone was indecent enough to laugh.

It rained all night. It blew all night. A hot breakfast made the hearts a littler lighter but the weather gave no signs of improvement. We moved off, and, climbing a series of low ridges, soon lost sight of the mountains that had such appeal on the previous day. Rain combined with the unfriendly southerly made for slow going and a further dampening experience was in store for us. I happened

to be in front when the track entered a pocket of scrub, and next thing I was waist deep in water. There was little indication of this hidden creek, but probing with a stick showed it about 3 feet deep and the same distance across. The axe was produced and a couple of large bushes were placed across the gap, but when attempting a crossing I dunked myself again, this time being hauled out by Len, whose only thought, I fear, was to save our food being soaked.

A further attempt was made upstream where a sapling was felled across the creek. I crossed, then Len, with Roley following closely. I should say Roley attempted to follow, because after much arm waving and balancing, he very gracefully duck dived. I think George had the haulage contract and, accompanied by yards of advice and lots of splashing, the old bloke was landed. The rest of the party crossed with dry shirts and we plodded on a little more cautiously. The next creek had a log crossing and, safely across, we continued over button grass to have our first look at the Junction River. One look was sufficient. This was one river we couldn't swim, so a conference of wet walkers decided to follow the Craycroft Track. This track led to Geeveston and Huonville and was longer than the Kalista track, but we hoped we could progress as far as the Craycroft River in the wet conditions.

The crossing of two unmapped creeks gave us an idea of the job ahead of us. The rain was still pouring down and when we reached the first creek on the map our worst fear were realised. In dry conditions it would be an easy jump but now there was an expanse of water about 60 yards wide. We all had a bit of a scatter around and I went upstream to have a look. The water here was only knee deep and I paddled quite a fair distance before I found the main channel. After climbing out of seven feet of water I rejoined the party for lunch in a semi sheltered clump of trees.

After lunching the male team all did a little wading and after lengthy search, found a place where we hoped to cross. When we left dry ground we had to plough through head high scrub with water to our knees. After about 30 yards of this we edged across a tree that had fallen over the main channel then did another 30 yards wading to terra firma. I think we were all relieved to cross safely as a slip into the racing channel could have caused trouble.

In sleet and howling wind we headed for the next creek. The track was lost and with a snow pole every mile we decided not to persevere with the search. When we arrived on a ridge overlooking the creek it was getting late, so we decided to camp. There was some protection from the wind and we went to sleep with the howl of the wind as slumber music.

Awakening with the thought of a possible swimming programme ahead of us didn't make me happy. Showers were still driving down from the Arthur Range but after breakfast we decided to look for the track. Len and I went south and after about a mile we fluked a sight of the only snow pole and followed the track down to the creek. We returned to camp and when we arrived back at the creek

a few blows with the axe put a satisfactory bridge over the stream.

The weather was improving, the wind now blowing at only 70 m.p.h. so we set sail for the next creek. The track met the creek down close to its junction with the Huon River and we had lunch within view of the torrent. A couple of dead saplings were dropped across the creek and one more obstacle was behind us. At this stage, we felt ready to tackle anything. We walked across button grass plains with the Arthur Range towering above us. This range has to be seen to be appreciated and though the cameras were busy I feel that they would be unable to do justice to this magnificent range of mountains. I heard Gladys murmuring glories by the dozen and I agreed. The skyline is the most rugged and impressive I have seen, and, from a ridge, our first view of Federation Peak added lustre to the scene. The sun was shining as we dropped down the other side of the ridge, but losing sight of the Arthur's was compensated somewhat by a fine view of Mt. Picton, with the Craycroft River in the foreground.

Our first close-up of the river came late that afternoon. One look was sufficient for that day. Sixty yards wide and dark and deep it was a different proposition to the creeks. We made camp in a sheltered spot and went to sleep on the problem. In the morning the river seemed to be dropping a little. Len and I went downstream, Roley and George upstream, leaving the ladies to report on the rate of fall. George returned with news of a possible crossing place, so upstream we bashed through bracken and scrub. The place had possibilities. Several gigantic trees lay practically across the river and on the other side was a tree that should bridge the gap if the axe was applied. I was all set to swim over with the axe but the courage ebbed when I considered the force of the current and probability of snags. I may have showed good judgement because when we felled a tree further upstream the current whirled it away as if it was a matchstick. We made the afternoon a rest day with clothes washing the main occupation.

The river was falling at the rate of two inches an hour and in the morning we found it was down about two feet. Down came a fair sized tree. Four strong men took a firm grip but the tree refused to move. With a cord we measured the exact distance to be bridged and the tree was cut accordingly. Four strong men on the heavy end, three strong girls on the lighter end, pulled, pushed and levered. The log was manouvered almost into position, balanced for a glorious moment of uncertainty, slipped from our grasp into the river and sank like a stone. We went upstream for another try. Need I say that we chopped another tree. This time our efforts were successful and when the first walker placed his foot on the other side of the river a cheer went up that wouldn't have disgraced a Rugby League match of the day.

Instead of going downstream to look for the track we decided to shoot straight up to a bare looking hill above us. A horrible experience of bawera and cutting grass. Means of progress - face flat on the scrub, regain the feet and walk the distance flattened. Ditto repeato. The going was steep and when we reached the open

141

ground I felt I had done a half day's walk in 60 yards .

We found the track, then followed it up a succession of ridges, with many backwards glances at Federation Peak and the Arthur Range. Lunch was a welcome break, with panoramic views to the south and west. I think we climbed over 4,000 feet that afternoon and camped at the foot of Mt. Picton, looking rugged and majestic in the late afternoon sun.

The camp spot was wet, but with built up beds we were comfortable. At least, everyone else was, but when Len built the bed he somehow didn't put enough packing on my side. After sliding out of the tent several times I was forced to complain. An elbow applied to the ribs of tentmates is recommended as certain to attract attention but the lack of sympathy left much to be desired. Rearrangement of packs downhill was an improvement and I at last slept.

Though mist and low cloud shrouded the camp we were awake early and moved off with the promise of a fine day. Skirting around the foot of Mt. Picton, still covered in cloud, we came to North Lake. On the northern side of the lake we found evidence of the Hobart Walking Club. The track was blazed and marked with expired car number plates, some painted red and yellow, and with pieces of rag and yellow chalk marks. We blessed every one of them. Those of you who like walking off the beaten track would be ecstatic on this section without the markers. We were now heading down towards the Huon River, losing all the height we had laboured to obtain the previous day. We went down through a mile of rain forest, best described by someone who likened it to a blazed obstacle race. A ticklish climb down 60 feet of what the map described as a "scarp" presaged the end of the forest and then we were following a track marked with snow poles which soon brought us to the Huon River and Blake's Opening.

The Forestry Commission has cut a six foot track through to this point and the Picton River and Picton Hut were about three hours walk ahead. Roley, George, Marie and Peg decided to camp by the Huon, but as our food bags were very light Gladys, Len and myself headed for the hut. The track was a lolly, and we made good time to the Picton River, crossed over the fine new suspension bridge and walked straight into an advance party of Melbourne Uni students on the way to attempt to climb Federation Peak. Wishing them luck we pushed on to Picton Hut arriving there about 7 p.m. Fresh potatoes in the hut were welcome and, after tea, buckets of hot water and a big dish made the end of a perfect day.

Before leaving next morning we padded our feet with elasto plast. Another tip from John de Bavay, and it proved one of the best. After following the track over Bog Hill, aptly named, we hit a jeep track which led us to a sawdust dump where exactly 5.1 miles of hard road led to Geveston. We had an hour and a half before the bus left for Hobart. This was where the elasto plast proved its worth and with the dogs barking a chorus we climbed on the bus with a minute to spare. There was no brass band to welcome us back to Hobart, but a

change of clean clothes and a beckoning cafe was a satisfactory substitute. The rest of the party? They arrived in Hobart later in the evening, being fortunate enough to get a lift from a utility truck returning from taking stores to the University climbers.

Well, that's the trip. The editor demanded a report and it cost me miles of pad paper, chewed pencils, and more than one headache. I think we would be unanimous in saying that an axe is essential on this trip, a wall tent with good proofing is desirable, and a waterproof garment with sleeves and a separate cover for the pack is advisable. Oh, and last but not least, if going down Davey way, put in an order for fine weather and leave the swimming till you get back home.

(Two long articles were received for this month's Magazine, both divided into two parts, one part for each of two issues. As both were descriptions of difficult trips in new country we decided to publish them in full, but to put one whole article in this Magazine and the other in the next. Don't miss next month's thrilling full length description by Ron. Knightley of a New Zealand climb. - Ed.)

#### NOTES ON ERA.

By Kath. McKay.

Well, we've done it again: Christmas has come round, New Year has come round, and now we're coming round, after the intoxication of freedom, fresh air and sunshine in our annual visit to Era.

And how green was our valley this summer, with extra springs in the creek, in the bracken-bedding and in the cows and horses which leapt nimbly between our tents, snatching the food-bags of the unwary. (The leeches also, be it whispered, were springing about more than usual.)

The barbed wire enclosure takes away some of the charm from the view towards the sandhills, but will be suffered gladly by all who note the growth of young trees within it. It will not be the S.B.W.'s fault if a tropical forest does not arise there shortly, what with all the mango and pawpaw seeds that were planted; not to mention slips of oleander, jacaranda and pomum citreum. (The answer is a lemon.)

A party of non-walkers plodded perspiring beside the barbed wire fence, and one was heard to remark, as they crawled laboriously beneath it, crossed the enclosure and wriggled out the other side: "Look, Fred - somebody's bought this block and they've fenced it in".

Musing upon the virtues of this our Era, we began to wonder how it got its name. The editor may at this point interpolate any information he has on the subject, while we took a look at the dictionary.

"Era, it says (among other things) is an important date. How right it is - a date we have kept for some years now, looking forward to it from January to December. But the dictionary goes on - "Era is from a late Latin word, aera, meaning a number, originally 'counters', pieces of copper used in counting, aera being the neuter plural of aes, aeris - copper.

Now, the word copper in conjunction with Era calls to mind only one thing - Our Nudists. Time was when coppers crawled about the scrub in a shockingly overdressed state - long pants, flannel shorts (we think) ties (possibly) with a sugar bag of spare parts thrown over the shoulder, and field glasses with which to spot the erring mortals who boasted no covering save their own skin.

These days are past, and this year one solitary nudist remained to carry the torch of his faith. We tripped over him here and there, but he persevered, and we feel he deserves a little ditty, (what worse punishment?) with which, dear reader, we close.

A nudist down at Era  
Reclined upon a dune,  
He crouched beneath his eyeshade  
On a rainy afternoon,  
Or peered through darkened glasses,  
At the fierce light of the moon.

He skipped from rock to sandhill  
With bath towel waving free;  
He skirmished round the bushes  
To dodge our company.  
- What with all the interruptions  
He was pale as pale could be.

Some said: "He's just a moron",  
Some - "He should be run in:  
Has no one ever told him  
That nudity's a sin?"  
O lordy, what a pothor  
About a bit of skin!

#### JUST TO REMIND

annual subscribers who have not paid this year's sub. that their subscription expired with January issue. It is 6/6 to have the magazine posted, or 5/- to have it reserved and held for you in the club room.



17.

"Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia,  
"Mara",  
Coopernook Avenue,  
Gymea Bay, N.S.W.

January 25th, 1950.

"The Editor,  
"The Sydney Bushwalker",  
55 Kirribilli Avenue,  
MILSON'S POINT.

Dear Sir,

My Society is very grateful for the publicity that you have given to our 30th Report through the Editorial of "The Sydney Bushwalker". I have to express our thanks and to intimate that I would be pleased to supply copies of the report and to contact interested persons if enquiries are made to the above address.

It is important however, following upon your comments, that I should be permitted to enlarge upon the Society's policy of Commonwealth control in "Conservation and Allied Affairs". Conservation is a national matter and demands responsibility on the part of the National Parliament. It seems doubtful that any governmental body (or any body for that matter) will accept responsibility and substantiate large sums of money (nothing less is needed) without some measure of control or co-ordination. That Interstate Conferences are difficult to organise, no one doubts - but then anything concerning Conservation is difficult to organise; and you should know that an Interstate Conference on matters affecting Faunal Preservation has just concluded at Hobart, Tasmania. Let us resist this desire to be parochial; bushwalkers tend to feel justified when their favourite "stamping ground" is set aside for "recreation purposes"; but there are scientific and economic angles as well as the recreational and cultural aspects. Might I remind your readers that our Report says: "our major biological problems are of national and at times international importance..... four States control the conservation of the Koala and the Platypus.....need for a national policy of Fire Control and Erosion in adjoining States and for biological surveys concerning the provision of additional Sanctuaries or National Parks as in the case of the Kosciusko State Park, in which two adjoining States are interested"?

Perhaps your readers will be led to believe that this Society suggests a remote central control from an impregnable Canberra; but there is no such suggestion. Local demands must have local attention. Even with State control we still have extreme differences of treatment necessary - what of Western N.S.W. and the eastern coastline? Yet nobody would suggest that local Councils or shires are the adequate authority! We should be wary of the rather futile belief "that practical conservation must depend upon voluntary efforts," particularly if it means plant-

ing trees with gusto , but little scientific understanding of the real problems of conservation. May I be permitted to ask your readers to defer acceptance of the assertion that "Conservation is, and will remain, a matter of predominantly local interest" until they have thought deeply on the matter, considered the value of a Land Utilisation Survey (on a National footing), the tremendous scope of land misuse in adjoining States such as N.S.W., S.A. and Queensland, read for themselves that section of the report which deals with Commonwealth Control, and perhaps also considered the success of F.V.A. only because it was a National Scheme? Anyhow, isn't the Snowy Scheme national?

All this need not (and indeed, does not, as your comments show) stay us from action now; and what is more, on matters that affect all the States of the Commonwealth. Once again I think the real solution to your readers' knowledge of our efforts will be as you yourself recommend - "a reading of the Society's Journal as a means of learning the complete story."

Yours sincerely,

Allen A. Strom  
HONORARY SECRETARY

(We have not yet seen any instances quoted of interstate conservation matters which could not be co-ordinated by agreement between interested states. But our main concern is that the Wild Life Preservation Society will waste its limited though effective resources in striving for an almost unattainable objective of doubtful benefit - Ed.)

#### FEDERATION NOTES

by Brian G. Harvey

A CODE OF ETHICS is now being published and will be sent to every member of every club. A modified version will be printed for general distribution amongst the bushwalking public, which step should make the bush a better place for all concerned.

AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION to tighten up the investigation of new applicant clubs was carried without dissent, the River Canoe Club abstaining from voting. The Canoe Club thought it was unnecessary, that the Federation had nothing to offer a new bushwalking club, that affiliation should be made easy and that the club should be "educated" after admission. They objected to ban on tree-cutting and shooting in the "Code of Ethics" because they wanted to be free to chop out offending trees in navigable rivers and take pot shots at rabbits ad lib.

SEARCH AND RESCUE reported that a young lady had been left by a party to fend for herself in the National Park, Tasmania, such information being obtained from the Pelion Hut log-book. Investigation of allegation is in hand.

A VICTORIAN FEDERATION exists, we were informed, but to date there had been no liaison. Letters addressed to Victorian Walking Clubs suggesting interstate co-operation had not been replied to.

THE CONSERVATION BUREAU announced the inclusion of Allen Strom on the Bureau. The Bushman's Handbook had been considered and the main conclusion was that "balancing the improbable need of survival knowledge against the destruction necessary to its acquisition, the Conservation Bureau does not recommend study of the Bushman's Handbook to bushwalkers."

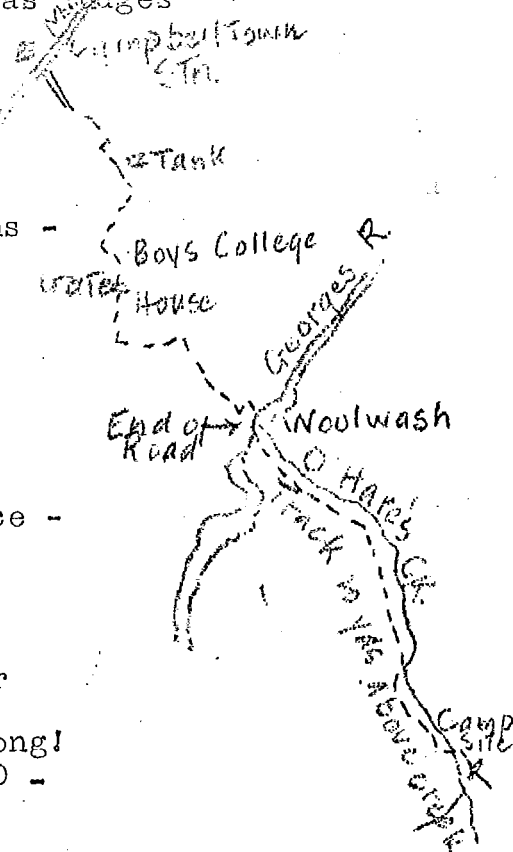
### HOW TO GET TO THE SWIMMING CARNIVAL

As mentioned in the Social Notes the Swimming Carnival will be held at O'Hare's Creek on Feb 18-19. The organisers urge you to forget the idea that you have to be a champion to compete, because there will be events to suit everybody, including novelty events you can win as long as you can just keep your head above water, and non-swimmers are welcome to act as judges etc.

Trains depart from Central on Saturday at 10.30 and 11.30 a.m. and at 12.28, 1.29, 3.30, 4.30 and 5 p.m. Trains leave Campbelltown on Sunday at 2.12, 3.14, 4.14, 4.44, 5.14 and 6.15. A bus meets some trains - fare 1/-. Taxis are 4/- for the trip.

### JOIN THE HAPPY THROG

of annual subscribers to this magazine who cheerfully pay for their copy in advance - and save a shilling into the bargain! If you want your magazine posted to your home address, just fill in the form with this copy and send it together with 6/- to the Business Manager, or a copy can be held for you in the club room for the reduced sum of 4/6. Be in it - 114 others can't be wrong! (These amounts will cover issues March 1950 - Jan. 1951.)



### Nature Study in America:

Q. How can you tell the age of a snake? Barbara Loebenstein, 1575 Harding, Detroit.

A. It is extremely difficult to tell the age of a snake unless you know exactly when it was born - Detroit News.

THE MAIL BAG

As may be imagined, Paddy's mail bag produces letters from many of the odd corners of Australia. It produces some curious requests and quite a few pats on the back. Here is an extract from a letter received from Warwick, Queensland, which has a particularly Australian flavour.

"I have been using your gear for some years with complete satisfaction. You may be interested in this story of a tour to the Diamantina country in the far west of Queensland last winter. In this country a "swag" is "de rigueur" for every traveller. I duly packed mine - a down sleeping bag, japara groundsheet and one man tent. The last I used like the westerners use their swag-cover, half laid out over the groundsheet and the other half thrown over the top. The locals rocked with untrained mirth when I produced my swag - a package a little larger than a gallon paint tin. However, I slept as well and as warmly as they in their huge ones."

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