

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER.

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to the Sydney
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EDITORIAL.

We Have Been Warned.

At the date of writing (August 18th) news reports contain ugly stories of bush-fires ranging along 700 miles of the Queensland coast between Brisbane and Townsville. Here is our warning. The last considerable rainfall in the Sydney area was at the beginning of May, and since that time drought conditions have existed.

Admittedly there are places in the Sydney and Blue Mountains area which were so severely burned out two years ago that it is unlikely they would take fire at present: there are many other places where the growth is thick, dry as tinder, and fit to blaze like a torch.

Unless there is heavy rain during the next month, followed by other useful falls, this is liable to prove as terrible a summer as 1951/2, when the State suffered bush fire damage to a cost of £5-million, not to mention the incalculable harm done to forest and catchment, the destruction of native plants and animals.

Although winter has barely left us, it is up to us, if we really mean what we say about bush preservation, to exercise the utmost care in the use of fire: to extinguish fires left burning through carelessness of others: to arrest any small fires we encounter on walks: and to preach to others that this could be another blow-up year.

The cure and solution for bush fires is not in our hands, but we can accomplish something if we are duly warned and ready.

AT THE AUGUST GENERAL MEETING.

At the beginning of the Meeting the attendance of about 30 was the smallest roll-up for some months, but even during the brief duration of the business, numbers increased to more than 45. Among the arrivals was Geoff Wagg, our only new member to be welcomed, who was first classified as "wagging it" by the anonymous voice from the audience. After hearing the minutes, Secretary Colin Putt reported on the deliberations of the Screen Sub-committee. It appeared that a beaded screen about five feet square would cost £28, and if kept in rolled condition may deteriorate. A matt white screen would give almost equal reflection, a wider angle of satisfactory reproduction, and the materials could be purchased for 30/-. The work of making it up would be done by Messrs. McGregor and Putt. The present projector (without cooling device) was considered satisfactory. After Dormie had contributed the comment that the sub-committee had been "baffled by Mr. McGregor's science", and that the risk of theft from Ingersoll Hall was reduced with a large screen, the report was adopted. Bill Cosgrove reported on some suitable screen material. It was 50" wide. Some doubts were expressed whether we'd ever need so much material, and again the voice from the ranks "Use it for a tablecloth!"

Amongst the points raised in the report was the fact that our Commonwealth bonds of face value £200 would bring only £179 on the present market. This prompted the enquiry when the bonds matured. Said the Treasurer briskly "1963". Changing his topic, Kevin Ardill then proposed a vote of thanks to the sub-committee and to the workers who would produce the new screen.

We left Correspondence and Treasurer's Report in our wake, and had run through Federation Report before the President rose to summarise the activity of the Conservation Secretary prior to taking holidays. He had been a busy man, with letters to the Lands Department on Era, a batch of letters on timber cutting inside the boundaries of the Mark Morton Reserve, and a comment on despoliation of Wollemi Creek which was published in the "Herald". Also there was a report on a meeting with the Secretary of the Scouting Movement, where the question of the window display in the Scout Shop had been discussed, in company with other conservation matters. The suggestion was made

E I G H T - H O U R W E E K E N D

I S H E R E A G A I N ! ! ! ! !

COMPLETE YOUR FOODLIST AT . . .

" T H E S A N I T A R I U M S H O P "

DRIED APRICOTS APPLE RINGS PEACHES PEARS

WHEATFLAKE - RYVITA - VITAWHEAT BISCUITS

STONELESS DATES RAISINS SULTANAS ALMONDS

WHOLEMEAL BREAD FRUIT NOUGAT PRUNES

SHELLED PEANUTS APRICOT ROLLS

ALL BRANDS QUICKLY-MADE BREAKFAST FOODS

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL - SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DRIED FIGS

T H E S A N I T A R I U M H E A L T H F O O D S H O P

1 3 H U N T E R S T R E E T , S Y D N E Y

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that walkers could cultivate a better appreciation of bush preservation amongst scouting parties by talking over such matters in a friendly fashion at chance meetings in the bush. The Scouting Secretary had suggested that ability to make snares, bush beds and the like had saved lives in war time, to which Tom Moppett had replied that there was no reason why one stock of suitable materials should not be used again and again. If new timber was cut each time the ultimate result could be "no bush".

In General Business we had only two items: notice of motion of the change to Thursday night meetings - the matter to be thrashed out at the September meeting: and Brian Harvey's plea for support for magazine advertisers.

By 8.38 the whole of the night's business was done, and another of the "short" meetings ended.

At the end of the last scrub-push along the Woodford Ridge, the party were very tired and droopy upon arrival at Woodford Station. The leader had a happy thought that we should go by bus to Lawson to seek a "chemist" to get some "linament" for our scratches, and catch the fast train, which does not stop at Woodford, from there. The "chemist" lived at the "Blue Mountain Inn" so you can guess what the "linament" consisted of. After an hour's moderate application, the party had quite transformed and was as bright as if just setting out into the Blue Labyrinth.

MONUNDILLA.

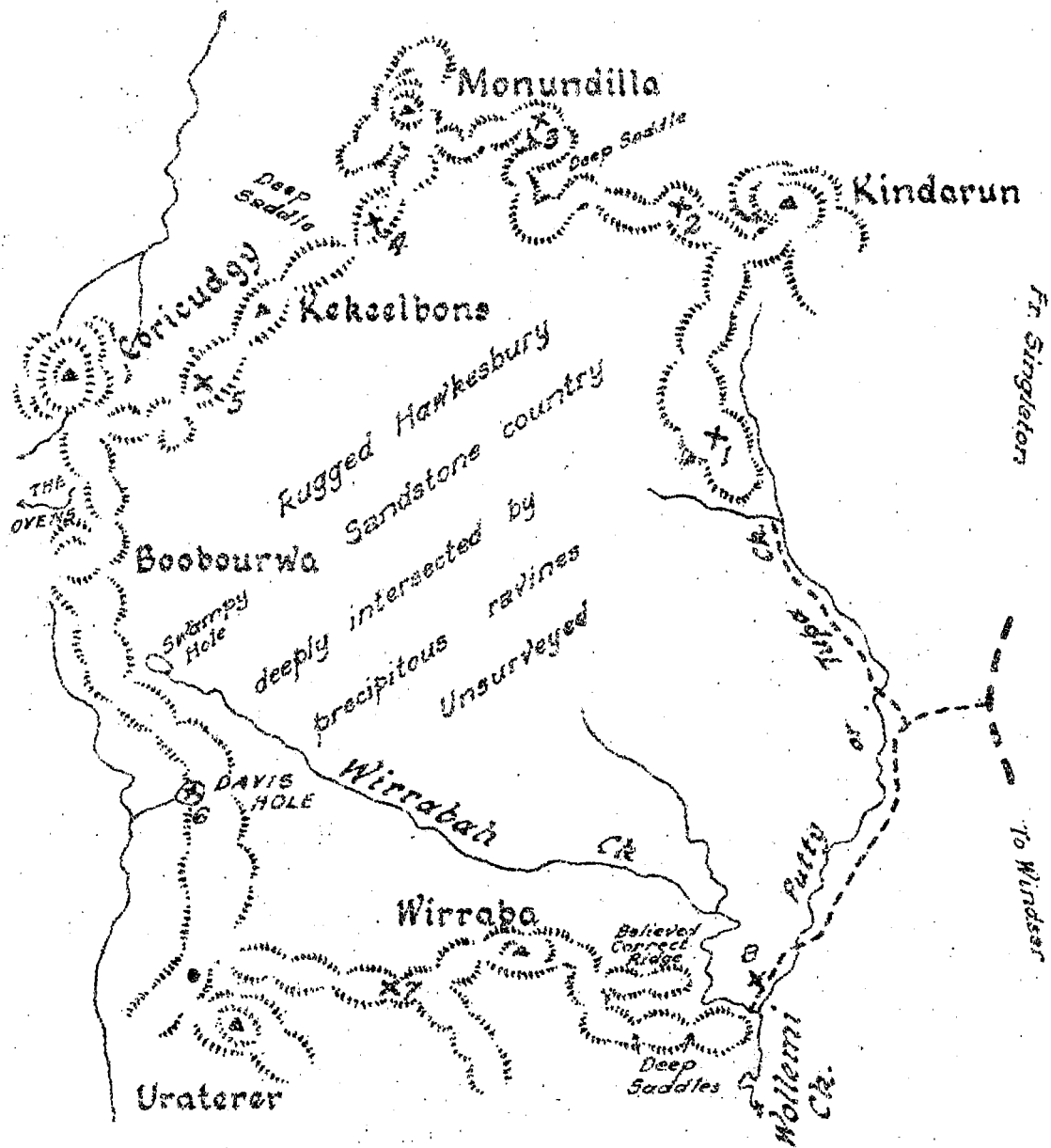
By Alex Colley.

Should any hikers ever become lost in the Northern Blue Mountains, the journalists would at last be right when they described the terrain as "rugged mountain country, the roughest country in the State - where a single slip would mean a fall of 200 feet" (it's always 200'), and used the rest of their stock of "lost hiker" phrases, which, I suspect, are kept permanently set up in type in a special pigeon hole in newspaper offices. But this unhappy conjunction of fact and description is unlikely ever to occur because hikers seldom, if ever, go there. Nor does anybody else that you'd notice. Though only 2 hours from the G.P.O. by car and a few minutes by air, this area of some 3,000 square miles is one of the least populated parts of the State. Most of it can be covered only on foot, hence its unpopularity. In the centre of it, where rise the Macdonald, the southern tributaries of the Goulburn, the Gudgegong and the northern tributaries of the Colo, are a collection of mountains with weird names such as "Monundilla", "Coriaday", "Coricudgy", "Kekeelbons" and "Bournbourwa". To me they are slightly suggestive of bird calls and perhaps are anglicised versions of aboriginal bird names. It was towards these high points that the 1953 S.B.W. Monundilla expedition, comprising Ira Butler, Ray Kirkby, Jim Brown and the writer, headed on June 13th. To forestall controversy let it be recorded, here and now, that the four of us placed our feet on the top of Monundilla simultaneously.

We started our trip from the Post Office at Putty, and on the first day did about 8 miles on a road which led us up the valley and started us on the ridge to Kindarun. As we followed up Putty Creek we could see nothing beyond the low hills rising only a couple of hundred feet above the creek. The valley would have been pleasant enough if it hadn't been for the scars of stream erosion. The creek bed was filling with sand, and, as it became shallower, the water of successive floods was cutting into the silt banks and carrying them away. Many acres of valuable flats - the farmers' chief source of livelihood - had already been carried away. A farmer we talked to told us that the banks had only carried away in the last couple of years and that it was thought by many that the cutting out of timber was the cause; a view we had cause to agree with at a later stage.

The last farmer up the valley, a Mr. Cobcroft, directed us to a road which followed a ridge in the direction we wanted to go. He warned us that there was no water on the ridge to Monundilla (pronounced Melon jelly), but this was not unexpected and we would have thought twice about attempting the trip in a dry spell. Neither Mr. Cobcroft nor anybody else tried to warn us off the country, and, knowing that the local people are the chief sufferers in bush searches, we were rather surprised at this. Perhaps they thought we looked old enough to know better.

Mr. Cobcroft told us where to find water in a couple of miles but as the light started to fade we found some a little earlier and camped, glad to be in the bush at last after a day on roads. Next day we followed the bush track, which led us almost to Kindarun, our first objective. It proved to be a volcanic knob commanding a very extensive view, including most of the high points we planned to climb.



Scale: 1 inch = 4 miles

Our camp sites: x

Roads: ---

To the west was Monundilla, looking very close - it was, in fact, only 8 miles away - though we didn't anticipate it would be easy to attain. Actually it took us two full days to reach it. Most of the ridge was easy to follow, but the country had been burnt out fairly recently and dead bushes were plentifully strewn in our path at knee height. All of us wore long pants, or at least long socks, and we probably averaged only about a mile and a half an hour most of the time. There were two deep saddles to cross - so deep that we weren't sure they existed till we were a few yards above them. I went down to one of them expecting to find a creek there and follow it back up to the top of the ridge. I couldn't understand why I was unable to hear the sound of running water and wouldn't believe we were on the ridge till we stood on a little narrow saddle, so deep that the sun didn't reach us while we ate our lunch down there. Jim, a Blue Labyrinth veteran, sensed the presence of the saddle in his radar mind long before I did.

By the end of the first day's walk, i.e. after we left Putty Creek, the narrow cleared valley below us, which was the only settled land in a vast expanse of bush, was no longer visible. For a time we could see some cleared land at Howe's valley some ten miles to the North-east, and this, with the exception of glimpses of Uraterer, was the only cleared land visible. Though we were less than 60 miles from the densely populated coast, here we could see only range upon range of bush-clad mountains. The distant view was as it had been for centuries before Captain Cook, and it was hard to believe that an industrial civilisation lay hidden below the ranges.

Our ridge wound about a lot - probably enough to double the direct distance. Once we completed three-quarters of a circle. In half a day's walking round it we came only a mile nearer to Monundilla. Water was always a problem, because the gullies dropped away steeply without shelving. We used to start looking for water gullies early - about 3.30 p.m. When we found one that looked promising we would take our packs down as far as it was practicable to camp. Then we would go down with water bags, usually finding water 100 to 200 feet below the top of the ridge. We did this nearly every night, and only once did we have to come back and move on to another gully. Though we never missed out altogether, even for lunch, it was seldom that we found anything that looked like a permanent spring.

From Kindarun, along the ridge to Monundilla, we had extensive views from the higher, northerly aspected points. Barrington Tops and the Mount Royal Range were to be seen across the Hunter Valley (itself hidden) to the North. Mounts Yango and Warramalong were prominent to the East, while to the South there was a maze of gullies described in our 1906 geological survey map as "rugged Hawkesbury sandstone country deeply intersected by precipitous ravines - unsurveyed". This is a description which, despite its Victorian flavour, it would be hard to better. There are no mountains in this area; just barren, rocky, rounded hill-tops of pretty even height. They sloped down harmlessly enough, but dark cliff faces may be seen near the bottom of the gullies. Or is it the bottom? The gullies get steeper and steeper as they go down. Tree tops and dark rock faces can be seen down there, but you never see the bottom, and I have a fair idea you couldn't get to it. When planning the trip I had ideas of taking a short cut across this country if we didn't reach

Monundilla by the fifth day, but I wouldn't advise anyone to try going down those ridges. With nothing on the map to guide you it would be sheer luck if you found a ridge that led right down to Putty valley, and, if your ridge led only to an upper gully, it might be very difficult, if not impossible, to go further on that route.

Monundilla itself was a disappointment. Timber partly obscured our view, and, though there was a clearing on the northern end of the mountain, which had a flat top about half a mile long, the raspberries, lawyer vines, and other entanglements were so dense that it wasn't worth the effort of getting to it. But we were impressed with what we saw. Except to the West there were no great valleys or cliff faces, but to the north-west we looked over range upon range of mountains, like rollers at sea, descending in height till they merged into the flat horizon, which was, in fact, the western plain. An almost similar view extended to the South-east and the far distant flat horizon there was the Cumberland plain. The distance from the N.W. to the S.E. horizon was probably over 150 miles. I know of no other point from which one can see clear across the Dividing Range on either side. Looking at the tangle of ridges and dark gullies to the North I felt a great respect for Fred Douth, who reached Monundilla from Baeremi Creek in 1947. We at least had the benefit of a map which showed our ridge as a procession of furry caterpillars over white paper. Nevertheless we have no quarrel with the map. Aerial survey was unheard-of in 1906 and, despite the white spaces, everything included was pretty near its right place. The surveyors must have travelled our ridges, otherwise they couldn't have mapped all those twists and turns.

From Monundilla our ridge led south into the maze of gullies. We did more talking than walking for the next half day or so. But it paid off. By a process of elimination we discovered the outlet to each gully below without losing more than a quarter of an hour or so on a couple of false leads, and at last found ourselves on the key saddle, hidden a thousand or more feet below Monundilla. Looking at the impassable walls on either side of our saddle, we realised that this few yards of ridge was almost certainly the only negotiable route south. As we climbed the other side the Kekeelbons came into view, and an hour or so later we acclaimed the first cow manure, a portent of pastures and track ahead. The Kekeelbons - two volcanic cones alongside a third high point composed of sandstone - proved to afford the best views of the trip, as we had an unobstructed view from the central cone, which we climbed. Most of the country we had seen from Monundilla was below us, while the sun illuminated the great Capertee cliffs to the south. Blackwater Creek too was interesting, and we had glimpses of bluish-black walls deep down in the valley. It is an aptly named creek. Seldom would the sun brighten those waters at the bottom of the valley, which, as always, we couldn't see.

Cattle grazed on the lush grass of the Kekeelbons, and we soon picked up a fairly clear track, recently used by the stockman. After three days without a track we appreciated stretching our legs and being able to watch the scenery instead of the obstacles.

As we neared Coricudgy the angry whirr of buzz-saws tearing into the remainder of the rare eucalyptus globulus trees that were once the glory of the mountain, became louder. Some years ago it was believed by the Club that, by creating a reserve of the mountain top,

this timber would be saved, but it hasn't worked out that way. Passing by the stumps and scraggy tree-ferns that remained on the rich volcanic soil of the mountain, we came to the headwaters of the Cudgegong, a tributary of the Macquarie. Approaching country we knew, we left our ridge to cut across the wide, gently-sloping Western valley - a contrast to the steep gullies to the east. For the first time in five days we followed a running stream.

We had our lunch on the clearing called "The Ovens", so named, evidently, from the rock formation of the main divide nearby, which may be likened to a battery of ovens. That afternoon our packs were light, the weather cold and invigorating, the track clear and our hearts, if not young and gay, were at least equal to the effort. Our track threaded its way round rock faces and over obscure saddles, through a labyrinth which might have taken us a couple of days to cross had we had to find the way. Towards evening we came to a volcanic neck where there had been water on the last trip, but it was further down the gully now, so, in the last of the remaining daylight we made a dash for Davis' Hole. Luckily we found the track leading down to it just before dark, and were probably the second party of bush walkers to camp in this delightful spot (Max Gentle and party camped there several years ago). The track to Uraterer drops several hundred feet as it passes between David's and Gosper's Holes and we had to descend some 300 feet more from the lowest point of the track. In the volcanic gully below we found a large spring-fed clearing, surrounded by open grassy bushland with plenty of good camp sites. The place is like St. Helena or Euroka, though ringed by much higher hills - about 6-800 feet above the valley. Not a tree has been rung; not a bottle or tin in sight. It was perfectly sheltered - a treat after our scrubby ledges, high above the meagre little pools of water we had used on previous nights.

Next day we forced the pace a little to reach Uraterer by lunch. Though the track is seldom discernible over this stretch the ridge is broad and easier to follow in this direction than in reverse. From Uraterer Jim was our guide, being the only one who had been over Wirraba. If he hadn't remembered the general trend of the track we mightn't have found it for some time, as in the first couple of miles it crosses a spur and follows shallow gullies. Another stockman had been out this way, but we parted with the hoof marks near Wirraba when the track led off to the South-east. Soon we came upon traces of a track which erosion suggested might once have been a route for stock. As it neared the top of Wirraba the track became very uncertain, but we followed what seemed the logical route for a horseman and in places came upon a well-defined track, though it might have been merely a cattle track. Skirting the two high points and walking along the saddle between we found this grassy mountain a very pleasant spot.

After Wirraba traces of the old track could still be seen. For the benefit of future parties the vicinity where we lost sight of it is marked on the accompanying map. I feel almost certain that it follows a well defined spur a little north of the ridge we followed. This spur, we could plainly see, has no pronounced saddles, nor anything to prevent a stockman from following it down to Wirraba Creek and continuing over the low hills between Wirraba and Putty Creeks. The last three miles of the ridge we followed is a series of mountains connected by low saddles and liberally littered with all the obstacles known to bushwalkers.

Wirraba Creek itself was a scene of destruction. As in Putty Creek the banks had carried away leaving a broad swathe of mud and sand. On this creek there are no clearings, but the remains of a timber road along the creek, and huge stumps supported on branched pedestals of bared roots, many feet above present ground level, tell the tale more clearly than any conservation report. A broad river of sand is being gradually carried down these creeks to Wollemi Creek, later to reach the Colo, then the Hawkesbury. Query - will we see the day when the eroded banks of the Capertee, Wollemi, Macdonald and other streams have washed down to convert the Hawkesbury into mud flats?

The rest was road walking, which we didn't mind after that abominable ridge. Our trip ended, as it had been throughout, in fine weather. When we arrived back at our transport we found that betting in the valley during our absence favoured the mountains unless we followed the ridges, a judgment with which we would agree. Jim's sandshoes, dirty but intact, were a source of wonder.

Looking back on our trip we realised that it included some features which are the accepted lot of the walker in new country. There were fairly long stretches with nothing much to recommend them. Water and camp sites were hard to find. But when you know the tracks, the pleasant volcanic outcrops, the permanent water and the interesting high points, there is good camping and good walking to be enjoyed. The Southern Blue Mountains is better walking country, but this is partly because we know, or can find on the map, the tracks, water, camp sites, etc. In the Northern Blue Mountains careful "navigation" is necessary, because there are few tracks, while negotiable routes are often far apart. With the knowledge we now have we could plan a very interesting week's walk. And if any members have ambitions I offer a suggestion of something which, to my knowledge has never been done. Kevin Ardill and other explorers have crossed the Blue Mountains from east to west, and venturesome motorists have driven round them, but nobody has crossed them from North to South, from the Hunter to the Cox.

For those planning trips in the Northern Blue Mountains the following magazine articles will be of interest.

- "The Northern Blue Mountains", by Max Gentle, June 1947.
- "Round About the Hunter Range", by "Skip", November 1947.
- "Wilderness of the Colo", by Max Gentle, January 1948.
- "The First Walk Down the Colo", by Max Gentle, January 1948.
- "Newnes, Glen Davis, Mt. Uratere to Capertee Mountain and Glen Alice", by "Cerberus", January 1950.

Several other articles have appeared in earlier issues.

OUR COMPLIMENTS TO Victorian Search and Rescue for their successful work in the recent search near Mt. Donna Buang (reported as Mr. Donna Buang in one Sydney paper - we all do it).

Summer is A'coming in Again... and with it the WALKS PROGRAMME for the months of JANUARY to APRIL. This includes the critical period January and February, when folk are reluctant to commit themselves to leading trips... Plan that walk now, and you won't have to dodge the Walks Secretary.

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After an absence of (it was said) 14 years, Wilbur Morris appeared in the Club Room on Friday, August 21st. All unwittingly, he perched himself on one of the new tables, which promptly folded up, taking with it the two tables adjoining. It says much for the durability of walkers (no, not that he survived the fall) but that he found many familiar faces.

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It has been suggested by some people that there was a misprint on Page 7 of our August issue. These people are evidently unaware that the name of Blue Gum Forest has been changed since the Working Bee of April last when many workers toiled up to the waist in cold water.

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CORROBOREE Mark 2 was held on August 22/23, with 47 folk present. At about 5 p.m. on Saturday it looked as though there may be two corroborees ... more about this interesting possibility in the October magazine ...

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The Colour Slide Exhibition provided another triumph for that placidly insidious character Bill Rodgers with his "Mount Roland". The other places to George Grey and John Bookluck. Those highly commended by the judge included entries by Audrey Brady, Ken Angel and Geoff Greethead - as well as repeat mentions of Bill, George and John.

...

"And now I'll show you on the map just where you are" quoted the leader of a recent Sunday walk back of Hornsby, as his party downed rucksacks and gathered around him. And was his face red as he carefully unfolded the KIAMA Military District Map. We are pleased to report a prospective member was able to produce the Broken Bay map, and save the day.

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SEARCHING.

By Malcolm McGregor.

Search and Rescue was called out on the weekend of 19th June to assist the Katoomba Police to look for Mrs. Mary Lewis, who had been reported missing on Wednesday 17th.

This job had none of the glamour and none of the success that the 1952 search had. It was plain hard work, shoving through scrub, looking in likely places and unlikely ones as well, covering the tracks that the Police and locals had searched the previous days to make sure they had not overlooked anything, and to add to our discomfort it was bitterly cold the whole two days.

IF YOU ARE GOING PLACES
CONTACT

SCENIC MOTOR TOURS,

RAILWAY STEPS,

KATOOMBA.

DAILY TOURS BY PARLOR COACH TO THE WORLD
FAMOUS JENOLAN CAVES AND ALL BLUE MOUNTAIN
SIGHTS.

TRANSPORT BY COACHES FOR PARTIES OF BUSH-
WALKERS TO KANANGRA WALLS, GINKIN OR OTHER
SUITABLE POINTS BY ARRANGEMENT.

FOR ALL INFORMATION

WRITE TO P.O. BOX 60, KATOOMBA
TELEPHONE 60, KATOOMBA.

For the search itself there is little to say: the work was hard and uninteresting, and it was to the credit of everyone that they stuck to the job as cheerfully as they did. The main point of interest was the co-operation of the Police. A 'bus was arranged to take us to and from Katoomba, the nights were spent at Wentworth Falls School of Arts and Katoomba Court House respectively, and Police cars did any moving of personnel we considered necessary.

The bright spot of the weekend was Saturday night. You have to be as tired and cold as we were to appreciate the small comfort the Court House offered. Two large fire places and the necessary fuel were provided and in a flash wet clothes and boots, cooking gear, food and what-not littered the place. To describe the chaos is impossible, but if you imagine a row of boots along the Court bench, a dozen black billies before each fire, and food and clothes strewn about the floor, dock and other available furniture, you can get some idea of the scene that met the gaze of a small ish gent in civvies when he opened the door to see what was going on. The roar he uttered could be heard miles away. It was "The Beak" himself, and it took our friend the Sergeant some time to pacify his outraged dignity that his Court House should be so used.

Without doubt, this was not the type of work for which S & R is best suited, but the call had been made, and we must answer, because there is no group of the community better fitted to move in the bush than we are. There are some people who regarded the search as useless from the outset: as it turned out they were correct, but, if this was the reason for their non-attendance, then let them think of Mrs. Lewia as one of their own kin to see whether their actions were justified. I was most disappointed that only two of our members were present for the whole weekend, plus one for the Sunday and two for part of Saturday.

RAILWAY HIKES

(Notes made on observations by a hiker who was there.)

Clarence - Old Zig Zag - Lithgow.

The train consisted of 5 coaches. Excellent detailed map of the route with notes on the trip supplied. At least one guide and a member of the Railway Historical Society travelled with the party.

On the trip to Clarence, passengers inquired why our observer wore heavy boots. On the previous Friday, heavy snow had fallen on the Blue Mountains and when the party arrived at Clarence, deep drifts were still lying in shady places. The track was slushy in parts and those who had wondered about stout footwear soon realised how desirable this type of walking gear can be as they sank, ankle deep, in mud. No high heels were reported, but rather inadequate bootie types of feminine footwear with crepe rubber soles, and casuals, were evident.

Numerous friendly snowfights occurred, but when the loutish element began to make themselves evident, they were severely reprimanded by the guide. Scenery was good and interesting. Lunch near Mt. Sinai (3,800 ft.), then down the track of the old Zig Zag to Zig Zag Signal Box where the train was waiting.

Almost total absence of ruc-sacs and cape groundsheets, but plenty of overcoats and expensive clothing, string bags, cardboard boxes as well as small haversacks made from gas mask containers. No casualties observed.

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Bundanoon - Grand Canyon Lookout - Tooth's Lookout - Fairy Bower-Bundanoon.

Train consisted of 7 coaches of even better dressed hikers than attended the Zig Zag excursion. Another excellent map and notes supplied. Bundanoon was a stopping place known as Jordan's Crossing when the line was first opened to Goulburn in the '60's. It was renamed Bundanoon ("Big Gullies") in 1881.

Weather conditions dry and fine. Some hikers went golfing for the day, others went to horse, some into the "pub" and the rest went walking with the guide. Lunch was at Grand Canyon Lookout, where local Legacy Branch had set up a stall. Ample time was allowed for sightseeing and meals.

The observer reports that both excursions were very well organised and conducted. However, as the next excursion is reported to be to Blackheath, then bus to Evans Lookout, walk to Govett's Leap Lookout, then bus to Mt. Victoria to join the train, the observer does not intend to attend as he wants to walk.

IMPORTANT TRANSPORT NOTICE.

B U S H W A L K E R S R E Q U I R I N G T R A N S P O R T
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'PHONE B'HEATH 81 OR 146. LOOK FOR CARS TC5210 or TV270

OR BOOK AT MARK SALON RADIO SHOP - OPP. STATION.

"THE BUSHWALKER" NO.12.

Federation is publishing again this year "THE BUSHWALKER" -
 its annual magazine which has not appeared since 1948.

Material required: Stories describing walks, incidents on
 walks, canoeing, climbing, skiing, caveing, etc. - and
 photographs. (Closing date - September 20th).

Advertisements: Contact Business Manager, Jack Evans, BX1245.

Material to be sent to: The Hon. Editor, "The Bushwalker" No.12,
 77 Hudson Street, Hurstville. (Or
 'phone LU4648.

REPORT ON "NATIONAL PARKS OF VICTORIA".

In this month's issue we conclude Allen Strom's "Report on
 National Parks of Victoria", parts of which have been published in
 the July and August magazines. We would call attention to the thought
 of a great Alpine Park mentioned in this part. We like it - and
 will have something to say about it next month's editorial column.

Victorian National Parks 9

Cowes and San Remo are the "hot-spots" of the holiday traffic with the "blah" of roundabouts and "what-have-you".

The advertised "tourist attractions" of the Island include the Penguin and Mutton Bird Rookeries, the Koala populations and the Seal Rocks. The Seal Rocks on the far south-western corner of the Island and these were made the subject of one of our visits. Fortunately, the Rocks are inaccessible (without a boat) but a fine view of the animals can be had with the use of a telescope or a pair of binoculars. There is, however, an incessant demand by professional fishermen to reduce the numbers of seals on the pretext that they destroy fishing nets and reduce the size of the catches.

Not far away is "Summerland" where the Penguin and Mutton Bird Rookeries exist. These to my mind, are in a pathetic condition ... it amazes that the birds dare to return to their nests at night! In one "sanctuary" tents had recently been pitched right over the nesting burrows ... and close by, were at least fifty people firmly encamped for many days. Roads already traverse the area where some of the birds walk in order to reach the burrows ... we saw dead penguins killed I presume, by passing traffic. The sanctuaries appear to be miserably small and settlement is proceeding on the surrounding land ... some of this land appears to have been cut up for a "suburbia" type building. The tourist traffic is tremendous ... great hordes of people arrived in several buses to see the birds return to their nests at dusk.

I would think that the position is so bad as to be hopeless; but should the authorities wish to save the situation, immediate action to cut off the south-western end of the Island, the gradual elimination of all permanent human habitation in that area, access to the Rookeries to be by foot alone, would seem to be the only successful policy.

And what of the Koala? Well, we saw a number, generally in trees that were suffering defoliation ... anyhow, there did not appear to be a great number of food trees ... and the great exposure of the Island would prevent great growths of trees. The extensive development of the land would militate against the whole Island becoming a "sanctuary" ... perhaps small enclosed areas could do something. Stories of the Koalas having bred themselves out of food looks highly probable... the use of land for the normal pursuits of Man and a sanctuary for animals ... quite hopeless!

I couldn't help feeling very depressed about the whole matter of the Penguins, Mutton Birds and Koalas as we left Phillip Is.. According to the much blazoned contention, the hordes of people who saw these animals should by now, have been influenced to protect them ... and yet I hear no public outcry to correct this misuse of our Native Fauna!

Victorian National Parks

From San Remo we went on through Wonthaggi ... Victoria's Black Coal Town ... Inverloch, Koonwarra, Meeniyan, Fish Creek and into the Wilson Promontory National Park. The camp that night was of course, at Tidal River ... a well-appointed Camping Area with a full-time Ranger. Some of the party under the leadership of Bill Dingeldei, climbed the highest peak in the Park, Mount Latrobe (2366 feet).

The area of the Park is 102,000 acres and is the most southerly point of the mainland of Australia. It is a magnificent peninsula of granite with beautiful coastline scenery originally named "Furieux Land" by Bass in 1798, but later re-named Wilson's Promontory after Thomas Wilson, of London, a friend of Flinders. A road is being cut up Mt. Oberon ... some of us followed to the top and obtained a wide panorama of sandy beaches and dented coastline.

But the real story of "The Prom." is a sad one. Some eighty thousand acres were again burned out early in 1951, this time apparently destroying permanently, the forest giants that grew in many places. Only a maze of fallen dead trunks greeted the party that climbed Latrobe ... no regrowth of trees were to be seen. Lilly Pilly Gully famed as the home of the Koala is a grey mass of dead trees. Everywhere I could see the terrible change since my last visit. It seems obvious that some plant species have become extinct in some places; striking and undesirable ecological changes have occurred and there is an advancement of exotic and unwanted plants.

The history of "The Prom." has been one of disappearing species and recurrent fires. The toll is now becoming fully apparent. Where do the fires come from? There are many opinions ... but one thing is certain ... the 1951 fire burned for many days before it "got away" when the hot northerlies drove it south, ravaging and consuming to finally burn part of the lighthouse, itself! It is significant also, that His Honour, Judge Stretton (June 24th, 1946) reported as Royal Commissioner on matter concerning forest fires "Grazing has been a regular recurrent cause of forest fires. The extent of the relationship between grazing and forest fires may best be expressed by stating that wherever grazing has been practised in mountain forest, it has been one of the major and most frequent causes of fire." A scientific fire-protection plan for National Parks should be formulated. Grazing of domestic stock is completely prohibited in many National Parks throughout the world, including those in Switzerland and Tasmania.

Two small National Parks ... Tarra Valley (200 ac.) and Bulga (91 ac.) ... are located in the Strezlecki Ranges, a most interesting mountain chain rising to a couple of thousand feet and standing between the Latrobe Valley and the coastline. Extensive

Victorian National Parks

development of the Range has taken place but it is obvious that at one time tremendous forests of Ash and Beach existed here. Our route took us through Welshpool on to the Grand Ridge Road ... certainly an adequate name ... to the Tarra Valley Road. The park entrance is situated about two miles down this road. There is an attractive parking area and entrance gate and a small but delightfully situated camping area amongst tall gums and tree ferns.

The walks through the park are splendidly arranged to give adequate inspection of the excellent Rain Forest which includes the Victorian Antarctic Beech or Myrtle (*Nothofagus Cunninghamiana*). This is a smaller leaved variety than the northern species (*N. Moorei*) but shows the same capacity for long life, some specimens apparently having withstood natural erosion sufficiently to expose the root systems to a depth of about 12 feet. The party was able to stalk and observe a Lyre Bird for a considerable time.

A short distance away is Bulga National Park, the smaller area enclosing a valley packed with tree ferns, a suspension bridge enabling the visitor to go out over the valley and look down into the tangle of ferny leaves. Both Parks embrace ferneries of rare and distinctive beauty ... some specimens exceeding fifty feet in height.

The attractiveness of both Parks, but in particular that of Tarra Valley, tends to cloud one's realisation that both are ludicrously small. They are but National Monuments and both are extremely vulnerable to the effects of development. If these parks are to retain their primitive beauty, their lyre birds and the other natural charms that justly attract the cultured citizen, an adequate belt of protective bushland must be reserved all around them giving the closed environment discussed at the outset of this Report. There is still to be considered if that is possible, the steps that may be taken to enlarge these Parks into the true dimensions of a National Park ... perhaps, coalesce them ... where the feeling of being "lost" in the vastnesses of Nature could be adequately appreciated.

North from the Strezlecki Ranges and into the Valley of the Latrobe at Traralgon ... the drop is steep and the ridges are trimmed almost bare. Here too, Nature has answered Man in Her own language, with landslips in exchange for reduction of cover. The coastal slopes of Gippsland must be rich judging by the extensive settlement and in addition, to the Latrobe Valley has come the brown coal mining of Yallourn and Morwell. Much public money has gone into these undertakings to save Victoria from the embarrassment of irregular supplies of black coal from New South Wales.

Victorian National Parks

Mt. Erica and the Baw Baw Plateau dominate the northern landscape from here and we know that as our route lies over the Main Divide there is some climbing ahead. The scars of many fires, but in particular those of '39, are to be seen on the side of the Baw Baws ... groves of white ghosts, fire-eaten mountain ash. The Tyers, The Thomson, Walhalla (now further along the road to extinction since the tragic floods last year) pass and there is a terrific climb over and down to camp on a swift flowing tributary of the Thomson. Next day we made Matlock (4500 ft) officially recorded as the highest township in Victoria and right on the Divide. Once this was a town of 20,000 persons, but the only evidence to-day, of this population is the extensive area of cleared land from where we enjoyed a magnificent panorama embracing a vast expanse of Victoria's most mountainous areas.

By the way of Woods Point, Jamieson, Mansfield and Whitfield we finally skirted around Mt. Buffalo into the Owen's Valley ... possibly the richest valley in Victoria, not to mention the interesting appearance of Hop and Tobacco growing and the mighty gold dredge at Harrietville ... reputed to rank amongst the biggest in the world! But to Mt. Buffalo National Park ... a great granite monadnock... "a western outpost in the Australian Alps, with its elevation above sea level varying from 4,000 to 5,600 feet" ... a reservation of some 43 square miles (about 27,000 acres). This must be Victoria's happiest park at these times. Its snow gums and little plains, granite tors and look-outs are grand and satisfying. No grazing cattle were seen, the scars of past fires are well hidden and the destructive activities of the tourist are largely concentrated around the Chalet. Fortunately perhaps, we cannot see the results of past abuses and we revel in the beauty of summer flowers and the splendid views from the Horn, the Monolith and other viewpoints.

From Buffalo we looked out towards the Bogong High Plain and the peaks of the immense Alpine Regions of Victoria and New South Wales ... and next day we were in the Alps, amongst the mists at Hotham, looking out over the Barry Ranges again, the overlapping of range upon range from Higginbottam ... and on to Omeo.

It is in the Alps that we should leave our sojourn and dwell upon the splendour of them. Victorian snow country is magnificent! What a wealth of beauty and satisfaction in contemplation ... the Baw Baws ... Mt. Wellington and all the Middle Alps ... the Bogong High Plains. This is indeed an Alpine Parkland already made ... and why not contiguous with the Kosciusko State Park? ... the whole range from Mt. Erica to the northern limit of the Brindabellas planned for the people for all time! Tracked for walkers and trail riders, adequately fitted with contact points, huts and some roads, this would be a feature fitting our nation ... a trail through two States and the Commonwealth.

Victorian National Parks

Although we did not see all the Victorian National Parks on this trip, the records of The Caloola Club indicate that we have visited about 14 of the 16. The State like most of the Australian States is not well off for National Parks ... 0.6% of the total area of Victoria has been set aside compared with Tasmania's 3%, New Zealand's 4.7% and Great Britain's 12.7%. That some Australian States are in an even worse condition than Victoria is shown by the all over figures for Australia ... 0.23%.

Although the following summary by the Victorian Town and Country Planning Association is intended to drive home the moral to Victorians, it is as well applied to many another State that we know

"One thing stands out clearly, and it is that National Parks in Victoria have occurred without plan, and may be described as a collection of individual park areas unrelated to any master plan for the State. Only in a few instances can it be indicated that a planned approach is being made to the development of a national park.

"Generally speaking, the reservation of a specific area of Crown Land as a National Park is brought about by the interest and enthusiasm of a small group of the citizens who prevail upon the Government of the day to take the necessary action. This having been achieved, further interest ... at least in the majority of national parks ... at governmental level by the provision of funds is almost non-existent. Where funds are provided, these are not adequate for the proper development and maintenance of the areas, and are allocated on a spasmodic basis, without regard to any established policy of progressive and regular development and park management.

"Down the years it was not unusual for Governments to carry out the formality of reserving a National Park area and then remaining almost wholly inactive in the proper planning and orderly development of the parks ... a policy of "laissez-faire".

"The potential wealth hidden in National Parks throughout the world, by way of their health-giving values to the people of the respective countries, and as attractions to tourists from other lands, is fully realised by the controlling governments. It will be seen that a high standard of park development and management is set in Overseas countries, where a strong financial policy is recognised as an essential factor in National Park planning."

As in Victoria, the citizens of New South Wales would welcome a special enquiry into the care, management, development of existing National Parks and the planning of additional ones.

PHOTOGRAPHY ! ? ! ? !

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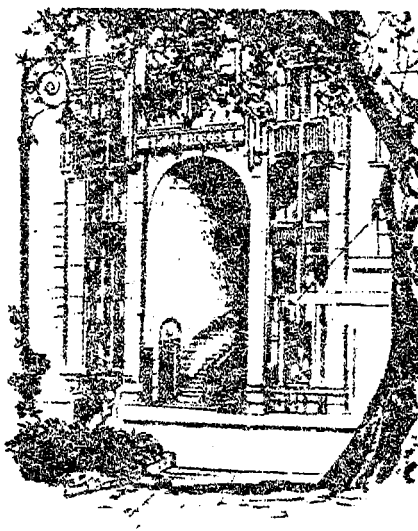
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FEDERATION NOTES - AUGUST MEETING.

By Allen A. Strom.

DEEWHY LAGOON: Improvements planned for the Deewhy Lagoon will destroy a large portion of it as a Bird Sanctuary. The Federation will support the National Trust in protests to a number of authoritative bodies.

BUSHWALKER BALL: Members of affiliated clubs are asked to rally to the support of the Federation for the Ball to be held at Paddington Town Hall on Monday, September 14th. Tickets 17/6d. News to hand would indicate that the Federation stands to lose heavily. Duplicated handbills and posters are available for advertisement. John Cotter wants to know how many are going in order to arrange for decorations and catering. The orchestra and other matters are in hand.

THE BUSHWALKER, NO.12: Editorial copy, stories, photographs, suggestions urgently required by the Hon. Editor, Ron Wardrop, 77 Hudson Street, Hurstville.



PADDY MAIDE

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

For many years we have been proofing tents with a mixture of waxes recommended by a chemist knowledgeable in such things. Any old wax won't do to proof a tent of course. The wax must be highly water repellent and not harmful to the fabric of the tent. It must not be so stiff that it makes the tent bulky. It must have a range of plasticity so that it remains pliable in freezing cold and yet not melt to an oil under summer sun. It must be colourless and odourless. Such a paragon of waxes was achieved by judicious blending of several waxes. The proofing service became very popular and one day John Bushwalkers could proof their own tents and jackets. Then arose the question of the name. "Think up a good name" I said to John and the next thing I knew the jars of wax were labelled "Drumstick". "How come"? said I.

Well, said John, eyes atwinkle, "I said to myself, Paddy Wax - Paddy whacks - Paddy whacks the Drumstick!" - so "Drumstick" it is, and if you want to proof a tent or jacket get a jar of "Drumstick" - Price 2/-.

...

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