

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER.

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to the Sydney Bush Walkers, C/- Ingersoll Hall, 256 Crown St., Sydney.

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EDITORIAL.

The Pruning Season.

At the Committee Meeting of October, the names of about 60 unfinancial members were crossed off the books. The number was made up of approximately 40 "active" and 20 non-active members, and reduced the total membership in all categories to 216. Notification is being sent to all concerned.

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Some of those removed from the books will certainly apply for re-instatement, and it is probable that a number previously on the "active" list will ask to be restored as non-active, and that Committee will approve most requests of this kind. However, the majority of those crossed off will simply pass out of the records of the Club, and in one year we will show a wastage of more than forty members.

To date the intake of new members this year has been 11, and with only 15 names on the current list of prospective members, it is quite certain that the end of the club year on January 31st will see us with depleted numbers. As a comparison, the following tabulation, taken from annual reports, may be of interest:

As at Jan. 31st	1941	1945	1947	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
Active members	237	259	238	225	223	215	216	203
Non-active members	25	39	45	56	51	57	63	49
Intake during year	28	26	30	37	26	28	32	20
Crossed off or resigned during year	13	4	52(x)	37	32	30	25	47

Note:- (x)- During 1947 all members who had been on active service with the Forces and had not returned to the Club were crossed off.

What will be the consequences of this reduction of membership? Of course, it does not necessarily denote a diminution of our liveliness, as most the "active" walkers affected were in fact totally non-active, either as walkers or in any other aspect of Club enterprise. Indeed, on a proportionate basis, it leaves us rather more active than we were, and from a thoroughly mercenary viewpoint the principal result in the loss of revenue - something like one-sixth of our previous annual income.

Here one might readily digress with an analysis of our income and expenditure, pointing to variable items, such as postages, which are largely influenced by membership: while other costs are constant, such as rental of Club room. The fact is that we will not be able to live "in the manner to which we have been accustomed" if the present trend continues.

For some years our membership was reasonably stable. Last year a reduction was evident, and this year a steep decline is indicated. It is probably a direct product of the generally waning interest in walking which we have remarked previously, the reasons for which seem to be numerous and varied. While we should not be alarmed by the tendency, we should perhaps consider what we want the Club to be in the future. Are we content to see our numbers falling? Do we believe it will presently level out at a satisfactory figure? Or do we feel that some action should be taken to stabilise or increase our membership?

This has been a vexed problem in the past, when Club opinion has generally been opposed to promiscuous growth, or any form of advertising for new members. Certainly there is a maximum figure at which the jobs of some officers, notably Treasurer and Secretary, would become too onerous altogether. In any case, lowering of our standard of

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admission would be an undesirable thing. The point calling for consideration is whether we wish to embark on something in the nature of a recruiting drive to maintain our membership. Should we agree to move in that direction we must be careful that our decision is not dictated by the selfish desire to secure more funds for the gratification of existing members. The Club is the thing, and the only motive which should govern our thoughts is the continued welfare of the walking game to which the Club has contributed, and can continue to contribute, so much.

AT THE OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING.

Reported by Alex Colley.

Latecomers seeing a stream of walkers emerging into Crown Street shortly after 8 p.m. on the night of the General Meeting might well have believed that the Noises Off Club was staging a revival, but the real reason for the exodus was that the door of the Club Room couldn't be opened. Fortunately the fire escape door was open, and so a street corner meeting in Crown Street was averted. The new entrance provided no cover for late-comers, who perforce made an impressive entry up the

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broad stairs past a jardiniere of gum-leaves instead of slinking in by the side door. The arrival of Mr. Henley and Miss Steenbhom, announced by Mr. Moppett, was most elegant.

Correspondence revealed that Mr. and Mrs. Norbert Carlon, Mrs. C. Devitt, Messrs. Colin Broad and Roy Bennett had been elected to Honorary Membership, while Mr. Coates of Hilltop, who had been very helpful to Club members, has been offered Honorary Membership.

From the Y.M.C.A. Ramblers came an invitation for 12 of our members to attend their annual camp at Yarramundi, on 21st and 22nd November.

The Treasurer's Report provided evidence of a very satisfactory round-up of late payers. No less than £19.10.0 had been collected in subscriptions. In fact it appears from correspondence that all but one has paid (Far be it from us to point the finger). (Alas - far more than one - Editor.)

The Conservation Secretary's Report described a Conference on Bushfire Control, presided over by the Chairman of the Bushfires Committee, Mr. Messer. At the conference Mr. Morris, Bushfire liaison officer of the Sutherland Shire Council had described the Fire Fighting Centre at Sutherland Council Chambers and Brigades at Engadine and Heathcote, which include in their areas portion of National Park eastward to Kangaroo Creek, also the brigades at Waterfall Sanatorium, Loftus and Bundeena, and some further away from National Park. He asked what manpower Bushwalkers might provide for bushfire fighting in National Park, using the Park's equipment and with assistance and direction from members of the various Sutherland Shire Bushfire Brigades.

Tom Moppett explained that Mr. Morris's idea was that any bushwalkers in the park during bushfire periods might report fires and perhaps help the brigades. Some discussion ensued, in which Gil Webb suggested that the provision of a good camp site might be an inducement to bushwalkers to stay around ready to help. It was decided to appoint a Committee consisting of Malcolm McGregor, Tom Moppett, Paul Barnes, Allen Strom and Alex Colley to report on the practicability of the suggestion.

Rumours of a road to Era were discussed. The most likely source of the rumours seemed to be Mr. Hawkin's statement that Era should be opened to the public.

In the absence of further subjects for discussion the meeting was closed 35 minutes after it started. The problem of how to lock the fire-escape from the outside was solved, happily, by the arrival of the key to the main door.

INSTRUCTIONAL WEEK-END. Roy Bruggy's programmed walk for November 20-29th has been converted into an Instructional Walk, the camp to be held at Moorabinda. Rest of details as advertised.

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THE MATTERHORN - A TRAVERSE.

By Leon Blumer.

As we gradually approached the hut in the late afternoon the Hörnli ridge loomed above our heads. We had already viewed the Matterhorn from various sides and marvelled at its impossible outline, its airy ridges and faces, so it was with a little trepidation that Brian and I tried to visualise the route for the next morning. Such was our respect for the peak that we had left Janet at Zermatt, Janet having been with us previously on the Dent Blanche, a much more difficult peak in all respects.

The hut, of course, was full to the brim, so we grabbed a blanket each and slept on the table after the usual supper of maggi soup (so thick that a spoon would stand upright). Ropes and rucksack provided the necessary padding, and we actually slept for a few hours. This was our fourth week in the Alps and we cared little when and where we slept.

Rising at 2.30 a.m. is always a horrible affair, especially when other people are striving to get away before the appointed time. Despite the confusion we joined in with the hordes about 5 a.m. in the chill light of dawn. Down below, Zermatt was still covered by a sea of clouds - very beautiful when the first rays of the sun touched this billowy sea. It was going to be a fine day, a necessity for the ever-changing Matterhorn.

The first two hours were spent scrambling with the crowds along a rather loose ridge, with a splendid view of the east face. Some of the Zermatt guides don't believe in manners, and Brian, as leader, had a brush with one who pushed past into the few remaining feet between a previous party and ourselves. It is very annoying to climb under these conditions, but gradually the parties thinned out and we recovered our previous good humour.

After the Solway Refuge the ridge narrowed and shot up vertically, the climbing becoming very difficult and exposed. We were held up by a few more slow parties, some with rather poor rope technique, but we managed to pass on some easier gendarmes until a 100-ft. ice slope was reached. We followed the example of an Austrian couple and donned crampons for this stretch, but felt afterwards that it would have been perfectly safe in boots. It was quite windy and cold above this, so hastened to remove crampons and came quickly to the fixed ropes below the shoulder. The exposure here was good - one slip and we would fly downwards into thin air for thousands of feet. In our enthusiasm we pressed on up the fixed ropes, iced-up and progress so slow that, after the first 200-ft. my fingers lost feeling, and I found myself ready to faint through cold shock.

Luckily Brian was leading and did not seem too badly affected but as we had been going for four hours, we stopped on a sunny platform for second breakfast. Out of the bitter wind we filled ourselves with concentrated food and quickly recovered strength and warmth. There is more to mountaineering than pure climbing, and I have heard of leaders falling off climbs through neglecting this first principle.

Without the fixed ropes the Matterhorn would be a most interesting climb indeed.

Numerous parties passed either up or down whilst we enjoyed our snack and silent reverie. The clouds above Zermatt were clearing and showed the town nestling like a jewel between steep hills and fields. Our old friends, Dent Blanche and Zinal Rothom looked particularly fierce, stray wisps of cloud hovering round their summits and ridges. An American girl and guide passed, the girl remarking that it was the first and last time she would ever climb a mountain. She had a bad habit of clutching the ropes and swinging like a pendulum, so I can only say that guides do earn their money with most people.

More fixed ropes led up the steep nose to the top of the actual shoulder, somewhere near the position of the famous Whymper party accident. This was nice and airy, with a 300-ft. steep rock and ice slope which plunged down to our ridge to the overhanging slabs of the west face. We tried to save time here by climbing the first 150-ft. of ice-steps in boots, but quickly became involved with descending parties. We had too much rope out, Brian being belayed about half-way down the slope. After a muddle of about five minutes, plus some hard words exchanged with guides and other descending parties, I managed to bring Brian up to a safe position and we used crampons for the remainder of the slope. There is much danger in having too many parties on a peak, and one slip here would have been disastrous. We had already been told by an English climber of the lone Austrian who, before his eyes, had slipped and plummeted down the same ice slope.

We breasted the ridge and were struck by a feeling of great height and remoteness. All other people, except a lone Swiss and the Austrian couple, had departed, and it was very pleasant to balance along to the Italian summit to admire the splendid view.

We had already taken six hours, much more time than we had intended, and we had doubts as to whether to attempt the complete traverse. The Italian face fell away below our feet in a dizzy precipice, and by craning our necks we could see that the Italian ridge butted against it somewhere below us on the right. Mist rose up to meet us and this made it seem all the more spectacular. We knew it was a difficult ridge, and we nervously considered the pros and cons. Will we or won't we? Yes, we will! (This with a confidence we did not feel.) We committed ourselves gingerly to the first section with a large amount of anxiety, I being painfully aware of sweaty hands and a pumping heart.

The third cord, a rope ladder, was rather horrible, iced-up, decayed, and with a few rungs missing. It swings out over the precipice, and creaks and groans when, at half-way, you have to transfer to the inside rungs. I have usually a steady head over sheer space but was acutely conscious of the fact that it would be impossible to hold once the ladder broke. The mist enveloped us more than once and added to the sublimity of the depths.

The Italian shoulder was reached and the going, though still exposed, became much easier up and down jagged gendarmes. We were the

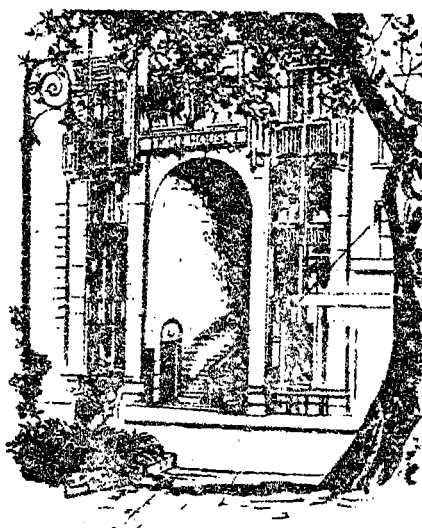
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only two on that side but managed to find scratch marks and occasional footsteps on the snowy parts of the ridge. Most of the rock strata sloped downwards and outwards and there were some pitches which would equal any severe English rock climb if the ropes were removed. Below one especially difficult pitch which Brian (as last man) had to rope down, we found a plaque commemorating a famous Swiss guide, Otto Tuhner who was killed last year by the cord breaking. We congratulated ourselves on our slower but surer belay technique.

We lost the route after this, and found ourselves on the precipitous Italian face. We tried twice to find the route before realising that scratch marks led above a snow slope, around a corner and across to the main ridge. To have kept down the face on a subsidiary ridge would have been suicidal. Stones rattle down this at all hours.

About 3.0 p.m., after a few more difficult pitches down the ridge the Savoia hut was reached, a welcome sight to two weary climbers. This refuge is perched on a small gap in the ridges and occupies quite an airy position - no place for sleepwalkers. Two Italian climbers occupied it, and generously offered us a cup of tea. One side of the

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hut was littered with empty Chianti bottles, so we should imagine the Italian side is not without its attractions. We brewed a marvellous soup on our small petrol stove and, while drinking this, an Englishman with friend and two guides burst into the hut and complimented us on our route-finding tactics. We had been observed from 3,000-ft. below, dithering about near the small snow patch, and the Italian guides seemed happy that they did not need to go looking for us that evening. We gathered from the Englishman that the way down from the Col du Lion was perfectly straightforward, so we gaily set forth over the few remaining pitches to the Col.

Our triumph was short-lived. To the right the cliff looked steep and loose, below us a steep snow couloir led down to the glacier, but we did not want rocks on our heads that time of day. We tried three times to find the route, so in desperation followed down a loose rock wall to the left of cliffs overhanging the main glacier. We slunk down in our shame, hoping that our bad route finding was not being observed by the friendly Italians.

A hail from the hut 700-ft. above our heads showed they were still taking an interest in our future. Too late, we were then half-way down the rocky wall. On the glacier a further shock awaited us - an 80-ft. ice cliff above an enormous gaping bergschrund, probably 100 - 150-ft. deep, brought us to a sickening half. Lord, what will we do? However we climbed over to below the rock cliffs at their junction with the ice and Brian played out the rope as I climbed down 50-ft. to a frail-looking ice bridge, where I managed to belay with the axe. It was difficult, Brian half-climbing half-abseiling* from a small spike of rock, which I had to watch closely for any signs of giving. Half-way down the rope was flicked off, and I drew in the slack. Here was probably the most dangerous moment of the whole day, and it was with genuine relief that my friend reached the ice bridge and rejoined me.

It took only a moment to recoil the rope, and we were flying down the glacier in the gathering twilight. We noticed a huge stone shoot down the couloir so decided we had probably chosen the best way off under the circumstances.

About a quarter hour from the bergschrund we noticed the real track coming down on our right. It must have wandered across the loose rock cliff from the Col du Lion. We then met two jovial Italian guides carrying enormous loads. They were going to join with the Swiss guides the following day in a memorial service to Otto Tuhrrer. We have heard recently that another guide was killed because of a breaking rope. Oh, well, more memorial services and plaques.

Down to the hut of the Duke D'Abbruzzi in cloying mist a bit travelworn but very happy to have savoured the delights of the famous peak. We had considered pushing on over the Furg Joch in an attempt to reach Zermatt that evening or the following morning. The prospect of getting caught out on the glacier didn't seem to appal us as much as it did the hut proprietor who insisted on our staying the night, and finished up bringing his fee down to half-price. This was capital clean sheets and good food instead of dates and rock shelter - jolly good. We were also amazed at the attention and meals received that

night. Hagglng over prices earns respect from all Continentals, so it seems.

The following day we wandered up to the Furg Joch, ambled across the Theodule glacier with its delightful panoramas, then down a winding track to Zermatt and the flesh pots. The most famous peak of them all had been conquered. We were supremely happy.

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(*Abseiling is a method of descending by virtually sitting in a loop of the rope, which is slung loosely over a projection, the climber allowing the free end to pass through his legs and hands, so controlling his speed of descent.)

MORE INFLATION.

By "Crikey".

Inflation has been a ready-made subject for the financial critics and a lot of space has been devoted in the newspaper advertisements to inflation as a means of making prominent objects more prominent: but we noticed a different slant in an overseas magazine. The U.S. firm of B.F. Goodrich has developed a tent capable of accommodating 100 men, and which is made in eight sections joined up by 320 feet of zipper. There are no tent poles. Built-in air pockets are inflated into ribs and the whole can be erected in six minutes, the ribs being sufficiently rigid to maintain the walls without poles.

This brings us to the point where we can visualise some day our "Paddymade" tents being constructed on a somewhat igloo pattern, with built-in ribs of plastic tubing, and a featherweight pump to supply the necessary rigidity. A hollow rib at either end, and one in the centre, with a long one to form a back-bone on the ridge, all interconnected to the latter, might prove a practical idea. One peg for each corner only would save weight. The igloo would provide more elbow room when one was confined during rain. Again, the tent could be moved holus-bolus at will to gain the shade of a tree or to beat a retreat from the chronic snorer next-door. And, last but not least, what fun could be had with a sharp pin!!

A late suggestion has come in that wind from general meetings may be bottled in aluminium containers and issued free to the owners of pneumatic tents.

You lucky people don't know how close you were to getting a magazine of 19½ pages last month. On second thoughts, seeing whose item was on the bottom of page 11, you may have been lucky to escape it. Anyway, as Brian picked up the stencil, it "just came apart in his hands". Horror, panic - but by happy circumstance Ken Meadows and car were there: Brian was whisked back to his office, with a blank wax sheet, while the rest of the production team sweated over the damaged stencil and finally fixed it to the duplicator (mostly with ink and faith). By which time the production expert was back with a new bottom half (of the stencil, we mean) - and the presses rolled again.

FOR WE OURSELVES HAVE SAID IT.

From the Foreword to the Journal of the Soil Conservation Service of N.S.W. (issued April, 1953). The views expressed and the facts stated are not new or unfamiliar to us, but it is gratifying to see our own Club's case for preservation of vital catchment regions given the blessing of the official journal of the Conservation Department.

"It is only when disaster of some kind overtakes a region that serious thought is given by the community in general to the cause of such disaster and the means by which it can be prevented. This is true whether the disaster be floods, dust-bowls or fire. In the case of excessive floods, as with erosion, if we are to mitigate them, the first step to take is to cease causing them. This, of course, is so obvious that it should not be necessary to mention it. Nevertheless, all too often actions which attempt to remedy the position after it has occurred are taken while no action is taken to prevent the continuation of the trouble at its source. We have in the past, by man's unwise actions on the watersheds, contributed greatly to the increasing floods and, unfortunately, we are still doing so.

The community consists not only of groups of quite different interests, but also individuals of different and even conflicting interests. Some groups in the pursuit of their interests have been actively causing erosion and have perhaps unwittingly increased floods in other areas many miles away from the scene of their activity. When it is realised how interdependent we are it will be conceded that one small sectional interest of a community should not allow the pursuit of its interest to endanger the rest of the community. For instance, the pushing of settlement into the steep, poor and unsuitable mountain watersheds laid the foundations for accelerated erosion, quicker run-off and excessive flooding, the clearing and overstocking of these poor and inaccessible areas accompanied by the frequent fire destroyed them by removing the protective cover which nature had placed there. The firing also spread to unsettled adjoining timbered country in the mountains. As these mountains form the main catchments of the streams great harm is continually done to the areas as a source of water. Rabbits, of course, followed the settler into these remote regions as his clearings made it possible for them to thrive. They hastened the deterioration. The settlement of these unsuitable areas also took a heavy toll of the men and women who fruitlessly struggled there, so nobody benefited. It so happened, also, that when the headwaters of some of the tributary creeks were cleared and burned, the creek being forced to carry greater quantities of run-off water in heavy rains, ran wild and cut out and destroyed main very nice alluvial flats lower down the creek. These useful flats would have been quite safe had the top country not been settled. The eroded material goes down in floods to silt and swell the main river.

The condition of the vegetative cover and the degree and extent of erosion on these top areas determine the amount and rate of run-off which, in turn, determines the height and frequency of floods. It also determines whether these floods will bring down useful alluvial deposits from vegetated catchment areas to deposit on the flats and enrich them, or sand, gravel and stones from the bare eroded surfaces to deposit on the good flats on the lower river. Many a good flat has

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been destroyed by the deposition of coarse erosional debris from an eroding catchment area.

It is obviously illogical to spend money remedying areas with one hand while still causing it with the other. If wise land use determinations throughout the catchment are made, the foundations can be made for flood control. It is in the highest altitudes and steepest country where the heaviest rains are received, and where the densest vegetation al protection is required. In some cases this may be achieved by grass, as on the fertile plateaux, but in the roughest country and where the soils are shallow and poor, trees are the best means of holding the country. It is essential that fires be excluded as they do untold harm, not only to the timber, but also the catchment as a source of water. Burning mountainous areas of high altitude for the sake of a fresh pick of grass for a few sheep or cattle is not in the interests of the catchment areas nor of the community in general. In these areas the worst enemy and the greatest cause of excessive flood heights is the bush fire. It is the most destructive agent and one we must bring under control.

ANNUAL MEETING WAS QUIET AND ORDERLY - First page headline in the "Tararua Tramper".
That's news in any walking club.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

Ted Phillips of the River Canoe Club reports an amazing item of news:

"If the newspapers had grabbed hold of it, it would doubtless have been super-headlined "Hiker cheats death in miraculous fall of sixty feet over mountain cliff only injuries slight cuts to leg, knee and forearm!"

But the odd part of such a glaring notice would have been that, for once in a while, the press would have been stating a fact WITHOUT usual fanciful journalistic padding. Yes, it WAS true - and it happened during the River Canoe Club's September mapping walk at West Head.

An unfortunate member of the party slipped from the track, sixty feet above the blue surface of Pittwater, and rolled, as a log does, over, over, over and OVER down a sixty-degree rock-boulder-no-scrub slope to the water below. The non-stop roll was abruptly ended when the unfortunate one crashed against a shore-line tree, which prevented his ending up with a final bash on to the rocks below. Screams of the women of the party disturbed the quietness of the bush, but they and the men present just couldn't believe their eyes when the unfortunate one straight away stood up at the tree and wiped nothing else than the daze from his forehead with a quick swipe of hand across brow.

Apart from the few cuts mentioned and a little shaking-up the unfortunate one suffered no harm. Medical examination proved that no bones were broken and he was ordered to bed for a day to allay delayed shock: this was followed by two days trying to walk (all he could do was to shuffle the feet a few inches at a time) and he suffered extreme stiffness and soreness from the knees down only for a few days.

The rucksack was ripped from its frame on the downward horror fall, but the unfortunate one vows that that sturdy "Paddymade" pack, with plenty of clothing inside, acted as a cushion and saved his life. There were five horrified witnesses - 'Gene Phillips, Beryl Trennery, Allan Clarke, John Holly, and "Uncle" Molineaux and, if you don't believe this, then ask 'em. As Allan Clarke said "It's no use telling them at the Club what happened: they'll never believe you. It had to be seen to be believed!"

But if you really want to know what it feels like to roll fifty feet down a mountainside, then - see Ted Phillips.

On the weekend October 23/24/25 Operation Loveaduck was launched, as Brian Anderson, Jim Hooper and others set out to voyage the Middle Wollondilly by rubber dinghy. Baggage for four men was contained in two kerosene tins. We hope for further data on the exploit later.

Frank Rigby squatted on a rock near the top of Devil's Hole, and promptly complained that his brains felt cold. After a moment of surprised comment on his unconventional design, he was dubbed the "Renault" man.

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THE MONSTER OF ERSKINE GAP.

By Jim Brown.

Joining Loch Ness and Mount Everest, the Blue Labyrinth has now acquired a fabulous monster. In a Sydney newspaper of October 12th it was recorded that a party of soldiers carrying out a cross-country march from Ingleburn to Katoomba had been altered concerning a hairy creature reported by timber cutters to inhabit the vicinity of Mount Harris (on King's Tableland road south from Wentworth Falls). This evoked quite a deal of further comment in the newspapers. The Army, traditionally stolid and unmoved by vapourings, commented that its trans-Labyrinth marathon would not take special arms to deal with the "monster of Erskine Gap".

It is quite plain, of course, why "Erskine Gap" has to be dragged in, whether it exists as a topographical feature or not. Places like Loch Ness and Mount Everest have a certain glamour of situation and nomenclature. Had the Pressmen been aware of the term "Blue Labyrinth" that would probably have been ideal, conveying almost mythological implications of Minotaurs and Ancient Crete: but Mt. Harris is such a stupid name, lacking in drama, so commonplace and plebian. The "Monster of Mount Harris" sounds quite absurd, like "The Phantom of Emoh Ruo", or "The Specture of Railway Hotel" or "The Ghost of Jones Street".

We have the greatest admiration for the monster which can survive on Blue Labyrinth country, especially if he be a carnivore. Even a herbivorous monster, on a diet of prickly moses, lambertia and oxy-

lobium, leavened by occasional bracken and geebung, would have just cause for being as wild as wild can be. The most monstrous thing we have noticed in the Labyrinth was a fellow walker skinning a snake at lunch time.

At first the vague description "hairy" seemed to contain a clue, but, on mature consideration and after some tactful enquiry, it appears that our hairiest walkers haven't ventured into that country lately. Reluctantly we have abandoned this facile solution, but would abjure any bearded walker to avoid the area lest over-enthusiastic monster hunters are at large.

At the timber cutters' camps along the King's Tableland road one may see vast numbers of bottles with fascinating labels: at the present time, after a drought winter, there is very little water for breaking down purposes in the Labyrinth, and this promotes the theory that the monster of Erskine Gap was conjured out of a bottle, in much the same way that Aladdin produced the genie from the lamp.

Of course, there is one sure thing. There is a monster which may appear in any forested country. It is all consuming, its breath is smoke, red flame stabs from its nostrils. Usually it is born of a small sliver of wood, tipped with a compound of phosphorus. It is a killer.

CASUALTY LIST FOR SIX-HOUR'S DAY WEEK-END (By John Bookluck.)

Trip: Katoomba - Splendour Rock - Cox's River - Megalong - Medlow Bath.

Leaders: Roley Cotter and Peggy Bransdon.

Tally of Casualties: The Whole of the Younger Set, which proves the older members can still take it.

(a) External: Judy Wagg: Only half an hour from Katoomba developed blister elephantus (left heel), followed by another (right heel) in the morning. Dr. Cotter (hon. degree) attended.

Heather Joyce: (Another prospective) decided she needed another pair of glasses - Fate did away with the previous set mysteriously on Sunday night.

Grace Aird: (Prospective) actually unscathed externally; punishment - 5 hrs. carrying Judy's boot (1 boot is heavier than J. Aird's tent). Others who got the boot were: Yvonne Renwick, Alan Wilson, Clem Hallstrom, Eric Adcock, Ron Parkes.

(b) Damage: J. Bookluck - Sleeping bag badly burnt all over by shower of coals from camp fire, caused by exploding stone. So loud the report the various reactions were:
 Claude Haynes: An explosion at Guthega.
 Roley Cotter } Woomera Atom Blast
 Peg Bransdon }
 Enid Hallstrom: Ten tons T.N.T.
 Clem Hallstrom: (Who was asleep at the time) - Atom bomb fell near his home.

- (c) Internal: Judy Wagg, Jean Aird, Grace Aird, Heather Joyce, Yvonne Renwick, Beverley Price: most of all to Allan Wilson, John Edwards, Eric Adcock, but NOT J. Bookluck. All the above suffered a bilious attack of delayed-action type, reactions generally took place on Wednesday in Sydney. Was it the apple pie and cream at the Farm House, or was it the water in the creek on the tourist track up to Medlow Bath??
The old foxes were unaffected - they had neither.

.....
An atmosphere of unseemly hilarity prevailed at the slide night of October 23rd. The usual cries of "Ah-h-h-h!" and "Mighty!" and "Bono!" were supplemented by hiccups from young Julie Frost, which called forth the Schafer request "Please remove that duck!" One of George Grey's slides of swans at Taronga brought an urgent "Ooh, look - the black one's sunk!" While Dave Brown explained the figure in a view from Fitzroy Falls: "That's John White and Mark Morton".

.....
So help me, this is true, When Dave Brown's party left the car at The Summit at 11.30 on October 16th, the usual collection was taken up for car fares - and it proved to be £1 too much. Now hold your seats! Everyone claimed to have contributed the correct amount! During the two days that followed, no one weakened. What is wrong with the Club's walkers?

DANGEROUS GAME.

The "Tararua Trampler" of some months ago records :

"It is with deep regret that the N.Z. Insurance Company Limited have found it necessary to reduce their benefits to mountain club members. They state that the loss ratio since its inception is about 200% and have therefore eliminated the death benefit altogether, and extended the weekly benefits limit of eight weeks to all pastimes."

Must be a tough game if Insurance Companies can't make it pay off.

MORE ON THE "MONSTER".

.....
Since the original reports of the "Monster" of Erskine Gap, Press reports have tended to convert them into Warrigals. This is far more reasonable. Warrigals were in the Blue Labyrinth years ago - in fact some of them made a map of the area. More than five years ago, on our first crossing of the Labyrinth from south to north, we found two Warrigals had written their names on the discs of the trig. point at Euroka, overlooking "Erskine Gap". If any Warrigals are at large in the Labyrinth at present, we hope they will be spared.

.....
The N.S.W.G.R. is evidently not alone with its conducted hikes. We note from the Walks Programme of the Victorian Mountain Tramping Club: "Railways Mystery Hike - led by F.V.W.C." A much more intriguing entry on the same programme is "Annual Gold Prospecting and Barbecue weekend".

IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

Morning papers on October 21st reported an operation carried out by expert gynaecologists on a lioness at Taronga Park. The surgery was performed with all mod. cons. including anaesthetics, and no doubt a stiff fee (including danger money) was paid to the sawbones... However on the previous weekend Dave Brown's party from the Mini Mini Range operated on an eagle at the junction of Gibraltar Creek with the Cox, free, gratis, and without publicity. It happened like this.

The party found the wedge-tail squatting forlornly on rocks along the edge of the Cox, with the talons of one foot caught in a rabbit trap. Evidently it had happened some days previously, for the bird was too weak to fly. This posed a problem: plainly death by starvation was only a matter of time, yet no one was very happy about approaching those razor claws, or the curved beak, or the bent wings.

However Dr. Frank Barr took photographs (for medicinal reasons only, of course): and Dr. Richard Hoffman administered the anaesthetic (with a six-foot pole of driftwood). Thereupon Drs. David Brown and Kenneth Meadows, with nurses Sheila Binns, Beryl Christiansen and Kath Brown hovering in the background, removed the foreign body from the patient.

For a time post-operative complications were feared, and at one stage it was thought that the anaesthetist had been over-enthusiastic. However the patient rallied after a time, and after a convalescent period of about two hours, took off, flying slowly at a low level down the river.

WILD FLOWERS AND OUR FEELINGS.

By Clem Hallstrom.

Nature's way in the display of her wild flowers is something which can always give great pleasure. There are hardships of life and adversities which mean mental turmoil, and in this struggle the thought may sometimes arise: "Is life worth living?" Each and every one of us knows how difficult it is to have tranquillity always about us, but bush-walking provides an outlet so that we can reach an awareness of beauty and realise the worth of living. Mental communion with a flowering landscape conveys an answer of lasting peace, magnetises us to the surroundings, and plays a part in that tranquillity we need.

Spring introduces itself as a dream, but is the awakening from the cold and drab winter months. From the slumber of Winter a new life is born. Spring heralds the life of colour: the greenery of young shrubs sprouting; the flowers taking form on more mature bushes, all adding to our admiration of the display of August and September.

The wild flowers and the surroundings that are in harmony with them know of a calm and this calm is a nourishing attribute to our contentment. From the necessary reserves and wild places comes a peaceful ecstasy that one feels is real living.

FEDERATION NOTES - OCTOBER MEETING.

By Allen A. Strom.

FORESTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL: The F.A.C. would be pleased to have a representative from the Federation at Council meetings. Any bushwalker who is free on the Third Thursday of the month at 2.30 p.m. willing to represent the Federation and prepared to report on matters of interest should contact either Paul Barnes (UB1351) or Allen Strom (WB2528).

ROYAL DUTCH TOURING ASSOCIATION has asked for photos on Australian Bushwalking. These will be published in Holland. This was left for attention by Miss Joy Russell.

RANGER PATROL. Following discussion on the activities of the Patrol, the President suggested that bushwalkers could give vital and active assistance by joining the body: Secretary is Ken Roberts, 3 Richmond Avenue, Cremorne.

PROPOSED WARRUMBUNGLES NATIONAL PARK: Messrs. Gordon McInness and F.A. Pallin have been recommended to the Department of Lands for inclusion on the Trust, if and when set up.

FEDERATION BAIL, 1954: Organiser required. Anyone willing to undertake the work please contact Paul Barnes (UB1351).

CONSERVATION REPORT covered the following items ..

- (a) Efforts by Forestry Commission to gain control of Morton Primitive Area as a Flora Reserve.
- (b) Map of proposed Park on Kariong Peninsula (copies from A. Strom - WB2528)
- (c) Bungonia Gorge - report on destruction to panorama from Caves area and commencement of effort to have the Gorge declared a National Monument and thus prevent destruction by mining company.
- (d) Budderoo - map of proposed Park covering Barren Grounds and Budderoo (copies from A. Strom).
- (e) Bouddi Natural Park - appeal for bushwalkers to assist voluntary patrols in Park (contact A. Strom) and notice of Work Party on October 24/25th.

CONFERENCE ON BUSHFIRE MATTERS was held on October 1st. A number of matters were discussed the most important being the arrangement recently made between Sutherland Shire Bushfire Fighting Organisation and the National Park Trust. Bushwalkers in the National Park Bushfire Patrols will be co-ordinated with this liaison. All bushwalkers wishing to assist the Bushfire Patrols in National Park and Garawarra Park are requested to contact Paul Barnes (UB1351) without delay.

If the Trustees of Colong Caves Reserve are interested in the small dint appearing in one of the stalactites near the Caves entrance they should be referred to Elsie Bruggy. Pathological examination of any hair or scalp found adhering to the formation will establish identity beyond doubt.



PADDY MADE



SHOPPING LISTS ARE IN SEASON.

Already the prudent ones are going into town armed with Christmas shopping lists. Each list is conditioned by the character and habits of its owner. A school girl's list might run: "Soap for Mum - Razor blade for Dad - Hanky for Aunt Clarice", and a harrassed Mother's list - well, there are sufficient Mothers in the Club these days to be able to imagine it. They probably have one in the handbag right now.

The walker's list is probably as comprehensive as any, being a jumble of gifts for friends and preparation for that trip to Tassie or the Alps or wherever it may be.

Whether you are the careful type that works with lists or the haphazard kind that just thinks of things, you might note that Paddy's workroom has a full programme for the next two months. We can squeeze in a few repairs but please note that we shall positively not be able to accept any repairs or alterations after 30th November. Your co-operation would be appreciated. Sorry, folks, but things is tough!

NEW LINE.

Petrol pressure stoves. Weight 16 ozs. 5" high, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter - complete with small aluminium saucepan.

Price 56/-.

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