

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to the Sydney
Bush Walkers, C/- Ingersoll Hall, 256 Crown St., Sydney
Box No.4476, G.P.O., SYDNEY

No. 253

DECEMBER, 1955.

Price 6d.

Editor: Dot Butler, Boundary Road,
Wahroonga (JW2208)
Business Manager: Jack Gentle

Sales & Subs.: Jess Martin
Typed by: Dot Butler
Production: Barbara Brown

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AT OUR NOVEMBER MEETING

- A.G.C.

Because, it was rumoured, of a social counter-attraction not many came into the club room for the meeting of November 11th. So few, in fact, that at 8 p.m. the President and Secretary were counting heads for a quorum. By 8.30 this had materialised and shortly after there were 34 present.

One new member, Geoff Broadhead, was welcomed by the President.

The recent Conservation Conference called by the Chief Guardian of Fauna was reported and discussed. The activities of our representatives (Tom Moppett, Malcolm McGregor and Jim Brown) were the subject of favourable comment. Tom and Malcolm were members of a committee who reported on the implementation of the Conference's proposals at the previous meeting, and together with Myles Dunphy did much to influence the trend of the decisions. Although they did not recommend the complete banning of the sale of wildflowers because they did not think the conference would agree, the conference after long discussion exceeded their recommendations and voted in favour of the ban. The proposals for a National Parks Authority were accepted, and control of the use of firearms strongly supported. On this latter subject the Conservation Secretary will be glad to hear of any instances of careless use.

Room stewards appointed for December: Brian Harvey and Geof Wagg.

THE 1955 RUDOLF CUP
(WITH A DIFFERENCE)

S.B.W.

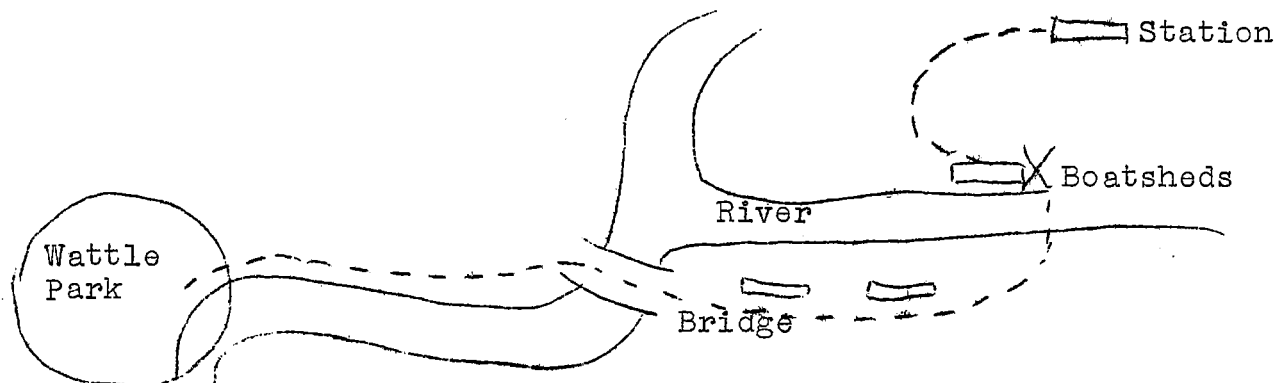
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C.B.W.

BOAT RACES DURING DAY, TO BE FOLLOWED BY BARBECUE IN EVENING.

DATE: SUNDAY, 18th DECEMBER.

PLACE: WATTLE PARK, IN NATIONAL PARK, AUDLEY.



WHERE TO MEET:

- (a) PEASANTS WHO TRAVEL BY TRAIN, MEET AT BOATSHEDS AT 10.30 or 1030 hrs. (TRAIN LEAVES CENTRAL 9.21 or 0921 hrs.)
- (b) PLUTOCRATS WHO COME BY CAR, MEET AT WATTLE PARK AT 10.30 a.m. or 1030 hrs.

COST: Approx 7/6 (INCLUDING HIRE OF BOATS AND PURCHASE OF BEASTS).

EVENING ARRANGEMENTS: FOR THOSE WHO COME BY TRAIN, TRANSPORT WILL BE AVAILABLE BACK TO SUTHERLAND.

HOT WATER: KERO. TINS NEAR FIRE WILL MAINTAIN SUPPLY OF BOILING WATER (WE HOPE).

WOOD: THOSE WHO COME BY CAR - IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF THEY WOULD BRING ALONG A LOG. ("LOG" IN THIS SENSE MEANS WOOD, NOT OTHER CLUB MEMBER).

WARNING!

NO S.B.W. MEMBER WILL BE PERMITTED TO HOLD ANY C.B.W. MEMBER UNDER THE WATER FOR MORE THAN 10 MINUTES.

THOSE INTERESTED PLEASE CONTACT

B. ANDERSON, Esq.

B0259, Ext.302

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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AUSTRALIA MY STUDIO

- Ray Bean

I Hear the Whistling

We stopped the truck in a dry creek bed somewhere near Broome.
 I think by mutual accord all three occupants welcomed the change from
 the everlasting travel over sand, the spinifex, the fantastic shapes
 of termite mounds passing on either side, the dust and glare, and the
 curious Baobab tree (*Adansonia Gregorii*) - Pronounced Bo-ab in the
 north.

In the creek beds (dry, of course; you don't travel this country
 in "the wet") things were different; there were also gum trees.

Being a bushwalker I shed the truck quickly and began to walk.
 It mattered not in which direction, it all looked the same which ever
 way one turned, although I found myself headed for a group of Baobab
 trees where the water during the last wet had scoured out a shallow
 area leaving the roots of the trees exposed.

The termite mounds stood mutely like misshapen gravestones in an
 overcrowded cemetery, and rising above them were two Baobabs, one a
 well proportioned bottle shape with bare wildly flung branches
 twisting upward like flames, and the other a simple massive column
 riven at the top into two great outstretched arms.

The glare on the white sand was blinding, and with my camera at the ready I began to circle the area looking for composition that would suit the stark dramatic beauty of the place. Taking some shots I then turned my attention to the third tree, a "young" one (giant examples are computed to be milleniums old!) gracefully rising from exposed roots into a symmetrical tapering column with slightly curved sides, the branches dividing and reaching gracefully upward to finish in long fine fingers from which all leaves had fallen. The nut or fruit still remained like Christmas tree decorations against the brilliant blue sky.

The Baobab is the ogre of the arboreal world, there being no limit to which the old trees may go in ugly contortion and vulgar gracelessness. The young trees may grow with grace for a while but seem unable to resist a boisterous urge to clown.

I was struck with a feeling of awe in this place. Perhaps it was the presence of the termite mounds. You could see in them anything within the orbit of your imagination - animals of all sorts, groups of people, nuns everywhere, kings and queens in coronation robes and crowns tilted at unkingly angles. Those people who will persist in seeing kangaroos and things in the cliff faces at Katoomba would have a wonderful time here.

I walked away from the graceful Baobab, having photographed it, and some months later it confronted me from the front cover of a woman's weekly magazine being held by a fellow commuter on a city bound suburban train. What a contrast in location.

Back to the two trees I went in search of yet another photograph, but I seemed to have exhausted all possibilities and was enjoying the warmth of the sun when I became aware of the whistling. There was a high pitched continuous whistling. It hadn't just begun, or had it? It just seemed to infiltrate my awareness. It was all about me persistent. I began looking for its source, which was not difficult because it came from a nearby termite mound. I got within inches before I doubted that it was there, and then found it had gone somewhere else; not stopping, just a continuous single note that changed its position of origin.

Then I began to remember bits of stories told by drovers and bushmen of the inland about a mysterious whistling that is sometimes heard but never traced to any form of life. Naturalists, too, have heard it but have never been able to track down what makes the sound, although they no doubt have theories, and until they are sure will go on answering the questioner frankly, "I don't know."

It occurred to me that I had in my grasp a rare opportunity to add to the knowledge of mankind, and so I set about methodically tracking down the cause of the sound, discounting as I went obvious possibilities like birds, crickets, and such things. Should there have been another to watch my crawling, running, creeping and frustration amongst those infernal termite mounds they must have thought me in the final stages of a perish. Many times I got, I thought, within an inch or two of the whistling, but as soon as I

KEEP UP YOUR VITALITY
ON WALKS WITH

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CENOVIS YEAST (CONTAINS WHOLE VITAMIN B COMPLEX, ALSO D,E,F
AND H.)

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BASE YOUR HOLIDAY FOOD LISTS ON WHOLESOME FOODS

WIDE RANGE OF DRIED FRUITS, NUTS, BISCUITS AND DRIED FRUIT
SWEETS.

FROM

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,

13 H U N T E R S T R E E T, S Y D N E Y.

thought it was just a little to this side or that, it was coming from another place yards away, or from all places at once as though the air was saturated with it. As my frustration grew I rushed about more wildly from one place to another, and then with grim determination I would check myself and begin again, listening, creeping, crawling.....

One thing I did establish, in my own mind anyway; the whistling is there, but what causes it, "I don't know."

FEDERATION REPORT - NOVEMBER

- Allen Strom.

A letter was received from the FEDERATION OF MOUNTAIN CLUBS OF N.Z. relative to visitors from Australia using Huts in Alpine Areas without prior permission or payment of the proscribed fee. The letter asked that the practice be discontinued and that in future, all intending visitors should contact the Secretary of the Federation at P.O. Box 1604, Wellington, N.Z.

The C.S.I.R.O. is seeking a BOTANICAL ASSISTANT for collecting in Papua-New Guinea, and handling botanical collections at headquarters at Canberra.

RIFLE RANGE NEAR PATONGA; Members of Clubs are asked to continue

6.

to protest to the Department of Lands against the establishment of the Rifle Range on the Waratah Patch near Warrah Sanctuary and within the proposed area for the Kariong National Park. Mrs. P. Goulding (W.E.A. Ramblers) collected 122 signatures to a petition against the proposal. These were from Patonga residents to the Department of Lands.

SEARCH AND RESCUE SECTION: Clubs are requested to speed up the supply of names on revised Contact Lists. Practice Search will be held over the week-end March 9/10/11th, 1956 in The Oaks-Warragamba Area. It is hoped to organise another practice search shortly, in co-ordination with the Police Rescue Section.

BUSHFIRE FIGHTING ORGANISATION: The organisers have been very disappointed with the response and make an urgent plea for more names. At the Practice and Demonstration of Firefighting held at Heathcote on November 6th, only fourteen bushwalkers were present.

An interview held with Mr. H. Messer, Chairman, The Bushfire Committee, had revealed that when the Board of Fire Commissioners take charge of an area, the VOLUNTEER BUSHFIRE FIGHTING BRIGADES can only operate with the permission of the Board. This explains the situation on the Blue Mts.

Following a discussion upon the success of a WILD LIFE SHOW in Western Australia, it was decided to seek an interview with the Chief Guardian of Fauna with a hope that a similar show might be arranged in Sydney.

BARREN GROUNDS: The Minister for Lands has agreed to the dedication of about 4,000 acres on the Barren Grounds as a Faunal Reserve. This is the culmination of a lengthy campaign. Now that the neighbouring Budderoo Peninsula has been largely reserved for the Preservation of Flora and Fauna, it is planned to work for the addition of the Budderoo Lands to the Barren Grounds as a larger Faunal Reserve. A Faunal Reserve is the most secure and satisfactory type of reserve that we possess at present.

The lease to mine marble at WOMBEYAN CAVES has been granted. A number of bodies were called together by the National Trust to discuss ways and means of improving the methods of operation adopted by the Dept. of Mines when issuing licenses for MINING AND PROSPECTING IN SANCTUARIES AND RESERVES. A committee has been appointed to undertake suitable action.

Congratulations to Ruth and Dick Pier on the birth of a daughter.

FOR ALL YOUR TRANSPORT PROBLEMS

CONTACT

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JENOLAN STATE FOREST	20/-	" "	" " "
CARLON'S FARM	10/-	" "	" " "

WE WILL BE PLEASED TO QUOTE OTHER TRIPS OR SPECIAL PARTIES
 ON APPLICATION.

I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE..... -Geof Wagg.

.....and my, what a vast selection of dirty rascals.

Transport was the big question. The main piece of bod-moving equipment was to be the Puttmobile making its maiden voyage, and at one stage I distinctly remember we had exactly the right number to fill it. Then we had it packed tight with one roosting on the stove (the hot seat) and another perched like a parrot in the spare tyre. We had resigned ourselves to this when the transport suddenly increased until we had only one passenger to the square acre of upholstery. As the day grew closer, though, the panic subsided until we had a neat convoy of 2 bikes, 2 cars and one (the one and only) Puttmobile. All of these were to make their way more or less independently to Drury's Farm. Some started early and some started late, but miraculous as it may seem when one regards Garth's motor bike with Stitt's critical eye, we all arrived on or before 7.30 Saturday morn. We thought we'd meet up at Tomerong with Don and Tina who were honeymooning in that vicinity, but we didn't. We also thought we might meet Pat and Ian up from Canberra, but at the last minute Pat sent a letter beautifully illustrated with a diagram showing how many pieces the bike was in, so we didn't meet them either.

Seven-thirty at Drury's Farm was a murky morning. The Drurys were putting a bullock team through its paces while Hoop hovered at a safe distance climbing trees and balancing on fence posts angling for a cine shot. It was about this time we became aware of a Presence in our midst, wearing an indescribable hat conjured out of yak pelt - blessing money - proclaiming holy days - and asking people could they please tell him which way is east. It was none other than the Dalai Lama who has an answer to every question and never uses a word under five syllables.

The day still lowered at us and Pigeon House was a dim blue silhouette in a dull grey sky as the Puttmobile and Rigby Renault travellers set out in serried ranks like straying sheep towards the farther clearing where the bike travellers and those in the Doctor's Dodge had hid themselves. We found them in fine spirits and half full of breakfast sausage, so while they ate Pete regaled us with how the corrugated road had reduced Garth's bike almost to a palpitating heap, and Garth wandered round with pieces of bike denying everything.

The vanguard, that is every one except Dot, Stitt and Garth, moved away about ninish along the timber road towards our climbing ridge. My directions for this tricky piece of navigation had been multitudinous. Paddy said "First go west with a bit or north in it, then north with a bit of west in it, and described to me in detail every bridge and crossing. So propelled by the confidence all this advice bestowed we strode onward. Soon it was time to take stock. Here was the river - here was the bridge; Hmm...."now Doctor's Creek must be just around this bend. I'll have a look." I had a look and concluded that our ridge was just across the creek, but when I returned Stitt and Co. had showed up and were claiming that our ridge lay on this side of the creek. Hmm! "Most destroying to the confidence," I thought, "However one must stick up for one's rights however wrong they are" - and I led off towards my ridge while the insurgents followed up their own.

We crossed the creek on a nice greasy steep-sloping log - or most of us crossed I should say, because as I was mounting the opposite slope I heard a tremendous splash!!....and turned just in time to see a plume of water rising eight feet into the air. Colin it was. Hobnails for ever and other New Zealand curses I'm sure.

Our party of nineteen minus three straggled and struggled to the ridge top. No rest - we had a seance instead with Hoop and others incanting over the Holy Map (blessed by the Dalai Lama) and were amazed to find that the ridge ran in the correct direction. Could I have been right after all? Well, well. Press on. After we had been pressing on for a short while Pigeon House came into view straight ahead. This was fantastic. I must have been right. These things do happen I suppose. The feet and minutes slowly passed with a steady uphill grind until, Lo and Behold, as though the Lama had produced them out of his hat, the three truants appeared making our party sixteen plus three.

Soon after this we stood all together under the frowning brow of the rocky face and thought "Lunch before or after?" We decided on a

compromise with a snack first to give us strength to climb, but leaving enough appetite to call us back. A good theory anyway. We turned our faces to the slope and found it steep and getting steeper. The top was high and seemed to be getting higher, and the wind was blowing and definitely getting blowier. We thought it might storm or snow. Snow - we thought of him and our minds drifted away to where he was reclining on the sungold sands of Era. The next we knew we were almost bumping our noses on the rock face. Well, the present problem was to hand and we set to. Ross knew the conventional way up and led off to it, but Dot was determined to pioneer a route. She did too, proclaiming it all to be cat's meat as Col and I clung to slabs and scrabbled with hobnails, and Don and Digby doggedly followed foot and hand, and the wind bullied and buffeted us all. On top the gale unleashed its final fury so that we clung to rocks for support as we viewed the view. This was extensive but dimmed by the grey sky light, and diffused by the squalls of rain sweeping up the valley. Photography was virtually hopeless, so with little other temptation to linger we soon turned back to lunch. Dot pioneered the route down too, but most of us felt it would be advantageous to know two routes and took the easy way down. By the time we had returned for lunch the wind had died and the clouds had all blown away - to Era I suppose.

The sun shone brightly all that afternoon as we wound down Longfella Ridge to the Clyde River. On the clean green clearing below we sat admiring this aspect of the Castle and gloating over the wonderful weather that seemed in store for the morrow while we waited for the stragglers. Soon it became evident that our party was minus three again, but Pete said he'd wait and put them on the track up Yadbora Creek, so as the hour grew late we moved off, minus four.

Yadbora seemed a fairly open kind of creek, though fortunately with plenty of shrubbery at first as the fifteen odd bods snuk past the homestead where we feared we'd be not welcome. The big clearings on the banks gave good clear views of the Castle which now seemed to be very close. I'd just been retrieved from a side creek up which I'd seemed inclined to stray when we came upon a veritable village of tents, some Rucksack and some Ramblers I believe, and also our three strays who'd come down a different ridge and arrived before us. We were now plus three minus one, for Pete was still waiting patiently (?) back on the Clyde. The plea of "Camp - Aw mighty campsite," had been arising now as we came to each fresh clearing, so here I not very reluctantly allowed myself to be won over about three quarters of a mile from our avowed objective, so long as we had a seven o'clock start next morning (what hope!) and we added our tents to the slum beneath the trees. Looking up between the trees we caught a glimpse of the reflected glory of the sunset and thought absently of the minus one sitting cold and getting colder at the foot of Longfella Ridge, waiting for those who would never come. The Dalai Lama must have thought so too, because as campfires flared in the dusk and some brave ones returned from an icy swim he was suddenly noticed to be missing, having transported himself back to the Clyde to save a soul. But to our consternation the first to appear was the minus one himself, who must have passed his rescuer somewhere en route and mistaken him for a straying yak, while the Holy One was probably so concerned with the Otherness of Things, or possibly with the tea Dot was preparing for

him in the sacred vessel covered with charcoal and coated with yak grease, that he didn't notice a thing. Eventually, of course, Minut One No.2 returned and brought us greetings from the people at the homestead whom he described as peasants reeking with offal and offspring, so inbred that all they could say was "Dhaww."

Everyone was just relaxing after tea when it started to pour with rain which sent us scuttling to bed. What had happened to the beautiful weather we were expecting next day? "You never know your luck," I thought, and began counting starters for the morrow. Beryl was reluctantly retiring with a bad attack of gym boots; Doctor Bob was feeling slightly out of nick, and the Admiral was shipwrecked. The ship that was his undoing was a ladyship, Dawn, and according to the Doc, a destroyer.

The next day began at a bleary five-thirty with a semi-conscious peer at the weather. The evening's rain had cleaned the air and the chill wind was, at present anyway, blowing us no harm. I lit the fire and started waking the people who I thought wouldn't mind. First Grace, then Digby, then Brian. I could hear Ross talking so I knew his tent would soon be awake. Then I woke Grace again and saw Dot getting the breakfast for Garth and Pete and Putto. She apologised for this show of domesticity by explaining that she hadn't done anything towards getting meals on the previous day. Presently the Dalai Lama struggled out, and even Hoop was awake and giving moral support to Beryl who was cooking for him and Digby. I woke Grace up again and gave her some breakfast, then looked to see what progress. Joan was mumbling grumpily about people using all her water, while Jean wandered about with a mug hooked on one finger and a food bag on another trying to remember why she had given Grace nearly all her sugar.

Time was mooching on - it was a quarter past six. So I woke Grace up again and gave her the rest of her breakfast.....and emptied her out of her sleeping bag. Then I noticed three other offending forms still encased in superdown while Dot called vainly for them to come to breakfast. This clearly called for stern measures, but I doubted if I was equal to the task. First I seized on Putto, who fortunately happened to be ticklish, and once wrung from his sleeping bag decided he might as well stay up. Next was Stitt who was definitely ticklish but had to have his bag confiscated because of a distressing homing tendency. Last came Garth, who twice forewarned seemed to be about eight armed (twice four are eight), and put up a terrific battle, but being in a sleeping bag must be a great disadvantage because I even managed to get him out. With the time at a quarter to seven I emptied Grace out again and prepared to move off. At precisely seven o'clock the party of one minus eighteen moved off, followed by the ribald cheers of the peasantry.

The river shrubbery was still wet with the night's rain. The sky was once more overcast but didn't seem seriously threatening, and I trotted along whistling absently, engrossed with the map. Here is the bend, this is the clearing, then that must be the ridge. I climbed a little way and sat under a tree wringing out my socks and contemplating the Otherness of Things. One week you get a party without a leader....next you get a leader without a party....there's just no system in it. Presently I heard some "Coo's" from down the

creek and replied vigorously, only to find when the coo-ers emerged that it was the Rucksack crowd.

"Have you seen a party?" I asked, "...about fourteen of them?"

"Oh, your crowd," replied Norm Allen, "I saw them going up a ridge about half a mile back."

"Ye Gods!" I thought, "The poor little lambs have gone astray." I turned to ask how long ago this was, but the others had gone and I looked like being one minus eighteen all day. For five minutes I waited in perplexity, then I heard Colin's voice rumbling in the distance, answered by Dot's growing nearer, till one by one my lambs filed into view. Now we were nineteen minus four, which was as it should be, and I was most relieved.

The ridge was open and climbed at a most reasonable angle to the southwest corner of the Castle's lower plateau, and here whom should we meet but the Rucksack mob taking a breather before skittering along under this first cliff face to a spot where an ancient landslide makes it possible to climb up to the tail. They didn't stop long however, and we set off after them because, after all, it is nice to have someone else to blame if you get a bit off the track. And for the most part it was almost a track while we followed along underneath the cliff line, but when we came to the last climb up to the tail we found we were wallowing waist deep in wiry boronia bushes. However, it's wonderful what a path twenty odd people can make, because we returned in our own tracks with much less trouble.

Under the steep broken rock line of the tail Dot found she still had the urge to pioneer a route, so she and most of the party began scaling up a very promising piece of cliff, while some of us who felt less intrepid followed Norm Allen and his crew through a sort of squeeze hole to the other side of the narrow barrier, then up an easy sloping dirt-filled crevice to the top. When we had got about half way up we heard noises below and saw the rest of the party coming along. They had found their piece of cliff unsafe without a rope, and squeeze through the squeeze shortly after us.

From the top of the tail we looked only slightly upward to the top of the Castle, but down a long, long way into Oakey Creek. Poor Jean, who was starting to feel the effort, thought she might sit here and wait for us to come back, but a bit of pulling from Stitt and pushing from me and we got our dear Great Auntie over the worst of it. Colin, too, got into a predicament rather like Jack Wren's story of Gram'pa with his foot caught in the bear trap, when his boot became wedged in a crack. He couldn't get it out either, so we unlaced his boot and set him free.

So one way or another, and with one thing and another, we found ourselves on top of the Castle. From the instant you set foot on the broad flat top the rocky eminence of the Pidgeon House draws your eye (and camera lense) like a magnet. Away and away across the low plateau of Byangee, across the valley of the Clyde with its clearings and homestead till you meet the ridge, then up to the cliff line, up

the steep sloping sides to the crown of rock, and behind it the sea. Northward lay Pidgeon House Gorge, south and west were mountains, hazy blue and dimmed with cloud shadows - an immense vista, and yet too far away to hold the eye which slowly reverted to its resting place - Pidgeon House.

But enough of looking; we wanted lunch. Some hardy types found sufficient will power to consult the names in the cairn before they ate, and discovered that Jean and Dot, Joan and Grace, appeared to be, from the record, the first four females to set foot on the summit. Quite a distinction. Colin and helpers also built an enormous fire whose smoke was intended to prove to the yokels in the valley, who believed the Castle to be unscalable, that we really had done it. Unfortunately, though, the wind dispersed the smoke so quickly that we could scarcely see it from a few yards away. The same wind carried a rich smell of singed hair and eyebrows over to the others having their lunch.

We had taken four hours up from the creek to the summit, so, calculating our return journey, this didn't leave us much time for aesthetic reflection after lunch. However, returning in our tracks of the morning we found required much less effort, being gravity-assisted, but it took almost as long. When it came to sidling under the cliff we took the high road while the Rucksack mob took the one lower down, and we certainly came out on top by about ten minutes. So, carried away by the exhilaration of an energetic day with the people we like best, we were running and singing as loud as we had breath to, down the ridge to Yadbora Creek - we thought. Then our balloon was pricked. "We're on the wrong ridge," shouted Snow. Suddenly it seemed to grow dark as the glow faded from our enthusiasm. More effort, we thought. The two New Zealanders and Pete were already at the foot of the spur when we told them, so they just kept crashing down the creek, but we crossed to the right route; even so we were a little behind them at the bottom. It was here the joyful thought came to us - Let's get the Admiral, the piker; bet he's been up to mischief - tied our sleeping bags in knots or let down our tents - but whatever it is we'll revenge ourselves first and discover afterwards. With cat-like tread we snuk along, crossing crossings with a minimum of splash, stalking our prey. We were all together when the tents came in sight, and there the Admiral was relaxing on a log. As we roared down the slope he sprang up, (it must be dreadful to have a guilty conscience), but he was too late. Seize him! Tickle him! Take his shoes! Throw him in the creek! (Save his watch), Pour cold water on his manly chest!

"You fiends!" shouts the Admiral, "That's the very water I slaved to carry up from the river for you."

"Don't tell stories," we answered and continued the treatment. Of course the really funny part, as we discovered later, was that he probably had carried the water for us, although Dawn says he made her help him.

That night while the little stars arced widely across the sky, the nineteen minus none slept the untroubled sleep of exhausted innocence, even the Sacred One foregoing for once his night-long

vigil and meditation on the Otherness of Things.

And the next day we returned, all the way to Drury's while the sun shone. The oldest Drury was out to meet us and was inclined to be a little sceptical of our having climbed his mountain.

"Hew lit a fire on top, didchew?" he roared. "Well, Hi didn't see no fire." (The Castle isn't visible from Drury's). Then he exploded to the half-startled Beryl, "Hew didn't climb thet mountain, didchew?" Beryl, who was nearly bursting with stifled laughter, shook her head. "Hi didn't think hew would!" he shouted triumphantly, then waving a hand towards Grace who was some distance ahead he said in a confidential bellow, "She's a fine tall girl. Wen Hi saw 'er walking so straight an' tall Hi thought it were Joe's girl Clarissa. Y'know Joe, 'oo lives hup the back?" gesturing with thumb over his shoulder. We said we didn't know Joe, but showed him Jean who'd been chortling in the background, and told him this was Grace's sister.

"Haw!" he roared and thumped me on the shoulder, "Jist uz well Hi never said nothin' wrong about 'er!" Then we all laughed, I picked myself up off the ground, and we went off still chuckling amongst ourselves, a happy party of nineteen minus none.

Well, that should rightly be the end of this story, and so it shall be, but one can't help mentioning how the gallant Puttmobile, which had pulled it's load so well all this way, collapsed near the top of an enormous hill just out of Milton, and how the Dalai Lama declared that we had angered the Gods who dwell on the Mountain Top and that the situation obviously called for a human sacrifice; and how we decided that the Admiral would do anyway and sacrificed him by the roadside, tying him to a post of the safety fence with a blood-red cross emblazoned on his forehead and a minus sign on his chin, (It should have been the other way round); and how he stopped three cars with his piteous crys of "Help!!" until Colin told us that seeing the sacrifice hadn't worked he was going to send for the N.R.M.A., and how all except Ross and Colin left the happy communal atmosphere of the truck to hitch home in lonely twos and threes.

And just as the very last word we must admit that Garth's machine rattled precariously on, through mist and moonbeams, through blinding rain and fog, all the way back to Sydney, while Doctor Bob's car had two, or was it three, blowouts, and young Donnie who was with him along with four others, got home to Blacktown just as his father was sitting down to breakfast.

TASMANIAN HOLIDAY: Anyone wishing to go to Tasmania for the period Dec. 28th to Jan. 31, please contact Dr. Livingstone (IX5142). One member of his party of four has dropped out and he will be pleased to take someone else. His car is being taken over, and a sight-seeing and walking tour is contemplated. All expenses will be shared.

A DAY

- Dot Butler

"Once, once only, never again, never,
 The idle curve my hand traces in air,
 The first flush on the cloud lost in the morning's height,
 Meeting of the eyes and tremble of delight,
 Before the heart is aware
 Gone! to return never again, never!"

I recall the day now with a feeling of faint sadness.
 It was a pity it had to die, it was such a lovely day, all blue and silver, all soft and scented, gentle as a lover's smile.
 As we moved through it all sense of separateness vanished away - we felt a part of it - accepted by it - at one with its gentleness and peace.

It was a day in August. A pale winter sun coloured the landscape in soft pastel shades. Garth and I had left the rest of the party to burrow in dark muddy underground caves and had set out to see something of the south east corner of Tasmania. From our camp at Hastings Caves the road led us through forested hills to open country, and then sloped downhill to the Lune River....River of the Moon....., lying exquisitely clear in the morning's peace. A low white bridge spanned the stream, and on its rail we leaned silent for a long time above the water in which were reflections of amazing purity; each leaf and twig of the overhanging trees was mirrored in minutest detail. The shining sun had looked into the still water and sunk his image in its depth; had we dived in off the bridge we would have plunged right into his golden heart. Close by a fish plopped on the glassy surface; ringsome ripples broke its mirror calm; we watched them getting fainter and fainter, but who could say for certain when they had entirely gone?

We are all affected by beauty whether we know it or show it or not. The live flame of appreciation shone in Garth's eyes like a star, so that one found oneself wondering at times which was the more lovely thing to look at, the scenery or Garth.

The road went on through softly swelling hills, green and quiet, where the sun dozed in the daytime and darkness brooded at night. We passed orchards of sun-born sweetness where we recognised the small white blossoms for plum and speculated whether other trees with brown shining bark were apple or pear.

Leaving the road we followed a timber mill's rail-track for several miles towards the sea. The day sparkled round us with a diamond glitter as we skipped along the sleepers....one, two, three, hop....one, two, three, hop. Straying along the track were ewes whose soft eyes spoke of endless days spent in nibbling at the grass while their newborn lambs frisked in the green and amiable meadows. In the blue distance snowy mountain tops broke the sky. A scene of deep tranquility and content.....and we were happy too; our eyes were resting on the sights we loved - the sunlight of a clear

day, the pure sky, the silent mountain peaks, and all the small lives moving about us.

When the sun had climbed to the mid sky we came to an inlet of the sea lying all still and lovely bright below the snow-capped peaks. Coming closer we passed through a stretch of open eucalyptus forest and caught glimpses of the wide water that flitted and glittered as far as the eye cared to look. Then through grass and ferns down to a narrow strip of beach and a sea of blue and silver that flashed about us. That must be the South Polar Sea. To think that we are only 150 miles from the northern limit of drift ice from the Antarctic.

"I think a swim is indicated," said Garth, "yes....definitely,must have a swim," and there he spoke the thought that was all ready to be uttered by me. So we swam in the living water while small silver fish sputtered and waved their tails in the slow-motion surge of the anchored weeds.

Bright sunshine danced over the sea and flung spears of light towards the sky as we ate our lunch on the pale sea beach among the stranded shells. We lay in the sun for a space of timeless time and mused on the wonder of the world.....

"Why is all strange? Why do I not grow used?
The ripple upon the stream that nothing stays,
The bough above, in glory of warm light waving slow,
Trouble me, enchant me, as with the stream I flow
Lost into the endless days.
Why is all strange? Why do I not grow used?"

A feeling of breathless change woke us from our drowsing and dreaming. There was a rustling and a whispering of leaves as the trees thrilled with sudden life. Currents of excitement flashed through the clouds and filled the upper air with movement. We put on our capes and set out to meet the oncoming storm now approaching with great speed from over the distant hills. It met us in the middle of our sleeper-hopping, but by the time we reached the road it was over and all was peace again. But there were no reflections left in the Lune River - just soft brown water from which the life had died.

Back to the camp with time for a swim, so down we go through a dark thicket smelling of damp ferns to the thermal pool steaming under the low clouds. Then back to catch the bus, and away through the pale evening air.

And so the day was done - a clean, calm, gentle day, all quiet restraint and decency - a day rich and full with the sense of the long years of youth.

But that was three months ago. By now the dust of that August day is mingling with the dust of dead centuries. We sigh; we strew a few flowers on its grave.....then turn our attention to the living.

Editor's Note:

I consider this one of the triumphs of my career, to have wrung an article out of Putt.

Said the Wagg 'un
To the Putt 'un,
"Who's this vegetable mutton?"

Said the Putt 'un, (Col Putt)
"Well," said he,
"If you want to know, it's me."

THE ROT SETS IN

By the Vegetable Sheep.

As we pounded our way up Lapstone Hill I was already worrying about the group of well-known bushwalkers in my car. The all-steel bodywork would be all right, but the tyres? Surely I had read or heard that in the Northern Territory white ants would eat rubber if suitably provoked. Digby was following later in his own car, but this mob had obviously been well briefed. Just out of Cullen Bullen, and some 40 miles from our destination, they unanimously recognised "just the place to camp the night" on the right side of the tar-sealed road by a muddy little creek. I slowly drifted into sleep holding on to a tent cord because I was lying where somebody's tent peg should have been driven; while the other cars manoeuvred and parked, fence wires twanged, fires smoked and spluttered, billies rattled, farm dogs yowled, and a serene moon shone brightly above.

Breakfast was the sort you have in railway trains - a horrid confused business of bodies in sleeping bags, piles of packs, and porridge burnt on a primus - but we were away soon after seven, and before nine we were at Red Rock Creek in the Capertee Valley waiting for the fast post-war cars to catch up. Four shooters were disgustingly camped by the side of the road and were having a wonderful time blowing holes in the roadside gates and mail-boxes. We felt insecure, and walked up the hill to look at some bees. Schafer lost his pipe in the long grass just as the other cars arrived; we dragged him from the search and bounced off up the farm road towards Mt. Conobla, our objective.

There was no water in the creeks, and it was nearly eleven o'clock when we got to the farm house a mile from our mountain, so why not have lunch now where there's a tap. We lay and munched in the shade of the car, admiring Conobla, which looked very like Pidgeon House from this angle. Lunch complete, we set out along the rough bush track to the bitter end of mechanised transport. When we set out on foot it was much hotter, and the steepness much more noticeable; we stopped to discuss the habits of mistletoe and wait for the rest of the party whenever possible. Unfortunately photography was out as an excuse, the trees were too thick.

At last the saddle, and Whacko! A steep but nicely broken rock ridge to the summit. Here, too, our intrepid leader, Bono, waited for his party to gather for the final assault. On the way up through the bush we had heard Digby's car going back down the valley, and had unjustly accused him of returning to the fleshpots of Capertee. Now we learned that he had been severely gashed by a sardine tin and was off to Portland Hospital for four stitches and an anti-tetanus injection. Poor old Digby, white-anted by his own lunch!

Safely arrived on top, we admired the second summit of Conobla, a sheer-sided block of rock separated from us by a chasm some ten feet wide and at least a hundred deep. Nobody felt in good broad-jumping form. Schafer was bemoaning his incredible bad luck in losing his cigarettes, lower down the ridge, in a crevasse only six feet deep, but only two inches wide. He could see the ruddy things at the bottom, leering up at him. (If only he could have seen Snow and me pull them out with a stick later, and smoke the lot on the spot).

Gundangaroo was just over the way from us, a steep-looking scramble down to a saddle and a long scrubby-looking bash up to the plateau. The return would involve a full traverse of Conobla and it was getting a bit late, so we sat swatting insects and admiring the fantastic castellated ridge between us and the Wolgan country. Like most things, Conobla was harder to climb down than up, but we arrived safely at the cars and so to the Capertee River bridge and a lovely swim. Bookie cleverly talked the girls into walking miles through Scotch thistles to bathe out of sight, but seemed to have some difficulty in hiding his own nakedness in 3 inches of water when a car appeared on the bridge above him. As still evening drew on, the Old Soaks, in the best white ant tradition, drove off to the Glen Davis pub, while the Band of Hope collected and burned all the rather scanty firewood in the area. It was here that the supreme hardship of the trip was endured; the leader forced us to carry our packs a full hundred yards from the cars to the campsite, rather than knock down the fence and drive over.

The great Capertee rib of Gundangeroo was right behind us. It looked very difficult in the twilight, but I promised to wake Geof at 4 a.m. and have a go at it. Geof woke me at 6, we pulled Snow out from under his collapsed and rain-sodden tent and fed him porridge, sausages and custard; then we grabbed a 70-ft. rope and set off through the flowering thistles for our mountain. The talus slope was very short, and almost at once we were on the rock rib. An honest, kindly ridge at first, steepish, but broken into short safe pitches of hard sound rock, and gloriously free of vegetation. Silhouetted against the blue sky above us was a great breaking wave-crest of bright yellow overhanging sandstone. The easy way led straight up towards it. At last we stood on a ledge in its shadow, on our right a sheer drop, on the left a shallow corner in the smooth, straight wall, with two vertical cracks. Snow, in sneakers, was pushed into the lead by the two hobnail-wearers. Fifty feet above our heads he stopped on a ledge like a window sill and gave us the best belay possible.

We stood on our window ledge in a row, now only 12 feet from the top. Above, the crack was hardly thereat all and the wall bulged somewhat. Some fine combined tactics by Geof and Snow got nowhere. I looked down between my feet and thought that window-cleaning couldn't be much of a job.

A sturdy little tree leaned out above us, and we resorted to rope throwing. The rope got stuck, and we tied twigs and things together with our bootlaces to poke at it. It had taken us an hour to get to the ledge; it took an hour and a half to get the rope safely over the tree. At last it was set. We tested it mightily,

then up we went. A concerted yell to the camp from the top, then off we went to find another way down. A steep little dry gully looked as if it should cut right through the cliff-line, and down we raced. Soon we were in a mossy canyon hardly three feet wide, double-roping down dry waterfalls. Ahead the chasm was opening out. "I can see our way clear down to Glen Davis," yelled Snow, - "except for the first 800 feet!" Yes, that was the height of the last waterfall in our little creek.

Hurrah for a nice ledge leading away to the left of the fall. We hurtle down easy slopes and rope over short drops, and here we are back on the talus slopes just as a torrential downpour bursts on our unprotected heads, with thunder and lightning for good measure.

It is still only 11 in the morning as we squelch back to the cars where the mob is huddled, digesting breakfast. Their breakfast merged imperceptibly into our lunch. Exhibitions of snake charming, and how-to-drain-a-Franch-horn were given in the middle of the road; a small offering of rancid butter was burnt before the Dalai Lama, and then we were belting the corrugations back to Blacktown and a wonderful dinner at the Waggs.

Something should be done, though, about the unexpected bumps in the Mudgee road; the area inside my car where Bookie was trying to spread apricot jam on a piece of bread will need steam-cleaning..... So will Bookie.

THE BARE FACTS

- Kevin Ardill

Sniff if you wish, but a day walk is a most pleasant way of sampling a little of the delights of bushwalking. There doesn't seem as much urgency as is often displayed on a week-end trip - a sort of feeling that you'll be home that night so why worry about anything. You can try out your new boots; the leader will be most considerate and halt the party while you plaster tender spots. Funny thing, isn't it, but if you attempt the same thing on a two-day walk you'll be darn lucky if the leader doesn't eat you. Certainly there will be some strongly worded remarks about the so-and-so who turns up in new boots.

Getting lost on day walks is simply not done. The Friday-nighter may go astray on a similar ridge 30 miles or so to the west, and boy! will he get a sympathetic hearing on the Wednesday night when he tells of the tribulations of his tribe! Go adrift on a day walk, and later bend the ear forward to receive a spot of condolence. Bend it right back brother - you won't get any.

What started this line of thought? A day walk. Four gentlemen walkers assembled on Campbelltown station on strictly official business, viz. the day walk of Nov. 13th. David Ingram spoke of certain ladies likely to participate in the outing, but a quick glance along the platform showed the party would remain all male. Four new boots, two old boots, and two sneakers took their places in the bus,

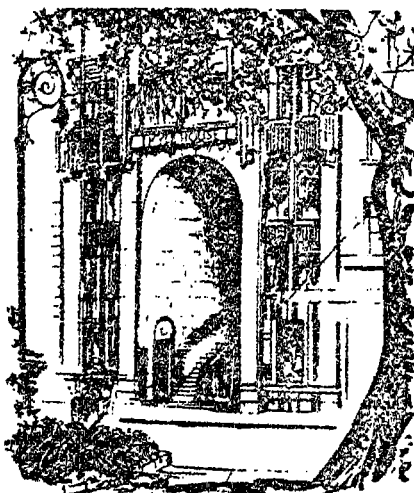
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and a bob's worth later we were at the Woolwash. (Pardon the bus extravagance, but the road is long and dusty, and it's really a case of bust it or bus it.)

Right, we're at the Woolwash on the George's River. We walk - David, Colin (Ferguson), Dick and myself. Twelve o'clock brings a halt, a swim, lunch, rest, mosquitos and sandflies, lumps, scratch session, moving off in five minutes. We're off.

Ladies, thank you sincerely for sparing my blushes; a mile and a half and three rests later we come across some boy scouts bathing in their birthday suits. Only they weren't boy scouts. 'Twas the soldiers, no less, - trainees having a last swim and clean up before the following day's march to Holdsworthy camp. "Are you blokes hiking?" in an extremely critical tone. Well, we had a yarn, declined an invitation to swim, and pushed on down the river. Honestly, I don't think I'd have had the courage to go on if the party had been mixed; the river bank for miles was a succession of bathing parties, and when we got close to Frier's Crossing the congestion was terrific. Explosions on the ridge above were most frequent, and two young chaps (clothed) informed us of the presence of time bombs, booby traps, etc.,

in the area. They also exhibited their boots, nicely hobnailed in the approved Paddy Pallin style and all done on the premises - a young businessman in the battalion was doing them at two bob a boot.

At Frier's crossing a large notice informed all that the place was a military training area, and might I suggest that anyone walking around the Punchbowl Creek area had better take along a couple of spare limbs. Here is a chance for someone to lead a walk that could really go with a bang.

That just about concludes the par on the day walk. We managed to avoid getting run over by a succession of army vehicles on the way to Minto, but achieved some measure of fame by being recognised in the train home by some ex-bathers going on leave.

A final thought: Would a leader be permitted to blindfold feminine members of a party under similar conditions? Perhaps a by-law, or amendment to the Constitution?

ANOTHER TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY PARTY

- Dot B.

Salute to Betty in all her winsome girlhood - beautiful as a newly opening pink rosebud with the dew still sparkling on its petals.

A large party of Club members arrived at The Barclay, Rockdale, some by bus, some by Puttmobile, but I doubt if any Walkers walked as it was raining heavily.

First came cocktails in the reception room (not house). "None for Betty till she comes of age," said Mother, "And that won't be till 20 past 8."

It looked like a pure respectable suburban gathering for the first dance, then inherent Bushwalking tendencies came to the fore and coats were shed one by one, those with bracers removing same and making judicious use of string.

Among the valuable presents was one with a strong Bushwalker flavour - in a cut-glass salad bowl, garnished with red and yellow nasturtiums, lay coiled 6 ft. 2 ins. of carpet snake. The story was it was anaesthetised and might be expected to come to about 12 o'clock when it could be taken home and used as a mousetrap. Batty danced round the floor with it held at arm's length, greeted by consternation and squeals from other couples.

Supper was a mighty show, especially the 3-tiered stands of cakes, the lowest plate for the Trogos, the middle one for Walkers, and the top one for Mountaineers and Rock Climbers. At one side of the room was a table of 14 ravenous Bushwalkers, and at the other side of the room was another of only 8. To the 14 it looked as though

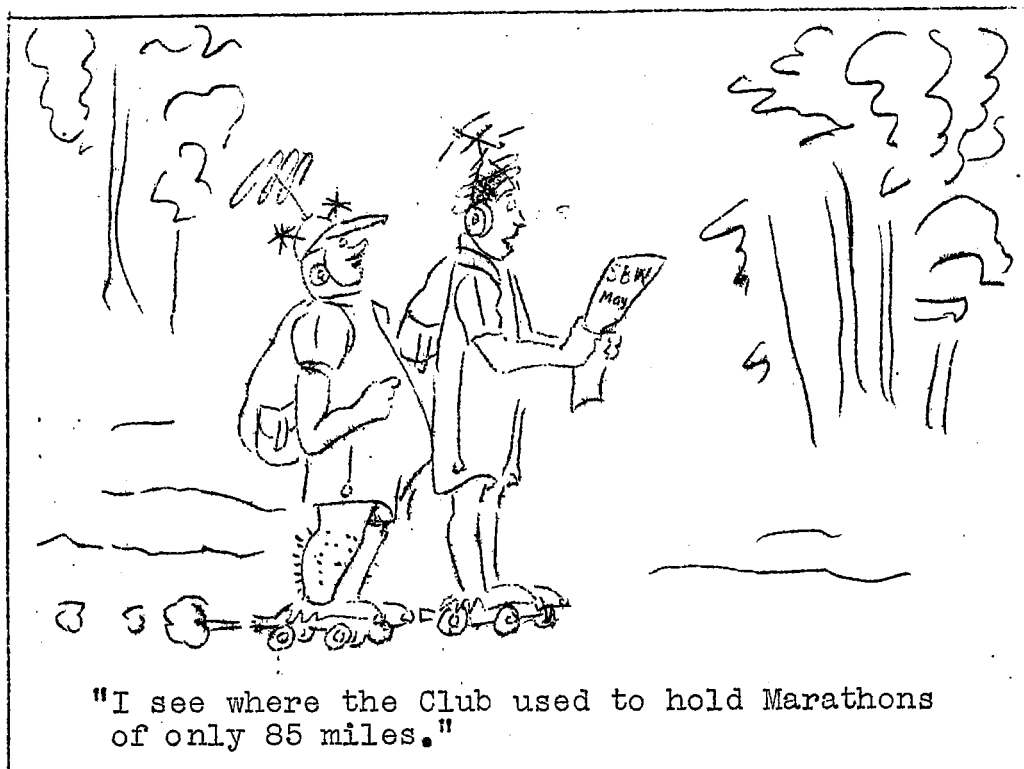
the 8 were being unfairly oversupplied with food. "Let's stage a raid!" suggested the hungry-gutted New Zealanders, so the whole table rose to a man (and woman), and stealthily but swiftly swept over to the 8's table. It was a most successful foray actually - about the only thing we didn't get was a plate of chocolate cakes guarded by Heather. Snow and the Admiral were just sitting shots - like taking candy from children.

As centre piece to each of the half dozen tables was a large chrome receptacle, the function of which was not what Colin imagined, but to contain the ice and bottle of champagne which appeared later and with which we drank a toast to Betty, and to her parents who twenty-one years ago thought up this beaut excuse for a party.

Rosso, who celebrated his own 21st only a few weeks back, presented Betty with a mantle radio on behalf of her S.B.W. friends. Father gave her the key to the front door (My! What a colossal lock the Swain's much have on their door! What for?) Then the bandleader sang something sweet and low which he said (I think I quote him correctly) typified the fair young Elizabeth Swain, and as neither of the Peters knocked his head off they must have agreed.

Then more fun and dancing till midnight when Betty and her parents packed up the presents and counted the spoons (Incredible! - still all there!) and the gay multitude put on their coats and headed for home and a bit of sleep before setting out for a week-end aqua-lunging at Era.

Sez Keith





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