

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to the Sydney Bush Walkers,
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AT OUR JULY MEETING

At the beginning of the meeting the President welcomed Ross Laird, just back from overseas, while those present made whatever welcoming noises they deemed appropriate.

Thereafter business proceeded rapidly. Only two items occasioned debate. The first was a request from the Federation that we supply copies of our Walks Programme to the S. and R. so that they would know where to look for us. Ron Knightley moved that we write to Federation strongly rejecting their implication that official S.B.W. parties ever got lost. Geof Wagg thought the motion would embarrass Federation delegates. Don Matthews warned that it would be taken with the utmost seriousness - it might be better if our delegates fitted it to verse or sung it. Impressed by these forebodings, Ron withdrew his motion.

In his monthly statement Ron Knightley gave the cost of the new typewriter as £54 (it was first used for last month's magazine).

The second subject of controversy was the clubroom cats. Frank Ashdown moved, and Ern French seconded, a motion that we write to the Rationalist Association protesting against their (the cats') presence in the clubroom. They were, he said, encouraged by food and given trays which they could not be persuaded to use (of this visual and olfactory evidence was to hand). The correct place for cats was in the caretaker's flat. Ken Meadows said that, though in favour of the sentiments expressed, he would have to write the letter, and a similar letter had been written before, but the cats were still there. Ron Knightley also favoured the sentiments, and suggested reference to the Health Department. When the motion was put, the cats won, amidst applause.

At the conclusion of the meeting a vote of thanks was expressed to Jack Wren who had quietly taken it upon himself to replace two floorboards, one broken and the other bending freely, following the shocks sustained during the judo evening.

YOUR WALKING GUIDE

Walk No.

- 82 Mossvale return via Fitzroy Falls-Grassy Mtn-Maralya Pass. An interesting trip in continually changing country, mostly on track. Cost - 28/-.
- 83 Albion Park-Dhruwalgha Mt-Jamberoo Pass-Minnamurra. An adequate test walk with some delightful views. Cost - 21/-.
- 84 Heathcote-Ulloola Falls-Audley-Launch to Cronulla. Pleasant, easy, track walk. Cost - 10/-.
- 85 Katooma return via Blue Dog-Glen Alan Canyon & Carlon's Head. Excellent trip for aspiring walker to test his metal. Good views and fine country. Easy rock climb on fixed chains up Carlons Head. Cost 23/-.
- 86 Katooma return via Red Ledge & Mitchell's Ck. An old favourite and always exciting. Good views over Megalong Valley. Cost - 23/-.
- 87 Glenbrook-St.Helena-Blaxland. A trip in the notorious Blue Labyrinth but St. Helena repays the effort. Can be scratchy. Cost - 15/-.
- 88 Blackheath-Minni Minni Rge-6 ft. Track-Katoomba. Good medium test walk. Extensive view from Gibraltar Rocks. Cost - 36/-.
- 89 Megalong Valley-Charlowie Ck-6 ft. Track-Katoomba. Another good medium test. Megalong always scenically delightful. Cost - 25/-.
- 90 Terry Hills-Topham Trig-Willunga-The Basin. Pleasant walking with possibly some early wildflowers in this mild season. Cost - 8/-.
- 91 Federation Ball. No Friday night walk this weekend.
- 92 Pymble-Ryland Trig-St. Ives. Saturday & Sunday walk will combine. For
- & 93 further information see ad. page 14.

AMENDMENT TO WALKS PROGRAMME

WALK No. 84 - Heathcote - Ulloola Falls - Audley - Cronulla will now be held on 24th August in lieu of 17th August.
LEADER: Joan Cordell - FY.2575.

WALK No. 87 - Blaxland - St. Helena - Glenbrook will now be held on 17th August in lieu of 24th August.
LEADER: Jack Gentle - XM.6121 or LA.6041 (B).

Note also reversal of original route.

ON BEING LED

- "One of Them"

As we had foregathered at a common meeting place at Marulan on Friday night, the 4th July, we should have been in a receptive mood when Ron Knightly told us that, after leaving the cars at Long Point, we would go down on to the river that night. He and another wanted to climb a ridge on the far side of the Shoalhaven near McCallum's Clearing to see what was on top and anyone that wanted could join them, otherwise the time could be spent lazing at Lake Louise. We heard him out and then in unison chanted "we want to camp on top". A look of incredulous unbelief sat on the Knightly brow, but when his climbing partner sided with the other 18 Ron gallantly gave in and off we went to Long Point.

On disgorging from the four cars Ron and Stewart set off down the hill "just a hundred yards" to make camp at the Lookout. Well, whether the word "lookout" conjured up a bleak picture in our minds no one will know, but everyone immediately set about pitching tents right alongside the cars. A puzzled leader appeared after a lapse of fifteen minutes to see what had happened to his party.

"Moving off at 8 a.m." were Ron's last words that night. Needless to say we moved off at 9 a.m., down a beautifully graded zig-zag track. On coming to the steep slopes of King Pin, Ron told us we were going over the top, at which two-thirds of the party lengthened their strides, zagged a zig, and disappeared from sight. However, a few conscience-stricken souls clawed their way up a scree and were rewarded with a magnificent view of the winding Shoalhaven.

At the junction of Barber's Creek and the Shoalhaven, on the left-hand bank, is a lovely grassy flat, invitingly sunny last Saturday morning, and it was here that the mutineers had their "elevenses", in spite of the leader's assurance that it was far nicer on Lake Louise, just a few hundred yards ahead.

Away again after a pleasant break, Ron led down the creek to cross, whilst the majority went up the creek and got wet feet because of it.

On arrival at Lake Louise packs were downed to photograph and enjoy the pleasant surroundings. Our frustrated leader at last got us on the move again, this time leading half the party through a terrific outcrop of nettles and mud, whilst the breakaways walked in comparative comfort higher up.

Meandering along the river bank was very pleasant that morning with the sun filtering through the casuarinas and the lyre birds calling on the wooded hillsides.

Crossing Bungonia Creek, Stewart ventured first and went hip high in the quicksand, so the rest took off at a different spot and managed to make the other side wet only to the knees.

The pleasant luncheon spot chosen by the leader was by-passed and we climbed about 50 feet above the river to sit and munch our loaf and gaze up and down the Shoalhaven.

It was at this juncture that four of the "older" members of the Club (one an original "Tiger") decided they couldn't make the steep ridge immediately ahead of us, and would camp until we picked them up on the return trip. The leader was most understanding and told them just when and where we should appear on Sunday, and away we all went, waving goodbye to the "stayputs". Perhaps

regretful that he was losing some of his flock, after having traversed about 100 yards the leader looked back, and was amazed to find that the four had upped packs and were following along. The perversity of man!

Up a steady pull until we made camp at the Bungonia Lookout about 4.30. Billies were soon bubbling with stew, and after taking our fill much reminiscing and chitter chat around a roaring camp fire took us well into the night.

Sunday morning was spent wandering around the Tops - the Gorge is really an amazing place and well worth a closer look when there is less water in the creek.

A gloriously hilarious scree run, which dropped us 900' into the lower parts of Bungonia Creek in 22 minutes, was the highlight of the morning.

Lunchtime found us on Barber's Creek at the foot of the zig zag. Ron was most magnanimous and upon enquiry as to when we were moving off granted us another half an hour. Was this received with sighs of content? No, not on your life. Almost with one accord the party hitched up packs and started on the climb out, leaving the leader with a sagging jaw and a bewildered puzzlement on the vagaries of man.

Anyway, Ron, we all think you're tops as a leader, and thanks for a grand weekend.

THE KIWI HAS WINGS

As announced in our last issue, our old member Dorothy Lawry will be coming over from New Zealand for a period of nearly four weeks from 22nd September. To give many members the opportunity to "reune" with and meet Dorothy, it has been arranged that a "Gipsy Tea" and Campfire will be held at the home of Brian and Jean Harvey, 12 Mahratta Avenue, Wahroonga, on Saturday, 27th September. As this will be the weekend before the Six-hour Day Holiday, it is quite likely many active walkers will be at home and all are cordially invited to come along and join in the camp-fire songs and doings. Bushwalkers will be expected to arrive about 5 p.m. and bring their own tea and supper. Arrangements will be made to "hot-up" anything requiring "hotting-up", whilst the Harveys will provide boiling water for tea. Bring your own plates, cutlery, mugs and billies and help create that camp atmosphere for Dorothy. Anyone wishing to camp overnight will be very welcome, as it's a long way home for some from Wahroonga. Those in the Higher-Income-Group are requested to provide transport where possible for their more humble car-less brethren!! Those coming by train alight at Warrawee and catch the Sanitarium bus to Mahratta Avenue. Would all those who intend coming please inform the Harveys - JW.1462.

DATE TO REMEMBER

Following her twelve months' trip through India, where she made a special study of the Buddhist religion, Marie Byles is going to talk to us about "The Sacred Himalayas" on 17th September. Don't miss this chance of learning more of these mountains and the people they nurture.

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

ALL ON A SUMMER'S DAY

- Jim Brown

You know the peculiarly Anglo Saxon quirk of sentiment that makes much of the defeat or the rugged road? That's why we speak with such affection of military encounters like Mons in 1914 or Dunkirk in 1940. That's why bush-walkers so fondly recall the trips on which they were most severely tested or even overthrown and I think that was why Broken Rock trig became quite an obsession with me until a certain summer's day last year.

I can't even remember the beginnings properly. They may go back six years to a wintry weekend when we (Neil Schafer, Digby and self) successfully went from Bimlow via Cox Junction and Green Wattle Creek to Bull Island Gap and Yerranderie. The only thing to mar our satisfaction was the difficulty in getting out of Yerranderie on Sunday afternoon, so we were a day overdue, purely through transport problems.

During the map study that preceded that trip I became aware of the presence of Broken Rock trip. Look at your Jenolan military map. In the bottom, not far from the eastern corner, where Green Wattle Creek first enters, there's a nameless creek coming in from the west; at its head there's Broken Rock Trig, 2505', and a definite indication of a saddle south of the mountain, with spurs running down into Black Hollow Creek. On the Blue Mountains Tourist map the picture is virtually repeated, and the creek is named Fritz Creek. On both maps there are indications of a track of sorts leading up towards the saddle below Broken Rock.

The idea of visiting Broken Rock festered in me (the slob of a thing!) for years, and presently a trip pattern was evolved. Yerranderie, out along Scott's Main to a point near Bran Jan, down into Black Hollow Creek and up into the saddle - visit the trig - down Fritz Creek to Green Wattle and back to Yerranderie.

It should be a three day trip to do it comfortably, but with my holiday weekends committed, I finally organised it, in company with John White and Jack Gentle, for the end of March 1957. It was a rigid timetable, there was no margin for error, the weather on Saturday had to be kind. Well, it wasn't. In that year of drought we struck a wet morning and the trudge along Scott's Main was marked by low-hanging cloud. Nearing Bran Jan the cloud broke at times and we thought we could identify the gap with a very low saddle leading over into Green Wattle. But the configuration of the country didn't seem to tie with the maps exactly, the weather was uncertain, and we knew the sands were running out. The original plan was forsaken, and we came back via the Kowmung.

All this, of course, only contrived to make Broken Rock the more alluring. I promised myself another bid, coming in from Bimlow, but conditions didn't permit another try during the following months, and when the opportunity came, it was on a snap decision and under most unfavourable auspices.

The "permitting" condition was the absence of the "family" on a visit to Canberra, but due back Sunday evening. The limiting factors were a dud shoulder (sort of slipped disc I found later!) and the persistent hot, bushfire weather of December '57.

Of course I must have been slightly crazy to try it, but 9 p.m. Friday found me driving along the smoke-hazed road towards Burragorang, solo, with an aching shoulder and an ambition to get to Broken Rock and perhaps into Black Hollow Creek, and perhaps to Bran Jan, maybe even along the Cedar Road to the Cox and back to Bimlow. Say twenty-eight miles the lot, with the unknown saddle from Green Wattle to Black Hollow Creek (including Broken Rock) as the real test.

I knew the Major General of Bimlow was in residence and the road blocked at the town, so at 10 o'clock on a warm, dry evening, with the still air milky with smoke and moonlight, I concealed the car behind the trees just across the Wollondilly bridge, and went to bed on top of my sleeping bag. I'm not sure if I slept at all, what with mental arithmetic about the next day's stage and the sore shoulder.

The first pallor came into the summer sky at 3.40 a.m. A filthy dawn: the air had a death smell of bushfires, and the Burragorang Walls looked hazy and unreal. It was much too warm, much too dry. By 4 a.m. I was walking, at 4.20 I by-passed the toll gate, and at 5.30 I came to Cox Junction as a sunset-red sun glared through the yellow murk in Warragamba Gorge.

The last two miles from Bimlow had been through a waste land, where all the lower forest had been destroyed, a shambles of fallen timber and charcoal, with the dry powder of the tractor-trodden road rising in puffs at each step.

Cox Valley was a ruin also. I remembered Snow saying it made him feel sick - he didn't want to go that way again; and I wondered if the destruction had been carried into the side streams, Green Wattle particularly. It had. There was no respite from the ugly naked desolation when I left the Cox, not for

another three miles at least. I hurried through this sad land, until about 7.15 I reached the Warragamba full storage level. Even at that hour I was glad of the forest shade, walking in hat and sandals only.

Just after 8 a.m. I came to the clearing at Fritz Creek, and halted for breakfast with twelve miles already covered - the easy twelve, I reminded myself. Here there had been some uneven bushfires, but the big clearing and the forest immediately about were unharmed. After the nightmare journey in the country due for flooding, this was a real haven: there was even a little water in isolated holes in the creek. A dry hot wind was beginning, and clearing away the smoke overcast that had sheltered me so far, so I put a shirt on. Presumably I looked like the famous Pelaco advertisement.

Beyond the clearing I could see the hazy ridges where Fritz Creek rises. There seemed to be no obvious saddle, but perhaps it lay behind a big bluff topped with cliffs - that may even be my Broken Rock.

Shortly before nine I started, turning up Fritz Creek. There was a track at first, but perhaps just an animal pad, and in a mile it disappeared in thickets of scorched bushes. I was coming under the shadow of the cliffy bluff, so turned up a spur. After a few hundred feet I could see my ridge was going straight up towards the cliffs, and by ten o'clock I was making a sidle on steep crumbling shale slopes a little way below the cliffs. The heat was increasing, and though the wind was dry from the west, sweat was streaming down and stinging in the cuts from scorched-sharp bushes.

It was energetic sidling, and the scrub on the sheltered side of the range was thick and clinging. I found every few yards of climbing called for a rest. Usually I can walk with very little drinking but I was half through the quart of water I had brought in a plastic bottle from Green Wattle. The water was getting sickly warm.

At the corner of the bluff I stopped. Something was very, very wrong. In all directions, so far as I could see, the divide between Green Wattle and Black Hollow was topped with sandstone walls. Both sides of my imagined Broken Rock the range ran out at almost even height. Where, then, my saddle? If this above me was indeed Broken Rock, I could not imagine where the gap could be found.

I sat down, propping my legs against the slope, and felt the skin crawling with sweat. This was no good at all. Only 10.30 a.m. and growing hotter. Much more of this work with a croole shoulder and it would be a heat stroke job. The crest was at least four hundred feet above, probably more, and with the cliff line to negotiate. Away below on my left I could see the big green clearing at the creek with shade trees and water.

I turned downhill.

Without the target of the gap to sustain and drive me, I realised how nearly spent I was. The legs were jelly, my wind gone. On the half-hour descent I had to stop a few times. When I did come back to Green Wattle, a few hundred yards above Fritz Creek, I fell into a shiny pool and stayed, clothes and all, for ten minutes. By the time I walked down to a drinkable hole, ten minutes away, I was quite dry again. I stayed in and around that pool from 11.30 a.m. until after 3 p.m., while the mercury must have flirted with the 100 mark on the thermometer.

In the densest shade I could find, sprawled on a groundsheet spread on thin dry grass, I oozed at every pore. The plastic of the groundsheet stuck to me and sat up with me. Myriads of flies tickled my large expanses of bared skin. The bread from a plastic bag at lunch was crisped, the tomato from a damp billy was tepid.

Gradually black-blue ragged clouds welled up over the range that had repelled me. I had decided to let the storm get going and walk, stripped off, in the rain, back down Green Wattle, but about three o'clock I smelled smoke, the acrid reek of burning gum leaves. Just over the creek, behind a shoulder of what must be Black Coola, a grey whisp was climbing in the now expectantly still air. Too close for comfort. I swung on my readied pack, took a last baffled look to the invisible "saddle" and started down Green Wattle.

It took more than an hour for the clouds to realise their menace, but never was menace so welcome: when the storm did break, it came as a gentle rain, growing heavier and more constant. Finally it forced me to keep on walking when I would have rested.

The barren broken country at the bottom of Green Wattle and on the Cox was thoroughly wetted when I came to it. Where my toes had thrown up dust eddies that morning (or was it a week before?) I now splashed through yellow puddles. If anything the country looked more pathetic under rain - the drought of the morning was more fitting to this desert.

It rained all the while I tramped back to Bimlow, and stopped just before I reached the road block in the last faint light of the day. As I climbed over the gate a door was opened and yellow light spilled out. Someone at the door reported "Just a hiker".

When I reached the car it was 8.20, with the decision of camp or return home to be made. The latter won, but it was a weary and thwarted walker who crawled into the empty house at 11.30 that night.

The whole episode was so dismaying and unrewarding that I unconsciously "wrote it off" in my mind until my little daughter was heard the other day murmuring over and over "all on a summer's day". What's that from? I wondered. Ah yes, "The Queen of Hearts she made some tarts, all on a summer's day". At least, I thought, a fitting title for one trip. Horrible trip.

Then I found I could think dispassionately of that lost walk, and not feel so irritated at my failure.

As to Broken Rock, well I don't know if, like the Knave of Hearts, "I'll sin no more". But if I do, it certainly won't be all on a summer's day.

AUGUST SPECIALS

Just as the ancients boasted their deeds in song and story, so the ancients of S.B.W. prepare to blow their own battered trumpets with a repeat performance of that operatic epic "By Jet With Geof", the story of the eighty-five miler, on the free night - 20th August.

The following Wednesday should prove to be an evening of exceptional interest as Geoff Broadhead will show movies of Eastern Asia, China and U.S.S.R.

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A STATISTICAL REPORT ON THE 103½ MILER

- John Manning

Alas, how the numbers dwindle as the walk grows near; from a possible fifteen, the acceptors were whittled away to leave just three staunch or stupid bods to step from the train into the rain on Thursday night, just in time to see Coates' truck disappear ahead of them. Fred Worrall (President of the Hobnails), Mick Elfick and myself comprised the team, with Mike Peryman and two other Hobnails starting from Picton.

At 8 o'clock we started along the road, arriving at Coates' farm 9.15 p.m. A grand circle was then taken at a very solid pace and we were at the farm again at 10.00 p.m., camping in the old hut (a most elusive hut) by 11 p.m.

6.00 a.m. Friday morning we stepped out of the hut and set sail for the Nattai, reaching there about 7.10 a.m. After a slight delay we were away at a great rate of knots (14 m.p.h.) until the Alum River hove in sight at 9 a.m. Five minutes for chunder and we're off again. Martins Creek flitted past at 10.10 and we stepped across Shea's Creek at 12.20, had lunch, and were off by 1 p.m. We were now following Mike Peryman's footprints (a theoretical 6½ hours ahead). 2.15 found us edging past picnickers at the Nattai Bridge to see Mike's time, which was 5½ hours ahead. No time to rest now, and down the Nattai we staggered to the 'Dilly, which we crossed twice, and eventually regained the road, practically crawling into Bimlow Bridge in the slow time of 3.40 p.m. (The leader says the party must walk faster.) After a couple of minutes break for a drink, we began to stalk towards Bimlow. Having side-stepped at least two of the Sergeant Major's ambushes we walked into the banked-up Cox at 5.40 p.m. My spirits almost sank when I saw the water over the road for it was getting dark

and we had to climb several hundred feet and traverse around at that height on a slope of 60° (ahem) back onto the road $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away. It was dark by this and we pushed along the road to Green Wattle Creek, sidled another small mountain and reached the food depot at 6.55 p.m. and McMaho's at 7.20 p.m. We forded the river and climbed over the hill and dropped down to a rather deep Cox River for camp in the open at 8.00 p.m.

6.00 Saturday morning, three pathetic, shivering figures hobbled across the icy Cox - OH THE PAIN - and then turned themselves in the direction of Mecca and shuffled along the Cox to Commodore, where Mick and Freddy must poke around inside a tank. Over the Policeman to Kill's Hut and wonder of wonders Mike is only $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours ahead. With fresh incentive we repair our pace and reach the Kowmung at 9.40 a.m. Mick and I are both thinking - if only Geoff was here. Kanangra River showed itself at 11.30 a.m., twenty minutes for chunder, and then off again, reaching Harry's River at 2.15. Forty minutes for lunch and the $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours to Gibraltar Creek and I'm feeling crook (that large tin of Youngberries). 4.40 p.m. and we head for home up the track, losing it and reaching the road just on darkness. We blunder a little and eventually reach Mitchell's Creek for a last quick snack. 7.55 and three almost exhausted, but very contented, bods step onto the cliff drive at the top of Devil's Hole.

Walking time was 26 hours at an average of 3.64 miles per hour - Friday 3.85, Saturday 3.25 - for a total of 94 miles. Two hours resting and eating time, seventeen hours slumber and three hours walking on Thursday night for at least nine miles.

In future if the camp is made at Wilsons Creek the first night (quite a reasonable and simple matter) as it should have been, the hundred miler becomes much more feasible.

AND NOW FOR THE THREE PEAKS!

HERE I BELONG

"Bull Moose"

- After a hard trip

Here I belong, where the bodgies grow
In the city where there's shops to buy in
'Neath these roofs I come and go
Tiled gables and galvanised iron.
Here I belong, relaxed and lying
In steaming bath at nine P.M.
Conscious of aching limbs and sighing
"How can I go to the bush again?"

Lifting myself from the soapy flow
My reflection sends all thoughts a'flyin'
What's left of me is there on show,
Bruised and torn - there's no denyin'
A man can live so close to dying.
Like a person deranged, I count to ten,
Stopping myself from loudly crying,
"Why DO I return to the bush again?"

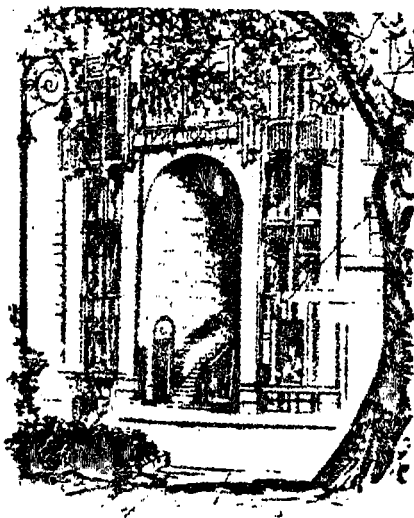
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A BALLADY LONG WALK

- Mike Peryman

They planned a walk for Anzac Day
And though it was a long, long way,
An easy walk 'twas said at first,
With plenty of water to quench your thirst.
There was big John with legs so long -
He led a party of three strong;
The other two of lighter gait,
And they were not the kind to wait
For those behind, whose lack of breath
Brought them all nigh to point of death.
So Michael E. was to have fun
With Hobnail Fred, the other one.
With gaudy six and windswept locks
They were to battle the mighty Cox,
Big John was for one hundred miles -
He had to prove a point you see.
And also to disperse the smiles
Of those who scorn his artistry.

'Twas at Hilltop his start was made,
 No moon or stars to give him aid,
 But blundered in the misting rain
 On Starlight's Trail - all was in vain.
 And yet before they came to harm
 The night was spent at Coates' Farm.
 At first light they were then away
 So keen they were to start the day:
 Down to the Nattai and thence the 'Dilly,
 But to cross at the junction was oh so silly.
 Of these three gallants you'll hear no more -
 From them themselves you'll learn the score.
 Instead of that I have a hunch
 You'll read about another bunch,
 Another three there were to roam,
 They ne'er had been so far from home.
 And as they wished to stay alive
 They only did their eighty-five.
 'Twas not for them the moans and wails,
 For they were only young Hobnails.
 Their sox were of a different hue,
 To some, it was of Mitchell Blue.
 From Picton town they made their start
 With lightweight packs and lighter hearts,
 Much dusty road they must traverse
 Before you will be through this verse.
 Many miles of road they were to see
 Without the favour of M.W.S.D.B.
 Along the 'Dilly, up to the Cox,
 With sweaty brows and seeded sox.
 Before them they could see but water
 Where they were told it should not oughta
 be, 'cause there should be a road
 Which was now only fir for Toad.
 So over the top they took their load,
 The distant mountains their only goad.
 They heard a noise - it was a jeep,
 To the left they stalked so they could keep
 On going, 'cause this was a hunt
 And they were well up in front.
 Time drew on, but the sky was clear,
 And Commodore's Hut was oh so near,
 But the old Cox was apt to wander
 And they also were left to ponder
 Where it could be - this bend? the next?
 At last it came their hopes were fixed.
 Some food was there, they'd planned with care,
 Their muscles nagging,
 Their tongues a-lagging,
 With dusk a-creeping,
 Their brows a-weeping,
 They crossed those grassy hills,
 Over dry creek bed
 Through grasses dead,
 All but outdone their wills.

Atop the ridge, their breaths agasp,
 In gloom beneath they heard a rasp
 Of waters over rocks.
 At last, they thought, too tired to speak,
 "Those waters are the Cox".
 And so fall into bed
 Beside the river; a blessed shed
 Of sheet iron with a wooden door,
 And beddings three upon the floor.

At break of day they fled this hut,
 Refreshed in hope and vigour, but
 This dewy dawn and stinging nettle,
 Could not allure from them their fettle.
 The river to themselves they had
 This time of day, and they were glad.
 No finer views they'd ever seen
 Than these along the rippling stream.
 They chalked their times in crayon red
 On stones along this river bed
 So those behind could see their time
 And say, "Why look, we're doing fine".
 Then up the Cox they met some folk
 Who thought it must be some big joke,
 "What do you mean? you cannot stay,
 Don't you know you've another day".
 So on they sped, they could not tarry,
 More food awaited at River Harry,
 No sight was greater to behold
 Than their delight at this untold
 Wealth of tins - fruit salad, cream -
 They almost thought it was a dream,
 And as they gourmandised themselves,
 Footsteps were heard, but not of elves.
 Around the bend in ruddy blush
 Came the leader of the push.
 Well in fore was balding Fred,
 A flashing glow in sox of red.
 Our shock was great at them to meet,
 Their one desire, "just two new feet".
 And with some words their wounds to soften,
 "Oh! Do you come here often".
 We left them there with heavy heart
 To have been caught with such a start,
 With greater speed, above mach 1,
 The Hobnails set off at a run,
 Their empty packs bounced on their backs,
 They flew towards the six foot track,
 And so on up the track they went
 Although their breath was long since spent,
 And when it seemed they'd go no more,
 They had but reached the valley floor.
 While high above in sunset's fleck
 They saw the walls of Narrow Neck.
 The setting sun had closed the day,
 But not before they found the way

Through fence and paddock to the road,
 Where they at last put down their load.
 Then with their torches blundered on,
 One day had never been so long,
 A track had never been so steep,
 This Devilish Hole their breaths did keep,
 Their time was going, oh so fast,
 And yet this day would not be past
 Until they reached the weary top
 And there down on the tarseal did they flop.
 By starlight they could see
 The forty-eighth hour would almost be -
 Ten minutes more, their time was through.
 But now to think of walks anew,
 A lot of country they had passed,
 A walk they planned - you might have guessed,
 "Now can you see those large three peaks,
 We'll be on those within five weeks.
 Now up you blokes, but just go slow
 For only one more mile to go.
 I know a wondrous camping spot
 With bedding there and showers hot,
 And we'll await the other three,
 So keen to flake they're sure to be!"
 Three tired walkers then trooped in,
 No need for them a "Mickey Finn",
 But let us leave our tales of sorrow
 Until another day - tomorrow.

WATCH FOR THIS WEEKEND

Why not spend a weekend with wildflowers in our beautiful bushland. We have in store for you an interesting weekend and the fares will be the cheapest of the year. David Ingram will lead the party to base camp on Saturday to an area out from St. Ives. The stroll will be leisurely with time for afternoon tea. Your favourites, Yvonne Renwick and Edna Stretton, will lead in a campfire sing-song. Clarice Morris will be there to answer any question, whether genetic or biological. She will also deliver a short lecture on plant ecology (i.e. the relationship of plant life with its environs). John Bookluch will give practical demonstrations in taking wildflower close-up photos with eye level cameras. The President, Gentle Jack, shall lead the day walk.

- BRING (a) Your co-operation and good spirits - preferably out of the bottle.
 (b) Your questions, note books and hand lenses.
 (c) Since I'm writing this ad. I can be long-winded. For photography:-
 (1) Camera (whether Box Brownie or Lieca).
 (2) Close-up lenses - a MUST for wildflowers. A second lense is a sound investment for those who wish to further their close-up work. Make sure you bring the Focusing Tables which should be supplied with the lenses or booklet that is sold with your 35 m.m. camera.
 (3) Measuring tape
 (4) Tripod, cable release and exposure meter (not absolutely essential).

TRAINS Saturday 12.51 p.m. electric from Central to Pymble.
 Sunday 9.00 a.m. " " " " "
FARE 6/3 approximately includes bus fares.

THREE PEAKS

- Geof Wagg

If John or I or anyone had seen, in imagination, the perfect night to start our trip, and if that mental image had been taken and transformed into glowing reality, losing nothing in the transformation, then it must still have fallen short of this night, simply because we would never have dared to imagine such perfection.

We didn't notice it at first because moonlight means nothing in a city, nor yet on the journey up in the train where the excitement was deafening. There was Mick Elfick sitting with all the calm composure of a Jack-in-the-Box - Barry like a barrell of gunpowder with the fuse alight - John was a nervous stag - Freddie a pacing feline - Mack Peryman's smile all but divided the northern and southern sections of his face - Snow and I, heaven knows what we were like, and everyone emptying packs and repacking them, changing shoes, changing socks, pulling sweaters on or off. Small wonder we didn't notice the night.

But when we stood there on the Neck and saw the track, a blazing meteor trail before us, and the mountains around and beyond clear, sharp, but slightly dimmed like a memory, we realised at last the magnificence of this night.

So we breathed it and walked into it and the walk began, born of our effort and baptized with our sweat. We talked of Esmarelda and Rear Admiral Byrde and were at Taro's Ladder in two hours. Across Debert's and twenty minutes later we took our first rest without feeling the need. It was a strange experience this; almost eerie to feel at once warm with exertion and cold with the air of this same soft night that took the familiar scenes along the track and made them clear, yet dim, so that we moved through memory even while it was real.

With a certain confidence the party crossed the Glens of Guess to White Dog ridge and so down to the Cox.

It was pleasant at ten to twelve as I lay in my bag in a leafy hollow beneath a bush to see the lights of the second group appearing on the skyline of White Dog. These ones hadn't waited at Katoomba while Snow and John bought food, so we who had caught a taxi to the Neck and as we got started without being seen, decided to arrange this surprise meeting on the Cox. John hailed them and the torches above waivered then as the fire flared and Johnry called again, it dawned on them that they had been tricked and the thin sound of faraway abuse drifted down to us on the still night air. Soon they arrived and recriminations were still in progress when I went to sleep.

It's dark, a sightless hand gropes for the torch, finds it and withdraws. Inside the sleeping bag the tired batteries flicker a tiny light and sleep-blurred eyes fumble with the figures. "Ten past five! I'm late." I shook Snow. "Hey Snowy, it's half past five!"

"Groan".

A handful of leaves dropped on the embers of last night's fire. Breath on them and see the yellow flame, first touch of the artist's brush on the plain grey canvas of the dawn. The flickering, moving flame, sole living thing in the green-grey dew-soaked world. But life breeds life and as the fire grows

it draws the formless shapes and bundles painfully crawling nearer till in its glow you see they are your friends. Mick, eating stew from a billy, two spoonfuls then back on the fire, Freddie with the interminable tin of fruit.

At almost six and barely light we started along the river, soaking our shoes with dew and stumbling over rocks. Somehow now we didn't feel like fire-eating walkers and the cold damp morning air lay in our hearts. We took to the climb of Marcott's Pass almost reluctantly, knowing its steepness from experience. Slowly, as imperceptibly it seemed as the sunlight that moved to meet us, we climbed. Meanwhile below, along the valley of the Cox the dull grey shadows deepened to a beautiful lucid blue and as the mist dissolved, the sun itself showed clear above the ridges and it was day; delicate, dawning day. Lovely as a bride, blushing too, shedding on the world a rosy light; full of sweet promise. We wed ourselves to this day. The dawn wind brought us her kiss - night was behind and the vapours in our hearts dispelled.

Now a change was upon us. No longer we raised our feet faintly to the slope. Our pace began to flow, our stride to lengthen; breathing was an easy rhythm and conversation no effort. Freddie, already stripped to his singlet, went with his spring-heeled walk that always seemed to be about a run, while John, who crumpled with stomach pains whenever he stopped, still went faster than most. Michael and I led the field feeling like the two front Huskies of a fanning sled team, or the forward flicker of a running flame.

Gentle's Pass 8.30 - Dex Creek 9.00 - Cloudmaker 9.20.

At the trig Mick conjured a tin of fruit salad out of the rock. It was ice cold (there had been frost at Dex Creek) and delicious. Within minutes almost everyone had arrived and was eating furiously. The Famous Higgins with the air of a connoisseur selected items from a bewildering array of food; John, his stomach pains gone, ate in customary manner, tearing the loaf with his teeth. Freddie dined delicately from a tin of baby food.

Here two of the bods decided to make a more sedate return to Katoomba via Morilla .

Thunder Buttress sounds impressive and it is. A high ridge that dips and twists towards the outlying plateau of Maruba-Karoo then drops like a roll of thunder to Kanangra Creek.

We crossed Rumble, sidled Roar and picked up the ridge at once. Maruba-Karoo, with its miniature three sisters, we skirted below the cliff then rode the thunder down. Kanangra Creek 10.50.

The creek bank was a haven of shaded green grass and the iced water tasted sweet to our dusty throats. Here we had first lunch with a might brew-up of Cocoa. At 11.30 we were pulling out again, Mike Peryman electing to make a detour round the foot of the mountain to pick up his tea dump (and incidentally, Snow's) which had been left at the creek - river junction. Snow gave minute instructions: "Up along the second flood shelf - mm - dead tree - mm - sticks and leaves - mm - dig - mm - fair way down" etc. It was well hidden.

Without going downstream to the main spur we cut into the climb of Paraliser South Buttress, which flew as graceful as a Swallow's flight for the summit. We had viewed it and approved it from the opposite side, eyeing the two steep, breath-taking sweeps and pacing them with two strides of our mind. Here now

we found the steepes still breath-taking but so much better than expected. The glorious, golden midday views trapped our eyes and lent greater pleasure to the effort. Paraliser summit - 12.50.

Around the little cairn we loafed until a quarter past, basking in the sun and eating, then roused at last by Manning "We've been here too long!" we followed his lead on to Paraliser North Buttress. If the South Buttress is steep, this North Buttress is precipitous. For a while there was some dissention as to whether we were on a ridge at all. Mick would call down, "A bit more to the right I think John!" and Famous Higgins on the other flank would counter with, "A bit this way isn't it?". But Manning John kept his own council and, as usual, was 100% correct. After its first plummeting plunge the ridge steadied for a while to a respectable grade and we tail-enders came up with the others at the point where it finally flung away pretensions and went headlong for the depths. We took the tree-studded precipitous that led towards Guouogang's Naroo Buttress, trusting to luck and Manning's judgement. As usual, smack on. The last of us rolled down at 2.40, just missing the amazing sight of Famous Higgins (commonly F.H.) sitting naked for three minutes waste-deep in the icy waters of Kanangra River. The sensation, he informed us, was truly alpinic.

This last descent had found the chinks in our armour. Blisters appeared and knees began to creak. While we made repairs the deep, green gloom of afternoon spread along the narrow, shaded valley. Suddenly, on glancing down the stream, I saw an amazing thing. A pair of vivid pink socks was walking briskly towards us. As they drew closer an enormous grin appeared at an improbable distance above them, then the rest of Mick Peryman materialised. Salutations were exchanged but Snow's first words betrayed his sentiments. "Did you find my tea?" Mick's smile faded back into the gloom and Snow's jaw dropped.

"Who taught you to hide food?" he demanded. "It must have been a bunny rabbit". "I had to dig about three feet."

Snow brightened up when the food was produced and explained that he didn't want any boy scouts to find it.

"We've been here too long!" quoth the Johnny, bouncing on his toes to flex his calf muscles.

Psychologically I'd been prepared for an hour-long rest here. I already had the feeling that I'd done a good day's walk and was quite prepared to settle down for a couple of hours, leisurely cook and eat, then possibly choof a few hundred feet up the ridge for the night. Manning, Elfick, Freddy Worrall and the Famous Higgins on the other hand were looking forward with keen anticipation to their stock of goodies (no less than a dozen tins) that Freddy had lugged out a few weekends previously and cached near Guouogang trig. As man's aspiration follows closely his food supply, the abovementioned set off for the summit, while Snow and I, trying to make the best of two worlds, ate my tea on the river and his on the top. Mike Peryman and Dough Doughnut, who were also doing a spot of cooking, waited too.

By 3.30 we'd eaten everything we felt we reasonably could and began to pick our way between the nettles to the foot of the ridge. The last big climb we told each other, forgetting for the moment all about the climb back to Katoomba. One thing was certain, it was the last climb for the day - our day. She had been beautiful and kept her beauty even now as her life drew to its close. The great white moon already well clear of the earth foretold her end and we toiled upwards

on the twisting, spiney ridge that lay like the scaly tail of a dragon, who slept while we St. Georges took him in the rear.

We mounted rocks and climbed successive bumps, we saw the daylight dim in Davies Canyon and caught the grey-white glint of water falling in Whalanian Abyss. Just at the ridge head we crossed a perpendicular gully of unbelievable green, then up a bump and up a hump and up and up and up - Lord we were tired - but at last flat ground and sally scrub - the top.

All at once we realised our day was very old. The last warm flush had drained from her soft cheeks and left a pallor there; then as we watched she died. A tiny cool breeze brought us her last kiss.

We called, and the answer gave us our direction through the maze of charred sally sticks to find the others settled by the trig - eating. A little fire flared fitfully in the now gusty wind lighting flighty shadows on the rough stacked stones of the trig, but above the placid moon beamed confidence. We exchanged times (and the first group's had been noticeably better than ours as we arrived after 5.30), then, looking up, marvelled at the weather.

But heavens - even while we watched the moon like a great gold coin gleaming in a pool, ripples of disturbance passed across the face. Drifting fingers of mist, clinging, clawing at the face of the moon, drawing up from the east the damp, beady blanket hiding the stars. Lower and lower it sank, driven by the wind and moving within itself, teeming, like a pestilence, till it enveloped us. Just like that it happened, all within three minutes, while we watched. Our lovely day was gone and we were the prey of treacherous night.

What held now we wanted to know. It might rain in five minutes or during the night, or the next morning could find our route swarthed in mist. Snow was consulted because he lived at Katoomba and should be an expert. "Well," he said with an air of knowledge, "It could easily clear off in half an hour. On the other hand, it might set in and rain for a week."

Thus assured, we settled down for the night, most around the trig scattered wherever they could fit between the rocks, but Snow and I sought shelter in the treeline just below the summit.

Well it didn't rain and it didn't clear away, it just stayed misty and when at last after a long, long night the waning moon showed redly in the west, we decided we'd had enough of sleep so Snow got up and lit a fire by which we warmed ourselves under the pretence of drying our fleabags. The sky above the mist made luminous by the moonlight showed darkly through, still bright with stars, and cheered our hearts with signs of clearing.

Next came breakfast, a miserable affair with just on half a cup of water each, but even before we'd finished we heard a cry from higher up... "Wake up Wagg!!" signed with F.H.'s megaphone voice. In haste we crammed away the rest of breakfast and hustled up to the trig, arriving just as the Famous One gave tongue once more. We were amazed to find him and indeed all the others still at the angle of repose because - well their couch must have been even less comfortable than ours.

While they ate their tins of ice cold fruit and milk, the mist about us cleared and all around below us swelled the cloud sea, cold and grey in pre-dawn light, filling the river valleys and turning the peaks to islands and peninsulas. Later as we left the sun broke from the horizon cloud and turned the stuff below to fairy floss.

The ridge over Queahgong to Jenolan was strangely free of mountain holly. Only a tiny green sprig here and there gave a promise for future walks. At 7.30 we rested on Jenolan while Micheal mended his sandshoe with string and sticking plaster, and Johnny lapped condensation from the tree branches, then out along the Great North Ridge for Scrubber's Hump and the Cox. The morning now was fair as it could be; the rising valley cloud went - Pooff! - just as it reached our feet and the party was in tremendous spirits. We identified peaks, creeks and places in all directions (who cares if we're wrong.) F.H. regaled us with his experiences in the Dutch Alps, Mike Perryman demonstrated skating on a scree slope and Micheal's sandshoes parted sole and upper once more. Hilariously we arrived at Breakfast Creek at 9.30, set about a mammoth brew-up and gorging festival. A tin of cocoa was found lying on the grass like a gift from heaven, more tins of fruit and chocolates were unearthed from hiding places round about. Billys bubbled and conversation subsided under the steady chommo, chommo, slurp! An argument broke out between the "make it in the billy" and the "make it in the pot" cocoa cooks. The Famous Higgins performing with the finesse of a trained dog demonstrated the advantage of thick woollen gloves when manipulating billys over hot fire. (A pity that that hole in the finger had to come just where it did, but he didn't spill much.) By eleven there was silence except for an occasional burp, and Manning John staggered to his feet to declare "We've been here too long!" then slumped back on to his fleabag in the sun. By 11.15 Freddy Worrall was burning the remains of a plastic bag full of stew which had faithfully accompanied him through the trip and F.H. was cooking a final billy of porridge. By 11.30 we were on our feet and moving - staggering a little, mind - but moving once more in the direction of Katoomba.

The remainder of the trip? Anyone who's been that way could write it. The fact is we'd eaten too much and there seemed no doubt that we'd make Katoomba in good time so we dragged our feet a bit. We made some pretence of pace along Breakfast Creek, but the climb out was an effort and the Carlon's Head climb was even worse. I'm not speaking for everyone, of course. Freddy Worrall's pace had never declined and John's great frame was still capable of any effort his will could put upon it; but the rest of us felt we'd done a good walk and were prepared to take it easy. After a brief second lunch on top of the Head we picked ourselves up for the last lap. Walking all in orderly file we got as far as the main Neck track, then Dough Doughnut, who'd done the whole trip at a stroll, gave us all a shock by taking off at full gallop. Manning John stood the slow pace only a few minutes more, then he too forged ahead and soon disappeared. Both Micks were now wearing socks over their sandshoes in an effort to hold them together and this tended to give the party quite an invalid flavour which we others made the most of by dawdling. There was another stop at Corral Swamp, but it was turning coolish so we didn't linger. At Diamond Spray we came across five lumps of sugar (one each) set in a neat row across the track. "Sugar for energy," we thought, and the pace increased a fraction. Then best of all, just before the first quarry we saw our two speedsters and the pace increased a whole lot. They'd waited more than half an hour so that we could all finish together and we did. Our arms around each other's shoulders we stepped on to the bitumen together.

Mighty bods and a mighty trip.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Keep your ears tuned for details of the walking trial to be held on the second weekend in September. A stack of fun and excitement for every member of the Club.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

To quote the opening sentence of your July Editorial ALMOST word for word "This tiger country stuff for prospective members is all very well, I suppose, but in my opinion, it is often overdone".

Most applicants for prospective membership have, during the past years, done so in search of congenial companionship, and to learn how to walk and camp, to enjoy the out-of-doors, and to establish a community of interest with at least one of the various groups which go to make up the total Club membership.

These people come to us to learn to walk and camp. It has become recognised of late, that it is the job of executive members in particular, and club members generally, to ensure that they are afforded every assistance and encouragement. There are some prospective members who take to "tiger walks" like ducks to water, (there are several on the current list) but the majority of them need their initial six months to equip themselves with the "know-how" in bushcraft so that they can look after themselves if the going gets tough. Not all leaders of walks in rough country are considerate to prospective members. I know of several fairly keen prospectives who, during the past twelve months, have become discouraged through being subjected to "some genuine suffering".

Consider the good training for walks to Kanangra and back offered by the "rambles over Mt. Solitary", or to Blue Gum Forest and Lockley's Pylon, or to Carlon's and Clear Hill. What a wealth of experience in map reading can be gained from a lowly trip to St. Helena, or to The Wheel and Woodford Ridge. "There's no doubt that everyone is capable of doing trips into so-called 'tiger country'"; yes, but they usually wish to get out again by 8 p.m. on Sunday night.

If certain prospective members wish "to suffer" (or more politely, to try themselves out), let them do so, but why inflict unnecessary suffering and sometimes loss of working time on unsuspecting prospectives? The Committee has rightly rebuked a couple of thoughtless leaders for so doing. The Club has lost too many eligible members during their prospective membership over a period of years through indifference to their welfare.

However, the new order seems to be well established now, whereby prospective members are assisted and encouraged by the Hon. Membership Secretary and her active and not so active assistants. The fact that there is normally at least one new member welcomed at each monthly meeting augers well for the Club's future.

One last point, "we members who aren't particularly gifted with a flow of conversation", (not members of S.B.S., surely!) should make a definite effort to overcome their diffidence and endeavour to make new prospectives feel at home and be sure that they are not "left lonely in a crowd".

Thank you, Mr. Editor, for a stimulating Editorial, and for drawing attention to the forthcoming Prospectives' Night.

Yours faithfully,

David Ingram.

MORE NEWS FROM EDNA G.

On my last day in Interlaken I decided to do the three passes tour whilst the weather held. The passes had only just been opened for the Summer and in some places they had only cleared for one way traffic through walls of snow. However when vehicles meet head-on, only the bus passengers panicked and the drivers seemed to know who should reverse to a safe place. There had been recent snow and the glaciers and mountain tops were wonderful - Sassen, Furks and Gletsch. I will never cease to marvel at the way the Swiss maintain their roads. In many places the roads are built up over space and the tunnels and bridges have to be seen to be believed.

Brig has lived up to all my expectations. The first morning seemed hopeful so in company with a German lady I set off for Zermatt and Gornergrat. It was a grand trip with lots of field flowers and then alpine flowers and as usual in this country, rushing streams and waterfalls in all directions. Zermatt is a tourist village on a plateau and from here you get wonderful glimpses of the Matterhorn. There are no cars in Zermatt - you travel by a cog railway - and the so-called taxis are horse drawn carriages. The principal hotel still has an enclosed mid-Victorian type carriage with steps up the back and glass walls and a porter stands on the back steps. It is drawn by two horses, and has to be seen to be believed. There are tunnels, but you go most of the way up Gornergrat in the open and the views are glorious. It was a perfect day and the view of the surrounding alps and especially the Matterhorn were magnificent. I really felt this was the climax to all the wonderful things I had seen. We were told by some Swiss folk that they had friends who had been to Zermatt a dozen times and the Matterhorn had always been hidden in cloud. Matterhorn is such a lovely isolated peak exactly as we have always seen it in pictures. Gornergrat is 10,203 feet above sea level. Not only the cows but the horses also wear bells in Zermatt, but little tinkling ones.

Yesterday I took the postal bus to Simplon Pass. It was a doubtful day but I had quite good views of the surrounding peaks and went up to the large eagle which was built by the Swiss Army during the war. This is the Italian border and the eagle has his eyes towards Italy: I walked down for some miles and thoroughly enjoyed it. Talked to a car-load of English folk - the second lot I have met who shipped their cars to Italy and were driving across the continent home. However, they all seem to have a short time and stick to the main highways so that they miss a tremendous lot of interesting places.

Today I went to Moerel and took the zeilbahn to Riederalp which is a little tiny village at 6,392 feet and apparently popular for skiing. You do the cable car trip in 15 minutes. I came back on my own this afternoon and felt slightly "windy", especially when the thing came to a stop for some minutes. It is most intriguing however. What I had thought from above to be broad river flats over the way turned out to be a plateau about 2,000 feet up: From Riederalp I had a lovely walk through the Aletsch Natural Park flora and fauna reserve. Had good views of the Aletsch glacier, said to be the largest ice-sea in Europe. I strolled through pine woods with snow drifts here and there and tiny tarns and always lovely flowers - buttercups, violas, gentians, mauve and white snow bells (these are lovely little fringed bells) mountain roses and lots of others. Most of the mountain tops are hidden in clouds and it was not good weather for photography, but excellent for walking. However, on my way back it started to rain and continued quite heavily. With lovely patches of brilliant gold buttercups and hundreds of deep blue gentians, I found the world a good place - rain or shine.



PADDY MADE



THE HUMBLE TENT PEG

It isn't often that Paddy is moved to publish the unsolicited testimonial type of letter but here is portion of one he received that was simply signed - "Newly Weds".

Dear Mr. Pallin,

We have just undertaken that expensive operation of setting up house and would like to express our gratitude at the economy and the quality of what is possibly the most useful article you produce - the tent peg.

In the kitchen, not only as a skewer and cake tester, but when we have guests they look most attractive holding our kabobs. As well as this, Ethel finds them very useful for a stitch holder.

Paddy would like to point out that they will also keep a tent firm in any weather as though they had been made for the job, and to mention that he has innumerable other little items for the walking bod of equal quality & adaptability.

PADDY PALLIN
Lightweight Camp Gear
201 CASTLEREAGH ST SYDNEY