

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to the
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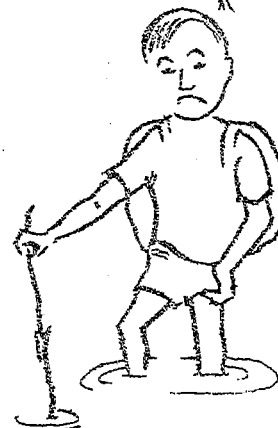
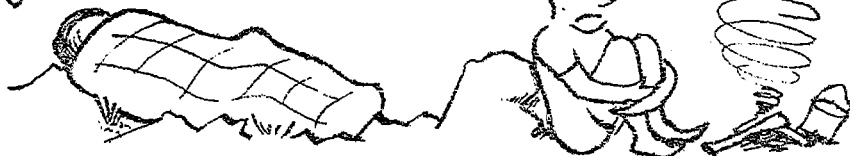
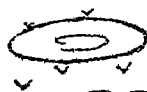
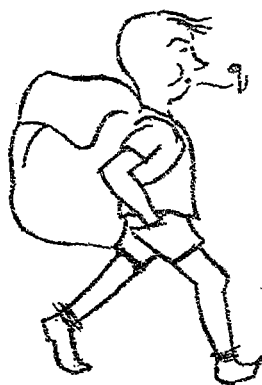
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SEPTEMBER 1963

Price 1/-

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Hi,

Some may wonder why we, in our leisure time, forego the amenities of civilisation and disappear into an apparently inhospitable bush when we could be sitting quietly in some pleasant locale, sipping something cool or hot as the season might dictate.

Walking has been defined in a well-known authoritative work as "the art of progression by setting one foot methodically before the other - the most venerable and universal way of locomotion among mankind, as has been for a million years."

A little prosaic for the philosophically inclined, but wider research has something a little kinder to offer, like this:-

"Walking, in the nobler sense, is a measured progress inspired by the woods and hills, by rivers and the flowers of the field, a serene partaking of the enduring sources of joy. It conduces to meditation - or perhaps it should be said that only those of philosophic spirit truly walk, receptive of the beauty which is everywhere in a nature unmarred by man. Walking and meditative thought are bound together in the very name 'Peripatetic'".

Those who walk in this broader sense are in good company. Like, for example, Paul of Tarsus.

"He was on his way for the last time to Jerusalem, having come by boat from Phillippi to the Troad. Then he sent his company by ship around the peninsula to Assos - for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot."

Or if Paul doesn't move you, how about Rousseau -

"What I most regret," he said "is that I kept no record of my journeyings. Never have I thought so much, existed so much, lived so much, been so much myself, if I may dare to say it, as when I went alone and afoot."

We in this club aim to lift walking above the plane of the methodical putting of one foot before the other and to enjoy the broader sense of walking and all it contains.

S.W.B.

THE AUGUST GENERAL MEETING

Jim Brown.

Now, why should some General Meetings take so long and others be so short? There's a fine question for students of mob psychology. You can't even tie it in to a derivative of Parkinson's Law that a meeting will fill in all the time available to it. Look at the August meeting, for instance -----

The meeting was under weigh at 8.15 p.m. and after Lawrence Quaken received his long deferred award for winning the Men's Breaststroke at the Swimming Carnival back in February, we went on to welcome four new members, Elizabeth Henderson, Evan Williams, Phillip Bailey and Peter Godwin. The fifth candidate, Leah Brooks, was missing - ill.

Minutes were duly signed as a correct record and out of this Frank Ashdown asked if the Sub-committee looking into the question of Club Funds had done anything about the Era Funds. Ron ruled this question out of order, pointing out that Frank's proposal of the previous meeting was a notice of motion to be considered at the Half Yearly Meeting. Frank was assured that his motion would be featured on the Agenda for September.

The President also pointed out that the suggested two walks for Sunday had been achieved on some weekends on the coming programme which needed filling. As ever, it was up to the members.

Correspondence contained a letter of enquiry from a potential member who enquired if we had any uniform - also an offer from a clothing manufacturer who was prepared to supply us with Club ties. In addition an organisation known as the Mountain Equipment Co. informed us they had tramping equipment imported from New Zealand for sale.

There was an interruption at this stage as a heavily bearded newcomer approached the Presidential table and deposited some documents there. Ron assured us it was not Ned Kelly, but only Paul Driver, Federation's President, who was shortly returned from the role of Gregory Blaxland in a simulated crossing of the Blue Mountains. The last matter from correspondence was advice that we had sent to Federation a cheque covering sale of 110 copies of the latest Bushwalker Annual. Now we were on to reports, where Gordon Redmond told us we were £50 lighter in ready cash than we were at the end of June - but this included the typewriter purchase. Cash at bank at 31.7.63 was about £197.

The walks report contained the story of the 97 miler on 5-7th July (Katoomba - Narrow Neck - White Dog - Mt. Cookem - Friday night camp - Scotts Main Range - Yerranderie - Wollondilly - Bullio -

High Range - Mittagong). Total ascents 5,000 ft and descents 6,000 ft. Wilf led a party of 6, and only one retired. Despite flooded rivers, good times were made and arrivals at Mittagong ranged between 2.30 and 4.15 p.m. on Sunday.

On the same weekend a walk in the Mountain Lagoon area was programmed, but no report was received. A third weekend trip led by Geoff Boxsell went from Mt. Victoria via Lett and Cox River, Megalong Valley to Medlow Bath. The party of 5 came out by Blackheath Creek. Jack Perry conducted the 7th July day walk from Cowan along a ridge towards Gunyah Bay - report not yet available.

On 12-14th Wilf's track clearing weekend on Starlight's Track was attended by one other member (a prospective) only, Wilf commented that our Club has failed to do its share of this valuable work. Quite a lot is still to be done on this old pass into the Nattai valley. The Instructional Walk listed for the same weekend was cancelled - leader injured and incapacitated.

Was it the personality of the leader that accounted for the roll-up of 6 members, 9 prospectives and 1 visitor on Ron Knightley's walk on 13/14 July down Perry's - Blue Gum - Lockley's Pylon to Leura. Members of the Blue Mountains National Park Trust were met near the Pinnacles and a rumour is current that the trail down from Perry's Lockdown (once known as Dockers Ladders) is to be improved. John Holly and a party of five carried out the Sunday walk of 14th July - Cronulla - Bundeena - Wattamolla - Garie - bus to Waterfall. Windy weather and excellent wildflowers reported.

A well organised S & R Practice was held at Toby's Glen, 5 miles from Woodford on 19/21st July. It was an excellent weekend, but only 4 S.B.W. were there. Over the same weekend Jack Perry had a trip from Robertson via Carrington Falls to Kiama - no report to hand yet.

Gordon Redmond's day walk, originally set down for 23rd June, was transferred to 21st July (Engadine - Kangaroo Creek - Uloomalla Falls - Audley). Two members, 6 prospectives, 1 visitor made up the party, and excellent walking weather was experienced. On the same day Margaret Wilson was out with 22 starters on an easy amble from Bundeena to Marley and back. Aboriginal rock carvings were inspected at Jibbon - wild flowers were coming out nicely.

Over the same weekend Sandra Bardwell and party of 4 did the "Three Peaks", with only one retirement (At Cloudmaker). Gucugang was reached within 12 hours from the foot of White Dog.

Next weekend, 26-28th July, Colin Putt and party of 15 went in from the Vines area to Tarn Mt. and Angel's Falls and back. Around Tarn Mt. an excellent cave for a base camp was found and a pass to the Falls was discovered. It is possibly the first party to reach the Falls.

Bob Godfrey took a party from The Wheel across the Babyrinth to Q.V. Homes and down Kedumba - details not yet available. On Sunday 28th, Dick Child was abroad with 16 people between Waterfall - Kangaroo Creek and Audley. It was the leader's birthday and suitably celebrated.

Ron Knightley remarked that it may be as well for newcomers to know that we didn't always start our programmes with 97 milers. ("No" said the voice from the ranks "sometimes they're really tough").

Having told us that the remaining reports would be "tabled" as usual, Ron told us we were at general business, and he particularly wanted to say that it was not the right thing to bring visitors without conferring with the leader - recently a visitor who was not equal to the trip caused some complications on a day walk.

This was also the final chance to put forward Constitutional amendments for discussion at the Half Yearly Meeting - and time was running out if one didn't want to get a "little yellow stinker" about unpaid subs.

In general business Frank Ashdown was still aggrieved that the summary of day walks published in the magazine did not co-incide with the date of issue of the magazine. Everyone concerned expressed regret (without too much concern) and - to the general surprise - that was it, and the meeting was all over at 8.45 p.m.

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

THE BLACK HOLE.

Terry Thomas.

It's early Saturday morning and the Kurrajong-Lithgow road is behind us. Rick and I hear the cars less distinctly as we walk over the south Peak of Mt. Tomah, inadvertently driving a flock of sheep ahead of us.

"That must be the creek the Sydney Uni. mob were talking about." "Fair enough - let's get down there."

We push down a few hundred feet to the creek bed and cook breakfast. On top of each pack is 120 feet of nylon rope, presumed breaking strength better than 3000 pound. This is sandstone country, on the edge of the Grose Valley, and the creeks plunge to the level of the valley floor through deep narrow canyons. Sydney University Bushwalkers had been through a nearby canyon a few weeks before, and had told us of "a great black chasm" which "joined in on the left towards the end of the first day." We were hoping this creek led into that chasm. After all, why should they "do" it before us? Breakfast over, it's time to change into swimming trunks and T-shirt. "Man, this water's cold! Wish the sun would get with it."

We move off down the creek at a fair pace. Much of the way is open going through ferns and over moss-covered rocks. An occasional waterfall spills down the rock walls, which are gaining in height and keep closing in, forcing us to wade through the icy water. We avoid a few swims by some hair-raising balancing on improbable footholds, but finally the inevitable happens. Once you get wet above a certain level you may as well swim anyway.

At last we hear a roar ahead. The creek plunges 20 feet out of sight. "Rope job, Rick." "Yes, let's climb round on that ledge and see if there's a decent tree to rope from." "Wonder why it took so long to start falling. Must drop in a hurry when it does."..... Prophetic words!

We rope down to the cascade without trouble and pull the rope down after us. (The rope is used double and passes around the anchor point). No going back now, this is strictly a one way trip. A few yards further on the water plunges out of sight in a gap between boulders. This time we move out along a wide jungle-covered ledge on the right. It is impossible to see what confronts us in the descent, because the ledge curves away gradually. At least we can see that we have reached a junction with another canyon.



We set up the rope, using the full 240 feet. I clip on and start the descent. Having covered about 60 feet of sloping earth I reach the vertical rock wall and lean out. The walls drop sheer for about 100 feet to a band of ferns on either side. I can't see any water flowing between the ferns. The rope doesn't reach the ferns.

"Come on down Rick, we'll have to rope again from here." Rick joins me, and we set the rope up above a tree which appears to be growing from a ledge below us. Rick goes over the edge. A few minutes later he starts yelling. I can't hear him properly but he's off the rope and wants me to come down to a small stance on the cliff a few feet above him. I go down and look around. We are really in trouble! The rock wall on our side of the canyon goes straight down. There is no sign of a ledge where the ferns are. There is no anchor point in the little niche I'm standing in.

The tree we had placed all our hopes in grows from the other side, sort of leans over against our side and then grows out again. Below is a strip of darkness. I drop a rock into the depths. It bounces down out of sight and we hear it clatter downward for what seems to be half a minute. Rick is standing on the only branch in sight. It is about 9 inches long. He has tied himself to the tree. With about 20 feet of rope left I decide to try and slide across the tree to the other side. I do all right at first, but then nearly come unstuck.

The tree is wet and covered in moss. Then when I am almost there the rope pulls the end of my jacket into the snap link and jams solid. The elasticity of the nylon lets me gain a few inches and my pack touches the ledge giving me enough stability to free the rope. The solid ground feels good, everything's wonderful, we are going to beat it after all -- for a second there I thought I was dead. Now Rick backs his way across. A few anxious moments and then he is safe, too.

We pull the rope down and it comes easily. It is incredibly narrow and dark below. We loop the rope around the tree we have just crossed and let the ends drop. "Think it reached the bottom?" "Let's pull it up and have a look," says Rick. "Fair enough?" he asks, holding the wet ends up for inspection.

We both know that in a water-soaked place like this it doesn't prove a thing. Without further comment he clips on and goes over the edge.

I hear a yell and feel the rope. It's free. I start down. This descent in the darkness is unlike any other I have made. First my feet are on one side, then I am hanging free, now it's the other. The narrowness accentuates the depth below. I can see Rick. Then I am standing in the stream bed. About five feet of rope is being washed around in the water, not a large margin of safety. We bring down the rope and Rick starts to coil it up. I should be helping him, but instead I walk upstream, deeper into the chasm, in a kind of trance.

This tremendous slot snakes back further and further into the rock. The top is completely covered over in many places where boulders have jammed above. The water is roaring now, but the atmosphere is one of tranquillity; a cathedral with the organ in full voice. The falls are around yet another corner, but the water is deep and turbulent. I edge out on a log wedged under the water, steadying myself on a log jammed overhead. Rick appears and starts to move out behind me. He swings on the overhead log to test it and it comes away. The log and I disappear under the water and then surface, both unhurt. I clamber back next to Rick and we watch the waterfall in silence. It drops through a hole in the "roof" above and showers down. Sunlight shining through the same hole lights it internally, with beautiful effect. We watch until the cold forces a retreat and then move off, out into the light of a normal canyon.

Looking back we decide we have aptly named that canyon "Calcutta" after the famous Black Hole.

With my thin build the cold is taking toll of my strength but Rick pushes me on, telling lies about the glorious campsite around the next bend. There are yabbies everywhere. Finally this second canyon joins a third canyon and we are sure of our position at last. We have reached the lower section of Thunder Canyon. We decide to have a quick lunch and push on to a campsite downstream, but even before lunch is ready it starts to grow dark so we prepare a campsite nearby. I start cooking some tea and then notice that Rick has flaked out on his sleeping bag. "Wake up you b-d and eat this. You can't walk on one meal a day." He curses at being disturbed but condescends to eat.

Soon the rocks are spotted with blue light as the glow worms get under way. An occasional firefly floats through the ferns. About midnight heavy rain wakes us. We lie on one groundsheet with the other over us and our heads under a rock ledge. A little later Rick wakes up and mumbles - "That's funny - it's raining like mad but the stars are out." He tries to sit up, but hits his head on the rock disturbing the glow worms overhead.

Next day we set off down this larger canyon, eyes alert for a quick escape route. White sand, cream and red rocks, ferns, trees, crystal water - but also an added dimension; a perfection in form and arrangement that almost seems planned and is never quite reached in other canyons I have seen. The canyon is dropping again and we have to use the assistance of the rope twice in short hand over hand pitches. These are followed by a swim of a hundred yards or more through a fantastic "river cave," with the channel so narrow initially that our packs almost scrape the walls. There is a roof overhead, even in the wide sections. "Hell, I'm cold, pass the rum." "Hey, don't drink it all, give me another swig."

Running on the spot and O.P. rum bring the body temperature back to normal. "That's about as cold as I've been, are you sure this is summer?" Rick is not sure.

A swim or so later we reach a spot where it looks not impossible to climb out. I go up for a look and decide that we can at least climb the first cliffline. We have lunch and start up, negotiating the lower cliffline with no great difficulty. We search around and find an easy way up the final cliffline, and a 5-mile walk brings us back to the road.

"O.K. Rick, now we walk back to the car." "Wrong! I can't drive. You walk back and I'll mind your pack."

Rick lays out his sleeping bag and goes to sleep. I set off down the road. No road bash can mar the memory of a trip as unforgettable as Calcutta Canyon, first time down.

F E D E R A T I O N B A L L

PADDINGTON TOWN HALL

FRIDAY, 11th OCTOBER

TICKETS - 22/6 EACH
(AVAILABLE IN CLUB ROOM)

D A N C I N G 8.30 p.m. - 2.0 a.m

SAW PIT CREEK

This year saw the usual gathering at Sawpit Creek over the school holidays. S.B.W. was represented by the Moppetts, Colleys, Burkes, Brookses and Kirkbys, and as visitors, Les Galven and family, and Don Gordon and son, a total of twenty five bods. Spear-headed by the Colleys, whose camp-fire was just visible out through the trees at night, the S.B.W. group retreated to comparative seclusion at the far end of the area, but even so, there were mutterings that a new and more private spot would have to be found.

The Park Trust is slowly developing Sawpit Creek as a caravan and cabin park and this year there was a fair-sized contingent of caravanners and campers scattered around the flat, no doubt attracted by the all-weather access roads.

Letters to the Editor.

Dear Stuart,

How is your editorship of the Mag. going? Being editor in 1957-58 myself, I can offer you a modicum of sympathy - it can be pretty hard to get sufficient material.

Anyway, a small contribution enclosed. Last year on a tour of the U.S., my wife and I tried a spot of bushwalking. I made some notes at the time and have finally got around to writing it up. Hope you can use it,

Yours sincerely,

Frank Rigby.

P.S. Just as passing news, perhaps you might mention that Joan and I are back in London after a 4 month motorscooter tour of Europe. We are planning to leave England about end of August, riding the scooter overland to India. Barring revolutions and a few hundred other contingencies, we may even be back in Australia early next year.

SOCIAL NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER

On 18th September FRANK DARLOW will be talking to us about walking in the McPherson Ranges. You are sure to enjoy Frank's bright commentary and there is no doubt that he will again prove to us that he is still a very excellent photographer. (Remember Colour Slide Competition 1962?)

"GREG VALE - FILMS" is the Social Programme's offering for 25th September. The title is most unpretentious, but the night will be one of great entertainment for you. You will not see "Cleopatra" but of this I'm sure - Greg's sincere little efforts titled "Queen's Visit to Sydney", "Sydney Show", "Spring is Here" and "Jenolan" will be much more satisfying than the other star-spangled expensive vehicle.

FOR SALE

Cine Kodak Royal 16 M.M. 3 speed Movie camera with Cine Ektar 1.9 Lens. 7 years old, good condition - complete with carrying case and instruction book. £50 or offer. Ring Kevin Dean 842469.

PADDY MADE

11.

"LIGHTWEIGHT PACKS"

"ULTRA LIGHTWEIGHT PACKS NECESSARY."

One often sees this instruction or recommendation on the club walks programme for the more arduous trips. We all agree it's very good advice.

Well, just how lightweight can you get and still have the necessities of food, shelter and warmth for two nights and two days in the bush.

There is a great interest in the super lightweight, judging by the demand on our new nylon cape ground-sheets (9 ozs), Bunyip rucksacks (13 ozs), No. 1 Aluminium billies (4 ozs), begging bowl (combination mug and plate - 2 ozs), aluminium foil for succulent lightweight cooking and golden tan tents for super lightweight shelter.

We'd be very interested and are sure many others would appreciate some tips if the more ingenious among you will be kind enough to let us have a typical list for an ultra lightweight two day weekend. We will print the four lightest received in the next issue.

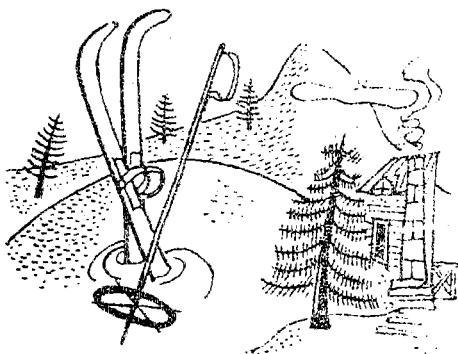
Don't forget eight hour weekend 5th, 6th, 7th October.

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A BRIEF SKIRMISH WITH THE WHITE
MOUNTAINS.

Frank Rigby.



"The region ahead has the worst weather in America. Turn back NOW if the weather looks bad."

Such is the warning which welcomes walkers to New Hampshire's White Mountains, one of the loftiest and most rugged sections of the Appalachian chain. Glorious May sunshine flooded the mountains as Joan and I hitched up our packs and headed for the hills for three days to get away from America's overcivilised civilisation.

Twenty four hours later we were struggling to get out again in possibly the worst weather conditions I have yet experienced. It happened this way.

After an exhilarating climb of 4,000 feet, we stood on the White Mountain's highest summit - Mt. Washington, 6,300 feet above the sea and the site of a small observatory for studying the very special climate referred to on our warning sign. We felt that the observatory rather spoiled the summit, to put it mildly, but next day we were to bless it. As I looked down at the rock-strewn, treeless terrain around me, I was reminded very much of parts of Kosciusko. A mile or so away to the south I could make out the Lake of the Clouds hut, one of a chain of eight operated by the Appalachian Mountain Club during the summer months. Hikers can trek from hut to hut with nothing more to carry than a day pack - hardly S.B.W. style, but those huts could be more than welcome in a place where the weather changes from fair to furious at the drop of a hat; even so, more than forty people have perished from exposure within a generation.

Summer apparently starts here about June 15, so we could not count on the huts in any way. Instead we took a trail which struck out over the tops for half-a-mile before plunging down 2,000 feet into a valley where we hoped to camp. From the top we could see a small lake on the valley floor and prospects for a campsite looked reasonable. So down we went, scrambling and rock-hopping, while water from the melting snowdrifts cascaded all around us. An unpleasant surprise awaited us as we found the valley utterly uncampable - huge boulders were strewn in confusion all around the lake and soft snowdrifts cunningly concealed the awful depths between them; where the rocks gave out the thick tangly scrub took over and it began to look black for us. But just

then I spied a small open meadow through the trees on the other side of the creek - surely here was a campsite. Alas, on inspection the ground was found to consist of a mossy semi-liquid bog; but never say die, for in one corner was a relatively dry spot barely large enough for the tent - we pounced on it avidly.

With the tent up and a thick layer of spruce boughs covering the moss, we had a snug little camp. On the only other dry patch of ground we got a fire going with driftwood from the lake (which turned out to be a beaver dam). At last we wriggled into our bags and I took a final peep at the outside world - the stars shone brilliantly and the air was quiet and still; life was good.

About midnight I awoke with that strange feeling one gets when all is not well. Gradually I realised what the trouble was - from the tree tops came a surging roar; I succeeded in ignoring it for an hour or so by sinking deeper into the bag, but as if angered by this human apathy, the wind now attacked the tent, which billowed and flapped like a sail in a gale. One fear kept recurring - if the wind was so fearsome as this in the valley, what must it be like above treeline on the tops? At daybreak the rain came in sheets and the mountains were blotted out. Over a bread and spreads breakfast we considered our position.

We could hibernate in the tent and try to outstay the weather; but with the reputation of this region uppermost in our minds, we feared that the weather might outstay us. On the other hand, we could try to get out now, and as the wind just then dropped somewhat as if to tempt us, we decided to make a break for it. The going down the valley looked tough, particularly as "the trail (actually only a negotiable route over the boulders) was covered with big snowdrifts now became icy with the rain. However, this route seemed safer than retracing our steps of the previous day along the exposed crest of the range. But ten minutes of floundering down the valley among boulders and drifts raised serious doubts - for all we knew there could be many miles of this terrain. When I sank through a snow-drift into the icy waters of the creek, it was enough - we turned tail and started back up, exposure and all.

The wind and driving rain were now in our faces and as we gained height the conditions worsened. In fact the wind chill was now severe and fingers and toes were soon numb with cold. Our groundsheet-capes were almost useless as great gusts of wind threatened to tear them from us (oh, for a parka!) But bit by bit we climbed until Joan, who was leading, yelled back, "We're there, I can see the top ahead". Next thing I knew there was a terrific din from up front, as if a score of frenzied eagles were beating their wings all in one place - it was Joan's cape as it caught the full force of the terrible wind sweeping over the exposed crest of the mountains. In an instant she was flat on her stomach and waving me back - she could not stand up against such a force.

Fortunately there was a big rock just below the crest which offered reasonable shelter and we huddled behind it to recover and reconsider our difficulties. Once stopped, we cooled off rapidly and extra warmth was essential. As Joan's spare clothing was handiest, I finished up wearing a grotesque combination - a pyjama top and a pair of long red underwear, both on the outside and both distinctly feminine in character. Now what should we do? We know it was not much more than a half-mile to the shelter of the observatory on Mt. Washington but we seriously doubted whether we could make it. It was too far to crawl and even if it were possible to stay erect, we wondered what might happen to our health in the process! Alternatively, the thought of going back again over a route we had already rejected was equally repulsive. We postponed the awful decision for a while to give the weather a chance to improve.

Of course it didn't; the mist and rain, accompanied by a high-pitched screaming, continued to sweep horizontally over the crest. As I hadn't actually experienced the worst of it, Joan suggested that I might like to sample the fresh air on top before reaching a decision. Accordingly, I battened down and worked up to the awful lip, but in the last few feet I was blown back again. Next time I gained momentum and managed to come up on level ground; it required all my strength to move against this fury but it was just possible, at least for a short distance. I turned around and was virtually whirled back to our shelter - I have always dreamed of flying and I very nearly achieved it at that moment. I felt that we ought to give it a try; it would be an ordeal but the prospect of retreat seemed worse. So off we went, capes flapping like sails - this time we both knew what to expect and so the elements had lost a key weapon - shock. We bent up double and put our last ounce of strength into the battle. It was a nasty moment but somehow we managed to keep going. What followed seemed like a hazy nightmare in retrospect - the stinging rain, the solid wall of the wind, the biting cold and the laboured breath merged into one terrible whole that I don't care to remember. How much time elapsed I do not know, but suddenly there was the Observatory looming up ahead in the mist; never had shelter and heaven seemed so synonymous.

We spent the next hour or so coming back to life (Joan's fingers were still tingling a week later) and changing wet clothes. We were now more than ever interested in the weather records set by these mountains. Some samples:

- (1) The world's record wind velocity, 234 m.p.h.
- (2) Covered by mist for 300 days of the year;
- (3) Average annual temperature = 20°F., lowest temperature ever record = -55°F;
- (4) Average annual wind velocity = 35 to 40 mph;
- (5) Annual snowfall (if it fell on Mt. Washington instead of passing over horizontally) would measure 30 to 40 feet!

Conveniently, most of the snow drifts down into a large ravine where it affords good skiing well into the summer.

And they call this a hikers' paradise! I am wondering if Tassie is so bad after all.

DAY WALK GUIDE

SEPTEMBER 15. Two walks this Sunday:-

(a) Cronulla - around the beaches to Kurnell - 7 miles easy. This will make a most enjoyable day out and will provide something a little different than usual and provide an opportunity to see at first hand the flora at Kurnell and sandhills which is of great interest.

Train 8.50 a.m. electric, tickets to Cronulla. Fare: 5/6 return. Leader: Margaret Wilson. 'Phone XM0444 x 229 (b).

OR

(b) Berowra - Joe Crafts Creek - Cowan. 8 miles medium. An excellent chance to view wild flowers in the Hawksbury Area and this trip also takes in pleasant creek walking and is an excellent forerunner to test walks.

Train 8.40 a.m. Electric via the bridge, tickets return to Cowan. Change at Hornsby (9.26 a.m.) Fare 7/7 return.

Leader: Alex Colley 'Phone 442707.

SEPTEMBER 22. Two walks this Sunday also.

(a) Brooklyn - Porto Bay - Edwards Trig - Cole Trig - Cowan. 12 miles medium with rough sections.

For those who would like to enjoy a really good walk, this trip will serve you well. It is of pattern test walk standard and is recommended to prospectives who have been "broken in".

Train 7.54 a.m. to Hawksbury River from Stean train terminal. Walks Programme time appears incorrect, please check with leader. Fare 12/3 return. Leader - Ron Knightley Phone 483747.

OR

(b) Glenbrook - Campfire Creek - Redhand Cave - Euroka - Glenbrook. 12 miles medium.

An excellent trip in the blue labyrinth. There will be plenty of wildflowers as well as the notable Red Hand Cave of aboriginal fame.

The walk is also a good test walk. Train 8.45 a.m. to Glenbrook from Steam Train Terminal. Walks programme is incorrect for train time. Fare 14/5 return. Leader John Holly BU5585.

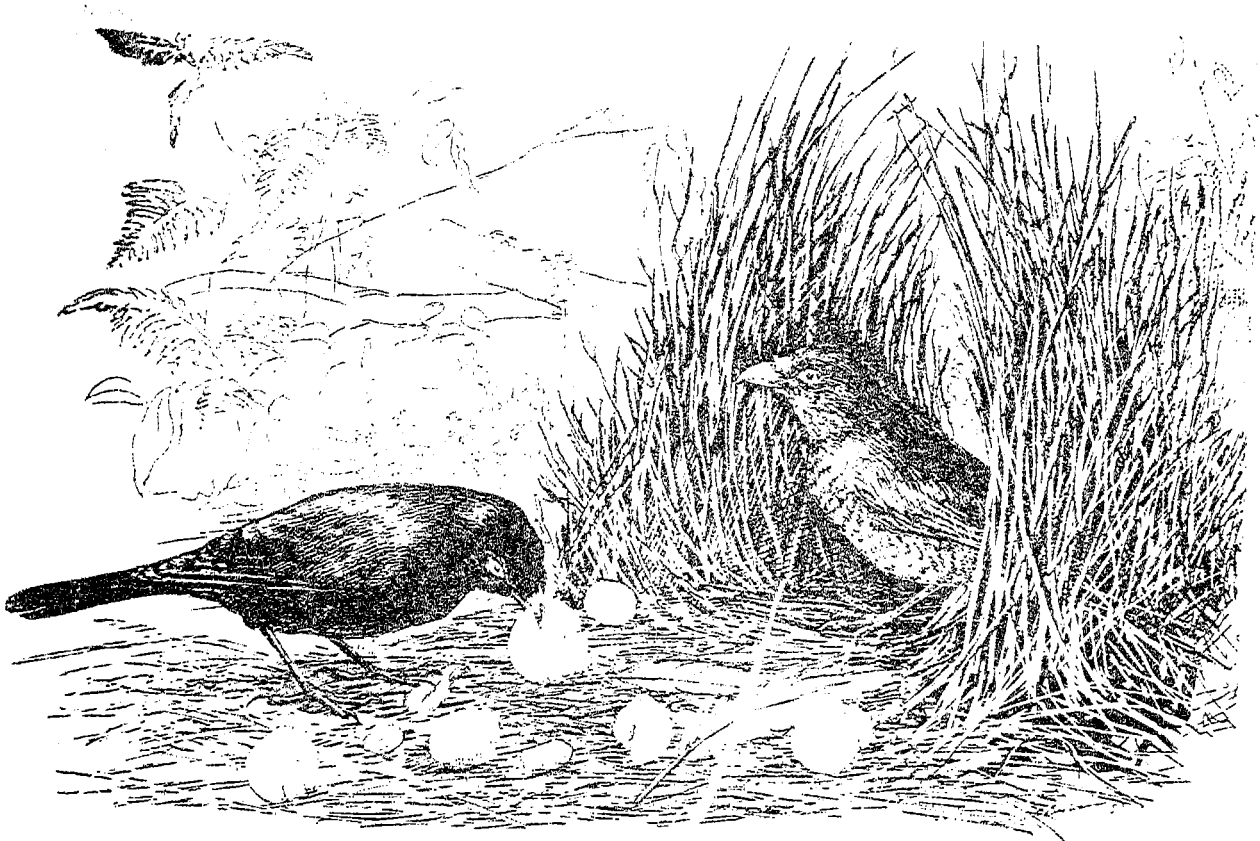
SEPTEMBER 29. Waterfall - Mt. Westmacott - Myuna Creek - Heathcote.

12 miles medium. This trip will take you through the Heathcote Primitive area and is well worthwhile. Wild flowers are abundant and there is pleasant creek walking. Train - 8.20 a.m. Electric from Central. Tickets to Waterfall alight at Heathcote. (Programme is incorrect for train ticket). Change at Sutherland. Fare 5/6 return. Leader Ted Child 67-0444 (b).

OCTOBER 6. - No programmed walk.

OCTOBER 13. Douglas Park - Nepean River - Menangle. 10 miles medium.

This area has not been traversed for some time and will provide an excellent day's excursion. If the weather is warm a quick swim could be arranged. Train 8.22 a.m. Steam. Tickets to Douglas Park. Leader - Jim Brown - 812675.

SCIENCE NATURALLY - "BOWER BIRDS".

The female Satin Bower-bird (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*) stands by the bower while her mate re-arranges his playthings.

Bower-Birds are restricted to Australia and New Guinea. They are about the size of the common pigeon and, except for their colouring, are rather ordinary looking birds with medium-sized pointed beaks and fairly strong feet.

However, bower-birds are unique for several reasons, the best known being the remarkable display structure built by the male. Some species actually "paint", applying chewed-up charcoal to the walls of this bower. In addition to this adornment, an amazing range of decorations is brought to the bower - flowers, coloured objects, mosses and lichens, bleached snail shells, bones and so on. The birds are also renowned for their elaborate displays during courtship and while protecting their "territory" from rival birds.

We have seven different kinds or species. The 'Satin Bower-bird' (male a sheeny blue-black; female a drab olive-green) extends through the coastal forests of the east from Melbourne to Cape York. The 'Regent Bower-bird' (male, black and gold; female, brown) inhabits the rain forest and other damp forests from Gosford to about the Bunya Mountains, south-east Queensland. The 'Spotted Bower-bird' (both sexes brown, but males have a small tuft of lilac feathers on the back of the head) is an inland dweller. The 'Great Bower-bird', which has the same colouring as the Spotted Bower-bird, is distributed right across the north of the continent. The extraordinary 'Tooth-billed Bower-bird' (brown) and the 'Golden Bower-bird' (male, golden; female brown) are restricted to the rain forests in the Atherton, Queensland, area. The 'Fawn-Breasted Bower-bird' (brown) lives in northern Cape York and southern New Guinea.

A number of different bower-birds, some of them brilliantly coloured, are confined to New Guinea.

Closely related to the bower-birds are the green Cat-birds (so-called because their call resembles the meowing of a cat), living in the rain forests of eastern Australia north from Cambewarra, near Nowra, N.S.W. These birds do not build display structures.

The Bower: The display structures of the bower-birds may be of several different kinds. The Satin Bower-bird constructs two parallel walls of sticks, about 18 inches long and a foot high, in a clearing on the floor of the forest. The structure is beautifully fashioned, as shown in the illustration. Around the bower (which has nothing to do with the nest) are strewn other fine sticks and dried grass and a variety of objects of two colours - blue and greenish-yellow. Thus one finds blue parrot feathers, pieces of blue glass, bits of blue cloth, cardboard and broken plastic toys, and so on. Into the greenish-yellow category come bleached snail shells, dried strands of grass and small yellow flowers that are renewed daily. In and around his bower the male sings and displays. Here most of his courting is done and his performance continues throughout the breeding season, the female alone building the nest and rearing the family.

The bowers of the Spotted and Great Bower-birds resemble those of the Satin Bower-bird, but the decorations are different, bleached shells and bleached bones being especially favoured. The Regent Bower-bird seldom builds a bower, and then it is only a small, flimsy structure. The Tooth-billed Bower-bird merely decorates a cleared space on the jungle floor with large leaves, placed with the bottoms up so as to show their pale under-surface. The Golden Bower-bird, by contrast, constructs a gaint structure that bears little resemblance in shape to those of the commoner species. Sticks are piled against a pair of saplings, so that a "twin pyramid" effect results, and between them is a dancing perch. The largest structure recorded is one 9 feet high on one side and 6 feet 6 inches on the other. The area adjacent to the display-perch is decorated with moss, lichen and berries.

Display: This consists of hopping and "dancing" about the bower. The objects are lifted and placed in different positions, new ones frequently being brought, and the bird lifts and straightens the sticks that compose the walls. On occasions it also "paints" them (painting has only been recorded in a couple of species). While moving about the bower the male may call frequently, especially when the female is near. The notes are low, rasping and guttural, with a certain amount of mimicry of other species. The dancing reaches a peak when the female alights near the bower and the male hops about her with wings extended and draped.

The whole of the elaborate bower-building and display of the bower-birds is accepted to-day as being associated with courtship and with the maintenance of "territory", i.e. frightening other members of the species from the area of bush "owned" by the particular pair. The males of adjoining territories are highly "jealous" of each other, and it is not uncommon for one adult male to sneak into his neighbour's domain and, in a few minutes, completely flatten his bower. Should the owner return prematurely a wild chase and fight ensue, the interloper twisting and turning through the trees as he seeks to escape his enraged pursuer. The rebuilding of a bower takes a couple of days.

Food: Bower-birds as a whole eat insects, native berries and fruit. It has been pointed out by Dr. A.J. Marshall, the authority on the group, that the Satin Bower-bird of our eastern forests has her young just about the time cicadas are plentiful and that these form one of the main foods of the young. In autumn some of the bower-birds, notably the Satin Bower-bird, flock, and may then enter orchards and feed on fruit.

Nesting: The nests of bower-birds are cup-shaped structures of sticks, generally built high up in trees. The nest need not be near the bower, and, in any event, has nothing to do with it. The male never shows the slightest interest in the nest from the time it is started until the young leave. The eggs of the bower-birds are varied in appearance but in some, such as the Satin Bower-bird, they are beautifully streaked and marked. They take about a fortnight to hatch and the young are in the nest for a similar period. Young birds are greenish in colouration, that is, they resemble the female. A couple of years elapse before the young males assume the blue-black colouring of the adult.

PROSPECTIVES -- CLUB GEAR FOR HIRE.

Financial prospective members can hire gear from the club at the following rates.

Packs	1/- per day
Tents	2/- per day.

Groundsheets are supplied free with the above items. Gear can be picked up on Wednesday evenings and returned the following Wednesday. See FRANK BSHDOWN or SANDRA BARDWELL to make arrangements for hire.

FEDERATION REPORT - AUGUST 1963.

Wilf Hilder.

Bouddi Natural Park: The road to the Dingledei Hut at Mt. Bouddi has been tar sealed and the trust are carrying out track maintenance and clearing in the park. The trust wants to rehabilitate Putty Beach (disfigured by Rutile Mining) but is hampered by lack of finance. In order to raise finance for the park, the trust are now charging camping fees.

Timber Milling in Kosciusko State Park: Federation were advised of a proposal to cut Alpine Ash in two areas of the K.S.P. (Further details are given in the August issue of the National Parks Journal). Federation promptly dealt with this outrageous proposal by sending strong protests to the Lands Department and the K.S.P.

Jooriland Grazing Leases: Considerable discussion was had over the Water Board's proposed leasing of part of the catchment area for Warragamba Dam, 17,000 acres in the Joorilands Creek area; County Camden parishes Nattai and Wanganderry. Federation realised the amount of good that grazing animals do in reducing fire risk by grazing, keeping open and making trails etc. This far outweighed the small amount of pollution they caused. The leases also fortified Federation's cause in the "gentleman's agreement" with the Water Board. So, like the three wise monkeys, Federation is not taking any action.

Hoddle's Track, Saddleback Mtn: The Rucksack Club have recently completed blazing on Hoddle's track, County Camden, parish of Kiama. This is the well known track which descends from the Barren Grounds (Fauna Reserve) plateau and climbs onto Saddleback Mtn and joins the Kiama road. It is now well blazed and cleared though still muddy and slippery in places owing to the heavy rains this year.

Docker's Ladders - Perry's Lookdown: The Blue Mountains National Park Trust are reconstructing the Docker's Ladder trail to Bluegum Forest. The trust are making an excellent job of this with some concrete and wooden steps and reforming the whole trail, which has been very slippery in the past.

Chairlift on Ayer's Rock: Federation is protesting to the Department of Interior about the proposed chairlift at Ayre's Rock. Why stop at a chairlift? The Rock is an ideal site for the cutting, drilling and blasting of a network of fire roads, complete with locked gates and a Helicopter Landing Ground.

Grose Valley Primitive Area: Federation has written to the Blue Mountains National Park Trust re the erection of locked gates at Strategic points on fire roads in adjacent areas to the Grose Valley Primitive Area, County Cook, parishes Blackheath, Irvine, Jamieson, Grose, Bilpin and Burrallow.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme: The Outward Bound instructors have agreed to examine young people who are applying for the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Federation has offered to train these people in map reading, safety

walking and camping by them unofficial prospective members of the various clubs and making sure that they are taught properly. Federation's President, Paul Driver, has worked hard to get this scheme moving and this will in turn undoubtedly boost the walking movement.

Search and Rescue: At the S. & R. practice weekend attendance was 98 from 14 clubs. The Police Rescue Squad were well represented and the Army Medical Corps also sent some observers. The Blue Mountains National Park Trust repaired the roads in Toby's Glen area and cleared an excellent campsite in Toby's Glen, which was much appreciated by all present. The credit for organising the weekend so successfully must go to Nin Melville, whose unflagging and strenuous efforts for S & R are a great help to the Federation and all bushwalkers.

Bimonthly magazine: A committee has been formed to look into all aspects of producing a Federation bimonthly magazine. Such a magazine is not intended to compete or do away with Club magazines, but would contain some reprints from Club magazines as well as new material etc.

Reafforestation: The Men of the Land Society, the National Trust and the Bouddi Natural Park trustees will plant trees in the Maitland Bay Kilcare area. The Forestry Commission - the Royal National Park Trust and Garawarra Park Trust will also plant trees in selected areas in Garawarra and Royal National Park.

Information: The Federation is seeking further information on a farmer who has allegedly prevented walkers from access to the Six Foot Track, County Cook, Parish of Megalong. Failing a settlement of the dispute in a friendly discussion Federation will seek legal advice.

Federation is seeking further information on an Army proposal to construct a large artillery range in Nattai Valley. Also on a Water Board proposal to install a locked gate at Mt. Werong, Westmoreland County, Bonshea parish on the Oberon Stock Route road. This road is virtually impassible to ordinary vehicles at Ruby Creek bridge, Abercorn parish.

New Maps: Bulletin No 17 N.S.W. Mines Department, Geological Survey Map Ulladulla - Tianjara area. This covers all the Budeawang Range Area from the Sassafras Nerriga Road as far south as Termal. These two maps scale 1 inch to 1 mile do not show ridges only creeks and geological boundaries and are extremely interesting. An explanatory book accompanies the maps. A revised edition of Myles Dunphy's Bindock Highlands Map is now available. The Lands Department Rimlow (Jenolan D) map will be available any day now.

A map of the Thunder Canyon area, County Cook, Irvine and Bilpin parishes, appears in the latest issue of the Kameruka magazine. This is a most useful sketch map.

For a review of these maps and also a review of new books see the October issue of the magazine.