

## THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to  
the Sydney Bushwalker, The N.S.W. Nurses'  
Association Rooms "Northcote Building,"  
Reiby Place, Sydney.

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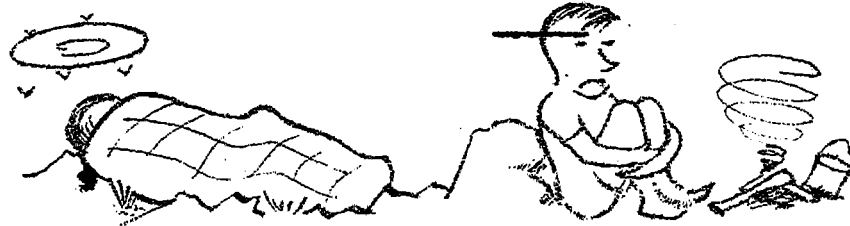
352

APRIL 1964

Price 1/-

### C O N T E N T S .

At The Annual General Meeting -J.Brown	2
Paddy's Ad.	5
Nadgee at Christmas - Wombat	6
Federation Report - March	8
Day Walks	8
Social Notes for April	9
Do It Yourself Supplement	10
Mountain Equipment Co. Ad.	12
Famous Historic Walks - No. 1.	
The First Descent of Clear Hill.	13
Terra Nova - Part II. - J. Brown	14
A Day Trip Through Claustal Canyon -	
Bandicoot	17
Klimpton Ad.	19
Anzac Memorial.	20



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AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

Jim Brown.

The 36th Annual General was prodded into life at the almost indecent hour of 7.35 p.m. and since the attendance at that time was so unrepresentative (being barely 40) standing orders were suspended to allow the less consequential business to be transacted until the ranks grew (which they did to about 85 later).

Correspondence became the first item to receive the treatment. We learned we were invited to join the Olympic Club, complete with poker machines and other appurtenances of a really efficient club. Since affiliation may mean the use of a rent free Clubroom, we will be getting more data. And we were invited to contribute to the South Indian Ocean (Heard Island) Exploration Fund - which we did, a lot later in the evening. There was an invitation to the dedication of a new organ at Seaforth St. Pauls Church as a memorial to the late Hilda Stoddart. Frank Ashdown reported on gear hire, which realised £18.14.- during two years, about £3 below the cost of equipment purchased, but with a good deal of use still to be obtained from the gear.

There was talk of an Information Centre to be established by the Blue Mountains National Park, possibly by the western highway near Linden. Because of some conflict over the attitude of walkers to shelter huts in national reserves, Paul Barnes had asked that a policy be defined and a sub-committee of 3 was appointed to consider and report to the next meeting. Alex Colley, Alan Rigby and the Conservation Secretary (to be elected) were appointed.

People were now rolling up in strength, so one new member (Janet Roach) was welcomed and later, much later, in the evening we caught up with another (Geoff. Whitty). Swimming Carnival Awards (1964) were presented, George Gray scooping a good deal of the pool, while Missus also featured prominently. Stan Madden and Lynette Hynes carried off the Mandelberg Cup. We went on to the Annual Report, which was taken as read. A question was asked by David Ingram about the tally of non-active members and it was indicated some names had been missed from the list. Brian Harvey was dismayed to point out that nothing was said about the 1963 Swimming Carnival, and it was discovered that the previous Annual Meeting had decided that a year later was too late to record it. So far the Annual Report had not been adopted and probably the above questions were legitimate in the circumstances. Frank Ashdown now shot off at a tangent, and asked if we were content to sit by smugly and accept an intake of only 20 new members yearly. He moved that the incoming Committee investigate the reason for so many prospectives failing to make the grade and consider whether membership procedure should be changed.

Naturally this brought whoops of joy from an array of members who could remember that they had said almost annually on this same subject back as far as 1928. Wal Roots explained we were dying on our feet 20 odd years

ago and evidently were still expiring. Brian Harvey said about 54% of prospectives missed out. Ross Wyborn said the compulsory Instructional weekend was a source of irritation to people already well trained in walking. Jack Wren felt that, though some people may not need it, some instruction was a sound principle, and that the small intake last year was merely one of the normal "ups and downs" of membership figures. He felt the standard of walking should not suffer simply to get bigger members. Alex Colley felt some Instructional walks were uninteresting - they should be real walks plus instruction. Elizabeth Henderson said people should be willing to give up one whole weekend to the walk to gain membership.

Wilf Hilder, while supporting the main motion, pointed out that other Clubs had quite lately discovered the importance of giving instruction to newcomers. The standards should not be sacrificed. Following more discussion the motion was carried.

So we came to the Annual Financial Statement, also taken as read. Gordon Redmond threw another ripe plum to the eager debaters. Broadly he wanted a 10/- p.a. lift in the active subscriptions: which should give about £96 p.a. to the Club coffers. Analysing the results of recent years, he considered in the first year, in the absence of certain non-recurring items, we may well improve our financial position by about £145, and this, with the extra income in later years should allow us to meet the various equipment purchase costs and also budget for expansion and improvement, including a building up of the Era reserve fund. First to the attack was Frank Ashdown, who had seldom heard such a sob story. The Club had no need to build up a big financial background, and the expenses which put us slightly in the red last year would not appear in 1964-5. David Balmer reminded the meeting that last year's subscription impost fell on married couples. Len Scotland considered the fees were high enough - we were holding our own and that should suffice. Claude Haynes believed a lift may send some actives over the divide into non-active, and amassing property was no good, especially to a walking club. Ross Wyborn thought an increase may discourage some more prospectives.

About this stage it was pointed out that the original motion, which did not propose any increase in the application fee, was contrary to the letter of the Constitution which stipulates it be half of the annual sub. Having doctored the motion, and after hearing some words of opposition from the Auditor, the motion was lost - by quite a small number of votes. Ross Wyborn now moved that the subscription be the same as last year and although Wilf Hilder would have preferred a figure between the Redmond and Wyborn proposals, it was carried.

Once this critical business was disposed of, it was noticeable that there was an easing of the tension of the meeting, and after romping through a generous slice of electing we were suddenly, but none too soon, at General Business, the first matter being a gesture by the Treasurer who moved a donation of £25 to the Heard Island Expedition. He would, he told us, have made it £50 if the exalted subscription had been passed. Alex Colley

felt this was a cause for which donations should be sought from individual members, while Claude Haynes suggested on their return the Heard Islanders may be willing to tell the Club of their doings if we were reasonably generous. Snow Brown told us he would lead an expedition to Perisher Valley next winter and if it received worthwhile support he would be willing to give a talk illustrated with slides. We didn't take an option on that offer, but assented to £25 for Heard Island. Colin Putt voiced appreciation on behalf of the venturers. Everyone being in an appreciative mood, Frank Ashdown mentioned his approval of the editorials in recent magazines, and Claude Haynes asked if we had heard of some quite alarming "developments" which were marrring the Kanangra landscape. Wilf Hilder said we knew of the changes and he would give Claude an account of what was afoot.

Alex Colley, supported by Frank Leyden, told us of a pleasant river flat concealed in the rugged ssction of the Kowmung River in the vicinity of Wedgetail Bluffs, on the river's great southern bend. He suggested that this attractive spot may be worth acquiring. It appeared to have been used by farmers at one time, being later abandoned as too difficult of access. Frank Leyden said a moderately active party could get there in about 4½ hours from the Kanangra Road - area was about 40 acres. It was moved that we write enquiring from the Lands Department what steps would be needed to gain possession. By the time this was carried, virtually without debate, the hour was past 10.30 and there was just enough time to scrape up a couple of room stewards before we called a close to the 36th Annual General.

#### OFFICERS ELECTED FOR 1964.

President	HEATHER JOYCE.
Vice Presidents	JACK GENTLE RON KNIGHTLEY
Secretary	DAVID BALMER
Assistant Secretary	ELIZABETH HENDERSON
Treasurer	GORDON REDMOND
Walks Secretary	BOB GODFREY
Social Secretary	EDNA STRETTON
Conservation Secretary	WILF HILDER
Literary Editor	BOB DUNCAN
Committee	ELAINE METCALFE - EVELYN ELFICK JACK WREN - RAMON U BRIEN WILF HILDER * HEATHER JOYCE DAVID INGRAM * RON KNIGHTLEY * to sit on committee
Federation Delegates	BRIAN HARVEY - COLIN PUTT
Substitute Delegates	ALEX COLLEY
Magazine Business Man.	ESME BIDDULPH
Parks & Playgrounds Del.	MAURICE BERRY - JOE TURNER - WAL ROOTS
Trustees	NAN BROUKE
Auditor	COLIN BROAD.
Hon. Solicitor	

# PADDY MAIDE

5.

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NADGEE AT CHRISTMAS.

Wombat.

Nadgee is a coastal National Park abutting the Victorian border. It is one of the last remnants of unspoilt coastline in N.S.W., and the only area where gozunkopedes are still common.

About 4 o'clock p.m. Christmas day, Dave and Judy Balmer and Jim J ellybean arrived in Camden and we roared off in my car towards Nadgee. We reached Womboyn, the start of our walk, early next morning. Ken Lewis, Foxa Butler, Jack Pettigrew and Peter Cameron were there before us, and had cross-examined the proprietor of the ice cream kiosk about the nature of the country ahead. He said that it was completely impenetrable with "wire grass" jungle 20 feet high and shark infested to-mile-wide river estuaries. He said the only thing to do was to drive back inland a couple of miles and then go along a jeep track. This was obvious nonsense, but the party was infested with white ants who were only too anxious to jump back into the cars.

We came to the jeep track but only a few yards along it we were stopped by a large fallen tree. The thought of getting out of the car and walking the few miles along the track to Nadgee filled the white ant's hearts with terror once more. "Let's go down to the sea again" they cried "and walk along the coast line."

The track down to the sea was terrible, the cars were groaning, the car owners were psychotic with worry, but the passengers made it unscathed, piled out, and prepared morning tea. After hours of repacking the party at last seemed ready to move off and Pettigrew and I shouldered our packs. But a pitiful bleat arose from the multitude. "Don't you think we should wait for Snow Brown and Mick Elfick; they were supposed to be coming." Then seeing that this tack was not working, "The ice-cream man did say the coast was impassable, and I think I can see a shark out there; we will have to drive back to the tree and walk-along the track." "\*!! you \*!!\*" said Pettigrew and I, "We are walking along the coast, you can \*!!!\*". "Oh Robert Robert" sobbed Dave Balmer, "don't make us walk all the way back to the tree; let me drive your car back, and then it will be ready for you when you come out". I reluctantly agreed and Pettigrew and I set off.

The walk along the coast was mighty, wide wave cut terraces backed by towering cliffs. Every few hundred yards the terrace was cut by a chine. We would wait till the sea retreated, jump in, swim or wade across, and madly scramble up the other side before the next wave came. But at last we came to a chine we could not cross; it was too deep and sheer, and it ran back into the cliff as a long cave. We found a gut in the cliff wall and with a little trouble climbed up.

Once on the top Pettigrew got out his map and a shifty look appeared in his eyes. "The jeep track is only a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile inland at this point," he said, "We could actually run all the way on that, get to Ferricka hut

April, 1964.

The Sydney Bushwalker

7.

first, and tell the other slobbs that the coast walk was a mere biscuit toss." "But that would be dishonest," I replied, "Let's do it."

We started heading inland through the scrub and soon found out what the ice-cream man had meant about "wire grass". It was a tangled creeping Casuarina and it cut my sockless ankles to ribbons. After half an hour we had not come to the track, the scrub was terrible and all hopes of beating the main party to the hut had faded. After three hours all hope of reaching the hut that day had faded. By late afternoon we were taking it in turns to kick through the terrible tangle and hope of regaining the main party at all seemed slim. We were completely foxed and the country was becoming more and more rugged. "!!! em, we'll do an exploratory trip by ourselves" said Pettigrew.

At last we reached a stream which we thought might be the Merricka. If it was the road should cross it and the hut should be at the crossing. We walked downstream and came to brackish estuarine water. Clearly, the hut would not be further downstream than this. We walked upstream but the gorge became even more abrupt; no road could cross that. The map was obviously wrong, we had no idea now where the hut was supposed to be. It was getting dark so we had tea and jumped into our fleabags. In the morning we decided to head back for the coast. If we walked along that we must come to Nadgee. Now, no longer looking for a non-existing hut and road we could choose a sensible ridge route and we came to the coast, about 2 miles south of where we had left it, at about 10 a.m. The walking along the coast was mighty. In a couple of hours we came to a beautiful long white beach curving to a distant headland, and there, in the distance, were bodies walking towards us. My eagle eyes detected that the one in yellow was Foxa, the one that looked like a lobster was Peter Cameron, and the skinny one was Jim Jollybean.

We met them; they said they were on an after-breakfast stroll. We walked back to the camp, behind a lagoon, together, and there was the mob, Snow Brown, Mick Elfick, Evelyn, old uncle Dave Balmer and all. They had arrived the previous afternoon. We told them what fools and white ants and decadent road bashers they were. Apart from a one day exploratory side trip through the scrub, the coast route had taken Pettigrew and I only three hours. The coast route is definitely the quickest easiest and best way to Nadgee.

"The coast south of Bald Hill has often been compared with the far-famed French Riviera. My view is that with its patches of tropical jungle and lowlands of rich dairy meadows it even surpasses the French resort."

Professor Griffith Taylor.

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MARCH FEDERATION REPORT.

South Indian Ocean Heard Island Expedition. A subscription list has been started among the clubs and Federation headed the list with a donation of £10.

Search and Rescue Radio Training. A course of training for radio operators has been planned and should begin shortly. The PMG has once more refused our request for a higher frequency but we hope they will rescind their objection.

Federation Reunion. A noisy, wet but extremely happy reunion was held at Burralow Creek. 160 attended.

Garrawarra Park. Land portions, lot 9 and 10 have been resumed and added to the Royal National Park, instead of to the Garrawarra National Park, as recommended by bushwalkers. Clubs were asked by Stan Cottier to write to the Department of Lands protesting at this change of plan; apparently there is a danger that Garrawarra Park itself may eventually suffer the same fate.

"Bushwalker Magazine". It was resolved that the 1964 Bushwalker Annual be published this year as soon as possible. A management committee was elected to deal with the business side of the publication.

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DAY WALKS.

APRIL 19. Warrimoo - Long Angle Gully - Fitzgerald's Ck - Nepean River - Blaxland. 12 miles.

It is a long time since this walk appeared on our programme. Mainly pleasant going along Fitzgerald's Creek with a rocky descent to the Nepean River followed by a scramble back up to Blaxland. Genuine test walk material, this!

Train: 8.54 a.m. Mt. Victoria train from Central Steam Stn. to Warrimoo. Tickets: Warrimoo return @ 15/8. Map: Windsor Military. Leader: Jim Brown.

APRIL 26 Berowra - Cowan Creek - Bobbin Head - The Sphinx - bus to Turrumurra. 10 miles. After a steep descent to Waratah Bay, there is a track all the way along the foreshores of Cowan Creek. There could be a few sandflies-about at lunch time. Recommended for new prospective members. Train: 8.10 a.m. Hornsby via Bridge from Central Electric Stn. CHANGE AT HORNSBY for Berowra. Tickets: Berowra via Bridge @ 6/- plus 1/3 bus fare. Map: Broken Bay Military. Leader. G.Roberts.

MAY 3. Engadine - Kangaroo Crk - Uloola Falls - Waterfall. 12 miles. The mileage given in the programme seems a little short of the actual distance. The walk traverses part of the National Park



April, 1964

The Sydney Bushwalker

9.

MAY 3 which we do not often visit. Good test walk material.  
(Contd) Train: 8.50 a.m. Cronulla train from Central Electric Stn.  
CHANGE AT SUTHERLAND for Engadine (rail motor). Tickets:  
Waterfall return a 6/-. Map: Port Hacking Tourist or Port  
Hacking Military. LEADER: Peter Rempt.

MAY 10 Chatswood - bus to Terrey Hills - Ryland Trig - Cowan Creek -  
Bobbin Head - Mt. Kuringai Station. 11 miles. There is only  
one Sunday morning bus for Terrey Hills. Hence the early start.  
The way along the fresh water portion of Cowan Creek is  
attractive. Tourist track from the head of the salt water to  
Mt. Kuringai Station. Train: 7.55 a.m. Lindfield via Bridge to  
Chatswood. 8.25 a.m. bus Chatswood - Terrey Hills (Mona Vale Rd).  
Tickets: Mt. Kuringai via Bridge return. Total cost in fares 8/-.  
Map: Broken Bay Military. Leader: David Ingram.

WALK ALTERATION.

Jack Perry advises that his walk on May 18-19 will cover the  
following territory -

COWAN - THREE TRIGS - GUNYAH BAY AND RETURN  
(Camp at Gunyah Bay).

SOCIAL NOTES FOR APRIL.

Contained in April's social programme are three nights which  
should be most entertaining.

On 15th April, Horrie Salmon will present his Bird Watching for  
Bushwalkers. This will give us an opportunity to learn the art of  
participating in this hobby and there is none better than Horrie to teach  
us.

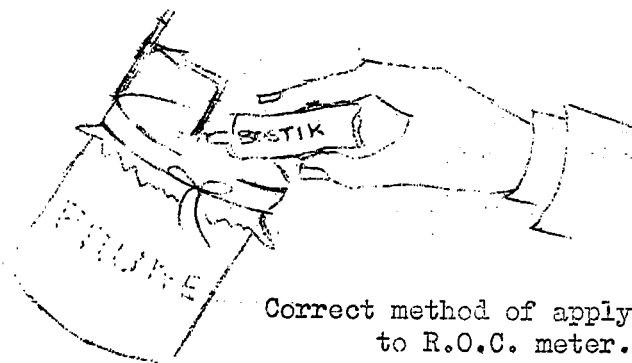
Mrs. M. Gray who recently spent some time in the People's Republic  
of China, will be happy to tell us of her stay there. She has many  
beautiful slides to illustrate her talk which concerns a part of the  
world in which all are immensely interested. A visit to the Club on  
April 22 is a must.

On 29th April we will have our slide night. Bring your slides  
along, about 20 per person and let's see where you went over Easter.

DO IT YOURSELF SUPPLEMENT.MAKE YOUR OWN RATE-OF-CLIMB METER.

No instrument is more essential to the serious bushwalker than a rate-of-climb meter. It is almost impossible to judge rate-of-climb intuitively. The walker who climbs too slowly may find that he has insufficient momentum to carry him up the final slope; the walker who climbs too rapidly may unwittingly overshoot the summit.

Yet any person with modest workshop facilities can make his own rate-of-climb meter. Go to your butcher and ask him for a pig's bladder. Next find an empty 5 lb prune tin. Stretch the pig's bladder tightly across the mouth of the prune tin in the form of a drum, taking care to first remove any objects which may have been stored in the tin. A tiny (one micron) hole must now be punched in the base of the prune tin. Air will leak through this only slowly, so that in climbing the pressure inside the tin will be greater than that outside, and will belly out the pig-bladder drum. It is only necessary to attach a pointer to the centre of the bladder, and mount a celluloid scale on the outside of the tin, and a reliable rate-of-climb meter is yours.



Correct method of applying pointer to R.O.C. meter.

SAVE THOSE LOOSE BITS OF SKIN

Few walkers can have come back from a hard weekend trip, and had a hot shower, without finding that they could peel sheets of skin from their feet. Probably most walkers simply throw this skin in the waste paper basket, or leave it lying about on the bedroom floor. There is no need for this waste. Properly tanned this skin can be used to make excellent mock pig skin purses and wallets, a charming gift for a loved one.

Here is the method. The skin should be carefully smoothed out and pinned by the edges to a flat board. It should then be gently simmered for two days in strong black tea to which a little alum has been added. It is now tanned. When sufficient pieces have been accumulated they may be stitched together into the desired form of the purse or wallet.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Is your house cluttered up with bags of old rooster feathers which were going to be a sleeping bag? Bent fence palings which were to have been skis? Old bed frames half-way to becoming H-frame packs???

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Letters to the Editor.

Dear Sir,

I explicitly followed the directions in your article "Build a Barbecue in your Tent" - March issue 1963. The barbecue was built of lightweight aggregate in the form of an open hearth 18" x 12" x 12" and was surmounted by a grid of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " aluminium rod. Before fixing the barbecue to the wall, the 2-man "Paddy Made" A tent was boiled for two hours in "Anti-Pyr" flame proofing solution, and a 2' length of 6" aluminium irrigation pipe was affixed in the roof as a chimney.

I regret to report that, despite this, on each occasion on which we have attempted to use the barbecue the tent has-so filled with smoke and fumes that we have been forced to go outside and eat our food uncooked. Furthermore the barbecue leaves no room for sleeping within the tent. I write this in case others of your readers may have struck similar difficulties.

Yours faithfully,

I. Bumble.

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FAMOUS HISTORIC WALKS. No. 1.

The First descent of Clear Hill. Reprinted from  
the Sydney Bushwalker Annual 1934.

Frank Duncan.

Note - In other countries people make first ascents. In Australia, which is a topsy-turvy country, we make first descents instead.

One of the first long week-end walks undertaken by my wife and myself after arriving in Sydney was down Nellie's Glen, through the Megalong Valley past the Woolshed, and down Black Jerry's Ridge to the Cox's River.

The chief features through the greater length of this route are the impressive bluffs, ridges and precipices of the Narrow Neck, or Clear Hill, Plateau. I well remember comparing it with the plateaux which figure so often in the tales of Rider Haggard, plateaux which usually have but one way of access, and this very difficult, and whereon are found the most weird and wonderful of ancient civilisations.

It was in this mood that we fell into conversation with a walker, who told us of the approach from Katoomba via Narrow Neck. When I suggested that it would make a most interesting route out to the Cox from Katoomba, he pooh-poohed the idea with vigour, and held forth on the ring of inaccessible cliffs at the end. He mentioned several unsuccessful attempts during the past years to find a way off the plateau. Later in June, 1928, we joined a popular Bush Walker trip to Clear Hill, at the end of this six-mile long plateau. On the way out we mentioned to some of the party our ambition to pioneer a route to the Cox via the end of Clear Hill. And as we arrived at our camping spot at Glen Raphael early, we set off for an evening exploration of the possibilities of a descent of the cliffs, feeling delightfully light and fresh without our heavy packs. A short time found us at the very end of Clear Hill, perched up in the air with cliffs on three sides of us, and a fine clear view, one of the best I have seen in New South Wales, of bush-clad ridges in every direction. Tortuous valleys at our feet wound away in the distance, but most striking of all was the feeling of airy lightness and detachment, and freedom from the petty cares of every day life.

A photo or two were taken, and then the search began. Soon our efforts were rewarded, and we climbed down the gully to the west of the southernmost point of the hill. The descent was in the form of steps or ledges extending in the direction of Mount Mouin. After repeated deviations and retracing of our steps, we came to a sheer cliff within fifty feet of the bush-clad foothills below.

These last fifty feet were the only serious difficulty of the descent, but even here it was not long before three of us, E. Austen, J. Debert and myself had climbed down a chimney-like crack and solved with a shout of pride the descent of Clear Hill.

We returned to camp very pleased with ourselves, and made plans for the morrow, when the Austens, J. Debert, Gwen Adams and ourselves made the descent with our packs, and lit a smoke signal from a clearing on the Dog Track, to let our friends, who had stayed on Clear Hill, know of our safe descent.

We spent the next night near the junction of Breakfast Creek and the Cox, and so home via Jerry's Ridge, tired, but with a satisfied feeling of achievement.

Subsequently a deviation on the latter part of the descent was explored by others, and this saved the climb down the chimney.

The charm and grandeur of the unspoilt bush still clings to Clear Hill, but now someone with more ingenuity than poetry in his nature has fixed a rope-ladder for the convenience of weaklings down the one bit of real climbing on our original route. The Philistines, I fear, will yet put an escalator up Mount Cook and a lift up Kanchenjunga!

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Editor's Note: Frank's prediction, made in satire, has come true. There is now a lodge on the Grand Plateau of Cook and "climbers" are flown in by ski-plane.

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#### TERRA NOVA - PART II.

Jim Brown.

Towards ten o'clock, the track began to rise on to the flank of Mount Baker: the map suggested that, once the initial climb was done, it should be possible to skirt around the head of a small gully, and pick up the ridge to a conical hill (Ross Castle), from which the spur ran off to Coriaday. This would avoid a futile clamber up to high ground, followed by a drop on to the connecting ridge. Obedient to this plan I left the track on the shoulder of Mt. Baker: about an hour later a much chastened walker climbed up to the high ground and came down again on to the Ross Castle ridge. That gully had a marvellous growth of fern and lawyer vine.

However I did manage to skirt Ross Castle in fairly open forest and on a passable animal pad, and bent my steps toward Coriaday, a mile or so east and almost 1000' higher. Now came the sun, and the heat again, and with it thirst. Fortunately I was carrying water - two 30 oz plastic flasks - nearly four pounds weight of water. I hated the weight - but I couldn't manage without the water; it was just one of those love-hate involvements you read about in modern novels.

It proved a long, hot, exasperating climb on to Coriaday. Like all basalt hills it had its share of rich vegetation, including lawyer vines,

and great stacks of loosely assembled lumps of rock underfoot. Soon after midday I topped it - on every side high blue distances stretched out, with hazy peaks and crags reaching up from the smoky valleys. Off to the north I could see the pasture of Widdin Valley. Yet none of it was readily seen, and it was nearly impossible to get a camera angle because of the luxuriant tree and shrub growth all about the mountain top.

At this stage I should explain that there is a ridge running direct north from Coriaday into Widdin Brook valley. To judge from the Singleton quarter-scale maps, however, the gradient of some other ridges dropping into Widdin further downstream should be easier. My plans then, was to go off the eastern side of Coriaday get on to the main north-south spur dividing Widdin Brook from Blackwater Creek, and later turn north-west into Widdin. What actually transpired made all this scheming look rather silly.

After lunch I dropped off the eastern side of Coriaday - not quite literally. Steep as it is, you couldn't fall far in that tangle of shrubbery, nettles and basalt rocks, all overshadowed by a regular jungle of coachwood (I think). It went down very fast and rough for nearly a thousand feet, and without any visibility of the ridge pattern ahead.

Once I did hear the tinkle of a stream amongst the jumbled boulders, and after filling my water bottles, and wetting my sweat-cloth, I veered over to get back on the "ridge" and soon came to the rich grasses and tall forest country. This yielded to the sandstone and its impoverished vegetation, and I think I must have been dazed by the heat, for I made a classic bloomer - fully realising I should go north, I followed an animal pad which kept going east. I think, at the back of my mind was the thought, All right, here's a track, and it goes east. That means, if it keeps on, it must get down into Blackwater Creek, and Blackwater Creek joins Widdin, and so Bob's Your Uncle. I probably persuaded myself that a quick arrival on the assured water of Blackwater Creek would be a good thing - I was beginning to realise that in this heat, and in this country, everything must be subordinated to getting water.

But when, after rather more than an hour on a generally easterly bearing, I came close to the drop down into Blackwater Creek, even the very obvious importance of water seemed less significant. It was unpleasantly clear that the descent into Blackwater Creek was a slender "if" and the going down in the creek would be sheer hell. With the time nearing four o'clock, I remembered seeing a lush little valley running off north just at the base of Coriaday. I went back to it, and spent Wednesday night by the spring, listening to either a domestic dog gone wild, or a dingo that could bark as well as howl - or maybe just a talented lyre bird.

Thursday dawned fine and clear - almost too fine and clear because of the promise of more heat. The early hours were made pleasant by a north west wind which still held some freshness, and by a successful foray to the north which brought me to the Widdin-Blackwater divide. I even selected the

very ridge I sought going off north west; and despite the incomplete picture given by the map, followed it out for a couple of hours without trouble.

In fact, I suppose one could say that my ridge traverse went as well as one had any decent right to expect, in such country and with such a map. However, there was one stage where I became convinced I had wandered on to a side spur which would precipitate one too soon into a wild tributary creek of Widdin. I spent an hour sidling and looking before I decided I had been right all along. In the increasing heat I could ill afford an hour's strenuous scouting around.

About 11.0 o'clock I came to a wide rocky area with a view over Widdin. It was hazy, but worth a photograph. Except that I seemed to have reached the end of the reel (several exposures too soon, I thought), and rewound intending to reload. Opened the camera and looked in dismay at the torn strip of film. Apparently the heat had been too much for it, and by opening it to the light, I lost everything I'd taken on the trip. I snapped on the back plate again until I could unload at night inside a sleeping bag. As I sat, heavy hearted, looking at the wonderful jumble of ridges I couldn't record, another thought smote me. The wretched map showed the sides of Widdin Brook as steep slopes - but these were cliffs: not quite continuous cliff lines, but the saw-tooth effect of cliff and dividing creek you see on parts of the Nattai - very attractive, most impressive - but how negotiable?

The next hour while I plodded on in a temperature of about 90° towards the end of the ridge was rather tense. Although I had been drinking my carried water sparingly, I was well into the second flask. Come what may, I must go down. If the ridge wouldn't go, I'd have to take to one of the formidable side creeks and battle down that to Widdin.

On arrival at the rim the pale green pasture and line of casuarina were clearly in sight, no more than a mile ahead and perhaps 1500 ft below. Tantalising, because it was quite obvious the ridge was "out". The big question was whether I could get down readily into a creek. I took a drink of the tepid muddy water left, forced down a bite of dry, unappetising food, and started to behave like a well trained wallaby. In point of fact it was a bush animal pad that took me down, skirting the base of cliff line, then diving down on a ridiculous slope straight for the side creek. It was dry. I flopped into the dense shade.

After five minutes or so rest I was able to take a more balanced view of the position. Sure, I had been promising myself gallons of cool water, and it couldn't be more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile to Widdin Brook itself. Besides there may be water further down this gully.

TO BE CONCLUDED.



A DAY TRIP THROUGH CLAUSTRAL CANYON.

Bandicoot.

Peter Cameron and Allen Barclay were bagged up on the verandah of the old homestead, when I arrived at South Tomah on Sunday morning last February. They had arrived the previous night. Soon cars were arriving continuously, Snow Brown, his brother John, a bloke from the P.M.G. that Snow had talked into coming, Pete Stitt, Geoff Wagg, Brian Harding, Sandra Bardwell, Heather Joyce, Mick And Evelyn, Ross Wyborn; there were thousands of them.

When the last man had arrived, our leader jumped onto a tree stump and gave a short talk on the nature of the trip ahead. Three ropes were to be taken, bathers were to be worn, we were to circumnavigate the Camel's Hump via the Canyon and return to this spot before nightfall, every member was to obey the code of ethics of the club at all times, and Geoff Wagg was to go last, his bathers being in need of repair. We set off to the saddle between South Tomah and the Camel's Hump and dropped to the right into Claustral Creek.

Soon we came to the first fall, a rope was thrown down, and, after an age, the party dropped one by one into the deep dark slot of Claustral Canyon. All, that is, except the cunning ones. Peter Cameron and I volunteered to retrieve the ropes so we could keep dry until the last minute. As we sunbaked on top we could hear Ross Wy-wossi-born's frozen squawk in the water below.

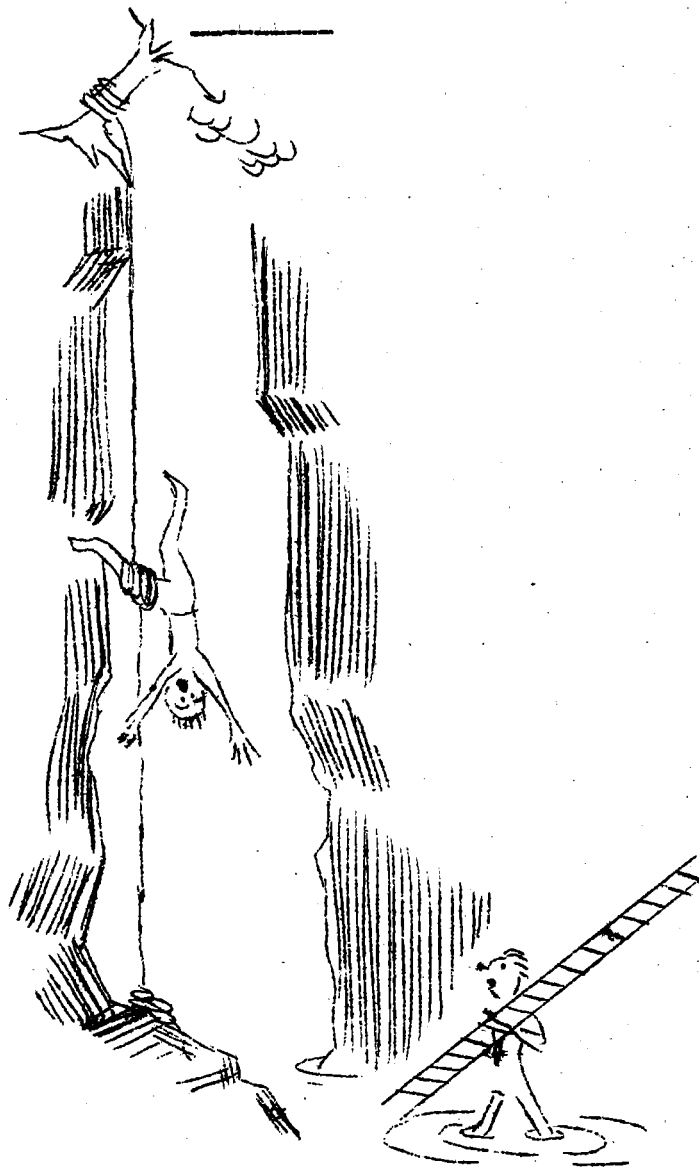
When the last squawker had squawked around the corner, we dropped in too. The water in the slot was churned brown by the hippopotamuses that had rushed through before us, and the giant red yabbies peered down on us from ledges high on the canyon walls, where they had fled in terror. Naturally we got to the big camping cave at the Thunder Canyon junction last, and every one had guzzled all the best food and were lying on their backs in the sun.

After lunch we set off down Thunder Canyon. The P.M.G. bloke was new on ropes and slow, but there were deep pools at the bottom of most of the small falls, and a quick shove or a stealthy trip usually had him to the bottom quickly. So, soon, we were at the exit spot, where a small side canyon spills over a waterfall into the main canyon.

Wade Butler had climbed up here a couple of weeks earlier and left a guide cord. When we arrive Mick and Snow and Pete Stitt had used this to pull up a climbing rope and were at the top. Ross Wy-wossi-born was seated like a Buddha in a niche half-wsy up the wall; he said he couldn't climb any further; his hands were slippery. The non-climbers

had the rope tied round their mid-guts and were hauled up one by one like dead cows. Peter Cameron said he wasn't too proud to go up this way, and, to test the resilience of nylon rope, Snow and Mick played yo-yo with him and finally built up enough bounce to catapult him to the top in one go.

The side canyon was good, and led us to the opposite side of the Camel's Hump saddle. Where we had started. Home again! What a mighty day. With trips like this it's no wonder Sunday walks are the most popular.



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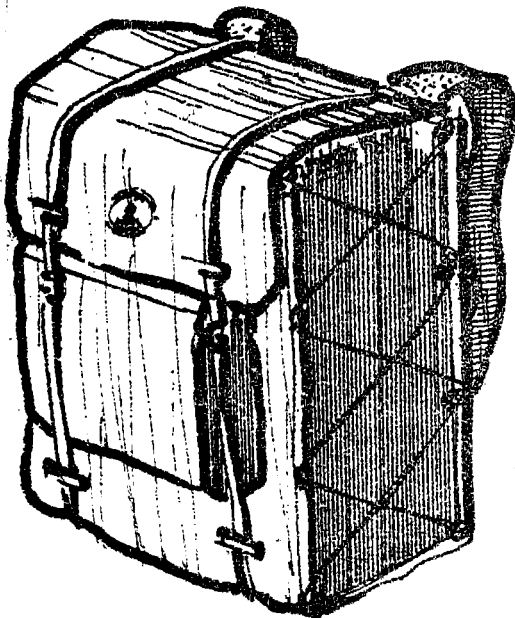
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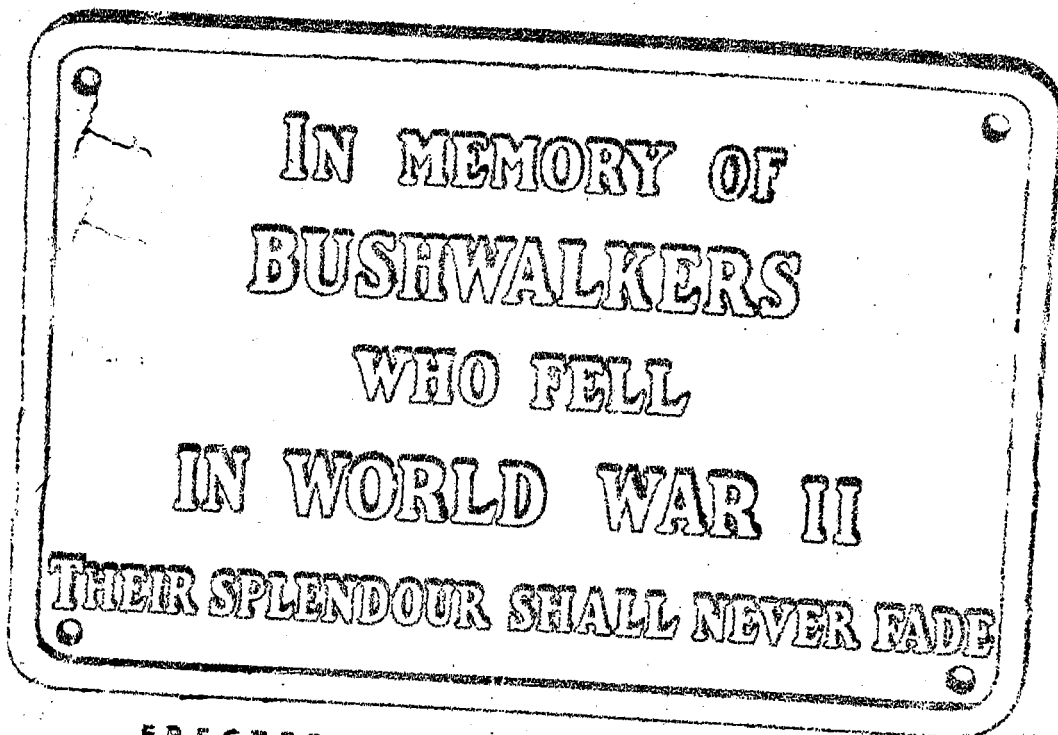
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