

AT THE AUGUST GENERAL MEETING.

J. Brown.

Possibly the most significant point of the meeting came right out at the outset with the introduction of no less than six new members, Johanna Hallmans, Margaret and Brian Vazey, Alan Hedstrom, Frank Tacker and Neville Page. There was also the pleasing news that Enid Rigby, a foundation member, had been re-admitted to membership and Jan Goodyear returned from travels.

Disposing of last month's minutes in short order, we had Dot Butler telling us the latest on the Christmas Party, which it was now proposed to divide into two parts, so getting the best of two worlds — a campfire gathering at the George Gray's, following by a session at Eastwood Town Hall with dancing to records and a supper organised by Club members.

Correspondence informed us that Brisbane Water National Park would be officially opened on September 11, and we were invited to advise whether we would be represented. Frank Ashdown asked when we were to see the slides of Heard Island, and Dot Butler offered to liaise with Colin Putt on the matter.

The Treasurer advised that the month's fiscal operations showed a slight improvement with current—use funds in the order of £277. He said the coming notice of meeting would contain a warning of unpaid subscriptions to the "recalcitrants".

Bcb Godfrey presented Walks Report covering June and July, but as he threatened to send particulars to the Editor, no details are included here. From the comment on Walks the President had two things to say - (1) walks leaders were asked to provide details of mileage involved and train times (ii) walks through the snow of 18th July would be accepted as test walks.

Margaret Child's Parks and Playgrounds Report touched on a couple of purely Sydney-side matters, and added that Gosford Shire Council did not propose to lease land for a caravan park at Wamberal while the Lands Dept. did not intend to release any of Royal National Park for housing purposes.

A summary of the Federation Report went into the August magazine, But David Ingram advised that there was still only an acting Secretary, and an urgent need for a Minutes Secretary.

So we came to General Business with Ron Knightley speaking of the havor in Blue Gum Forest caused by the snowfall of 18th July, with fallen boughs and litter over all the floor of the Forest. This could be a fire hazard in the warm months, and he proposed that our Federation delegates move for an approach to the Blue Mountains National Park, and if working bees should be arranged, S.B.W. would assist. After a little comment that a few logs might be preserved for camp fires, the motion was carried.

Mention was next made of a repeater station being erected by the Department of Civil Aviation at Point Lookout. The initial suggestion was that the problem be dropped into the lap of Federation, but it was pointed out that Federation had limited facilities for investigation and perhaps we should first get additional data. Possibly we should tackle the argument ourself. Finally it was agreed we should marshall as much information as we could and notify Federation.

Alan Rigby mentioned the Search and Rescue activities - S.B.W. was not strongly represented and should send an official team to future practice weekends.

The final item - apart from the appeal for Room Stewards - was Frank Ashdown's advice that Club equipment included three new packs, plus a new lightweight groundsheet. Total stock was now 9 packs and 5 groundsheets. Frank pointed out the lightweight equipment needed careful treatment.

In this way a peaceable little meeting closed at about 9.15 p.m.

ANNUAL REUNION 18th-19th SEPTEMBER.

WOODS CREEK.

See Edna Stretton if you can contribute to the campfire entertainment.

Kiddies' Treat - this year there will be races for the children with handsome prizes for the winners. There'll also be a bag of sweets for all children present. Fun and games will commence at 10 a.m. on Sunday morning. See Betty and/or Ern Farquhar for details.

Enter the damper competition which will be capably judged by Miriam Steenbhom. Only ingredients, flour, salt and water to be cooked in the remains of the previous night's campfire. Judging will commence at 11.15 a.m. Sunday.

Congratulations to John Luxton and Stephenie Sullivan on the announcement of their engagement.

AND THE SNOWS CAME.

Betty Farquhar.

John and Gaby Dede, Ern and I were on the 12-50 p.m. from Central en-route to Blackheath and another weekend at Blue Gum. Jack Gentle and the rest of the party having caught the morning train. We four settled down to lunch, knitting, reading and a cat nap, what a lovely afternoon we were all set to enjoy every minute of it.

A beer at Gardiner's inn, a cab handy and we were at Perry's changing into our shorts — was that a flake or two of snow? Yes, it was, Gaby excitedly saying she hadn't s een snow since leaving her native Italy, us telling her she'd need her snow shoes before we would all be home again. Snow on the mountains to us really only meant a few scattered spots of ice cum snow — never enough to make a decent snowman, we didn't give it another thought.

On the track down, and soon met by Jack - a walk up Perry's never bothers him. How many were in camp? Who were they? A cup of tea would be ready for us, we chattered on. The sun shone bringing out the wonderful colours in the cliff faces, what a day, yes we were going to enjoy this week-end.

Dinner on cooking, our tents all ready for the night, a talk with Brian Matterson and his party, a visit to Gaby's fire - she was cooking dried veges for the first time and peas and carrots were literally flowing out of her billy. Did they eat them all? I don't think anybody found out, it had started to rain. Blue Gum had a jinx on us it looked like an early night. Meryl came to do a professional job of stopping some persistent bleeding from a vein in Ern's arm, and stayed to chat for 20 or so enjoyable minutes. Ern anxious to test out a new parka braved the downpour to make some tea, I climbed into my sleeping bag sorry to miss a camp fire and the talk, it certainly was raining, what was that song "Who'd be a Walker", who indeed!

We were up at 6.30 cooking and packing, farewelling Brian and his party. It had rained steadily all night. Back up Perry's Jack decided, no point in walking more than necessary in this weather. Suddenly it was ice, snow, sleet and cold in what order we didn't know and what a change of scenery in so short a time.

Three or four sea scouts arrived cold bewildered and feeling ill, yes we would help them some, our party taking their wet heavy equipment.

Hurriedly we finished packing, what had happened to our fingers, they just wouldn't seem to work. Edna started off with the sea scouts, everybody

else following as soon as they were ready. Don't stop Col Ferguson said, keep going. Keep going, our first trip up Perry's and for several of the others. I couldn't keep moving, a stop to catch a breath and on again up and up. What a trip, the snow was falling fast, the track becoming covered, some parts icy, some thick with snow. Branches crashing down with the weight of the snow made a frightening and awe inspiring sight and sound. With a crack and a cloud of snow down they came all around us, every few minutes. Almost to the top, we came upon the scout's packs left in an overhang. Jack had sensibly decided there was no point in carrying them any longer. Their first aid must have weighed at least 5 lbs.

The rails at the top were iced and slippery, no help there. At last the top, then began the road walk which was by this time some 12 to 15 inches under snow and it was still falling heavily. We were in a different world, what a fairyland, everything looked so different under this heavy mantle of snow. Branches still crashing with a whirl of snow on both sides of the road, beautiful little birds with burnt orange coloured breasts pecked along under the sides of the road, the undergrowth almost completely covered, was it only yesterday afternoon, a few short hours ago we had travelled this same road by cab:

I was tired, the road seemed endless, I couldn't feel my legs let alone my hands and feet, Ern encouraged me just keep on going I'd be alright he said. Something to eat, that was it, I was hungry, it was passed lunch time, perhaps I'd feel better if I ate something. What an effort to get my ground sheet and pack off and get the cheese and salami out of a pocket. Off again, a bite of cheese and salami, what was wrong with my jaws? They just wouldn't work. I glimpsed the flask of rum poking out of Ern's pack, a swig of that, yes it went down, oh well, my jaws must be alright, just keep on going, just keep on going.

The first house what a relief, some of the others ahead disappearing so it seemed under a snow laden tree. We followed, under the broken fence, the gate was snowed under. I fell into the snow knocked off balance by fatigue, the fence and my pack, it locked like the same fate had befallen somebody before me. Into a derelict house found by Colin and Grace. What a welcome from Gaby Dede, "Come in, come in Betty a very kind old man is making us tea, he's very kind, said we can use his house, isn't it kind of him". Yes it was wonderful of him. That hateful pack off, others talking they nearly all felt like me, what a moral builder. Where was that old man, he was conspicious by his absence, did somebody really live here, it was an old house, oh well, it didn't matter. Hot tea and food passed around, the sea scouts blue with cold and shivering were near the fire and fed homemade bread (Colin's wonderful mother) piled with sausage, Edna and I sharing the same cup of tea, her cup being used by a scout. Meryl producing a flask of whisky, tea and whisky "how wonderful" was Marj. Barnes' verdict. "Isn't the old man kind", said Gaby, what old man, a hesitant pointed finger, our host, battered bush hat, long trousers, still ssrving tea and bread, COLIN FERGUSON. The ensuing merriment joined in by Col and Gaby was just what the doctor ordered.

On our way again this time confident, houses on both sides, snowmen complete with hats, gloves and scarves, electric wires hanging low, swellen with ice and snow, looked like giant festoons, the roofs of the houses covered so evenly, great branches being stripped from garden trees. The main street covered, Colin's car left on Saturday was half covered over, a man shovelled snow off the hotel roof onto the main street. The station steps were like a ski run, we climbed the fence and walked on snow — what was under it I don't know. Into the train, no power, we would be in Blackheath all night. Dry clothes, some first aid for Edna's heels they were raw, how she had walked and carried extra gear I couldn't imagine, food and into our sleeping bags was the order of the day.

A cheerful guard came through, a deisel may be coming, how did he know? Pedal wireless? How he knew we were not to know but the deisel duly arrived amid much hooting and tooting some 2 hours after we had arrived. We left Blackheath at 5-30 p.m. The train travelled slowly, down past the Hydro, what a sight to see, the lights on they spilled out onto snow covered cars, trees and fences it was truly a winter wonderland.

Somewhere down the line we stopped to discard our deisel, power and heat were on - we were thawing out and Sydney and home were near.

SOCIAL NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER.

On all three social evenings this month we will be entertained by our own club members. On 15th, Vice-President Alan Rigby will give slides and commentary on the "Wolgan and Capertee Valleys". These are two of Alan's favourite haunts and since all know Alan's skill as a photographer, the 15th should be a good night.

Many new members will not know Henry Gold since he has been living abroad for several years. On September 22 we will be able to see what he did with some of his spare time while away from Australia. The intriguing title "Land of the Cliff Dwellers" should bring many people into the club on Henry's night.

Two new members, Margaret and Brian Vazey, will be telling us about "Tramping in New Zealand" on September 29. Since so many of our members have visited our sister dominion and many more anticipate visits in the future, this might should be a popular one.



7.

In a shop full of special things for walkers something new or extra special is always worthy of attention. We have a new boot by KLIMA of Austria. Only four ounces heavier than a sandshoe yet many times more sturdy, a comfortable light weight boot with padded leather uppers and non slip sole. Designed especially for mountain walking, we are sure these will be appreciated by keen walkers.

Especially suitable for girls these come in a range of sizes starting at size 4 and going through to men's size 10.

Priced at a reasonable £7.5.0, make sure of your pair now, we only have a limited supply.

1st Floor, 109A Bathurst Street, SYDNEY. Corner George Street, 262685.

PADDY PALLIN Camp Gear

BM2685

(5) <u>A CLIMBER IN THE FRENCH ALPS</u>

- Ron Cox.

Grenoble. July

Dear Everybody,

Previous accounts I've written have been of mountains you've probably never heard of. This may be of more interesting as it's about a more well known mountain, the Dru.

Unfortunately I con't describe to you a successful ascent of the Bonatti route, or anything similar. Instead I have to tell you that I failed on the ordinary route. Oh, humiliation! I went with a chap called Yves Mareschal, a chemist at the Nuclear centre who has done a fair bit at 'Blau and Chamonix, although, being married, he's a bit out of training at present.

More or less to get aquainted, Mareschal and I did a short climb one evening after work on the Trois Purcelles, a group of limestone crags at about 4,000 feet, above Grenoble. Apparently he was satisfied with me because he thereupon invited me to go to the Grepon. The anticipated weekend, the weather looked bad so we stayed in Grenoble. On the Saturday we went to a crag called Chamechaude but it started to rain just as we got to the foot of the climb. I thereupon insisted we go to the 7,000 metre summit by the ordinary route. Very reluctantly Mareschal tagged along. We didnIt quite make the top, the rain got heavier and heavier and forced a retreat. In descending we got half drowned and Mareschal muttered alusions as to how, in all his experience, the only people who went out in rain like this were British. The Sunday turned out to be fine and we went south into the Vercors massif to try a magnificent Dolomitan-style wall a thousand feet high and kilometres long. Here, because we started late and couldn't find the route, we only got up a few rope lengths then gave it away.

After this, despite the fact that we hadn't really established we were a team, Mareschal desided we would bypass the Grepon and do something harder, the Drus traverse. To put this Drus attempt in its correct perspective I should mention that, in the last month or so, apart from the vague excursions mentioned above and the Aiguille Dobrona mentioned earlier, I did two fairly climbs of "Difficile" standard. One was on Mont Aiguille, a peak incredibly similar to Crookneck (Q'land) in appearance but three times the scale. This I did with an English electrical engineer whom I'd met in the Aiguille Dobrona trip. (This bloke, like everyone else, is here for the mountains, and because there is a strong demand for good jobs in Grenoble, he is reduced to all sorts of bum jobs, at present translator, to stay here.). The other climb was a traverse of a couple of the Aiguilles de l'Argentiere, a smallish group some 30 miles away, very similar to Geryon (Tasmania). I did this with a bloke who'd never climbed on a mountain in his life but was a whiz in the Grenoble quarry where the local lads all train. Thus he couldn't understand why I was horsing around so much leading on what to him were just ordinary problems - I've never had such an uncooperative second. !.

On these various climbs I found I could lead Grade V, if with difficulty Grade V is where it's just starting to overhang and tends to be strenuous. I've

not yet found any <u>delicate</u> climbing in France either in limestone or granite. When Mareschal suggested the Dru, in which the hardest pitch is of IV, I therefore thought I could do it. This was wrong. I didn't realise the immense difference between "difficile" at Chamonix and "difficile" on the 2,000-3,000 metre stuff near to Grenoble such as I'd been doing.

We left Grenoble Saturday morning June 27th and were at Montenvers about 11 a.m. stared at by hundreds of tourists. From Montenvers one descends onto the Mer de Glace and follows it upstream a couple of miles. It's the flattest and smoothest glacier I've ever been on. Then you climb up an easy 3,000 feet into a side valley to the Charpona Refuge, a CAF hut for some 15 people. The hut was deserted. It appears that the area has a certain aura of difficulty — rether like the Upper Hooker valley (N.Z.) — and is not very popular. Certainly the immense walls of the Dru, the Verte and the Maine which soar above the refuge on three sides are a bit frightening.

We arrived at the hut just in time to beat the traditional afternoon thunderstorm. After it cleared we went up to a vantage point and vaguely receied the route, then returned and got to bed about 7 p.m. Whereupon four loud-talking Geneva Swiss arrived and kept us awake till about 10 p.m. Grrr! Started at 2.30 a.m. next morning after a breakfast of porridge which, although he is French, my friend claims he likes. Wasted about two hours sorting out a route across the slots and seracs of the Charpona Glacier. By the time we got onto Dru rock it was sunrise — rather beautiful on the arc of mountains from Mont Blanc to the Jorasses but rather disquieting since at this hour we should

have been much higher. Grand Dru Petit Dru 12,5001 Top of Bomnatti's S.W. Buttress reached S.W. Arete "Breche" Shoulder "Flammes de Pierre" Charpona Glacier ICE Charpona Hut 9,500 ft. FALL

This is a picture of the Charpona side of the Dru. The Dru traverse is fairly classic but as late as 1925 - the age to which Fris Roche's famous novel "First on the Rope" applies, it was considered as amongst the biggest undertaking in the Alps. Now it is rated as "difficile" which is one grade less than the North Dru (TD) and two grades less than the West Face or the Bonnatti route (ED). Still, it is considered quite hard. The guide book says 6 hours to the top of the Petit Dru and 12 hours (refuge - refuge) for the traverse. To do these times there is only one solution run!

We, unfortunately, were not capable of running. On the easy rocks between the Charpona glacier and the Breche one should move together with his companion except in one or two odd spots.

Single I was not used to moving together on rock, and since we weren't a smooth, old established team, we did most of this in pitches. Even though we "led through" it was very much slower and very much more tiring this way. In addition we made route finding errors, seemed always to find the hardest way, and by the time we hit the Breche it was very late, 8.30 a.m.

Here we paused to stare in awe at Bonatti's S.W. Buttress, only a few hundred feet away. I suppose an almost perfectly smooth and linear column, broken only by occasional overhangs, 2,500 ft. high and tilted at 85 degrees, is not so very remarkable. What is remarkable is that one man climbed it, alone, spending day after day at the very limit of human powers. Then we looked down the plunging chute between us and the S.W. Buttress and wondered how he could get the courage to abseil down there — alone! Because the lower part of the West Face had recently slipped, making access to the S.W. Buttress near-suicide (a relative term!). Bonatti came up the ordinary route from the Charpona to the Breche and abseiled down the couloir to gain the foot of the buttress. All alone and all with a 60 lb. pack!

Such reflections made our puny efforts to get up the ordinary route seem laughable. We had so far taken more than twice the guide-book time and hadn't even started on the difficulties. We are continued on up the S.W. arete turning around a big gendarme and gained the "Shoulder". Above here the wall really shoots up and here commence the 800 feet of continuous difficulties, all Grade III and IV. We struggled up some 400 ft. getting tireder and slower. Being second I had the heavier sack loaded with crampons and ice axes (necessary for the descent if we did the traverse), spare rope, etc. The sun blazed down mercilessly as we climbed cracks and chimneys and

we sweated away our last strength. We were just too slow, and about 11 a.m. with 400 feet to go, realised that if we went on it meant a bivouac.

We sat on a little terrace, the highest point reached, for a half hour, eating, feeling glum and demoralised. Fancy failing on the ordinary route on the Dru! Below us a vast panorama of half the mountains I've ever dreamed of - Mont Blanc, the Aiguilles, the Geant, Grandes Jorasses.... I hardly saw them....I don't think I've ever climbed a mountain seeing so little. Absorbed by the climb I'd hardly bothered to even look and took very few photographs.

We started down, in long rappels, to the Breche. I'm getting quite French. On my first climb in France I was shocked to see people placing nylon line slings for rappelling off. On the Dru we rappelled several times off slings that had been hanging there for an unknown time and I hardly ever complained. (Frenchmen, incidentally, have never heard that there is a danger of nylon rappel slings melting.).

On the last rappel the rope stuck. It took me an hour's quite

work to get it down. That finished me. Up to this time we had both worked, sometimes Mareschal would be leader, sometimes me, but after that I followed along, a docile second, hoping he knew what he was doing.

I might mention that m this climb we used no pegs except for a couple of abseils. It was great to climb in classic fashion. I remember particularly the tremendous satisfaction we both felt to overcome one difficult problem by the time-honoured technique of giving a shoulder.

From the Breche we moved together nearly all the way down. Soon we were envoloped in thick mist and wandered about all over the place (as shown roughly by the dotted line on the diagram) trying to find the exit.onto the glacier. In the mist it was very dark and I feared all the time we'd be benighted although in reality it was still quite early. Later there was a brief fifteen minutes hailstorm which completely soaked us and made it imperative to get off the mountain. Fortunately the mist cleared enough after the storm to give us a view and allow us to gain the glacier. Here we decided to cross the glacier at a lower level since our morning route went for some hundreds of yards over the debris of avalanches which come off the Verte. It proved to be very difficult to cross, particularly since snow and ice alike were in the worst condition I've ever met, somewhere between porrige and soup. At the last ice-wall before the opposite bank Mareschal was wrecked , and I had to call up my last initiative to struggle up it. It was most unpleasant in that glacier, lost in the mist, shivering in wet clothes, afraid of the approaching night, and we were glad to get out of it.

Ran down the ridge to the Hut where, since we were week-end climbers, there was no rest. We had to get back to Grenoble. By the time we'd descended the 3,000 feet of rough track to the Mer de Glace it was almost dark and I was finished. Fortunately Mareschal had recovered by this (it was astonishing how the leading ability changed hands several times on the trip) and by almost miraculous navigation he found the way down the Mer de Glace to the steel ladders which lead off the ice near the Montenvers. It was pitch black andhee did well to find those ladders. I merely staggered along behind like an automaton.

We rolled into Montenvers asleep on our feet, collapsed on wooden benches at the railway station. It was ll p.m., we'd been marching 20 hours almost non-stop, and there was no question of going home to Grenoble. Slept until 4 alm., woken every hour or so by the cold (what must it be like a few thousand feet higher?) and in first light ran down the railway line to Chamonix. (That run in tight "Toni Egger" boots crippled me and I've had to wear slippers to work all week). Got back to Grenoble about 8 a.m. just in time for work. Mareschal had an interview with his Prof at 10 a.m., which is why we absolutely had to get back. I went to work but was totally unable to do a thing all day. Fortunately at lunch time there was a champaigne party to celebrate someone's wedding, and at least in the afternoon I was happy in the knowledge that no one else could work either.

The post-mortems on this trip have been long and profound. I've more or less decided that I was biting off more than I could chew in attempting the Drus. There is some excuse in that week-end climbing is a fair shock on the system after a sedentary week. One cannot really get fit and stay fit in the

way that is possible on an extended climbing vacation. And living in the blazing hot valley of Grenoble one cannot acclimatise either. However, these excuses don't avoid the indication that I'm not good enough to do long routes of "D" at Chamonix. My boss, who's done a bit, gave me a bit of a pep talk at work one day last week, reckoned I should stick to easier stuff for a while and learn to move fast before trying the harder classic routes. He's right. To do the times quoted in the vook for Chamonix climbs, you've absolutely got to be able to run. It seems to me that the times quoted are the times for parties thoroughly competent at the level of difficulty involved, in order to scare incompetent parties off the climb.

ALPINE NEWS

A Chamonix guide and an American, J. Harlin, put a new route up the W. face of the Blatiere. They claim it is harder at least for the artificial sections, than the Brown-Whillons route on the same face. (The B-Whillons route,) with its famous "Fissure Brown" is said to be inaccesible due to land-slips/ It was long considered as a contender for the hardest route at Chamonix. In its clear state as the English did it, i.e. 10 pegs and I wedge, there were 8 pitches of IV. The difficulty varied depending on how heavily it was pegged.)

Gaston Rebuffat (author of "Sublight and Storm and other famous climging books) had a serious prang on the Lent du Geant last week. Appears he was leading an artificial when a whole row of pegs came out, one after the other. He, his client, and the second guide, fell 150 feet into a snowfield. They were sliding off into the wide blue yonder when a quick-moving guide, leading a party just behind, fielded them on the snow. He ran to the Col du Geant and called up a helicopter which had them in Chamonix in two hours, despite high winds. (ost rescues are by chopper these days). Rebuffat had discs broken in his back, similarly the other guide. The client, a 64 year old Englishman, had mild concussion. Whether this will finish Rebuffat's career is not known.

"The last great problem" of the present day is the Eigerwand Diretissama. The original Eigerwand route winds all over the place and it's considered to be time someone put up something direct. Rene Desmaisons, France's star of the age, got about a third of the way up two weeks ago and is back there at present, with another Chamonix guide and the above-mentioned American, Harlin. This Harlin is a Yosemite Valley man and has been around a bit (Eigerwand, new routes on Mont Blanc massif, notably the S.Face of the Aig.du Fin, considered to be the hardest artificial climb at Mont Blanc and Dolomitan in standard. Like most people who attempt routes of such magnitude these days, they carry a two-way radio. I can see the day will come when the use of radio becomes general (in the same way that the little white helmets, once the mark of the Eiger climber, are getting to be worn by anybody, including me, these days. Then if you get into strife on the climb it will only be necessary to get on the blower to Chamonix gendarmerie and their helicopter will whip you off in a matter of minutes! Ah, the march of progress......

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NATURAL HISTORY.

ENCOUNTERS WITH ANIMALS.

W. Gillam.

All the best writers, at some stage of their career, have felt the need to write about animals. Kipling lamented that one had to go to Rio to see an armadillo; Hemingway thought up some of his most typical plots while being chased by a lion or stalking a sundowner. He constructed a marvellous allegory on a marlin that was too big for a boat but, with some delicacy, just short of being too big for belief. Disney and Armand Denis constructed fortunes on an anthropomorphical view of animals. Shakespeare himself left an admirable handbook on how to tame shrews.

I feel my own time has come to stand with my back to the wall and record my own encounters; encounters that have left me dazed, shaking, often bloody and ready to embrace the Manicheean heresy that the forces of evil will inherit the earth. Not that animals themselves are evil. Just that when I encounter them they are cruel, vicious and obviously possessed of greater intelligence. Whether they be, in the Biblical phrase, on the face of the earth, in the ocean, or in the air. Trout, when they reach legal size, an age of consent, sneer at me. Jewfish know which is my light bait line and which is the heavy line to which they are supposed to attach themselves. I have pursued the wily, striped, blackfish for a lifetime and feel, on balance, that I am hopelessly behind them. Enough of fish.

The animals living on the face of the earth are another matter. Years ago with a mate I stopped for a late lunch at the foot of Bridal Veil Falls. We had stopped for two reasons: exhaustion and rain so torrential that sitting under the falls made no difference. The smoke swirled from the massive fireplace we had constructed to shield the flame. Rations and morale were at a low ebb. The water destined for soup gave, now and then, a derisory bubble which barely stirred the carmine mud which we hoped would become tomato soup. It was to be thickened with the last of the powdered milk. Hot food for cold bodies. Half our store of the precious powder was carefully stirred into cold water and left near the fire to warm. We waited. The fire went out. At least there was no more smoke. Never mind. Mulled soup for frozen bodies. The milk will stiffen it. Then! No milk! I hadn't touched it. There was none spilt on the ground. Ergo, my mate had drunk it. To maintain his integrity he submitted to close inspection. Certainly there was no smear on his lips, no thrushlike lining to his mouth. I couldn't see past his glottis. I accepted his innocence and mixed the last of the milk.

The moment the billy was placed on the ground the shiny, avaricious eye of a lizard was discerned gleaming in the fireplace. With great difficulty, it had already more than doubled its body weight, it dipped itself into the milk and proceeded to lower the level. When it was sated it crawled back to the only warm thing in that slowly dissolving landscape, our former fire.

Lizards have disputed with me while I built my house, basking on stonework, spitting at a trowel under their stomach, clawing at a long handled shovel then chasing the faint hearted builder from the other end of the shovel. One frilled neck monster, provoked far beyond a human tolerance merely crawled into the cavity between the walls and spat at me for weeks. For all I know he is still there along with the spirit level, four boxes of matches and one pipe he caused me to drop into the cavity. The house, completed, is a haven for small lizards who bask, gorge and bring forth their young inches from our breakfast table. We shelter behind the plate glass window. Owls swoop at night to catch moths. My heart turns right over and stays still.

Possums have bitten my fingers as they ransacked my pack; they have pulled my wife's hair while she slept and chased a fork around a clean aluminium plate at night. It didn't wake me, but such is married life that what disturbs my wife disturbs me. I have tried to shake them from raindripping trees with predictable results. I have been made wet. Friendly (?) possums have jumped on me, clawed me and played toboggan on my roof. They have masqueraded as cats, to have their ears rubbed (this is a diabolical play on a dark night), as the Slasher, as the Man in the Nylon Mask and have tormented all the dogs within barking distance of where I sleep.

Currawongs have stolen food from me in places a thousand miles apart. Kookaburras have shamelessly eaten pounds of steak from my fingers then flown away across the gully to laugh. Camels have marched across the endless plains to emerge from the mirage as emus. Ant eaters have snuffled around my tent while I imagined all sorts of terrors. In the rain forest of the National Park I have crept after shy tree runners and pardelots which my children can see at one hundred yards. Together we have stalked a pair of lyre-birds causing me to miss morning tea, several smokes and fall into a nettle patch. When we found them, at the astonishing range of ten feet I felt at last that I had met an animal at least on equal terms. Until the mimicking began! They evoked every birds and some of the animals that had humiliated me. I took it for a few minutes then ran back to the car for a cigarette and the safety of the bitumen road.

When decimal currency comes and everyone has pocketfuls of frillynecks and possums and lyrebirds I am off to shoot a buffalo. Like Hemingway's hero I might have a piece of that short happy life.

DAY WALKS.

SEPTEMBER 26. Cronulla - Ferry to Bundeena - Jibbon Pt. Marley Beach cross country to Audley. 10 miles.
The route of this walk, as published, would cover at
least 10 miles. The coastal scenery south of Jibbon
is good - so should the wildflowers be, where not damaged
by bushfires.
Train: 8.50 a.m. Cronulla train from Central Electric
Station. 10.00 a.m. ferry Cronulla - Bundeena.
Tickets: Cronulla return @ 5/6 (not Sutherland as
programmed) plus 2/- ferry fare.
Map: Port Hacking Tourist or Port Hacking Military.
Leader: Margaret Child.

Chatswood - "The Pools" (Belrose) - "The Hole in the Wall" (North Avalon) - Palm Beach.
This outing will take the form of a car trip to visit several areas of natural interest, not forgetting Esmee's promised "tea". If you wish to attend advise Esmee Biddulph in good time. JA5272.

OCTOBER 10

Turramurra - bus to Kuringai Chase Gate - "The Sphinx" - Cowan Creek - Bobbin Head - Mt. Kuringai. 10 miles.

The scenery is pleasant in this part of Kuringai Chase and there is usually an excellent display of wildflowers between "The Sphinx" and Cowan Creek. Suitable as a first Club walk.

Train: 9.10 a.m. Hornsby via Bridge from Central Electric Station to Turramurra. 9.50 a.m. bus Turramurra to Kuringai Chase Gate.

Tickets: Mt. Kuringai return via Bridge at 5/6 approx.

Map: Hawkesbury River Tourist or Broken Bay Military.

Leader: Gladys Roberts.

COLOURED SLIDE COMPETITION 1965

Congratulations to

- 1. Frank Rigby.
- 2. Margaret Vazey.
- 3. Joan Rigby.

Our thanks also to Mr. Wal Allen of Y.M.C.A. Camera Circle for his constructive criticism and the time that he most generously gave in judging this competition. Thanks are due also to the many people who contributed slides. The crowded Clubroom and the most attentive audience gratifyingly indicate the popularity of this annual event.

WAITING A CONSENSUS.

"White Ant".

Our democratic system used to work on the concept of the mandate. Bob's Mob asked for a mandate for independent banks; if you liked Ike you gave him a mandate for change. Bob emasculated the banks and Ike played golf. There is guided Democracy in Indonesia and a strong man in Pakistan. And Lyndon waits for a consensus.

Walks leaders I have known in the past took the printed word of the programme as their mandate; if it said R40 it meant just that, even if you had to run up a few redundant ridges to make up the Forty. Others went home if it rained. Some guided. A few were strong men. Mike Short is the first of the Johnsonian leaders. We all say our piece and steer for the Great Society.

I had never been to Barralier, it isn't a great metropolis. There are three buildings with roofs, several feed sheds, a rotary clothesline and a receiving station for Mer Majesties Mailes and Telegraphs. On Saturday morning there was a quick poll, if the programme said Barralier then the hub of the place was the telegraph station so we should go there. We saw the postmaster who was co-opted as a special adviser. He indicated a course of action with grand gestures but neglected to tell us the way out of his fences, stock yards and erosion gullies.

Time was flitting. Mike, taking back his souls' care from the P.M.G. led on. We rock hopped along the river for some time. Ah, said Alan Round, this is no good, we should cut off this corner. We agreed to cut off the corner. A false move. Away from the Wollondilly the drought was very evident. Round's Ridge was bathed in sunlight and sheepsbones. The skyline was ominously rough. Would there be water along the tops. A majority said it would be problematical. The minority said there wouldn't be a drop. We put down our packs under ten shady trees. The Stringybark lobby wanted to go along the tops and camp, dry if necessary at the top of the Falls. The leftish-liberal Paperbarks though we had time to look at the Falls from the bottom to see if there was water coming over in which case it would be safe to go round the tops. I knew that I was going to camp under the casuarinas and listen to the song of the river. We left our packs to look at Tomat Creek and the bottom of the Falls.

Tomat Creek is a granite gorge with possibly only a small flow at the best of times so that there are really no large block-ups. and no rounded river stones. This makes for delightful rockhopping. The first two miles were bone dry, then a few pools, a small flow

and finally a view of the falls or vertical cascades. There wasn't much flow but it was nice to sit in the sun and watch them, to eat a few raisins and the top-of-the-ridge orange. Now to organise that camp and the sound of the river. This was achieved by meandering back to the river, a demonstration that it wasn't too cold for swimming and an extended lunch hour.

In harmony we walked for an hour after dinner, stopped on a grassy flat, washed, tented and sipped soup by five o'clock. The stars came out the moon went down and Gemini V arrowed across the Milky Way. The drought-dry wood blazed merrily, the casuarinas murmured once in the warm wind and went to sleep. I had intended to bring a book of poetry and a torch. I had forgotten both.

Sunday was a day walk up Millnigang Creek, a brisk rock hop to the cascades in the creek and a ridge-run back to camp. At Barrelier we had another swimming-wash and achieved a complete consensus over tea, cakes, vitaweet, apples, oranges and a handful of raisins.

If I have a trip there in the future there will be no arguments. The party will camp at midday and swim until it is time to go home.

AND PYLONS TOO. From a Correspondent in California.

In a wooded suburb of San Fransisco President Johnson's drive to preserve what is beautiful in America has over-ridden the Atomic Energy Commission's scientific enthusiasm for efficiency and economy. The 4,000 inhabitants of Woodside, California, scored a surprise victory over this powerful government agency when the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the federal government must abide by local laws - in this case, that electrical transmission lines must be buried out of sight for nothing more than beauty's sake. For two years the town has been staving off the AEC, impatient to build five high-tension electric power lines on a five-mile route which would slash across Woodside's cherished redwoods. Threatening to put in goal any federal agent who touched a single tree, the residents financed a court contest to compel the power lines to be laid underground.

The ruling which they have now won requires the AEC to bring in through underground conduits the power that it needs to operate the world's largest nuclear linear accelerator, which is being built at Stanford University nearby. The town won its battle in part because it brought more sophistication and larger financial support to its legal protest than poorer communities might have mustered. But Woodside's concern for the integrity of its environment drew crucial backing, as the decision made clear, from the recent presidential pronouncements on beauty.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING IN THE HEART OF TOKYO.

Mountain climbing enthusiasts can now practise scaling rocky slopes on the facade of a building in the bustling entertainment and shopping district of Shibuya in Tokyo.

When the makers of mountain climbing equipment had a new building constructed they had the front facade, from the second floor to the roof of the sixth floor building constructed of concrete in a way so as to duplicate the appearance of a rocky facade.

The Facade, called the "Tokyo Rock", is 65'6" high and 32'7" wide, and has been built at an angle of 84 degrees with the ground.

In addition to a few channel-like "chimneys" and overhangs, 130 hakens, the special spikes used in mountain climbing, have been fastened to the facade.

The Tokyo Rock was designed under the supervision of leading rock climbing experts in the country. A safety net has been spread along the lower edge of the rock as a safety measure.

A spokesman for the Company said that safety was the principal object in designing the Tokyo Rock. He said that since it was the first project of its kind in the world, he would be satisfied if it contributes to the dissemination of knowledge of proper rock climbing techniques.

The Tokyo Rock is open to the public for 5/- an hour, much to the delight of rock climbers who have now found a place for practice in the middle of Tokyo without having to go to the mountains.

Trainers are always available at the site to help beginners while members of the Japan Alpine Association and other mountain climbing groups are holding regular training sessions at the site.

OFFICIAL SKI WEEKEND. Primarily an introduction for those who don't and would like to. Pleasant camping, instruction. The leader has four days off but if you only have two, transport can possibly be arranged. Ring 5208423 about the twentieth.