Happy Christmas

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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A good New Year to all

THE NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING.

J. Brown.

A whole group of new members made their debut at the November meeting: Bob Battye, Ron Brown, Peter Godwin (Jnr), Barry Tarver and Meryl Smith were welcombed in that order and Jean Jordan and John Marane were not present. Philip Nicol was also still missing and bids fair to become the only known member who didn't even appear to receive a badge.

Minutes of the October meeting drew no comment and from correspondence we heard that our Honorary Members had been re-elected and Bill O'Neill posted to Non-Active during his travels. The question of nominations for two vacancies on the Fauna Protection Panel arose and we supported the N.P.A, proposal that Professors of Botany of Sydney University and Zoology at New England University should be endorsed.

Arising from mention of Bill O'Neill's departure the President announced that one Federation Delegate (also to sit on Committee) should be elected at the December meeting.

The Treasury Department advised that current funds slipped downwards about £7 during October to a closing balance of £304.14.4.

Bob Godfrey tendered an account of walkabouts in October, beginning with the Labour Day Holiday weekend when Ross Wyborn's Snow and Ice Instructional brought out a total of 29. Two of the Instructors were Dot Butler and Colin Putt. Kerry Hore had a party of 9 over the Gaberang Range, and Bob Younger inherited Ron Knightley's Splendour Rock walk and had a party of 4.

On the 9-10th October weekend Jack Wren's Instructional trip at Euroka bought out 9, including 5 prospectives, and there were about 18 in Gladys Roberts' party on the Cowan Creek daywalk.

The next weekend - 15th-17th was wet, but didn't stop Bill O'Neill's walk in the Morna Point area beyond Newcastle (9 members and 2 prospectives). However Bob Godfrey's walk in Wentworth Creek folded up - lack of starters - and there were only 3 on Jim Callaway's day walk from Audley to Otford in the rain.

In better weather Ron Knightley and Stuart Brooks held their car-swap Shoalhaven walk on 22-23rd October and reported some stinging trees in Bungonia Gorge. David Ingram's day walk from Minto attracted 11 starters, and found the scrub about Bushwalkers Basin burned.

The last weekend of October saw a trip by Bill O'Neill, but the report was temporarily mislaid and we could only be assured that it went. Jack Gentle and party of 15 carried out the day walk from Helensburgh, but "ran out of miles at 3.p.m.".

The Social Secretary issued a reminder of the Christmas Party to be held at the home of Helen Grey on Saturday 11th December, and the Parks and Playgrounds Report brought mention of proposals discussed at its last meeting for heavier penalties for dumping rubbish in parklands.

There was a report from Mick Elfick on attendance at the Nature Conservation Council's annual function. He referred especially to an address by Dr. J.G. Moseley of the Newcastle University on Wilderness Areas which contained fairly strong views akin to those held by many walkers. Mick suggested that the Club should submit some suitable conservation motions for discussion at future Councils and the President said it would go into the Secretary's "Remainder Book" to be brought up at a meeting several months before the next Conference. Other members remarked that the Club had in the past placed matters on the agenda.

Federation's Report mentioned the vexed question of access to the Cox Valley via Six Foot Track. There had apparently been some laxity many years ago in defining the correct line of access, but provided walkers remained south of Megalong Creek they were unlikely to irritate landowners in the area.

The President referred briefly to "Scanty attire" work by a walker at Central Station on a recent trip and urged all to maintain a reasonable and sensible standard of dress.

There was a report on the bush fire hazard at Blue Gum. Fires had swept by on the ridges, but not harmed the valley floor. Many campers had used up a great deal of the fallen timber and the threat of a holocaust was much reduced.

Just so that people would be aware of the position on opening of the Club Room, it was announced that it would be closed on 29th December but open as usual on all other Wednesdays. The first Wednesday in January would be a Free Night - no Committee Meeting as a quorum was doubtful.

Meryl Smith suggested that Club members may take a more active interest in the Outward Bound Movement - its personnel and doings.

David Ingram mentioned that Club members had conducted wild flower study walks for the Movement and Dot Butler referred to Instructional work done by Jane Putt and herself at camps of the group. Jack Gentle said he understood John Worrall had a combined walk with Outward Bound people on the coming programme.

Frank Ashdown reported a stowaway - an umbrella - in the camping gear and suggested if there were no claimant it be disposed of.

Mention was made that the notice at the door of the Club Room was in need of adjustment and the President advised that Jack Wren had the job in hand and a sign giving the up to date telephone number for contacting the Club would be in position shortly.

Was there anything left to say? Only to call for Room Stewards and then call it a night, at a respectably early hour.

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(8) A CLIMBER IN THE FRENCH ALPS - Ron Cox

Grenoble
November.

Dear Everybody,

Am feeling a bit perkier these days, having done my first "T.D." (tres difficile) climb, last weekend. There is a great difference in the social status of TD climbers and that of the average climber who occasionally does a climb of D but never anything harder.

Of course, the said TD climb turned out to be the usual bungle. I went with a young CAF chap who is an electronics technician at the Nuclear Centre. He is considerably better than I am and has done a fair number of TD climbs. Our mountain was Mont Aiguille (2080 m) which I once described to you as being very similar in appearance to Creokneck (Q'land), but on three times the scale. There had been a very heavy snowfall five days before and everyone was telling us that we were mad to go, the season was finished, there'd be snow and verglas feet thick on all the rock, etc., etc. People have exactly the same wet blanket tendencies here that they have in Brisbane, Hobart or anywhere else. In fact during those five days since the last snowfall the sun had been shining on the mountain and our route, which was on a south-east face, turned out to be bone-dry. We started on the rock at 9.30 a.m., having left Grenoble at 6 a.m. the same morning (Saturday).

There were roughly 700 feet of sustained difficulties - much IV, V, and some artificial on a fairly vertical limestone cliff. We alternated the lead, and the nastiest bit for me was a spot of delicate Grade V, which involved some tricky footwork while hanging on to nominal handholds. It took me nearly half an hour to work out how to do this and to summon up the necessary courage. I was dreadfully afraid that the other bloke, coming up second, would find this easy thus causing me to lose much face. So when he arrived at the difficulty I invited him to pull on the rope to save time, which he innocently did, afterwards saying how difficult it must have been for me without a rope to pull on.

We were both carrying sacks, which proved a nuisance; the leader would climb without sack and sackhaul, the second would climb with sack. On the second last hard pitch, sackhauling proved impossible and being second I had to climb with two sacks, one stuffed intothe other. This pitch more or less finished me for the day and left me wondering how I will fare if I ever want to do long, hard routes at Chamonix where you have to climb with a very heavy pack and there is no time for sackhauling. After that pitch I suffered from cramps in the fingers and arms which proved troublesome while I was belaying the other bloke on the next pitch, which he led (a wall in A1 and A2, 15 pitons with exit in V) The cramps in my hands would cause them to lock on to the ropes I was giving tension on, which was all very well until it came to paying the rope out, when I would have to use one hand to unlock the fingers of the other. This was the only long artificial pitch on the climb and was reasonably easy since all the pitons were in place. After that a little scramble brought us out on the summit plateau. It was just sunset; we had taken 8 hours, twice the book time, mainly due to my slowness while leading and the number of times that I tangled the ropes.

Having arrived on top we were not out of the wood. As I said, the mountain is similar to Crookneck, that is, it is steep on all sides. It was therefore much like arriving at the top of East Crookneck and having to go down an ordinary route three times as high as Crookneck's, and being a north sise (O Misery), all plastered with snow and ice. Still, we would have made it had we been able to agree on where was the ordinary route. Unfortunately we had conflicting ideas. I reckoned it was a gulley which I'll call gully A; the other bloke reckoned it was gulley B. After much argument we started down gulley B. After 300 feet of descent the other bloke decided no, it really was gulley A after all, whereas I had now changed my mind and now reckoned it was gulley B. More argument, then back we went up to the summit plateau to peer once more down gulley A. Full of ugly ice, it was certainly much less inviting than the other which was cleaner, so back we went down gulley B, only to run into sheerness, darkness, and no sign of the cables which are fixed across the difficulties of the or dinary route. We had been wandering about in near darkness on iced rocks and snow, tied together but not belayed, and I decided it was getting past a joke, so back we went to the summit to bivouac.

Apparently it was 1 degree centigrade in Grenoble that night, and we were 6,000 feet higher and quite unprepared. We had a sweater each but no duvetm no dry socks, etc. We kept alive by a simple expedient which I recalled having learnt in my youth back in Australia - we made a fire. Here and there on the fairly extensive summit plateau, where it was not covered with snow, were enough stunted dead bushes to make two or three hours' fire. When this was near exhausted it seemed that we were in for a miserable night, but out looking despairingly for more wood on the plateau I tripped over a fallen Trig. post - a long bit of 4 by 4 with a wooden triangle attached. Using pitons as chisels and wedges we split up all this wood and were able to keep a small fire going all night. It was still cold and it seemed the longest bivouac I'd ever experienced -- the nights are long at the end of October - but it would have been considerably less comfortable without the fire. We were very thirsty so we melted snow in the cleanest can we could find amongst the summit refuse. It was a most unusual bivouac for my French friend who had never heard of fires and was filled with admiration at my skill in keeping one going all night, which compensated somewhat for my poor climbing performance. I explained how, in my country, the indigenous peoples, having neither habitation nor clothing, keep themselves warm at night beside a fire. (Actually the idea of lighting a fire was inspired by an improbable book I recently read in which two climbers, caught out high on the Dru, kept themselves alive by burning their ice-axes?).

Came daylight, and four hours' mucking about got us off the mountain. We were back in Grenoble about 1 p.m., feeling very tired but me feeling more cheerful than I'd felt for months. Climbing has been dogged by almost continuous bad week-end weather since the end of August and I had been feeling very frustrated. I hope to continue to climb, although there is great pressure from the more restful sport of skiing. At least I have done my TD, which is important to me. (Actually I should mention that SW Nazomi and the Bowie Ridge on Mt. Cook (N.Z.) would only be rated ordinary D)

S. B. W.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

HELD ON

SATURDAY 11th DECEMBER

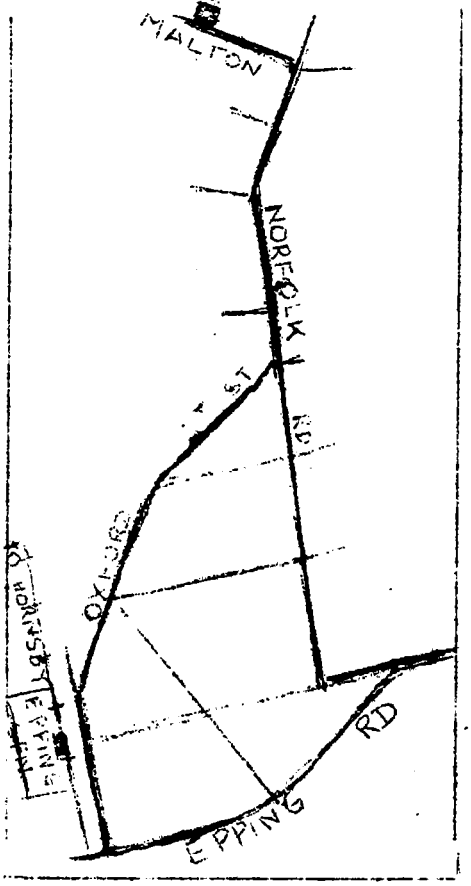
at the Gray's Place

209 MALTON RD EPPING

OUT DOOR DANCING

SUPPER

ALSO!

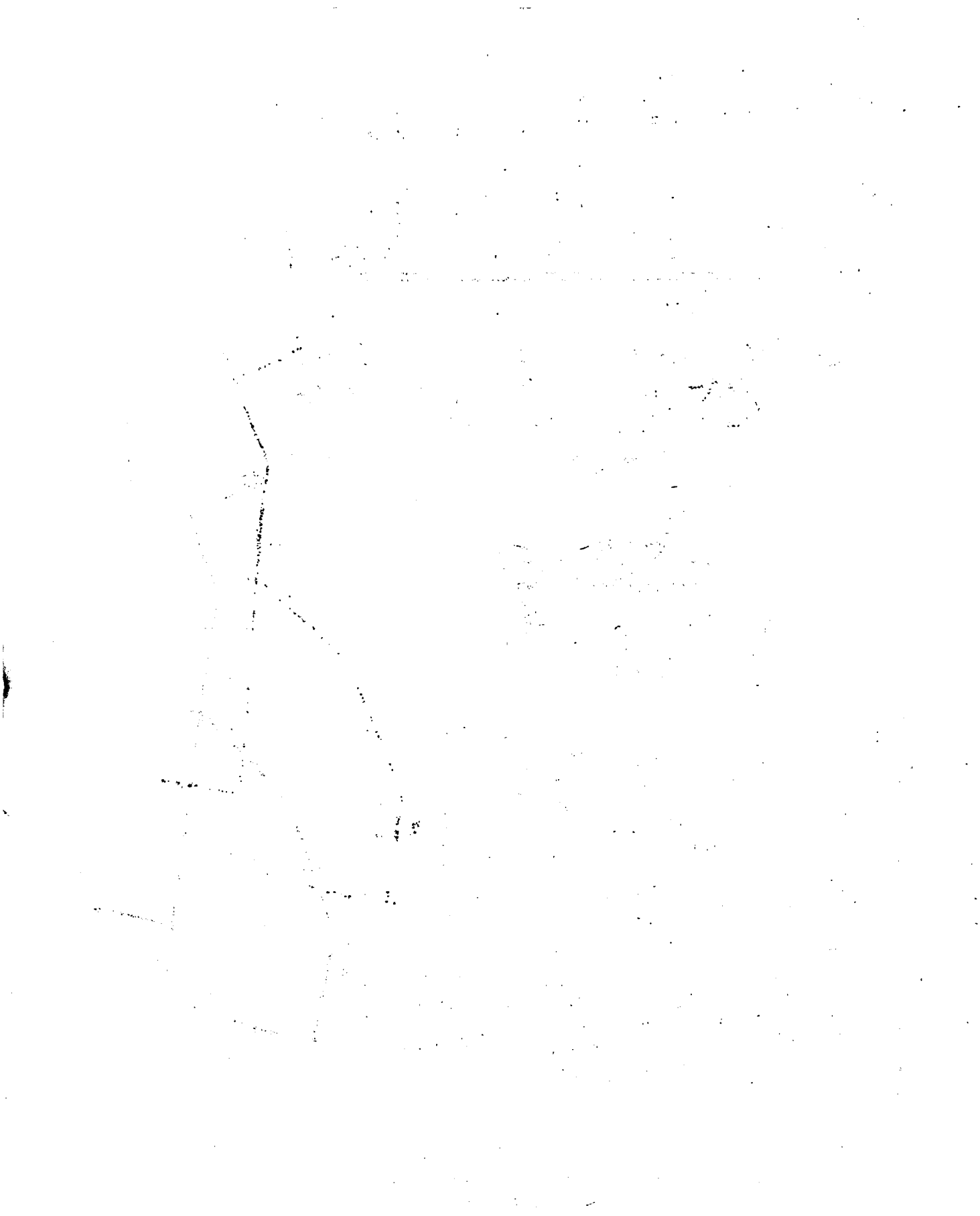


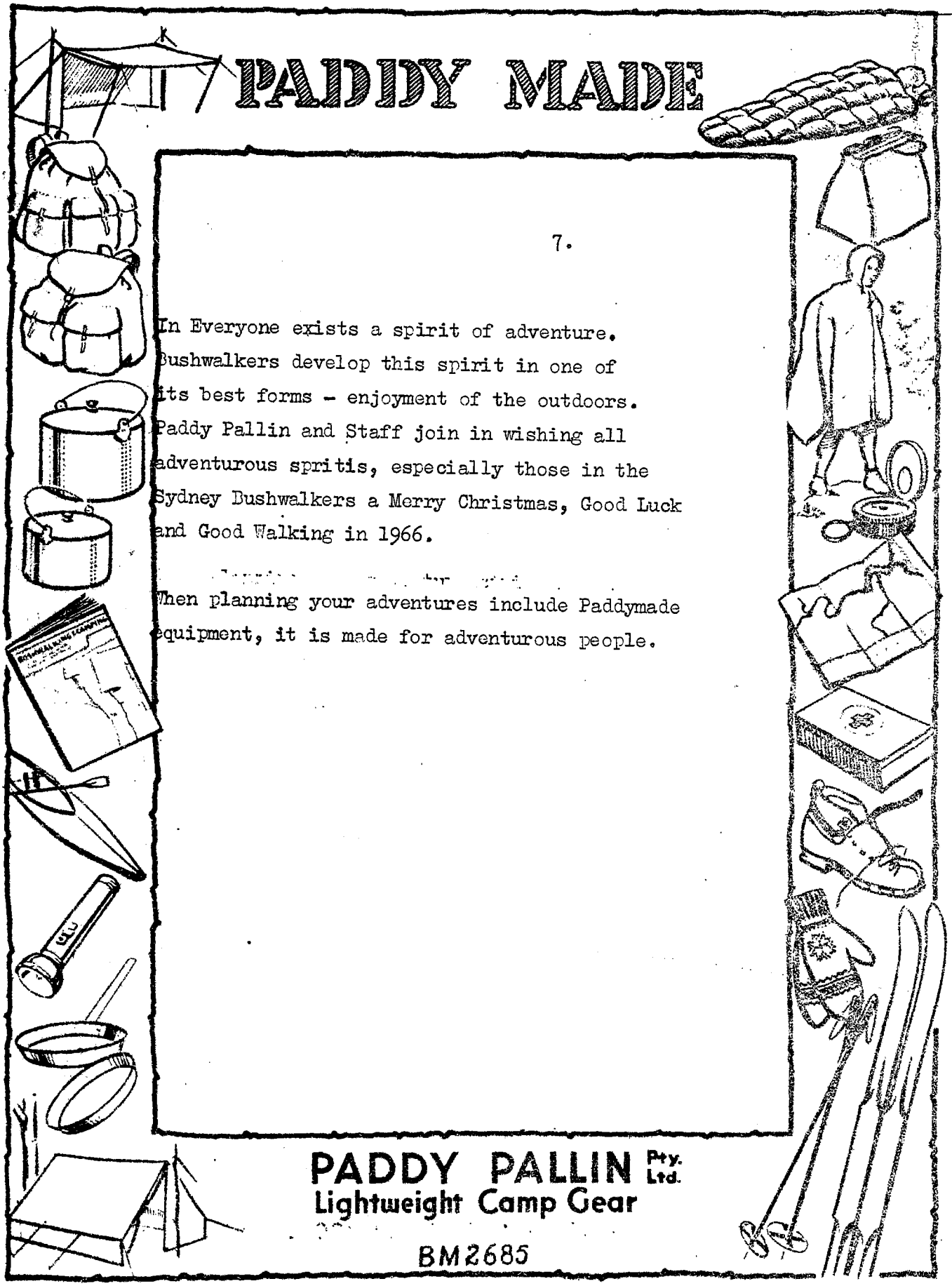
GAMES (INVENTED BY DOT)
BARBEQUE - COME EARLY AND BRING YOUR OWN TEA.

SAY GOODBYE TO SNOW BROWN AND BILL KETAS, LEAVING FOR EUROPE SOON.

SHELTERS ERECTED — DON'T BE PUT OFF BY RAIN
Overnight camping for those interested.

ALL FOR ONLY 10/- EACH.





In Everyone exists a spirit of adventure. Bushwalkers develop this spirit in one of its best forms - enjoyment of the outdoors. Paddy Pallin and Staff join in wishing all adventurous spritis, especially those in the Sydney Bushwalkers a Merry Christmas, Good Luck and Good Walking in 1966.

When planning your adventures include Paddymade equipment, it is made for adventurous people.

FAME

- Parp-Eyes.

"Some day I'll be famus!" said the wild, round schoolboy scrawl. It was the postscript to a letter more than 30 years old which I discovered in a box of antiquities I was mulling over before consigning them to the incinerator. "Watch the newspapers, Parp-Eyes, for further announcements," it said.

It was written by a young lad who, a few years earlier on a rabbiting expedition, had shot his arm so full of lead - picking his gun up by the barrel - that it had had to be amputated at the shoulder. Despite this the boy followed his driving urge, which was to find out all he could at first hand about Australia's birds and animals. He lived at Penshurst and every week-end saw him down at the Scientist's Cabin in nearby National Park, identifying the birds, learning to mimic the birds' calls, painstakingly setting delicate little traps to catch marsupial mice so he could examine them and set them free again. He was well known to Sydney Bushwalkers of that period; he could always lead them to where a bower-bird was fussing around its ornamented bower, or where the male lyre bird was performing its nuptual dance before its mate.

His mother would cook him a collection of rissoles - 10 if it was to be a one day trip, 20 for a two day trip, 30 for a 3 day trip, etc. He lived on rissoles, the scent of which seemed to ooze out the pores of his skin. But he also knew the edible plants and fruits of the coastal jungle and augmented his protein diet with these. Under his constant badgering others of us gingerly did likewise; nettle soup, bracken shoots, the white inside of the grass tree, black jack-apples from the jungle - erk!

Many week-ends we spent with him, admiring his skill at one-armed climbing, erecting "hides" in the trees from which he would patiently watch and photograph nocturnal birds and animals. These were very numerous; there was no motor traffic to disturb them and the few visitors to the hidden Scientists' Cabin were very careful not to frighten any wild life. He was not interested in ordinary school work, but was well liked by the Museum scientists who could see the makings of a great ornithologist in him, given the opportunity.

Well, the opportunity arrived. After a series of lectures given by him to country public schools, on the subject of Australian Birds and Animals, in December 1935 he took off to join an Ornithological Expedition in New Guinea, sponsored by Oxford University. His letters from the depths of unexplored New Guinea kept the Bushwalkers amused. There was the story of one of their native carriers who asked for time off to go back to his village and spit on his father. The Expedition leaders were unwilling to let him go, so our bright young Aussie suggested that he spit in a bottle and they would send that back. The native solomnly did so, it was corked up and duly despatched, and the Expedition didn't lose his services, and he didn't lose his wages. His honour was served, and everyone was happy.

The Oxford scientists made it possible for our budding young ornithologist to go to England (which he found incredibly stimulating) and work at Oxford. From simple beginnings he went on from one academic level to another higher one,

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and after many years of valued work abroad he at length returned to his own country a few years ago and is now the emminent Professor A.J. Marshall of Monash University. "Famus" indeed.

Postscript: So famous, indeed, that Bill Gillam, in his Natural History session in the last Bushwalker, couldn't remember his name and attributed the forthright sardonic humour in "Journey among Men" to some author other than Jocker Marshall. I hope Bill is prepared to apologise.

An apology to the real author.

In the November issue your editor claimed that one of the best books he had read recently was written by "Russel Drysdale and Don Seventy." He now wishes to amend this to read "Russel Drysdale and Jock Marshall."

One member owned the book and wondered to whome she had leant it; another member offered to supply a biography of Jock and a third member wondered why he had two copies of Sydenside Scene.

This is still well worth reading. Dot Butler's note is offered as an ap ology and tribute.

Holiday Wanderings.

Christmas moves people in different directions. Ross Wyborn was seen working out a complicated schedule on a crumpled sheet of paper. A casual observer may have thought he was merely going down Claustral Canyon rather than "organising" innumerable ascents, traverses, ice-caves and descents at a distance of 2,000 miles and predicatably (bad) weather. Dot nodded nonchalantly.

The Wrens are going to Tasmania to walk and the Maddens are going there to drive. Bob Godfrey is chartering a boat to tour the Barrier Reef. There is a caving expedition to New Caledonia. Enzo Tarlae is seeking to avoid snakes at Kossie.

David Brown and Bill Ketas are sailing for Greece early in the New Year. Everyone is taking yards of film. Some are going to write their memoirs when they return.

Everyone is going to the Christmas Party at the Greys.

A VISIT TO THE TROBRIAND ISLANDS

- Dot Butler

Dear Everybody,

I've just had a most fascinating couple of days in the Trobriand Islands. About 20 of us went on a Charter Flight, which worked out less than half the usual fare (only £16 which included accommodation). The Trobriands are about a third of the way to the Solomon Islands from New Guinea, out in the middle of the Solomon Sea. There is quite a group of them, including lots of little ones which are just poking their coral heads above the waves. The one we stayed on is 16 miles long with coral outcrops showing up through the vegetation over its whole length. Hibiscus, a sort of pointsettia and franjapanni are all in bloom. The place has many birds - frigate birds soaring over the sea, white egret-type birds in the mangroves; the noise of other weird booming-birds comes hauntingly out of the jungle. But the most fascinating sight, by far, is the native population. I have never seen a more happy laughing crowd of people. They all look strong and healthy and well-built (except for two or three albinos we met with in one village, too utterly pathetic for words - practically blind and all covered with sores and huge freckles. However this didn't prevent one of them behaving as though he was the chief). On these islands it is the women who rule and the men do what they are told. The girls are glorious self-assured little brown people who wear the shortest skirts of any native races - more like little pouf ballet skirts - and nothing else except perhaps a halo of franjapanni. The small native-style guest house we stayed at served up meals better than you would get at any first-class hotel anywhere in the world - red-nippered crabs, roast pork, yams, breadfruit and all sorts of salads. There was a sweet concoction made of coconut and caramel which was bang-on.

Two lorries took us all over the island along its several roads. We dropped in at every village we passed so that the islanders could do a bit of trading - they make beautiful, unique carvings; I am bringing quite a few home. We swam in the Solomon Sea, with a couple of little coconut palm islands a few hundred yards out. The water was very pleasant although a trifle warm; you could find cool patches if you stired up the lower layers. The native people were quite intrigued at the sight of some of the large white men in bathing trunks. There were lakatois being poled and paddled around in the bluest water you could imagine. We watched a fishing boat come in; a crowd of natives rallied round and came up the coral beach carrying strings of bright silver fish. All the roads to the villages are lined with tall coconut palms up which little boys shin to bring down coconuts for the visitors. They slash off a bit from the top and you drink the cool coconut milk which is really good, especially when you are hot. The native huts are made of coconut matting and thatch and look very picturesque.

In the evenings the brown people sit around in little circles out under the bright tropical stars with a small fire glowing - just for company as the nights are warm, - and sing their native songs. One of our men is busy tape-recording native songs so he picks them all up on his tape then plays it back to natives. The look of astonishment on their faces is really something to see, especially when they recognise their own voice coming out of the 'bocus' (box). They laugh hillariously. It's an unforgettable experience to be sitting in the middle of it all listening to their lovely harmonising. The girls voices are rather harsh but the men's voices are something you can listen to all night. In the tribal singing it is nearly always the woman who leads off and the men

come in as a chorus. The little children who go to Mission School sing school songs in English, rather like nursery rhymes but with a native background. They put plenty of pep into their singing.

We had a voyage in lakatois through the mangroves and jungle hung with vines and long trailing orchids and other sweet-scented flowers. As we passed native villages little children would be paddling around in canoes and swimming, big sisters looking after little baby brothers and sisters, but it looked as though they all could swim by the time they could walk so the young ones didn't need much watching. Great goanna-type lizards bask down by the water on bits of mangrove branches and roots and, although we didn't see any, there are said to be crocodiles which lie around in the mud with just their snouts above water - you pick them out by the gleam of their eyes above the mud. One of the lakatois with a few clumsy whites in it tipped up and into the murky water went a keen photographer with his £150 camera - a complete write-off, of course.

We did a bit of caving. Right out in the thickest jungle there is a huge underground limestone cave with all sorts of formations hanging from the roof caused by water dripping through the coral of which it is formed. Three natives carrying flaring kerosene lamps took us through. It was quite a small entrance. A handrail of branches led through right down to where there were pools of crystal clear cold water, several yards deep, with little islands of smooth water-worn coral peeping through it. Here the hand-rail finished but another cavern and tunnel led away into the darkness. The boy said this hasn't been explored but that it went through to the sea. I suppose they know this because the fresh water emerges out on the coast. However, it might only seep through the coral to gain an outlet. It would be worth exploring.

The natives of the Trobriands worship the yam - quite understandable as their staple food is yams, augmented with fish, crabs, coconuts and bananas. Every year they hold a yam ceremony, but this year the works were somewhat gummed up as the Chief had put a curse on them - No Rain! The people begged him to remove the curse, but he was adament. So they begged the missionaries to entreat him. Their entreaty included 20 sticks of tobacco, so he Chief agreed to try to remove the curse, but warned that he might not be successful. Then followed a session of heavy magic and incantations, but the skies remained brightly blue. The Chief had to report that the gods were not prepared to listen. He was sorry but the drought would remain. The people would just have to sweat it out. Of course, he kept the 20 sticks of tobacco! However word got around that one rebellious village was going to hold its yam festival in spite of the cloud hanging over it, so after a fair bit of coming and going on the part of messangers we all got in the lorries and rumbled off to this village. When we arrived under the coconut palms the young men and women were being dressed up in grass skirts, bodies brightly painted in black, white and red, their backs greased with coconut oil or pig fat and sprinkled thickly with yellow pollen. Their mop of frizzy hair stuck full with white feathers in the form of a halo and in all their finery they dance around in circles waving long sheets of crinkled bark. A very colourful spectacle, especially with a background of old men and picanninies, bark huts and tall

yam houses, and huge waving coconut palms in the background. One old woman was carrying a branch to which were tethered six huge brightly-coloured butterflies as big as bats. These fluttered around all the time on the ends of their foot-long strings. I could have bought them for a few sticks of P.M. and released them but she might have construed that as criticism of her ways, so I didn't. To see these huge butterflies slowly fluttering through the coconut palms is an amazing sight. The first one I saw I thought was a bat flitting out at dusk.

All the people on our charter flight bought so many carvings that it was a problem gettingthem loaded into the plane for the return flight to Moresby. The two pilots have this sort of thing happening so often that it has ceased to be funny but all the rest of us, in tourist mood, made the most of the oppor tunity to be amused. Eventually we took off, farewelled by the whole native population in their pretty grass skirts or red lap-laps, all waving and shouting "P.K.", "P.K.", "P.K.," which the tourists have interpreted as meaning that they want a P.K. and so toss them chewing-gum, whereas the local whites tell us that it is a native word "pekay" which means "come again." However, the natives have now come to know that it means chewing-gum to us, so they are quite happy to go along with our interpretation.

We flew back over the coral sea to Moresby, which was quite cool by contrast. In a couple of days I take off for Rabaul, which I will tell you about in my next letter. Helen Hewsen and Jan Jacobson of the C.M.W. have finished their botanical mission up here. They have climbed Mt. Wilhelm, which they say is only a walk-up really, and they will be holding a slide evening at their Club when they return and tell you all about it.

REWARD

The Editor knocked at the Pearly Gates,
His face looked drawn and old.
He meekly asked the Man of Fate
For admission to the fold.

"What have you done" St. Peter asked
"To deserve admission here?"

"I ran the S.B.W. Mag.
For many a weary year."

The Pearly Gates swung open wide
As St. Peter touched the bell.
"Come in," he said, "and take your harp,
You've had your share of Hell."

NATURAL HISTORY - A SUMMER PLACE.

Bill Gillam.

In that branch of man's endeavour called "Materials of Construction" the ideal material is one that is readily available, costs nothing and will last forever. A summer place, or rather a place to spend summer weekends should meet similar simple tests. There should be deep water for swimming, just warm enough, sweet running water for drinking, enough wood and the only people you meet should be friends. The spirit of the place should be such that if the people you meet are not friends already they will be after the weekend.

There were once sufficient places within easy reach so that we could spend the twelve weeks of summer touring them on successive weekends - I don't swim from choice before Christmas. It was only necessary to enquire before we packed up where we would spend the next weekend; Bouddi, Maitland Bay, Norton's Basin, Bushwalker's Basin, Glenbrook Creek. I had a romantic attachment to Glenbrook Creek.

The track to the creek started on top of the third cutting going west from Glenbrook Station. It was well marked and guarded only by spider webs of a very sticky insinuating nature not found elsewhere. The technique was to coax someone taller and braver than yourself to take the lead. There were overhangs to camp under, pools within sweating distance of each other, a Turkish Bath atmosphere in the Gorge and, in those pre-electric days, steam engines to be identified as they grunted up the hill. These days I am less romantic, there is a road to the causeway and beyond and there are nearly twenty years of initials charcoaled on the overhangs.

For a brief spell Norton's Basin was very popular. One could walk up to inspect the new dam workings and wonder only vaguely that it would eventually close off Burragorang. My memory can't reconcile the small size of the early work with gigantic structure that exists there today. The style at Nortons was to canoe up from Penrith if you knew a canoeist. Canoeists in those days sang "to the small guitar" and a violin and serenaded the dawn. It was perhaps more romantic even than Glenbrook Creek. Alas the canoeists did the freshwater equivalent of swallowing the anchor and the happy band was scattered.

The summer place par excellence was always Era. In the days when it was a private fiefdom there was always someone there. If it offered little wood and less water it compensated in spirit, accessibility and convenience. Initially one camped at "North" under Thelma Ridge and there were some places which were the acknowledged camp sites of certain people. These people hid their tent poles in the same spot all the time. It was courtesy, legitimate and convenient to see who

was camping, who was expected and then to "pinch" poles and camp spot. These spots and their owners are still remembered today as Mouldy's, Rowans, Ardills and at a discreet distance up the ridge itself "Dick Graves". In generally fine weather you camped in the open; in a southerly you braved the leeches and hunted the cows from the lilli-pilli. I spent all of one Christmas Day in the lilli-pilli eating my way through a canoe bag of Christmas cheer. There was a continuous drizzle, a half gale overhead, a smoky fire, the leeches sortied in strength and a very much more established member read Peer Gynt Part I. Aloud. On Boxing Day the fire burnt less smokily, I had sufficient cigarettes to burn off the surviving legions of leeches. I gradually recovered and the much more established member read Peer Gynt Part II. Since the next day was not a public holiday the weather improved. People moved out; Peer Gynt was folded away. In the company of a young lady with whom I had become very friendly I sat halfway up Thelma Ridge with the empty canoe bag. We collected enough food to stay until New Year.

One of the disadvantages of camping at North was having to negotiate the swamp late at night when one returned from socialising at the surf club or in the huts. This problem was often solved by resting on the hill until the early summer dawn, having a quick swim then picking a way safely through swamp, tents and water buckets in broad daylight.

Wood often enough came from the beach in the form of drift wood, hatch covers, awn timber and what have you. Very comfortable camps were made, tables, seats, bedheads. The wood was constantly turned in the sun so that it was dry enough to use several days after you went home. It was hidden away for the next time. Working parties built a dam, trees were planted and a fence put around the trees. The cows and the horses and the deer pulled down the fence. The Trust resumed the land.

I don't know if it was the resumption that drove people from North. Suddenly it was "in" to camp at Stockyard which until then was left to scouts and tourists. A whole new technique of weekending had to be learnt. There were leeches on the flat but the northeaster flapped the tent on the hill. One came down a ridge by a less obvious track on Friday night and climbed out through tall trees and a million cicadas. There were arguments whether the wind blew down the hill during the day or up the hill at night. All water was subject to much scrutiny. Some said there were more mosquitos, some said there were less flies. Gradually we settled in. Fewer people came. It was no longer such a sociable place.

The last few years, in the drought, there has been little water there. One could walk quite easily across the swamp. The hills were brown and dry. Even the cows were driven away. Through the last winter I have often walked around from Garie. The children picked up agates

from the point and ships of flint and petrified wood on the sandhill. There were no tents, the place was deserted. We carried water for lunch or went home early.

Recently there was enough rain to start the creek flowing. The grass grew again, miraculously green, and clipped by the cows and deer to a smooth lawn. A heavy windstorm brough down a lot of dead branches. It was, I felt, time to introduce another generation to weekends at Era. We braved the leeches and camped on the flat. The northeaster flapped the tent, the children splashed in the pools on the rock platform. I was shamed into a cool pre-christmas surf. At daylight the children woke, lit the fire and then gathered cicada shells until breakfast. They found two Greengrocers emerging, frightened a lyre bird when they filled the water buckets. Whip birds sang noisily, palms clashed their leaves in the faint breeze. We had a swim.

From a clear sky a violent southerly tore over us. The sand flew, the tent came loose, branches fell. The weekend was over.

SOCIAL NOTES - DECEMBER 15. "Balls Pyramid - Watsons Crags" - Movie and slides by Dr. Tony Balthasar.

DAY WALK - Note Alteration of route. Heathcote - Uloola Falls - Peach Trees Trig - Hacking River - Waterfall. 10 miles.

Owing to bushfire damage, the leader has decided to amend the route as shown above. The walk will take in the South-Western corner of The Royal National Park, and will be accepted as a test walk.
Train: See leader for time. Tickets: Waterfall return @ 6/-.
Map: Port Hacking Tourist or Port Hacking Military.
Leader: Gordon Redmond (FY4980).

NOVEMBER FEDERATION REPORT: Tianjara Proof Range: The Department of Army advised that live ammunition would be used during the weekend 27-28 Nov. Any parties visiting the area are advised to contact Federation's Information Officers (Paddy Pallin or Wilf Hilder) for dates of future shoots.
Search and Rescue: In commenting on an alert when a young lady left a party and did not arrive in Braidwood until Monday, the President said: "Under no circumstances should parties of less than 3 leave the main party when walking through the bush."
Marathon Walk and/or Orienteering Contest: An offer by Mr. P. Pallin of a prize for a Marathon Walking Competition was not favoured, but the offer to run an Orienteering Contest, involving map reading and route finding, was accepted. The competition will not be a race. Competitors will be in parties of at least three.
December Federation Meeting: To suit the majority of delegates, this month's meeting will be held on Monday 13th Dec, 1965.
Bungarrabee Walking Club (Blacktown) was elected to membership of the Federation.

REFLECTIONS OF A CLIMBER. Part 2 - Dot Butler

The Rock-climbing Section of the Sydney Bushwalkers.

This section evolved from a group in the S.B.W. called The Tigers, the leader of which was Gordon Smith. "Smithy" was a terrific walker. In his twelve years with the Club he clocked up 54 thousand miles (i.e. an average of 4,500 miles a year. Besides his week-end Bushwalking trips he used to walk to work some 16 miles each day and did Marathon road-walks at night. During the early exploratory years of bushwalking in N.S.W. when the white spaces on the Blue Mountains map were gradually being filled in with details, Gordon Smith walks were always in the news. In May 1935 he led the first party to assail and climb Mt. Jenolan and Heartbreaker. He and Max Gentle did the first epic trip down the Colo, and of course it was a Gordon Smith trip, with Max as navigator, when nine of us "did the Gangerangs and Mt. Tiwilla" one Anzac week-end (1936), finishing up making a first ascent of Carlon's Head after a splendid dinner down at Carlon's farm.

In 1936, after I had had a 10-day climbing holiday in the Warrumbungles with Marie Byles and Dr. Eric Dark, Marie encouraged me to form the Tigers into a Rock-climbing Section. This was taken up with typical Tiger enthusiasm and we now worked out trips that specifically called for some rock-climbing. We were, and remained, free climbers. The slow, patient method of climbing with hammer and pitons was unknown to us. The rope was used mainly for the party to climb on after the leader had taken it up the difficult pitch and it was seldom secured to anything more stable as a belay than the leader's shoulders. Any of our Blue Mountain trips that finished up along Narrow Neck were now terminated with a rock-climb out via Red Ledges, Black Billy's, Carlon's Head.

By 1936 Australia was pulling out of the throes of the Depression. We all had jobs now and could afford to look further afield for our week-end jaunts. The rolling stock of the S.B.W. still only comprised one motor car and a couple of motor-bikes and push-bikes, but we could now afford to hire a truck to get us to more distant parts. One Easter, with Jack Debert at the wheel, we went down the Clyde for the first exciting climbing in that unknown terrain. The stratified sandstone was wind-weathered into bizarre shapes, many of the rocks looking like old-fashioned beehives, and no shortage of camping caves. I still think some of the best and most romantic climbing in N.S.W. lies down in the little-visited Castle area round the Clyde.

We were the first party to swim the Cowmung, adopting the then new procedure of wrapping our packs in groundsheets and floating them down the river. In our bathing costumes we climbed the granite faces whenever a feasible route offered, just for the fun of it, and then dropped back into the cool river pools.

One really super challenge was in the summer of 1937. Word had been

getting around concerning a fantastic canyon down near Blue Gum. It could only be entered by climbing up the face of a precipice via a waterfall and no one knew the mystery of its cold dark interior. This was Arathusa Canyon, which Dr. Dark had tried out a little earlier.

It was a scorching hot week-end when we made the first attempt. We followed a wallaby trail which went along a narrow ledge around the face of a cliff and climbed up the falls by means of a conveniently but precariously placed little tree. Inside the canyon was enveloped in a Stygean gloom. No sunlight ever touched the dark rocks, only a dim light filtering down from the closed-in top of the hundred foot high walls. The water was icy and many swims were necessary. We wrapped our clothes in groundsheets and put them in our packs to keep them dry and shivered our way through to another fall, where we were eventually turned back. A second attempt later resulted in two parties coming in from either end and both converging at the previous impasse, one above and one below it, but our timing was not too good and we didn't meet. Our lower party retreated by climbing out via a side canyon - quite a high grade climb.

In 1937 Smithy took the first Australian Climbing party to New Zealand. We had three months there and came back fired with enthusiasm for real climbing. Marie Byles, always on the lookout for peaks that really looked like peaks, had climbed the 2,500 ft. of Bonum Pic in the Burragorang in April, and we now bent our attention to things that really looked like peaks - Pigeon House, Big Rick (Mt. Colong), Little Rick. There is some doubt whether we were actually the first up Little Rick, and after this lapse of time I haven't the faintest idea whether we were or we weren't. I only remember climbing up via a large gum tree and getting from it on to another which grew out from a crack in the rock wall.

Study of the map for new rock-climbing country became a favourite occupation in the Club. The Wolgan and the Capertee country, at that time completely unvisited, looked as though it offered something, and good trips were organised out to Mt. Uraterra and surrounding parts. I remember once leaving the rest of the party in camp at Annie Rowan Clearing on the Wolgan and going out for a bit of solo climbing on the rock walls nearby. I had successfully climbed a pretty steep face and reached the top just as the sun was going down It was necessary to get down right smartly but the steep route I had taken up didn't look too inviting in the failing light. However there was nothing else for it, so I got going. I came to a difficult spot. If only I had six feet of rope I could reach the next foothold below. What was to be done? I took off my shorts, cautiously with one hand, clingong on to a small excressence with the other, and put one leghole over the hold. I put my belt through the other le hole and pulled it till it was secured by the buckle, and hanging onto this I was able to reach the lower ledge and safety. But what a predicament; I can't go back to camp only in my shirt. I climbed down till I came to the tree line, got myself a length of stick, climbed back and hooked my shorts off and the day was saved. This was a salutary lesson in the dangers that beset the solo climber. Abseiling was an unknown art.

It was a momentous occasion in the S.B.W. when Dave Stead, one of the Tigers, was elected as President against a pretty stiff opposition. We must do something appropriate to celebrate. "Suppose you all go and throw yourselves over the Gap", snarled some nark on the other side. That was it! But we would go up instead of down.

Sydney had been having some rough weather the week-end we chose for the big climb. Three of us set out from Balmoral in my two-man canoe to paddle around to Watson's Bay, but mountainous seas turned us back when we got out between the Heads so we went by tram instead. We met up with the rest of the Tigers on a little beach Sydney-side of the Gap, then clambered around the cliffs making dashes across slimy rocks threatened by high seas, and on several occasions having to dive in and swim across stretches of surging water, till we came to the face of the Gap proper. The greatest excitement was the near-drowning of the new President when he dived into the surging swell and was unable to get out again. We watched him being dragged out to sea and dashed in towards the rocks several times, and finally managed to grab him by the scruff of the neck and pull him out. It was a mighty climb up the Gap. One thing I remember was the pains we went to to avoid the throng of sight-seers who had gathered up top to watch the astounding performance of potential suicides going up instead of down.

These are some of the climbs I remember. There were many others during the three years 1937/8/9 but I have forgotten the details. By the end of 1939 war put an end to climbing as the boys were called up for military service or manpowered into industry. With everyone's energies being concentrated on the war effort there was no time for frivolities like climbing. Just wait till this bloody war finishes! "After the rank, steamy smell of the jungle," wrote Bill Mullins from the fighting lines up North, "it will be good to be back in Aussie again, drinking the magic Rhinegold on some sunny sandstone peak."

After six long-dragged out years, by 1945 the war was over - but we had lost our leader. The unbelievable had happened. The tough, indestructible Smithy was dead, victim of neglect in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. Other members of the Tigers were now all scattered and married, so it looked as though the Rock-climbing Section of the S.B.W. was dead. But not a bit of it! In 1954, like a new phoenix arising from the ashes of its dead self, another race of Tigers emerged to carry on the climbing tradition. But this is another story. It will keep for another time.
