THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKE

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

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EDITORIAL.

Our Social Habits.

"Things ain't what they used to be in the good old days". We have all heard it again and again from the old-timers in every walk of life. You know, just occasionally they could be right.

In our own Club it has been said that, as far as the Social Programme goes, we have become a club of spectators rather than participants. These critics complain that the Slide Projector has grown to be our Master, while we are its dumb slaves, sitting in the dark and being most anti-social. Could we say it is something like taking our T.V. set to the Clubroom?

A study of the Social Programmes from the past shows there is some substance in these claims. There has been a gradual change in emphasis over the years, a change that has, in general, favoured the spectator functions. A period of relatively rapid change in the early to mid fifties heralded the explosion of the colour slide cult into mass popularity — perhaps the colour slide has done to us what T.V. has done to Society as a whole.

For instance, how many years is it now since the Club has enjoyed an intelligent debate? (We may have even lost the art). Community singing with a piano-accordian and a lusty leader is as dead as a dodo - no wonder our campfire singing has gone down the drain. Remember the square dance years, some of you - that stuff was real participation; and it was social.

Slide nights make it easy for everyone - for everyone -for the Social Secretary, for the Lecturer and for the audience. Because they're easy, they will probably continue to dominate the Programme. Maybe this is what most people want; but there is a sizeable minority who would prefer less quantity and more quality in their slide evenings and who would like the gaps filled in with participation functions.

It is up to these people to sell their ideas to the Social Secretary and the Committee. If they're good ideas, that minority could quickly change to a majority.

SCCIAL NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER.

This month our thanks are due to two of our Club Members for supplying items on the Social Programme. On 21st September, Frank Ashdown will present a talk on two places of great scenic attration, i.e. Canberra and Lamington Plateau. All new and prospective members, particularly from overseas, should find the night most enjoyable since both places should be visited by new arrivals in this country as soon as possible.

Those people who had the good fortune to be in the Clubroom when Henry Gold entertained us with "The Aztecs" and "Scenic California" will be looking forward with great interest to his "Impressions of Europe" on Sept.28. Henry is an excellent photographer and manages to capture the unusual in his pictures.

THE WILD GOATS OF WILD GOAT PLATEAU.

- Don Finch.

The meeting place on Friday night was to be The Royal George at Picton, thus showing the leader to be a fellow apt to make indiscreet decisions. The first load of bods came in Brian Harding's Landrover; with him were Don Finch and a prospective Barry Pacey. They were drinking middles of lemon squash until Heather Joyce arrived then they started on schooners of C.P. rum. When Dot Butler, Peter Kaye and John White arrived they were down to ponies of water and A.P.C.s. While all this was going on a game of back pool was being played, two of the local boys assuring us that they had never played before offering us a game at a quid a corner.

By closing time the last car had arrived and after a "quick" conference we moved off at 2.30 a.m. The object of the discussion was to determine the best route to Mt. Burragorang. John White moved off in the direction of Mowbray Park and the rest followed the leader towards Mittagong. However, Uncle John, being wise in the ways of bushwalkers, waited up the road to see what the mob would do after the symbol of fatherly quidance had left. He soon found out and caught us up on the first hill. An incredable number of left and right hand turns were made that night which were only justified when the water-board gate appeared across the road. The usual complaints about the lousy campsite were made, a few people slept in the cars while the bushwalkers slept in the trees.

The fire was started at 6.30 a.m. the next morning and by 7 a.m. everybody was awake if not up and cooking breakfast. Then I woke the Pres., and after the usual colourful exchange of good morning phrases, he asked me about the water situation; which, considering the fact that we were on the top of a ridge, would have been non-existent except for Brian's 5 gallon jerry-can. This of course was unknown to the Pres. who was still flat on his back in the back of his panel van enjoying his little game with his 2 gallons of water and eleven presumably thirsty bods — the carrot on the string game ended when Brian announced that he would drain his radiator.

After several false starts, including a femme who started cocking breakfast after everyone else had packed up, a true move-off was accomplished at 8.20 a.m. and on hour later we were walking along The Little River after successfully negotiating the cliff line without incident. The fabulous view of the cliff-lined Nattai and Little River valleys was a magnificent reward for our penance. A new fire trail scars the left hand bank of The Little River going at least up to the Blue Gum Creek junction. Lunch was started at 11.45 a.m. near Blue Gum Creek. The lunch fire was quite fierce and erupted several times during lunch. Ramon U'Brien who seemed to be the main target for flying embers was obliged to move. Uncle John (sorry Dave) stepped on a hot ember and for its entertainment value, the ensuing performance was well worth the trouble to watch.

When the announcement came that it was time to move off up the hill and that it was advisable to fill up our water bottles I was delighted to hear the Pres. grumble that he didn't bring his water bottle. I was going to suggest that he should go back and get his two gallon container. I am sure, however, that his answer would also have been a suggestion. The climb up to Junction Mountain began about 1 p.m.

At a vantage point on the top of a small cliff where we rested and took in the view, a fellow called Zot who came in Ian Steven's car told us how thousands of years ago before the birth of Phil Butt, the Romans in their caterpillars built the cliffs on the other side of the river just so as we could sit where we were and wonder how they were made. The other people in Ian's car were Roger Lockwood and Peter Lannigan, an Englishman, who despite a sophisticated upbringing in an affluent society refused to take off his trousers and walk in comfort.

The top of the Wild Goat Plateau was everything that we hoped it wouldn't be, a maze of ridges which were covered by low trees and lower scrub which included every plant that ever scratched, tore, stabbed or tripped a bushwalker. The world was suddenly reduced to a piece a yard wide and teh yards long straight in front. By 4.30 p.m. we had travelled three miles along a predetermined route, less an a mile an hour. It was decided on the shores of Lake Joyce that we should accept Uncle John's suggestion and try for water in the gully below us, the waters of which, if there were any, flowed into Golden Moon Creek. (N.B. Lake Joyce at the time of discovery was approximately 938 mm wide and 1556.4 mm long with a maximum depth of well over 15 mm. Although, it presented no problem on this occasion it is adivsed that water wings should be carried if venturing into the area after periods of heavy rain.)

The minor tributory in the gully ran into another minor tributary which ran into another minor tributary. Thirty yards from this junction the creek bed, which had been consistently dry with a few damp patches, was found to be under two feet of water. The campsite was chosen and then made, a fire was built which contrary to the usual procedure was large enough for everybody to cook on at the one time. The after-dinner conversation included steam trains, direction by the stars and for Zot's benefit, the correct way to pronounce "pronounce". While it was only between the Colonials and Zot there were only two schools of thought, then somebody asked Peter for the English version and this left us with three to choose from. It looked as if we would be up all night until Ian called for mugs which he said were for a short burst of Scotch, after which it was time to retire at 9.30 a.m. Uncle John, who had already been in bed for two hours trying to get to sleep, declared in no uncertain terms that it was about time too.

I awoke the next morning to see Dot start the fire and our little world covered in a light dew. Breakfast was over at 8.10 p.m. and after a moan from the leader (which fell on deaf ears) that we were at least four hours behind schedule we moved off. The scrub was as thick as the day before

and it was no great surprise when we found ourselves three hundred yards west of where we should have been. Three alternatives faced us: to go east to the saddle to the south and then west again total distance 2 miles; go down to the creek, which was a tributary of Martins Creek, see if it was promising to follow it down to Martins Creek and thus save about three miles, or go in a bee-line straight up the other side and down into Martins Creek. The creek was lined on either side by Eliffs and it looked as if it could develop into another Claustral Canyon. A way across was found by Dot and we climbed up the other side across the top of a flat ridge and down into Martins Creek via a side creek. The side creek had several large waterfalls in it but these were no problem to siddle. Martins Creek was reached well after 11 a.m. and after about a thousand yards of rock hopping down the creek we stopped for lunch.

The leader started ranting and raving about the 15 miles distance back to the cars. This seemed to have some effect on the party. After lunch an amazing thing happened — everybody just started packing up and got ready to move off without a word being spoken. The creek gradually changed from large boulders and little waterfalls to grassy flats which made the going quite good. Even so it was about 3 o'clock when we reached the Nattai and the Advance Party. After a short rest and further consultations on the map we moved off with about 7 miles to go to Little River, From here until the junction the party spread out so we didn't see much of each other until the Little River was reached at 5.30 µm. There it was decided that Brian Harding and Uncle John should go up over Mt. Burragorang along the fire trail to the cars and then bring the cars down the Sheehys Creek road and pick up the mob.

A fire was lit and a community tea was had, Dot as chief disher-upper with Roger in charge of Milo-making. It was 7.15 p.m. when we moved off up the road after several unsuccessful attempts to work out North and South using the stars. And of course the occasional thought for Brian and John. After the fire trail came the Nattai Bridge and then the Sheehys Creek road. We were all lying down on the road having a rest when two sets of car headlights came weaving down the road. Everybody jumped up and started running up the road to meet the cars. "We've been running since the river" was the story. However, they were too tired to be impressed. When they had both turned around Brian dropped the tailgate on his landrover and was met by a two-inch high tidal waver — that was the end of the water in the jerry can. After a quick trip back to the other cars and the exchanging of tales of how we spent the last $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours we all moved off to Picton for a cup of coffee and then the short trip home.

CONGRATULATIONS TO PETER CAMERON AND PATSY MOULDEN ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THEIR ENGAGEMENT.

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THE AUGUST GENERAL MEETING.

Jim Brown.

started a little belatedly after a scratch Committee meeting held in full view of the hoi-pollio, vetted the spring walks programme. However 8.30 p.m. saw us settled to business, with one new member, John Hart, to be welcomed and one Victor Trett, who had apologised for his absence.

Minutes gave rise to no comment, nor for that matter did Correspondence which contained (inter alia) a letter returned from Frank Young - anybody know his whereabouts? - the usual crop of inquiries about walking and membership - from the Nature Conversation Council saying there were few takers for the school to be held at Gosford and the date of application had been extended: David Ingram regretted that there was one "commercial" only - a private hotel in the wilds of Kings Cross soliciting our custom.

Gordon Redmond advised a month in which receipts were just a little in excess of expenditure to give a closing balance in the current account of \$297. A report from Parks and Playgrounds referred to protests over "developments" planned for Ashton Park, Bradley's Head: an item raised by Cooke River Valley Progress Assocn. concerning recreational areas at Tempe that were threatened with road development: a menace to parklands in Warringah Shire where sporting clubs sought additional land; opposition to the car park beneath Hyde Park being considered by City Council; and — of more direct concern to us — a letter to the Lands Department asking its policy on transfer of tenure of Era hutments.

Phil Butt presented a Federation Report, the items covering Federation's support for removal of huts from Primitive Areas, one S & R. alert for a cance party overdue by 1½ days on the Shoalhaven, advice that Black Jerry's trail was open to walkers, but the farmer at the summit would appreciate passers by making themselves known (except at those times not usually regarded as visiting hours). The rest of the meeting, said Phil, went on and on and on, and included the election of officers. Affiliation fees were fixed for Metropolitan Clubs at 10c per head. The meeting also fixed Federation events for the ensuing year, except the S & R practice, but including the Annual Reunion on the second weekend of March.

Gordon Redmond put an addendum along the lines that Federation's annual financial statements were not ready for the Annual meeting, a poor show he contended. He did not blame the retiring Treasurer who had taken on the job simply because no one else would.

The Walks Report was inaudible. Social Notes related to things that will take place before this is published, so no comment. Before entering on General Business, John White spoke simply of Alan Rigby, and asked us to observe the usual minutes' silence for this well-loved member.

No one had any ideas on what form our Christmas Party would take. We were asked to support Federation's Ball in September, as the organisation's income was limited. John White announced that at the next meeting the position of Vice President and Federation Delegate would be filled.

The first general business stemmed from Gordon Redmond's earlier remark on Federation's financial reports, and he moved that copies be sent to each affiliated Club. Several people remarked that this had been done intermittantly in the past and we voted that it should be "intermittent" no more, but a regular thing.

This gave rise to the President's remark that the new Federation Treasurer was one of us, and thus to Gordon Redmond's undertaking to help as required with the preparation of the annual statements provided the accounts could be made available to him at an early stage.

It was pointed out that Federation's proposed reunion date would clash with our usual mid-March reunion. Phil Butt said it arose from the determination to hold the Federation event two weeks before Easter, and as John White remarked, being a moveable feast it could conflict with ours, determined on a different footing. We voted to go ahead on our usual date anyway.

Dot Butler reported being in touch with Rev. Father Coughlan on behalf of the Club's Cycling Section and finding that he had no objection to walkers using the shelter of the hut, but asked that people going that way give him some prior advice. Eddie Stretton asked if the Club had a Cycling section and it was suggested that we had one "de facto".

After the debacle of July the President was obviously relieved that his call "Who'd be a Room Steward, who, who, who" did evoke three "who". And at 9.20 p.m. it was all over until the Battle Demi-Royal of the Half Yearly Meeting.

GO WALKABOUT.

Jack Gentle.

The novelty has worn off the motor car. There is no doubt that the tide is turning. Walking is coming back into fashion.

Consider this novel phenomenon. Some young executives bound for lunch spend ten minutes trying to get a taxi to carry them at a snail's pace across the city. One says to the other, "Let's save time by walking". And once the astonishment at the unusual suggestion has worn off, there is general agreement with this original idea. Our young executives are learning an important lesson.

Rapid transit is often the slowest way of getting somewhere. In England, country walking never went completely out of fashion, and the public right of way along traditional paths across private property is jealously protected to this day. The German students' Wanderjahr never completely ceased to be a respectable tradition, and within the last decade youth hostels have become increasingly familiar all over Europe — the youths of other nations have discovered them and the European tour conducted at least partly on foot has become increasingly popular.

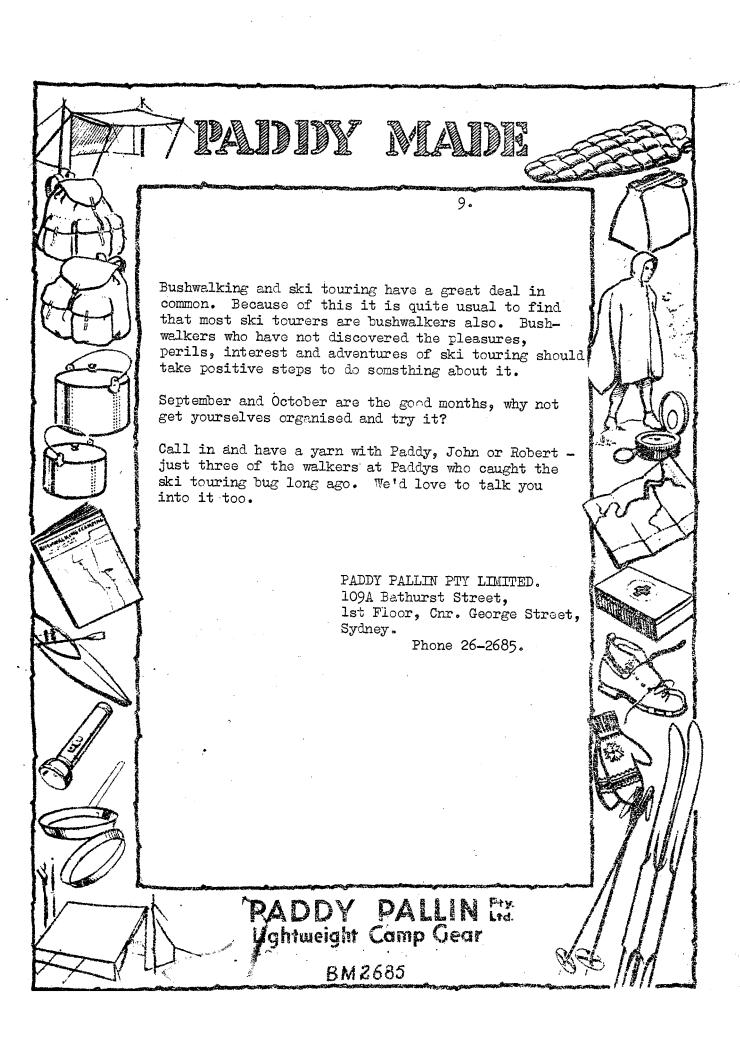
The significant fact is that such pedestrian tours are not merely for those who cannot afford anything else - their advantages, as well as their economy, have come to be what count. Another recent phenomenon operates positively in the same direction: the rediscovery of nature. Books about animals, plants, mountains and oceans are being bought in unprecedented numbers. Thereau is more widely read today than ever before, and one of the things we are learning from him is that nature is as wonderful in the small and near as in grandiose and remote.

Once you get into the bush there is no substitute for legs. That is true whether your taste is for the ambitious walking or for "window shopping" in nature, which means strolling about in a leisurely manner keeping your eyes open for the orchid by the mossy stone or for the little creatures who share the earth with us. Even those who are uncomfortable once they leave their concrete footpaths will find that city walking also affords delight. You can't get the best of a city from a taxi or a bus (to say nothing of a train), because much of it, like much of the best in the bush, is made up of little things.

Two hundred and fifty years ago the London poet John Gay wrote a descriptive poem entitled "The Art of Walking the Streets of London". He knew something that is equally true today — you learn a city only by walking in it. Whether you walk in the city or the country the motion of the legs stimulates both the tongue and the brain. Samuel Johnson, that hater of the country, said some of his best things while walking with Boswell.

Demosthenes composed his orations while walking on the beach. Plato taught in a grove. Aristotle who founded modern logic and science was known to his contemporaries as the Peripatetic Philosopher.

For the second time in a month, Death has struck suddenly at the Club ranks. In July we lost Alan Rigby, a well-loved companion of many years standing — in August it was a young man in his prime. Charlie (Chubb) Harding, due to be presented with his Membership badge at the September meeting, lost his life when rock-climbing at Wattemolla on August 14. To those who knew him, Chubb was a likeable an cheerful fellow, eager to discover the delights of the Australian bush and the companionship of bushwalkers, after migrating from England just a few short months ago.



BEWARE!

As a matrimonial bureau, the Club has always been a huge success, beating even the professionals at their own game. One can't help noticing that this trend is going to continue, so it's felt that a word of warning to the starry-eyed is again timely. With this in mind, we've resurrected a 'Sydney Bushwalker' classic from 1956, when Pat and Ian Wood were inspired to poetry on hearing of the engagement of Geof Wagg and Grace Aird.

Dear Geof,

What's this we hear about this 'ere decision to engage A special combination set to last you all your days?

A floor-scrubbing, dish-washing, hot-potato-masher, A door-closing, bread-cutting, cup-and-saucer-smasher; A spin-drying, bean-stringing, dirt-and-dust-wiper, A bed-making, biscuit-baking, pay-packer-swiper; A back-warming, sock-mending, fast-efficient-cocker, A clothes-pressing, tea-brewing, extra-good-looker; A bath-running, nappy-changing, string-bag-lumper, And what is more, to cap it all, a Geoff-Wagg-thumper!

Dear Grace,

We hate to cast a shadow but we often pause to wonder If the average in dream-men doesn't end up just as under:-

You'll find he is a shower-hogging, early-morning-moaner,
A Sunday-paper-snatcher, and a frosty-morning-groaner;
A practised-alibier and a secretary-slayer,
A champion-putter-offer and a regular-mislayer;
A bathroom-floor-flooder and a cold-foot-putter,
A grubby-hanky-hider and a birthday-overlooker;
A doormat-misser and a drying-up-escaper,
A cake-tin-cleaner and a pudding-basin-scraper;
A saucepan-lid-lifter and a bad-bargain buyer,
A long-grass-grower and a cut-finger-cryer;
A sock-holing, baby-spoiling, leaky-tap-forgetter,

We hope we haven't made you feel you'd rather be a lone you. For you'd miss the life-long audience you each will need to moan to! And moaning on your ownsome is a lonesome sort of game,
And marriage sees there'll always be "the other one" to blame!

But if you thump him hard enough you're bound to make him better!

Letter from Bill O'Neill.

(Below we publish part of an interesting letter written by Bill to Margaret and Dick Child. After a very active period with the S.B.W., Bill sailed home to his native England some months ago. For those wishing to write, Bill's address is:

60 Brassie Ave., London. W.3.

- Editor.)

'The journey home was very interesting and enjoyable - even if a trifle long, indeed by the time we arrived in Southampton most were thankful to be off the vessel for more than just a few days. The day spent in Auckland was used for a trip to Rotorua - I was much impressed by what I saw and would like to spend a spell over in N.Z. both islands. Having friends in the two sections it should be easy to get to know the Antipodes better those slides of the Vaseys and others I've seen of the Southern Alps certainly whet the appetite. Calls were made in at Fiji and Samoa - the latter being especially beautiful - indeed an ideal conception of a South Seas Island and, more surprising, unspoilt and relatively free of the so called progressive development generally associated with the Yanks. One such example is the new hotel that has been built on a projecting spit in the Harbour - its external features are based on the traditional Samoan style of house making, but internally it has every luxury and convenience one could wish. Most of the island, like Fiji, is hilly and densely covered with vegetation. The beaches are good in places but unsafe - shark danger is bad. The view of the island at sunset as we sailed to Hawaii was unforgettable. Honolulu was grossly overrated and very dear - more or less a huge army-navy and airforce arsenal - probably a contributing factor towards the expensiveness. The overall scenic possibilities were not of a quality to rave over - I've seen as good if not better on the North Queensland coast althought it's only fair to say that had t me and funds permitted , more leisurely excursion to the outer islands it would have been a very different story - you may recall the very good slides exhibited at the Club one Wednesday of the largest of the group Hawaii - they were really interesting. Our next port of call was San Francisco - a most beautiful city which was reminiscent of Sydney both being hilly and having both extensive harbours and beaches - Frisco having a somewhat larger harbour and is definitely more hilly. Its buildings are generally modern style but graceful. Much of the surrounding suburbs and adjoining cities of Oakland and Berkeley are pretty nondescript but the glory is its setting against the harbour and very attractive "green belt".

We sepnt a day and half there - unfortunately landing on Thanks-giving Day which denied us the opportunity of paying a visit to the National Park of Yosemite - a great pity for I was much locking forward to this - still an opportunity may exist on a return trip. We traversed all three harbour bridges - glorious views and of course - great technical interest. Perhaps pride of place for me went to the new Mascric Hall near Grace Cathedral - it had a most imposing entrance foyer, with one complete wall of illuminated glass - rather like an enormous mosaic - unfortunately I didn't have my camera with me so missed out taking a shot of it.

The next port was Los Angelos - pretty crummy, its scle redeeming point were the suburbs nestling under the foothills of the nearby ranges - already snowcapped and a perfect background for the subtropical vegetation and garden specimans. Of less pretence and more endearing nature was the final port in the U.S. - San Diego next to the Mexican border - this is a glorified naval base but has an attractive setting, possesses a magnificent park that contains some fine Spanish Colonial buildings. Acapulco in Mexico was notable for its wenderful harbur setting - almost land locked and ringed by barren hills. Its beaches are very lovely and colourful and ringed by ultra modern hotels - including the inevitable Hilton. The older native parts were of much more interest even if one needed a nose bag on most of the time - the sanitary conditions were hardly all mod. cons. This applies to even greater degree to the Panamanian ports each end of the Canal - the difference between those who have and those who have not really is stark (with every evidence of the police state) - no wonder its always on the verge of revolution!

The canal itself was transited in daylight, the weather being over-cast much of the time but exceptionally humid — it was scenically and technically very enjoyable. Another highlight of the trip was the Colombian port of Cartagena on the Caribbean — it is one of the former fortified cities on the old Spanish Main — retaining virtually intact, its city walls, old buildings and fortifications — all dating from round the 16th century perhaps a little earlier. We spent an absorbing day in hot sunshine investigating its nooks and crannies and would like to have spent much longer there.

We made a call into Trinidad - its port was colourful without being outstanding although the beach which we later went to for a swim - on the northern side, was superb - as were the views across the straights to the mainland of South America. A lengthy passage eventually landed us in Lisbon a delightful city with a great deal to hold ones interest - especially from the architectural point of view - I wish we had longer there - but since this is relatively easy to revisit, particularly in conjunction with Spain, it was less of a loss than say the islands in the Samoan group. We were there for a day, then followed a stormy passage through the Bay of Biscay, a brief call in at Le Havre, finally landing amidst high wind and driving rain at Southampton in the early hours. However, by the time we were hustled down the gangway, the weather cleared to a perfectly beagtiful sunny winter day. Three car leads of family and relations were at the quayside to greet me, and after a short stop for refreshment we sped on our way along the remaining 75 miles to London and home. Christmas was as you would expect a distinctly family event, with much reunion and acquainting with new members of the family. After a month or so of visiting I restart work - as a local government officer at the new city hall of Westminster - a modern ediface like the AMP in Sydney, some 22 levels high and commanding a magnificent prospect over the city towards the Surrey and Hertfordshire hills. At Easter I resumed serious walking, inaugerating the "season" with a trip up to Snowdonia - a very good trip, quite arduous on the "unscheduled" sections although the very mixed weather conditions - snow, sleet, ice, rain and sunshine combined to make certain sections a little trying. ' \

MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT

COMPANY.

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WHITE-OUT.

(Ski-ing in a snow storm.)

- Greg Reading.

The sky is formless and void, empty and white. Earth too is formless and void, empty and white. Here they meet.

And I - am in between.

When the sun shines the sky is bright and hard - Though a thousand miles beyond my reach.

(today I touch it with each glance! It licks my face! I hold it on my hand!)

But when the sun shines the sky is hard and bright.

Earth too is hard and bright, its edges steep and sharp.

I strain to cut a grip on it, cling with all my might —

Lest I should slide right off.

But today the world is formless and void, empty and white.

Mind too is formless and void, empty and white.

Body only is moving in perfect harmony,

Floating, falling - through this nothing white.

CONSERVATION COMMENTARY.

by the Conservation Secretary, Alex Colley.

At our Annual General meeting in March, a small Committee was appointed to represent the Club in a discussion with the Minister for Lands. The Committee consisted of Heather Joyce, Michael Elfick, the President (ex officio), Alan Rigby, whose experience and ideas will be sadly missed, and myself. It has since co-opted Henry Gold, whose knowledge of overseas parks, together with his photographic talents, will be valuable. It has been an active Committee, having met four times, and visited the Minister, while individual members have inspected controlled burning methods at Canberra, photographed the Church Creek limestone formation for the Dept. of Lands, and held discussions with top departmental and other conservationists. A great deal of knowledge of modern conservation practice has been, and is being acquired. This report seeks to summarise some of it.

There is no need to reiterate the S.B.W. conservation policy, which was adequately discussed, and approved by the General Meeting of June, 1964, but it is something new to have our long-cherished ideal of extensive primitive areas receiving support from many quarters. For long we were accused of wanting to keep the parks for ourselves. Parks could not be created, it was said, unless roads, buildings and all mod. cons were introduced, thus making

them available to the public. I have already drawn attention in the magazine to President Johnson's reference, in his Message to Congress on Natural Beauty, to "the forgotten outdoorsmen of today who like to walk, hike, ride horseback or bicycle. For "them", he said, "we must have trails, as well as highways. Nor should motor vehicles be allowed to tyranaise the more leisurely human traffic." Shortly afterwards Congress set aside nine million acres of "permanent Wilderness" in which "earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

Here in New South Wales we find Dr. Mosley now of The Australian Conservation Foundation, a geographer who has specialised in parkland studies, giving an address which could well have delivered by Mylos Dunphy, whose work he describes with enthusiasm. Dr. Mosley addressed the N.S.W. Nature Conservation Council and his address has been reproduced in "Architecture in Australia", "The Living Earth", and possibly other publications.

Squarely facing the "availability to the public" argument for "improvements" Dr. Mosley said:

"Because unconfined recreation is almost by definition a minority activity some people are suspicious of the equity of devoting such large areas to this purpose. Further, some nature conservationists feel that more intensive use offers a better prospect for successfully resisting claims for commercial alienation and so of preserving some natural values. Their attitude is defeatist but perfectly natural in view of our park history.

For this reason it is essential to publicise the rationale for wilderness parks. It seems reasonable to assume that since the different activity groups in the community need different conditions for satisfaction it is in the public interest to preserve the maximum environmental variety. It is easy to see that since wilderness offers the maximum contrast with the city and therefore lies at the extreme end of the spectrum of recreational environment it is a particularly valuable resource. Its destruction would significantly narrow the range of environmental choice. Thus it is a half truth to say that such areas are available only for the use of the exclusive few. Like many other special community facilities, such as museums and art galleries, these are available for all who wish to use them and hence are a collective good."

Speaking of the existing park system Dr. Mosley said that it "favours the gradual conversion of all parkland to serve the interests of mass tourism." This was the reason why our policy defined a park as "a sanctuary from modern civilisation." We fully recognised the need for popular, commercialised, mass recreation areas, but said that such areas were in no sense national parks.

On the subject of improvements, Dr. Mosley goes further than we were game to venture. The criginal report of the Conservation Policy Committee recognised the need and even desirability of roads built to the perimeter of National Parks, but stated that no road should penetrate far into the Park.

The meeting thought even this was asking too much and settled for "a minimum of roads." But Dr. Mosley says it is undesirable to have good roads extending even to the wilderness boundary. A practical compromise here might be a policy of roads to "Development areas" near, (preferably outside) park boundaries but stopping short of wilderness areas. Of wilderness areas he says:

"One of the chief characteristics of wilderness recreation is that it is unconfined. If the country within the reserve is to invite the visitor to wander where he will and present a challenge to route-finding skills, it must be kept as wild as possible. The landscape should exude an atmosphere of boundless freedom. Any attempt to influence movement is clearly incompatible and these areas should be kept trackless, hutless and bridgeless. Roads and graded tracks obviously have no place in such an area and hence the satisfaction of visiting it. I believe that an element of danger should be accepted as an essential ingredient of wilderness. If, in spite of this consideration, track markings and survival huts are thought necessary for safety they should be minimal and strictly prescribed.

The spontaneity of the visit can be spoiled by many things which are useful in some parts of a national park but undesirable in a wilderness area, such as warning notices, interpretive signs, uniformed rangers, entrance gates and other visitor paraphernalia which suggests to the traveller that he is entering a specially designed play area. The visitor can obtain all the information he needs from maps and pamphlets. Mechanised access of any kind is also undesirable. This includes all kinds of rough country and over-snow vehicles, ski-lifts and aeroplanes. It not only reduces self-reliance in travel and impairs the biota but also brings mechanised civilisation into the bush. All this requires that management be as unobtrusive as possible."

At this point Bush Walkers may ask themselves "Is this heaven, or have we been dreaming?" Let us take a deep breath and look at another report in which Mr. C.P. Gabel, Operations Officer of the Parks Service Bureau, covers the main threat to any wilderness area likely to be established in this country - bush fires. Mr. Gabel's methods of fire protection are founded on simple facts known to any bushmen. These are that fire risk and/or intensity increases with temperature, falling humidity, wind velocity, lack of rainfall and the amount and condition of readily combustible undergrowth. These factors have been calibrated and combined to create a "fire danger index." One of the measures of the index is the distance of "spotting" in advance of fires - i.e. the carrying of burning material upward from the fire and deposition some distance ahead of the fire front. This distance can be up to 7 miles on a bad day. Is there any means of controlling such a fire? Mr. Gabel thinks there is, provided the area is divided into compartments by the creation of "buffer strips". "Buffer strips" would be areas where "fuel reduction" had been undertaken. "Fuel reduction" is accomplished by a light ground fire, lit and controlled in mild conditions. There may be nothing new in this method. The aboriginals lit fires, possibly to protect the grazing lands of their game, and it is a fair bet that they never wilfully

started a "wild fire" which would leave both the game and themselves to starve to death. Graziers have used fires, frequently uncontrolled, to protect their properties, often with no concern what happened to the fire once it left their boundaries. The creation of "compartments" is, however, a recent development made possible by the bulldozer. The purpose of the roads is to provide easy access both for control burning and for fire fighting.

Mr. Gabel's park is therefore a far cry from Dr. Mosley's Eden. It is, in fact, almost indistinguishable from a State Forest. Will this roaded and partly burnt out area sufficiently resemble a wilderness to serve as the kind of recreation area Dr. Mosley envisages? If the views of Club members are indicative, it won't. But, if uncontrolled fire destroys wilderness and roads and controlled burning can preserve part of it, isn't half a loaf better than none? It is, if these are the real alternatives. But are they?

Take first the fire control aspect. Technically, Mr. Gabel's report represents a summation of forestry experience, but, is it economically possible? When the Forestry Department, a substantial revenue producer, is short of funds for fire centrel, what hope have park authorities of obtaining sufficient funds to control fires over millions of acres of rough, non-revenue producing bushland? None that I can see. The danger is that they will get enough to do the comparatively easy initial work of pushing bull-dozers along ridges, but not enough to maintain their roads, build dams, pay men to do control burning and fire fighting, buy equipment and, in general carry the job through to the stage of effective fire control.

Next let us examine the premise that fires destroy wilderness. Any fire, controlled or uncontrolled, destroys flora and fauna and creates erosion potential, but, as any Bush Walker knows some parts suffer much more than others. The worst areas are those frequently fired, and the best those infrequently birt. The worst areas are almost invariably in the vicinity of huts and settlement and the bost in the more remote parts. Little bushland outside State forests, with the exception of that growing between houses in settled areas such as the North Shore, escapes fires. But there are substantial areas of infrequently burnt remote country where the interval between fires is sufficient for almost complete recovery of flora and fauna. An example of this is the Daua Valley and parts of the Kosciusko State Park, where trees in the vicinity of huts have been killed by frequent fires but the wilderness a short distance away from huts and tracks is little affected. This leads to the conclusion that if the incidence of fires could be reduced to that of the more remote areas, wilderness might survive despite occasional burning.

Could such a reduction be achieved? Mr. Gabel prescribes several methods of reducing incidence, such as provision of fire places, restriction of access along service trails, prohibition of fire during danger periods, prohibiting or educating people against smoking away from safe places during the bush fire danger period, and even the closing of parks when the danger index is high. But for some reason he omits what the Forestry Department in

its annual reports describes as the prime cause of bush fires - burning off. True, there is a law which, if obeyed, would eliminate this cause, but obviously it is not obeyed. Fires lit outside parks are allowed to travel beyond the property of the person responsible. Other fires are lit, some within the park itself, to create a no-cost "green pick" for stock. The policing of fire laws and regulations requires staff and funds, but it would be considerably cheaper than a fully readed, equipped and staffed fire control service. It would be preferable to a partly organised service which would destroy wilderness values without giving protection. From the viewpoint of recreation it would provide an environment which could usually be enjoyed, instead of a network of reads and "buffer zones" in which true wilderness appeal would be non-existent.

Dr. Mosley doesn't say a great deal on this subject but what he does say is, not only very sympathetic to the "no roads" viewpoint, but goes so far as to question whether Mr. Gabel's methods have not already been superseded in modern park management practice.

He says: "By far the greatest obstacle to the maintenance of a successful wilderness environment is the use of fire roads. Without entering into the polemics of fire ecology one can safely say that some fire control is necessary to prevent the alteration of the biota by man-made exaggeration of the fire factor and to prevent fires from affecting adjoining property. Unfortunately the existing major method of control - the fire road - detracts from wilderness enjoyment in such a way that many of the walkers I have canvassed believe that it is better to have no fire roads and risk fires in wilderness areas. The answer of course is to find methods of controlling fires without roads, and this has been done in the wilderness areas of the U.S.A., where by using helicopters to transport men and materials they have been able to abandon the fire road systems. Although helicopters are expensive it is worth remembering that there are not other major costs involved in the management of wilderness. Surely the advantage to be gained justifies their experimental use in this State."

Helicopters are expensive, mighty expensive, and this points up the second economic limitation to fire control in parks. The preparatory measures - roading and control burning might be achieved by a fairly small and not prohibitively expensive organisation. But, if control is to be effective, a large reserve of trained manpower and expensive equipment must be kept on hand for instant occasional use. To keep such reserves in being for park protection, to be fully utilized perhaps only once in several years, is not financially practical. If men and equipment are not available when required, the whole system will prove futile. The solution which I have proposed to this dilemma is to make fire fighting a regular part of defence training and use defence personnel and equipment when essential.

Enough has been said to prove that there is no easy solution to wilderness conservation. Let us suppose we were in the Minister's seat. What would we do? Firstly, I would say, we would seek all the knowledgeable advice we could get, which is just what he has done. Nor would we commit

ourselves until we had listened to all points of view. With such thoughts in mind your representatives made it clear that we were out to help rather than criticise. As a means of presenting our credentials, we outlined the Club's previous conservation efforts. We told him of current projects and asked how our efforts could be made most effective. We queried the effectiveness of fire trails. The Minister gave us a sympathetic hearing, and I believe he is with us a good part of the way. He has had extensive fire fighting experience and believes that heavy equipment is necessary for fire fighting. On this he may be right, but we hope he isn't. Perhaps the most significant thing he told us was that he will be only too pleased to receive and consider any proposals we like to put before him on suitable areas for the creation of National Parks. Detailed work on land titles is, he told us, no longer necessary - it can be done by the Department.

Shortly after this we received a request from Balder Byles for photographs of the Church Creek Limestone formation. The following week-end John White and Henry Gold went down there and took excellent photographs with which Mr. Byles was very pleased.

Members of the Committee believe this is a climax period for conservation and that, if we put forward a well-reasoned case in co-operative spirit, it may well be adopted.

ONE MORE MONTH.

by "Observer".

Paddy Pallin's Orienteering Contest held in the Wheeny Creek area, was a great success. 17 teams (a total of 34 bushwalkers) from many Clubs competed and only 2 teams became lost (whoops, sorry, we meant temporarily mislaid). The winners were Messrs. Daniels and Lorimer of the C.M.W. (winning time 5 hours 23 mins), Messrs. Rasmanis and Kavalieris of the Newcastle Bushwalking Club ran second and Wilf Hilder and N. Rees of the C.M.W. were third. Of the Sydney Bushies, Paddy reports that Joanna Hallman and Margaret Dogertom, the only all-female team in the contest, did exceedingly well, Paddy says it's definitely on again next year.

Two very well-known Club members were seen carrying a suitcase down at Burning Palms. This would have been alright except for the embarrassment of running into Owen Marks' Saturday day walk. We can well imagine Owen's challenging cry of "the things you see when you haven't got a gun."

Scene: Ross Wyborn's 21st Birthday Party on August 6. A huge crate was carried into the assembled company in the Wyborn living room. With some trepidation our Rosso began to unpack it and after several layers were removed a real live human leg was thrust into Rosso's astonished face. Out

popped Don Finch, full of vim and vigour despite his close confinement; a dubious sort of 21st birthday present, you might say, is Donnie Finch, but no, he was only the bearer of a beaut. new Mountain Mule pack. May that pack go to great heights — and come down safely again!

Once again a most promising and brimming-over Walks Programme (Ssptember-October-November) has been produced. If they all go, there's going to be some wonderful new and rarely-visited country come under the boots of S.B.W this spring. For good measure, we have a speleological trip, a snow instructional, a gourmet week-end and a "paddling on Li-Los, Inner Tubes or Surfboard" thrown in. Versatility has, perhaps, always been one of S.B.W.'s greatest strengths.

Bad luck about the entries in the Colour Slide Competition not being judged. As things were, acclamation from the audience proclaimed that Edna Stretton and Audrey Kenway had won joint honours.

FEDERATION REPORT - AUGUST

Phil Butt.

From "Correspondence In" - The Scenery Preservation Board at Hobart reports that rangers have no power to restrict entry to the Cradle Mountain-Lake St. Claire Reserve even in bad weather.

From "Reports" - Tracks and Access - Lindemans and Robertsons Pass tracks are to be blazed with aluminium markers by Members of Federation and then cleared by Blue Mountains City Council.

The S & R demonstration programme this year 15-16th October, 1966) will depend on offers of assistance and suggestions.

Mr. Paul Barnes was elected unopposed for the position of Junior Vice President.

The positions of Convenor of the Publications Committee and member of the Conservation Bureau are still vacant and member clubs have been circularised that these positions are vacant and requesting volunteers to fill them.

Dates of Federations:

S & R Demonstration - 15-16th October, 1966 Federation Reunion - 11-12th March, 1967 S & R Practice - to be decided. Annual General Meeting - 18th July, 1967.