

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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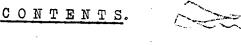


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FEBRUARY, 1967

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18.









THE JANUARY GENERAL MEETING.

Jim Brown

There are now a couple of conventions that are firmly attached to the January meeting - there are few people present because so many are still on annual holidays - and the meeting commences late because of a preceding Committee meeting. This year was no exception.

Roger Gowing and Barry Pacey were the new members to welcome, nothing stemmed from the December minutes, while correspondence contained a couple of safety in the bush circulars from Federation: one recommended that cascading parties carry and have handy a good length of rope, the other advised that S & R representatives were prepared to address clubs on safety principles. National Park Trust acknowledged our advice of timber cutting at Era, and suggestions that more ranger activity should be concentrated there.

As to be expected by January, the ready-use funds are falling, but still quite satisfactory, being \$257 at the end of December. The Walks Report was mostly unheard, but it sounded as though most of December's programmed walks actually went off and with reasonable attendances.

Phil Butt reported from Federation that a crew of Victorians proposing a foot crossing of N.S.W. from south to north had been advised to follow the general line of the Dividing Range, rather than walk the Western Plains. The Federation Ball was a long range project for September 8 at Paddington Town Hall. Search and Rescue has acquired an additional radio. There was a proposal that Federation publish a periodical magazine through the agency of a printing firm which made its living from advertising in journals it produced. And there had been discussion in Federation as to the cause of sickness after drinking Cox's River water — was it too much mica? No firm decision.

After advice of coming social events, it was early to General Business where Edna and Jack Gentle and Joan Rigby were added to the Reunion Committee - a convener still to be elected. We were warned that Constitutional amendments should be lodged with Committee by the February meeting, and that President, Secretary, Walks and Social Secretaries all would be unable to contest those positions at the Annual Meeting.

Arising from John White's remarks that these were quite sizeable jobs with membership now at 319, there was a query whether the club should consider a limitation on size or a restriction of intake. Alternatively should additional officers or assistants be created? It was mentioned that some of the membership panel had soldom been present to care for the heavy influx of prospective members during the past year. The President said he would be sorry to see membership closed - a steady intake was most desirable - but it was a matter that the incoming Committee may have to think about if numbers went over, say, 350.

It was announced that one of the packs available for hire to new members was astray. Would anyone knowing whereabouts, etc. - no reward.

Gordon Redmond referred to the question of a periodical journal published by Federation. He was somewhat concerned because (financially) the Federation Annual Magazine in recent years had been a disaster. Phil Butt explained that it was too early to go into details: at this stage it was casting around to see Club reaction to the scheme to have it printed by this firm who reserved the advertising rights.

Frank Ashdown said the whole thing was a fiasco, and had never achieved much sale amongst the public. The sales were to walkers, who didn't have to be persuaded anyway. Phil Butt replied that quite a considerable number of copies had been sold through bookstalls, and David Ingram said the Scouting movement was seeking additional copies of the last Federation Annual.

Kath Brown referred to other problems - notably obtaining a regular supply of contributions, especially contributions with a walking flavour, d not entirely of the allied recreations of rock-climbing, caving etc. Frank Ashdown now moved formally that we were not interested in the proposed periodical. Some speakers suggested Federation's idea was to obtain publicity, without the outlay involved in its Annuals. John Holly said he understood the loss on recent issuen had been about \$200 annually. The motion went to the vote and was lost, which presumably means that we refuse to be NOT interested in the project.

And on this enigmatic note we took off at 9.15 p.m.

Give us from dawn to dark Blue of Australian skies, Let there be none to mark Whither our pathway lies.

(From "The Bush"). James Listsr Cuthbertson.

'Tis pleasant, I ween, with a leafy screen
O'er the weary head, to lie
On the mossy carpet of emerald green,
'Neath the vault of the azure sky.

(From "By Wood and Wold"). Adam Lindsay Gordon

WHAT IS THE SWIMMING CARNIVAL, ANYWAY?

The origin of the S.B.W. Swimming Carnival seems to be shrouded in the mists of antiquity, but by interviewing some of the oldest inhabitants, I have managed to glean a few facts about the trophies offered for competition.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s there was, in Sydney, a pawnbroker by the name of Mandelberg, whose shop was notable for the remarkable number and variety of objects hung on all available surfaces both inside and out. Likewise, in the early days of the Club there was a walker, named Tom Herbert, who was also remarkable for the numerous items of gear depending from his person and pack. Ergo, Tom Herbert became known as Mandelberg. Now as Mandelberg was also a keen swimmer, he decided in an openhanded moment to donate a handsome trophy, namely an outsize aluminium mug. I have often wondered if any of the holders over the years have followed the old custom of draining it in one gulp?

The Henly Cup is a more conventional award - a small silver cup given, in the late 1940s, by Bill Henley, who for many years organised the Carnivals. The engraving on both cups is interesting reading - a miniature Club history.

In the seven odd years that I have been attending Swimming Carnivals, the programme has consisted of:

Open Breast-stroke Men and Women
Open Freestyle " "
Long Plunge " "
Dual Relay Handicap (1 man and 1 girl)
Peanut Scramble

The Mandelberg Cup goes to the winners of the Dual Relay and the Henley Cup is presented to the swimmer who gains the highest points score for all events, including THE PEANUT SCRAMBLE!

So far this sounds like any ordinary swimming carnival and indeed many characteristic features are present: the programme often starts late, there is indecision and argument amongst officials, and there is a handicapper, who is often abused for incompetence, if not downright bias. However, there the similarity ends. It is obvious to the most superficial observer that this is a truly amateur event - not here do you find the highly trained and well co-ordinated machines to be seen gliding swiftly and effortlessly up and down Olympic Pools across the nation, but an enthusiastic group of part-time swimmers, breathless with excitement and unwonted exertion. The venue would hardly conform to international standards either - no starting blocks, inadequate changing facilities, only the bush fringed, cool depths and the startled hills echoing to unaccustomed shouts of encouragement, triumph and despair.

Most of the Carnivals I have attended have had some memorable feature. The first year we went Rosemary was only three, so we caught an early train on Saturday morning and spent most of the day walking down to Lake Eckersley in 80° heat. That night, in spite of netting, the mosquitos devoured us, and what was left felt anything but fit for strenuous exercise. Rosemary, I remember, startledthe entire gathering by relishing a diet of dry Ryvitas.

The following year we enticed my mother along, and shortly after lunch on Sunday, a thunderstorm burst upon us. The quickest retreat was across the pool, but as my mother can only swim if she is sure of being able to touch bottom, she, like Rosemary, had to be ferried across on a lile. Then they both cowered under one raincoat, not to keep dry, because they were only wearing swimming togs, but because the rain was pelting down with painful force.

Then there was the time when Ron Knightley, complete with Dormabile and Esky, felt it his Presidential duty to dispense cold beer to all as they topped the slope and achieved the road. In those days it was possible to obtain a key from the Water Board so that decrepit types and those with young families could drive along the road, but the Heathcote Primitive Reserve Trustees no longer permit this.

In recent years the Swimming Carnival seems to have lost popularity — could it be because now one must WALK the whole way? I prefer to think, rather, that members have been overawed by the official—sounding title and programme. This need not be. Those of us who were once swimmers are no longer any real challenge, owing to our increased burden of years and decreased supply of wind. Although there are cups to be won, this has never been a really serious affair, and all it needs for success is plenty of starters. We can introduce plenty of novelty races — more handicap events — provided we can find somebody willing to be handicapper and risk lynching! Somebody might even feel the urge to denate a new trophy.

Anyhow Owen and I expect overwhelming numbers and plenty of bright ideas on February 18 and 19. Don't disappoint us.

DOWN: 1. The Creel; 3. Obscure; 4. Macarthurs; 5. No. Seven; 6. Meanders; 8. Irs; 9. Sand; 10. Spur; 11. Her; 19. Try; 20. Wit; 22. Araluen; 23. SE; 25. As; 26. Dorrigo; 29. Synod; 30. Plate; 31. Flat; 33. Clay; 35. Do; 38. Go.

ACROSS:

2. Kowmung; 7. His; 10. She; 12. Fra; 13. Sacks; 14. Pea; 15. Can; 16. Urn; 17. Deux River; 18. Et; 20. We; 21. Erse; 24. Nadir; 27. Lyre; 28. Sots; 29. Toned; 40. Ebony.

34. Ade; 36. Onset; 37. Goz; 39. Toned; 40. Ebony.

SAND DEPOSITS IN THE MACDONALD AND COLO RIVERS.

Alex Colley.

In an article with the above title in the October 1966 Journal of the Soil Conservation Service, J.R. Dyson, B.Sc.Agr found that sanding was extensive. It was "not confined to the lower reaches of the major streams, but was widespread and severe throughout most of the tributaries of the area."

The catchment area was predisposed to erosion because of the "steep topography and the loose unconsolidated sandy soils."

"The main factor contributing to erosion," he states "has been bushfire, which has damaged the vegetation, removed the protective ground cover of leaf litter and exposed the steep, sandy slopes to erosive influences Burning of forest country on both Crown and private lands to provide winter pasture on the forest floor produces the same effects as bush fires with greater frequency and presents a major cause of erosion, particularly near settled areas. Timber getting has also been a major cause of erosion. Eroding access tracks, snigging tracks and the practice of burning-off prior to cutting an area have all contributed to the sanding problem Eroding fire trails, army roads and other access tracks have also contributed."

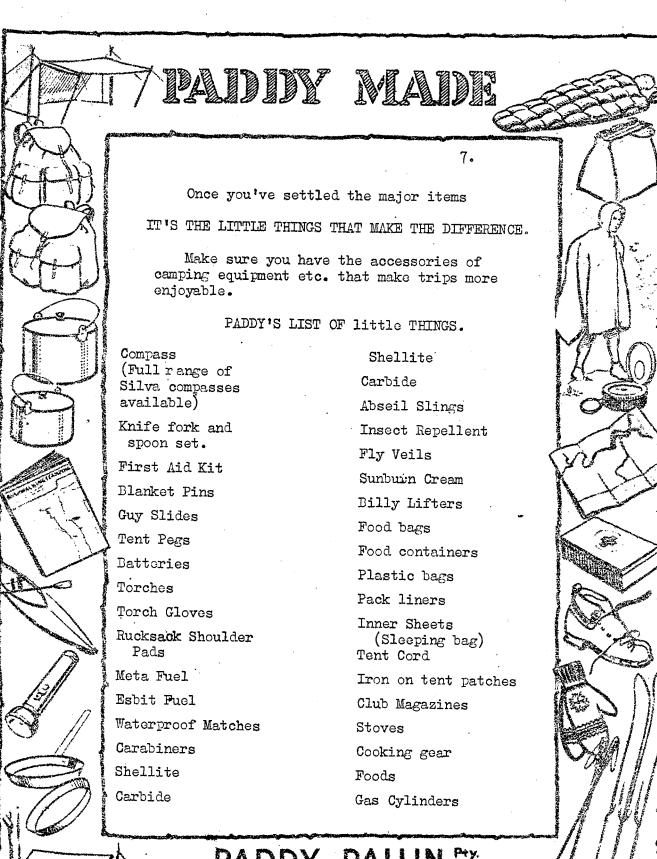
All of this will be pretty obvious to bushwalkers who know the area, but it is good to know that the Soil Conservation Service sees the "problem" so clearly.

A CLIMB OF MT. COOK.

By Ross Wyborn

"What's climbing in Europe like?" I asked Mike. "It's different to here" he answered, "Snow conditions are different, huts are higher which means generally shorter climbs, but probably the most noticeable difference is the large number of climbers on every climb."

Mike White and I were staying at Plateau Hut which is situated at an altitude of 7,500 ft, below the highest peaks of New Zealand. There were only three others in the hut apart from ourselves and there was plenty of room as the hut has 24 bunks. Outside the wind was blowing and the visibility nil. Inside the climbers waited anxiously for the weather to clear. A couple of days later the weather cleared enough for a reconnaiss—ance trip across the Grand Plateau which is the large-dish-shaped never of the Hochstetter Glacier on which the hut is situated. We kicked some steps up the Silberhorn ridge in preparation for a Glimb of the Mt.Tasman, New Zealand's second highest mountain, the next day. Next morning we were away after a late start at 3.00 a.m. but had to turn back because of bad snow conditions after climbing only a couple of thousand feet.



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That's when it all started. As we were nearing the hut we heard the drone of the first aircraft. The small Cessna landed on tte Grand Plateau only 10 minutes from the hut and the climbers made their way across to the hut. Before long there was another plane, then another, then another. Soon the hut was flooded with about 17 climbers. So much for the peace of the New Zealand Alps! All the climbers had their eyes on Mt. Cook. The high peak had not yet been ascended that season. Amongst the parties that had flown in was a party of five Japanese Climbers, most of whom could not speak English. They shook hands all around and we made friends with them in broken English. When we pointed to Mt. Cook and asked "Cook"?, they excitedly nodded their heads saying "Yes - Cook". Mike and I were rather sceptical about the weather for the next day but agreed to get up at midnight and have allook. Two of the others had broken a trail up the Linda Glacier to 10,900 ft. on Mt. Cook so we decided to have a got at that if the weather was O.K.

Poking our heads out of the hut door at nidnight told us that the weather was fine. Soon the hut became a beehive of activity with climbers preparing for the days climbing. While some uncoiled ropes, packed packs and clanged crampons and karabiners, others milled around the stoves cooking breakfast. We left at 12.45 p.m. and the others were only a few minutes behind. A long string of small lights from climbers headlamps flickered as we walked across the Grand Plateau. A full moon shone and illuminated the icy peaks around us. Soon we were picking our way over the blocks of avalanche debris in the lower Linda Glacier. The Linda Glacier Route is exposed to avalanche danger and we didn't pause under the tottering ice cliffs. The upper Linda Glacier was easier going but the avalanche danger remained and we did not stop until we reached the ridge at 4.30 a.m. We were now out of the avalanche danger and we took a welcome rest to take in our surroundings. We were at an altitude of 10,900 feet and already the view was very extensive. The first rays of dawn illuminated the labyrinth of mountain ranges that were stretched before us as far as the eye could see.

The next stage of the climb was a rock climb of about 700 feet. These rocks are commonly called the summit rocks although there is an ice cap of about the same height above them. On reaching the summit rocks we took our crampons off which proved to be a bungle as there was ice in between the rocks. One of the other parties came clambering up the rocks in their crampons and we stood to one side as they climbed up a steep and awkward chimney. We fixed belayed up the summit rocks and the party of two Japanese below us did the same. "It's getting like European climbing" Mike explained - "With climbers above and climbers below".

The summit rocks were slow but sitting on a rock, belaying gave us a chance to admire the view which was unfolding beneath us. The most prominent peak was Mt. Tasman which stook like a great white tooth on the main divide just to the north of us. There was hardly a breath of wind and the mountains seemed peaceful. Suddenly the serenity would be shattered by a shout from below - "Take up the slack you B -----

The last section of the climb is the ice cap. This is also the most exciting part of the climb as you rise above all the other peaks of New Zealand. We moved together up this section cramponing carefully up the sastrugi ice. Slowly the mountain dropped beneath us and we stepped onto the summit, 12,349 feet high at 8.50 a.m. The view was fantastic with the whole of the New Zealand Alps spread at our feet. We could plainly see Mt. Aspiring in the south and Mike picked out the ranges that were well known to him in the north. The first party had been on top for about 20 minutes and one of the party was doing 50 one-arm push-ups as part of a dare. We thought he mightn't be able to climb down again. A party of two Japanese arrived at the top about half an hour after us and after the usual hand shaking we took photos of them holding their colourful flags and pennants. We spent an hour on top absorbing the scenery before beginning the descent. On the way down the ice cap we met two more Japanese climbers who had come up the more difficult Zurbriggin Ridge Route. Below the summit rocks we met another two climbers who had also climbed by this route but did not continue to the summit that day. The descent back down the Linda Glacier was a long hot slog but we did not weste time as the avalanche danger is greater later in the day.

When we arrived back at the hut we found that a party of 8 more Japanese had flown in and another party had walked in. The hut was now bursting at the seams with people and more people flew in next day. To escape the teaming millions we fled to the valley and I proceeded to Malte Brun Hut only to find the hut packed full of S.B.W's and other miscellaneous Australians — but that's another story

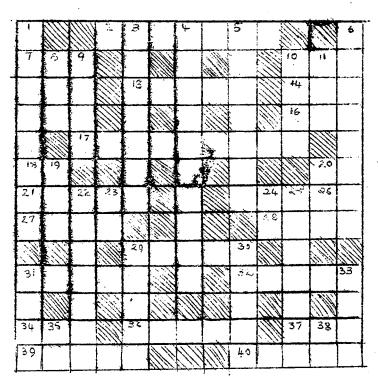
FOOTNOTE - For the statistical record, 9 people climbed Mt. Cook on the day of our ascent; 10 people on the day after and equally equally large numbers on the following two days. Plateau hut had a maximum of 33 climbers the day after we left (there is only 24 bunks). One thing we can say is that we climbed Mt. Cook from the bottom hot like those who fly into the hut and just climb the top half as so many do these days.

DON'T FORGET THE REUNION
- FUN, GAMES, CAMPFIRE -

WOODS CREEK - MARCH 11, 12

S.B.W. CROSSWORD

Phil Butt.



Clues - Across

- The Hollanders and Tuglow form it. (7)
- 7. Not 11 (d). (3)
- 10. Pronoun (3)
- 12. An age in the National Park. (3)
- 13. Fires a half gun in a boat. (5)
- 14. The fifth in a hospital vegetable. (3)
- 15. Hundred with a container. (3)
- 16. Run amok with a vase. (3)
- 17. Rue varied. (anag.) (4, 5)
- 18. Latin and ? (2)
- 20. You and us ! (2)
- 21. Obliterate a seer? (5)
- 24. 501 in ran back is at the bottom. (5) 27. Instrument. (4)
- 28. Drunks are cha in help (4)
- 29. Holy rap on a pack. (5)
- 31. Point near the Castle. (5)
- 32. 27 (a) endless with 99 for a verse with singable qualities. (5)
- 34. A drink in bad eats. (3)
- 36. Crushed stone at the beginning. (5)
- 37. Go away to India! (3)
- 39. Blended weight with; the editor. (5)

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DOWN
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- 1. Near the junction of the Grackenback and Snowy River. (3,5)
 3. An outward bound mongrel in the South East is ambiguous. (7)
- 4 & 31. A good reunion site! (10, 4)
- 5. One more than NOVI (2, 5)
- 6. 17 (a) has red back in a controversial test. (8)
- 8. One sug god for him! (3)
- 9. The South Australia Northern Development would administer some of this (4).
- 10. Odds on the capital on the ridge. (4)
- 11. An endless flock of sheep. (3)
- 19. Arty without an effort. (3)
- 20. Wistaria without songs for power of understanding. (3)
- 22. Situated near 17 (a). (7)
- 23. Direction (2)
- 25. Like (2)
- 26. E.N.E. of Point Lockout. (7)
- 29. A convention (5)
- 30. Fight for this river dish! (5)
- 31. See 4 (d)
- 33. 150 with a returned race of brutes with no "hoo" for a pigeon (4)
- 35. Five hundred, nothing ! Act !! (2)
- 38. The direction that Christian soldiers go. (2)

BUSHWALKER AND TRAIN TREVELLING.

by Jess Martin

(Transporting bushwalkers by train has been on the way out for some years now. In fact we have some active members of about two years standing who have yet to board a train. It is timely that Jess should now describe some of the trials and joys of train travelling of earlier days — Ed.)

When I became a Sydney Bush Walker very few had spare cash (some had barely enough for necessities) and motor cars were a rarity amongst members; so we travelled by train and, if the pocket could stand it, sometimes a car or bus was hired to take us from the station to the more remote commencing points.

Holiday weekends and at Easter, train after train left Central loaded above the plimsoll, "bodies" being jammed in the corridors and even on the carriage platforms. As an empty train slowly pulled into the platform there was a concerted rush by the passengers, often packed six deep, to enter. Bushwalkers, using their brains, waited on the platform for the carriages nearest the engine and by cunning use of their rucksacks were able to board the train and be seated before the ordinary passenger. I being short and considerably lighter was at a disadvantage until it became the practice to lift me and sometimes the other girls through the windows so that seats could be commandeered, the men occasionally entering the same way. (This, of course, is against a Railways Department regulation!)

Trains carried a very representative cross-section of the Federation Clubs and many a trip was discussed and planned on the journeys. I was very fortunate in my friends who, trying to avoid stereotyped trips, were always seeking new country and no effort was spared in plotting the route and gathering information, or food was carefully planned for nutriment, lack of deadweight and as much variety as dehydrated food can offer. We would ask other groups their plans and mention our projected trip, often new to them, or they would have more recent knowledge or a suggested improvement. There was camaraderie but considerable rivalry amongst the walkers.

A carriage full of bushwalkers can be rather intimidating to the uninitiated, and it was humorous to see the startled expression and the hurried retreat of the ordinary citizen. Several times one more courageous than others remained and on alighting from the train mentioned that he or she had not enjoyed a trip more; we have also found these people good company and most interesting. When one carries a rucksack it seems to break a barrier and many people converse on all sorts of topics — I have heard some amazing tails and personal details I would not ordinarily be regaled with. The quiet man or woman listening to our talk very often gave us valuable information about the area we were visiting, having attended school, lived on a farm or their folk had run the local sawmill, and we have been recommended special features to see or where to find permanent water; also "see Jim Smith or Bill Brown and he will be able to give you any information you require".

There have been amusing incidents too, the following being examples. In a train on the way to Nowra, a woman and children alighting at Jasper's Brush and one of our men (always the gentleman) helping them out and then handing out the luggage, much to the later consternation of some men at Nowra, whose fishing gear had also been handed out.

Returning homefrom the South Coast in a crowded train, a ticket inspector was fining all travelling in 1st class on 2nd class tickets. An irate man, who said he could not find space in 2nd class, argued with the collector but had to pay and, when the inspector departed, said in a satisfied voice, "I paid him with a bad coin."

A party coming home from Richmond, 'Lord Randal' being sungand the carriageful rising before, and sitting down in unison after, "I fain would lie down". An inspector entered and, with a startled look on his face, retreated behind a hurriedly closed door. The following weekend the same man entered the carriage and drily said, "Not singing today?"

So that we could all relax on return journeys we aimed to have the whole party in a 'dogbox' carriage or in adjoining sections of a corridor carriage, where no stranger would intrude or have their olfactory senses offended. (Isn't it amazing that some people don't appreciate the campfire



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MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT COMPANY

smoke odour of bushwalkers' gear, clothes and hair?) Although we always washed and changed into clean clothes (sometimes on the train) we still had the bush aura about us. On an overnight train one could stretch out on floor or seat in a sleeping bag, and in cold weather it was much more cosy. Bushwalkers always being hungry the remaining food was pooled, biscuits and slices of broad being spread, and often the engine driver or stationmaster would boil a billy so we could have hot tea. We knew the engine driver had control of the train and if the party were tired we could doze or, if wekeful, sing or chatter, and many a new trip was planned on the homeward journey.

It is much harder to relax when travelling by car, and the driver dare not let his attention waver. My opinion is that the advent of the motor car has meant the walking movement has lost to some extent the enriching effect of meeting and mingling with different personalities, because although groups have always been a feature of Club life and a very practical one for our activity, in the past they were fluid, and when travelling by train the party can always be increased to include someone whom it is thought will be an asset. I wonder how many good Club members have been lost to us through lack of accommodation in a car party?

ONE MORE MONTH

By "Observer"

That Cupid fellow is working overtime - first on Bob Duncan and now on Snow Brown, both of whom were among our staunchest bachelors. Snow has become engaged to schoolteacher Margaret Clarence, a lass he met on his recent overseas jaunt, and the couple plan to marry in May.

Bob Duncan, married in Melbourne on February 6, was given a hilarious last fling bucks' party on February 1. About eighteen of his buddies, mostly from S.B.W., showered Bob with oceans of advice, most of which of course, not quite suitable for printing. Old-timers present at the party and not seen much these days, were Colin Putt, Peter Stitt, Garth Coulter and Geof Wagg.

Noticed John Powell getting around on crutches and with a plaster cast on his leg. Really, John, you've broken the rules - this sort of thing is reserved for the skiing season!

Skulduggery on the Wollongambie - it was exciting entertainment if you were in the stalls and not on the stage. In a long pool with narrow vertical walls, four bods on air beds lined up across the width of the pool - four others advanced down the pool towards them and the smell of battle was in the air. One second there were eight bodies on stable

air beds in a nice quiet pool and in the next instant there was bedlam. Air beds and bodies were flying in all directions at once and the water was churned to a frenzy - the things you see when you haven't got your movie camera!

What's this queer thing on the Social Programme, "North Queensland - Sydney to the Gulf?" We've heard about the New State Movement in north Queensland but didn't realise that Sydney was included.

Poor New Zealand: It does cop a bashing over its infamous sandflies. Laurie Rayner was comparing the merits of Milford and Doubtful Sounds at his recent slide evening. Said Laurie, "Doubtful has the advantage that it's still in a completely natural state but that includes the sandflies also. At Milford it takes two of the monsters to carry you away but down at Doubtful one can do the job quite easily."

Believe Roger Lockwood's trip down Arathusa Canyon last month was done in one day! Indecent haste, we say. "Observer" well remembers a previous trip and the joys of camping on a huge boulder in the middle of the tumbling waters just below the Canyon. The fact that there was nowhere else to camp and that a few vital pieces of equipment were thoroughly wet is quite beside the point.

HIGH DRAMA AT BARBER'S CREEK.

Frank Rigby.

There is a magnificent swimming pool on Barber's Creek, one of the best anywhere. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that the sight of it would captivate any bushwalker on a hot day. For one thing, it is deep and expansive and for another, it possesses an irresistible slippery dip, all lubricated with green moss and tumbling water and sloping at an angle of 45° from the pool above. What makes this pool even more attractive to the daring types is the series of platforms from which it is possible to bomb the pool. The lowest is at a modest ten feet above the water, but they grade in severity until one comes to a lofty ledge at a measured and rather frightening distance of fity feet above the pool.

On a recent walk up Barber's Creek, there was enacted some high and prolonged drama on this fifty-foot ledge. Everyone knows that we have a young and fearless adventurer in the club in the shape of Don Finch - a man who is destined for soaring heights if he can survive the meantime.

Now this same Don Finch, having warmed himself up by bombing the pool from the lesser or common garden levels, scrambled up to the heights, walked resolutely to the lofty ledge and simply continued on into space.

The spectators were dumbfounded - there was a falling body, a mighty splash and then a grinning visage popping above the surface - it had all happened so suddenly they had barely time to realise what was going on, let alone to savour the event. However, the real drama had not yet begun.

Roger Lockwood had followed the intrepid one up to the ledge and was now poised on the brink, staring at the cool depths below. One could only guess at the mental torture, perhaps akin to the suicide cases at the Gap when they can't quite make up their minds. Anyway, Roger stood his ground for something like fifteen minutes, now and then arching his body as if to take the plunge but always pulling back in the nick of time. Of course there were jibes of "have a go" flung out from some of the crowd and rurmurs of "that male ego on the march again" from one or two females in the gallery. Finally, when the suspense had given everyone indigestion, Roger retreated and jointed the rest of us to eat his lunch.

There was some mild excitement as a few more ran the gauntlet of the slippery dip. Then I looked up to that ledge. Shades of night, there was Roger on it again: I rubbed my eyes but there he was in the flesh, perhaps a slightly quivering flesh, but unmistakably there. Another expectant hugh now swept the gallery, but Roger did not jump. A big toe would sometimes tentatively explore the edge while the eyes roved up and down the rock walls to contemplate again and again that awful height. No doubt the mind was reeling at fifty vacillating cycles to the second but only Roger could tell you that. He turned away after each lapse of courage but only to face the brink once more. Several times it seemed he must be off and we held our breath; but like a skyscraper in a gale, balance was restored at the last split second. We knew now that he would do it — it was only a question of time.

And he did. I was in the middle of a mouthful of tea when it happened and that mouthful never went down. But I suppose it was a bit of an anticlimax, really - the swiftly falling body slightly tilted from the vertical, the nighty splash, the shadowy shape plunging downwards into the depths and, wait for it, yes, a live bushwalker coming up for air. The flight through space is rather spoiled by the fact that one doesn't have time to appreciate the facial expressions.

Now that his feat had been equalled, our Don realised that a grander performance was called for. So he announced that if two more would take the plunge, he would jump a second time. This challenge only served to kindle the flames which were already flickering in other breasts. Quietly and without fanfare, Barry Pacey mounted the rostrum, and the heavy drama was

all over again. The atmosphere was now like that of a Roman Holiday, except that nobody particularly wanted any sacrifices; the teetering at the brink, the endless yes-I-will-no-I-won't, the advance and retreat, the battle between valour and discretion - it is amazing how the human mind can torture itself for so long.

Finally Barry went too. We're not sure whether it happened in a moment of supreme bravery or whether he overbalanced but I'm prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt; his exultant cry on reaching the surface: "I'm alive!"

We went on with our lunch in peace and it was quite some time before the next Act opened - Barry Wallace had now entered the arena. Memories are a bit hazy on how long Barry the Second took to perform this compulsive deed but we do remember that, like the others before him, there was suspense aplenty.

Don's Challenge had now been met and I'll say this form him that he didn't need reminding. Without any fuss, our hero ascended to the now famous rock and promptly walked right off the edge without even looking. That's something for you. He then calmly announced that if only one more bod would bomb the pool, he would render a third performance.

Probably Peter Kaye had already made up his mind anyway, for very shortly he also was on the rock looking at the incredible gulf below him. But Peter did not flinch for long and in no time we had witnessed the sixth bit of drama from five different performers. Peter remarked a month later that he could still feel the impact! Two or three others went to the spot and looked over, but that was all — I assume that one look was enough for them.

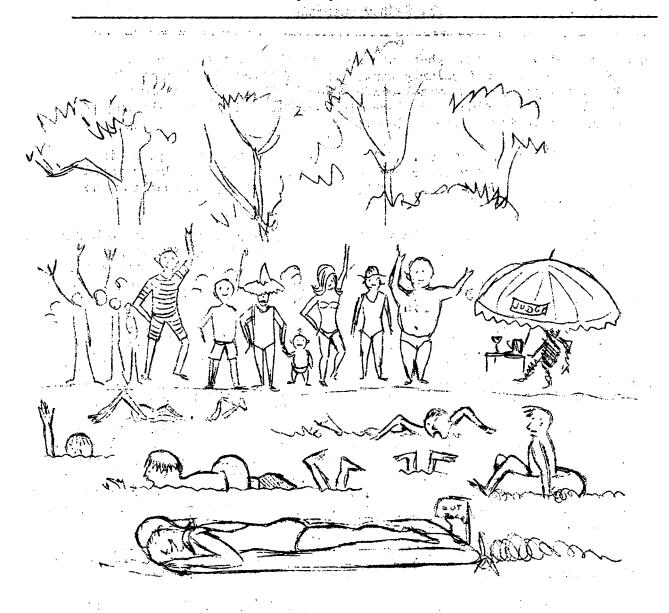
The rest was routine. Don kept his promise but the way he jumped, it was just like eating your bread and butter without jam.

So the last high jump was made at Barber's Creek, that is, until next visit. And am I going to try it next time? Whatever qualities are required to make that jump (what a field day for the psychologists), I'm quite certain I was behind the door when they were handed out.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MARCH 8th

START THINKING ABOUT OFFICE BEARERS NOW



DON'T FORGET - SWIMMING CARNIVAL.

FEBRUARY 18 - 19th

LEADERS: OWEN MARKS AND NAN BOURKE

THIS ONCE ANNUAL AND VERY POPULAR EVENT HAS BEEN RESURRECTED

THIS YEAR. TURN UP AND REALLY MAKE IT LIVE. 4 VERY PLEASANT

WEEK-END AND LOTS OF FUN FOR ALL.