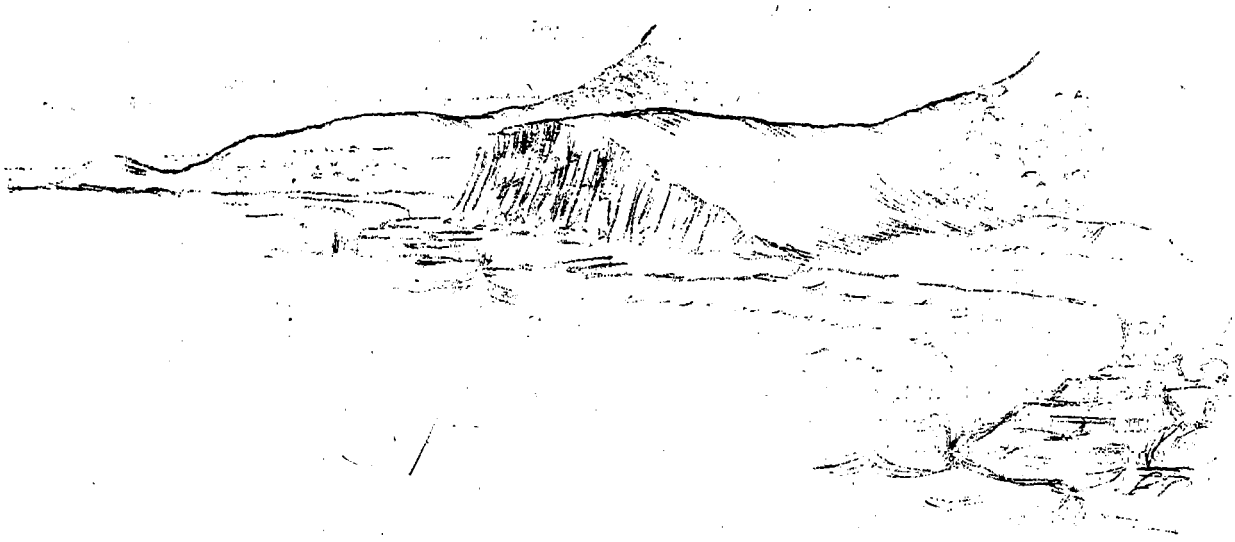

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A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to the Sydney Bushwalkers, Northcote Building, Reiby Place, Circular Quay, Sydney.

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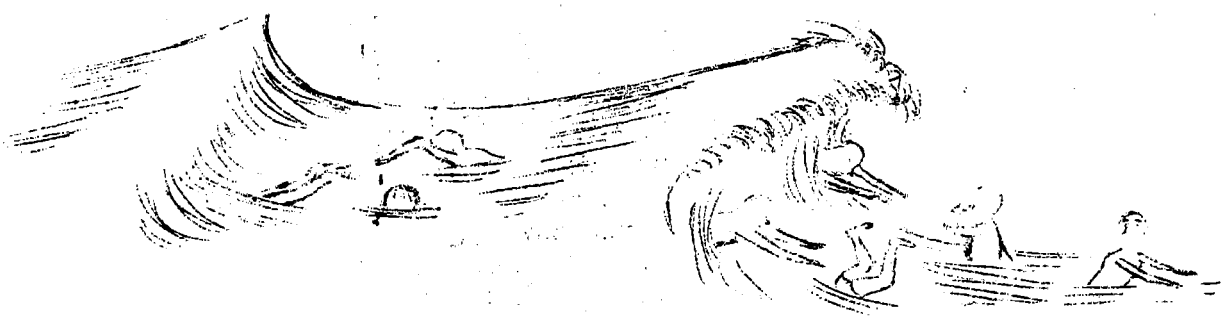

A WALK TO WALLABADAH.

Pat Harrison.

We all have our share of nostalgic yearnings. I think perhaps I have more than my share of the commodity. The hunger for well remembered places was strong upon me as I conceived the idea of traversing the Liverpool Range, a part of the Great Dividing Range, from Murrurundi to Crawney Mountain and then dropping down into the headwaters of Quirindi Creek and thereafter following that creek to Wallabadah and the road to Quirindi. The distance along the range to Quirindi would be about twenty miles then about eleven to Wallabadah and another ten to Quirindi. The general altitude of this section of the Liverpool Range is around 4000' and the course of the walk would involve climbing 8000' feet.

Being neither a complete misanthrope nor yet wholly gregarious I asked Bruce Vote at the coffee shop after a club meeting whether he would come. He didn't say yes nor yet a definite no so that I thought he would not be able to come. It was a very pleasant surprise when I received a telegram at Quirindi on Wednesday May 15, 1963, which read: "Arriving Thursday p.m." He really arrived Wednesday night and slept under the bridge across the Jacob and Joseph Creek because he was reluctant to disturb us late at night. He was duly rebuked.

We left Quirindi at noon on Thursday 16th and had no trouble finding a lift to where the New England Highway crosses the Liverpool Range about three miles north of Murrurundi. Our altitude here was 2200' and the weather wasn't at all promising as we went through a locked gate and along a jeep track to Mt. Helen, distant to the east about four miles and involving a climb of 1800' to its crest at 4002'.

The cloud was low but it was a very scenic walk along a comparatively narrow range with extensive views to Murrurundi and the upper Hunter Valley on our right while on the left, the western side, the view stretched away across the Breeza Plains and beyond to some humps on the horizon which were probably the Warrumbungles.

When we reached Mt. Helen we were well and truly in the mist and found our way down the end by compass to the saddle 800' below. Once down to the 3500' level we were in the clear again, below the cloud and in country which has generally been cleared of timber. There was a lush growth of grass, even to an untrained eye the best cattle country you could find.

When we reached the saddle we began to think about camp for the night and whether we would have to use any of the two quarts of water

we had been carrying. The saddle led northwards to another feature (3607') and when we reached it we found the left-hand ground sloped uniformly but that the range still went northward to a higher feature (3894'). However, the ground to the right, to the east, sloped for several hundred feet and then formed a high plateau. This treeless plateau was quite extensive and from a distance looked swampy. After crossing this high valley we eventually found water by sound. We could not see the stream but could hear its gurgle beneath the bracken and the grass. There was fish-back fern covering a little runnel with a pure, determined flow.

Camp was made immediately in the long grass nearby and by great good fortune we found enough wood for our needs. The mist swirled and boiled around the crest of the range and always seemed about to descend and close in on us. It never did. From our tent during the night we could see the winking lights of cars on the highway near Blandford. Our camp was on one of the headwaters of Wheelahans Creek.

We started at 8.45 on Friday and sidled round the unnamed feature (3894') to the saddle connecting it to Mt. Temi (4111'). Mt. Temi is shaped like a great flathead fish of which our saddle was the start of the tail. The 550' climb from the saddle was simple enough, a narrow rock ridge of basalt chunks with thorn bushes and nettle for stimulation. The crest of Temi is flat and clear. In addition to the far ranging views of the previous day we could now see a very interesting formation, to the north-east, in the valley of Warland's Creek. This formation, Wallabadah Rocks, rises straight up from the floor of the valley for 1000' and more than half of this height is sheer. Wallabadah Rocks in appearance is a split rock very similar in appearance to Belougery Split Rock in the 'Bungles. It has the same reddish colour as Belougery. It remained with us as an impressive sight for the rest of the day as we made a half circle around it along the range. There are trees at the base and there appear to be bushes on top.

There was a steep 850' descent off the northern end of Temi to a broad clear saddle and from the saddle a climb up to another unnamed feature(3690'), the southern side of which was dotted with several small tarns. In the swampy ground they appeared as pools among the reeds. We now knew that our main worry, water, had been unnecessary and this was further confirmed at lunchtime on Lagoon Mountain (3432') where there is another of these natural tarns. Directly west of Lagoon Mountain through another 450' saddle was another scenic formation - Loder's Peak (3450') which dropped away very steeply on its southern side.

The continuous ups and down along this range were soon to end, for after making an abrupt change of direction to the east at Lagoon Mountain we dropped down 900', climbed up the same height to

another unnamed peak, took our last look at Wallabadah Rocks which were now directly south of us at their closest point to our walk, and then headed due north down a beautiful long ridge to make camp at 4.20 near the headwaters of Quirindi Creek and just above its junction with Splitters Creek. Here and there on the hillside as we came down this ridge could be seen ring-barked trees whose brown dead leaves gave an attractive autumnal appearance as they shone golden in the afternoon sun.

Anyone who has walked with only one companion and camped far away in new country will know how satisfying were the camps of this night and the previous night. In my case I had the added pleasure, after many years, of being near the source of the stream upon whose banks twenty miles downstream I first saw the light of day nearly half a century ago.

On Saturday morning we set out at 8.20 with one pack between us and took the long ridge on the western side of Splitters Creek (Ref. 960890 Lands Map Quirindi B 1:31680) and completed the 2600' climb to Crawney Mountain (4736') at 10.15 arriving there with Bruce's hat filled with mushrooms he had gathered on the way. It was unfortunate that above the 4000' level the range was covered in a thick mist, blocking the splendid panorama of more than twenty miles to Nundle and Quirindi. From Crawney Mountain there are three water-sheds; one to the north-east and the beautiful Pool River which in turn finds its way to the Namoi, one to the southeast to the equally beautiful Isis River which feeds the Hunter and the third westwards down the valley of Quirindi Creek which winds its way past casurinas, green flats and pleasant farms and fruitful soil and on through Wallabadah and Quirindi, around Whoda'thought it Hill and across the Breeza Plain to lose itself in the Mooki River.

We followed the range southwards from Crawney down a 500' saddle and across a peak, very rocky and narrow, and descended by the reference 994894 which brought us back to the blue tent by a complete circle. This is a splendid walk. Coming down the narrow spine of Peak 4686 it was fascinating to see the mist swirling on the Isis River side while the other side was clear.

Rain had begun to fall as we reached camp, but by Bruce's effort we were soon eating mushrooms fried in butter. There are three or four settlers along this creek between our camp and Wallabadah and consequently there is a road of sorts; a true bush road which did nothing to spoil our day. And what better way to prepare for the ten mile road bash from Wallabadah to Quirindi than downing a couple of glasses in an old country pub while the rain drummed down outside.

Bruce and I are both purists - at opposite ends of the spectrum. He doesn't like to walk on roads; I like to walk anywhere and everywhere. A mile from Wallabadah, tea overdue, a truck came along and

to Bruce's obvious delight would not move unless we were on board.

Maps? There are excellent ones of the area by the Lands Dept in a scale of two inches to the mile; we used the Quirindi "B" and "D" sheets and one of the joys of the walk was the use of these maps to find our way. A last word. The winter is the best time to walk in these ranges. Snow falls on the high ground and there are hard frosts throughmid-winter.

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ALL THE WORLD LOVES A LEADER.

TARGET FOR TWELVE YEARS.

Jim Brown.

I suppose you could say it was Pat Harrison who started it all: well, at least he revived an old flame that had been dormant for about ten years.

Originally it was back in 1957 that I developed a yearning to visit Broken Rock, that elongated Mount Solitary formation which is the northern end of the ridge dividing Green Wattle Creek and Butchers Creek. The trouble was that I considered it should be practicable to do the trip comfortably in an ordinary two-day week-end, and it didn't turn out that way.

Over the next two years I made three abortive attempts to reach Broken Rock Trig. The first started from Yerranderie - you could still drive there via Burragorang at that time. Jack Gentle and John White joined me in the jaunt, and the plot was to follow Scott's Main Range to Branfan, drop into Butchers Creek, and tackle the range from the saddle immediately south of Shoebridge Mountain. Misty weather and lack of time thwarted us, and we went back via the Kowmung.

A few months later I was at it again; this time from Bimlow, the lower Cox River and Green Wattle Creek. It was a solo trip in high summer, and I couldn't find any break in the cliff overlooking Fritz's Creek. I decided I was too young to die of heatstroke and retreated again.

The third bid - once again from Yerranderie, and in company with Heather Joyce (White), Alex Colley and Don Matthews - came nearest to success. We went over Bull Island Gap and down the top of Green Wattle Creek, then climbed out into one of the deep saddles in the divide to the west. However, between that point and Broken Rock Trig was another high section with three roughly conical tops, then another deep saddle and finally the knife edge up to Broken Rock. By 4.30 p.m. on the Saturday we were on the third - the most northerly - of the three pimples on the centre part of the range, and it was obviously too far to the northern outlier of the divide. We gave it best, camped on Butcher's Creek and returned on a cold, squally Sunday via Scott's Main and Byrnes Gap.

At that stage I threw up my hands in disgust, declared that Broken Rock grapes were sour, and wrote it off. Except that, over the years I occasionally found myself looking at it on maps - especially after new and detailed sheets were finally published some four or five years back.

Then Pat Harrison took a party over it on the Anzac Holiday week-end, coming in from Kanangra by the Gingra-Range and Cedar Road. It was reported quite fully in the magazine a few months ago, and the story mentioned a bit of rudimentary rock climbing on the southern end of the range: there was a reference to "the break which gives the range its name, and is the only way off except for the ends": and there was NO MENTION of any rock work on the northern ridge. I verified this information from Pat and brooded over it. It would be good for morale to get the best of Broken Rock. All right, we'd do it, but we'd throw in a third day, and tackle it from a new quarter.

Putting the plan into execution I left the car at Medlow-Gap about 7 a.m. on the last Friday in September. Having concluded it was not going to rain in the next 48 hours (and it didn't) I left the tent behind and made fairly brisk time down the White Dog fire road to the junction of Cos and Kowmung Rivers. After recent rains Warragamba was up to full storage level, and there was still water only two hundred yards below the junction.

There followed about three hours up the Kowmung, one of my crossings coinciding with a black snake who was swimming towards the west bank as I waded to the east. After early lunch I clabered out at New Yards Creek and fairly early in the afternoon passed the Catholic Walkers' Chapel on Scott's Main Range.

A few hundred yards further south and I was striking off along a ridge to the east. Judging from the map, the northern side of this spur could bring me down into Butchers Creek below the 400 ft. contour, where I could be marooned by Warragamba water on the western bank: so I tended to veer south, and found myself heading straight for the middle of Broken Rock Range. However, it was a nice open spur, and let me down into Butchers Creek in time for afternoon tea, and consideration of the next move.

It seemed sensible to go downstream until I was opposite the northern limit of the cliff line, passing on the way quite a few evidences of farming activity in the days before the flooding of the valley - bits of old fencing wire, short lengths of rough road, even a small herd of half wild cattle. Finally I camped just above the slack water on a wide flat with open forest.

The next day was to be Broken Rock Day, of course, so I was boiling my eggs by torchlight at 5.0 a.m. with the first glimmers of dawn behind the cliffy range, and moved off at 5.40. For maybe 1½ miles it was a gentle ascent on open ridges, with the northern shoulder of the range lifting sharply ahead, and by 7 o'clock I was on the crumbling shaly stuff of the buttress. It was simply very steep, with no real obstacles, and 7.30 brought me to the first

crest, at map reference Bimlow 352062.

The way ahead now dropped slightly, and followed the rim of a kind of causeway leading to the end of the cliff line. The morning was brilliant, the eastern slopes vanishing into a hazy golden film of light, with ghostly timbered slopes rising beyond. I was surprised how little of the Cox Valley I could descry on that side. Far westward, over beyond the Wild Dog Mountains and in Negalong, smoke was rising and masking the distant hills - last minute burning off before the 1st October, I assume.

The causeway section, and a further climb of about 500 feet brought me by about 8.15 to the first true top of the Range (map ref. 347042). From that point it became a succession of ups and downs along the saw-toothed western rim. Pat's party reported the same. The scrub is moderate, the wild flowers at the end of September were very fine, the westerly outlook impressive, with the humps of the Gangerangs west and south. The going was rather tedious, however, and slow - so slow.

Somewhere about 11.0 a.m. I came to a place where the cliff appeared to break down. I examined it carefully, as this was the proposed route off the range and came to the conclusion that it would "go" unless any lower line of cliff, invisible from the top, was in the way. Just beyond I took an early lunch, conserving my carried flask of water, as there had not been any obvious supply on the tops so far.

The pack was left at the lunch spot, and with just a camera I went on to the highest point, Broken Rock Trig 2506', twenty minutes or so to the south. Once on it, it was obviously the top of the range, with a nice outlook south to the blue breaks around Yerranderie, and the three coned top next south along the ridge. It was exactly noon, the light strong but hazy, and there were no shadows in the gorges, so I took only a couple of "record" shots. The trip point is a stout pole mounted in a pile of rocks, some of which have tumbled away, so that the whole affair has a drunken lean. A queer target to be one's objective so long, but none the less satisfying to make it.

What follows is always anti-climax: the return to the pack took only 15 minutes and the descent via the "break" into the warmth of the westering sun was slow and thirsty over loose crumbly surface well littered with slippery leaves and twigs. But it was also uneventful, and I made afternoon tea by Butcher's Creek, before going downstream to the foot of the ridge which had deposited me on the stream about 24 hours earlier. Then up to Scott's Main Range to sleep under brilliant stars at the Catholic Walkers' clearing.

The final morning had a dreamlike quality. There were several steam-hauled tour trains abroad that I was keen to sight. To fit in with their schedules, I moved off at 3.30 a.m. and saw:-

(a) the dawn on Mount Cooken
(b) sunrise on Cox's River
(c) the car at Medlow Gap about 9.30 a.m.
(d) 3009 at Blackheath (Zig Zag railway tour)
(e) 3203 at Menangle (Rotolactor tour)
(f) 3214 and 3642 at Helensburgh (South Coast tour)
(g) an appalling traffic jam on the South Coast Road as people took advantage of the first really fine Sunday in some weeks.

All in all, you could count it a successful day too.

BETTY HEYWOOD (nee PRYDE).

Our more senior members will regret to learn of the loss sustained by Betty Heywood in the passing of her husband Richard Heywood in U.S.A. on Wednesday 3rd December.

Betty, of course, is a daughter of our much revered member Charles (or Charlie) Pryde. For years Betty has been resident in America and her address is:

Mrs. Richard Heywood,
30 Saxon Road,
Worcester 01602,
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HOPE OBSERVED.

Observer.

One of the words to appear in the sixties was "environment" - an awareness that the quality of life could be as big a consideration as income tax policy. Concern with pollution, whether it be air, water or urban landscape is very likely to become a major issue, in some centres literally a matter of life and death, in the seventies. From this rather narrow immediate concern there has already grown a surprising interest, in the Western world at least, in the overall environment which we recognise as conservation. This is shown as a new willingness to consider other than purely economic factors whether in land use, insecticide or a dozen other things. The Little Desert scheme in western Victoria, though shown to be economic nonsense, under present market conditions, would almost certainly have been maintained unless conservationists had also shown it to be cultural vandalism. Barrier Reef drilling, Colong mining, development schemes not yet proposed, could, hopefully, be looked at with similar realism.

Ironically, Australia's huge mineral development in the decade could alter the whole of the quality of Australian rural life. The rather dangerous argument of having to rely on exports of rural products to maintain overseas balances is rapidly becoming out of date. Coupled with chaotic marketing conditions for practically all rural produce there is a very real chance that much margianl rural land will find other use. For far too long a "one-crop economy has had to be tolerated, producing rural idiocies too numerous to list. The desolate way of life of a North Coast dairy farmer will be less attractive and in an age of increasing affluence should not be tolerated. The poorly considered extension of wheatlands in recent years has already extracted its price.

In the Sixties New South Wales saw the beginning of professionalism and investment in the running of its established National Parks. This saw an almost immediate very large increase in the attractiveness and use of the Parks. Without such use justification for the investment is difficult and justification for further parks even more so. The current unified policy for National Parks could ensure that the popular use ones, close to the city, will contribute economically and in general interest to the more remote ones. Certainly introducing people to the parks could not fail to increase general awareness of the need for more parks, for more foreshore access and more investment.

One dream of the Sixties was a "high-country" national park to include the greater part of the divide of the eastern states. Such a

park would be sensible, economically and culturally and would rival any in the world. It could be part of the better life we hope will be ours in the seventies.

JOY REMEMBERED.

Observer.

Everyone should have in their lives an Era Period, whether it is a few days, a summer or one's youth. Era and socialising were, in my youth, synonymous. One went there on ten minutes notice on any week-end between November and Easter, argued whether to go by the rocks, the Granites or Thelma Ridge - it depended on the time of arrival, financial state (taxi, bus or rare private car) - then argued whether to camp at Stockyard, among the lillipillis, on the flat among the leeches, on the hill to catch the breeze.

I had a tent that pitched well on the flat but looked very shanty-town pitched on the slightest slope. Its one redeeming feature was a clip-on mosquito net. To prove my depthless amiability this abode was collapsed at least a dozen times one night to exclude insects. Inevitably one mozzie was always left. The tent would be collapsed and rolled on to eliminate the one mosquito. At last peace reigned. Towards morning a southerly demolished the tent around us. We did not stir but clutched the tent net and a variety of food bags as a security blanket. When the sun beamed we covered our heads and slept on. Unembarrassed we woke at midday, swam, ate four o'clock lunch and slept that night somewhere between an Era hut and the lillipillis.

Era was the place for the most candid of candid photography, the results of which were best kept to oneself. From one reel I showed precisely one print - a completely innocuous, out of series shot of a pair of horses grazing on the hillside between north and south. It is a print of which I still remain fond. I wriggled on my stomach, downhill after the horses as they moved on continuously. Perfect composition came only moments before physical collapse.

There was always a balance of alternatives between availability of water and the prevalence of leeches. Paradoxically one walked further for water in damp years to escape camping with the leeches. Good cicada years were earsplitting. Towards the end of summer bindi-eyes were an obsession. I remember vividly the peculiar

agony of one girl walking towards the beach barefooted. Both feet picked up burrs simultaneously. She sat down. Both buttocks ditto. She tried a handstand, the last desparate recourse. One hand found fiendly territory.

The aboriginal midden provides still the perfect spot for sun-baking. There are endless combinations and possibilities of direct and reflected light and cooling breeze. Either beach was sure to provide just the right surf or the right company. We swam and socialised with future notables, cursed the grazing animals and then late on Sunday ran up a ridge to beat someone's sister's record attempt.

Era this year is greener than ever. The water in Stockyard is as clear and sweet, the leeches still find the one person in the party terrified of them. There is more driftwood than ever to collect and dry and hide in the trees. Cicadas are having a tremendous year. Surf breaks beautifully on the bank. People still walk past with mysterious loads. Optimistic fishermen still stand on the rocks. Among the age-old shells and chipped stone on the midden we found a 1925 sixpence.

An epic account of a voyage down the Murray from Tom Groggin to Khancobin has been promised indirectly to grace a future issue. This report, which will rival Shackleton's escape from the ice, will appear when the author has the manuscript typed since he wishes to avoid ambiguities appearing in the final article. He is not going to risk recumbent, redundant, recling lions in any of his simile or metaphor.

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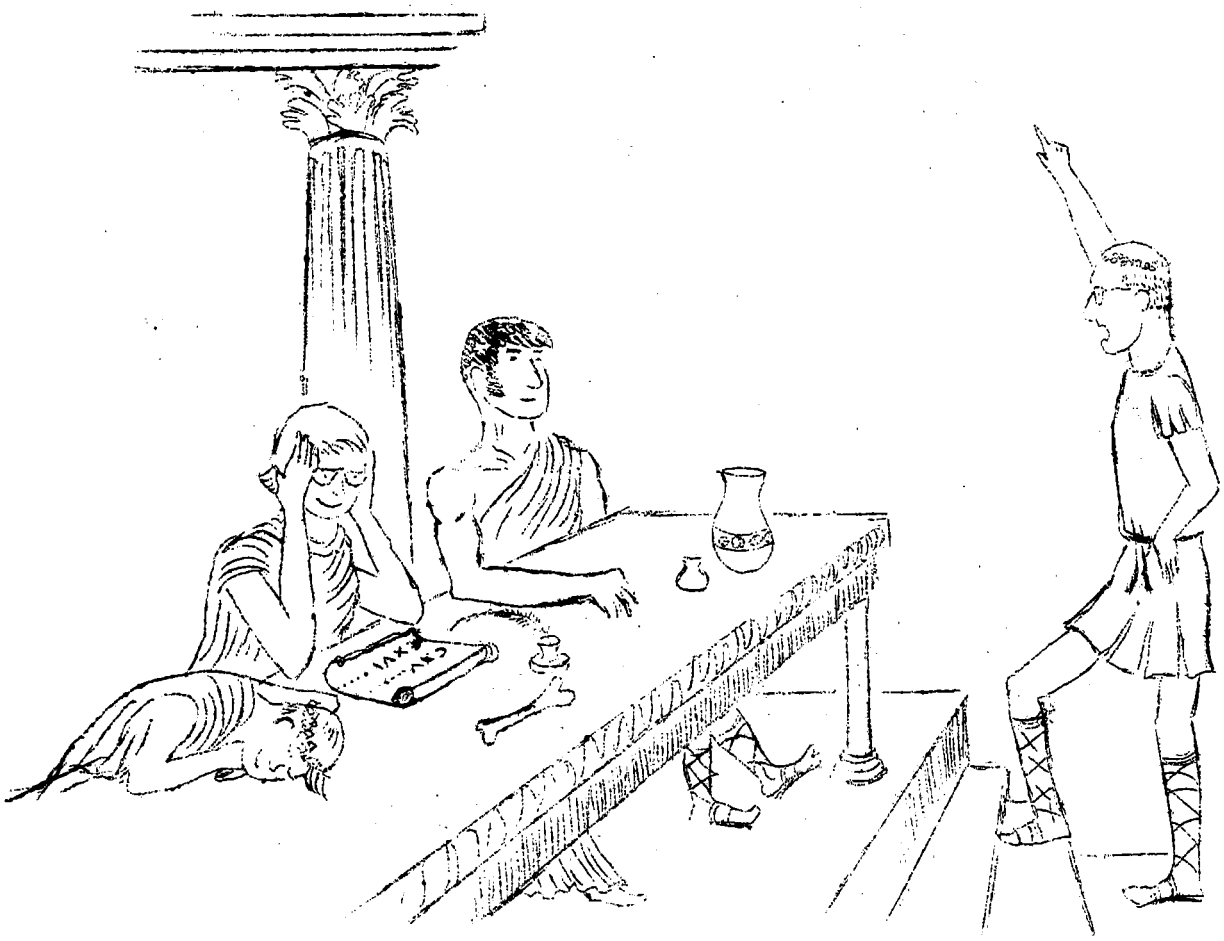
The December General Meeting.

Jim Brown.

The last meeting of the calendar year saw four members welcomed - Pat Marson, Jan Phillips, Ruth Morgan and George Maver - and there would have been five had Wendy Major been present.

No one wanted to raise any matters on the count of Minutes, but Don from the Chair, pointed out that we were still short of a Federation Delegate, whereat Jim Calloway was nominated and appointed. Don went on to say that the Kangaroo Valley land Management Committee met on the site early in November, and conferred with the Quakers next door who did not now seek grazing rights on our block.

Frank Ashdown was inspired to ask how the Annual rates would now be paid, and was told the amount of about $24 p.a. would be met from the Club's normal funds.



Correspondence told us Beryl Chapman had been reinstated to membership and Jean and Tom Moppett had transferred to non-active. There was a rather non-committal reply from the Premier to our request that the Sim report on beach mining be given an airing in Parliament.

The Secretary read the month's financial statement, showing income of $25, expenditure of $142, and on hand in the current account at the close of November $690.

Walks Report included the autobiographical comment of some leaders interposed with the Walk's Secretary's account. Early in November Frank Leyden's jaunt to the Valley of the Swamps, out from Bell, found reduced wild flowers after last year's fires, and pleasant camping at the "Swamps" about 4½ hours walking from the Deep Pass car park. On the Sunday there had been two day walks: Nancy Alderson and party went into the Red Hand Cave-Campfire Creek country, finding the creeks well up after rains. Your reporter with team of 18 visited Burning Palms and rock-hopped to Werong Beach.

The following week-end, which was most wet, was rather a flop, and Instructional Walk being cancelled for lack of prospectives, an Ramon U'Brien's Grand Canyon jaunt because of a superfluity of water. Alan Hedstrom took Owen Mark's trip (Owen being on the Pacific Islands Grand Tour) and Frank Leyden with a samll party of 5 memberswent to Peat's Farm - a little visited area on Hawkesbury estuary.

The week-end 22-23 Nov. was gloriously fine and David Cotton's team of six went to the Wild Dog Mountains, finding outsize nettles in Carlon's Creek and spending a night camped "on a 45-deg slope". Barry Wallace took a crowd to Yalwal and Danjera Creek: camping early after a near mutiny, they still arrived back to the cars good and early on Sunday but found a pleasant way to kill time in Nowra where George Maver had access to a Club. On the same weekend Sam Hinde took people into seldom visited territory near Spencer on the Hawkesbury: his account of the trip was scurrilous, highly coloured and should be ignored (especially most references to your reporter).

To conclude the month Spiro Ketas plus six others came down from Kanangra to the Kowmung via Cambage Spire and did come li-lo-ing downstream, and Owen Marks somehow prevailed on 31 people to trudge from Bundeena to Garie (morning tea at Marley provided).

Came Federation Reports for November and December, with Wilf Hilder explaining there had been two schools of thought about installing a second plaque to Taro at Clear Hill, the final decision

being no additional memorial but possibly the use of the funds available on improvement of ways and means of leaving the Narrow Neck peninsular.

The vacancy for Federation Treasurer had been filled, but an Auditor was yet required. Affiliation fees for 1970 would be the same as '69, the Ball would be in September, place and date to be chosen, and the Federation Reunion on April 11-12 at Sugee Creek near Mangrove Creek (via Spencer).

The Catholic Walkers were now affiliated: Kuringgai Chase Trust evinced some interest in walking tracks and seemed willing to improve them and include them in their information literature. Federation was watching with some concern the Blue Mountains Council's schemes for a fire road into Grose Valley.

Wilf reported new 1:50,000 maps of Ettrick and Bonalbo in the far north-east of the State, a map of the Jacob's River area (covering The Pilot and high spots south of Kosciusko) and provisional maps embracing the Apsley and Macleay River Gorges - quite preceipitous ravines. Publications of interest were "The Melbourne Walker" 1970 edition and a Periwinkle book "Wild Flowers of South-East Australia."

On to general business, and Frank Ashdown explaining that his talk in January would not be on "English Countess" but "Counties". He hadn't been able to find a countess on his recent visit to Darb - not even Lady Chatterley. From the Chair Don said members attending day walks should contact the leader and not just turn up: allother things apart, the trip may have been changed. Then, as he donged the gong at 9.5 p.m. he wished us all a Merry Christmas.