

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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An Englishman's impression of the Bush.
Dr. Thomas Wood in "Cobbers" writes:-

All day we had the sombre bush, a twisting road, and the sky. Colours sank to a few greens and greys, spaced with a brown or two; and the endlessly varied glimpses caught by the eye fuse into one in the memory - a track walled in by trees, bridged across by cloud. Monotonous? Yes. In the unimaginable number of trees which make the bush, the individual beauty of each is swallowed, only the mass remains. It has no shape. Its one beauty is colour. Take that away and what is left? In Australia, nothing. Worse than nothing, if seen at speed. Then its vastness is brought home to you, rammed in. Its eternal brooding silence chills you like winter cold. I never felt, when I was in the Bush or going thru' it, that it wished me harm; that a malignant power lurked hidden but active, such as I have known in a tropical forest, waiting for a chance to strike - a something that made me start and look over my shoulder, scared. The bush is not like that. It wished me no harm because it never saw me. Its utter indifference, of the heart eaten away by melancholy, are true. A man lost in the bush goes mad. The bush is not to blame. Like the sea it knows nothing of love or hate. It is too old to care.

COTTER RIVER

by Alex Colley.

In March 1937, Bill Hall and I, looking for new country for a ten day walk, noticed on the map Mount Bimberi, 6,274 ft. high, with several other mountains of over 6000 feet in the vicinity. From these mountains flowed the Cotter River, looking about 25 miles long on the map. That was all we knew when we set forth on foot from Canberra along the road to the Cotter dam. We were picked up by a reticent Englishman who couldn't understand what we were up to, but was well imbued with the public-school code to appear curious. Let it be said, however, that we have always thought highly of him, for not only did he save us ten miles of road walking, but he took us over a path to a point well above the dam, where he left us, proffering no caution and asking no questions.

Most of that afternoon we walked in the water along the rocky river bed. Only occasionally did we leave the stream for the steep banks covered with stiff, wiry, thorny growth. We camped that night on a shale covered hillock next the river, having covered about a mile and a half by the map. Next day was much the same. We developed a technique of following the banks on the inner sides of bends, often rising far above the river and scrambling down the precipitous slopes where the river had cut in before deflecting round the end of a ridge. The only place we could find to camp was a small patch of grass in a hollow - all right if it didn't rain. It did, and midnight found us sitting on a rock with our pecks watching the water swirl through the tent. There was nothing for it but to crawl up the hill-side and pitch camp on the stones. That day we had covered three miles by the map (so far as we could tell). Next afternoon we were overjoyed to come upon Ginini Creek and nearby a flat with white gums and grass. We did five miles that day. There was more rough going next morning, relieved by stretches of open timber. By afternoon the valley had opened out and we came to long flats covered with russet-brown kangaroo grass. White gums gave way to small "black" ash trees with smooth, dark-green trunks. Ahead of us great dark rounded mountains, many with bare granite summits, rose from the floor of the valley. We were thankful to make the shelter of the old Cotter homestead just as an ominous black raincloud rolled down the valley, accompanied by a bitter wind. There we stayed for two pleasant days, during which we climbed Bimberi. Then on to Yaouk, through sheep and cattle country to Gudgenby station, a little beyond which we were picked up by a philosopher and wireless merchant who took us in to Queanbeyan.

My next view of the Cotter was at Easter 1939 (those who were on the trip please omit this paragraph). This was in the good old days when there was petrol. Fourteen club members were induced to part with £2/14/7 each and we hired a Pioneer motor coach for four days. The story of how we fought our way down Ginini Creek and up the Cotter, camped among the stones just above a beautiful flat, loped up to the Cotter homestead, climbed Bimberi, sped down the other side to Gurrangorambla, run along Long Plain and down Coolemon Creek, is too well known to bear repetition. Never to be forgotten were our feelings on finding that the motor coach was waiting for us on top of Brindabella Mountain, unable to get down, nor the long journey to Sydney between 11 p.m. and 6.30 a.m. our search for food at 2 a.m. in Goulburn, and the sun lighting the tower of Central Railway as we arrived back, just in time for work.

But time is kind. It obliterates our sufferings; and Easter, 1944 found eleven of us once more bound for the Cotter. This time there was no petrol, so we had to walk over roads through 9 miles of arid sheep country, then 7 miles, mostly uphill along a dry creek-bed, and 4 more miles uphill along a road. This was our first day, from which we didn't recover. The next day was 12 miles along a track, according to the map. It was meant to be an easy day with good scenery. It would have been if the track had still existed, but, as we found out, the tracks on the Federal Capital Territory map in this region have mostly disappeared long ago. However three of the unblistered and one blistered member of the party found time to rush up Mount Kelly (6,001 ft) and obtained one of the best views in the district - a complete panorama, including Jagungal, the Kosciuszko plateau, the Fiery Range, all the mountains on either side of the Cotter, the Murrumbidgee plains and the Tinderry Range. Each mountain in the foreground was a separate peak, so that there was no continuous range on any side to obstruct the view. It was a splendid vista of granite cape, rounded mountain masses and distant peaks. Right beneath were some beautiful little upland flats dotted with snow-gums.

Next morning, after walking for over 3 hours at a steady 3 m.p.h. we had covered a track marked $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles on the map. In the afternoon the blistered ones got an early start and went up Kangaroo Creek, where there was supposed to be a track. The unblistered, starting a bit later, decided the track must be on the ridge above the creek and started up to look for it. This was a bad mistake. It is psychologically impossible to come down a mountain from half way up. There were calls for a while. Once they sounded quite near. The ones on top thought the others were half way up. The ones below thought the others were half way down. So both parties waited half an hour. The ones below were sitting on the track - quite a good one. The ones on top climbed and climbed, inevitably, right to the top of the highest mountain in the vicinity, Mount McKeahnie, then along the ridge top over granite boulders and through wet succulent undergrowth, to camp eventually in the dark on a rocky hillside, just 50 yards above a delightful grassy flat and less than 10 minutes from the track. Next day we all met again on the Murrumbidgee ("You should have seen the view from McKeahnie - oh boy!") The mountaineers had to walk fast and far to get out, but fortunately were in good fettle. A little further on we were picked up our gas-producer taxi.

Back at the railway station we were glad to find that the Scotlands had turned up. On the first day they had stayed to tend a wounded calf stuck between two rocks. They had a map with the route marked but missed us when we deviated from the course for a few miles and didn't find us again. Had we stayed to look for them we would probably have had to spend the whole four days in the sheep country.

This story has no moral, but it is a good idea in new country to stick together, to plan short trips and not to believe the map track distances, or the tracks, till you have done them. I think it was the same in the early days of the Club when the Southern Blue Mountains was new country. Now, thanks to Miles Dunphy, we have a good walkers' map with all the tracks and negotiable routes shown. Another help is the fact that there is nearly always someone in the party who knows the way and the walking time. Perhaps now I know enough of the Cotter country to plan a good walk. Who would like to come next time?

MAY THE COACHWOOD BE EXTERMINATED ?

By Abores Australis.

The coachwood (*ceratopetalum apetalum*) is the tree with green glossy leaves like those of the sassafras, but without their aromatic smell, with flowers like the Christmas bush, and with a tendency for the base of the trunk to be pyramid in shape because its roots do not go below the humus into the subsoil. It grows in our gully brush country, and is one of the trees that go to make up that lovely dense sub-tropical rain forest which probably once covered all the coastal districts of N.S.W.

Its danger of extinction lies in the fact that it has not been found how to propagate it. It is noticed that along the upturned soil of a new road, it may spring up like wheat, but although the seed may duly germinate in nurseries, so far it has never been grown in forests artificially. Nothing is impossible. It used to be thought that hoop-pine could not be cultivated artificially, but after many years of painstaking research its secrets have been laid bare and there are now plantations of it. The same must be done in respect of coachwood, and the Forestry Department has its eye on a promising young student, who appears to have a flair for this kind of thing, and has sent him to Sydney University for a special course of training. In a few years' time he will set to work on the coachwood and other trees, but at the earliest it will be many years before we feel secure about the coachwood.

Meanwhile the timber of this tree is in tremendous demand. It is a hard soft-wood of even and consistent grain so that it can be cut into very fine plywood useful for making, among other things, mosquito bombers. But in addition to this extensive field of wholly wasteful application, there is a big demand for it in high class cabinet work, while whole truck loads go to make the wooden heels of ladies' shoes. One small way in which bushwalkers might help to preserve the coachwood until it is learned how to propagate it, would be to give up wearing or admiring high-heeled shoes!

When the tree is cut under the supervision of the Forestry Department it is very carefully taken out; only the larger trees are felled and only in scattered groups. It is thereby hoped to preserve the forest cover to protect the young trees. But no matter how careful a forester is, he can never be certain what will happen when one of nature's factors is taken away, that is of course, until the secret of the tree's propagation is discovered.

Even more fatal to the life of the coachwood than our desire to destroy Japanese people, or wear high-heeled shoes, is our failure to keep bush fires in check. It is only in the state forests that there is any fire-prevention scheme in working order. Outside the state forests the fires spread unchecked every year, especially in primitive virgin country, and as we all know, once our brush country is swept by fires there is no possibility of its regeneration in our life-time and possibly never, and the coachwood, which lives on the humus of decayed leaves, suffers irretrievably.

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SUMMER DAYS ON TUMBLEDOWN CREEK.

By Alice Wyborn.

River oaks etched against a pale afternoon sky, and the roar of the river, greeted us as we followed the track down the last ridge, and dropped our packs on a green carpet of grass by the creek.

We had been told at Brindabella we would find a good camp-site with excellent fishing at the junction of the Goodradigbee River and Tumbledown Creek (also known as Flea Creek), and our first view of the spot certainly justified the description - at least, as far as the camp-site went - the fishing we were to prove later.

Our tent was quickly erected on a lovely green flat surrounded by pink blossomed briar roses, and we then went exploring.

After leaving Brindabella the Goodradigbee River winds its way through some rough, rocky country with granite walls on either side, and at the junction of Tumbledown Creek rushes out from the gorge with a mighty roar and sweeps in an abrupt turn to the north-west. The creek was flowing crystal clear, and its lovely green flats and ferny banks make an ideal spot for peaceful camping.

We enjoyed perfect weather for swimming and exploring the river and creek, and in the evenings we went fishing when the last rays of the sun, shining through the trees, cast lacy patterns over all. Here in the calm, cool evenings, one could sit quietly by the river holding a rod and line, hoping to catch a trout, and nearly always doing so, - but what matter if no fish were caught - here we had peace and beauty, and the world at large seemed very far away.

One day we went five miles up the creek which we found to be very pretty, and after leaving the cool green glades, climbed out on a long ridge, our objective being the summit of Mt. Coree (4,600ft). It was a hot day and we were glad to reach the top at 2 p.m. five hours after leaving camp. Here we had lunch and enjoyed a wonderful panorama of the surrounding country, and could look back over the mountains and plains we had traversed the previous week. Away to the east was the city of Canberra, its white buildings just visible in the sunlight, and the water in the Cotter Dam sparkling like a deep blue sapphire. The trip back to camp was made in much quicker time, for we were anxious to get back to our fishing. We found that from about 7 p.m. till 8 p.m. was the best time to catch the trout.

Never did we tire of scrambling among the rocks on the river and wandering through the cool glades of the creek, inhabited by many varieties of birds and plenty of rabbits. The latter would sit up at our approach, eyeing us curiously before scurrying away to their burrows, with little white tails bobbing.

When we reluctantly said goodbye to our paradise, we promised it a further visit in the distant future, when we hope to find it still as lovely and unspoilt.

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N E R A N G

By "UBI".

Nobody could claim we encouraged the dog - not at first anyway. Having alighted from the train we set off in the heavy rain to look for the show-ground. The night was pitch black, we were drawn into our ground-sheets like snails before a pinch of salt and the dog did not possess a single white hair. However, as we began poking around in a partially built sawmill looking for shelter our suspicions that we were being shadowed were confirmed. We did not actually see the animal but vaguely referred to it as "he" and feared for our food.

Nevertheless in the morning light everything appeared intact until we found only the top of the pineapple remaining but, until further evidence was forthcoming, it was considered that the cows were the likelier culprits. The dog was so thin that it might have been forced to "go vegetarian" though what its breed was the combined knowledge of the three of us could not determine. Some cattle we think but it was smaller than the usual cattle and the light proved "him" to be a "her" though such is the power of preconceived notions over the mind that we were never able to assign the dog the right sex during the succeeding days except after correcting ourselves.

We moved for breakfast to the showground - the dog followed. Here, all ye hard-hearted, ye strong-minded, ye logicians rejoice but ye shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven - we gave that dog the remainder of the steak.

Of course the dog now showed marked attention in keeping up with us but as it was collarless and apparently ownerless we did not begin to worry until just before lunch when we suddenly realised that the position was acute as we could not feed the animal and we could not induce it to leave us. I concocted a plan entailing returning the animal to Nerang by a car or lorry going the other way but unfortunately for my plan there were no such vehicles.

The dog was now a major problem in our life and the subject of much spirited argumentation so, a name seeming desirable, we christened her "Nerang" after the town from which she hailed. The rain continued to fall providing an adequate though prolonged christening, but it also worked for Nerang's benefit for we were unable to cook the sausages and, fearing for their wholesomeness if kept much longer, she received her share. She also received some cake which theoretically should have been eaten before this and which I thought a good enough excuse for feeding to the addition of our party. As at breakfast and ever after, Nerang proved the case for heredity over environment by taking no interest in our food or attempting to beg; she merely lay down and slept and gratefully accepted what was given her.

When we arrived at Binna Burra our real worries began. The guests in an excess of sympathy all remarked on the thinness of "our" dog and with words of pity produced numerous morsels from the kitchen. Nerang ate them but refused to leave us and kept coming into the dining room whenever the door was left open. But did she obstruct or annoy the guests? No! she dropped at our feet and slept until we attempted to move. Uncertain of the welcome a dog would receive at Binna Burra we repeatedly denied ownership in words not harsh but indifferent. Now my conscience will let me think only with shame of those efforts at denial.

We were housed in a tiny attic reached by a ladder in which it was obviously impossible to have a dog yet Nerang commenced to howl down below. We breathed a few soothing words and, as though satisfied with our presence

ten feet above, she curled up under a seat beside the wall and didn't move all night. We had hopes of leaving her at Binna Burra - just one more among the tribe of animals - but she proved unique so our temporary ownership and guilt were patent.

All day she trotted along in the rain and here we discovered another trait in her character. She always kept at the heels of the leading member of the party except when we became a little separated when she would chase around keeping a watchful eye until we were close again - the cattle dog instinct for keeping the herd together, I suppose. It was still waste of time attempting to light a fire at lunch-time so more sausages were doled out to Nerang who was probably being better fed than ever in her life before. Just as we, Nerang caught her quota of leeches and occasionally had to be de-leeches, a process to which she submitted with extreme docility, with as much apparent understanding as a human being and with much less squealing than some.

Further problems arose at O'Reilly's. Here the guests were divided into two schools - those primarily worried that the other dogs would harm Nerang and those concerned that his (sorry, her) howling might disturb their sleep. For, after having been well fed, she seized every opportunity of slipping into the dining-room and lying at our feet and, upon being ejected, cried quietly. We could have easily solved the problem by having Nerang sleep outside the door of our hut but, alas, in the yard were numerous small ducks at large.

A keen debate followed and the guests arguments were so distressing that we decided to risk Nerang in the bedroom. So, dragging a mat as far from my bed as possible, I put Nerang on it and before you could say "Jack Robinson" she was sleeping; in the morning she was still slumbering in the same spot and I verily believe that she had not moved all night.

The breakfast we acquired from O'Reilly's for Nerang was so immense that she refused to finish it but Kay (the dominating male!) stood over her and insisted, adding such fatherly remarks as "you might be glad of it before the day is over."

This morning Nerang had a narrow escape from a snake which I had seen and avoided. She was at my heels but when I jumped aside she stopped within inches of the snake's fangs quite unaware of the danger. I frantically coaxed her away. She joined in our next snake hunt with more fun than appreciation of danger for when our six foot black friend was surrounded he was quite vicious.

The next great event in Nerang's life was swimming the swollen Canungra River. We left her to manage by herself and twice she tried but was unable to make any headway against the current. This would have been a good opportunity to have got rid of her but I think she would have crossed eventually somehow; in any case we did not feel inclined to leave her out in the houseless countryside having now determined to take her to the township of Canungra. So on this and subsequent occasions we forded the river linked together, the centre one carrying Nerang.

Whenever we met anyone we expatiated on Nerang's qualities and endeavoured to induce the hearer to accept her but our salesmanship must have been lacking for at Canungra Station we and the dog were still inseparable. Had one of us a home in Brisbane I am sure Nerang would have been added to the household; as it was we had to face the obvious conclusion that, while we boarded the train, Nerang would have to remain. I had a scheme for distracting her attention at the last moment with some sausages but the town possessed no such luxuries. Instead, as the train ran through the fields Nerang ran after it until even her training of sixty six miles in three days was of no avail.

WHAT I'VE HEARD !

The Easter holidays brought the Bushwalkers out in crowds, but it is doubtful if the bush feels any better for the holiday. Canberra must be suffering badly from scorched earth. Thirteen members of the club "did" this district and "did" it thoroughly. Good organisation and careful co-operation from everyone, enabled the party to break up, almost immediately, into four parties of three and one over. The re-union at the station on Easter Monday, when two parties of eight and one party of five, came in, was everything that could be expected, and everything that could be expected, was said.

Another doubtful benefit has been conferred on the country down south. This part of the country has been enriched (?) by the addition of a full set of teeth (upper). This, or these were not abandoned in that first fine careless rapture that holidays inspire but deliberately walked away from their owners. Unless we want a "Stranger than fiction" on our hands, we ought to put up warning notices in this district to save anyone being severely bitten and then bitterly blaming an escaped lion.

Many members (and their relations, apparently) made Friday the 21st April an opportunity of relieving themselves of the oppressive burden of Private Property by turning out their garages, attics and bringing in the stuff they couldn't give away, even to the salvage man. The things brought extremely high prices which ought to satisfy even the Services Committee for whom it was arranged and we feel there is considerable truth in the morose prophecies of one member who asserted that if another auction was held next week they would get all this lot back for re-auction. Surely there must have been much gnashing of teeth of those who had so carefully placed a reserve on their articles, when they saw the high prices reached.

We owe, and offer profuse apologies to Mr. W. Mullins. Bill, we hear was married a few months ago to Sheila White, and this oversight on our part occurred because we were unable to contact someone who had been at the ceremony. We hope the happy couple think so less of our congratulations for being extended so late.

After Ray Bean's effort in last month's Bushwalker, he has decided to have a rest, and as an afterthought to have tonsils out.

LETTERS FROM THE LADS AND LASSES

Letters were received during April from:-

Jean Ray, C.M.W.
 Rob Morrison
 Gordon Upton
 Gordon Mannell
 Sgt Norden
 Frank Gentle
 Bruce Simpson

Jack Campbell
 Tom Moppett
 Keith Bennell
 Ron Galley
 Jack Watson
 Jack Adams

Gordon Mannell - England 11-3-44. Since arriving in this country I have managed to see a fair amount of the place and, besides visiting London quite a few times have spent a week on a farming property in Yorkshire. I have also spent some little time in and around Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Recently I spent a week in and around Glasgow and was able to make a trip up into the Scottish Highlands as far as Loch Lomond. I was fortunate in that the Highlands were under snow during my visit and a good time was had by all.

Tom Moppett - England 10-3-44. I am glad to see quite a number of members are becoming interested in snow and several talk (I really mean write but have no doubt they also talk a lot) like experts. Good thing. I'm all for it. By the way I thought Bert Whillier's story of his involuntary snow trip to Kanangra a delightful effort. Did you see the article on Kosciusko and thereabouts by someone named Hall in Walkabout? A good article I thought, but I take a dim view of his remark that the pre-war skiers only followed the main tracks. Just the same I wouldn't mind having a look at even main tracks - its far too long since I saw them. Since last August or thereabouts walking, cycling and photography have been out for me. Have spent leaves in London looking around and seeing a few shows. However am beginning to look away from the city now and start counting films. Unfortunately will have only three weeks leave between now and 3rd September. Have two very pleasant weeks off recently. One to Oxford - had a very interesting wander round the colleges and the other was a visit to relatives at Stafford. The latter week-end I hitch-hiked - the whole week-end costing only 4/2.

Jack Adams - England 6-4-44. Very glad to have your latest airgraph (2/3/44) as continuance of "bits and pieces". Have I mentioned receiving the souvenir of Annual Federation Reunion? A splendid idea. I see my old cobbler Jack Hunter there - "Smiled, giggled and chortled". The R.R.C. have lost an ardent walker when Nev Bruce passed away suddenly. A decent chap was Nev. It is splendid to know that Bill Cawood is at last home - bet he can't get his rucksack and boots on quickly enough. I'll do the same myself. Too bad some police spotted Vic and Peter at North Era. Good to know that Era will be at last preserved for us and posterity. I read yesterday in our "News Letter" that a reserve around Kosciusko has been set aside forever. Contrary to my expectations this winter has been very mild and short; fall of snow only whilst in Hampstead London. At beginning of March was lucky to get up to Glasgow seeing the lovely Lochs and Ben Lomond country, like to climb there next summer. Visited Ayr and Robert Burns home at Allaway, beside picturesque Edinburgh. "Ops" have been Berlin 15/2/44, Stuttgart on 20/2/44, Augsburg 25/2/44, in March Stuttgart 15th, Frankfurt on 18th and 22nd, Berlin 24th. Will write again soon.

Frank Gentle - Torres Straits 26-3/44. It's about time I replied to your welcome letter of the 2nd inst. which I received on the 4th. I've been kept busy lately, being engaged on printing work, besides having plenty of correspondence to answer - so please excuse this delayed reply. Thanks very much for sending the "Walkabout" which came last Wednesday and which was most interesting especially with the fine photographic blocks. Also received the current Walks programme and the Annual Meeting circular which my father re-directed from home. Regarding my brother Max's present address, I regret to inform you that his address is temporarily unknown to me and is undecided, owing to a change of unit. I think that the best thing for me to do, under the circumstances, is to send any literature, kindly sent by the B.S.C. on to Max when I've finished reading it. etc.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

May I crave space in the "Letter Column" of your Journal to refer to three matters of interest appearing in the April issue of The Sydney Bushwalker, which I have just received?

They are:-

(a) INCORRECT SPELLING OF NATIVE FLORA.

I should like to support Mr. David D. Stead's remarks in his letter of 10/3/44 apropos the article "Grey Day at Era" by M. Bacon, and the incorrect spelling of the various wild flowers referred to therein.

This is, as Mr. Stead says, a very important matter, more particularly having regard to the wide circulation of the Club Magazine. Such a Journal often becomes a document of reference and it is in my opinion most essential that any matter appearing in it should be as correct as possible. The same could be said of the Club's Programme of Walks, in which frequently place names are very incorrectly spelt. In this regard, I brought the matter before the Club some years ago and made the suggestion that Mr. Stead now makes, that a small Committee might be appointed to read through "Technical Articles", as he puts it, but my suggestion was that the Walks Programme should be carefully perused by someone experienced in the correct spelling of Place-names, before the programme went into print. I feel sure that Mr. Stead's well-meaning reminder will be taken in the right spirit by those concerned and will have the desired result, at the same time have the effect of drawing attention to the desirability of having Place-names correctly spelt also.

(b) THE BLUE LABYRINTH, INCIDENT.

Hearty congratulations to Ray Bean for his "temerity" in bringing this matter under notice. I concur in all he has to say and as a Foundation Member of the S.B.W., would make an appeal to all, young and old alike, to remember that the Club is after all a Recreation Club and surely it is not too much to expect that sympathetic and courteous consideration should be extended by all to all.

(c) DRIED FRUITS & VEGETABLES. RAY KIRKBY'S QUERY.

I would refer all interested to a pamphlet available on application to the "Wm. Angliss Food Trades School" Melbourne, Vic., (associated with, I understand, the Technical College) for some very interesting information on this subject and that of a simple home-made Dehydrator.

I am, etc.

JOSEPH V. TURNER.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (CONTD)

With Ray Bean's open letter many of us must agree. Many Bush-walkers are intolerant. They look down on other walkers, other clubs, other members of their own club. They are particularly intolerant of the non-bushwalker public. They don't like picnickers, they don't like scouts, they don't like shacks, they don't like aliens, they don't like motorists. Wild statements often made about farmers' methods of using (and abusing) the land. Show no appreciation of the farmer's need to live. Why this intolerance?

I believe it is because to these members, bushwalking is an escape from life. Normal living involves mixing with people of all kinds and opinions. It means doing one's share of the community's work. Also most of us cannot feel satisfied with the world as it is and living means fighting to change it. In such a life, recreation plays a very necessary part and bushwalking appears to me one of the best forms of recreation. But it is no more all of living, than sleeping is all of living. And it is when people forget this that the trouble begins. When the week is just something to be got through for the sake of the week-end to come; when all one's interest centres on food-lists, maps, and transport then various abnormalities appear. To some, test-walks or the fulfilment of some schedule become a fetish and club traditions sacred. Some dream of the primitive existence on a desert island (well supplied with the products of modern industry via Paddy-made). Little cliques spring up, happy together and not very interested in other members.

Over-indulgence in bushwalking is as bad as over-indulgence in alcohol, or picture-shows. My advice to those afflicted with the habit is to get out and look at the world - and fight it, if need be. Try to make one change in it worth making and then come back and see if you don't look at your club members more tolerantly and wonder why you got so worked up about who brought an extra onion that wasn't in the food list.

RUBY PAYNE-SCOTT.

OUR OWN MEETING

Mr. David Stead was in the chair.

Resignation of Office-bearers: Hilma Alder, Jean Moppett and Stan Martin.

Miss Beverley Druce was elected Hon. Secretary and Miss Hazel Firth, Hon. Assistant Secretary. Miss Grace Edgecombe is to be Federation Delegate and Committee member from 1st August. Hon. Auditor, Eric Moroney.

OUR OWN MEETING (CONTD)

David Morris was welcomed as a new member and Mrs. Devitt of Woodhill, via Barry was made an Hon. Member.

Mr. Colley drew attention to a press notice on fire in National Park. He proposed that we write suggesting they organize a fire-fighting service.

Soil Erosion - Cox River.

The Water Board appreciated our letter re siltation of Warragamba Dam. Steps are being taken to have the area declared a Catchment Area within the meaning of the 1938 Soil Erosion Act.

TO A BILLY

Old Billy--battered brown, and black
 With many days of camping,
 Companion of the bulging sack,
 And friend in all our tramping:
 How often on the Friday night--
 Your cubic measure testing--
 With jam and tea we stuffed you tight
 Before we started nesting!

How often, in the moonlight pale,
 Through gums and gullies toiling,
 We've been the first the hill to scale,
 The first to watch you boiling;
 When at the lane the tent was spread
 The silver wattle under,
 And early shafts of rosy red
 Cleft sea-born mists asunder!

And so, old Billy, you recall
 A host of sun-burnt faces,
 And bring us back again to all
 The best of camping places.
 True flavor of the bush you bear,
 Of camp and its surrounding,
 Of freedom and of open Air,
 Of healthy life abounding.

You bring us more--with those we love
 We watched you boil and bubble
 And in the sunny skies above
 Forgot each schoolboy trouble:
 So not without a kindly glance
 We eye you in the study,
 Although you've met with some mischance,
 Although you're black and muddy!

James L. Cuthbertson (1851-1910)