

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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Spain, which had a topography similar to Australia, had never reached its proper agricultural development, Mr. Clayton said, because warnings of soil erosion had been ignored. To-day anyone could despoil this country, cut its trees, fire its countryside, and waste its precious streams. It was necessary for Australians to develop a consciousness of the land itself. Too many people believed that so long as trams ran and the Stock Exchange existed all was well.

S.M.H. 21-4-44.

(Mr. E.S. Clayton, Director of the Soil Conservation Service, speaking to the C.W.A.).

BLACK CLOUDS AND SILVER LININGS

by "Ubi".

How can I possibly describe the black outlook when I arrived in Queensland? There appeared to be walking in plenty but - In the first place, there were absolutely no walkers. The only equivalent of the walking fraternity - the National Parks Association - was as dead as the proverbial door nail and the remains most unhelpful. I was hoping that, as I went to the station to begin my solitary walks, someone from the crowd would rush up, embrace me and then describe their unsatisfied desires to go walking but all I experienced was an intense curiosity. My feelings did not improve as I realised that the population had never seen a walker before - literally never seen a walker - and I have scarcely met one person yet who recognised me as one. The last sentence leaves, I know, an opening for a biting answer but I refuse to alter it. I have one friend here - ex Sydney a few years - who had walked and who evinced the liveliest interest in my adventures and ambitions. Unfortunately he now suffered a grave disability which threatened to warp and repress his whole life and was very sad indeed especially as he had endeavoured to interest his wife in walking.

If no one recognised me as a walker, on the other hand, everyone thought I was a soldier - mostly A.W.L. - though they never imputed either of these things to me when I was in the army. In time we discovered that it was often most advantageous to be mistaken for the local soldiery and now try to look as much like it as we dare. The average eye is not very critical and a lot of our walking has been done where many commandos are trained. Our hopes mostly tend towards lifts but often we receive embarrassing sympathy (!) and praise. Having asked a small favour of one female shopkeeper I was treated to such an ebullient display of feeling that I was most apprehensive. On another trip, as we were unfortunately speeding for a train, we were invited by long distance shouts to a cup of tea. We declined but the invitation was repeated with the words "We'd like you to have a cup of tea with us". After racing six miles on this occasion we finished up with a quarter mile hard run for the last train so our refusal can be understood but we did not turn down the two luscious pineapples offered us earlier in the day.

I was cast into deeper gloom when I surveyed the train position. Briefly it is this. There are several main lines from Brisbane and these have many branch lines. The main lines all pass through flat, comparatively uninspiring country but the branch lines at least approach good walking districts of which there are plenty within reasonable distance of Brisbane if you can only get to them. The main lines have some trains at suitable times but the branches - well, from one point of view they are triumphs of organisation for it would not be possible to schedule them at more inconvenient times. I hope I have not acquired a reputation for statements of doubtful truth for then, when I come to describe the speed and accommodation of the trains in general, I should not be believed. However, I am not writing at length on our transport problems and how we overcome them for it is an epic deserving separate treatment. Here I shall only modestly foreshadow our success in the plural of "Veni, Vidi, Vici".

Food also had me a little worried but one item which can be done without when walking is food - to a certain degree anyway. This problem was solved partly by carrying fresh fruit and vegetables but when the price of "measly" lettuces, for example, rose to one and threepence it made one think. However,

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I am now an accomplished shopper with a nose for eggs, onions, bacon, potatoes and an expanding repertoire if not an expanding girth. Near the weekend anyone watching me on my way to work would note a zigzag course like a destroyer avoiding bombs as I went from shop to shop trying to obtain some comparative rarity. My one bad failure was my leaving completely unimpressed a Chinese restaurateur when, in an endeavour to get some rice, I put over a lovely sobstory complete with a catch in the voice.

Experience has taught me to often include on the menu "living off the land" - sometimes disguised as "fruits in season". This art is divided into two methods - the legal and the technically illegal but quite excusable. Between the "desert and the sown" abandoned properties are quite common and our greatest coup have been six dozen bananas one weekend and thirty two (32) pineapples between four of us another. At present we can be almost sure to find a laden orange tree sometime in the weekend and it is not unusual for us to bring home a dozen or two oranges.

As I am on the bed and breakfast stunt and breakfast consists of tea and toast I have all my meat coupons for the weekend while butter is taken care of by Kitty. It is not due to the "Wentz" that Kitty has to be shared between us but it does, I think, add to our credit that Kitty has to be kept in the refrigerator until required. Kitty is our Surplus Butter Supply which is kept in the refrigerator at the Medical School. Her neighbours are germs, bacilli, streptococci and what-have-yous so I hope these bacteriologists know their job.

My jeremiad would not be complete without the mention of maps. I arrived here with only a road map which showed no prejudice whatever and did not hesitate to show mountains miles and miles from their true locations and even, I discovered, forgot one railway line. After a time I tackled the military authorities for permission to purchase some maps and, much to my surprise, it was granted. Those I have been able to obtain are not nearly as detailed as military maps nor as accurate but they are infinitely better than anything I previously had of Queensland or than none.

Having written about "we" for some time I had better describe how eventually the almost miraculous did happen on Anniversary Weekend. As I was standing in the queue wondering whether I should get a ticket in time to catch the train, up rushed two chaps with packs. Throwing aside the traditional British reserve I ventured to speak to them without introduction with the result that we joined forces in a trip to Binna Burra and O'Reilly's. Both hailed from Melbourne originally and only the fact that the car to Binna Burra had broken down caused them to make a last minute change in their plans and go by rail. We have had many marvellous trips since, including some of the best in my life, but not once has any one of us seen (or even heard) another walker.

Brisbane is lacking, compared with Sydney, in short walks though there are still plenty of these. However, within 100 miles of Brisbane there is magnificent country better, I am forced to admit after due consideration, than Sydney can boast. The mountain peaks, after being used to plateau country, are overwhelming. One limiting factor is the jungle but now in the Winter even this is losing its terror for it is possible to get through it but the Summer rains make the same task most unpleasant. I find the wet Summer and the dry Winter a decided advantage though disconcerting at first. We are scarcely

over the reconnaissance period yet so in time I hope that several of the long road walks we have had can, with greater knowledge of the country, be converted into genuine bush-walks or dashed over on some kind of power driven vehicle - it would not be advisable to be more specific.

I shall conclude this article with a list of some of the places to which I have been, hoping that I shall make green with envy both those who know the country and those to whom they are only vague names. However, I have good photographic evidence to support my claims as, in this branch also, co-operative effort left us on only a few occasions without films and we have survived many crises in developing and printing.

And now just conjure up these - Mt. Glorious, Binna Burra, O'Reilly's, The Cougalls, Springbrook, Glasshouse Mountains, D'Aigular Range, Mts. Lindesay, Barney and Maroon, Flinders Range, Lamington Plateau and Christmas Creek. They have been sufficiently wonderful to lighten the nostalgia of an exile.

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING OF THE SYDNEY BUSH WALKERS HELD AT 5 HAMILTON STREET SYDNEY at 7.55 p.m. on Friday 16th June, 1944.

PRESENT; About 30 members. Mr. Stead in the chair.

President welcomes Roy Davies and congratulated him on becoming a new members

CORRESPONDENCE: Was read and received.

LAZ PURA: Moved by Mrs. Moppett and seconded by Mr. Johnson that: "The Secretary write to Mr. Pura requesting him to reconsider his decision to resign from the Club. CARRIED.

RE ERA: Moved by Mr. Duncan and seconded by Mr. Johnson that: "The Federation delegate of this club should bring before the next Council meeting of the Federation, the correspondence received from Miss M. Byles, with a strong recommendation for the resumption of Era lands, and that the Garawara Extension Trust Fund, together with any further subscription from any other bodies or public appeal, should be utilised towards this end, and that such subscription be open for any one month. CARRIED.

Moved by Miss Garrad and seconded by Miss Payne-Scott that if such a subscription is opened by the Federation, the Clubs £100 be put into this fund. CARRIED.

Mr. Roots moved an amendment to the effect that this donation by the Club should only be made provided that: if and when resumed the Era lands either be attached to Garawara Park Trust Fund or else form a nucleus of a new reserve. MOTION LOST.

Moved by Mr. Duncan and seconded by Miss Garrad "If the Federation does not desire to open such a fund, and if the Club still wishes to subscribe its £100, and if the majority of the contributing members still wish it to be done, Miss Byles be asked to proceed with the deputation." CARRIED.

Meeting closed at 9.2 p.m.

THE LAST OF THE BUSH WALKERS

By Ray Bean.

The second world war was but a memory. The post war reconstruction had crammed so much into the lives of the people that happenings of merely ten years ago were not remembered clearly. The experiences of several life times were telescoped into one; such was the pace of living.

The great fifty seven years of peace prophesied by Nostradamus was nearly at an end. People were living at an excessive rate to get as much pleasure as possible into the few remaining years of peace. Even now there are obvious signs of unrest in Neo-slovakia where everyone knows there is a 2% preponderance of Aryan stock. Frankly, Democratic Socialism is on the slide.

The year is an important one to Winston Gladstone for he has supervised the laying of more seamless, jointless, plastic road ever achieved in one year, and as we see him entering his gravity car with his fiancée and two friends to show them the great Highway 371, we see something of his achievement reflected in the proud expression on his face.

Gripping the synthetic steering wheel Winston sets it to the direction of Highway 371 when he gets beyond the suburban limit. for Highway 371 is as straight as well, the shortest distance between two points, and he has no need to steer, such is the perfection of the gravity car whose simple but efficient engine converts as much of the force of gravity required to propel it into horizontal force.

As the streamlined, highly polished, plastic shape of the car speeds along Winston turns a knob on the dash-board and they listen to an orchestra on the television radio playing an atonal symphony by the contemporary composer Mozhoven.

Highway 371 has no intersections or branches, just a magnificent ribbon of road, right across the mountains to the Western plains and beyond; the ingenuity of Winston Gladstone, even though the mountains were crossed and criss-crossed by roads and dotted by aerodromes.

On Scots Main Range the car came to a standstill and the quartet carry a small picnic hamper into the shade of the trees.

The meal break is an opportunity for Winston to tell his friends of the technical difficulties encountered and overcome in the building of Highway 371, and he is asked what was the most interesting encounter of the project.

"Well, said Winston, strangely enough it had no connection with engineering, but I have never met such an oddity in my life."

He settles himself into a more comfortable position and strikes an attitude of importance, for Winston loves an audience, and considers himself no mean teller of tales.

"You have probably never heard of that strange sect, or cult, or something, known as Bush Walkers; they roamed these mountains years ago carrying huge packs containing food and blankets, and lived under the trees at night and walked during the day."

"You mean they just walked?" asked Winston's fiancée.

"Yes, they just walked" said Winston.

"Gosh!" said his fiancée.

"Down on a clearing on the Kowmung River I met a fellow who claimed he was the last of this cult, or sect..."

"Or something" said the Fiancée.

"He was working a treadmill with his bare feet, carrying a huge pack on his back, and just gazing away into the distance as though he didn't know what was there".

"Did you talk to him"? asked the other man.

"Yes, I spoke to him, but he did not hear; at least he did not answer my question; he just looked ahead and kept muttering, no place to walk any more, no place to walk".

I made a few enquiries from small farmers in the district and they told me the story of the Bush Walkers."

"When he is not hike-happy he talks of the way these people walked the mountains years ago, and how he survived them all."

"Gosh", said the fiancée, "fancy walking."

This is finished, an idle tale of fantasy. It's oddity lies not so much in the flight of fancy, but in the thought that it could be true.

THE KOSCIUSKO STATE PARK

By "Silvanus"

(1) A brief sketch of the area itself.

The area covered by the park is situated between Yass and the Victorian Border, it comprises the mountainous catchments of the Murray, Snowy, Murrumbidgee and Tumut Rivers. For the most part the country is extremely steep although some relatively level areas occur on the tops of the plateaux. The country surrounding Kiandra is one such area. All the high country is covered with snow in the winter, and it is one of the few snowfall areas in New South Wales.

On account of the steepness and the distance from either Sydney or Melbourne the area is practically uninhabited and it is quite unsuitable for farming.

The bulk of the area is covered with forests; on the more or less level top these forests have been destroyed by repeated burning and their place has been taken by grass.

Some 140,000 acres are State Forests dedicated under the 1916 Forestry Act. These State Forests were selected on account of the fact that they contain commercially valuable timbers. One of them contains 1452 acres of pine plantation established by the Forestry Commission since 1924 at a total cost of approximately £25,000.

(2) Past History of the area.

On account of the steepness and remoteness the land was not sought after by settlers, consequently it has remained Crown Lands up to the present time

when nearly all the land in the State valuable for grazing, agriculture or other uses has been taken up by individuals or dedicated to appropriate purposes.

The land is actually residual Crown Lands of very low value, but containing areas of use during dry years for summer grazing.

Up to the present the Lands Department has made the land available to the Public for Summer Grazing under a system of Snow Leases and Permissive Occupancies. This system has given the public just and equitable use of the land in accordance with the spirit of the Crown Lands Consolidation Act.

Whilst giving the public the use of the land, the Lands Department has done nothing towards conserving or developing the natural resources of the area and has, in particular, done nothing to stop the bush fires which practically every year sweep through the mountains.

The results of these repeated bush fires are seen in the remnants of what were once splendid forests, now reduced to scrub, bracken and bare earth. In the high plateaux the scrub and trees have been destroyed, swamps have dried up, moss has been destroyed and the banks of streams, once covered with moss and vegetation, have been reduced to sandy beaches.

Failure to control these fires has been due no doubt partly to apathetic public opinion plus governmental failure to realise the final result of a slow process of degradation. The main cause, however, lies in the fact that the area has a very low economic value, and, while the expenditure necessary for this work is very great, the execution of the work could have but an extremely low priority in relation to the work of the State as a whole.

(3) Its natural resources.

Many years ago the N.S.W. Government built the Burrinjuck Dam and the water is now used both for irrigation and the generation of electricity.

The Murray River Commission has built the Hume Weir and uses the water for irrigation. Provision has also been made to use it for the generation of electricity.

The Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission is making a very thorough survey of suitable dam sites on the Tumut River, and it seems certain that a large dam will be built there very soon after the war in order to supplement the Burrinjuck Dam.

Many schemes have been advanced for utilising the water of the Snowy River for irrigation, for supply to Sydney and for hydro-electric power. Before very long the waters of this river must be utilised for one or all of these purposes.

Parts of the area have proved their suitability for the growth of exotic conifers which are so badly needed to build up our depleted forest resources. Some 1350 acres of country on Jounama State Forest have already been planted with pines which are now up to 20 years old. Parts of the area are suitable for the summer grazing of stock, thereby, relieving the strain on the western grazing lands whilst at the same time increasing their carrying capacity. With scientific management, pasture improvement and strict control, the usefulness of the area in this direction could be increased.

Parts of the area contain forests of Alpine Ash which is one of our most valuable Eucalyptus, much sought after for joinery, the manufacture of joinery, handles, boat cars and furniture, as well as general building timber.

The area contains the best, and almost the only, snow country where winter sports can be practised. This aspect has already been developed at Kosciusko, and is capable of much greater development.

There is much rugged mountainous country where the bush walker can find his Primitive Area made primitive and perforce kept primitive by the forces of nature, so long as it is not devastated by bush fires.

The streams are the natural home of trout and provide some of the best fishing in the State. The remoteness of the area makes it a natural sanctuary for birds and animals as well as a preserve for native flora.

The whole of it can form a vast playground wherein every lover of the outdoors can find his heart's desire in the way of recreation.

(4) A large and comprehensive conservation policy is required.

Here then lies a huge area waiting, not to be exploited, but to be conserved and developed.

We require a large conservation policy and a plan which will embrace, not only the present, but the future. A plan of conservation and development which will take account of all the varied assets presented by this almost unique mountain region.

(5) The conservation and development plan - Execution.

The execution of this plan calls for the services of a strong team of technical men: Foresters, soil conservationists, agrostologists, land administrators, organisers of public recreation etc. who will vigorously conserve and develop this area and make it serve its multiple purposes, and obtain from it the maximum use for the wide variety of people who need it, and for its own native fauna and flora.

Under a Ministry of Conservation, combining Water Conservation, Forestry, Soil Conservation and Agriculture - this could be done and a vast mountainous region converted - not into a State Park merely by name but into a living bequest for future generations.

The present Act contains the gem of the idea but the vision is too narrow; the full potentialities of the idea have been insufficiently realised; the practical difficulties associated with the work are not understood; the means provided for attaining the ideal are entirely inadequate. The result will be a park on paper but a fire-devastated wilderness on the ground.



SNAPSHOTS AT ERA.

Alcanber.

SEEN AND HEARD

Friday, June 23rd was Photographic Exhibition night and as is usual on these occasions Bushwalkers rolled up and visitors dropped in. No "incidents" occurred. Rival exhibitors controlled their feelings superbly.

As the best Social columns say, "We noticed", Alex Colley down from Canberra huddled in a corner food-listing, and Dot English was in A.M.I.N. Much clapping when the President announced that it was Taro's sixty fifth birthday. Grace Edgecombe and John Noble very much in evidence although we always thought a Bride was completely occupied on the wedding eve, snowed under by china and clothes. Best Man and Bridesmaid Malcolm McGregor and Elsa Isaacs also in attendance for the evening. The wedding was on Saturday 24th at Roseville.

A shower tea was given to Grace a few evenings before and nice presents and awful verses were presented to her. In fact supper was withheld till the verses were produced, and we now have a fair idea of what starving in a garret means.

The Nobles have gone off neatly and tidily, no straggling, Betty has announced her engagement to Ron Baker, this is confirming congratulations offered by all in the Club.

The "Herald" says that Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Pritchard have a son. Congratulations. We didn't see "Monthly Magazines please copy", but hope we are doing the right thing.

So far we haven't heard much about how King's Birthday Holiday was spent but super optimists have plans for Eight hour Day well under way.

Have you seen Flo Allsworth's legs? Recently, I mean. Well you should, while there's some skin left on them. No she didn't get these wounds bushwalking as you earnest Bushwalkers might hope. She achieved them renewing her acquaintance with a bicycle. Flo is a well known identity round all the suburbs now. Police are watching her tail light. As she loses her voice so frequently an extra loud bell has been installed. In the future there will be very few Hostels (hope they don't print this as Hotels, Mr. Stead) which her bike has not leaned against.

We do wonder how the Navy is getting along for a spot of deck scrubbing now Doris is laid low with Dengue Fever. We are all very glad to hear that she is now convalescing.

F R U I THOW TO DRY APPLES - 1st Method.

Peel the apples and core them right through, then cut into rings with a stainless knife. To prevent the rings becoming a bad colour, they must be subjected to sulphur fumes. Take several large clean jars and invert one at a time over a burning sulphur candle. As soon as the flame does down, turn the jar quickly, slip a saucer over the top to keep the sulphur fumes in. Put the apple rings in the jars as quickly as possible, covering at once. Allow to remain 15 minutes, shake occasionally, so that the fumes reach all surfaces, then spread on trays and dry in a cool oven 4 or 5 hours, perhaps longer. They should be tough and no juice left in them. Cover with muslin to protect from dust and leave in a warm, dry place for 24 hours. Pack in boxes lined with greaseproof paper. An alternative method after the sulphur treatment is to thread the rings on wire and stretch this in the sun. Don't let the rings touch.

APPLES - 2nd Method.

Core and thinly peel the apples, then cut into rings just under $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick. As you cut the rings, drop them into cold salt water mixed in the proportion of 1 tablespoon salt to 6 pints of water. Then thread the apple rings on to bamboo canes cut to the same length as your sliding oven shelves. If you have no bamboo rods, the rings can be threaded on to tape or strong string. Put the apple rings into the oven at a low heat - about 120°F.

Wedge the sticks across the oven, letting them rest on the grooves that the shelves rest on in the ordinary way. If they're on a tape or string, hang them from the bars of a shelf. Let the temperature of the oven be gradually raised to about 200°F. when the outside of the apples begin to shrivel. Turn the rings at intervals and examine them from time to time. They should not get hard outside, but should become leathery and bendable. Some apple rings may be dried sufficiently in about 4 hours - it depends on their thickness.

But to test if they are ready, cut one across the thickest part and squeeze the cut ends. If any moisture at all is noticeable, the fruit must be left in the oven a little longer and tested again.

When the fruit is sufficiently dried, take the canes from the oven and put them in a room of even temperature, standing the ends of the rods on raised blocks so that the fruit doesn't touch the table. Spread a piece of muslin over the fruit to protect it from dust, and leave it there for 24 hours to cool off gradually. Test the fruit again for moisture at the end of this time, and if there is any suggestion of it, put the fruit back in the oven for a final drying off.

The method of storing is important. Pack away the rings in any kind of box, jar or tin, but make sure they are kept in a place that is cool and perfectly dry. Don't put them on a top shelf in the kitchen

or pantry, because the temperature varies nearer the ceiling, and never put them in a deep cupboard.

PEARS:

Core and peel the pears, and cut them into either halves or quarters, according to the size of the fruit. Drop them into a salt solution in the same way as apples as you cut them. If the pears are a juicy variety, they are best dried when slightly under-ripe.

When fully prepared, the pears should be taken out of the salt solution and arranged in a single layer on a rack, and the rack placed in the oven at the same temperature as for apples. When the outsides of the pears begin to shrivel, raise the temperature gradually until it reaches 200° F. The pears may take up to 8 hours to dry, but they should also become leathery in texture, but not brittle.

Remove the racks from the oven at the end of the time, and cool and test them in the same way as apple rings. They are also stored in the same way.

PLUMS AND DAMSONS.

If plums and damsons are to be dried they should be picked before they are fully ripe. Remove all stalks and leaves and put the fruit into a large pan. Large plums should be halved and the stones removed. Cover with boiling water and leave for about 15 minutes with the lid on. Then strain and arrange on trays like pears. The method of drying plums and damsons in the oven, and of packing and storing them is then exactly the same as for apples and pears.

When any dried fruits are needed for use, they should be ^{soaked} soaked overnight, or for at least 8 hours - and then cooked in the soaking water. If sugar is needed add this when the fruit is cooked.

"When I feel like exercising, I just lie down
until the feelin' goes away."

Paul Terry - maker of animated cartoons.
