

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

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C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
Evolution By "Ubi"	2
Gingera By Alex. Colley	5
October News	8
Timber shortage in N.S.W. by Sec. of Federation	9
Extracts from London Letter ... Ira Butler	10
Letters from Lads and Lasses	11

THE OLD SAILOR

by Betty Riddell

The old sailor dreams of a little island.
Rolling like an apple in the wide green sea,
A little island he could hold in his hand
Turn over this way and then that
Set a tree here and there a nigger in a leaf hat.

He sailed all his life.
Till his blood ran as salt as the sea,
His ship was his sweetheart and his wife
And he passed many an island with no more
Than a glance at the bright white sand of the
curving shore.

But now that the sailor is old
He would like a little island like an apple.
Just to look at and to hold.

From

MEANJIN PAPERS, 1943.

EVOLUTION (contd. from last month) by "UBI".

My discoveries that milk and cream have to be brought from the cows to the city and the factory and that what comes to town on wheels has usually to go back again sounds as silly as the over-simplified story of Newton and the apple. Gradually I realised that throughout the whole of South-Eastern Queensland, dairying was common and that therefore a system of trucks must be used to bring the products to town. One had only to sift the chaff from the grain.

For the present, however, we were restricted to near-city areas and began to receive offers of lifts though we were safeguarded by other transport arrangements. I suppose I have never been in the position to know whether my Sydney compatriots would be as hospitable and helpful in similar circumstances but the unsolicited offers of lifts were often hard to refuse. For example - as we were making for the station on an early trip in the Flinders Range we were invited to ride into Ipswich on the top of a load of bagged charcoal. After eyeing the charcoal and our comparatively clean clothes we replied that we would "catch the train, thank you, ever so much" despite the fact that a long wait and a crowded, slow train lay ahead of us. Several times we met the same vehicle and each time the driver begged us to ride with him with such emotion that we wondered whether he thought we were notables in disguise. Of course we might have been useful weights for holding the charcoal on the truck. Finally we had to accept out of consideration for the poor fellow's feelings.

The first premeditated "hitch" occurred on an occasion when we had missed a bus and an extra nine mile road walk loomed in front of us. Along came an empty truck and, thank Heaven, one of the chaps had been in the Army and was not suffering from paralysis or shyness of the thumb. I cowered by the road as shudders of conventional prejudice coursed up and down my spine and doubt whether I would have had the courage to so act even to avoid the long, unexpected walk. Considering that a good-natured driver was only too happy to put us in an empty truck I think that a logician could make out a clear case of idiocy. From right now, in order to help towards the progress of the word "hitch" into the drawing room, I intend to strip it of its semi-respectable inverted commas.

At this stage of my evolution a lift arranged beforehand by inter-change of letters or spoken sentences in a reasonable approximation to the King's English seemed quite legitimate but to express one's hopes and longings by a dumb show enacted with the thumb showed how the Great Public School finishing class that one ought to have attended would have failed to convert the savage underneath. A new world of experience was opening as a new, exciting, tangible world lay just outside our Tantalus grasp. "For all experience is an arch where through gleams that untravelled world that fades for ever and forever as I move" sighed Ulysses and beyond our reach rose peak after peak dimly seen, haunting names which could become haunting memories if only.....

At last frustration became unbearable so I decided upon a "reconnaissance" trip to a locality near lots of excellent, untouched walking country in order to try to perhaps organise some transport further afield at a later date. I had decided, in desperation, to hitch any trucks - these not being so abashing. However the first vehicle which approached when I was clear of the town was a large sedan so I modestly cast my eyes down. The car stopped, I was invited in

and off we went. I happened to mention that Cunningham's Gap was my Nirvana out this way which admission was followed by an overwhelming offer to take me there and pick me up on Monday morning in time for work. I bought extra food at the only shop on the way where, also, my friend "shouted" me afternoon tea before I could do the same for him. Sunday being a perfect day I was able to climb Mt. Mitchell on one side of the Gap in the morning and Mt. Cordeaux in the afternoon though, expecting to be camping at a much lower altitude than 2,500 feet, I nearly froze at night in the Winter breeze and only a miserable fire could be coaxed in the jungle in the Gap. Some of our trips had been so cheap that a certain amount of rivalry, competition and boastfulness had crept in but I now held the record with 20 miles by train, 120 by car, afternoon tea and an unused, return railway ticket for 4/1d.

My notes record a very cheap trip on May Day week-end - a very appropriate time for the working and walking classes - to wit, 40 miles by truck, 60 by train and tram home for 2/2d.

My having been to Cunningham's Gap quite maddened Frank so he induced me to attempt to hitch there and back a few weeks later. We detrained at Ipswich and almost immediately picked up an Air Force truck which was obviously just about to leave for Amberley to which place we had intended to proceed sedately by bus. After Amberley comes No Man's Land. Four different trucks took us for short stages; one driver had a sense of honour and enjoyed our beaming smiles when he told us he was going to Warwick and thus through our destination. Had we been less eager we would have noticed that the car was scarcely fit to make the climb - the man whose car once stopped, may never start again, always seems to be the most willing to pull up. All the more to help push perhaps. At nightfall with 20 miles to go we were just about to leave the road to have tea in high dudgeon when two lights appeared over the hill so we decided to give the fellow a chance to prove himself a gentleman. The vehicle was an Army truck on the way to Warwick so we were accommodated.

Just before lunch the next day we left the Gap remarking that a lift to Mt. Edwards by lunch time would suit perfectly. Along rolled a limousine in a few minutes the driver took us up to Mt. Edwards although the only indication to him of our hopes had been telepathic. Upon resuming after lunch and a diversion up the mountain we had a very barren time until transport just froze and there is nothing more annoying to a hitcher than nothing to hitch! I was just mentally calculating how long it would take to walk 29 miles when, once again just at dusk, salvation came in the form of an American Jeep which took us comfortably back to the station. Very nice (and astonishing) we thought, considering the driver had his girl friend with him. He must have been a careful driver.

It must not be assumed that hitching does not require technique. This weekend, for example, our limousine episode caused us furiously to think with the result that we put out a new method of attack for sedans which will give some idea of the psychological problems which have to be grappled with. Having gathered that a sedan is approaching from behind the best idea is not to look around until the driver is sufficiently close to be able to see you clearly. Then look back with quick expectancy giving the impression that you would have possibly hitched had the vehicle been a broken-down truck but with a sedan it is different. This display of humility and sense of proportion has a good effect on the driver, puts him on his mettle and seems to

afford him an opportunity to improve his reputation and show he can be decent to the lower economic orders. One should also watch the face of the driver out of the corner of the eye because most of them like some assurance, even the slightest, that you will not refuse a lift if they do stop. If the driver wears this look of "What about it?" you reply with a sharp forward movement of the head and a lift of the eyebrows which removes all doubt.

Unfortunately the milk lorry position was not so satisfactory as few times were convenient. However, I heard of one most useful truck which leaves Beaudesert at 3.30 a.m. on Saturday morning and terminates only a few miles, as the crow flies, from O'Reilly's. Nevertheless while everyone knew of the truck nobody knew the driver nor where he was to be found so one weekend I set out to find him by hook or by crook. The trip began badly with a late goods train, resulting in the formulation of a plan which consisted of lying across the middle of the road to sleep as it was most unlikely that another vehicle would happen along this road between the hours of 1 a.m. when I would be crawling to bed and 4.30 when I expected the truck. As thick, ground mists greeted me on the five miles from the station to the town I abandoned this idea. Instead I slept beside the road with both ears cocked hoping, at the sound of an engine, to rise out of the mists in my sleeping bag like a wraith - one to cause the use of the brake, not the accelerator. Nature, however, asserted herself and at 6 a.m. I woke to find myself in situ. with a heavy cold the only compensation for failing to embark on a hard trip.

A fortnight later Frank and I wanted to catch this truck and, being a holiday weekend, we knew that WE MUST NOT FAIL. We had gained the additional information that before leaving town the driver picked up meat at a certain shop and our precarious transport having landed us in the town at a late hour there seemed to be only one course - to sleep in front of the door of the shop in order that the driver could not go without us even if only because he broke his neck as he fell over us. The town was deserted, we would be leaving at 3.30 a.m. there couldn't be a misadventure. But one cannot think of everything. Scarcely were we in bed than a dance finished in some other part of the town and the dancers began to wander home. We pretended to be asleep as we were inspected and discussed from various distances having a glorious time listening to the comments. Several Americans - we could tell only by the speech - approached very closely but then with a "Agh. Aussies!" they hastily retreated!

Thus have I been forced from the orthodox to the unorthodox and thus have some of my pet prejudices been manhandled. Upon assessing the past in the light of logic and experience I have no regrets; in fact I rejoice that some of my hide-bound conventions have been flogged, though their ugly heads are so Cerberus-like that I still welcome the identity-concealing darkness or feel relief at being mistaken for the Army to whom all sins are forgiven. In addition I have an almost exception-free record of people's kindness, helpfulness, humour and grand-nature and a record of splendid fun. For my hitching experiences have undoubtedly been matchless amusement. We always have some small bets on what time we shall arrive at various points and at our destination, laying down minute and exact conditions. Recently the goal post was the centre of a certain bridge and after an exciting ride with one eye on the speedometer and one on our synchronised watches I won by four minutes. What I would relish would be a correspondence by people giving their opinion of this doomed sport - for surely - in the brave post-war world, everyone will possess his own car.

G I N G E R A

by Alex Colley.

It sometimes happens that canoeists, because of the lack of water "canike" long distances, and walkers have been known to push cars along with them for miles, but we claim to be the first to take our skis for a walk. A word is plainly necessary to describe this new pastime, but as no English term has yet been included in the dictionaries perhaps the well known Russian word "walkski" is the best to describe our holiday.

In April the mountains had been whitehed by a foot of snow and again in May there was a good fall. Then something went wrong with the air currents, Week after week I waited and watched the mountains through my office window (not all the time - of course) hoping a cold westerly would cover the mountains in cloud and lift to reveal deep snow. But it never happened. Sometimes clouds would settle for a day, and for a few weeks there was a thin cap on the top of Gingera - never a real fall. By August I had decided there wouldn't be any fall. Spring was in the air - the birds had no doubt about it. However our arrangements were made and we decided that a walk would be fine anyway. But we couldn't bring ourselves to leave our skis behind, so they went with us.

Our first camp in the mountains was somewhat of an experiment. How cold would it be? We chose a sheltered spot out of the wind, prepared a bed of bark and grass, put large logs on the fire to keep it going and slept in close phalanx or sardine formation. Though the water bags froze stiff and there was half an inch of ice in the billyies we felt warm and comfortable and had a most enjoyable camp. Next day, despite our trappings, we did the remaining 8 miles to the Chalet in 3 hours without undue struggling. In the afternoon we took our skis to the top of Mount Franklin in case there was a bit of snow, but there wasn't, so we returned to the Chalet to plan a walk.

To lighten the next stage of our trip, Doreen and I set off next morning with a load of food, which we left at the site of our base camp, while Jean and Ron "did" the local sights, including Ginini Falls. We found a good spot for our base camp on a well drained saddle at the foot of Mount Gingera (6,092 ft.). It was about 5,600 feet up, high enough for a bad blizzard in August, but we knew a warm comfortable hut in a small valley below to which we could retreat if the weather was unkind. Last time I had been on Gingera there had been about 10 feet of snow and every tree and shrub was flagged with jagged ice on the windward side. I had great faith in that mountain, and it was justified, for on the Southern side we found 50 acres or more of snow; quite enough to play round in.

So next day we set out, still carrying our skis, and also the remainder of a weeks food. In the afternoon we really used our skis. The next couple of days we spent there too. The ski-ing was often quite incidental, except for Ron, who skied so ardently and acrobatically that his knees were strained and practically unbendable by the third day. When we weren't gliding through the snow gums or seeking out new runs we paused to enjoy the world of rolling mountains, deep valleys and sunlit plains below, or to look, at first a little wistfully, at gleaming Jagungal and the snow covered Main Range to the South. Only one mountain, the great rounded Bimberi, rose above us. Just below the top of Gingera was a beautiful little grassy flat through which a clear little stream flowed from the snow field through russet shrubs over the edge of the mountain. Looking out from the flat we could see nothing but clouds and sky.

and the rugged granite peaks at the head of the Cotter.

Our base camp was sheltered and comfortable. We chose a spot in the shelter of the two main limbs of a large fallen tree. Often at night we heard the wind roar on the mountain above, but never more than a slight breeze came down to our saddle. We pulled up snow-grass for a bed and always had plenty of wood for a good fire which we made fairly close to the abdulled tent. On the third night it started to rain and continued to rain the next day. We decided that a day of rest would be welcome, in fact necessary for Ron, who was suffering from skier's knees and gave the appearance of one aged before his time.

I had often thought of camping in the snow country in winter, and this was at any rate a partial try-out. One of the chief disadvantages of a ski-ing holiday is that one must live a cramped, barracks-like existence. If you have your own party and do your own cooking a good part of the time is spent cutting wood, washing up etc., If you go to a regular hut you must accept the company and food ready made. As ski-ing is strenuous you often don't feel like house-work and chores after a good day, and it is irritating to have to spend a couple of hours doing the various jobs in the morning before you set out. If you have a good party and a whole chalet to yourselves, as we did last year, hut life is very pleasant, but this is exceptional. It was infinitely easier and more comfortable in the open. Lots of wood which didn't have to be cut, and big fires we could all enjoy. Very little washing up. The tucker we liked when we wanted it - cooked by Jean, who managed to add half a stone to the weight of one. Plenty of time to be lazy when you felt like it. Another advantage is that you avoid the inevitable mess found in every ski-ing hut. We never felt cold round the camp. In huts it is usually impossible to combine fresh air and warmth for all. Either some away from the fires will be cold or all will incubate together - usually the latter. And last, but most important, you can see the sky at night. Of course there is the risk of a blizzard, but maybe it is worth taking.

After the day's rain, knowing that much of the snow we had not worn out would be melted, we set out to explore a nearby spur on which were some interesting piles of granite rock. Though it was scarcely a mile it took us well over an hour to weave our way through the thick sally. It was well worth the effort, for the biggest pile of rocks proved to be tremendous and the view over the Cotter valley was grand.

Next day we parked the skis against a tree and set off for Bimberi. The ridge proved too broken for us to get there that day. We were not disappointed, as we reached a knob nearby where we stood in driving hail, fierce wind and sunshine drinking in the magnificent mountain scenery. And it was pleasant walking country; mostly open timber and snow grass opening here and there on to open alpine glades, by one of which we camped. The following day we went on to our hanging valley below Gingera, on the roof of the range. There we camped in a sheltering grove of snow gums by the edge of the stream. From our tent we looked over the grassy little flat to the granite peaks ten miles beyond. A great black cloud rolled up from the valley, filling the whole sky as it approached and soon star-shaped snow flakes fell thickly. With evening came soft yellow light, half daylight and half moonlight, weird and unreal. Slowly the clouds passed over, then the moon cast a still spell over a fairyland of delicate lacy shrubs, veiled grass and white leaved trees.

In the morning we started back, wondering how we would get down to the Brindabella Valley with our skis. But it proved easy and the following evening found us camped by the swift-flowing, transparent waters of the Goodradigbee. Next morning we arrived at Brindabella Post Office where we were glad to leave our skis after their 40 mile journey much of which had seen no skis before. Here we were joined by Joan Hunter and Jean Thirgood who came out in the mail-car to meet us.

For a few miles below the Post Office the River flowed through a rough gorge, but we followed a wide easy track over the foothills and camped under the casuarinas at the Junction of Tumbledown Creek. It was very like parts of the middle Cox, except that the River was larger and so far unsilted.

Next afternoon we went up Tumbledown Creek till we came to Flea Creek, a clear rocky little stream flowing under casuarinas through little grassy flats. A little way up Flea Creek we "got among" the trout, as the fishermen say. Not that we tried to catch them of course. That would have been illegal. But one member of the party was so overcome by the sight of 15 large fresh fish in a clear pool three feet deep, that he plunged in and started to beat the water with his hands, while another flung himself fully clothed across the pool, and others stood by with towels in case any of the fish needed wiping. I'm sure the trout enjoyed the fun as much as we did.

In the morning we followed the creek till the going became rough then struck up a spur towards Coree. Again we were lucky to find an easy ridge. Half way up we had our first view of Coree, which looked exactly like pictures I have seen of the Tasmanian mountains. The top was an almost sheer wall of bare yellow granite towering several hundred feet above the surrounding mountains. From the top we had a magnificent view in every direction, while just below nestled a little clearing on Condor Creek, our campsite for that night. But it took us nearly three hours of pushing over loose granite covered with thin wattles and through other types of undesirable flora before we made camp in the last of the fading daylight.

This was the last of our never-to-be-forgotten campsites. Here we left the intrepid Jean and Joan to journey through the trackless pine forests to the Cotter Dam and thence to the Mount Stromlo turn-off where they were met by a car.

Now we are back in buildings and streets, working as we must, but just around the corners of memory are visions of mountain and valley, of streams and fire-lit campsites, and, most vivid of all, our little hanging valley on Gingera still and white in the moonlight.

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OCTOBER NEWS

Just to offset the tough conditions imposed by the Railway Commissioners, the Clerk of the Weather looked kindly on all holiday makers for the 6 hour week end. This annual endurance test fixture, Holiday Handicap-Christmas Elimination Trials is we think, designed by the Railways, not as a staff entertainment as we had supposed, but to test the strength of their rolling stock and the fortitude of travellers generally. Most Bushwalkers passed the fortitude test brilliantly. We did hear of a couple who having passed the Barrier Trials, failed miserably in the Boarding test. No doubt the S.B.W. Committee will deal with the two members who proved so spineless and we expect to hear of their transference to the Non-Active list. Of course they weren't Old Members.

A large party debouched on to Honeymoon Bay and enjoyed ideal conditions, they say. But there were no fish. Silly to expect to fish we say..

Another party touring Lithgow and Newnes expressed surprise because there was no beer at Newnes. Possibly as a result of this failure there was a certain want of co-operation in the party. One member optimistically carrying a camera, called, early in the morning for someone as foreground, as one might call for water in the desert. The result was the same as the desert scene. No one answered, and as one of the party explained, "when he (the optimist) caught up with us that night he seemed a bit cool towards us." He then had dinner alone, no not quite alone, he communed with a dead cow, for preference perhaps. We have heard of that party before.

The Services Committee had a picture evening in the Club Friday 20th. Natures Symphony in Kodachrome, coloured slides. Some we had seen before but enjoyed as much as ever and quite a few new ones, were shown. An appreciative audience stayed on for the auction of unwanted goods.

Len and Dot Webb were in this night. They report the youngster as thriving. Both Len and Dot looked thriving also.

After some months strenuous training, Flo Allsworth together with Jean Harvey and Jean Moppet departed for a holiday per bicycle, taking in Canberra and Tumut and lots of other places. Flo still hasn't realised her ambition of riding her bike with her feet on the handlebars. We won't tell you any more of the trip because if you find yourself anywhere in the vicinity of any of the three you will be told about the trip whether you want to hear or not.

Wal Roots party of holiday makers returned to Sydney after a fortnight away. The five of them, Wal, Charlie Pryde, Tom Herbert, Dorothy Lawry and Phil. White spent the first week on and about the Shoalhaven (nothing said about IN the Shoalhaven) and the second week they were near Carlons dining there at night. They also were away while the hot spell was on.

THE TIMBER SHORTAGE IN NEW SOUTH WALES
AND PROTECTION OF PRIMITIVE AREAS

by the Secretary of the Federation.

Bushwalkers long to be able to say, "Hands off the trees except in the State Forests where re-planting is the rule." The Federation has asked the Forestry Commission whether it needed more money, more men or more land to enable it to supply the whole of the timber needs of the State from the State Forests, and, if it had all it wanted of these things, how long it would be before we could reasonably cry "Hands off the trees except in State Forests."

The following is the reply; perhaps it will give you some idea of the shocking devastation of our forests that has been going on, and must continue to go on unless we gave up wanting houses and furniture as well as other things.

- "(1) Proper forest management would be impossible without the equivalent of the whole of the royalties from timber being handed over to the Commission. Actually in 1941-43 the forest revenue was £393,201, and the expenditure £528,393, but this expenditure includes little reforestation, which has been suspended for the period of the war. The programmed expenditure, post-war, is on the scale of £2-3 million per annum, against an anticipated revenue of £300,000.
- (2) Owing to excessive alienation in the past, the existing forest reservation is inadequate to maintain the native timber industry. Indeed, sawmills, post-war, will fall out in large numbers.
- (3) If the Forestry Commission had the money, and the land, and the staff - it would take at least 50 years to recover the situation.

Taking the Clarence Region for example of 3,000,000 acres in the five shires, 500,000 acres are reserved for the timber industry - the chief industry of the region - and of the 2,000,000 acres alienated, only one eighth is under crop or grass - the rest is despoiled forest".

The Forestry Commission adds the following as its attitude to primitive areas:-

"The Commission gathers that the Bush Walking Clubs are concerned to retain primitive areas. The Commission's solution of this need would be to define areas within broad National Forests, these areas to be retained in a primitive condition.

It is futile to declare areas primitive unless they be protected from fire. The Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury Sandstone areas are largely fire-wrecked areas - but the nature lover generally has been unconcerned to remedy this default of policy.

The Commission's policy is an over-all one, to cater for all community needs for the multiple service provided by forests - from timber supply to forest recreation. In Queensland, for instance, both National Forests and National Parks are managed and protected by one authority, viz. the Queensland Forest Service, each for its dedicated purpose.

Even managed forests contribute amenity, as for instance, although in Europe the primitive Oak and Beach forests no longer exist, the man-made pine woods

still occasion poetry. The New South Wales policy, however, would be to retain primitive areas within the pattern of protected woodlands. The Bush Walking Clubs could help best by defining areas of scenic content worthy of retention in the primitive."

EXTRACTS FROM A LONDON LETTER - IRA BUTLER

LONDON. So this is London, a great big dirty place with narrow winding streets. Have not been very favourably impressed so far. The more I see of other places the more I think Australia's a very fine place. We got across the Atlantic all right, but didn't see it - have not seen it yet.

Wandered round tonight with Noel Butlin. Got partly lost in the blackout. Wandered into a low pub down by the Thames, had two pints of "bitter" and a game of darts. Saw some real English life. Am at the Savoy at the moment - a most palatial hostelry with a bathroom (in our suite) nearly as large as our Melbourne living room - all in chromium and marble and with telephone, etc. A garish place designed for the exploitation of Indian princes, European diplomats and Americans. Intend to move tomorrow.

Met all the notables today. We are being given the big hand in a big way. We start work in real earnest after tomorrow. So far we have only been making the preliminary arrangements and have had some time for seeing the place.

Last night I went and saw London's best opera company (Sadlers) play The Bartered Bride. It was beautifully done and I enjoyed every bit of it. Had dinner at a cafe in Piccadilly afterwards and then had some fun getting home via tube. Capped the evening by forgetting to draw the blackout curtains and was visited by an A.R.P. man and a policeman.

One certainly isn't encouraged to eat in London, but if one goes to the right places the food is quite good and in reasonable quantity if not variety. We found an interesting cafe in Soho the other day - the Comedy. The old chap who waited on us was like a waiter out of a comedy film and I could hardly refrain from open laughter every time he addressed us. We had a pint of beer served in huge glasses and a reasonable three course meal all very attractively prepared and in adequate quantity. We were eventually bowed out by our waiter, the head waiter, and the doorkeeper.

Today (Sunday) I went to Maidenhead with Noel Butlin. We had a meal and paid a brief visit to a pub for a pint of bitter. There were some lasses there wearing gold crosses, having repaired to the pub on their way home from church. Took a boat and rowed up the Thames - about as wide as the Yarra at Studly Park - plenty of boats, barges, swans - very beautiful really. We rowed up for a couple of hours through two locks, each lock raising us some five or six feet higher up. Beautiful white swans about the river everywhere, and one had a family of five large dirty grey cygnets. Many large houses had frontages right to the water's edge - and there were plenty of notices, as around Melbourne - Private Property, KEEP OUT. We had a short walk ashore to the top of a small hill, and got a good view of a typical English countryside with a stretch of the Thames in front of us with yachts on it. Low hills with ploughed fields, and green fields with cows, and then a village snugly and snugly nestling among trees by the river. A pleasant landscape, but a rather self-satisfied one. A grim note to the peaceful landscape was the hundreds of bombers passing overhead to and from the continent, and the vapour trails weaving across the sky. It was a beautiful sunny day and we exposed our chests to the warm English sun. Some girls were in bathing costume and we saw one man actually swimming.

Am getting to see more of London, bit by bit. During a walk yesterday evening the number of churches either built by Wren or in his style was most obvious. So far they are the most pleasing features of London architecture I have seen. Some of them are only shells now but their bell-towers are generally intact and front view they look complete. St. Clemens is just in front of Australia House - you know, Oranges and Lemons the bells of St. Clemens. That's what's wrong with London - most of its charm derives from the history and literature of the place rather than from its nature. Remember the early scenes in Pygmalion - some church pillars in front of a market place. We passed by that yesterday - a dirty smellful place like Haymarket.

Saw some fruit barrows yesterday. Peaches at 4/- each, - not such wonderful peaches either. Grapes at 2/6 per quarter lb. I bought a couple of them and they were quite good. Some small apples were more reasonable at 8d a lb.

I still expect to be back in Australia by the end of the year.

Cheerio IRA

LETTERS FROM THE LADS AND LASSES

Chas. Jones. New Guinea. 11.8.44. I wish to express my thanks to you for the number of papers and magazines I consistently receive from your committee. The arrival of my own club magazine is always particularly welcome as in it I am able to read of the doings of the club and its members among places I know.

Sometimes of an evening in that quiet half hour before darkness falls I lean against the tent pole and contemplate the surrounding scene so different from the places featured in the "Bushwalker". Seldom I am afraid, does my walking instinct drive me to climb the hills which lie around us. The native villages in the hills are the cause of several disturbances and walking in those parts is frowned upon.

At present I am camped in a huge valley flanked by incredible steep kunai covered hills. I always thought the slopes of Mr. Mouin were steep but the slopes around here exceed them.

The valley itself is of interest to geologists but in the absence of Grace Edgecombe I am a layman to such a huge subject. The river flow has reversed many times I think and the valley has been tilted laterally I think making the river run over what was previously the side of the valley. It is this lateral tilting which is the cause of the terrifically steep hill sides.

Recently I had to survey a line for a road around one bluff which jutted out into the river. Whilst on this job I learned the truth of some wise acre's observation that there are only two types of hills in New Guinea, "perpendicular", they go straight down and "slantindicula" they lean outwards!

Scrambling around the bluff itself was no mean feat as I soon discovered. Accompanied by a few natives I began the journey but after a while I decided there was no future in that form of entertainment. No sir! When the natives too failed to gain a grip I decided (having in the meantime mentally checked the fact that I was not wearing Bushwalker badge) to beat a strategic withdrawal.

Later by dint of ropes and toe holds we managed to get around the offending rock face but I am sure many walks programmes will come and go before I join a "rock climbing" walk.

Earlier in my stay in New Guinea I was fortunate to spend a while in the area around Wau, Edie Creek and Bulolo. As you may know this area lies roughly eighty miles south of Lae and about thirty miles inland from Salamau on the coast.

Pre-war this area was accessible only by plane and was considered the "Garden of New Guinea". Wau itself is about 4,000 feet above the sea and enjoys a delightful climate. In appearance it is like some parts of the South Coast around Jamberoo, Robertson and Cambewarra. Massive ranges flank the basin in which Wau nests and it is on one such range to the west of Wau that Edie Creek lies.

As one begins the ascent the famous trail is seen along which the Japs made their near-victorious drive on Wau in the beginning of last year. Further east can be seen the gaps in the tree line where Australian batteries "plastered" the Jap batteries brought up from Salamau.

Further up the road, before it swings west into the Edie Creek valley, one can see the broad Markham valley around Nadzab and Lae. We were fortunate on most occasions in that we had clear days in which to appreciate the view.

At Edie Creek begins the now famous Bulldog road on which this company had the honour, dubious or otherwise, of working. A triumph of man's ingenuity and tenacity of purpose it gives no indication of the forces involved in its beginning at Edie Creek. Like an old rutted by-way in a country shire it winds its way westward to cross the Owen Stanleys at 9800 feet to penetrate the weird mossy forest and finally to wind its way along the sides of precipitous gorges till it finally reaches Bulldog on the Lakakamu River which eventually flows into the Gulf of Papua north of Moresby.

This narrow, dangerous road was to be the life line of Australia had the push on Lae and Nadzab failed last September. As the fortunes of war so decided the Bulldog Road was never destined to play that part.

I am afraid I have let my head go as the lads would say. Still it would have been a poor show had I baldly stated my thanks in one sentence so I hope my literary meanderings have not taken up too much of what must be valuable time to you.

Up here with time on one's hands at night the pen and letter feature large in our lives. Once upon a time I used to write about one letter a month, since being in the army and up here in particular, I have developed that form of activity to an annoying (to the addressee) degree.

Jack Adams - England - 28.6.44. Glad to hear from you and now I know that my mail to the B.S.C. is up to date. Noted many interesting items about fellow bushwalkers but must admit that I have not had the pleasure of meeting many of them - shall no doubt make up for that on return to a "Sunburnt country". Though we have had a week of glorious weather about a month ago, in which I went swimming three days running, it has been dull and wet quite often which has held up our flying. Managed to get a few more ops in to Duisberg and Dartmond, bombing marshalling yards in the Ruhr or "Happy Valley", Boulogne gun batteries, 6" guns at Ouistreham at dawn on D-Day, bombing just before H-Hour. We could see the invasion fleet creeping in beneath the broken cloud and were proud to give them a hand. Returning from a quiet leave to blast Le Havre docks and R.yards at Valenceinnes and now that Jerry is sending over R.F.B. (rocket propelled bomba) we have concentrated on their launching sites. One daylight raid was quite a novelty. 4 more ops to do and tour completed. Did you get away to Beecroft Peninsula?

And again on 3 th August. Writing once again to let you know that I am most definitely in the land of the living and will be for some considerable time. Here's the reason, tour completed 7th July with 3 mining, 15 German and 11 French targets. Post-tour leave of 14 days. Perthshire was really splendid. Fine weather and good grub and I thought strawberries as big as two bob and real ice cream was almost too much for my constitution so long deficient of such luxuries! Tried my hand at a bit of climbing and really appreciated a scramble over Mt. Blair scaring a stag en route, probably owing to my scant shorts and finally a magnificent panorama of lochs, valley of Glenisla and the wild and woolly highlands of Glenslea.