

THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to
the Sydney Bushwalker, The N.S.W. Nurses'
Association Rooms "Northcote Building,"
Reiby Place, Sydney.

Box No. 4476, GPO, Sydney. 'Phone 843985.

Editor - Bob Duncan, CSIRO, Camden. Camden 69251
(B)

Business Manager - Alex Colley.

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THE JANUARY GENERAL MEETING.

J. Brown.

Traditionally a tranquil and poorly attended meeting, January was rather more animated than usual, beginning with a welcome to Greg Reading, and a belated how d'you do to Jerry Sinzig, whose membership is several months old.

Only one matter arising from the Minutes was of significance - John Scott would be very glad to give us the keys of his home for a Christmas get-together, and we were told it would be discussed in General Business. Correspondence was almost equally docile, with a news item that the Premier regretted the delay in bringing down National Parks legislation - due mainly to the complexity of the proposed Act and pressure of other Parliamentary business.

Gordon Redmond was away in hospital, but a report of financial doings was rendered, showing the usual outgoing financial trend for this time of the year and the closing balance down to about £209 of ready funds.

The walks report also reflected the inactive Christmas time trend. Several coastal jaunts, including one to Nadgee, took place over the holidays and for the rest December was distinguished by a party of 22 on a Li-Lo trip along the Wollongambe, a fairly numerous day walk led by Gordon Redmond in National Park, and a party of 11 on Geoff Wagg's Kowmung River jaunt.

There being no Social report, we looked at Federation's bulletin, which indicated that, after an approach by Lands Department officials, a certain land owner in Megalong Valley seemed quite prepared to do the decent thing about walkers using the Six Foot Track. It was also recorded that the coastal track from Marley to Wattamolla had been cleared, that Slack's Stairway at Wentworth Falls was safe for experienced walkers (if not tourists), that Lennox Bridge in the Blue Mountain foothills was to be replaced, and a Department of Information film on Australian sports would have advice from a Federation representative.

So already we were at General Business, with the night only a pup. Some announcements reminded Club officers to report on the particular activities for the Annual Report, while members generally were told that they must put forward any proposed constitutional amendments for the February Committee meeting.

Then we were on to the vexed question of the Christmas party and what should be done with it. Alex Colley formally proposed accepting John Scott's invitation to hold it at his Clontarf home and if the weather was fine, it should be quite roomy enough: if wet, probably 50 would be the comfortable limit.

Frank Ashdown felt this matter should be held over to a more representative meeting and one voice grieved what problems would occur if the weather was not fine, but the motion was carried, leading to another Ashdown motion that some charge be made to cover incidental costs.

This motion underwent a sequence of changes and amendments, and without tracing all the pro and con of it perhaps enough to say that it was altered to include the costs of catering and such other costs as considered necessary by the Social Secretary. In that form it finally received the Club's endorsement. The catering cost just sneaking by with the very minimum of a majority.

A separate motion proposing that the Bush Music Club be sought to provide the instrumentation lapsed for a second.

So we came to another major event of the year - deciding where to hold the Reunion and we were solemnly reminded of the lack of wood at Woods Creek. Nominations were invited and there was a ghastly silence - apparently there was nothing new to offer. Eventually one brave member spoke up and nominated Woods Creek.

Then there were no more nominations. Jack Wren said each person who voted for Woods Creek was voting to assist in bringing wood from the hills. However, with nothing else to vote for, the result was beyond doubt.

The question of an alternative site was discussed - and Long Angle Gully, Burning Palms and Euroka in that order were proposed. The final vote went to Burning Palms if we were cut off from Woods Creek by fire, flood or other disaster.

Now came another unexpected bit of business, Snow Brown said the prospect of securing a bit of Bendethera seemed to be chancy. Perhaps we could consider other areas. For instance, on a holiday walk down the coast from Merry Beach to Pebbly Beach quite a few attractive seashore places were seen. If any of these were private property it may be worth while setting up a committee to find if any areas were for sale and within our price range.

Jack Wren suggested the area of search should be extended to embrace some interesting coastline several miles north of Merry Beach, around Meroo Point. Mick Elfick said if we could find nothing reasonably priced now, we would certainly not do so in a few years.

The motion was carried and a committee of Snow Brown (convenor) George Gray, Mick Elfick, Ron Knightley and Bob Duncan appointed, with power to co-opt.

Nan Bourke rose to say that only 2 families presented themselves at the Christmas Kiddies Treat. Did the Club want these affairs and would the Club circularise members to find why they did not attend. Frank Ashdown could see no reason for asking people - if they did not take advantage of the item on the programme, it should be withdrawn.

Alex Colley said it might do better in the form of a walk, such as the one recently organised by Leah Brooks. After more views on the desirability of canvassing Club opinion, the meeting grew jaded and decided it was no use asking opinions and the question was lost.

Then surprisingly, it seemed that it was already 9.50 p.m. the meeting had gone on for almost $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours and it was high time it was over - and it was.

T E N T S

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A GRAND TOUR OF MEGALONG VALLEY

Wombat

Two years ago I went on a trip, led by Wilf Hilder, cascading down the granite section of the Cox. It was mighty, shooting rapids, sliding slippery dips, and bombing little waterfalls. Clearly, people are idiots to rush off to the Kowmung, the Tuross, and all those places with such fabulous and neglected cascading territory close at home, and this year I determined to lead a Cox cascading trip myself.

I mustered seven starters:- me, Don Finch, Bill O'Neil, Jerry Sinzig, Kerry Hore, Terry Nol, and Terry No.2; we had more Terrys, Kerrys and Jerrys than Sydney Hospital. We left the cars at the apple pie and ice-cream shop on Megalong Road, and walked west across Megalong valley, along a road, until we hit the Cox at the beginning of the granite section, about seven miles upstream from Megalong Creek junction. An unpleasant fact, which had slightly worried me, but which I had hitherto kept submerged in my subconscious, now came to the surface. When I had cascaded the Cox with Wilf Hilder, Sydney had had 80 inches of summer rain; this year its had about 80 points. The Cox was not a torrent cascading over granite sills and boulders, but a series of puddles and dry sandbanks.

I was disgusted, but the others, who apparently had not been expecting the Cox to be in flood, seemed to think it was OK, and to enjoy ambling down the river. It was hot, and some newer members were worried about drinking Cox's water; I was able to assure them that it was quite alright; I've been drinking it for years. We found a few deep pools, and swam in each, and then ambled on to the next. This lazy way, we reached Megalong junction about 5 or 6 o'clock.

It was clear to me that we would have somehow to make amends for the lazy day, and I resolved that next day we would walk up the six foot track, up Mitchell's Creek, onto Narrow Neck, along Narrow Neck to Coral Swamp, down Red Ledge to the Valley again, and then back to the cars. That night two weak members of the party were affected by Cox's water, and spent more time in the bushes than in their sleeping bags.

Next morning, Sunday, I roused the party at sparrow chirp and, after breakfast, we pushed up the 6' track at a fair clip. We reached the Megalong ford in good time, and without being shot by Paddy Donkin, but then a delay occurred. The party wished to swim in the pool behind the ford. Although we had a long trip ahead of us, and no time to waste, I decided it would be shrewd leadership to allow them a quick dip; it was a blistering hot day. After 5 minutes I jumped out, and gave the

word for the party to shoulder their packs for the long climb onto Narrow Neck. Now an incredible thing occurred; it amounted to mutiny. The party remained cavorting around in the water, more like hippopotamuses than decent bushwalkers. After about half an hour trying to reason with them, I saw that it was hopeless; it was mutiny. I collected the only two bushwalkers in the whole party, Kerry Hore and Jerry Sinzig, and we set off up Mitchell's Creek.

What a contrast these two were, to the ragtag we had left behind: intelligent, good-looking, purposeful walkers. Mitchell's Creek was fabulous; while the rest of the country roasted under a blazing sun, we walked through clear pebbly pools, under shady angophoras and peppermint gums. We lunched beside a swimming hole, just before the creek began to rise steeply. Then after lunch we began the exciting scramble under boulders, and over cascades, which took us to the fairy glen, at the head of the creek, with its waterfall, deep swimming pools, caves and rain forest. Truly Mitchell's Creek is one of the most delightful in the Blue Mountains. From this glen the tops of Narrow Neck are reached by climbing a coachwood tree, into which nails have been driven. We were on the tops about three o'clock; the success of the trip was assured.

We raced along Narrow Neck, waded through the Coral Swamp tussocks, and stood on the lip of Coral Falls. "Yow!" said Jerry "What cliffs!" "A non-bushwalker would think it impossible to get down here."

"Yet, to the experienced, its quite easy", I replied "There's a crack over to the left of the falls which leads right down."

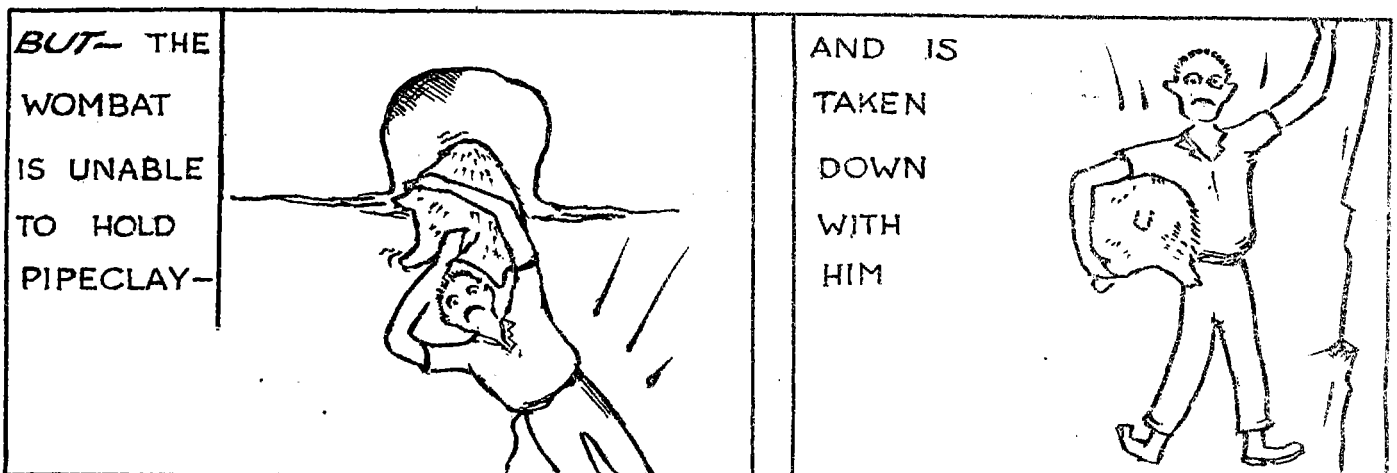
We walked left, i.e. south, along the cliff line and came to the crack. It was impossible to get down; completely overhung. We walked to the next crack; equally impossible. We walked to the next, quite a sizeable gully, and after much searching found a route which had obviously been used before. This took us down to a fairly narrow red ledge. We followed the ledge around some distance to the South, but it gave out. We came back to our gully. It looked as if we might get down this to a lower ledge, but it looked slow going and it was getting late. It was a bitter decision, but we elected to be prudent, to climb back onto the tops, walk back along Narrow Neck, and go down Dickson's Ladders. A good leader does not venture into unknown territory late in the afternoon.

We did all this, and sunset found us walking along Nellies Glen road towards Megalong Road, with 4 miles to go to the cars. Then we had a good idea. By cutting cross-country through the bush we could make it two miles bee-line. We pushed off into the scrub; the going was rough, but in any country 2 miles couldn't take long. The grain of the ridges kept cutting across the direction in which we wanted to walk, and the

scrub was shocking, but we kept on. Just on dark we came to a really large gully; we studied our map by torchlight, and decided that this must be Back Creek, and that if we could cross it before total darkness fell the worst of our troubles would be over.

We stumbled down and down, and then up and up onto the next ridge, only to see an even larger gully ahead. Clearly we were hopelessly bushed. The only thing to do now was to head back in the direction from which we had come. We stumbled South-West along the ridge in the darkness, and luckily it was a good one; in about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour it led us back to the Nellies Glen road, about 100 yards from where we had left it. We walked along the road to the Megalong Road junction, and there we left Kerry and the packs, while we raced on to get the cars. We were all in the cars by 10.30 p.m. I was home by 1 a.m., Kerry and Jerry were home by 2.

L'il Sweetie Nuggetheart.



CONTINUED

DAY WALKS

- Feb.14 West Head - Flint and Steel - Great Mackerel Beach - West Head.
10 miles.
Some fine views of Broken Bay and the Hawkesbury Estuary from West Head. Steep down to Flint and Steel and steep up from Mackerel Beach to West Head.
As private transport is to be used, contact Stuart Brooks on 496262 (H) for details.
- Feb.21 Heathcote - Lake Eckersley - Heathcote. (Swimming Carnival)
6 miles.
A short walk to be followed by the Swimming Carnival at Lake Eckersley (Woronora River) under the able direction of Brian Harvey.
Train: 8.20 a.m. Cronulla train from Central Electric Station.
Tickets: Heathcote return @ 5/6.
Map: Port Hacking Military or Heathcote Primitive Area.
Leader: Brian Harvey.
- Feb.21 Mt. Banks - Claustral Canyon - Mt. Banks. 6 miles.
As rope work and swimming are involved in this romp through Claustral Canyon, consult the leader, Dot Butler, for details and transport arrangements. Telephone 482208 (H).
- Feb.28 Helensburgh - Burg Track - Era Beach - Burning Palms Beach - Palm Jungle - Otford. 12 miles.
An interesting walk through the Garrawarra National Park involving a climb over part of the Illawarra Range.
Train: 8.42 a.m. Wollongong train from Central Steam Station.
Tickets: Otford return @ 8/-.
Map: Port Hacking Tourist.
Leader: Ron Knightley.
- Mar.7. No day walk has been offered for this date on the forthcoming walks programme at the time of going to press. See the new Walks Programme, when issued, for details.

THE BUSHWALKER AND SOCIETY III.

The "Sydney Bushwalker" has been fortunate to obtain permission to reproduce the 1964 BBC Marlborough Memorial Lecture by the Hon. Gordon Lyon -

"A Retort to Those who would say
that Vice is Nice".

This lecture appears on page 16 of this issue.



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A 430-MILE WEEKEND MOTOR TRIP AROUND BROKEN HILL.

Peter Cameron

Eight of us met at the Zinc Batch at 8 p.m. Friday to board our 1954 Vauxhall Ute for the weekend trip. We were Chris and Brian, two N.Z. geologists: Dave a geologist from Queensland: Fred and wife Toni, geologists: Craig, an engineer: and me, the lone metallurgist. We headed out along the Tibocburra road. It soon turned to dirt, sand, gravel and one lane, but was quite sound with no hidden potholes. Trees became fairly scarce; the plains were covered mainly by small clumps of saltbush. The breeze in the back of the ute was keen, the night sky very clear and the moon almost full, so it was very pleasant. Quite a few roos were out but not too many rabbits or sheep. After about 30 miles we turned off the road onto Mootwingee Station. We crossed the Station for about 15 miles, and there were many gates to open. Mootwingee Wildlife Refuge, for which we were heading, is in the Barrier Ranges. We arrived at the Refuge and found a sandy creek in which to sleep.

The sun woke us all around 5 a.m., so after a quick breakfast we were off; the track to the aboriginal paintings followed the creek and was quite shady. The paintings were rather simple; the main one being a snake some 20 ft. long. All are in large overhangs in a very rocky and barren area. Other paintings were mainly hands arranged in what appeared to be hieroglyphic order.

From the top of the cave the view is fairly typical of this country - wide flat plains with creeks outlined by lines of trees. Where ridges protrude there is a fair amount of red dust which seems to collect behind them.

Moving off from the paintings, we went to see the hand carvings which literally cover the hillsides. The carvings mostly depicted roos, emus, and goannas. The nearby rock holes disappointed all of us, as they were full of sand, and not the crystal clear water we have found elsewhere.

After this we moved off to find the area of fossils, about 6 miles away in a direct line, but as it turned out, about 60 miles by road. The sun was not hot and the hot searing wind gusts felt as if they had come from an oven. The road was covered in wind-blown sand. We sighted several roos, some with Joey alongside, and one lot of 8 emus. We turned into Gralta station, and there we were invited to swim in the tank. We jumped in, much to the disgust of the cattle drinking from it, who promptly left. Down a few feet the water was freezing, but a few minutes out in the sun was enough to make you jump in and look for the cold patches again. The boss advised us against going to the fossil area; it was 20 miles out and the road was covered in sand.

We took his advice, and after another dip were off to White Cliffs. The country was now of a coarse quartz sand with an occasional salt bush. A number of sandy creek crossings presented little difficulty but sheep would insist on running in front of the car and then tripping in their effort to get off the road. It was dark now, and we were worried that we might go through White Cliffs without seeing it, but when we arrived both lights were shining brightly:- the general store and the pub. The other buildings are 2 houses, a post office, a hospital, and a hall. Beer is 3/- a can here, but bitter lemon is only 1/6, all ice cold. The temperature in the bar was still 95. Craig and I took a short wander through the town, and had a yarn with a half-caste stockman who had been born and bred under the one roof there.

In its heyday White Cliffs had 5,000 people digging furiously for opals. Most lived in dugouts to escape the heat. Then the place almost died; 3 of the 4 pubs closed, and the permanent population dipped to about 12. Now White Cliffs is moving again, and the population is growing rapidly. Big earthmovers are the order of the day, instead of pick and shovel. One team of 7 has come from Adelaide with a £15,000 trench digger which will carve a hole 20 ft. deep by 3 feet wide by 2 million miles long.

The opals occur in veins in clayey dirt, and they are there alright. One lone prospector found £60 worth over New Year; a bulldozing crowd netted somewhere between £3,000 and £30,000 in December, but for taxation or other reasons they shut up like clams when asked exactly how much. But its not all easy money, they work long hours 7 days a week, and even after the bulldozer has dug the dirt it still has to be sifted and searched for opal by hand.

That night we moved out to the Government Tank, about 2 miles out. This collects water from a creek, if and when it rains. It is about 80 yards square, and at present 27' deep; it is 40' when full!

Next morning we visited the dug-out section of the town. We inspected the dugout of the crew with the new £15,000 trench digger. Boy, what a place! - all the mod. cons, flywire doors, kitchen stove, sink, fridge, shower, beds. In making this they first hosed out an old dugout to settle the dust. Then the walls and ceiling were spray-painted white, and lino laid on the floor - carpet in the bedrooms.

We left White Cliffs for Wilcannia. At the Government tank on the way out, there were a few gum trees full of galahs, white cockatoos, and budgies. These birds are fairly common in the outback. The country was now red soil covered with rocks, which gave a thick coating of dust to everything. After about 20 miles we saw some vegetation, first salt-bush and then clumps of sally gums. It was getting hotter and hotter, and our throats drier, and the murky White Cliffs water really started to taste terrific.

Wilcannia was seen first as a row of trees which line the Darling. The Darling is about 50 yards wide at present and about 60 ft below the banks which are fairly steep. It flows fairly fast for its length - about 2 m.p.h. an easy swim will just keep you in the same place. The temperature in the shade was 100° but this seemed cool after being out in the sun.

After much swimming and repairing of the Ute, the weather turned dirty, and the sky filled with dust, thunder, and lightning. Visibility went down to about 100 yards, and then it rained for about 15 minutes, during which half the annual rainfall fell.

We soon left the dust and rain and returned to sunshine with all its heat and fire. Wilcannia is 125 miles from Broken Hill - almost due East on a dead straight road, so we were driving straight into the sun. The country is still dry, but plenty of saltbush grows on which the sheep seem to thrive. The buggy put up a good fight and we covered the trip without major incident. On the last 50 miles of bitumen we travelled flat out at 47 m.p.h. The Barrier ranges seem quite high as they protrude from the plains - they are 1500 ft. above sea-level; the plains are 200 ft. We arrived at Broken Hill about 7 p.m; the temperature under the Argent St. awnings registered 93° on the B.P. thermometer.

S O C I A L N O T E S F O R

F E B R U A R Y.

Paul Barnes needs no introduction to the majority of S.B.W's. on 17th February, under the title of "4,000 Acres for 2,000,000 People" he'll be talking to us about the Heathcote Primitive Area. Several of our own club members have been doing most valuable work in this Area and what they have been doing and intend doing will be of interest to the club.

On 24th February there will be another popular Members' Slide Night. Although the number of slides is limited to twenty per person, bring a few more just in case the number of contributions is less than anticipated.

THE FIRST GANGERANG WALK
(Another famous historic walk)

Maxwell Gentle.

After visiting Kanangra Walls, via Gingra, in August, 1928, my next abition was to walk over the Gangerang Range. On joining the Sydney Bush Walkers in 1929, I learnt that this range was unknown to club members, and the data given on available maps was very limited.

While fellow member, Myles Dunphy, tempted me with descriptions of the Upper Kowmung gorge, somehow the rugged heights of Gangerang proved the greater attraction.

A Burragorang cattleman, Michael Maxwell, had been on part of the Gangerang, and information given by him indicated the best places to climb the range, and its low cliffs, also where water might be found.

While I was on a Friday evening train journey on Eight Hour Weekend, 1929, a chance meeting with Gordon Smith, at Valley Heights, resulted in having company on my Gangerang walk, instead of going alone.

I knew that Gordon would see the distance because he was 50 miles champion road walker of Australia. Needless to say we made good progress on the walk out from Wentworth Falls that night, to our camp site at Sunset Rock. No tent, blankets or sleeping bags were carried and we slept on a bed of leaves by a log fire. Fortunately the weather was fine and clear, and we made good time with our light packs, walking down Kedumba Pass next morning.

We reached our breakfast site on Cox's River at 8.30 a.m., and the Cox-Kowmung junction at 12 noon.

At 2.30 p.m. on Saturday afternoon we commenced to climb the Gangerang Range, from a point one mile further up the Cox. The ridge was at first a lightly timbered grassy slope, and rose very steeply for about 1,400 feet, then becoming boulder strewn, with thicker undergrowth. A low cliff with a cave was skirted here, being similar to the rocks on the adjacent Mt. Kookem. A fine view opened out up the Cox gorge, as far as the "Konangaroo Creek" area, mentioned in Surveyor Govett's writings, and its western tributary, rising near the "highest land", called by the Blacks of his time (if the word can be written as they pronounced it) "Kuo-uogang".

About four miles from our viewpoint could be seen the low cliffs of Gangerang plateau, and so we continued to ascend the ridge we were on, which was seen swinging more to the southwest, in that direction.

Our route lay through a thick forest of Turpentine and Eucalyptus saplings, but we sometimes enjoyed a glimpse of the mountain country northward to Mt. Mouin and Clear Hill. One of the best views was looking down Little Ti-willa Creek and across the Kowmung River to Byrnes Gap, and Tonalli Range.

Nightfall found us camped on a bed of leaves by a log fire, and we each had a two quart billy of water, which we had carried up from the river.

At daybreak next morning we continued walking along the thickly timbered flat topped ridge, which soon commenced to rise steeply, and eventually reached the foot of the low cliffs of sandstone and conglomerate.

A way up was found through a break in these cliffs (Gentle's Pass) on the Ti-willa Creek side, and then, after walking a mile on a lightly timbered, stony ridge on the plateau, a stop was made for breakfast by a running stream, in a swampy upland gully.

Later we walked southward over a slight rise, and then across the main marsh of the plateau, in the direction of a high hill, which we then thought to be the Gangerang peak. On reaching its crest we could see higher land ahead, and further progress was temporarily halted by a precipitous canyon, which a creek from the marsh had cut right through the ridge we were on (a geographical rarity).

This creek was later to be named "Dex Creek," and the high hill "Mt. Bolwarra". The view west extended across the Kanangra gorge, while eastward could be seen the grassy flats of the Lower Cox Valley.

After crossing Dex Creek, a well defined quartzite ridge led us along to the highest point of the range (Mt. Cloudmaker) at 12 noon, where marvellous views opened out over Kanangra gorge, and the famous walls, glowing in the sunlight.

The ridge then became very spectacular, and ran westward, resembling a great heap of boulders, coming to a point on top. It dipped and rose again about three times, and then swung southward. After a series of dips and knobs, the rock hopping over the very hard type of quartzite became easier, and the now grassy ridge descended steeply to Gabes Gap, the lowest saddle on the range in this section. From this gap it was possible to look west down a dry creek bed to Kanangra Creek, while a gully with tree ferns dropped down on the east side to Gingra Creek.

A very steep climb followed and presently we came to the foot of Craft's Wall, which we avoided, by keeping on its east side. After passing a number of caves, formed by the overhanging walls, we found

ourselves on the main ridge again, which, after less than a mile, ended under the Walls of Kanangra Tops. A break in the walls, 100 yards to the south, provided a way up. This was later to be named "Smith's Pass". From there it was easy going west past Mt. Maxwell and over a narrow neck to the iron ladder.

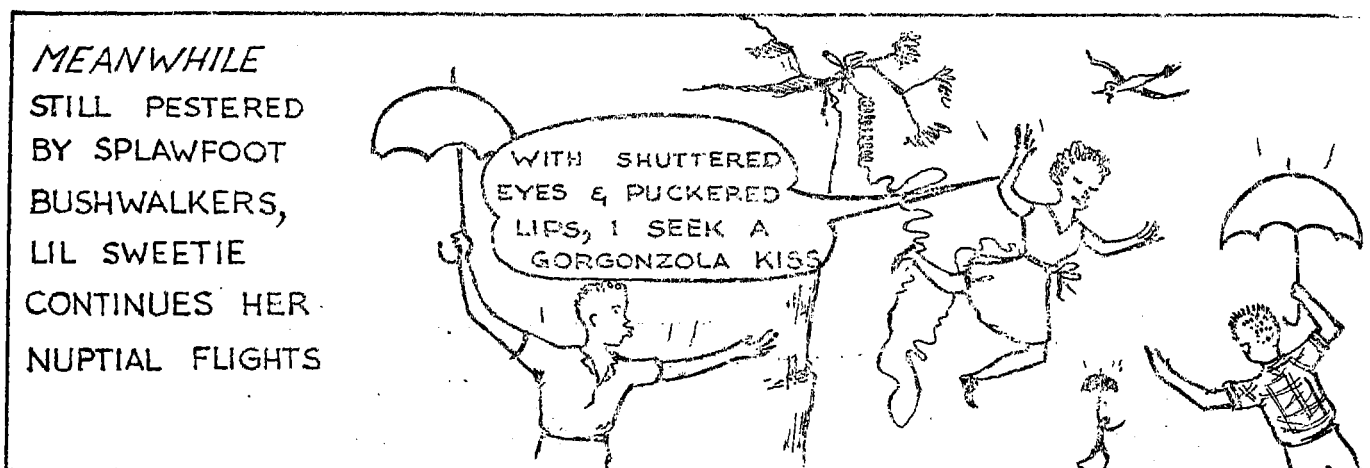
Our campsite for the night, in the cave with the dance platform, was reached at 4 p.m. a little over a day's walk from the Cox-Kowmung junction.

On Monday morning Gordon was more at ease, walking along the old cart track to Jenolan Caves. We passed through the Grand Arch there at 1.30 p.m., and continued walking along the road for another 11 miles before being given a ride in a service car to Mt. Victoria, in time to catch the 7.15 p.m. train to Sydney.

Thus ended a good three days walk, but the next few months saw the first ascent of Mt. Paralyser and Thurat, the first visit to Mt. Guouogang, and the first walk along Yellow Dog.

I remember standing on Mt. Moorilla, after a spell of torrential rain, in June 1930, when the view from there was really a picture, as it included five big waterfalls on the side of Thurat, which are not usually running. Next day, the first descent of Ti-willa Buttress was made.

It was good to walk along the well defined ridges of this predominantly quartzite country. The experience gained in bushwalking there was essential to us in 1931, when we ventured into a relatively dry Capertee-Colo area, which is only partly surveyed, but otherwise of rugged sandstone country, deeply intersected by precipitous ravines.



CONTINUED

SEKS

SEKS