

ISSUE No 10

Walks



&



Talks

G.R.

WALKS AND TALKSThe Magazine ofTHE BUSH CLUB.

By the time all the readers of "Walks and Talks" receive this issue, the Bush Club Annual Party and Dance will be over and just remain in the memory until next year again. It is to be hoped it is really a successful night.

Quite a few (enough for the next issue) articles are in hand at the present. Thanks to all the contributors and do not worry if your article is not in this issue as it will appear in the next, October, 1958. However, the Editor will be pleased to see the articles still coming in as it is better to have too many than not enough.

As quite a few of you now know, the Annual Meeting of the Bush Club is being held on Saturday, 23rd August. We look forward to seeing quite a number of members there to participate in the election of new office bearers for the smooth running of the Club affairs.

Welcome to the many new members now in the Club. It would be good to see some new members on the Committee from the new election. If nominated for election to a position they should not worry, as a few of the older members will show them the ropes and help them over the first hurdles, I am sure. Personally, I shall not sit for Social Secretary if nominated as I have quite a few new commitments for the future and could not keep up the work. However, I shall be only too happy to help the new Social Secretary if needed in any way I can. I'm sure this applies to all positions.

Editor: (Mrs.) Helene Longton, Lower Ground Floor Flat, 538 Bourke St., Moore Park.

US BUSHWALKERS.

By Nance Stillman.

"ALL the world is queer save thee and me, – and even thee"
Well, Mug, come in out of the wet, aren't you a BUSHWALKER?

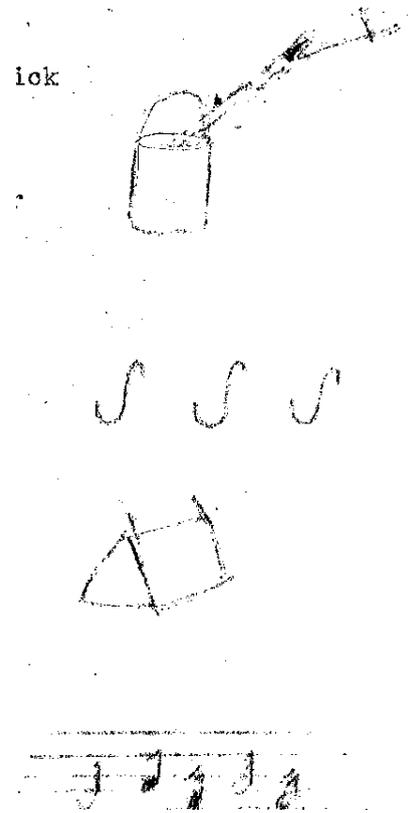
One of us is tall and lean, a most Estimable man.
He stirs a mess of goo in a can with a long long stick
and gazing benignly around him the while he
oft-times sucks the end of the stick with relish.
At last one suck discloses, so it seems,
That the goo is now delectable - So this character
removes it from the fire and smothers it with
Golden Honey, then squatting on his long lean hams,
he disposes of it.

Yet another is much pre-occupied with billy-hooks.
His conversation is always to the point
But drifts back and back to bull ants!
A painful subject. But he has a noble quality
of looking after tail-enders.

There is another, always ready first to leave,
whose pack is always neat, his tent well set.
Looking more at ease than most, he leans back
comfortably against his pack, close by the fire
where he watches the others as they spill and
burn their menus.

And there is a Ballad singer, who sometimes affects
A shirt with fringes. He occasionally munches into
exciting looking rissoles.

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And still another who could well be named a Pathfinder,
He pores over maps, he gazes North, South and Sunwards,
Then announces there is another two hours walking.
And many others crowd upon the scene.

One happy redhead – poor crazy thing, does not drink tea!
One, a large and cheerful type lugs a whopping pack containing,
One supposes, cupboards and shelves of things –
And he is always last – last to eat, to camp, to bed, to leave.
He is ominously interested in operations and fires.
Beware of him.



And yet another, a rose
numbers.
Fourteen beans, ten
soul
Who brought us books and
And one more who always
Or by a different route and
Is oft-times found
Across the creek from which he emerges and joins us on our
Homeward Way.



cheeked one who always cooks by
apricots. And the gadget man, a kindly
good refreshment.
comes by later train
schedule and
sheltering from sun or rain in a cave

And one who often walks alone for happy miles, just looking up
and looking down, and finding nests and pleasure in the marks
on Paths while others gather in a jumble stuttering out ideas,
and cluttering the tracks with culture.
Some must be first, some fast, some slow and cautious, others last. Lists and lists of
them - but the Hon. Ed. has had enough...

So chump, you see! Not mentioned here? Well don't stick out your chest
If you don't think you're queer, Maybe ... You're
Further round the bend than all the rest???

(4)



FEDERATION RE-UNION CAMPFIRE AT NORTH ERA, 1958.

By Frank Macken.

As usual the camp was attended by groups of bushwalkers, scouts and others interested. Upwards to 150 were present at the official campfire. Let me say from the outset that the smoothness of the organisation of the Re-union reflected credit on the Federation.

North Era we understand was selected as a site for its scenic beauty with cliffs and beaches, as well as for its accessibility coupled with a lack of firewood. This scarcity of firewood happily prevented much arduous collection of timber for the official campfire.

Still we (4 gents and 1 lady) were able to cook at our Bush Club fireplace by using old bootlaces, newspapers, dry grass, and a piece of rubber tyre found on the surf beach. Paul's socks were ejected from the fire when it was found that they clashed with the smell of the burning rubber.

From the opening of the official campfire at 8.00 pm with song leader, Paddy Pallin, in charge, it was obvious the Bush Club and other low brows were not wanted as showers of sparks and smoke were continually directed to where we sat, eventually forcing us out to the outskirts of the crowd, where we would not lower the standard of the gathering.

In other unhappier days when the camps comprised of ordinary types of bushwalkers from the common herd, the Federation campfires were the scenes of loud singing of the common popular well-known campfire songs interspersed with hilarious sketches. This year the quiet decorum and lack of noise or wild singing seemed a credit to Federation ethics, and not to apathy we hope. Here a much better tone was set by the distribution of really well printed song sheets on quality paper, which included many not so well-known English folk songs, ballads or what have you. Some of these songs Paddy Pallin seemed

to sing as a solo with half hearted assistance from those high brows who had some musical training.

The academic standard of the meeting was further continued and enhanced by the S.B.W. with their lengthy singing of the works of Gilbert and Sullivan set to suitable words for campfire entertainment. Quite well done too.

Despite interruptions at times with Frank calling for "Jailhouse Rock" and Paul wanting the "Wild Colonial Boy", also requests for "Click go the Shears" from Dave and Gordon, there was but little lowering of the standard set for the concert. There were also requests for excerpts from Rigoletto, Faust, and Aida, but Paddy explained the grand piano had been mishandled during transport and was accidentally dropped over the Government Games Lookout.

Another endeavour was made to drive away those without musical appreciation by the constant playing of the bagpipes by a kilted Scot, who played so well that the tunes could even be recognised. He retired in a huff when requested to play "The Wearin o' the Green". Even this attempt did not drive us away although there was unrest and murmuring from our members. The gloom was partly dispelled by "Tarro", a historical bushwalker character of some 70 years who then took the floor, and for the moment it seemed that he would bring back nostalgic memories of gumleaves or songs of the wide open spaces. Tarro gave us an epic poem entitled "Steam" which was the new wonder of the 19th century. Tarro was given a great ovation from the crowd. God bless him.

Fortunately, there were no vulgar or hilarious sketches to mar the tone, lower the dignity, or waste the time of the meeting any further. And so, exhausted from the job of "Something attempted, something done", Paddy Pallin closed the meeting at 10 p.m. This was clearly an organised hint to all of us and sundry to quietly go to bed early. However, the hint was not taken seriously and we all stayed on to enjoy the free Federation supper of a chunk of bread with slabs of hot lamb from the barbecue pit, and also with much steaming cocoa. Very soon rumours flow round that the police had called in

looking for the lost sheep, but no-one know anything and the police had gone away again.

Later the highbrows continued singing in small subdued groups till after midnight. Even this was spoilt by the B.C. ganging up and singing frivolously "Click go the Shears" and other popular tunes.

True it was that we half expected some overstimulated, emotionally excited goons to rush through the camp all night waking the sleepers with shrieks of "Is everybody happy" and other battle cries as in bygone days. However, the high standard of dignity set at this campfire seemed to prevail, even in such things as not leaving bottles strewed all over the camp sites as in past times.

A rude shock came to us the morning after, when the "Treasurer" or something called on us all for 2/- each towards the cost of the free supper. As the supper had been a good one, we paid up under protest especially as we were allowed each to sign the bulky visitors book of the many years of past bush-walking reunions.

It was interesting to note the early signatures of Governor Macquarie and the famous aborigine character Bonolong, with the quaint visitor's comment, "Minetinkit plurry rum bin rot gutt". And so we went home from another re-union which was so quiet and so satisfactory too in many ways.

PS. At the time of going to press we are informed the incident of the police re the lost sheep was a hoax spread by the University Bushwalkers.

PPSS In the event of any allegation of libel real or fancied, it is stated that some of the happenings are more or less imaginary and perhaps bear little resemblance to the actual truth at times. For further information please contact the Bush Club honorary legal officer and not individual members.

COLO VALE WALK
19th April, 1958.

By Gordon Robinson.

This was an ordinary weekend walk that became a long weekend walk. We just stayed out later than we planned - a full day in fact.

Gus Pipe, Eckart Hill and myself left Sydney via train on Friday night at 5.20 pm and after changing trains at Picton arrived at Colo Vale at 9 pm. Filling our waterbags at the station we walked along the road for approximately ten minutes and decided to camp as the water bags were getting heavy.

Saturday morning we reluctantly emerged from our tents, cooked a pleasant breakfast and moved off at 8 am. It was a nice fine morning that showed signs of heat later in the day. Proceeding along the road we climbed Mt. Flora where we enjoyed some morning fruit. Then on again climbing Mt. Blatoh, following a long spur, then down a steep slope to the Natti River arriving at 11.45 am. The Natti River is a deeply cut, winding river making its way calmly between the sheer cliff faces with tall attractive oaks growing on small bank and islands in the river bed. The river is a series of pools of various depths with fast flowing shallow streams connecting with rocks of all sizes scattered about - nice to admire, torture for walking or stumbling along. We had lunch beside a large pool which was being supplied with water from three waterfalls which fell about twenty foot.

We spent a pleasant afternoon admiring our surroundings as we rock hopped down the river bed. We arrived at a large bushy flat area that we mistakenly thought was McArthur's Flats at 5.30 pm. We later worked out that we had covered $3 \frac{1}{2}$ miles in $3 \frac{1}{4}$ hours. A pleasant spot, a good tea, and an interesting series of debates around a warm campfire, a well earned sleep then it was Sunday morning.

After a leisurely breakfast, Eckart and I decided to explore downstream as we had some doubt as to whether we had arrived at McArthur's Flats. We walked

some distance but the river ran between sheer cliff faces so we returned to camp and tried upstream and found a track on the side of a spur that looked promising. Returning to camp we had lunch, packed and started up the track. After about a mile the track vanished. However, the scrub didn't look too bad so we continued on going higher until we came to a sheer cliff face. Quite interesting but as it was Sunday afternoon and getting late we looked upon it as a bit of a nuisance. We decided to follow the cliff face base back until we found a place where we could scramble up. We found likely passes but were met with disappointments. However, after some time we arrived on top by the newly named - Pipe Pass - to what we thought would be clear sailing. However, what should have been flat according to the map dropped steeply away. Spurs were in the wrong places. We looked at the landscape, we looked at the map, we looked at each other, and as it was getting dark decided to camp the night.

We could see the lights of Mittagong in the distance and took a compass bearing on the lights. I had peanuts and an orange for tea as we had no water. Monday morning we were up at 5.45 am, packed and away at 6 am. We walked across the top where we were on to a Lookout overlooking the Natti River. From the Lookout we could see Mt. Jellore, 2730 feet high, and by compass bearings of the Mittagong lights and Mt Jellore we established we were on Flat Top.

Everything became clear. The map makers weren't a bunch of idiots after all. Everything was where it should be except us. We didn't walk down the river far enough or else had climbed Flat Top instead of the point. Making our way across Flat Top we reached a Lookout where we could see Mt. Blatch and a farmhouse. Two hours walking and we were asking the farmer's wife for a cool drink of water. She offered to make some tea. We thanked her but decided to push on as we thought there may be a morning train.

However, while we were enjoying our sixth cup of water the farmer's wife told us there were some bushwalkers two days overdue at Easter. This

made us feel happier. We weren't the only idiots anyway. We cantered along the road to Colo Vale Post Office and informed loved ones that we were safe. The time was then 11.30 am and the next train left at 3.30 pm. After discussion we decided to give our stomachs some nourishment. Descending on the local store we loaded ourselves with food and made for the station. On the way much to my horror, the usually well mannered Gus devoured five oranges in approximately 200 yards. We just finished lunch and cleaned up when the train came. After changing trains at Picton we arrived in Sydney at 7 pm Monday night. I arrived home with the thought that I must go to McArthur's Flats sometime.

DEAR CLUB.

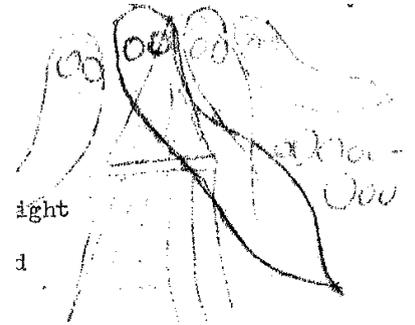
By Janet Stevenson.

I managed to get some time off one cold but bright March morning to go down to Whitehall and see the Changing of the Horse Guards (the Queen's Household Cavalry). It was really spectacular and far more interesting than the other Changing of the Guard, which I had thought a bit dragged out when I saw it at St. James Palace. The Old Guard, the Royal Horse Guards, were drawn up in line, wearing black cloaks with red collars, surmounted by gleaming helmets and red plumes (in summer they discard the cloaks to reveal the breastplates beneath) and mounted on dark brown horses, with the exception of the trumpet bearer with banner flying who was mounted on a dapple grey. As the clock struck eleven, the jingle of harness was heard and the trumpet sounded and through the archway came the relieving guard, the Queen's Life Guards, with their crimson cloaks and white plumes.

The brass on the helmets and the horse's harness caught the sun and threw back dazzling streaks of light and it was really a wonderful sight to see in that sunny courtyard in front of Whitehall. At the end of the ceremonial the two mounted guards at either side of the gates were changed and the relieved guard started on its way back to the barracks. And to think that this wonderful

sight can be watched every morning of the year

Having written for permission for several of us to witness the Ceremony of the Keys at the Tower of London, I received a permit for us to present ourselves to the Yeoman Warder at the West Gate one night at 9.40. They talk about "mad dogs and Englishmen" but it takes even madder Australians to brave the cold outside on such a wintry night. The Ceremony of the Keys originated 700 years ago when the Tower held the Royal Mint as well as the Crown Jewels, and it has taken place every night for the last 400 years. The visitors were lined up close to the waiting escort inside the Tower, there was a shouted word of command from the sergeant-major (a hysterical scream which made us nearly leap out of our boots with fright) and the escort formed up around the Head Warder who carried two sets of keys - one set gold replicas not for use. They then marched to the outermost gate, one of the escort held up an old fashioned lantern and it was locked up, and the same was repeated with the inner gate. When they came to the Bloody Tower (we all flinched every time this was mentioned!) they were challenged: "Who goes there?" "The Keys". "Whose Keys?" "Queen Elizabeth's Keys". "Pass Queen Elizabeth's Keys". Then they lined up in the inner court, a brief prayer was said for the Queen's safety and, as the clock chimed the hour of 10 pm, a bugler sounded the Last Post and the nightly Ceremony of the Keys was over. It was a frosty clear night and I half expected to see sad ghosts from the past drifting about the Tower walls. What stories they could tell.



I have gone all literary this month and have paid visits to both The Dickens House and Dr. Johnson's House. The former is a museum of Dickens' relics and it was here in London that he wrote OLIVER TWIST and NICHOLAS NICHOLBY and completed PICKWICK PAPERS. The visit to Dr. Johnson's House near Fleet Street gave me quite a thrill as I had the entire place to myself - so I climbed the old

wooden stairs to the attic, which was the "Dictionary Room" where Johnson kept half a dozen men hard at work, and I sat inside the warm room by the window reading my booklet all about Johnson and his times. The house has been restored to its original condition but is kept not as a museum, having as furniture only a few chairs and bookcases. In the front room downstairs I signed my name in the visitor's book then sat at the table and browsed through an imposing first edition of his famous DICTIONERY. It was very cosy and pleasant and I wouldn't have been at all surprised if Dr. Johnson himself had walked in the door.

Spring officially started on 21st March and it was just my luck that it happened to be the coldest first day of Spring on record. In fact there was even a sprinkle of snow to mock at optimists like myself, hopefully waiting for Spring to really start springing. I'm told that "if March comes in like a lion it goes out like a lamb" - so I hope this saying is proved right this year.

I am now a member of Queens Ice Skating Club, "the most luxurious rink in Europe". I went with several other Australians but as we were all quite new to ice skating we spent the entire evening going around the edge of the rink in circles, hanging on to the sides. Now and again I would bravely venture a yard or two "no hands" but usually ended up lovingly clutching someone round the waist for support - a handsome male for preference, of course! Several times the rink was cleared for dancing and it was wonderful to sit and watch expert couples whizzing around, keeping time to a Strauss waltz and doing intricate stops at a terrific rate. After falling flat on my back once and having several minor crashes, I was quite stiff and sore the next day but determined to have another go ... soon.

Only another month in London then I'm off to Holland for tulip time. I'm going on a hitchhiking trip through southern Europe with a Melbourne lass and we may be away for several months, though we intend to be back in time for the start of the Empire Games in Cardiff in July. Sincerely,

DEAR CLUB.

By Rhona McBurney.

We had an interesting time in Auckland and Suva. I only wished it could have been longer. Fiji was particularly interesting with its lovely mountains, covered with tropical vegetation and shore fringed with coconuts and pandanus palms. The soil looks very good and there is a great variety of crops. They include bananas, sugar cane, cocoa, yams, bread fruit rice, pineapples, paw paws, avocados to mention a few.

The Fijian huts are works of art often being woven in intricate patterns from palm leaves. In the countryside the people are all friendly and smiling, waving to you as you pass, and everywhere there are flowers, orchids, hibiscus, lassiandras cassias, bird of paradise are a few.

The native market was fascinating so we spent some time there and ended up with some shell and tortoise shell ornaments, and a lovely woven fan. There was a great rush on the woven palm hats, which the natives make in about five minutes.

When the ship berthed at Suva and also as it left, the Fijian army band dressed in red tops and white skirts were playing and a children's choir sang. As it was about 5 pm when we left, nearly all the population of Suva was there, particularly the children, running and scrambling for coins.

My new camera has been working overtime in the ports. Our day in Auckland was also interesting, particularly the time we spent in the Waitakere ranges, which are covered with native bush, full of tree ferns and other ferns and quite green and tropical in appearance. I am looking forward to seeing more of New Zealand. Diana and I were the last to run on board just before they removed the gangway in Auckland, much to the amusement of the other passengers. Best wishes to all My Bush Club friends - Hope you are enjoying some good walks. Sincerely,

(13)

The THYLACINE. (Also known as the Tasmanian Tiger, Tasmanian Wolf, or in earlier days, hyaena and zebra-o'possum).

When nature decided to introduce the mammals on earth, evolving them gradually from reptilian stock, one of the later stages of her experiment was the marsupials, or pouch-bearers. The great continent of Australia is the last major stronghold of these primitive mammals, which constitute a large portion of the Australian fauna. Better known examples include the kangaroo, wallaby, koala and wombat. Australia's rarest animal and possibly the world's rarest (if not already extinct) is the thylacine, more particularly known as the Tasmanian Tiger, a native of Tasmania only, although evidence does point to a previous existence on the mainland also. You see, there was once a land bridge over Bass Strait.

Dog-like in form, the thylacine is a beautiful example of what science calls convergence in evolution - that is, the tendency for totally unrelated animals to look alike because they act alike! Thus the ancient marsupial thylacine looks very like the modern placental dog because their habits, mainly methods of hunting food, are similar. However, there are notable differences. The thylacine's tail is very thick at the root, a characteristic of marsupials. It is, of course, the proud possessor of a pouch, which opens to the rear, unlike that of a kangaroo. Its gait is said to be un-doglike, and it has even been reported (an ancient and possibly unreliable observation) to rise on its hind legs and hop like a kangaroo when pursued.

Most striking of its features are the dark bands across the back and flanks, which earned it the "tiger" and "zebra" misnomers. Actually, of course, it is not even remotely related to dog, wolf, hyaena, or tiger, and certainly none of those animals can open a pair of long, tooth studded jaws to an angle of 180 degrees.

Largest of the carnivorous marsupials, it preys on small mammals and birds, but developed a taste for sheep and poultry on the arrival of settlers in Tasmania, and was therefore killed at every chance. This slaughter of a none-too plentiful animal led to its near-extinction, but there are many points of evidence, witnesses, etc. to indicate that it probably still survives, in rarity, in remote unsettled regions. Science has had so little contact with this interesting animal that little is known of its habits in the wild, and we have to rely on the often doubtful quality of bushmen's accounts and lore: some of this may be very reliable, but some could easily border on the romantic.

For example, several modern books on Australian fauna will tell you that the thylacine hunts its prey, not by stealth, surprise, or superior speeds, but by running it into the ground over a long, long chase, during which the tiger lopes along steadily, finally exhausting its prey by sheer endurance. As far as I can see this knowledge depends on one account only, as I have found that same tale told in books reaching back to 1852, and handed down from author to author - the observations of a single bushman - once only.

The animal is said to raise its family of 1 to 4 in a cave, a hollow among rocks, or similar place. I myself have found what is probable evidence of survival of thylacines by discovering droppings of a large carnivorous animal in a limestone cave in Western Tasmania. They were scattered thickly round a mound of earth raised slightly above the damp floor, slightly depressed in the centre, and lined with grasses - apparently a nest!

Let us hope that this unique animal still survives in the hard places of Tasmania, the wilderness where Man is seldom found.