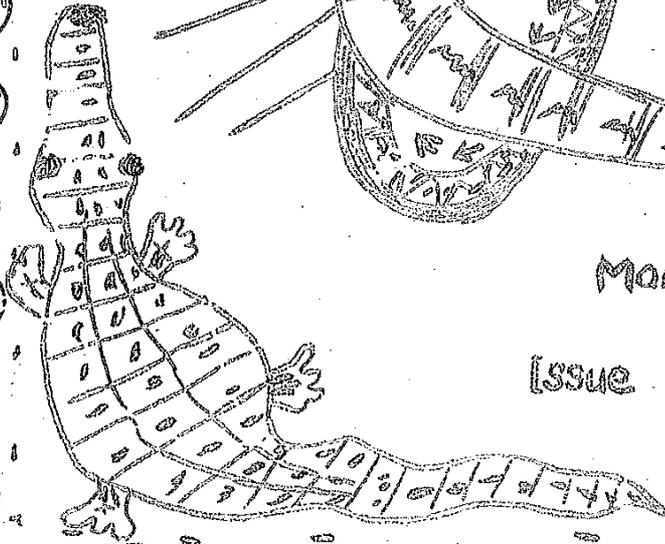
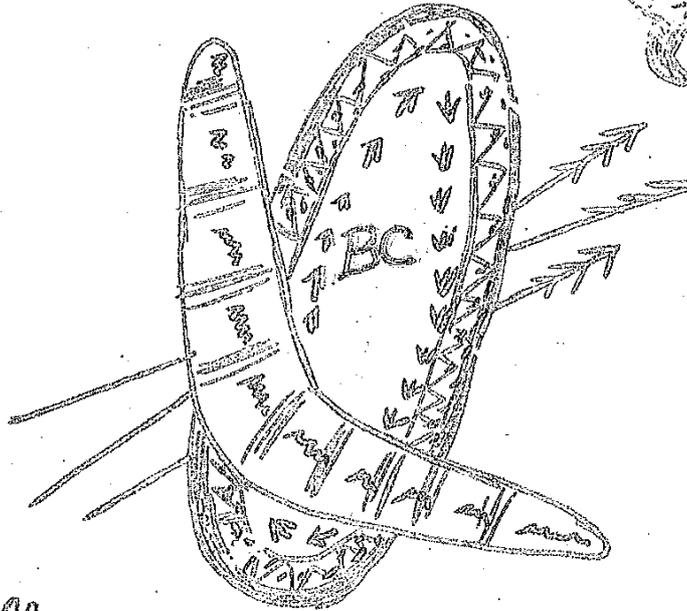
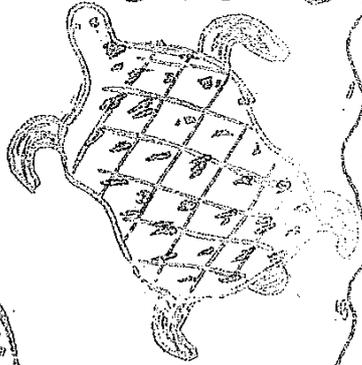


Gordon Robinson

# WALKS and TALKS.



March 1959

Issue No. 13.

WALKS AND TALKS

The Magazine

Of

T H E B U S H C L U B

I feel sure that most readers of this issue (particularly) will be relieved to know that I do not have to depend on my typing ability for my bread and butter. I must apologise for the slap dash effort - most of it has been typed in a frantic hurry, and there are typing errors, mis-spellings and in some cases, sentences mangled. The printing machine gets the sulks occasionally too - but it is done free of charge.

I do hope people will bear with it, and please keep sending articles in.

By the way, it seems that there are no ideas for designs for a cover, as up to date I have not even heard of any, let alone seen any.

The next issue of this magazine will be June. There will be plenty of good walks and camps between now and then, so let us hear about some of them.

HAPPY EASTER TO ALL.

Nance Stillman,  
Hon-Ed. 2 Rose Ave.  
North Sydney

I like the story about some of the Bush Club resting at the River below Lilyvale, and some children across the stream calling out "Look at the pigs - look at the pigs! !"

The Bush Club members were becoming rather affronted at their apparent rudeness, when suddenly they discovered that there were pigs - a Ma-ma and some young - and what is more - Ma-ma was already heading for the bush and carrying Albert's new day pack!

"Hot puppies!" what excitement! Ma-ma and Albert both determined to defend the pack with might and main.

Very pleased that Albert was declared the winner, and Ma-ma and family had to retire mumbling and grunting, without the prize.

---oOo---

I have heard that the last Federation Camp was a very happy affair, and well represented, and lots of people will surely go to the next one at Burning Palms in April.

It would be nice if the Bush Club could turn up in strength - and as each Club could quite likely be invited to give an item - we should get busy on SOMETHING.

Gordon wrote about this very problem in the last issue, but as so many members have been away on holidays, there has not been very much time to organise. However, there is still time, and Easter gives us a chance, so let us to it.

---oOo---

### MY FIRST BUSH WALK.

It was in the tiny Isle of Man in the middle of the Irish Sea, where pussy cats have no tails, and people called Manxman are governed by a House of Keys, and have for their Coat of Arms, a Three Legged Creature. In May time the brooks are bordered with primroses, and on Mother's birthday Nanna took us for a walk before breakfast to gather a basket-full of them to wish her "Many Happy Returns".

I was six years old, and I knew that fairies really existed, though some of my friends were not so sure because they were not in the Bible book like angels were. But more than fairies I wanted very much to see that Three Legged Creature really alive. Then one day, alone on the beach I did see him. He was exactly like the Coat of Arms; he was alive and he moved and he had three legs. Nanna said he must have been a star fish, but he wasn't because he had three legs and he walked. He was a really truly!

Young brother was more interested in motor cars than fairies, and on the Isle of Man there are motor races all round the island, and you must not cross the road at all then, for they simply shriek along - perhaps 25 miles an hour someone said - and they are very very dangerous!

But the most exciting thing of all was one afternoon when Father said we would climb Snaefell Peak. It is a huge huge, dark dark mountain in the middle of the island, and the map says it is 2030 feet high. It is the highest mountain I have ever seen. We left Mother and Nanna behind to look after the little ones, and Father and I set out. We left the cottages behind, and the primrose-bordered brooks and it was very lonely, and the mountain was very dark and very high. We went up and up and up, but we did not quite reach the top.

And now, when I read these lines of Matthew Arnold it is still that mountain that I see:-

"Thin, thin the pleasant human noises grow;  
And faint the city gleams;  
Rare the lone pastoral huts: marvel not thou!  
The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,  
But to the stars, and the cold lunar beams;  
Alone the sun rises, and alone  
Spring the great streams."

. . . . .

That was my first bush walk, and it was the grandest and best of them all!

Marie Byles.

---oOo---

TRIP TO QUEENSLAND.

Four of us have had a lovely holiday, mostly in the Green Mountains, Lamington National Park. Briefly, we made a base camp at O'Reilly's Guest House, on the site of the camp already enjoyed by Rosalie, Howard and Paul a week ahead of us. Rosalie did not return to Sydney with the other two, and made a wonderful welcome committee, with dry wood and a boiling billy, when we arrived on a wet afternoon - after a rather slithery and boggy trip from the plains. We missed her very much when she had to leave us after four days.

Our base camp was well chosen. A good setting off point for walks in all directions, besides providing company and comfort. We were invited to join in the social life, and almost best of all, to help feed the many beautiful birds which gather round the kitchen door - just like Carlon's - only many more.

Walking is good. Tracks well marked and graded, and plenty of variety. We walked to Binnaburra along the border track, and through the Arctic Beech Forest, besides many

other chosen spots, but after a week the weather began to look dubious, so we left there and drove round the Lost World, about five or six miles as the crow flies, but seventy odd miles via Beaudesert. We had planned to spend at least a day or two here, or even longer but a cyclone seemed to be warming up for big business, so we had to pack very hurriedly in order to cross a flooding river with no bridge, before it became impossible.

Our return trip was surprising and particularly good. We had no plans and no time-table. We saw trees blown down by the cyclone, rivers in flood paddocks a-wave with bluebells. We took a long slant to the east and looked at the Hillgrove Gorges, with simply magnificent water-falls thundering hundreds of feet, and sending up clouds of spray high enough to curtain the falls until the wind blew the mist aside, and made further falls of it. The rivers were flooding from the cyclonic rains. We saw the Oakey Creek Water Conservation scheme, the dam full and the safety outlets open to let the overflow out in a great slithering torrent that hit the rocks at their base and sent up a great splash of white water to swirl down a rocky gorge. We had a look at the Burning Mountain at Wingen, which was certainly a contrast.

We had lovely camps, mostly good roads, and a lovely holiday. We often thought of the other Club members, and wondered how the New Zealand party fared, also the Tasmanians, the Barrier Reef trip, Alan Catford on the high seas, and the camps and walks on the schedule, and hoped they were all enjoying their out-doors as much as we enjoyed ours.

---oOo---

Nance Stillman.

BURNING MOUNTAIN - Wingen NSW

On our way back from Queensland we decided to stop at Wingen, between Murrundi and Muswellbrook, and have a look at the "Burning Mountain". It is reputed to be a replica, or rather "the nearest replica" to an active volcano in Australia - but this gives one the wrong impression and is quite incorrect. It is in reality a gigantic seam of coal burning underground.

We arrived in the vicinity of the mountain just in time to accompany the lessee, Mr. Hall, of Melbourne, on one of his daily inspections. Mr. Hall proved to be a genial and knowledgeable host. He insisted that we each provide ourselves with a stout stick to help us climb the mountain! Rather a pity the rest of the Club could not see us, we felt, but as one member of the party was wearing dancing pumps (of all things!) and the ground was hard and slippery, one stick at least was appreciated.

Once over the first rise, the country changed quickly. We were soon in the burnt region, with very few trees in what must have been once a very lush area. Now it is bare and crumbly with no grass or undergrowth of any sort, and fissures and cracks among the soft crumbling rocks. As the track rises, the burning part comes into view - first noticed is the white mist-like smoke, and as we approach the earth becomes grey with patches of yellow, and soon there is a strong odour of sulphur fumes. No flames are visible, but they can be heard at times roaring and rumbling far below.

The heat is almost unbearable, and in every direction can be seen crevices yawning wickedly, many apparently hundreds of feet deep. Mr. Hall has some equipment at the site for the purpose of drawing off chemicals formed by the heat and fumes. One strange fissure about a hundred yards below the heat area, has a temperature of only 45 degrees,

yet all the others are directly over the fire area, and even some yards away from the centre, will boil a billy of water in record time.

The fire only moves approximately 3 feet per year, and by calculation has been burning a few thousand years and is likely to burn a few thousand more.

We thanked our host, and returned to the car, seeing one very large black, and two smaller grey kangaroos on the way.

---oOo---

Davey Elkins.

### ROTORUA.

As seen by Joy.

The place was a four-bed ward in Rotorua General Hospital, the time, just after lunch. A male head poked itself around the doorway and said "Have you seen any mice?". We assured him that we were not harbouring any four legged creatures, and then settled down for a good laugh.

Life in hospital was not dull. One afternoon my ward mates asked the Sister in Charge if I might go to the Maori Concert being presented in town that night. Sister obtained permission and the girls set to work. They washed my hair, gave me a facial, 'hot pack, cold pack and massage thrown in), lent me a coat, a handbag and some gloves, warned me to steer clear of the night porter, and eventually packed me off in a taxi.

The concert was unusual. Maori's do not put on an act in our sense of the word as they are perfectly natural on stage, and talk and laugh quietly among themselves. Each individual scene was preceded by an announcement from Rangi, the world famous guide, who proved to be a charming and witty person. The programme consisted of Poi dances, a Haka, games and Maori songs. The Maori's have lovely natural voices and excel in harmony even though most are untrained. It was certainly a treat to attend such a performance.

The hospital was situated on a high hill overlooking beautiful Lake Rotorua and thickly tree clad Mokoia Island, which is the setting for New Zealand's greatest romance. It appears that about 300 years ago there lived on the mainland of Rotorua, a Maori princess called Hinemoa, who was in love

with Tutanekai a young warrior from Mokoia Island. Hinemoa's tribe was at war with Tutanekai's tribe, so she was forbidden to see her lover. All the canoes were pulled far up on the beach so she could not see him secretly. Tutanekai would sit on the beach of his island home and play love tunes across the water on his flute, until one evening Hinemoa, longing to see him again, stole down to a point of land stretching out into the lake, where she tied gourds about her waist, and then dived into the icy water. After swimming for many hours she landed safely, feeling very tired and cold. Finding a warm pool, she rested until her strength came back again. Meanwhile, Tutanekai had ordered his servant to fetch water from the pool. The servant, seeing a face in the water, dropped his gourds in fear and ran to tell Tutanekai, who then went to see for himself. He was overjoyed to find Hinemoa sitting on a rock by the side of the pool. He took her in his arms, and as far as is known, they lived happily ever after. (This story is supposed to be true, but is told in quite a few different forms).

After a few days, we visited the main thermal area at Whakarewarewa, where we saw boiling mud pools, sulphur steam vents, and the famous Phhutu Geyser playing high into the air. We also saw many forms of Maori carving and a model village which depicted their way of life in the early days.

Rotorua certainly has much to attract the tourist, and I would like to return some day to the "Lad of the Long White Cloud".

---oOo---

Joy Yaldwyn.

Members who knew Miss Hilda Light will be sorry to learn that she passed away on the 3rd. December 1958, in Paris. When France capitulated, Hilda and her sister were interned in a German Prison Camp, and on their release at the end of the war, they returned to Sydney. Hilda joined the Bush Club, and was a regular walker and camper. She later returned to Paris, but was fated not to return. I wish to pay a tribute to Hilda, who was a woman of character and integrity.

---oOo---

Beryl McLean.

## WILSON'S PROMONTORY

Wilson'S Promontory is a National Park in Victoria and a very good place for a camping, swimming and walking holiday. Kathie was there in November last, and can supply information about camping conditions and how to get there by public transport, as well as by private car, if anyone is interested.

Here is a short account of her very happy holiday.

"I was priviledged to be accepted as a colleague on a recent visit to Wilson's Promontory, by an associated club, the Melbourne Ladies' Walking Club. Happily my holiday dates coincided with their arrangements, but the long trek from Sydney took up some valuable walking time, which I was sad to miss.

However, I drove into Tidal River Settlement via Fish Creek on a sunny morning in November, thrilled by an encounter with a large emu and a small wallaby. I reported to the ranger on duty, and soon found my friends, a party of seventeen, of all ages to beyond seventy years, all good walkers and all ready for anything.

I found I had missed a Sunday evening lecture by the ranger and a visit to the museum where animal, bird and reptile specimens are on view, for identification purposes.

The next day was to see the start of a marathon trek to the Lighthouse by part of the party, while another part accompanied them for some distance, heading for Leonard Bay and beyond. We all had to wait for low tide to cross Tidal River, but were across by 10-45 a.m. and looking for the entrance to a new track cut from the river margin to the track over Pillar Point. We all had a rocky scramble for bit, but then an easy grade took us to a fine vantage point looking over Tidal River Settlement and Norman Bay, and giving beautiful views along the coast to North and South. We dropped down to Leonard Bay and found that Squeaky Beach really did squeak beneath our feet. After a short break for morning tea, the party divided, three of us heading for Picnic Bay, while others set out for the Lighthouse. As we returned towards Tidal River later, we could see the Lighthouse party toiling up the Telegraph Road on the slopes of Mount Oberon.

Later in the evening there was a violent thunder storm, which seemed to circulate around the peninsular. We were certain that the Lighthouse party would have been caught out in the open, and this later proved to be the case.

The next day dawned clear and sunny, and we planned a two day trek to Oberon Bay. We discussed our plans with the ranger, who advised us not to attempt the descent of Mt. Oberon on the seaward side, but to follow the Lighthouse track round the edge of the big swamp until we struck the end of the sandy track out to Oberon Bay. There were high sand dunes and a fresh wind blowing in from the sea, and the going was rather heavy. We saw many blue-tongue lizards. The sand is making great inroads behind Oberon Bay. Many skeletons of trees show that this was once densely wooded, but now it is becoming a sandy waste. We pitched camp beside Growlers Creek. After lunch we explored the beach and picked up a bottle containing a card to be returned to some authority in Sydney. No doubt it will give some valuable information about tide drifts etc. when all facts have been assessed.

A cold night sent us early to our sleeping bags, promising ourselves to awake at dawn and watch for animals coming down to the water. However, next morning we did not see a single animal, but in the sand behind our camp we found tracks of wallaby, wombat, rabbit, snake, lizard and fox. All had been quite near us while we slept.

We left camp at 9a.m. and immediately met a snake, so for the rest of the morning we were very careful where we walked. The beach at Little Oberon Bay was our next mark. Lunch was a welcome diversion.

Owing to land slides the track has become dis-jointed and the ascent of the slopes of the Oberon Saddle is a hazardous under-taking, but the climber is rewarded at every turn of the track with beautiful sea views through the she-oaks. The islands of the Glennie Group stood out to the South of us. Crossing the shoulder of Norman Point, we encountered a few wash-aways, but nevertheless made good time and were soon descending among the Ti-trees and Coastal Honey Bush to the beach, which we followed round the sweep of Norman Bay to our camp.

Another joint excursion was planned to visit the Telegraph Station on the summit of Mt. Oberon, 1,845 ft above sea level.

The view from the summit is magnificent.

Morning was to see our return to civilization so after the evening meal we embarked on a round of farewell visits to the occupants of other huts in the camp. Returning, we discovered two deer grazing right outside the back door of our hut, and they did not move away even when we flashed torches on them to get a better view.

I left for Fish Creek with treasured memories of the comradeship of fellow members of our great bush-walking fraternity. I had increased my knowledge of Australian Wild Life, and hope that such areas of bushland will be preserved as sanctuaries for Australian flora and fauna, and to provide for the generations to come, who wish to escape, if only for a little while from the stress and strain of modern life.

---oOo---

K.A. Jones.

#### THE LOST WORLD

So much has been happening in the Club recently, that perhaps you don't know that Nance, Jenny, Dave and I have been to the Lost World. You will no doubt hear of our adventures, your problem will be to avoid hearing them for the third time, and also deciding which version to believe.

We set out from Beaudesert for The Lost World after lunch one day, a sixteen mile drive along the valley of the Albert River. As we neared our journey end, the razor back ridges of the Lost World appeared on our left as the valley narrowed. Mt. Widgee was disappearing on our right, as the sky was overcast and a heavy mist was descending. We forded the Albert River, passed through a couple of gates and followed wheel tracks among fat grazing cattle until we came to a fibro house on a slight rise, with long windows commanding splendid views. The road went no further, so this must be IT.

Nance and I went up to the house to make enquiries. In answer to our knock Mrs. Bernard O'Reilly appeared, a short woman with a very welcoming smile, and in no time at all we were all unloading Bertha, (Davey's car) just completing the job as it began raining heavily.

Miss Mollie O'Reilly joined us all on the verandah,

and before long we all enjoyed afternoon tea, while examining some fossiliferous stones - in other words pieces of rock containing traces of former living things preserved in them - mostly leaves and ferns. Soon we had Mrs. O'Reilly dashing about finding us more curious fossils and stones, among them a very heavy piece of wood. It looked exactly like wood, but was petrified and had become stone, probably millions of years old. We were told of a petrified log on the slopes of the Lost World.

Jenny and Dave were keen to go "fossicking for fossils" (repeat six times then read on) the next day. I was keen to, but my attention kept being drawn to the towering peaks of the Lost World, so near and yet so far above us.

It was still raining, but being Bush Club members we set off up the valley into the dim dark damp decaying rain forest, in search of a grove of orchids (which we found before returning to dry clothes and a good dinner).

We had a very pleasant evening. Nance & I invaded Bernard's small but good library. Dave chuckled at the witty comments in the visitors book, Jenny played with the cats and kittens, and we all talked and above all laughed. The O'Reilly family is very good company, and we heard many tales of the struggles of the pioneers in this jungle area.

During the night it rained heavily and the wind howled. At 8a.m. I made a dash to the kitchen and we listened to the weather news on the radio. It was all about a cyclone - wind and rain increasing - travelling parallel to the coast - no sign of easing. Mrs. O'Reilly said that if the rain continued we would not be able to cross the river by night-fall. I took tea to other three and we soon decided that it would be sensible to leave after breakfast.

It was raining and blowing so hard that we donned bathers while we packed the car. Mrs. O'Reilly tucked up her skirts and taking an old umbrella set off to look at the river. The umbrella blew inside out, we heard her jolly laugh float back to us, as she threw it away and continued on her wild wet way.

She hurried back just as we were finishing, with news that the river has risen six inches in the last hour, and that we must lose no time or we would be cut off at the crossing. So we made hurried good-byes, piled in and set off along the wet slippery track.

When we reached the crossing it looked much wider than it had the evening before, but Jenny and I waded through, noting that the water came to just below our knees. Nance waited on the bank and Davey set out, the car being swept a little down stream as it reached the middle. However, Bertha behaved wonderfully, and arrived on the crest of a wave and chugged a slow hair-raising ascent of the slippery bank. We had crossed the raging torrent and the swirling waters.

We all set up a loud hooray, and flourished our ground sheets like Spanish Bull-fighters.

---oOo---

Gordon Robinson.

KATOOMBA

Some members of the newly formed Katoomba Bush Walking Club have been hard at work putting spikes in the rock face of the Golden Stairs Track, leading up from the Skip Track.

This worthy effort should be greatly appreciated by the members of the many other Clubs who use them.

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I have heard that men can have hot showers at the Kiosk Reserve at Katoomba - but that there are no hot showers for women. Shame!

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## The 1956 Trip to Pigeon House

At 5-48 p.m. we left Central with spirits low and not feeling like enjoying our Hot Pies and Jam Tarts - WHY ?! Because Albert, our leader, had not turned up, and he had all the money for the bus, engaged to take us from Nowra to Drury's Farm. What were we to do? A deep dip into pockets and purses brought forth a surprisingly large amount of money, but not enough to pay for the bus. Anyway, we could not jump out of the train, so we just had to sit there and wait until Nowra came.

We thought all sorts of things about our poor Albert, but little did we guess that at that moment he was racing along in a taxi, trying to overtake the train, first at Sutherland, next at Waterfall and finally at Wollongong - but No! the taxi could not catch the train. At Wollongong he paid off the taxi and phoned through to Nowra, telling the bus proprietor of his plight, and asking him to contact us when we arrived, and explain. Albert would get a later train, and engage another taxi at Nowra to get to Drury's Farm.

We arrived at Drury's at midnight and set up camp. When we arose next morning, Albert was there, all smiles as usual, telling us of his adventures. As our eyes turned to the West, there was the top half of Pigeon House, half a day's walk ahead, challenging us to climb its summit. What a beautiful sight for a true mountain lover.

As we walked forward, it disappeared behind intervening ridges and tall trees. We were not to see it again until three days later, as it was hidden in mist when we lunched at its foot that day.

After a long decent on one of its ridges, we crossed the Clyde River where it was yet only a mountain stream and reached an old deserted homestead, built on an elevated plateau covered in lawn, - a beautiful place to camp.

However, whilst some of the party camped here, the ambitious members left after a short spell, to continue their trip to the Castle, a fine peak several miles to the North West. It was at this stage that the rain started in earnest.

The track, or at least what was shown on the map as a track, followed the river bank, but this was soon under water, and the further we advanced the deeper the water became. When the water reached our waists, we decided to call it a day, and return to join the other campers.

The next day the rain had eased of, and we had a very enjoyable time ambling around this glorious mountain valley. We were sorry to leave these peaceful surroundings the following day, but we had to return.

We arrived at the base of Pigeon House at 11-0am and all the party were able to make the summit, thanks to the assistance of a rope one of the members had brought along. From the top were extensive views of the ocean, the Castle, and the Mountains.

A few weeks later we saw in the Sydney papers that a party of American climbers had made the first ascent of this difficult mountain. Perhaps we should have left a flag on top.

Proceeding on our way back to Drury's Arms, we saw a nice camping site near a creek, and were resting, when down came the rain again, in torrents. Soon the ground everywhere was covered with one to two inches of water. As it appeared the rain had set in, we just had to erect our tents on the water covered ground, and cook our evening meal in pouring rain. The weather cleared the following morning about eleven. After drying out our tents and wet gear, we proceeded along the last two miles, past Drurys Farm to the road and waited for our bus.

A very happy Easter week-end.

---oOo---

Wally McGrath.

TO THE NATTAI with Gordon.

We met on Central at Ten,  
Two women, and eight men,  
The day was dull and overcast,  
But we remembered wet camps of the past,  
So we shouldered our packs and were on our way  
All in spirits bright and gay.

We left the train at Colo Vale,  
Which is over the hill and in the dale,  
    We had our lunch by the railway line,  
Some lunches were seen to be mighty fine.  
    At ten to two the word came to go,  
It was after three when we stopped for a blow.

We stopped at Mt. Flora, before decending,  
Onto a track that appeared never-ending.  
    We camped near the foot of Flat-top for the night  
Every-one thought it an excellent site.  
    All went to bed very soon after tea,  
"We have had a long tiring day" was the plea.

We left the camp about eight,  
And climbed at a leisurely rate  
    Over Mt. Flat-top - fine views from the top,  
And down to the river, with many a stop.  
    Along the river for lunch we went,  
Where a couple of pleasant hours were spent.

The day was sultry and frightfully hot,  
And a storm caught us in this lovely spot.  
    We waded and waded further down stream,  
To MacArthur's Flat, a campers dream.  
    Dave decided for supper he'd have Barbecue'd Bunny,  
When he could not find one, they all thought it funny.

Brian decided he would try for a fish,  
But we all missed out on this tasty dish.  
    The rain was heavy, the river rose,  
We had tea early and sought our repose.  
    The morning was fine, the hills were revealed,  
We met a snake on the track,  
    It's fate had to be sealed.

Then up Starlight's track, 'tis very steep,  
We often rested - and how we drank deep,  
    Of the beautiful water cascading down  
To the river below, - all flooding and brown.  
    Into Hilltop we wandered, tired and dirty.  
We had to wait for a train  
    From five 'till six-thirty.

---oOo---

Davey Elkins.

## A TRIP TO THE BARRIER REEF

Mid-summer is not exactly the ideal time to spend a holiday in the tropics, but the chance seemed too good to miss, so filled with pleasant anticipation of balmy days exploring coral islets with Myrell, I set forth hopefully on Boxing Day in a coach party of twenty-four, bound for Proserpine and the Whitsunday Islands.

Enthusiasm was somewhat damped the first day, when a mechanical breakdown held us up for seven hours. It seemed I had no sooner crawled into my sleeping bag at two a-m, when I heard the alarm go off in the large marquee, and the coach-manager's wife saying it was time to get up - at 4.30 a.m.!! However, after a meal my eyes were sufficiently open to appreciate the lovely countryside through which we were passing.

The Darling Downs, over the border, lush and green after the rains were a sight to remember. At Kingaroy we came to the peanut country, acres and acres of crops, just showing green above the ground. Around the Bunya Mountain foothills, quaint bottle trees made an appearance and mangoes on long stalks and paw-paw trees seemed to be growing in all the gardens.

We made an afternoon inspection of the open cut mine at Mt. Morgan. The trucks at the bottom of the yawning cavity looked like ants. In the foundry we saw copper ingots being poured from a huge crucible - 80 tons at a time - a glittering cascade of gold.

Nearing Rockhampton we passed the tropic of Capricorn and knew at last we were really in the Torrid Zone. By this time some of us were looking a little torrid too from the dust and heat. At least people on the camping area at Sarina must have thought so, as we jostled one another under the open-air shower after our swim, for one group was heard to remark to another "Wonder who they are - don't think they're Australians".

After a hectic morning purchasing stores in Proserpine, we finally sorted things out on the wharf at Cannonvale, with the temperature at 103 degrees and humidity nearly 100, and

embarked on the "Apache", gasping for a sea breeze.

Our first landing was Dent Island, a lovely spot, mostly cleared, with a natural spring of fresh water and a sandy beach, ideal for swimming. Next morning we set course for Shaw Is., and here we found cocoanuts growing, planted, we were told by the skipper, to sustain marooned mariners. One or two of the lads climbed the trees, but Myrell was fortunate to find a couple of cocoanuts on the ground. She had fun trying to open one with a blunted knife. It took ages in the stifling heat, but the tasty meat was worth the effort.

So far we had not seen any coral, so the skipper took us to Whitehaven Beach, Whitsunday Is. Here we jumped or dived overboard from the launch, and with the aid of glass masks were able to see unfolded beneath the wavelets, some of the wonders of a growing coral garden. I could have stayed there for hours, but the tide was dropping and we had to be off. Border Island, our next camp-site, looked inviting from the sea, but little did we know what was waiting for us ashore. Myriads of large, vicious March flies and swarming green ants. How we survived that first night-marish afternoon I'll never know. Even the sea afforded no relief for there the stinging sea lice attacked us. Fortunately the flies retired at dusk, and Myrell and I decide to sleep out under the stars - a delightful experience - and we forgot about the pests.

We broke camp early the next morning, still pursued by the flies, and made for Cid Harbour, Whitsunday Island. The flies were no better here, but there was a stream of fresh water, and we were able to wash our salty hair and clothes and generally tidy up. An obelisk with a plaque quoting a passage from Captain Cook's log book, when he named the Whitsunday Passage, served as an excellent table for either serving meals or drying clothes. I'm sure Cook wouldn't have minded my red jeans drying from the top of the monument.

We did a day trip to Nara Inlet, Hook Island. Thickly wooded hills rose straight from the water almost like a ford. We landed for a swim in the fresh water stream, but found the flies more vicious than ever. One needed to be a contortionist to undress under such circumstances. To escape them we immersed ourselves in the pool up to our chins, and spent an hour there gossiping. We were not sorry to board the "Apache" again. The Inlet is so beautiful that under happier conditions it would be an ideal spot to stay.

We then made for Hayman Island, advertised as a tourist paradise, and I sat in the plush bar on a yellow stool and ordered a lemon squash - robbery at 1/6d a small glass half filled with ice. The gardens were a riot of vivid colour, but I thought the reef disappointing.

That evening, back at Cid Harbour, we had a tropical downpour - our first rain of the trip. I stayed in the tent but Myrell and some others stopped in the water. They said it was warmer than standing in the rain in wet costumes. Tea that night after the storm was a cold "tinned" affair, but we dried off eventually and crawled thankfully into sleeping bags.

Daydream Island has the best coral of all the islands in the group, according to the lucky few who glimpsed it before the tide came in. I did sample the choice fat oysters though. We had a campfire in the evening on the beach, and decided that despite the pests, the islands of the Cumberland group in the Whitsunday Passage were well worth the visit, even in summer

Hoop pines and thick rainforest cover most of the islands, which are mainly volcanic in origin. None is a true coral cay; the reefs are fringing, but the coral is slowly being choked by sediments carried down from the mainland rivers in flood times.

The return trip by coach was via the coast. At Noosa Heads we ran into the beginning of the monsoon

rains and had two very wet camps. Noosa is an exceptionally beautiful place, as yet still unspoiled. I can thoroughly recommend it for a holiday. The Glass House Mountains beckoned us but the coach could not stop. We had some fun in Brisbane racing up and down the main streets but we finally found the highway across the impressive Story Bridge and so on to the Gold Coast - a garish place - then through the beautiful Brunswick Valley en route for home.

The mileage we covered on land was almost 3000 and we spent seven days cruising and camping in the Whitsunday Passage, all in the space of three weeks. I became so used to sleeping on the ground that on my first night home I was tempted to crawl into my sleeping bag and stretch out on the verandah. When my niece pointed out that the milkman would be surprised, I allowed myself to be dissuaded. It's remarkable how soon one accepts the fleshpots again, isn't it?

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Dorothy Bryant.

All will be pleased to hear that Helen and Des. Longton became the proud parents of a fine daughter, Suzanne, on Feb. 4th. last.

Helen has had a bout of influenza since then, but is recovering, and the family is doing nicely.

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No doubt about it, some of our members whiz about. Rosalie had about three weeks in the Nullumbimby district and Lamington Plateau, returned home for a scant fortnight and then flew to Western Australia for a further month. Home again now - and last heard of heading for the surf.

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