

Issue No 18

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“WALKS

TALKS”



The Magazine
- the Bush Club.

WALKS AND TALKS

The Magazine

Of

THE BUSH CLUB

Before the next issue of this magazine is published, the Bush Club will have had its annual meeting, with selection of office bearers, its annual dance and party, and be about to celebrate its twenty-first birthday.

I have already asked in the circular, for any present members who have any contact with any past members, to please try and persuade them to contribute something for the Special Birthday issue. After all, 21 years is quite an achievement - and we would very much like to hear from the early members - as we hope to meet them at the Special Birthday Dinner, which is being arranged. The Club gives us all an enormous amount of pleasure, and we feel grateful to the people who founded it, and the many committees and members who have kept it going for us.

It is to be hoped that a good crowd comes to the Annual dance and party. It is a very pleasant hall, good floor, good music and supper, and besides Frank's programme, we will have, let us hope, the added attraction of some Central Australian travellers IN PERSON. Come and bask in their sun-tan, and welcome them home.

I thought our President made a very good point at our last meeting on the subject of Sunday walks. He said - and it is true - that we have never put off a Sunday walk on account of weather - even when we had wet Sundays for about three consecutive months, nor has the weather ever prevented us from having a good day. It is very pleasant walking in the rain, if properly dressed for it - or the wine, and even if it is very hot, we always get to somewhere to swim and cool off, so do not ever let weather prevent you joining the others if you have decided to come.

HAPPY WALKING AND CAMPING TO ALL.

Nance Stillman,
Hon-Ed. 2 Rose Avenue,
NORTH SYDNEY
XB1961

There is nothing fundamentally new in my contribution meant to be a more detailed follow-up to Gordon's and Dorothy's articles in the October and December issues.

Yes, Gordon, scraping the plaster cast off the slightly burnt smelling, sticky billy can take the enjoyment and leisure out of the morning meal, but I do not think that cornflakes or similar preparations are the best way out. They are bulky in the rucksack, not very satisfying and not of true food-value.

On our unforgettable Tasmanian trip, Dorothy and I got our "pep" from Sanitarium-made "Granola". (Perhaps there are equivalents produced by other firms on the market). It is simple to prepare and there is NO PORRIDGE BILLY. If you mix some powdered milk and bring it to the boil, simply pour it over the porridge, and mix it, together with dried fruit, raisins etc., cover and stand near the fire for up to ten minutes to let it steam gently, and it is ready.

For a week-end trip you can mix the powdered milk and porridge together at home, and carry in a small linen bag, and pour the boiling water over it instead of boiling milk, but in cold weather, be sure and take care to keep the water hot until it has softened the meal, as otherwise you will have gritty unpleasant porridge. If you cannot keep your container near the fire, you could cover it and keep it warm wrapped in your sleeping bag.

For a holiday trip you will need some variety, and this variety is endless. Try coffee or cocoa, sugar or honey, grated nuts or dried fruit stirred in, or have it quite plain and appreciate the real cereal flavour.

As for quantity, you had best have a dress rehearsal at home. Appetities vary - but do not make it too thick or too thin, and remember to let it steam gently for about ten minutes. It will need a little more liquid than it says on the packet.

I have often used crushed or rolled oats instead of Granola. It tastes alright, but one does not get the full benefit of the oats if they are not cooked. One can also use wheat germ as the foundation for the mixture, but this is a very concentrated food and one should not eat more than half a cup full per day.

Have a go at it?

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NEWS FROM JANET -- Per kind favour of Dorothy

"We crossed the border into Spain near San Sebastian and went along the coast to Santander and then south-west through the magnificent Picos de Europa mountain area to a delightful place called Potes... We also went to Torrelevaga and saw the famous Altamira caves with their prehistoric roof paintings in earth colours, and with wonderful perspective."

"Before progressing any further I must say a few words about Spanish FOOD. I usually lose weight on a trip - but not this time! To start with, the few hostels in Spain were closed in November, which meant we stayed at pensions most of the time. As living was so cheap, it usually paid us, if possible, to pay full board and have a midday meal as well as breakfast and dinner. Breakfast was usually a half cold cup of coffee and a dry piece of bread. Spanish butter, we discovered, is atrocious! Then we starved until about two or three o'clock, when the midday meal is served. This would start off with an interesting soup, perhaps made with fish, or thickened with lima beans or noodles. Then we might have a tortilla (Spanish omelette with ham or potatoes) or a fish course, and then steak and chips. Often there was a salad bowl on the table, from which we helped ourselves to lettuce, tomatoes pepper and olives - floating in oil. All Spanish cooking is done with oil. Lastly came fruit, usually grapes, banana or apple.

In the evening, a similar meal, which could be any time between nine and mid-night - after which we could hardly stagger to bed. I ate more steak in Spain than I have seen since leaving home. And wine, tinto or blanco, with as many meals as I could afford at about 8d to 1/- per bottle!"

"Third-class travel in Spanish trains is a treat not to be missed. They were usually pretty crowded and the seats were hard and we would mostly have a fascinated circle of eyes around us when we started hacking up slices and buttering our bread (with margarine), though we ended up swigging wine from the bottle like everyone else."

Of the Spaniards Janet says: "The Spaniards are a very friendly and hospitable people, comparable to the Austrians and the Irish. My fair hair rather intrigued them and the fact that our ears were unpierced, unlike that of all Spanish women from childhood. But we struck great kindness and helpfulness wherever we went."

If anyone would like to read the rest of Janet's letter, see Dorothy.

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FIRE GAZING

Jenny Stillman at Bogan Gate.

"..Armies march by tower and spire -
Of cities blazing in the fire; --
Till, as I gaze with staring eyes,
The armies fade, the lustre dies "...

The other night as I was throwing my washing-up water on to the oleander in the front garden, I saw a very familiar and friendly sight in the paddock across the road. It wasn't the immense concrete wheat silos, or the bulkhead, the attracted my attention. They are familiar but too large to be friendly. In between these two structures, however, was a small camp fire - burning happily in the frosty night air.

I could only see one camper. He was sitting cross-legged gazing into his fire. He could have been any of the Bush Club males (Paul perhaps, for his hat was battered and droopy!).

A camp fire seems to have a magical appeal to me. I very nearly opened the gate and hurried across the road to join the camper. However, that was out of the question, so reluctantly I shut myself in my room with my un-inspiring radiator and wished that I were sitting around a Bush Club camp fire with all my friends.

I wonder what other people think about when they sit gazing into the glowing coals of a once blazing "Frank" type fire?. Do they see pictures, animals, soldiers or peoples faces?. Do they think of the past or the future? Are they aware of the drowsy companions who sit or lie around them - they too gazing as if hypnotised? I wonder!

I enjoy sitting before a crackling fire in a cosy living room - Who doesn't? but I enjoy a camp fire, wherever it may be, much better. I have been at some wonderful camp fires - and many of the best ones have been in caves!

I remember one such cave on top of Mt. Solitary. It was a large fire, but we were a large party. We sang and talked and argued and discussed until one by one we fell asleep. Some kind souls dragged themselves from their sleeping bags at various intervals during the night and stoked the fire. There it was - a perfect breakfast cooker next morning.

Another camp fire I will always remember was the one at the cave at Rocky Ponds. We called the cave the Pig-sty, for it was crowded with grunting, groaning bodies, and the floor was covered with mud. The fire took up most of the entrance to the cave and helped to keep out the driving rain. The wind kept the cave filled with smoke and sparks, but we did not care. The fire was friendly and cheering and helped to keep our spirits high throughout that uncomfortable wet night.

A small but memorable camp fire was that at which we welcomed the New Year 1960. This was after we came through Consett Stephens Pass, on a saddle below Mt. Twynem. The fire was small of necessity rather than choice. The only available fuel was some scrappy bushes and creepers which we had gathered after much searching. (We were above the tree line, near Mt. Kosciuszko). We welcomed the New Year with some hearty (though perhaps tuneless singing) and a nip of brandy each (from the first aid kit). There were no blazing logs, but the small bushes sent up flames which danced merrily for some minutes, and then bowed out to give way to the next bush's band of fiery ballerinas.

When some time during the night, we were all drenched by a heavy storm, the fire (and Howard) were waiting to dry us out and cheer us up. It was amazing how long that heap of scrappy bush lasted to feed the fire. We even left a nice pile for the next campers who might come that way.

And then there was the camp at --- but I seem to have wandered a long way from my starting point. That is how it is when one gazes into a fire - even if it is only a glowing red bar of an un-inspiring radiator!

..."Blinking embers tell me true
Where are those armies marching to?
And what the burning city is
That crumbles in your furnaces?"...

(From "Armies in the Fire by R.L. Stevenson).

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THE BUSH CLUB ON WHEELS.

The first year.

The Bush Club had its first outing by cars on the Queens Birthday week-end 1959, and after a year's trial, it looks as though the idea has come to stay.

We have had a variety of trips since then - all well attended - and luckily, all quite free of trouble as far as the cars and drivers are concerned. Sunday trips could be interesting - but unfortunately Sunday traffic is so heavy, that it seems that this idea will not appeal to many.

The car idea has both advantages and disadvantages - as of course has the bus or train to starting points. No doubt it gives us much greater scope. We can organize to get to country which was closed to us before because we had not the time available to cover the necessary distance. We can manage what used to be a three-day weekend in a two day weekend. We can make a comfortable base camp, and explore local country, and people who would otherwise be barred, by distance or time or weight, can come and join us - and all these have been done at our different car week-ends during the year.

On the other hand the cars cannot be used for round trips, and one certainly misses the large group in the train, in a warm comfy stop coming home from a hard week-end - with the chance to talk to just anybody - instead of the very limited portion of the party in each car.

The car trip is much harder for the leader to organise too, and much

credit is due to the good leaders we have had. Human nature being what it is - passengers feel they can rely on their driver to wait for them - although they accept the fact that the train driver certainly won't - and this idea could force the party into little groups, some early and some late. This makes life difficult for the leader - and in the case of traffic delay could make a wide separation in the party.

The Bush Club is in no danger of becoming a wheel club instead of a walking club - and four week-ends in a six-month schedule seems a very reasonable and pleasant percentage.

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BUSHLAND FLORA

(Not to be confused with the B.C. Species Hon.
Dorothy Bryant)

Plants are of many species. The smallest group of botanically similar species is called a genus (plural, genera). For convenience in classification plants have been divided into families or orders, each family consisting of a group of genera botanically related. Some families are widely distributed throughout the world, while others are indigenous to a particular locality. Here are a few notes about families and genera, species of which are to be found in the Australian bush.

The family Rutaceae is a very large order, ranging over the hot and temperate parts of the world, but most prolific in Australia and South Africa. To this family belongs the genus *Boronia*, with 88 different species and all confined to Australia. That harbinger of Spring, *Eriostemon*, or Pink Wax Flower, is another genus belonging to the Rutaceae family. Australia has 70 species of this genus, and New Caledonia 1.

One of the largest and most successful of all plant families is the Leguminosae, found in all parts of the world. Due to the presence of nitrogen-fixing bacteria in nodules on the roots, its members can live successfully in soils deficient in nitrogen. The fruit is a legume (beans, peas, etc. belong to the family), and all the pea flowers are members as well as the wattles, of which we have 400 species in Australia.

Well represented, also, in Australia is the family Myrtaceae, to which belong our Eucalypts, Ti-trees and Bottle-brushes. It is interesting to note that a few specimens of the genus *Melaleuca* (ti-tree species) are found in the Indian Archipelago, lending weight to the theory that Australia was once linked to that Archipelago by a land-bridge.

Plants of the family Proteaceae are found chiefly in South Africa and Australia, which could be taken as evidence in support of another theory that South Africa and Australia were once connected in some way. The genus *Banksia* (after Sir Joseph Banks, father of Australian botany) with 51 species is limited to Australia. Although we sometimes call the cylindrical flower spikes of the *Banksia* tree "bottle-brushes", they should not be confused with the genus *Callistemon* (red bottle brush is a species) which belongs to the Myrtaceae family.

Another Proteaceae genus, *Grevillea* or Spider Flower, is well known to all who walk through our bushland. It is confined to Australia and one or other of the 231 species flowers throughout the year.

The flowers (or florets) of the Composite family are collected together in a head, the whole looking like a single flower. This family is very large, the 14,000 odd species having world wide distribution. The Australian Flannel Flower belongs to this large family.

Another strange botanical coincidence is the family Epacrideae, to

which belong the Southern hemisphere heaths, not to be confused with the true heaths of Northern climes, whose family is the Ericaceae. The Epacrideae order is found in Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia and the Antarctic Islands. Could it be possible that at some period a connecting route existed between these islands? The genus Epacris has 33 species in Australia, amongst them being the well known Native Fuschia (Epacris longiflora).

It is wonderful enough to walk through the bush in Springtime and wee and smell the flowers, but it is better still to pause a moment to consider, with the aid of a little botanical knowledge, the ingenious prodigality and perseverance of Nature.

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ANZAC WEEK-END - 1960.

Nance Stillman.

Eight of us left the cosy snack bar near Katoomba station about nine o'clock on the Friday night. The wind howled along the street blowing dust and papers about - the shops kept their doors closed against the cold - and there were gloomy predictions of snow before morning, as heavy falls of snow were covering all the southern highlands.

"Crazy!" I could not help thinking - don't make me laugh, we do this for pleasure! I tottered and staggered along, now almost horizontal, and sometimes sort of spiralling upward, only held down by heavy shoes and two pairs of Paddy's Pinkies. However, good company holds any band together, and after the first five minutes, when we got used to the roaring dark, nothing seemed either odd or uncomfortable, and a couple of hours later we were snuggled down in a bit of lee - below the Ruined Castle - wrapped in our tents, and watching the big gums lash and stream against a back-ground of sparkling stars. We were warm from the walk, and slept.

Morning produced sun, with clouds racing before the still howling South Westerly, so that our climb up Mt. Solitary after breakfast was done in two climates. On the sunny side we could bask like lizards in hot sheltered sunshine - on the knife edge, we could hardly hold on sometimes, and when a cloud crossed the sun, it was miserably cold. It made the scenery very fine though.

We were glad to take things quietly, and our lunch site became our camp site - while a party set out to find the elusive Korrowal Buttress track. They found lots of places where it was not - but by elimination knew pretty well where it was - so we relaxed round a very good camp fire, and enjoyed the fact of the wind dropping, until about nine o'clock it became perfectly calm, and clear and starlight. A restful comfortable night.

This Korrowal Buttress track is really coy. Took quite a bit of finding next morning, although we knew the area where it must be. There is a little cairn of stones to look for - but by the time you have found that, you are already on the track, a lonely skimpy little path along a precipice. After a bit it is possible to start descending and you pass through some beautiful glades of trees in a series of natural terraces., and when you are well down you meet little Singajingawell Creek.. We followed this little beauty down stream until it joined Kedumba Creek, which we followed up stream, and of all things - we found a Black Swan. We started with such tumult - and we ended with such tranquility.

Oh! Black Swan, regal and serene, on far Kedumba creek,
Where is your mate, and where are the others, who flew with you
across the sunset sky?

Were you the apex, the leader of that lovely flight?
And were they afraid to follow to the dark pools beneath the
trees?

We cannot answer these questions - and so you remain unforgettable.

WALKABOUT IN A BUS

Gordon Robinson (compiled from
Mr Penfolds circular)

"Outback", said the Bushman, "is away out in the never never, where the crows fly backwards to keep the dust out of their eyes; It's away out west o'the sunset and right back o' beyond - it's away out well - yer can't miss it."

What's more we don't intend to miss it. On the 3rd June seven members of the Bush Club set out in search of the Outback, beyond the Paroo. From Brisbane the bus travels through Toowoomba, Dalby, Roma, Augathella, Blackall, Longreach, Winton, Cloncurry, Mary Kathleen and Mt. Isa to Camooweal, on the Northern Territory Queensland Border, then by the Barkly and Stuart Highways, rounding the John Flynn Memorial Cairn, erected by the Flying Doctor Service.

On past Banka Banka station, site of a large staging camp during the 1939-1945 war, across the Barkly tablelands to Eva Downs station, on through Elliott, Newcastle Waters to Daly Waters, where a tree, marked by explorer Stuart in 1862 on his overland exploration, may still be seen. From there through Larrimah - southern terminus of the railway to Darwin - to Warlock Ponds on the Elsey River, where in the Elsey National Memorial Cemetery, lie the graves of the "Maluka" and the "Fizzer", characters of Mrs. Gunn's famous book "We of the Never-Never".

We go to Mataranka Homestead, where is to be seen beautiful tropical scenery, and the thermal pool by the Waterhouse River, which remains at 98.5' degrees throughout the year. Further along, in the Pine Creek area are to be seen thousands of huge ant hills, many more than 20ft. high, and so on to Darwin, the Outpost of the North.

We spend two days in Darwin, then retrace our tyre-marks down to the Alice - passing the Devil's Marbles - huge boulders on both sides of the road. After leaving Alice Springs we proceed to Ayers Rock and the Olga's - and later we arrive at Cooper Pedy - where everybody lives underground, and will inspect the opal fields there. We will pass the Woomera Rocket Range - and cross the transcontinental railway at Kingoonya - and thence to Adelaide, the most southerly point of the journey.

The full trip will take four weeks, and the bus will travel about 6000 miles. Some of us have been attending lectures by Professor Elkin on the Australian Aborigines - and the professor assured us recently that travelling through these parts now is a picnic to what it used to be.

Well, please excuse seven of us from the next meeting - we will be away on a picnic.

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Gordon promised an article for this issue about the extraordinary Newnes Railway, but owing to unforeseen difficulties he has not been able to collect the material, so it will have to appear in a later issue. Watch for it - and come to the Newnes area with the Club later in the schedule.

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