

WALKS



TALKS



The Magazine of the
Bush Club

I would first of all like to say thank you to Nance Stillman, on my own behalf as well as from the Club, for carrying on the publication of WALKS AND TALKS so ably and for so long after Helen Longton's departure for Melbourne. When the first number of the magazine was issued in April, 1956, the membership of the Bush Club was under fifty. Now it is six years later and WALKS AND TALKS is an integral part of our growing Club, which now numbers seventy members.

The success and continuation of WALKS AND TALKS has been due entirely to the support and encouragement of members who have given up a little time and thought to writing articles for the magazine. Please continue the good work. Maybe some of you think you can't write! Have you ever tried? Well then, now is the time. And I'm quite sure there are some of you hiding artistic talents which could find expression in cover designs and illustrating articles.

I have tried to include in this issue as varied a selection of articles as was possible, with something, I hope, to please everyone: description, natural history, bushwalking within Australia and travel overseas, both prose and poetry--and spiced with a touch of humour. Perhaps you don't think all the articles are suitable for a bushwalking magazine! I would be very glad to hear which items interested you most in this issue and have your suggestions for future ones.

Janet Stevenson

45 Mona Vale Road,
PYMBLE

(Editor)

MORE ABOUT OUR FLORA (Not Grahamii)

Dorothy Bryant

Have you ever thought about the floral beauty spread before Dampier's eyes when he landed on the N.W. corner of Western Australia in 1699? So intrigued was he with the wealth of varieties that he took a few specimens home with him. By devious routes some seedlings must have reached England, for it is claimed that descendants still flourish at Oxford.

Captain Cook, a discerning man, also noted our unique flora, and gave the name 'Botany' to the bay where he first landed. Banks and Solander were the first botanists to begin a detailed study of our plants, but it was not until Governor Phillip assigned Robert Brown as Naturalist with Captain Flinders' survey ship the "Investigator," that thousands of specimens were collected and the first book written about them when Brown returned to England.

Charles Darwin, when he visited these shores, also studied our plants, but the man who came and stayed was Baron Von Mueller, first Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, and his interest in our flora continued for the rest of his life. He encouraged the collection of specimens from all parts of the continent, even as far as New Guinea.

The classification of plants began with the great Swedish scientist, Linnaeus, and what a formidable task it must have been. He put the plant kingdom into systematic order of genera and species,

Vascular plants are divided into two groups: (1) the seed bearing plants (Apermatophyta), of which the Angiospermae have enclosed seeds and the Gymnospermae have seeds exposed; and (2) plants without flowers and seeds (Pteridophyta), such as the ferns.

Monocotyledons are plants with one main root and the others with more than one are classified generally as Dicotyledons. Other factors, such as floral structure, method of reproduction etc., are taken into account when determining family classification.

New South Wales has many plant families, and while it is impossible to remember all the individual names of plants, it is a good thing to learn the chief characteristics of some of the more important plant families in this part of the globe.

A reliable book on Botany is worth studying and it is interesting to collect a few specimens when out on bush walks to take home to track down their particular family or families, and to note the locality where the flowers were found. We all know from sad experiences over the years how some of our loveliest bush plants have disappeared from their natural habitat, and I am afraid that Man himself is largely to blame for this--we need more vocal Conservationists.

SOME MEMORIES OF AN ALASKAN SUMMER

Rhona McBurney

Winter was over. Spring had come and set us free from this white-walled valley that had held us prisoners for eight icy months.

By towering mountains and tranquil lakes, and by swift-flowing streams recently broken free from their icy covers, the road led north to the Alaska Highway.

Overhead, geese, ducks and many smaller migratory birds were making their way to the vast tundra with its network of rivers, lakes and muskeg swamps. And we witnessed the arrival of the first pair of Rocky Mountain blue birds, the male resplendent all in blue and the female with delicate silvery grey wings and blue vest.

Flowers cultivated in our gardens bloomed everywhere in wild profusion. Lupins, delphiniums, forget-me-nots (the Alaskan State flower), and the lovely bell-shaped pasque flower, Flower of the Yukon, seemed to reflect the intense blue of the clear northern sky.

When twilight came, a clearing by a stream seemed an ideal spot to camp. A car was already parked by the roadside and suddenly an American, complete with fishing gear, raced up and, without any introductions, announced: "I'm getting out of here--they're eating me alive!" With that, he leapt into his car and drove off, leaving a cloud of dust hanging in the soft evening air.

Next moment "they" descended, "they"" being swarms of ravenous mosquitoes, and we were forced to find another campsite on top of a hill in the breeze.

At Whitehouse, some 350 miles up the Highway, we parted from our friends, a young Canadian couple who were heading for Skagway on the coast. On by bus to Fairbanks with its frontier town atmosphere, and then by Alaska Railroad to McKinley Park, where Moreton Wood (Woody), one of the owners of Camp Donali, was waiting to transport guests to the camp.

With a friendly glance he took in our luggage--haversacks, overnight bags and sleeping bags--contrasting strangely with the chromium fitted matching luggage sets of the America tourists. Eileen's reply, "Cassiar B.C.," to his inquiry as to where we were from did not deter Woody. "Aussies, eh?" he grinned. Later we found he was an expert on accents, particularly Australian accents, having had two of our countrymen at the camp the previous summer, and he practiced the inflections mercilessly,

So began a sojourn in McKinley Park, which was all the more delightful because it was unexpected. The drive to the camp through spectacular scenery was highlighted by the tremendous herd of caribou, now on the move strung out in hundreds, following an ancient way to their summer pastures on the northern tundra. The mountain valleys, comparatively warmer than the plains, are their winter strongholds.

Camp Dinali is run by Woody, his wife Ginny and her friend from college days, Celia, and they and the rest of the staff were warm-hearted and generous with the friendship they offered us.

We had intended to spend four days holidaying there and ended by staying all the summer, enjoying the scenery and the companionship shared by lovers of nature, music, literature and fun--in fact everything that makes living a joy.

Even the dreariest tasks seemed easy in this atmosphere. Washing up, laying floors, cleaning cabins and toilets, picking blueberries and making jam, filled our days from early morning till twilight, when the great McKinley was bathed in brilliant sunset colours.

What a happy summer it was. The days flew and soon were getting shorter and we noticed the frost heavier each morning, as we ran to the kitchen.

The tundra was changing colour and taking on the hues of a wonderful Persian carpet, and the birds were restless and gathering. Caribou were returning singly or in small family groups, contrasting with the vast herd we had seen earlier. They had grown magnificent white cloaks and vests and looked very majestic in winter garb.

The number of guests had dwindled and the camp would be closing in a few weeks, with the first snow. It was time to depart. Ahead lay the long trip south on the Highway with the beauty and intensity of autumn blazing on all sides, and the sombre pine forests illuminated from below by the flaming carpet of gold and red undergrowth.

THE BUSH WALKERS

Nance Stillman

You see them walk in single file along the little winding tracks
And when the evening shadows fall, they mostly sleep beside their packs.
Sometimes the way is stark and drear, sometimes there's heat and often rain,
But there is magic in those paths, for once they've walked -they walk again.

There is little comfort when they're new -- they don't sleep well--they're
tired and cold.

Yet soon the secret bonds are forged and they have joined the campers' fold.
Perhaps it is the birds at dawn--the sparkling stream--the mountain peak,
Or the song and laughter round the fire--that gives them what they seek.

No one knows where the magic has lain, but once they come--they come again.

THE CARNARVON NATIONAL PARK

C. H. Bell

Not so long ago the name Carnarvon Ranges was synonymous with thoughts of rugged, mysterious, and lovely unapproachable areas of tangled mountains and gorges. With the march of progress it is no longer unapproachable, being within the scope of almost any motor vehicle to reach the edge of this fascinating region.

The area is about 350 miles north-west of Brisbane and is a 50 square mile tangle of gorges, sandstone cliffs, mountain ranges and peaks, caves and rocky spires in colours ranging from white, through blues and pinks to bright orange and red. The Great Dividing Range forms the southern barrier and Black Alley Range angles away from the western end, forming a roughly triangular section in which is contained the Carnarvon National Park of 66,480 acres. Most of this was proclaimed in 1932 and the remainder in 1954.

The area is about 25 miles west of the Carnarvon Highway, midway between Injune and the south and Springsure in the north. The small township of Rolleston is the only settlement anywhere near except for some isolated cattle stations. The ranges can be approached from either north or south. Coming from Brisbane, a distance of 300 miles by rail to Roma is travelled and then a further 180 miles by road along the Carnarvon Highway via Injune. The so called "highway" is a black soil track in places and crosses many streams, usually dry sandy creek beds for most of the year, but liable to heavy flooding.

Ingelara Station is about five miles further along the road and from here are the first glimpses of the Carnarvon Ranges.

It is only just over 100 years since Leichhardt and Gilbert passed some distance to the east of the Carnarvons in 1844 while exploring the country north from the Darling Downs towards the Northern Territory. But no development occurred before 1900, when settlers gradually moved in and raised cattle on the surrounding plains.

From Ingelara Station the track is a formed black soil road to the entrance to the Gorge. At this point the Queensland Country Women's Association have built a hut (which can be used for shelter, by arrangement). The rock walls of the Questas, or upthrust angled buttresses, rise abruptly right behind the hut and stretch for many miles north and south. Behind them are the sheer sandstone and basalt cliffs, rising up to 3,000 feet above sea level to the Consuelo Tableland.

After entering the Gorge mouth, which allows only enough space for the creek, and travelling several hundred yards the cliff line opens out and a wide flat valley extends for about a mile upstream. Once beyond the open valley the gorge narrows and for about ten miles twists and turns generally westwards with sheer inaccessible cliffs on either side, broken only by narrow subsidiary gorges running into the sandstone.

Of the many narrow fissures which radiate from the main gorge several are of particular interest. One contains the best examples of native aboriginal paintings to be seen in the area and is known as Art Gallery Gorge. Another, in its upper reaches, has a perfect example of a free stone arch spanning about 30 feet. On the northern side adjacent to the Platypus Pool, a small gloomy gorge contains the hidden Ward's Falls.

There are many caves, the main one being the Cathedral Cave, about 200 feet long, 70 feet deep and 100 feet high. Most contain rock paintings of animals, implements, and human figures. Aboriginal burial caves have been located but the remains long since decayed.

The creek banks feature open forest timber such as gums, stringy bark and casuarina, with a generous supply of cabbage tree palms. Tree ferns, elkhorns, orchids and other damp and shade loving plants can be found in the sheltered area. Above the sandstone layer, hard dry wattles and Blue Mountain-type of vegetation predominate and on the plateau iron bark and dry forest timber cover most sections. Macrozamia palms up to 20 feet high are conspicuous on all the higher slopes.

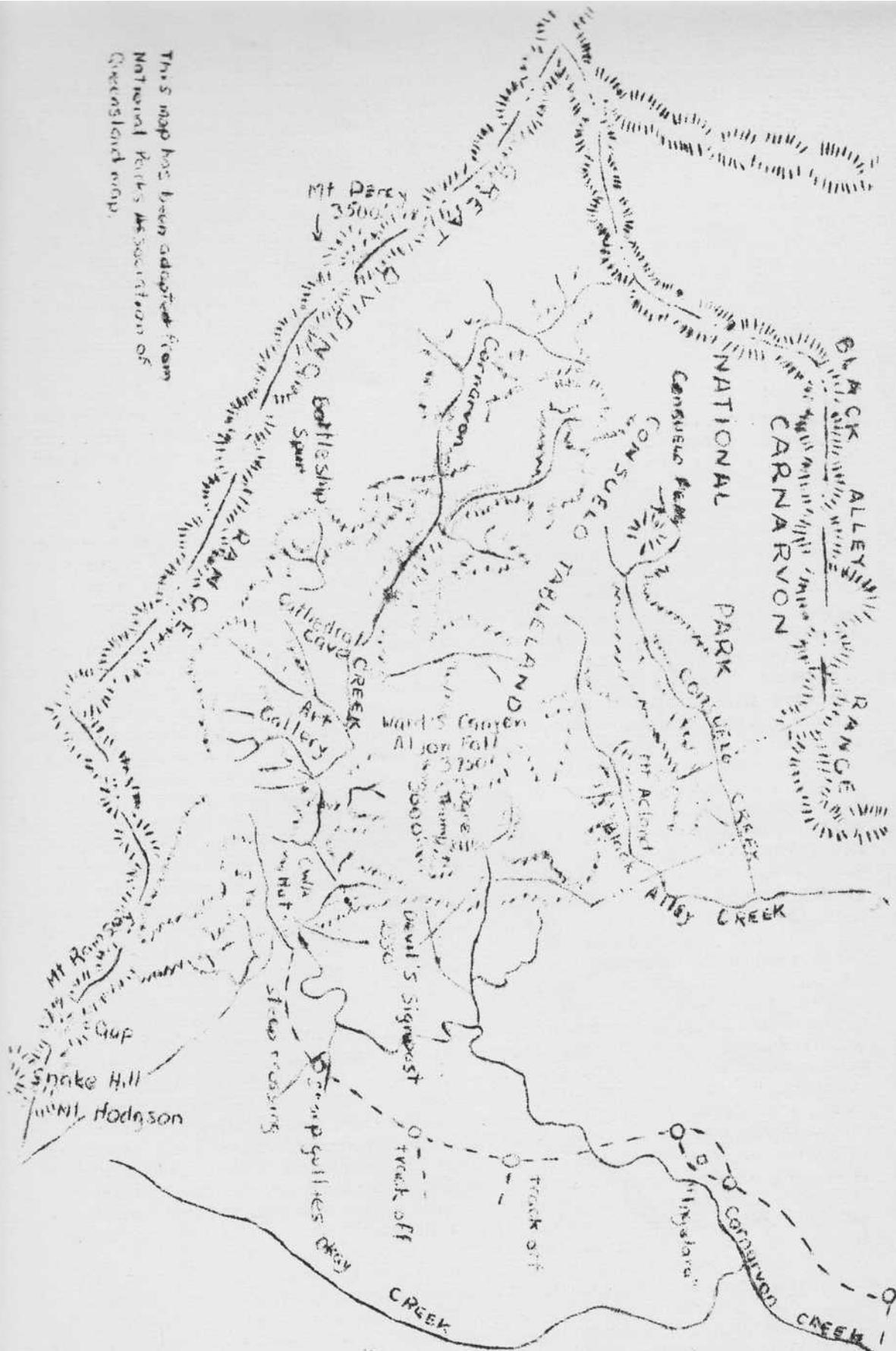
Ochre beds (soft rock or sandstone layers, of varying colours) can be seen along the creek bank. It was with this crushed and liquified material that the aborigine made most of his rock paintings. The usual method was to take a mouthful of the prepared ochre and blow over and around the object to be recorded against a clean sandstone wall.

To obtain an overall view of all this magnificence there are three main points which can be climbed quite easily. Mt. Percy (3,500 ft.) is an outstanding peak on the Dividing Range some five miles west of the Cathedral Cave, and from the summit the whole of Carnarvon Gorge can be seen. Battleship Spur, only two miles from Cathedral Cave, is probably the best vantage point of all. Also north of the camp site along the Questa line, a thin finger of rock will be noted. This is the Devil's Signboard (2,550 ft.), a narrow upthrust spire of sandstone which gives a panorama for many miles. Viewed side on it loses its spired appearance and rises steeply in a series of humps which make it possible to climb.

For a vastly different region, full of interest and fascination, still holding the remote and mysterious atmosphere of not long dead aborigines and their hunting grounds, the Carnarvon Range National Park will thrill and satisfy the nature lover, the photographer and the walker with its message of the Great Australian Bush.

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This map has been adapted from
National Parks Association of
Queensland map.



Scale 1" = 2 miles

CARNARVON NATIONAL PARK
RESERVE NO. 6 AREA About 66,480 Acres

Everybody knows the coastline in the vicinity of Sydney as a succession of golden beaches and bold headlands, which are magnificent enough. But how many know of the existence of some curious formations at points along the rocky shore between Manly and Palm Beach? Let's abandon our usual day of surf-frolic and sunbaking on the strand and poke our noses into some lesser known places.

Turimetta Head is a prominent point of sandstone and shale between Warriewood and Bongin Bongin Beach (usually, and erroneously, referred to as Mona Vale Beach - the latter is the little cove north of it). It can claim to be unusual because of the tunnel that has been eaten out of it by the sea. This has burrowed through the head itself, from side to side, but has not yet penetrated the rock platform which abuts the cliff on its south side. You can stand on this platform and watch the waves crashing through the tunnel at your feet.

Walk to the north end of Avalon Beach and you will become aware of a beautiful little stack - an isolated pillar of resistant rock which erosion of softer material has left standing out from the main cliff. Geologically speaking, it is rapidly on the way out, and its top may soon topple, perhaps in our lifetime -- who knows?

Continue around this rocky coast, past a recent fall of huge sandstone boulders, and look up at a very beautiful example of "honeycombing" in the cliff face. I cannot remember ever having seen larger "cells" than these. Further around, not far from the low point in the cliffs of this region, is St. Michael's Cave, a large opening in the cliff rather high up from the water. Also known as the Hole in the Wall, it is about 200 ft long by 30 ft wide and has a fairly high roof. A dyke of intrusive rock may be seen bisecting the roof longitudinally and this is the prime cause of the cave's existence, erosion and falling away of material following the original crack in the basic rock. A better way of reaching this cave more directly is to turn into North Avalon Road from the main road and follow it right out, parking in a vacant allotment at the cliff edge. A track here leads down and south to the cave.

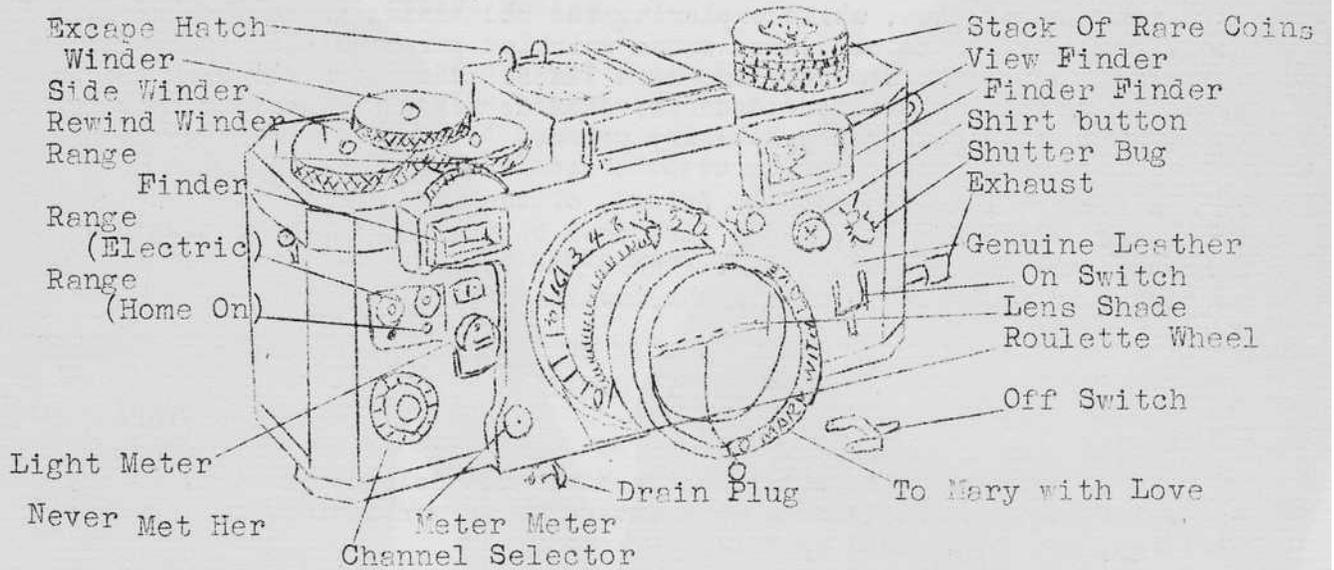
Now we shall go to Careel Head, between towering South Head and Whale Beach. A track leads down to the headland from the little dead-end street running out to Careel Head itself, and if we continue on around the point we find ourselves on a ledge of fine sandstone some 30 ft. above sea-level, unable to proceed further. It is here that we see some iron pegs cemented into the rock, probably by enterprising fishermen. A good rock climber can negotiate the face by the hand and foot holds provided, but most prefer the security of a rope of about 20 ft.

Once down, we can rock-hop around to the first natural wonder of this region - a huge rock cleft, reaching a considerable distance into the cliff. By means of very convenient natural ledges you can easily walk and crawl with perfect safety almost to the end of the cleft, to which the direct skylight still penetrates. Mirror-calm sea water, perhaps 20ft deep in places, occupies the cleft below the ledges, and the plopping sounds you can hear are made by crabs, which fall from the rocksides as you approach. This cleft is accessible only with reasonable seas and/or at low tide so if the seas look dangerous-forget it! You must also forget the larger sea cave about 100yds further south, but if weather permits we will take a peek.

This one is still quite deep, but is more open and really an extension of a deep gutter. Its size and height make it a grand sight. An important adjunct is the large sandstone pillar forming a single portal to its entrance. Honeycombing patterns the rocks here and the whole surface is washed clean and bright by the industry of sea and weather. The seas boom in the great pink-encrusted cavern, evoking perhaps dimly remembered stories of pirates' and smugglers' caves. Shags rest on ledges and crags high above us where the cliffs overhang, and here they are our superiors for, while they can remain, we of the land must turn and go-well rewarded by our enterprise but apprehensive of wind and tide.

PHOTOGRAPHY IS SIMPLE

35 M M CAMERA



A Brief Exposure on Modern Photography for Bushwalkers

Gordon Robinson

Introduction: Physical aberrations accompanied by the apochromatically corrected convergence of the dispersion of variably diffused light is passed by general acclamation through the diverging lens and projected through a rapid rectilinear lens by means of a soft focus, held between a tomato and a ripe banana.

There seem to be many spools of thought on types of film, cameras, light metres etc, suited for bushwalkers.

Let us begin with the camera. If we are going to participate in photography, it is generally agreed that a camera of some description is necessary for first class results.

Have you ever looked at the modern 35 mm camera head-on? Frightening, isn't it! Covered in gadgets. But don't allow them to scare you - all you must know is which ones to leave alone and it will perform as well as any simple box camera.,

The key word is Focus - it being the photographic word for distance and derived, as everyone knows, from the Latin word abode (of. Far from the old focus at home - Dickens).

Exposure-is the time sunshine takes to over expose the negative, giving foggy results which to say the best is not good,

Loading the camera - do not allow yourself to get depressed after trying to follow the printed simple instructions for a few hours, Everybody becomes entangled, strangled and slightly mangled, on their first few attempts. However, if your fumbling persists for, say, two years, drop photography and take up fiddlesticks where you can continue to fumble - but it's not so expensive.

Always remember, when in doubt -guess! Never ask a fellow photographer for advice on exposure. You might say casually: "What do you reckon I ought to give it, Charlie?"

Charlie says: "What film are you using? Is it colour?"

"What is that in Weston? Have you an ultra violet filter?"

"What make of lens? Make of camera? Serial number?"

"What is your fastest speed? What are you going to photograph, anyway?"

Actually, Charlie hasn't the foggiest idea what exposure to suggest and hopes you can't answer these questions.

It's much easier to give it f8 at 1/50th or 1/60th if your camera is constructed that way.

A friend of mine, while exploring the old mining ghost town of Glen Davis, came across an old woman whose wrinkled parchment-like skin reflected many years of worry and hard times. She was sitting on a cold stone step, in an old battered dress, outside her fast decaying shack where she had existed for many weary years.

A strange tale she told my friend of the life she had led in the boom days. It was a gay, happy life then but, alas, the boom didn't last - and now she was all alone. "What did you give her, Harry?" I enquired, "f11 at 1/100th" was the instant reply.

OUR CELTIC HERITAGE

Maurice Clare

As so many of us in this country have some Celtic ancestry it may be of interest to consider to what extent we in particular, and the world at large, are influenced by this element.

First of all it appears that Celtic people were living in Europe several centuries before the Christian era, and we know from Roman history that they were the immediate neighbours of the Romans in Gaul, Britain, Western Germany and what is now Switzerland. The presence of Celtic people in Europe is evidenced by the number of names of natural features such as rivers and mountains which are Celtic in origin. Vienna, Paris and London are Celtic names.

There were two waves of invasion westward into the British Isles, with perhaps several hundred years in between. The Celtic languages are divided into two groups called Gaelic and Brythonic. They have many similarities but some clear-cut differences distinguish them. One is especially characteristic. Where the Gaelic has an initial "c" or "q" the Brythonic has "p." Some examples are:

<u>Welsh</u>		<u>Erse</u>
pa?	(what?)	ca
pen	(head)	ceann
pedwar	(four)	cathair
par	(couple)	coraid

The Gaelic languages are Erse or Irish, Scots Gaelic and Manx. The Brythonic tongues are Welsh, Cornish and Breton.

Celtic mythology has profoundly influenced European literature. In the middle ages some of the greatest literary works dealt with the subject of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. We have the "Mabinogian," a collection of these stories written in Welsh, as well as Maory's "Morte D'Arthur," "Arthurian Romances" by Chretien de Trayes written in French, "Tristan" by Gottfried von Strassburg in German. Another great German work was "Parzival" by Wolfram von Eschenbach. Then there is the scintillating Middle English poem "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" written by a contemporary of Chaucer. By the way, King Arthur really did exist, but opinions differ as to when and where, and how important he was.

The great German composer Richard Wagner wrote two operas using Celtic stories adapted to his own purposes; they were "Tristan and Isolde" and "Parsifal." The prelude to "Lohengrin" opens by creating an atmosphere representing the Holy Grail which is an idea taken from British story.

The Welsh people are proud of their language, which has an unbroken tradition comparing favourably with most languages. From the point of view of philology, literature and civilization, Welsh claims to be second to none. From the musical point of view, we all know the Welshman's love of singing, and we owe the word "eisteddfod" to the people of Wales.

In the Hebrides, poetry and music has been handed down by word of mouth for 3,000 years. Because the people of the Isles have been isolated from Europe and England, this ancient poetry and music remains. The songs are preferably sung without accompaniment and the music uses at least twelve scales.

In Ireland, too, the ancient songs have come to us, many achieving such perfection of artistic expression that they have been ranked with the greatest expressions of chanson and lied. These songs are a far cry from the over-sentimentalised efforts we too often associate with Irish music,

These are just a few thoughts on the subject of the Celtic peoples.

ON HATS

Jean Finley

My dictionary defines a hat as "as covering for the head, usually with a crown and brim." Therefore, a bushwalker's hat may be defined as "a covering...suitable for walking in the bush" - thereby excluding Paris models.

Earnest study of the head coverings (other than hair) of members of the Bush Club has enabled me to classify bushwalking hats as follows: Firstly, bush hats (or what I call bush hats). A very suitable choice are these - their wide brims withstand the fiercest sun or the heaviest downpour. Secondly, cricket hats (or what I call cricket hats). There quite a variety of colours here and sometimes a variety of shades. This type has the advantage of fitting into that small corner in a pack, but I must point out that its shape will soon protest about such treatment. Finally, miscellaneous....These hats have a personality all of their own, e.g. Helen's jaunty little model and Joan's cap, and not forgetting Paul's by-word which, after all, does cover his head and does have a crown and a (?) brim. I should, also, I suppose, include my present model, as it at least covers my head and suntan cream on my face is quite effective --isn't it!

THE MOUNTAIN

The mountain sat upon the plain
In his eternal chair
His observation manifold,
His inquest everywhere:
The seasons played about his knee
Like children round a sire;
Grandfather of the days is he,
Of dawn the ancestor.

Emily Dickenson
(1830-86)

SAUNTERING

I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of Walking - that is, of taking walks -who had a genius, so to speak, for sauntering: which word is beautifully derived from "idle people who roved about the country in the Middle Ages, and asked charity under pretence of going a la Sainte Terre" to the Holy Land, till the children exclaimed, "There goes a Sainte-Terrer," a Saunterer - a Holy-Lander. They who never go to the Holy Land in their walks, as they pretend are indeed mere idlers and vagabonds; but they who do go there are saunterers in good sense, such as I mean. Some, however, would derive the word from sans terre, without land or a home, which therefore, in the good sense, will mean having no particular home, but equally at home everywhere. For this is the secret of successful sauntering.

Henry D. Thoreau
(1817-62)