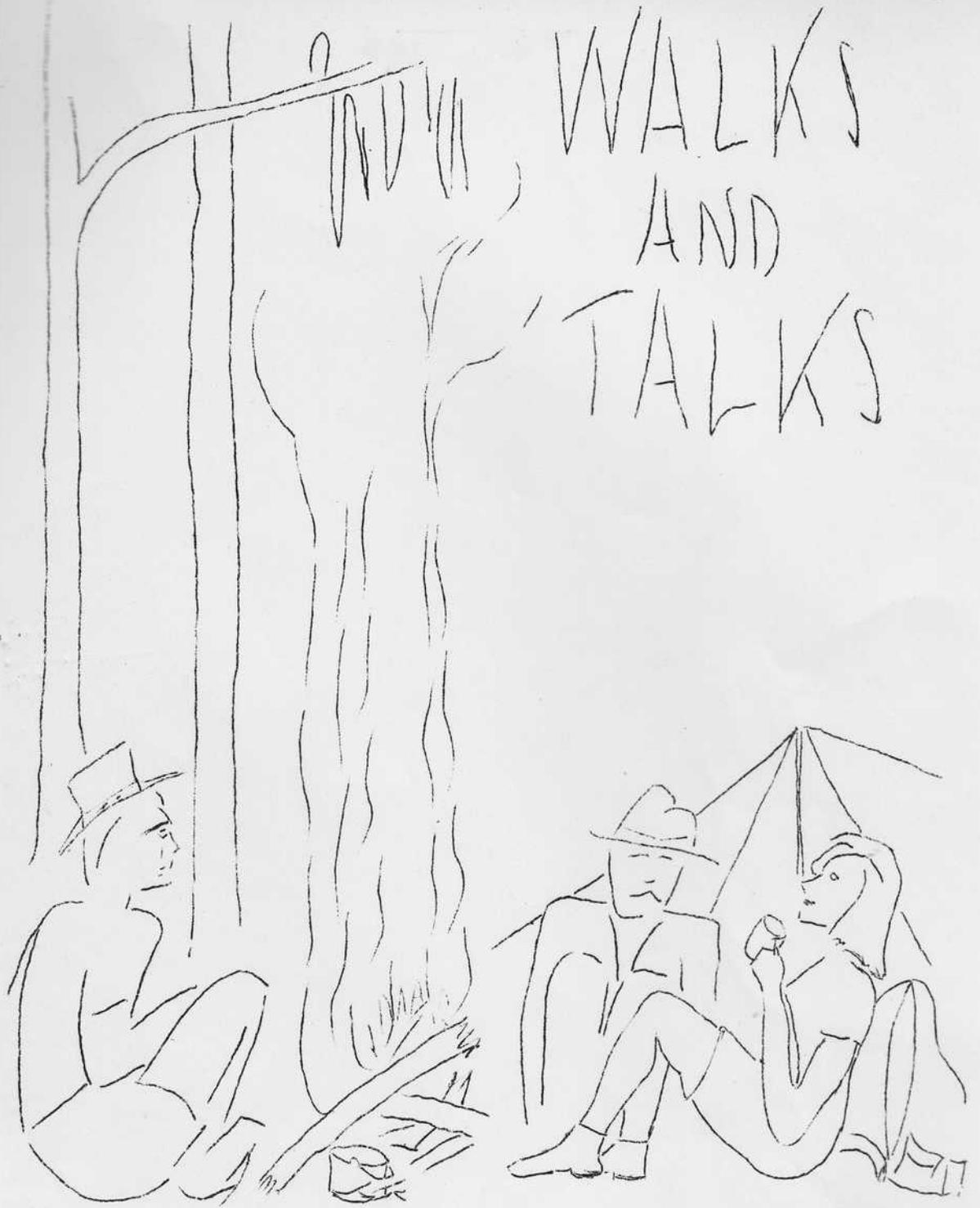


Price 1/-

No.28



The Magazine of the
Bush Club

For our campfire cover this issue, we have to thank Albert, and in the unacknowledged illustration on the October cover, you will probably have recognized Gordon's handiwork.

Each quarter, as the time comes to organize contributions and prepare stencils for the next number of WALKS & TALKS, I am always in a state bordering on panic, that I will not have enough articles to fill the issue. But I want to thank all of you who continue to support the magazine - those who send in very welcome unsolicited contributions and those who willingly respond, at the eleventh hour, to an urgent appeal for story or illustration to complete the makeup.

I am sure there are some of you I haven't heard from who have hidden talents for writing or illustrating. Or maybe you just haven't tried. Well, there's always the first time and I would love to hear from you. How about it?

There are a number of back issues of WALKS & TALKS still available so if you have missed out on any issue, or would like extra copies, please let me know. Copies are always obtainable at the monthly meetings.

11 Lord Street
ROSEVILLE

Janet Stevenson
(Editor)

IDLE THOUGHTS AT WOODS CREEK

Peggy Tafe

After a day of sheet enjoyment -listening to bird song, with the gentle 'tink' of the bellbird providing the main theme -swimming in the Grose and lazily wandering along its sandy stretches, tea is nearly over and the first stars are appearing. I think of all the other groups of bushwalkers who are probably around fires too, and idly wonder, out aloud, what it must be like to belong to another club. Rather disconcertingly, suggestions come thick and fast from all directions.

Would others notice everything one ate? Attention has just been drawn to the fact that I am still eating. Well, someone has to be last to finish! A verbal list is made of what I have been seen to eat since 11 a.m. that day; well, it isn't every weekend that I bring the remains of a five-year-old's birthday party as part of my camp rations. I try to justify this, and get slightly confused in the effort. Do other clubs have grammatical taboos up with which they will not put?

Getting up to see if my coffee water is ready, I get asked awkward questions about billy lids-are other clubs so fussy about small articles about which one can so easily make mistakes? Ah, coffee finished, I can relax. I lean back straight into the water bag which had been placed handily behind me, so that I wouldn't trip over the others, I suspect. I dry my hair and prepare to really relax and wonder about those other clubs.

What kind of answers do they have to Good Questions? Our nature expert has with him a library of at least four books-now is the right time to find out about things. "Do all insects have a pupa?" "No, but they all have a Mumma."

Maybe no other club could be quite like this one. Perhaps up with me they would not put. The fire dies down and the coals glow redly, the idle thoughts vanish, and I get up to prepare a damper for supper.

A mist. Although one could see right across the ship, they called it a dense fog and held us up for two hours. Two large blurs, then the Bridge emerged. Would it be possible to recognize folks one had never met, in the crowd? Then came a long drive past miles and miles of bungalow development. There must be land to burn. Everywhere there was a wonderful blaze of flowers, yet it was supposed to be mid-winter.

Would Australia prove to be home? Some temporary work would seem a wise beginning, so let us look at Australian education from the inside. "Such dear little girls!" said the voice at the other end of the telephone. In the old country they were wont to be called "little demons." As ever, there were the first few weeks of quiet watching, but here there were such hoards and the day seemed such a scramble one wondered how they learnt; especially when for so many it was in a foreign language.

"Whyever Port Augusta?" was the usual Australian's comment in England. "You have to go via Melbourne" the people said. Within was the desire to see the outback and to have a glimpse of a coolibah tree. It transpired it was possible to go via Broken Hill, the ancestral meeting spot. They had said it would be all the same--dreary grey--and yet there was a constant change of scene, all so different to anything met before. The trees all looked so small and fragile as if they drew no substance from the soil. Finally came the red parched beauty of South Australia with the ever-changing Flinders Ranges playing hide and seek in the background. Here one crossed miles and miles of scattered salt-bush and blue-bush set amongst the sand, then suddenly reached a luscious, wooded, shady valley. Here one could see sheep farms, visit the School of the Air and watch the control room of the Flying Doctor Service and learn something of the backbone of Australia. The will to cultivate must be strong here, for homes are built right out in the very desert.

The time came to return to Sydney's medley of colour and bustle, with everyone intent on the wealth of a home of their own and a car, even sometimes a boat. What grandeur there was to life, after the flat life of the Londoner. Yet, as no-one ever seemed to pause, one felt a pang of heartache for the patchwork English countryside with its thatched cottages and church spires and for the smile and quiet sympathy of old friends.

Some young Australians of all ages love the peace and beauty of the bush. When they down tools they go for miles by car or train, then step out into an enchanted country where the trees spring out of cracks between the rocks and a multitude of hitherto unknown flowers are embedded in a thick undergrowth which sometimes reaches human height. Let it not be supposed that one may walk, but rather break a pathway through solid hedge, scramble up perpendicular rocks or leap across torrents. Yet there is the ever helpful hand for those who are new to the down under.

It is here that one finds Australia's culture in "the University of the Bush." Some of the scholars study stones, flowers or birds, while others hunt by night for koalas. There are artists with their brush or camera, and singers and musicians. During siesta, or at the end of the day, arise the everlasting questions of philosophy, debated by scholars throughout the ages and one is reminded of mediaeval quadrangles, scholars' long black gowns and the weekly essay writing.

"Myself when young, did eagerly frequent
 Doctor and saint and heard great argument
 And ever and anon, went out by the same door as in I went."

Reputation is what men and women think of us. Character is what God and angels know of us.

Thomas Paine

Toolbrunup, an impressive, symmetrically shaped peak rising to something over 3,000 feet, is situated in the 30 mile long Sterling Range, some 50 miles north of Albany in West Australia. Although not the tallest peak in the range, its very ruggedness, with towering cliffs surrounding its summit make it the most challenging peak in the range and for some 3 years Mabs (my wife) and I had promised ourselves that we would one day climb it.

As our family, consisting of Frances, Robin and Linda--aged 9, 6 and 3 respectively at that time, had all climbed to lookouts and the top of the Devil's Slide in the nearby Porongorups, we decided to make it a family affair.

On our third and final holiday in Albany, during August 1961, we left our holiday shack before dawn and arrived at the start of the track leading to the foot of Toolbrunup at about 7 o'clock, with the youngsters still in their sleeping bags in the back seat of the car.

After a picnic breakfast, we started along the track at 8 o'clock. This track was in the process of being opened up for the use of cars and was still muddy and soft from the winter rains. A previous attempt to climb the peak had been foiled when we had become bogged here for several hours, so we were putting our faith in the old and tried means of propulsion on this occasion.

Arriving at the base of the peak, we cached our food and surplus belongings in the bush and took stock of our problem for the day--the climb. Although we had made many inquiries, we had never been able to obtain any information on the best means of approach to the summit. Facing us was a heavily timbered steep slope topped by towering cliffs which curved out of sight to left and right above us.

A spur starting some distance to our left, forming a gully on the western side of the slopes below the cliffs and vanishing behind the peak, gave us our only promise of success.

Finding a track through the high undergrowth under tall gums, we found ourselves following a creek up the gully. After some distance we noticed the creek had vanished and investigation disclosed the sound of water running below the surface. Disappearing creeks, and even rivers, are by no means rare in Western Australia but in this instance the sound of the water could be heard.

We slowly worked our way up the gully. The going was hard as all signs of any track had long since vanished and we negotiated a number of screes of small stones, on which an unwary step could mean a rapid descent. It was a case of every man, woman and child for themselves and this included three-year-old.

As we worked our way along the side of the spur, it swung sharply in towards the base of the cliffs and we eventually crossed an outsize in screes formed of rocks from 3 to 12 feet in radius. Crossing this, we found our way barred by a belt of impenetrable scrub about 8 feet high and 50 feet in width. Working our way up the scree, we probed for a weak spot and struggled through to the other side. After a long battle, which cost me the leg of my trousers and sundry other tears, we made it, and found traces of previous climbers going upwards. With comparative ease we reached the point where the spur joined Toolbrunup and found an easy climb up the last few hundred feet to the summit--a tumbled mass of boulders covering an area little more than 50 feet across.

It was worth the climb. The view was breathtaking. Stretching east and west were the peaks comprising the range; to the east the Chester Pass and further on the big rugged peaks of Bluff Knoll and Ellens Peak rising sharply upwards from the flat countryside. Away to the west a continuous cavalcade of smaller peaks, all disconnected from each other and stretching for some 20 miles.

All the surrounding country is almost flat and very little above sea level; which enhances the height of the peaks in the range. South lay Albany on King George's Sound, with the Porongorups midway between, and to the north a patchwork quilt formed by some of the finest farms in the state.

After an all too short stay on the summit, the descent was commenced. Working our way downwards past the scene of our tussle with the belt of scrub we eventually found ourselves in a natural grotto formed by heavy overhanging trees and scrub. Large boulders, probably a continuation of our outsize in scree, formed its floor, which was covered with light grass moss some three inches in thickness. It was a fantastic sight. This spot, shielded by high cliffs, probably rarely received any direct sun.

Leaving our grotto we encountered a most difficult scree, on which the children needed considerable help, as one false step would have caused them to roll or slide down its steep and treacherous slope. This was the most difficult section of the day.

After safely negotiating the scree, we worked our way back eventually to the car track. We had a quick snack and the walk back to the car started as Bluff Knoll turned a brilliant pink in the setting sun.

We reached the car at 7 o'clock, in darkness, just eleven hours after leaving it.

All in all, a full day for the family. Frances became a veteran of three peaks climbed in the Sterlings. For Robin and Linda it was their first but, we know, not their last climb.

MEMORIUM TO A BUSHWALKER

Who was Jack Evans?

His spirit greets us when at last we drop our packs
At the camp site down on Erskine Creek.

We never knew him - his age,
The colour of his eyes,
His size,
Or how or when he lived.

And yet we count him friend.
Did he help mark the little track
That leads to the camp site in the bend?

Shaded by a stand of trees (blue gum, turpentine and wattle being only
some)
A grassy level lies above a deep quiet pool, with rapids either end,
Where yet no flood has ever come.

A fine stone fire-place has been made,
Nails put in trees to hang food bags in the shade,
A sandy patch to bury tins,
(The campers' sins).

High rocky peaks to climb - clean sand for basking -
Little waterfalls and swirling currents to carry one
From glittering sunlight into darker deeps.

Yes, Jack old friend - we feel we know you well!
The things you liked and did are engraved on a little piece of tin,
Nailed to a tree in the middle of that camp site -

"IN MEMORY OF JACK EVANS"

Nancy Stillman

The world is round, and maps are rectangular!

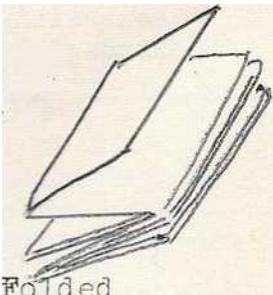
Early explorers had difficulty grasping these fundamental facts and thought, because maps were flat, that the world must be flat.

The oldest printed map in the round world is Chinese, and was printed in A.D. 1130. To many people maps have continued to remain Chinese.

The most difficult part of map reading is the unfolding. It's like trying to read the Herald at the breakfast table--it becomes messy.

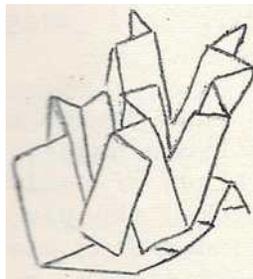
A few minutes attention to the illustrations will show clearly the correct way to unfold a folded map.

Once unfolded, map reading really begins, and the map should be folded up to make handling easy. To see how this is accomplished, look at the illustrations in reverse. The difference of course, is the inside becomes the outside upside downside.

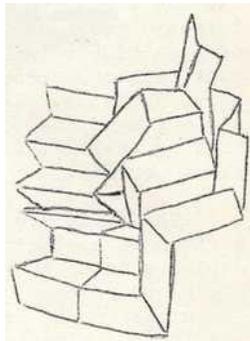


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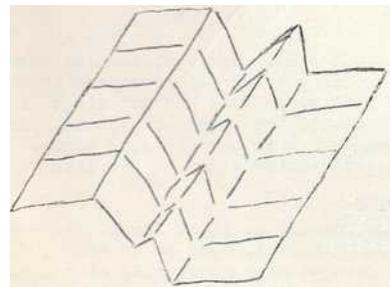
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Larva



Pupa



Mature

A Few Definitions

Basin: (a) a district drained by a river and its tributaries (b) a dish used for washing-up outside, or washing in outside,

Bluff: a sudden dropping away of the ground (understatement)

Cliff: same as bluff, but it's not kidding.

Canyon: a rugged and deep defile.

Defile: a rugged and deep gorge.

Gorge: a rugged and deep ravine.

Ravine: a rugged and deep canyon.

Rugged: a slight slope in open country.

Foreshore: what you row for if out in the centre of a lake and somebody pulls the plug out.

Knoll: a low detached hill.

Hill: Eckart's second name--definitely not low.

Cave: a sideways hole in the ground, sometimes vertical.

Plateau: an elevated plain.

Elevator: what you wish you had taken to get to the plateau.

Brook: a small creek.

Creek: a small river.

River: a large stream.

Stream: a large creek.

Watershed: a garage constructed over a swimming pool.

Contour: an imaginary line that isn't on the surface of the ground--spaced apart.

Bush: a region still covered with forest or scrub.

Forest: a region still covered with scrub or bush.

Scrub: a region still covered with bush or forest.

Subject for Interesting Discussion

If a bushwalking group is walking along a blazed trail and the decision is made to leave the track to visit an interesting point and rejoin the track by a different route, does the party deviate, diverge, divert, detour, sidetrack, wander, become confused, lost or delayed?

You must agree that's a good question!

SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD

Walt Whitman

(A fragment)

Afoot and lighthearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose,
Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
Henceforth I whisper no more, postpone no more, need nothing;
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
Strong and content I travel the open road.

TO CENTRAL AUSTRALIA BY COACH SAFARI

Frank Macken

On the strength of glowing reports by Bush Club pioneers who went to Darwin with Clive Penfold and the Greyhound coach outfit, Rita and I booked up for a similar tour of Central Australia.

The recommended kit was ne suitcase each, plus a one gallon water bottle and a half bushel box for the food. Also of course a tent, sleeping bag and other odds and ends. We were ready for the trip at last and left home at 6 a.m. to be early at the Strathfield garage to assist "loading at 7 a.m." as the circular said.

It was frosty winter morning in July and the taxi dumped us in the dark at the deserted garage, and we wondered if there hadn't been some mistake. Later, some people arrived with all kinds of equipment and, later still, the garage attendant came and unlocked the place. The two large green coaches were eventually fully loaded with over fifty intrepid adventurous safari tourists, And, most unexpectedly, a group of Bush Club welwishers arrived to see us safely away. "Safari" meant that the coach provided transport, itinerary and a water supply as well as supervision. You, on your part, provided one gallon of water each and arranged for your own camping and cooking, washing non-ironing and bating facilities and also a hell of a lot of energy applied at the right moments.

The first evening landed us somewhere out of Dubbo on the banks of a river we couldn't see in the dark. There was a seemingly disorganized scramble to do everything at once by the light of torches to sort out all kinds of camp gear, suitcases, water bottles and food boxes. And at the same time light fires, get more water, erect tents and stretchers and lay out sleeping gear, Try it in the dark and see how difficult it can be! This pattern seemed to be repeated each camping night for the rest of the trip.

Some at this stage wished they had not come. However, bedtime came at last and some of us awakened in the morning to 22^o of frost and the coach hooters blaring to get us out at 5:30 a.m. Some had not slept at all with the intense cold. However, thanks to two pairs of pyjamas, plus head snood and wool gloves, we were warm enough in our sleeping bags -with extra blanket bag as well. Yes, it was quite a job to get into the sleeping bag!

Breakfast time was another mad rush for all to light fires, get more water and to cook, take down tents pack equipment, load on to coach, attend to face wash and other jobs and yet get away punctually at 8 a.m. This routine was also repeated each morning and many, by now, were quite sure they should not have come, for not all were bushwalkers, However, soon the pattern settled down and we were on to Cunnamulla and Cloncurry, up into Queensland and the tropics.

There were many stops en route for photographers to snap scenes of the rolling red plain country with years of drought, the mulga trees and spinifex grass still growing through it all. At last we could sleep out nights in the tropic warmth. There was no dew, and no tent required—another chore evaded, what a relief.

There were up to 400 miles a day to cover and we made the time go easily, with community singing, skits and solos over the coach amplifier system. By now, most of the passengers were very glad they had come.

We inspected the Mt. Isa mines where we walked over three miles around the works in plastic safety helmets—a splendidly organized tour.

Soon we were in Alice Springs at the camping ground and we had a whole three days to ourselves. What a change, to wash and bathe in comfort instead of bathing in a dish behind a mulga tree before breakfast. A happy memory of Alice was the afternoon visit to the Rex Battarbee's home and studio, and their courtesy to us oddly garbed guests. His sincere and informative talks of the aborigines he loved, and of Namatjira and others he schooled in the artistry of water colours, was really something. And so was Mrs Battarbee's afternoon tea!

Of the rest of the trip—Standley Chasm, Ayers Rock and the Mt. Olgas—many have told you before. Up to now, ours had been a kaleidoscope of multi-impressions; bore water sheet, cattle and drovers, kangaroos and emus; and aborigines with boomerangs sticks and spears for sale. The aborigines allowed us to photograph them at 2/- a time. I did not know before that they were such a gentle people.

There were dried up creeks and rivers, eternal mulga trees and spinifex, red outcrops of anthills—everything stained red by the red ironstone soil. This is not desert but a sleeping land needing only water to make it flourish. We shopped at lunch times and lunched at the only watered patch of green grass in some of the towns. And always there were photos to snap.

We now knew how grand was the country of the Barkly Tablelands, with the never-ending changes of Namatjira colour in the hills and ranges. We saw everything, even the inimitable Bill Harney with his philosophy, his fund of aboriginal lore and everpresent welcome: "Don't call me Mister, call me Bill" he says. That was Bill, a typical Australian. No frills.

We left the tropics and the opal fields of Coober Pedy to traverse the couple of hundred miles of gibber stone desert down to Port Augusta and real blue sea—so different that one looked twice at the blue in the sunlight. Alas, as we returned via Broken Hill, the glamour was fading and we knew we were going home now. We were away from tropic sunshine and back to clouds, cold and early morning frosts and dew.

But we were all convinced it had been one of the best experiences of our lives. Thank you, Clive Penfold, and all who came 5,000 miles with us.

FIVE THINGS FROM LONG AGO

What is that which is most beautiful?

The Universe, for it is the work of God.

What is the most powerful?

Necessity, because it triumphs over all things.

What is the most difficult?

To know oneself.

What is the most easy?

To give advice.

What is necessary to happiness?

A sound body and a contented mind.

GUEST OF HONOUR - MR. GERALD DURRELL

At the very beginning I think I ought to make it quite clear that all naturalists are rather queer. In fact, most naturalists have to be mentally defective from birth to do a good job—you know, rather like politicians! Well, I'm a naturalist, and I've just spent six weeks in Australia and I'd like to tell you about it.

Well, we went down to Victoria, and, of course, one of the first things we did was to visit Sherbrooke Forest. Now this, to me, was an enchanted place. To find a section of forest like that so close to a large city that hasn't been bulldozed to make room for a coffee bar or something, this in itself was extraordinary. But when I saw the tameness of the creatures, I was even more astonished. Of course the thing that we wanted to see and to film was the Lyrebird. Well, we imagined this was going to be fairly tricky—we visualized ourselves, heavily disguised as rather frail-looking gum-trees, sitting about in the forest for days. But, in actual fact, within ten minutes of entering the forest, two Lyrebirds came up and, because I had no food to give them, indignantly pecked at my shoes. In fact, they went on so long that they became something of a nuisance, for they were young birds, and what we wanted of course, was the fully grown male bird displaying on his dance floor. Well, we found several of these Palais de Danses on the edge of the forest—circular areas that had been scraped clean between the bracken fronds—but as lyrebirds are temperamental, the question was which particular dance floor was in use? No one knew this, so we just had to be prepared. Like a team of Olympic runners we crouched on our marks, camera, recording machines, microphones,—all at the ready, all of us quite sure—even if a lyrebird did start displaying—that we couldn't get within fifty feet of it without frightening it away. But we didn't know the lyrebirds of Sherbrooke Forest. Suddenly, we heard one start up, and picking up our equipment, we rushed to the spot, thinking, of course, that the bird would fly off as soon as we approached. But, as far as this lyrebird was concerned, it couldn't care less. We got the camera within five feet of it, and then I had to plunge through the bracken to get the microphone near enough to record his extraordinary song. I wondered if he would fly away—but not a chance. This was his forest, and to Hell with us. His wonderful tail was thrown over his head like a quivering waterfall of lace; he trembled and throbbed as he gave forth his song, and the microphone was within inches of him.

The lyrebird is a wonderful bird, but not much more wonderful than half the birds you have got in Australia. I mean, take the Mallee fowl, for example. What could be more extraordinary than that—a bird that builds what could be described as an oven—an oven that he regulates to make sure that his wife's eggs are not overcooked? Australia is full of extraordinary creatures like this.

Now, I'm a naturalist, as I said before, and therefore you've got to make allowances for me being a bit—well, daffy. But I can honestly say that if you asked me what was the most memorable thing I'd seen in Australia, I'd reply—the birth of a kangaroo. Now, however enthusiastic you are, you can't rush out from the nearest city and witness the birth of a kangaroo—even in Australia. So I can't claim I saw this in the Outback, when, in actual fact, I saw it on the C.S.R.I.O. premises at Canberra. At the C.S.I.R.O. headquarters they keep a whole series of red and grey kangaroos, and they've studied them so well that they can predict the birth almost to the second. So all of us, with our lights and our cameras, sat in a paddock belonging to a red 'roo called Pamela. She seemed considerably less excited about the whole thing than we were. Then, after we'd waited what seemed like years, she suddenly adopted the typical posture of a female kangaroo about to give birth. She squatted on her haunches with her tail stuck out in front between her legs and her back resting against the wire fence. She took absolutely no notice of us dashing about with lights and cameras—she just sat there, bent over and licking herself. Then—suddenly—very quickly and easily the baby was born—a tiny, misshapen, pink creature, three-quarters of an inch long. Immediately, it started on the long crawl

up to its mother's pouch. Now the incredible thing is this: there was this minute, hairless creature, completely blind and deaf, using only its front limbs (because the hind limbs are too rudimentary to use at that age) to climb up what, well, to us would be a sheer hundred foot cliff face covered with long grass. Slowly it groped its way upwards through the fur, without any help from Pamela--all she did was to occasionally lick it. Then gradually it reached the lip of the pouch, and slowly hauled itself inside. But reaching the pouch was only half the job, because now it was inside, it had to grope around to find the teat. Now remember the baby is three-quarters of an inch long, and a kangaroo's pouch is the size of a large handbag--so you can imagine that for this tiny baby to reach and search for a teat in the pouch--well, it's about as easy as looking for a lost sixpence in the Sahara Desert. It was really one of the most extraordinary things I have ever witnessed--the blind, tenacious crawl of that baby kangaroo towards the safety of its mother's pouch. You know, if I'd come to Australia and seen nothing else but this, I would have considered the trip well worth while.

Extracts from the Guest of Honour talk broadcast by Gerald Durrell,
by permission of the Australian Broadcasting corporation.

FIRE NOTICES USED BY THE SNOWY MOUNTAIN AUTHORITY

Fire is an Upstart - Keep it in its Place
See Your Camp Fire is Dead Then Bury It
Man Raises Fire and Fire Razes Man
Charcoal Paints a Black Picture
A Bad Match - Fire and Forests
A Match May be Down but Not Out

A VISIT TO THE BLUE LAKE

Maurice Clare

During my holiday at Mount Gambier, in the south eastern tip of South Australia, friends took me to see the crater lakes.

The mountain, or "The Mount" as it is known locally, is an extinct volcano within the crater of which four lakes have formed, the best known of these being the famous Blue Lake. This lake, almost entire surrounded by precipitous cliffs, 300 feet in height, and accessible only at one or two points, has an area of 176 acres and is more than two miles in circumference. For a long time it was thought to be bottomless, but according to official soundings the maximum depth is 266 feet. The surface of the water is 68 feet above sea level. The lake takes its name from the colour of the water which, about November each year, takes on a distinctive blue colour.

On the day of our visit, conditions were excellent. The surface of the water was a brilliant cobalt blue, toning off to what might be called a lapis lazuli hue, or a milky-blue colour. The reflections were perfect, mirroring the cliffs and the trees and shrubs growing round the lake, and the clouds could be clearly seen reflected in the water.

Visibility was good and we could see the ocean 20 miles away at Port McDonnell, with the Cape Northumberland lighthouse at the most southerly point in South Australia. Due south is Mt. Schank, another extinct volcano which, with its low altitude and broad base, makes one imagine what the volcanic cone must have looked like in former geological times. In the distance are extensive pine forests, which are a distinctive feature of south-eastern South Australia and south-western Victoria.

The Blue Lake, together with the Browne, Leg of Mutton and Crater Lakes, as well as the various limestone caves in the area, make this part of our country well worth a visit.

But as I gaze some mist of evening falls
And coldly wraps thy glory from my night;
The sun descends, and on the mountain walls
I see the sudden steps of night.

George Milner