

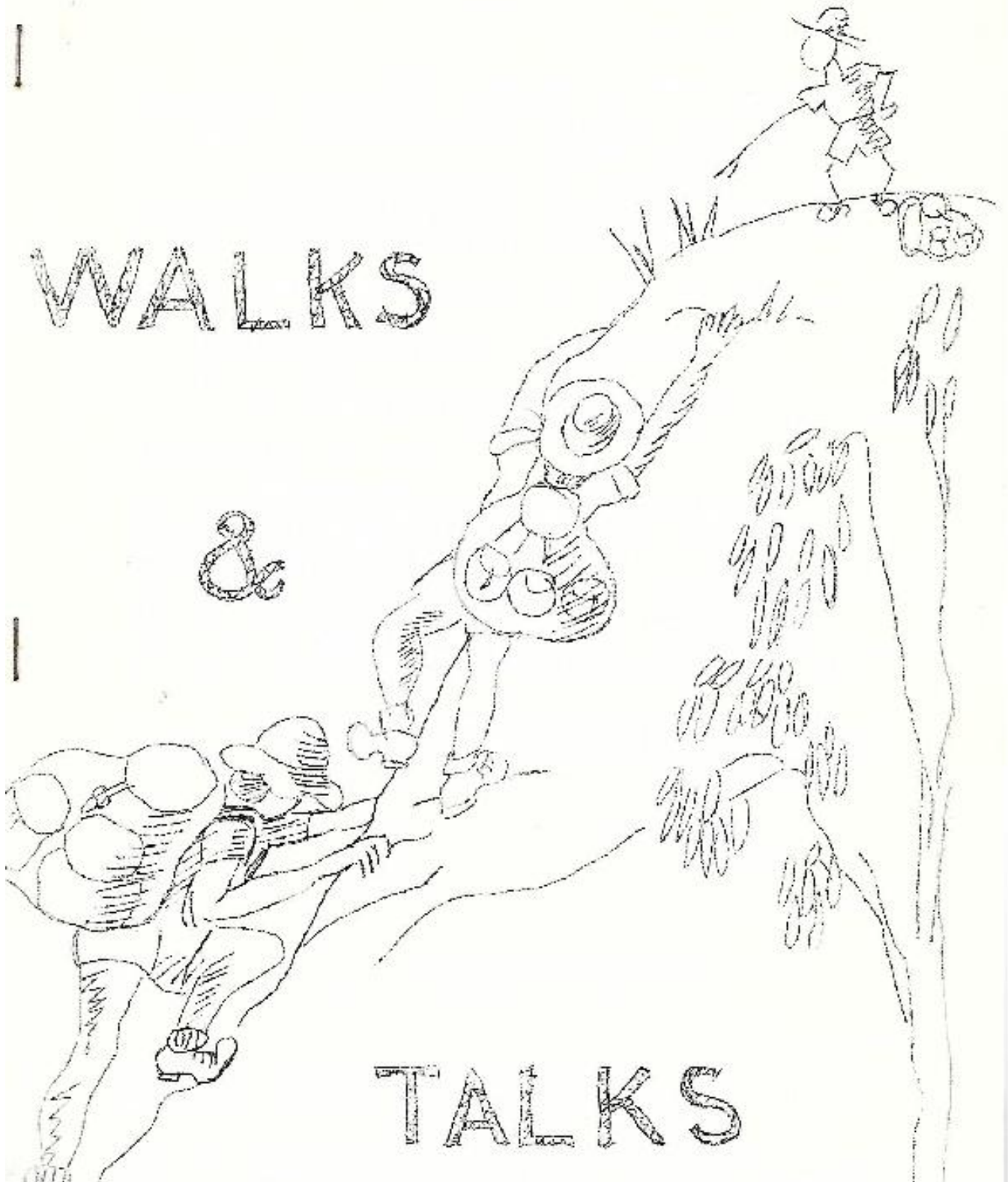
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PRICE 1/-

WALKS

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TALKS



THE MAGAZINE OF THE BUSH
CLUB

The last issue being late, we determined that this one would come out on time, so here it is. Contributors have come forward obligingly, and the following pages are filled with what we hope you will find interesting reading.

Our cover this time is the work of Rhona Graham, who, with the benefit of the advice contained in Wally's article in the last issue, has been able to spare time for this in spite of the cares of married life.

More news of prospective members, the latest arrivals being -

To Alice and Ted painter - a son (David Lindsay)

To Jenny Freeman (nee Stillman) - a daughter (Belinda Kay), making Nance a grandmother for the second time.

Congratulations all round!

The prolonged drought this summer has made us all a bit more bushfire conscious than usual and we have been saddened by the sight of blackened bush land in many of our favourite areas. On some of our camps and day walks we have had to manage without the comfort of a cooking fire. With a day walk this is not serious as it is not much trouble to carry a thermos of tea or a tin of fruit juice, but with a camp a bit of ingenuity has to be used. If you have any bright ideas for cold cooking, what about sending them in to "WALKS & TALKS" so that we can all try them out.

Please keep your contributions rolling in to either of the two editors, Mrs. Dorothy Bryant, 84 Bowden Boulevarde, Yagoona, or Miss Flora Graham, 77 Peacock Street, Seaforth.

Flora Graham
Co-Editor.

"BY THE GREY GULF WATER"
(Title of a poem by A.B. Paterson)

Dorothy Bryant.

"Banjo" Paterson's memorable lines evoked a desire to explore this northern part of Australia, intriguing with its great tides, crocodiles, and prolific wild life.

The wish became reality when, with a party of other Bush Club members, we visited this still virtually unknown part of the continent. True, our stay was of necessity brief, but long enough to sense the primeval surge of Nature - as Kipling aptly put it, "red in tooth and claw". Like the night we arrived tired, dusty and hungry at Karumba. While gathering wood in the tall grass, hoping the taipans were asleep, wild pigs searching for prey raced past. Peggy, discreetly bathing behind a bush full of chattering little birds, fled back to the safety of the concrete strip where we were camped on the site of a former flying boat base. The little bird's chatter soon changed to screams of fear and the wild black pigs supped well.

Stars gleamed brightly in the black tropic sky. Sleepers turned uneasily on hard beds as weird bird and animal cries disturbed the night, myriads of insects chirruped in the grasses.

Morning brought sunlight to the Gulf waters. Brightly coloured diamond mullet swam lazily beside the wharf, defying the patient fishermen. A flock of plump grey plains turkeys rose in a cloud at the approach of the bus, and emus scurried away into the distance. The crocodile shooters' camp beckoned on the far arm of the inlet, but after a paddle in the warm Gulf waters we took one last look and departed.

A.B. Paterson's poem, written so many years ago, gives a vivid picture of the loneliness the early pioneers and drovers had to face. After the 'wet' the great rivers like the mangrove-lined Albert we saw at Burketown, surge, swollen and muddied to spill into the Gulf. Like the power plant engineer at Karumba I talked to on the wharf, few can resist the fascination of the Gulf. He and his family could not imagine living anywhere else. Cyclones, heat and dust they accept. Crowded living in cities is not for them.

The following excerpts from the poem, which is included in the volume "Collected Verse of A.B. Paterson", are reproduced by permission of the publishers, Angus and Robertson Ltd.

"Far to the northward there lies a land,
A wonderful land that the winds blow over,
And none may fathom nor understand
The charm that it holds for the restless rover;
A great grey chaos - a land half made,
Where endless space is and no life stirreth..."

Slowly and slowly those grey streams glide,
Drifting along with a languid motion,
Lapping the reed-beds on either side,
Wending their way to the Northern Ocean.
Grey are the plains where the emus pass
Silent and slow, with their staid demeanour...

For the strength of man is an insect's strength
In the face of that mighty plain and river,
And the life of man is a moment's length
To the life of the stream that will run for ever.
And so it cometh they take no part
In small world worries; each hardy rover
Rideth abroad and is light of heart,
With the plains around, the blue sky over.
And up in the heavens the brown lark sings
The songs that the strange wild land has taught her;
Full of thanksgiving her sweet song rings -
And I wish I were back by the Grey Gulf-Water."

IF NOT BUSHWALKING, WHAT ELSE?

Kathleen Jones.

Amateur theatricals may be a far cry from bushwalking but it provided another form of relaxation when weekend duties made it impossible to take to the track with rucksack and billy. The local theatrical group was to produce "Showboat".

As the opening night approached we began to fear that we would never be ready in time. Principals went down with laryngitis and nerves were strung as tight as the violin strings of the orchestra.

The great day arrived and the backstage area became a hive of industry. Make-up experts worked desperately to have everyone ready for curtain-up, and stage crew quietly assembled props at their appropriate stations and rehearsed the various scene changes.

The orchestra launched upon the Overture, the opening chorus took their positions and in no time at all another production was underway. As the show progressed tension eased and we were able to give of our best. "Ole Man River" was well received by our meager first-night audience who showed their appreciation in the usual manner. The drift of smoke from the sheriff's cigar set us all spluttering in the confined space and we were glad to see him disappear into the men's changing room. Magnolia's stumbling effort at the piano keyboard set everyone's teeth on edge, then we were all singing our hearts out in the kitchen scene.

The play rehearsal went according to plan and the awful truth about Julie's parentage provided one of the climaxes of the plot. Soon most of the cast was on stage watching the performance of "The Parson's Bride". Captain Andy received a great ovation as he demonstrated what we should have seen had Mr. Schultz not been "took sick".

Act I was brought to a close with the wedding scene, and as the curtains swung down the panic began. The black women's chorus took to its heels in a mad dash for the changing room. Within the short space of ten minutes a transformation took place. Sixteen squirming bodies crowded around the two wash-basins and various receptacles placed around the floor. What a pity no one possessed a movie camera to place the scene on record! It was an unforgettable experience. Face, neck, hands and feet were scrubbed with such ferocity as must surely have removed several layers of skin. No matter how hard you scrubbed, there was always a black shadow under the chin, black spectacles round the eyes. At last we were satisfied, fresh costumes were put on and new make-up applied. Meanwhile the maddening voice of our stage manager counted down the minutes to the raising of the curtain. With a minute to spare we took to the stage for the second act.

The orchestra launched into the overture, the curtain rose, and we were all crowding around the booths at the Chicago State Fair.

Magnolia, deserted by her card-playing husband, returned to the stage for a livelihood and at the New Year's Eve celebrations at the Trocadero was reunited with her father, Captain Andy. Streamers thrown between the tables gave an authentic atmosphere and one well-oiled patron neatly fell from his seat, much to the delight of the audience. Finally Magnolia was reunited with her wandering spouse and we all assembled for the final curtain.

Was it as good as the last show? Did we acquit ourselves well? Only time, the local critic and our ensuing audiences will show.

DAY TRIP

Janet Young

Early one Sunday morning in November, the sun's rays crept over the mountain tops, over Vancouver's snow-covered roofs, towards the airport, where two cold but intrepid Youth Hostellers stood solemnly regarding a very small two-seater seaplane perched on a patch of snow. "Well, there she is, but we'll have to get the snow off her", said the pilot, enthusiastically thrusting a broom into the hands of the reluctant passenger. After two hour's hard work the Piper Cub was cleared of snow, and pilot and shivering passenger stood thawing out in the airport weather station, while an official, gloomily eyeing a chart, explained, "There's a gale of 60 m.p.h. inland on Vancouver Island, and north on Sechelt Peninsula, but it's only 20 m.p.h. here".

"Good, I'll file a flight plan for Sechelt, then we'll have some coffee and be off", chirruped the pilot - the passenger was quite speechless.

Soon, the plane was being lowered onto a slipway into the Fraser River. The attendant waved cheerily as he pulled away the chocks, and, before she realized what had happened, the passenger was firmly strapped into the seat behind the pilot and the Piper was taxiing out onto the river. "Here we go! We're off!" shouted the pilot, as they skimmed over the waves, while the passenger closed her eyes tightly, clenched her teeth and thought of her past life. When she opened her eyes, she found that they were indeed "off"; below them stretched a patchwork of fields and snowy roofs of the river delta farms, as the seaplane banked sharply and headed over the inlet. Away to the east beyond Vancouver were the peaks of the Coast Range - snowy Seymour, Grouse and Holly-burn mountains and the gleaming tips of the Lions. Below was the sparkling water, a ferry bound for Vancouver Island and the green mounds of the small islands of Howe Sound, with Sechelt Peninsula away to the north. The passenger felt happier and forgot the bumps as the little plane was buffeted by strong winds, forgot her feet were being frozen to blocks of ice by icy winds howling through a crack in the Perspex door. What a wonderful sight it all was!

The Piper lurched over Sechelt and up Salmon Inlet, where a boat below made a white wake and the snowy mountainsides grew closer and steeper. Suddenly the lake had ended and there was a narrow valley ahead. The passenger gulped as the pilot banked sharply and headed back to Sechelt where the plane settled gently onto the lake and was moored to a float. Here the pair ate a belated lunch in the cottage of a friendly resident who plied them with much tea and talk about the British Columbia of fifty years ago.

Time passed quickly and soon they were climbing aboard the plane once more. Sechelt flashed below and they flew through a golden sunset towards Vancouver. "Watch out for other planes", instructed the pilot, as they circled over the Fraser River. The passenger tried frantically to look in every direction at once, but all was well, and they made a perfect landing on the river as dusk fell.

The pilot ran the plane expertly up onto the slipway and they climbed out. "You look after the plane while I get a trailer" said the pilot, vanishing into the darkness and in a few minutes the Piper was transported to its patch of grass. Sunday's day trip was over.

"Wasn't it a wonderful day!" breathed the pilot as they drove home. "It certainly is now", agreed the passenger, muttering a prayer of thanks, for she wasn't a brave adventurer.

MY FIRST CHRISTMAS WALK WITH THE BUSH CLUB

Ivy Hodsdon.

Having heard such glowing reports of previous trips, I thought I'd like to go on the '64 trip. Norman had to work between public holidays but he urged me to go. As the time grew nearer to give Wally a definite answer, a little demon kept saying: "Meanie! Poor Norman will be on his own during the holidays." So rather unwillingly I decided to stay home, and told Wally that Helen would take my place and that was that! (Or so I thought).

Time was creeping on. Wally announced at the meeting there were still two vacant seats. Then my beloved husband, talking at the dinner table with the boys, was asked what he was doing with his free days and remarked: "Oh, nothing much as you mother doesn't want to go anywhere. Pity, too, as I've managed to get the extra days off." Was I mad! Without a word I wrote to Wally, and being told the seats were still available...presto, we were booked on the trip.

Now began my worries. Norman, as everyone knows, scorns such tit-bits as dates, nuts, raisins etc., and insists on BULK. I soon worked out my menu and told dear husband to do likewise. "There must be two loaves of bread". "Okay, if you carry them", I replied, "and what else?" Having settled the food problem satisfactorily then came the photography angle. I decided I would take my camera if it fitted in my pack - I wanted no dangling straps round my neck. Norman eventually got his camera bag down to 8 lbs. but it was agony for him, poor lamb, deciding which lens to take, what to leave behind. Would the wide angle be needed? What about the close-up for flowers...would there be any flowers? Having six different lenses, you photographers can appreciate his indecision. He settled for a macro, a medium long focus and his ordinary lens.

Our clothing was cut to a minimum but suitable for all weathers, we hoped. When we weighed our packs at East Hills Station mine was 32 lbs. with camera, and Norman's 38 lbs. plus camera bag.

Getting settled in the train didn't take long, and with Wally and Eric in a sleeper, we were a party of 7. After a night of varied positions, varied cramps, cricks and aching bones, we reached Albury to find Rhona and Howard waiting for us. They certainly looked well and happy, a little lighter perhaps, as their food supply ran low at Nadgee, but none the less fit and eager to join us on our way to Bogong Peak. A good breakfast under our belts and we were ready to take to the road. Boarding our bus we were soon travelling through the countryside admiring the scenery. The Ovens Valley is very beautiful and we passed through it all too quickly. We stopped at Bright to take on provisions, as we had been unable to bring fresh fruit, bacon and ham over the border.

Arriving at Hotham Heights we were greeted enthusiastically by a big Husky who obligingly posed for pictures (if you were quick enough). The wind was blowing strongly so our first thought was to find a sheltered campsite. Finding a hollow in the lee of a hill we put up our tents and had lunch. No tea or coffee, as Wally had to check up on the fire restrictions first, and although we felt there was no bushfire danger because of the snowdrifts and damp ground, we were good "Bush Clubber" and did as we were told. We walked on to the Hotel in the afternoon and were glad of a hot cup of tea and biscuits. 3/6d. each seemed a bit much but it was nice to have something hot and know that in future we could brew our own drinks.

Later in the afternoon we started off to see the mine marked on the map, but it was too far off and as time was getting on and we had our "Christmas Dinner" to cook, Wally decided we should climb Mt.

Loch for the view and then go back to camp. Mount Feathertop was predominant everywhere we looked, and as you can imagine, one could hear fellow photographers muttering: "How many shots of that dratted mountain have I taken? I know I took one with the Husky in the foreground, then one from the Hotel, and another from the camp, and I've taken one from Mt. Loch, and I'm not sure whether I took one through the trees...Ah, well, what the heck..."

Snowdrifts were everywhere and looked lovely. (We had a handy one at the camp which served as an ice-chest for our refreshments). The wind was still blowing cold and strong, so we were glad to reach the haven of our hill and start preparations for our feast. What with ham, tongue, chicken in white sauce, beans, potatoes, fruit salad and cream, fruit cake, various wines, lemonade, etc., who can blame us if we just sat and rested after such a meal? At about 8.30 p.m., after tea or coffee as an encore, we crawled into our tents for a good night's rest.

Sunday -

All ready and eager to be on our way. This was an easy day, only about 6 miles to cover. As we had some bottled refreshment to dispose of (Wally was unable to get anyone to carry it) we had a "stirrup cup" and off we set. The packs were heavy but what did we care! The air was fresh, the mist had lifted, the inner man had been fed and we were in fine spirits as we stepped out. What matter if there were string bags in evidence, that Norman's neck was weighed down with his camera gear - the day was young, and heigh ho!

Morning tea alongside a small stream with an unusual snow formation. The drift had melted underneath and the outside crust had formed a "verandah" over the running water. Several shots were taken of this and after a short rest we continued on our way through snow gums on to the top of Swindler's Spur which was to lead us down to Dibbin's Hut, our second camp. The spur was rather steep with loose stones underfoot but everyone got down safely and set about pitching tents. The hut was a typical stockman's, not over clean and rather dark, but a safe refuge in bad weather. On went the billy and we had a late lunch. Then a lazy afternoon stroll up the valley. Patches of yellow buttercups tempted camera shots. The snow daisies were not yet out. Tea over, we talked a while around the fire, then with a big push-out ahead in the morning, one by one we drifted to our sleeping bags.

Monday/Tuesday -

Like the good leader he is, Wally had spied out the land the previous afternoon and took us over the creek via a log, through the slip-rails, and then began our long climb up. His pace was just right and before we realized it we were at the top. Some climbed Basalt Temple, a rocky outcrop, while others rested. We had been in the trees up to this stage but knew the plains were not far ahead. The wind, although with us, had not caused any discomfort. What would it be like on the plains? We soon found out. Ask Dorothy how it blew. Even the cattle were huddled together for protection. Battling along the plains was very tiring. Not only did we have the wind to blow us off course but the snow grass was not exactly laid as a lawn. Eventually we came to a small outcrop and huddled together for morning tea. The weather was changing, and for the worse. Clouds were rolling over and by the time we had turned off for Cope's Hut we knew rain was on its way. A detour to Mount Jim was worth the climb, despite the sleety cold rain.

We did not climb Mount Cope but kept on for another 2 miles. At long last the hut came into view, a most welcome sight, and soon Howard had a big fire burning. Coffee and tea all round soon warmed us up. It was still very cold and windy outside, but the rain had

stopped so some decided to go for a walk. We came upon an aqueduct and saw how the natural mountain streams will be left after the water has been diverted. The plants deprived of water will wither and die and the bird and animal life will suffer too. One wonders if all the aqueducts are necessary. Arriving back at the hut with the weather looking most threatening, most of us decided to bunk inside. Eric, Flora, Howard and Rhona bravely put up their tents while the rest of us made ourselves at home on the various bunks. We had company for supper as the tent-ites paid us a visit. While the rain came down outside, we practiced our singing, listened to some very corny jokes, warmed ourselves at the fire, had steaming mugs of hot liquid and waved our companions goodbye as they went off to their tents.

Settling down did not take long and what a good night it was, tucked in our little beds, snuggling deep down in our sleeping bags while the wind howled and the rain came down in torrents. Oh! Those poor people in tents! Alas, all good things come to an end and with Wally's trumpet sounding in our ears we had to make some show of moving. By Heavens, what's this? Frost on Wally's boots? On Norman's hair? No jolly fear - SNOW! Norman, as usual, had been up early hunting that elusive perfect photo he is sure he must meet sometime, and had his nose frostbitten. (Let me tell you on the quiet how he enjoyed telling the fellows at work all about it... "Good holiday, Norm? Plenty of sun, eh? See your nose is peeling", was the cue for Norman to give them the whole story.) Our first thought was for the tent-ites. How had they fared? Very well indeed - no damage done at all. The tents looked so pretty with their covering of snow. Howard and Rhona's took first prize. Snowdrifts round the hut, grey and murky the afternoon before had put on a new dress of dazzling white and everything sparkled in the sun.

We breakfasted in the hut, cleaned up, replenished the wood pile and closed the front door. Icicles hanging from the side of the bank were photographed just before they melted. Wally thought it too wet underfoot to take short cuts so we walked along the road, eager to see the Dam and what lay around the bend.

I'm sure you've had the experience of walking along a road and being passed by a bus. How the people stare and look pityingly on the poor creatures plodding along, heads down, packs on back, making hard work of it. And how we pity them, sitting inside a stuffy old bus, missing all the wonders one can see by walking, the fresh air, the rain, the beauty of a flower, a bird on the wing, an unusual pebble... Two buses passed us on the way to Mt. Nelse, but although we still had the wind with us we wouldn't have changed places for anything.

The pull up Mt. Nelse was quite steep and at the top we decided to find a sheltered spot for lunch. Howard again got our fire alight and we managed to have a hot drink. Wally by this time was blue with cold and shivering nicely. He had been getting into trouble for carrying too heavy a pack, although everything in it was needed, he said.

We got off the track here and followed the wrong road. Meeting some people out walking from Falls Creek we were told we were on the way to Spion Kop. Wally decided to go there anyway, as we had come so far. This was to have been our walk for the free day, so it was a little premature. We did not quite reach the trig on the Kop as time was creeping on, but climbed well up and had marvelous views of Falls Creek and the surrounding mountains, then descended.

Resting at the spot where we had met the Falls Creek party, over the hill came a young man leaping from tussock to tussock like a mountain goat. "You're on the wrong track", he informed us, "and you

won't get into Roper's Hut tonight because a party of scouts are ahead of you". (This party had arrived at Cope's Hut the night before, wet, cold and hungry, after we had taken possession, and had had to push on to a Scout Lodge a ¼ mile down the valley, so we had told them they could have Roper's Hut the following night to make up.) We assured the young man everything was all right, and he continued on to Spion Kop while we cut across country to Roper's Hut. Afternoon tea at the signpost, with a wonderful view of Bogong Peak - in 3 days we would be up there! We went down the saddle then on to the hut, set in a glorious parkland with buttercups spread over a large expanse of green lawn and snow gums blending into the landscape. We had covered a lot of ground, walking the extra miles to the Kop, and were ready to put up tents, have tea, a chat around the fire and an early night, with no blast on Wally's trumpet to shatter the stillness of the dawn.

Wednesday -

The morning found us doing our chores and packing lunch to be off by 10a.m. At 10.15 a.m. we left (not bad, you will agree) and we followed the snow poles to the trig on Mt. Timm. Out came the maps and we plotted our next day's course up the "T" spur to Mt. Bogong. We continued down Roper's track for some distance towards Big River. This is another way to Tawonga, but misses Bogong trig and is also longer. We dropped down about 600 ft. looking for water, had a lazy lunch (dry) and wended our way back to camp to prepare tea. Wally had once again spied out the land, so it was with a satisfied feeling after a good meal and sing-song round the fire, that we went to bed.

Thursday -

This was to be our big day and Wally was anxious for an early start. We followed the track into the trees and when it became too thick we kept our eyes open for blazes. It was a thick scrub-bash, but we managed to keep going fairly well, even though it was very steep for the last few hundred feet. At the junction of the creek and Big River we crossed over, not very deep, had morning tea, then started looking for a way up. The track was above us somewhere, but we had to battle our way up the side for some distance before we found it. Wally went ahead making good footholds for us to follow. It was becoming rather hot and we were glad when a halt was called for lunch. A cheeky little robin came to keep us company. He was so inquisitive and most interested in us, as we were in him.

Off again, we climbed Little Knob, then Big Knob, and came to Aertex Hut - what an old wreck! Our goal was the Cleve Cole Memorial hut, so we had to follow the creek another mile and a half. This was the first time I really felt tired. We inspected the hut, a most impressive one set in a lovely little alpine valley. After the inevitable cup of tea, tents were pitched, a meal prepared (14 billies on the fire) and then came that lovely satisfied feeling after a good day. A sing-song round the fire, more beverages, and so to bed. Here we were on Bogong itself, only 3 miles from the summit. Tomorrow would see us at the trig then down the Staircase to Tawonga. Why couldn't we stay a little longer? Who wants to go home anyway?

Friday -

Leaving our campsite we followed the track and then the snow poles. The weather had been fair so far, but we had a dreadful suspicion mist was on its way. Were we to be pipped at the post? All those anticipatory slides so carefully treasures for the views from the trig - were they to be left in the camera? They were! The mist came swirling past, sometimes clearing a bit and then closing down again. It was cold, wet and windy. Ah! Something moving ahead - two drovers and their dogs. We stopped and spoke to one, commiserating on the weather and conditions generally. Then on again with heads bent low to reach the Summit Hut. What a haven! In we went

until there was room for no more. Now we could really appreciate the shelter these huts afford walkers and skiers in bad weather.

"Well", said Wally, "having got this far, we'll have to see the trig". Reluctantly leaving our shelter, taking a compass bearing because of the invisibility, we climbed the rise and came to our goal. The mist was so thick we could just make out one another, and with photographers rushing to get cameras back into cases we made our way back to the hut and were soon having morning tea preparatory to going down the Staircase.

Wally led us down carefully, avoiding the stones, and we came to a clearing in the trees to see a lovely view of the Kiewa Valley. Down, down to Bivouac Hut, surrounded by white daisy bushes - a rest and a sweet all round. The track became overgrown and hard to find from here, but we eventually arrived at the old timber road which led to Tawonga. Lunch by the creek, trying to find patches of shade, several creek crossings, and we were on our 8-mile road bash into town.

Information from a local resident passing in a car led us to a campsite by the Kiewa River where we were all glad to take off our packs and rest our poor feet. A cool-off in the stream (much to the annoyance of the trout fishermen), tea, and into our sleeping bags to be ready for an early start next day. We had arranged for transport to pick us up at 6 o'clock to allow time in Albury for breakfast and a change of clothes.

Everything went according to schedule and we boarded a bus which took us to Yerong Creek, then a rail motor to Junee Junction, where we joined the Riverina Express and settled in the Sydney bound train for home.

Thank you Wally, for a most enjoyable trip. The preparation that you put in beforehand paid dividends. Everything went like clockwork. To my fellow walkers, I give thanks for putting up with me, for the comradeship through the ups and downs, the campfires shared and the hundred and one incidents that make a trip well worth remembering.

ACROSS THE TOPS IN SUMMER

Dorothy Bryant.

Scudding clouds in a wind-whipped sky,
 Snowdrifts melting in the sun causing little rivulets to run
 Down the rocky hillside.

Snowgrass and buttercups trodden underfoot
 By boots of weary climbers searching for a nook
 Where rucksacks can be put.

Plodding stolidly from pole to pole
 In never-ending line across the windswept plain,
 In icy rain -

The welcome hut comes into view
 And Paddy's brew is soon concocted to a stew.
 (With added rice the diet's nice).

A chilly night and snowy dawn; the sun comes out and all is warm.
 Pardelots and robins trill,
 The soaring eaglet drops a quill.

From summit cairn vistas of lofty peak and distant deep,
 And the valley where mountain creek and river meet
 To swell the storage pond.