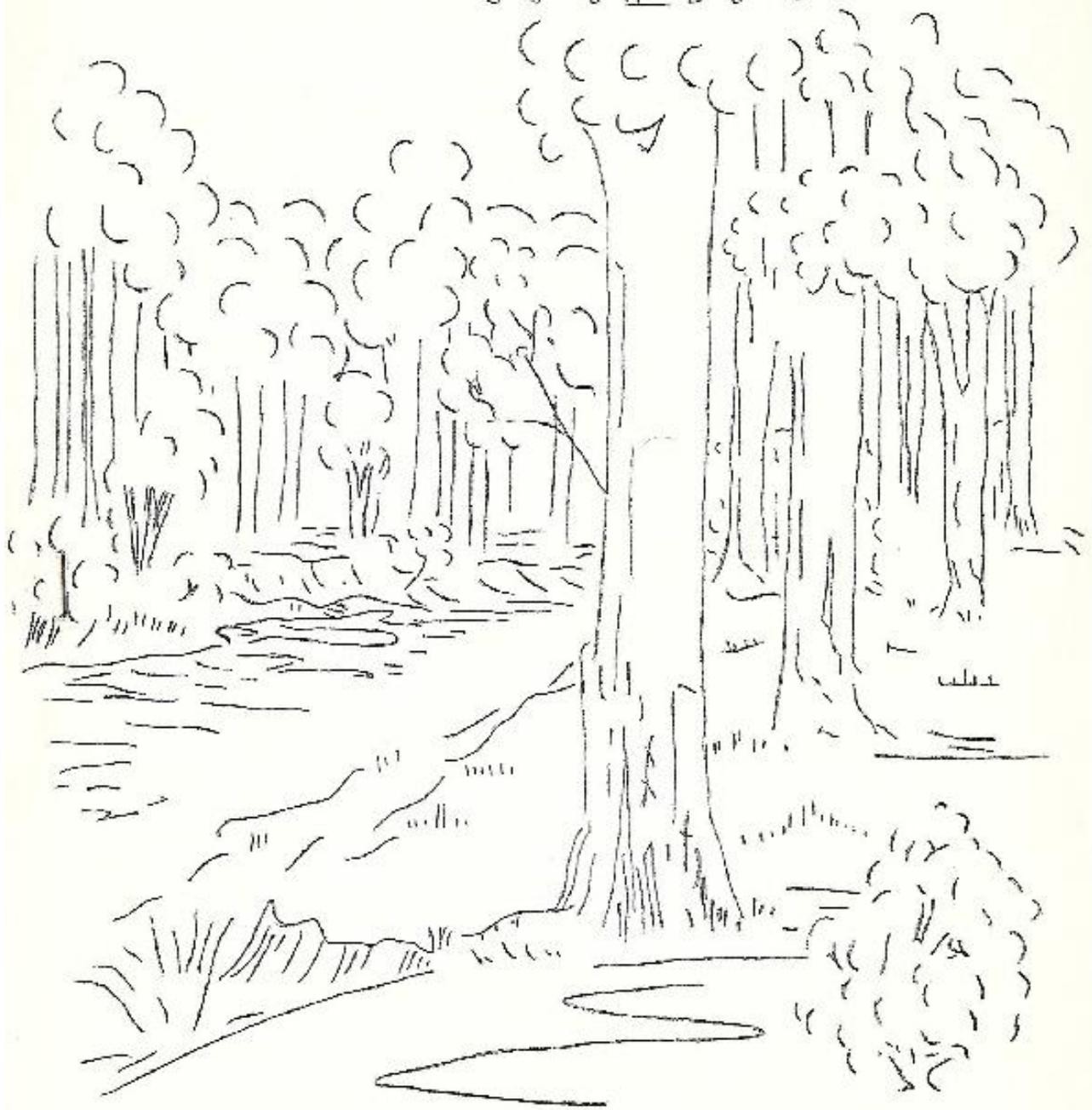


WALKS & TALKS

No 38



THE MAGAZINE OF THE BUSH
CLUB

The Bush Club has completed another year, having had the annual meeting and being about to have the birthday party (26th), and now here is issue No. 38 of WALKS & TALKS, in which we are giving you some extracts from Alan's Presidential Address and from Barbara's Secretarial Report.

We were very pleased to receive the contribution from New Guinea, where Peter and Janet Bedford have been teaching for a few years, and glad to know that Peter is keeping up the leg practice so that he will be able to join us on another Christmas Walk.

For our cover this time we have to thank Robert Hodson (son of Ivy and Norman) who has given us a scene from our well-loved Blue Gum Forest.

The Editors sincerely thank all contributors who have made it possible for us to continue in production, and we hope to hear from many more of you in the coming year.

Dorothy Bryant
Flora Graham

FROM THE PRESIDENTS ADDRESS TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, SATURDAY, 21.8.65

May I start by pointing out the many sidedness of bushwalking? There are many facets and many outdoor pursuits which stem from, or can be allied to bushwalking, such as -

- Nature study of every kind
- Arts - painting, photography, etc.
- Sport - swimming, canoeing, caving, ski-ing, rock-climbing
- Social activities - camps, singing, etc.
- Bushlore and Navigation in the bush
- Exploring and Adventure

We satisfy our urge to explore per medium of bushwalking, and this in turn provides an unfailing sense of adventure, be it ever so mild! At Easter last year we commenced exploring vacant Crown lands for the National Parks Association, at Ulan near Mudgee, and this Easter saw us similarly engaged in the Nullo Mountain-Benang Creek area east of Rylstone. It is gratifying that both Easter trips have produced results, Ulan being recommended by the National Parks Association as a Faunal Reserve, and the Rylstone area as a National Park.

We have the regular Christmas walk for those who really like to get away from it all and to see far horizons, and a few months ago we had a look at "new" territory between the Colo River and Mountain lagoon.

Every walk can be an adventure and a many-sided experience. We have a well varied schedule, which includes some very easy walks to keep active many members who would otherwise drop out.

My thanks in general go to all office-bearers for jobs well done and interest sustained over what has been a happy and successful year.

ALAN CATFORD, President

FROM THE SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Average attendance on walks: 8 Largest day walk attendance: 27
Average attendance on camps: 8 Largest camp attendance: 23
Present membership: 77

During a working weekend at Muogamarra Sanctuary in May, followed up by a Saturday afternoon later, members cleared a track for a water pipeline which it is hoped will help to prevent a recurrence of last summer's disastrous fire.

In support of a protest against a subdivision of land at Cheltenham which includes an area where the Hawkesbury sandstone and Wianamatta shale meet, a letter was sent to the owners of the land. Latest reports are that this subdivision has not been approved and the protest will be successful.

During the year Sydney Bushwalkers organized financial support so that a bid could be made for the Bendethra property in the Tuross area which was considered worthy of preservation. The Bush Club voted £20 to the fund, but the S.B/W. were outbid at the auction.

BARBARA BREARLEY, Secretary.

A WOULD-BE BUSHWALKERS LAMENT

I've racked my brains,
I've scratched my head,
I've tried to do
As Flora said.

Now and again
We try to plan
A walk to go on
If we can

But what to write
I cannot think -
My thoughts have all
Gone on the blink.

But when the day comes
We usually find
Something else happens -
It's put out of mind.

What have I done
To interest the Club?
Nothing at all -
That's the rub.

Unblocking a drain,
Leaking roof to mend,
Some cupboards to build,
Precious plants to tend.

I've cleaned the house,
I've gone to work;
I've washed and ironed -
The jobs I shirk.

The garden to dig,
Some seeds to be sown,
Or trees to be sprayed,
The lawn to be mowed.

I've scrubbed the floor
And cleaned the bath.
I've raked the leaves
And swept the path.

"Perhaps next week",
We hopefully say,
"We'll go out walking
For the whole day!"

SNOW IN MEGALONG

(Extracted from a letter to my son, Charles)

By Ivy Hodsdon.

So you arrived in England on Monday - the same day as your poor mother was snowbound in Megalong Valley - quite a wonderful experience!

Six of us (N.P.A./B.C. members) started out from Medlow Gap on Saturday morning to walk to the junction of the Kanangra and Cox Rivers. The morning was a bit nippy, but we stepped out gaily.

We made Splendour Rock for morning tea, and Lennie pointed to snow in the air, but I couldn't see it. Then we went down Yellow Pup to the junction where we had to wait for one of our members who had gone on ahead and managed to get on the wrong spur and so had an extra mile to walk when he hit the Cox.

Henry, the acting leader, was anxious to get up the Cox a mile or so before making camp. At a suitable place tents were erected, tea put on to cook, and then the rain came down, gently at first. We managed to eat tea and keep reasonably dry, but then the rain increased and the wind came up. We had to dive for stones to anchor the tents. I had twenty rocks around my tent, and just as well, for I almost became seasick the way it rocked and billowed in the wind. But morning found everyone still snug and dry, although the rain was steadily falling. Cold breakfast in our tents, then off we went.

We crossed the Cox several times before we came to the spur we were to climb to Knight's Deck. Blue Dog was steep and we couldn't stop for a rest, for it was too cold and wet. Lunch in the cave at the top was very welcome, before a warm fire. We then walked back to the cars. Henry, anxious about some of the slippery pinches, put chains on the car. The other two VW's had left, and we made our way out to Carlon's road.

Driving along the floor of the valley Henry suddenly exclaimed: "Wow! Look at those mountains!" - and there before our eyes was a wonderful sight. From the Hydro Majestic to the valley was just one white carpet. We kept going and the scene became better and better. Trees laden with snow had intricate lacey patterns interwoven with the leaves: guide posts on the road had little snow hats on and tree ferns had mounds of snow piled in their centres. A truly beautiful and unusual sight!

Rounding a bend in the road we came upon our first car, waiting patiently to be pulled out. "Hah, this is where the chains will be handy", cried Henry. We couldn't help the fellow in the car, he was in too deep, so on we went. Then we came upon Homer, another member of the party, in his little VW, with snow up to the doors. Len, who had pushed ahead, came back with the news that a lot of trees had fallen across the road and there was no hope of getting through that night. Men were working on a chain-saw at top speed but darkness was coming on and further work would have to wait until morning.

Back we went to the kiosk to see what food we could purchase, also to find out about shelter for the night. I had no wish to pitch a tent in the snow if I could help it. Laden with one dozen eggs, a couple of dozen scones, a bit apple tart and a large jar of clotted cream, we found shelter in the local hall. I must not forget to mention the bread rolls Ruth unearthed in a cardboard box on top of the cupboard. Goodness knows how long they had been there, but soaked in water and heated in the oven they were as crisp as the day they were baked (or almost).

We pooled our meager food supply and with the feast from the kiosk we settled down in front of a roaring fire to eat, surrounded by wet clothes strung on chairs. Len produced his guitar, and we had a short sing-song, then into our sleeping bags lined up on the floor. Outside the wind howled, but we were very snug.

Next morning after cleaning up the hall, we set forth to do battle with the snow. We didn't mind being one day late but wanted to avoid any more delay, if possible. We were told that the Highway had been cleared but the pass was still doubtful. The men were working ahead, so we went on. The snow was very thick, with piles heaped in the middle of the road a couple of feet high. Henry had put on the chains again, and after much slipping and sliding we struggled to the top.

Lennie had trouble with the VW, and although Henry jumped on the bumper-bar like a big brown frog, and we placed several large stones in the boot, the car couldn't make any progress. However, the grader eventually cleared the snow and Len was able to drive out.

You should have seen Blackheath! Walkers were coming in from all directions, calling out to one another: "Where were you, mate?" "Boy, wasn't it a beauty!" The roads were just snow and mush. Somebody told us two hundred cars had been snowed in at Lithgow; semi-trailers were blocking Victoria Pass, and altogether things were in a mess. One man who had lived in Megalong Valley for over forty years said he could not remember such a snowfall before.

We stopped at Katoomba to make calls home from the Post Office, then continued on our way. Mist covered the Three Sisters and snow had fallen well down the mountains. Traffic was terribly slow on the slippery roads, much to Henry's chagrin, and we couldn't travel over thirty. However, he delivered us home safely after a very unusual and exciting weekend.

A pity your father had to work and couldn't be with us, especially as my camera went 'bang' after my very first picture, so I missed the snow scenes. However, Henry and Lennie took some on their cameras for me. Will let you know later how they turned out.

NEW GUINEA "BY LEG"

From Janet and Peter Bedford.

"We've chosen the easiest, and I'm sure the most interesting way to answer Dorothy's request for an article.

There was recently held a Choral Festival about fifty miles from our station. Choirs entered from many parts of the island, including one from our school. A few of the smaller boys and I went on a boat, but Peter went in true Bush Club fashion. The local people call it "by leg".

Here is an account of the weekend, written by a fifteen-year-old schoolboy. It is entirely his own uncorrected work.

Our best wishes to all readers."

Walking to Kieta

A journey down to Kieta.

On 10th of June we walked down to Kieta. We prepared our food on the 9th of the - same month. Early in the morning we had our journey. At first we marched down to where all the Europeans slept. On the way to them we sang some funny song. We sang that to let them know about the trip.

Among the thick in thier and were two Europeans. These two Europeans were -

Mr D. Bexter from Australia and

Mr P. Bedford from England.

These two Europeans are teachers.

It is good to walk but the thing is that we sometimes cross the rivers. On the (way) we had five minutes rest. When we rested we ate the food which we carried. We climbed about four mountains. We reached the biggest river at 2 o'clock p.m. This river is to hard to cross because the flows very hard and strong. When we were on the last mountain where saw the plantation to where we will rest and sleep. We reached on the -that plantation at night-time.

We slept in that plantation. In the morning we woke up and had our jouny journey again. We had a bit of travelling and reached another plantation and we made a stop. We stayed there until the truck packed us . When we we reached the town we rested for two days. OS On Sunday morning we started to prepare ourselves for us to won wore.

On the same time we sang the cho-wae. We Burn P.T.S sang our song. There song was conducted by a Tolai man called Mr E Kaparust.

On that time we heart some nice song. We won one trophy. We came second. We returned to th our school by ship called Nordkie.

We were very happy to see our price and to meet all our friends at Kieta Sub district.
That's the End

Agorao (ANTHONY GARCA)

Footnote: cho-wae = choir

(I have the original composition of which this is a facsimile. Peter and Janet and all the other teachers in New Guinea are certainly doing good work. D.B.)

"WILDLIFE IN AUSTRALIA"

We have received from a Bush Club member a copy of the magazine "Wildlife in Australia", which is the official publication of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland. It is full of interesting information very well presented. This issue gives details of the newly established Australian Conservation Foundation, and also has the first in a series of articles entitled "Wildlife and the Camera", giving general advice on wildlife photography. The magazine can be bought on the bookstalls for 4/- a copy, and a subscription costs only 16/-, payable to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, Box 2030X, G.P.O., Brisbane. This is recommended as a very well worthwhile investment, which would also support a good cause.

INSTRUCTIONAL WEEKEND

By Alan Catford

This was conceived as being an additional draw for prospectives and one means of holding the interest of members, new and old. It was considered that more real knowledge of things connected, directly and indirectly, with bushwalking was most desirable. Accordingly, a date was set, a place secured, and a programme nussed out. We have Phyllis Goulding to thank for kindly loaning her Wentworth Falls cottage for the occasion, and six members and one non-member for delivering the short lectures.

Some people bedded themselves down in the house, others in cars, and the "incurables" elected to doss in tents, on the ground. At 7 p.m. on the Saturday, while the winter westerly moaned in the eucalypts and the stars twinkled frostily in the great clear void, 24 (approximately) adults and several children sat in comfort in the modest living room in the presence of a good log fire, and sustained a great interest in what was said during the ensuing three hours. I didn't notice any yawns, anyway!

Alan Catford started the ball rolling with a talk (illustrated on a blackboard) on maps and compass work, explaining just how topographical maps tell us what we need to know about the country, and then how to use the compass in direction finding, course setting and position finding. Ruth Price followed on a very different tack, discussing what "tack" to take on walks and camps, and in general dispensing pointers on what constitutes suitable foods, how to keep weights down, keeping qualities of foods, cooking methods suitable for camping, etc. A little about Search and Rescue was contributed by Howard Graham, who has for some time represented us in this field at Federation doings, and who thus had a few clues on the subject, knowledge which should be a "must" for all bushwalkers but which is, in fact, rather neglected.

At this juncture, to counter any tendency to nod before the event, we left our cosy lecture room and herded outside (in front of the house out of the wind, more or less) for some instruction in star recognition. This was given by Flora Graham and Ruth Price, who pooled their knowledge and pointed out Antares, Spica, the Southern Cross, and other visible navigational stars. Also, and most useful, how to find south and how to tell the time, from the Southern Cross.

We now figured we needed warming up, so coming inside again Dorothy Bryant gave us a run-down on what to do in the presence of bushfires - how to avoid them and what to do if unable to escape - information which could save lives if remembered and applied.

Rhona Graham then confronted the audience and told us how to preserve botanical specimens - leaves and small sprays - for later study, by pressing in old magazines, weighted, and with regular changes of paper for more succulent types.

To finish off, Dorothy's daughter, Laurel, opened the window on certain up-to-date first-aid techniques, using her long-suffering but very tolerant son, Mark, as the patient. This cleared up a few points which must have been hazy in most minds - mouth to mouth, burn treatment, snake bite, for example.

Next day nearly all members had a walk, and a few tried themselves out at compass work, taking bearings of known objects to fix our position, and identifying landmarks from our known position.

All in all it was a well-varied presentation and a weekend well spent. The response was very encouraging and we agreed that it must appear on our walks schedule in future and perhaps become a regular offering.

SEARCH AND RESCUE PRACTICE WEEKEND

By Flora Graham.

Each time a Search and Rescue Practice Weekend has been on before something has prevented me from going, but this time I made up my mind nothing was going to stand in my way, even though it meant catching the 6.08 train from Central on Friday night, which is always an awful struggle. This time, though, we had about half an hour to cool off on the platform, as the train was late leaving on account of the derailment at Wentworth Falls that morning.

Our party was small - only four of us, Rosalie, Howard, Rob and I - but there were quite a few walking types on the train, a lot of them bound for the same place we were. This was Ingar Picnic Ground, on a fire trail somewhere between Woodford and Wentworth Falls. 13 of us got out of the train at Woodford. It was a lovely clear moonlit night, with no need for torches. It didn't seem cold, either, although there was a fresh breeze blowing along the tops, making us want to keep moving.

After a few miles the road began to go steeply down, getting more and more precipitous as it went, round several hairpin bends, until at the bottom there was a nice little creek (Bedord Creek) with a choice of stepping stones or a fallen tree for crossing. In the moonlight I chose the stepping-stones as the less hazardous of the two, and got safely across with only one wet foot. Up on the other side the grade was even steeper - almost a hand and knees job - there was no breath left for conversation. The top came at last, and after a little level going we were at the turn-off to Ingar Picnic Ground, where a few vehicles and some tents let us know we had arrived at our destination. We lost no time in getting tents up and into sleeping bags before the cold penetrated too far into our bones.

In the morning - a lovely sunny one - we could see what a delightful place we were in - like a little amphitheatre, with a waterfall coming over a cliff into a pool where the creek had been dammed to make easy access to drinking water. Neatly constructed fireplaces were available, and only as much bush as was necessary had been cleared, the rest being in its natural state.

After breakfast, by which time all the lost parties had been safely planted, the rest of us were organized into search parties. We joined up with a party of energetic young men from a Newcastle club, making a party of 11, plus a radio operator. The story we were told was that a Mrs. Worthington had contacted the police saying her daughter had set out for a walk from Hazelbrook to Woodford with a party of inexperienced walkers led by an unreliable young man named John Dill, and they were well overdue. It was our job to find them and we were given a certain area in which to search. We all piled into two cars belonging to the Newcastle boys and drove to a point within the area, where we divided into three groups, and leaving the radio operator in a central position, each group set about searching a specified area, arranging to meet every now and then to report progress. This was all right in theory, but none of the groups had any luck, although we thought we had covered the area pretty thoroughly. Not long before finishing time (3.30 p.m.) we came across two boys by the roadside who told us they were from John Dill's party, and had left Miss Worthington and a couple of others "just down there somewhere", pointing vaguely down the gulley, where Miss Worthington was suffering from bee stings. So, pausing only long enough to make sure we had our first-aid kits to treat the bee stings, we plunged down the steep hillside to a swampy little creek, some following it up and some down, searching and calling as we went, but there was no response.

Back at the road the two boys told us they'd been having us on just to make things harder, and as it was then after 3.30 they offered to lead us to where the lost ones were. We four B.C.-ites didn't bother to go with them, but decided to walk back to camp and keep warm, rather than ride in the cars

and get cold. It had been bright and sunny most of the day but a couple of times during the afternoon isolated little grey clouds had dropped showers of sago hail - light bouncy stuff that was not at all wetting - and as soon as the cloud had passed the sun would be warm again.

By the time we got back to camp (about 4 miles) we had quite an appetite and lost no time in getting a meal. Before we'd finished eating a shower of rain came, which we at first took no notice of, thinking it would soon pass over, but it kept on insistently until we had to take notice and do something about it. What I did was to go to my tent, where I soon got so comfortable and warm in my sleeping bag that I dropped off to sleep, rousing every now and then to hear the pleasant sound of singing round the camp fire and thinking that I should get up and join in, but the sound of the rain still falling and the temperature of the air when I opened my tent to have a look out made me decide to stay where I was. The rain was very heavy in the night and I could hear the wind howling high in the trees but not much round our tents. In the morning when I had a look out I could see little rivulets of muddy water all around our tents, and heard from Howard that one had run right through his tent, making him wet in a few spots, so that he found it more comfortable to get up.

The bonfire from the previous night was still burning, and on going over there to try to dry out, Howard heard the news that the lost party we'd been searching for the day before had not turned up and been missing all night. The boys who had undertaken to lead our Newcastle friends to them hadn't been able to find the place again, and had given up when it was nearly dark, thinking they must have made their way back to camp independently. Some vehicles had gone along the road early in the night looking for any signs of them, but light snow was falling on the tops by that time and as it was too dark to search the bush at night it was hoped the lost ones would have found shelter somewhere.

By the time we got up in the morning the real search was being organised. Ninian Melville and Heather Joyce were dividing the volunteers into parties and getting them transported up the hill to where our lost party had been dumped the day before. Howard and Rob went off with one of the parties, and Rosalie and I volunteered to stay and keep the fire going and clean up the camp site. The rain was heavy and constant and sometimes it was very wet slushy snow. It was quite a job to keep the fire going as more and more rivulets kept flowing down the slope and had to be diverted from running through the fire. Also it was quite a task to clean up the camp site. The singers round the camp fire in the rain the night before had evidently been well fortified, judging by the number of empty bottles and cans lying around. These had all to be picked up and put into the receptacles that were provided. Anywhere away from the fire was freezing cold, and we were feeling very sorry for the searchers out in conditions like that.

After a bit more than an hour the first car came back with the news that the lost ones had been found and were being brought in. They had been sheltering in a cave all night and were comfortable in their sleeping bags with a fire to keep them warm. They said they had not understood they were to come back if not found by 3.30, and had been waiting until called for. They had realized after a while that they were not going to be called for, but by that time it was too late and too dark to make their way back to camp. At daylight in the morning they thought they'd better set out, but the snow made things look different, and they were very glad when the search party found them.

From then on Rosalie and I had a very busy time providing hot drinks for the poor frozen parties that were coming in from the search. At last all were in except one party which had no radio man with them and had not been able to be contacted to be told the search was over. These were the Newcastle boys with whom we'd been playing at searching the day before. Most others had by now packed up and were ready to leave, or had already left, but we knew the Newcastle boys were going to be in very great need of

the warmth of the fire when they arrived so some of us stayed and kept it going. They came in at last, very wet and very cold, having done as they were told, i.e. continued searching until lunchtime and then reported back to base. They were glad to hear that the party had been found, but a bit sorry for themselves that they had not heard earlier. After a short session by the fire, just long enough to get the feeling back in their frozen limbs, they packed up as quickly as they could into their three cars, into which Howard and I were able to fit as well, and reluctantly leaving the fire, we had a last look round the sodden campsite (the waterfall was really impressive now) and got going up the hill.

As soon as we began to climb the rain changed to snow, which became thicker the higher we went, until at the top everything was white. It was beautiful to look at but I felt sorry for the drivers peering through the snowy windscreens at the road whose potholes and rough places were disguised by a covering of snow. I felt even sorrier when the car Howard and I were in began to have engine trouble. We pushed it up a couple of little hills, but when we came to a big hill it really gave up and so did we. The leading car went on to try to get help, and as there seemed to be nothing we could do by staying, Howard and I got our packs and walked.

This for me was the highlight of the whole weekend. We were about four miles out from Wentworth Falls, on the high country near King's Tableland, and could see in all directions the hills with their pure white covering, and near us by the roadside the trees all festooned with snow. The soft flakes were floating gently down all about us and everything was so quiet, with only the soft crunching of our boots in the snow as we walked. When we got to the bitumen road at Bodington Hospital we began to encounter a few other people, and always there was a friendly greeting and exchange of experience. One woman trudging home told us she had spent the night in a picture theatre at Katoomba, as all roads home were blocked by the snow in the night.

Familiar places looked different with their covering of snow, and it was hard to recognize the solid white expanse with wires above as the railway line - we thought it would be a shame to spoil its beauty by pushing a train through it. The snow was quite deep on the roads by the railway station, and going down the station steps was really hazardous, as the thick snow had almost turned the steps into a ramp. We had been cheered as we came along the road by the sight of smoke coming out of the chimney at the railway station, and when we got there we found a few people, including Rosalie and Rob, had made themselves at home by a lovely warm coal fire in the waiting room.

Howard and I soon peeled off what wet things we could and dried them by the fire. We filled a billy with snow and put it on to boil. (For record purposes, a billy piled high with snow melts down to just over half a billy of water.) The Station Master came in now and then with progress reports of what was happening to the trains and how long we were likely to have to wait. With our snow tea we had toast made on the fire, and with little bits of this and that to put on the toast, we made a satisfying, if somewhat late, lunch.

An engine went through at about 3 o'clock clearing the snowy rails and at about 4.15 along came the 3.25 train, which had plenty of room for all of us, and was nicely heated so that we could continue the drying out process begun by the waiting room fire. There was no more delay on the line, and looking through the window we could see the snow becoming less and less as we went down the mountains, until by the time we got to Linden it had disappeared altogether,

So ended my first Search and Rescue Practice Weekend. I'm still waiting to hear the reports on the various searches, which was one of the things I'd been looking forward to (these are usually given around the camp fire on the Saturday night) - it looks as if I'll have to go again next time for that.
