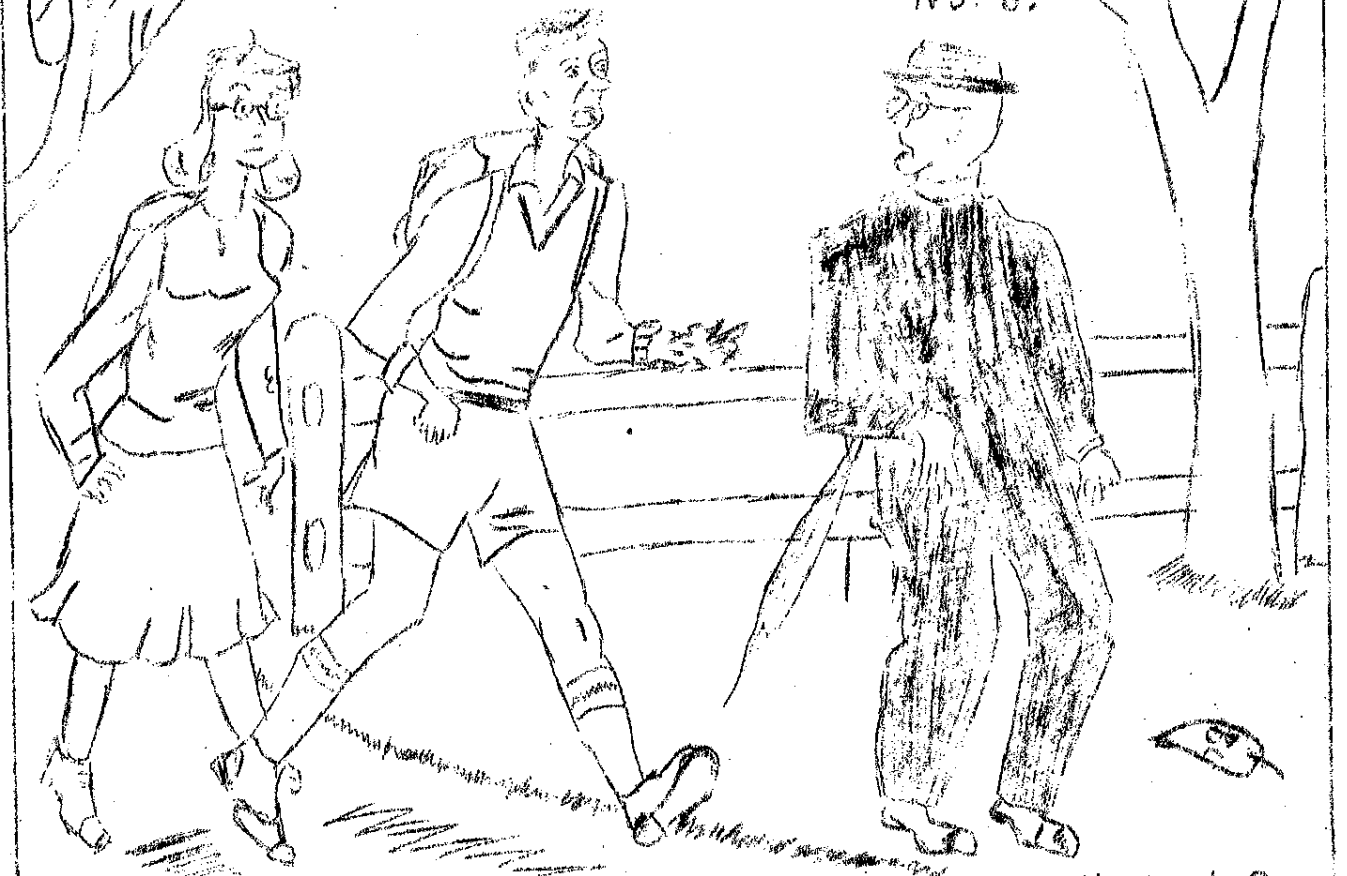


WALKS & TALKS.

No. 8.



Excuse me, can you direct us to The Devil's Hole? G.R.

JANUARY, 1958.

WALKS AND TALKS.

The Magazine

of

THE BUSH CLUB.

Janet Stevenson has sent me an article for "Walks and Talks" from England. She is still having a wonderful time and her address at present is: 8 Hilgrove Road, Swiss Cottage, London, N.W. 6. If any of you would like to write to Janet you can do so to the above address or: C/O Bank of New South Wales, 47 Berkeley Square, London.

As quite a few of you know, Alan Catford will now be working a great deal of his time at Wagga. However, he will have four days in Sydney every six weeks when he hopes to go out with the club.

The groups who attended the two Ballet performances arranged for the Club seemed to enjoy them. Forty six attended "Swan Lake" in the Bush Club Theatre Party on 29th November, and thirteen attended the "Nutcracker Suite" on 10th January. How many members should like to see "Chalk Garden" at the Theatre Royal"? Also when a really good film is showing in town and members feel they would like to attend in a group, please let me know and I shall arrange what I can.

Articles, both humorous and serious for your Magazine would be welcome.

EDITOR: (Mrs.) Helene Longton, 90 St. Paul's Street, Randwick. FX 3258

A DAY IN LONDON.

By Janet Stevenson.

So you are coming to London and you have Saturday free. You have heard all about the most obvious tourist attractions such as the Tower of London, the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace and the Royal Covent Garden Opera House - but you feel you would like something just a little different. Well then, put on your strongest walking shoes and allow me to be your guide.

It is winter and nearly Christmas so I am glad to see you have your warmest clothes on. Let's start with Kensington Gardens where perhaps, like me, you will feel the fairy tale atmosphere of the Round Pond and the statue of Peter Pan, although summer is really the time to see the children making it their playground, feeding the birds and sailing their boats on the Pond, The trees are denuded of leaves yet there is something rather beautiful about the delicate tracery of branches against the misty background of the sky. We cross the Serpentine into Hyde Park and wend our way towards Marble Arch. Here we must linger for a While at Speakers' Corner and listen to the soap box orators saying their piece. The various speakers are as entertaining to watch as to listen to. There are students out for a bit of fun, would-be politicians letting off steam on their favourite theme - anything from "down with the Government" to the "rights of women" - or religious cranks with flowing beards and a wild glint in their eyes. It's hard to say who are enjoying themselves the most, the speakers or the crowds of good humoured listeners.

At Marble Arch is one of the famous Lyons Corner Houses where you can have anything from a cheap snack to a large four course meal. You are now in the big shopping centre of Oxford Street and close by is the large department store of Selfridges. We can hop on to a bus here which will take us up Baker Street. "Six on top and four inside" says the conductor of one of the thousands of red double-deckers which daily move a population of millions to and from the city.

We alight at the top of Baker Street and walk along Marylebone Road to Madame Tussauds where you simply must see the wonderful waxworks exhibition. The waxwork figures are continually being brought up-to-date and represented there are many well known personalities from the world of politics, theatre and sport. I was fascinated by the historical line up of all the Kings and Queens of England and there are also tableaux scenes from history such as the supposed murder of the Princes in the Tower. If you like a touch of the macabre you can pay an extra 6d, to enter the Chamber of Horrors.

Now I shall take you down to the nearby Underground where we can catch a tube to Piccadilly Circus. Until you get to know the bus routes, the underground is the easiest and by far the quickest way of getting around London. Piccadilly Circus, with its statue of Eros in the centre and its lavish display of brightly winking neon lights, is the centre of the West End of London both by day and night. Just off Shaftesbury Avenue is a favourite eating spot of mine, a Chinese Restaurant, and here we can get a very reasonable and filling meal before continuing with our tour this afternoon.

We shall now walk back through Piccadilly Circus and down the Haymarket to Trafalgar Square with its Landseer lions and towering column topped by Nelson. Before going into the National Gallery here, do stop to have a look at the pavement artist outside and his very commendable chalk drawings of dogs and cottages. The National Gallery is so vast in its scope that one would have to "do" it at a run to go the round in one afternoon. But certainly you must have a look at the work of some of the English painters such as Constable, Turner, Hogarth and Gainsborough and that alone will take up the next couple of hours. London's many wonderful museums and art galleries are ideal places to spend that wet afternoon when you don't know what to do with yourself - not that that happens often.

We can now walk down via Charing Cross to the Victoria Embankment on the Thames. From here we can look across to the new Royal Festival Hall on the

South Bank, which was built on a cleared bomb site for the Festival of Britain. I have been to concerts there and the acoustics are really something to write home about. To the left we can see the Waterloo Bridge and to the right the Westminster Bridge, two of the many which span the Thames as it winds through London.

Guess you are hungry again now so I suggest we walk back to the Strand Palace Hotel. Here, in pleasant surroundings, and for only 5/-, we can get a very nice three course meal and eat just as much as we can pile on the plates.

Of course, you have heard all about some of the fascinating old inns in Britain. Well, London has its share, so shall we finish off with a "pub crawl"? I suggest we go first to Dirty Dicks and have a drink in the basement bar with its walls covered by foreign postage stamps and notes from visitors, and stalactites of dust hanging from rusty old pots and dead cats on the ceiling - untouched since the original Dirty Dick let it go to ruin when he heard of the death of his bride-to-be. Next we shall get the tube to Wapping in the dock area and go to the "Prospect of Whitby" which is the oldest London riverside inn and dates from the time of Henry VIII. I suggest you try a glass or two of cider and then sit back and absorb atmosphere and listen to the guitar someone is playing - perhaps he'll play "Waltzing Matilda" for us and we'll get everyone to join in - then I think we'll call it a day.

Hope you have enjoyed your day in London with me and that I've managed to give you a taste of some of the fascinating things I've been doing in London.

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TIME TO STAND AND STARE.

By: Dorothy Bryant.

Bushwalkers, I know, do find time to "stand and stare" and marvel at the handiwork of Nature, but few have opportunities for detailed study of the phenomena. Knowledge cannot be served on a platter but here are some gleanings acquired over the years.

The age of the earth is now assumed to be about 3,000 million years, but scientists are still arguing. The oldest rocks in Australia are Pre-Cambrian formed about 2,000 million years ago. In so far as the Sydney area is concerned our rocks (the upper layers) are comparatively young being laid down (sedimentary), in the Triassic period about 185 million years ago.

Everybody knows our Hawkesbury sandstone for who has not stubbed his toe or grazed a knee when scrambling up a rocky hillside. Once upon a time a layer of Wianamatta shale covered the sandstone but around Sydney this has practically all weathered away. Under the sandstone are the Narrabeen beds, dark red and chocolate shales containing fossil remains of past vegetation and acquarious life. Our coal seams lie under these shales but they belong to an older period again, the Permian.

It is difficult to visualize dense primeval forests of trees and ferns surrounding the margins of large fresh water lakes and huge unwieldy lizard-like creatures lumbering around the swampy marshes. When the land gradually sank into a great geo-synclinal trough subsequent weathering of mountain ranges thousands of feet higher than Kosciusko today, deposited millions of tons of sediments into the vast basin depressions. Then enormous pressure, heat and chemical reactions transformed the engulfed forest, after a long, long period of time, into the carbon or our present day coal. At Coalcliff, on the South Coast, along the shore line coal seams may be seen low down in the cliff face and fossilized remains of plants lie embedded in the surrounding shales.

Soil from weathered Hawkesbury sandstone is acid and of low fertility but how well our native flora has adapted itself to poor conditions can be appreciated by a walk around the National Park, along the coastal headlands and Kuring-gai Chase in springtime when the bush is a fairyland of flowers. Our renowned koalas depend for their sustenance on eucalypts growing on this soil and bird life is plentiful, if shooting is prohibited, in the sandstone sclerophyll (canopied) forests. We have patches of rain forest too, around Sydney. Here the soil is richer due to weathered volcanic intrusions in the sandstones. It is wet sclerophyll with trees completely shutting out sunlight. Lianas and prickly lawyer vines trip the unwary walker and epiphytes such as birds nest ferns, staghorns, elkhorns and orchids grow sometimes parasitically, high up on tree trunks.

It is well known that the Blue Mountains are really not mountains at all but an uplifted plateau fast weathering away, and the Nepean at the plateau's base, is a very old stream meandering along to link with its parent, the Hawkesbury flowing into the drowned river valley of Broken Bay. When the ice melted all over the world after the finish of the last great freeze the oceans rose and swamped low lying river valleys such as Port Jackson and the Hawkesbury.

The face of Australia has changed again and again since the dawn of time and the cycle will go on, man cannot stop it. Eons from now the Barrier Reef could be a great range of limestone mountains and Ayers Rock lost beneath the waves of a dividing ocean. We who love the bush and out-of-doors can only sometimes stand and stare - and ponder at our insignificance,

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Q. Why is a bushwalker essentially a wolf? A. Because he always goes with a pack.

THE EXTREMELY ULTRA LIGHT CAMPER.

By Gordon Robinson.

Paddy Pallin's Book, "Bushwalking and Camping" makes reference to the Ultra Light Camper. However, not a word is said about The Extremely Ultra Light Camper of E.U.L.C. for short. To those interested allow me to explain.

The E.U.L.C, is so keen about weight reduction that he or she goes on a strict diet a week before the final departure on a camp so that excessive weight is reduced.

The clothes of the E.U.L.C, consist of shirt, shorts and the E.U.L.C jacket made of waterproof japara generously padded as it also functions as a sleeping bag. It is of some length, reaching to the knees. The extra length is necessary for when the camper lies down to sleep the knees are brought up so the feet are under the Jacket. The Jacket also has a detachable hood which has many purposes. It can be draped over the head while sleeping. It will keep the head dry in raging storms, and will also store those oranges swiped from the orchard back along the track. The jacket contains many pockets.

First the drink pocket: containing a mug, tea leaves, sugar, powdered milk, all in attractive plastic bags of various colours, excepting the mug. This is done so confusion is at a minimum. According to the International code the following colour code should be adopted:

BLUE - tea leaves. GREEN - Sugar. RED - Powdered Milk.
If the memory is not the best, it may be necessary to write the code down and carry it.

The E.U.L.C. doesn't carry a billy. This renders a billy hook unnecessary. The tin mug is placed directly on the fire (enamel mugs are heavy to carry) Some E.U.L.C's go without milk and sugar, only using a small quantity of tea leaves. This again reduces unnecessary weight.

The Eats Pocket. This contain various items of food depending on individual taste. It usually consists of the following: Sausages, frankfurts, salmon, camp pie, salami, rice, rolled oats, carrots, dried peas, those cardboard biscuits, cheese and butter.

The Cutlery pocket. One only pocket knife. This is used for cutting green sticks for various purposes.

First aid pocket. Four bandaids, two bandages, one only snake bite outfit complete, one small tube sunburn cream, two bootlaces (see earlier issue for article), one small apple to keep the doctor away.

The E.U.L.C. socks are waterproof. They can then be used for transporting water to the camp site if it is away from the water's edge. A few socksful of water will soon put out the camp fire.

The E.H.L.C wears tennis shoes as boots are considered too heavy and you can never tell where you may run across a tennis court. You can't run across a tennis court in boots. "It's not done!"

An important point about the E.U.L.C, is that it is not necessary for lectures on Burn, bash and bury as the E.U.L.C does not leave anything which would ignite, squash or decay.

EVERYTHING is eaten.

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Q, What did the bushwalker's pack say after being taken to Paddy Pallin's?

A. I was framed (der!)

VAIN SEARCH.

Wanderings in Wild Parts of Tasmania.

By Alan Catford.

Fired by a two-fold enthusiasm for wandering in remote strange places, and for filming the life stories of still stranger animals, I found myself late in November, 1956 at Strahan, in South-West Tasmania. All alone, but not lonely, as I had the company of a headful of glorious plans for doing what no man had ever done before - filming (in glorious Kodachrome) the much sought-after, almost legendary, thylacine, or Tasmanian Wolf or "tiger".

The weather was cold and unfriendly, and I received the extremely doubtful consolation of being told that last year there were eight weeks of perfect weather at this time. However, the do-or-die attitude prevailed, so I sallied forth into the rain, loaded well past the Plimsoll mark with provisions, camp gear, clothes (the minimum), and my aim outfit with about 1200 feet of Kodachrome. I spent the first week getting used to rain and hard work near to Strahan.

My first sally was up the King River Gorge, following the Mt. Lyell railway up to Teopookana. Here I was able to spend the night in a railway hut, which was welcome under the circumstances. The King River presents a curious mixture of natural splendour and man-made desolation. The primeval forest tumbles down the steep slopes, clothing all with dripping green mossy growth and holding the land in a vice-like grip. At the waters' edge, however, the trees are grim skeletons, for wherever the river touches, it leaves death in its train. The waters carry a never ending burden of thick grey sediments in suspension - wastes from the huge Mt. Lyell Co. works at Queenstown - and this stifling flood kills all within its reach.

Ocean Beach, Strahan, is a mammoth strip over twenty miles long

and suitably wide. Unlike most of our Sydney beaches, it shelves gradually, and the rollers of the Southern Ocean break a mile out - what a surfboard ride! However, the water never seems to warm up enough for swimming here - at least I have never found it equable enough, even in summer.

After those minor "strolls" I was ready for a more ambitious plunge into the unknown. I wangled a free lift by the supply launch to "The Heads" of Macquarie Harbour, and was then all set to go South, and look for the "tiger" on this large, almost unexplored peninsula. The three families there to carry out the harbour duties wished me well, and I began by lumping my heavy "curse" across to the coast (three miles. I still found it intolerably heavy, and my left knee gave unmistakable hints of trouble. The next two days were spent taking it easy in a little tin hut, hard by that rugged wind-swept shore, in an effort to get the knee well. The place was notable for its pure white sandy beach, soft-birds, and masses of stinking giant kelp, cast up by the waves, and masses of driftwood. Sea gulls - sorry bird lovers - silver gulls were nesting here, and other types were taking advantage also of the shelter afforded by Cape Sorell.

After this I battled south, over miles of tussocky, sometimes swampy, button grass plain; through a few patches of neckhigh scrub, so thick that one had to fall over it rather than push through it; and past isolated patches of gum forest. A strange and desolate plateau, dotted with white quartzite outcrops, and dissected by deep ravines usually filled with dense scrub.

Typical animal life observed on these marches, was kangaroos and wallabies, echidna (spiny anteater) and wambats. The whole area was crisscrossed with animal trails. However, it was disappointing as far as the number of animals seen in the daytime was concerned.

Bird life is always more plentiful in the daytime, and I saw green ground parrots, black cockatoos, sea eagles, rosellas, wedge-tailed eagles, and currawong. The black currawong, or "jay" of the locals, is the clown of the Tasmanian bush. It is a fool of a bird, with its peculiar, erratic apology for flight - a series of frantic

swoops, flaps, and tumbles and its predilection for crashing on to the top of a busy, squawking and flapping wildly in order to retain a precarious balance, rather than landing delicately on a suitable branch as self-respecting birds do. I cursed the creature thoroughly on several occasions, when, as I tried to make a stealthy approach into some new area in the hope of not startling the native fauna, this self-appointed sentry would waken the echoes with its raucous song - a cry nevertheless quite musical.

The weather, meanwhile, was a good bit fine, but fitfully inclined towards showeryness, and there was always a cold wind coming in from the sea. I was glad of my heavy rain jacket - it was a fine windbreak. Later it probably saved my life, when twice I had to walk all day in driving rain, soaked of course from the waist down. A sou'wester was an equally good friend.

Such was the weight I had up, that in three days I was only twelve miles down the coast. The country, however, was not easy either. At dusk on the third day, I camped by a beautiful lagoon, fed by a stream flowing from an impressive canyon. The lagoon was back of a typical beach of this area - pure white sand, from quartzite. A broad beach, backed by high sandhills, in turn, backed by a hinterland of thick scrub, difficult to traverse.

The water of all these streams has a weak tea colour - a product of the button grass through which they flow, I was told. It creates no 'flavour' and apparently does no harm. In fact it may be an elixir of life, as I put on half a stone while in Tasmania!

During the march. I had been observing many animal footprints, mostly of wallabies, birds, etc., and probably some of native cats, devils, etc. Imagine then my joy at finding clearly imprinted in wet sand in this place - marks which looked just like the drawings I had made from casts of "tiger" footprints in the Hobart museum. I knew of the liability of confusion with wombat footprints but these looked right. And still they may be, for when I showed the picture I took to Hobart museum officials, nobody was sure, but they thought them more likely to belong to a wombat. I subsequently saw more of these in my travels

so, judging by frequency alone, I would say - wombat, not the rare "tiger", So much for that.

This had been a nice camp, but I left it in order to go up on to the button grass plateau above to look for the tiger coming out of the forests in the late afternoons. But during first night up there a cold change occurred and swamped me out, so I decided to return to the heads, in a forced march of eight hours. My little Japara tent would not hold back the driving rain. It was well that I decided to do so, for the bad spell of weather lasted some weeks, A good friend let me use a tiny vacant cottage (crude, but dry), and I put in the time filming events on Macquarie Harbour, in between showery spells.

Note: Part 11 and conclusion of "Vain Search" will appear in April Issue No. 9.

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WHAT IS A "GOOD LEADER"?

Questions:

By Paul Rann.

1. Should he be a competent person?
2. Should he know the area in which he is to lead the party?
3. Should he be able to read a map and know how to use a compass in conjunction with the map?
4. Should he be able to administer first aid?
5. Should he be a fully experienced bushwalker?

Answers:

1. Yes, as he has maybe ten, or perhaps twenty or more persons depending on him to sometimes a very great extent, he should be able to handle any situation which may arise.
2. Not necessarily because if he can read a map and use a compass he should be able to lead a party anywhere, without fear of becoming "bushed".
3. Yes, although he may know the area well, there is always the chance he has to lead the party of the route he knows, into unknown territory to himself, and here lies the chance of a mishap.
4. He should at least have a little knowledge on the subject, as there is always the possibility of a serious accident. Even a minor accident could be uncomfortable without attention. Think of what could happen to somebody who broke a limb, and the leader could do nothing to assist.
5. As long as he has done some bushwalking and has the above qualifications, he would make as good a leader as anyone else.

Comments are asked for in the next issue about this article.

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Q. When a bushwalker falls over a cliff, what is he likely to suffer?

A. A cracked back and a hacked pack.

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Why take food to Era when one can always eat the sand - wich - es there?

I visited two small National Parks in the Far North of Queensland. The bush beauty I welcomed after thousands of miles of desolation; that is, Australia's Interior and Northern Territory. Lake Barrine is on the Atherton Tablelands. It is 256 acres and 2400 feet above sea level. Being in a volcano pit, it is very deep. On the way there, I saw Baron Falls; the jungle at Karanda; and, clumps of giant bamboo near Yungaburra.

The main interest for the walker is the jungle - suspicious, cloaking, and for the unwary, poisonous. One species of palm has thin stringers which a Sydney walker brushes aside only to find his hair and clothing caught by large hooks. The trunk of one tree has a barbed phalanx, but the deadly painful Stinging Tree is only for those who wander aimlessly off the well-cleared tracks.

A three and a half mile long track is circumjacent to the lake, and there are a few others shorter than a mile long. I was rowing on Lake Barrine, which is very blue on a clear day, when a six foot snake swam to the boat. It wanted to be my shipmate but I discouraged it with an oar. Later I was told it was a harmless python.

While returning to Cairns down the Gordonville Highway I saw two brightly coloured awkward Cassowary. Green Island, formed from reefs and coral debris, is 16 miles from Cairns. It is about 40 acres of light, vine jungle, coconut palms and beach. Here one can drift on the water, over clam and all manner of sea life, nearly as beautiful as their coral shelters. On the other hand, one can sunbake under a palm tree suspiciously watching the coconuts above lest they should fall; or walk a few yards and let the jungle cloak one from civilization. If the Electric Plants are not on, the hollow roar of the sea on miles of reef, the wind rustling in the trees and palms, the birds fluttering are welcome sounds.

Then back to join holiday makers, tourists, campers. There we see that almost successful escapist, the fisherman, blissfully cleaning and repairing his boat and nets, examining odd sea specimens, exactly as he had been when seen a couple of weeks earlier.