

ISSUE NO 9

WALKS



TALKS

THE BUSH CLUB MAGAZINE

GP

WALKS AND TALKS.

The Magazine
Of
T H E B U S H C L U B .

As some of you no doubt have heard, the Annual Dance of the Bush Club is being held on the 25th July, 1958, a Friday. Tickets will be 6/- each.

It would be wonderful to see a really good "roll-up". As last year, it is being held in the I.O.O.F. Hall, 5th Floor, 100 Clarence Street, Sydney.

It begins at 8 o'clock and ends 12 midnight when all you "gay blades" will wend your way home after what we will all make a successful night.

An item of interest to all hearty bushwalkers, supper is provided. I realise of course, the 25th July seems some time off. However, this will be the last issue of "Walks & Talks" to go out before then and it is just an early reminder to keep that night free.

We can all band together to make this night a success by asking along all our friends and more particularly by all joining in at the Dance itself. Tickets will be available from May onwards.

Have received a letter from Alan Catford and he sends regards to all his Bush Club friends.

A theatre party to "Chalk Garden" was held and 19 attended. It was most enjoyable.

EDITOR: (Mrs.) Helene Longton, 90 St Paul's Street, Randwick, FX3258.

By Alan Catford.

After my "hole-up" at Macquarie Heads I tried another run South but was driven back again the morning after the first day out for the same reason - flooded out properly. To cap it all the tent blew down. Had I known that a few miles further south there was a dry cave, or rock overhang, I would have made for that, and waited until the bad weather went. Japara, unproofed, is fine in gentle rain. It gets wet to be sure but the water does not drop through. It just runs down the sides. However, heavy weather forces the rain to come through the thin material and wet everything. I had "proofed" my tent (a 2 man, 6' x 4' wall type) with a wax-type proofer before leaving, and this made it about as waterproof as mosquito netting. A subsequent attempt with another type was no better.

Back at the "Heads I continued with my documentary film. The waters of Macquarie Harbour ebb and flow through the famous Hell's Gates - a narrow channel only 270 feet wide. Immortalized by Marcus Clarke in his classic novel "For the Term of his Natural Life", this mill-race lies between the mainland peninsula and a small island, the home of the burrowing Fairy Penguins, whose weird cries at night are apt to alarm the newcomer. The tides here are unpredictable owing to the vast quantities of fresh water fed in by the several rivers. The amount of Water varies with the current rainfall so the normal lunar-solar tides are more or less lost in the resultant ebb, a torrent at Hell's Gates.

After this, I spent a week in a hut well down the Gordon River having been dumped there with my gear by the tourist launch. It would have been a lonely week of watching for the native cats and tiger cats (which never showed up) but for the simultaneous arrival of three prospectors, then later two more, who shared the hut with me. It was probably the biggest crowd the old hut had held for many a long day. These boys lead a hard life, sometimes in these old loggers' huts, sometimes under canvas. They are employed by mining companies to look for

payable minerals in these hardly explored parts. Their food is dropped by helicopter. (I could have used that admirable system). The first drop I witnessed contained eggs - a fatal mistake. "That night I enjoyed scrambled eggs. A couple of eels, caught on set lines and cooked by Hank made a welcome break in the culinary routine. They are common in all these streams.

Following this break, I made a determined effort to get further south. I had a special reason for doing so, as a strange animal had been sighted at Birthday Bay from a helicopter a few days back. It was thought likely (but mainly by the newspapers, I'm afraid) that it was a thylacine. This surely then was the place to go, especially as some of the locals had said they had seen tigers there some years ago.

This time, I left behind my tripod, thus relieving me of thirteen pounds. This must have made some difference (is thirteen lbs in 95 or so any different?) for I made nearly twenty miles that day over button grass, winding up on the seacoast near a spot known locally as Sandy Lagoons. On the map you see Lagoon Creek. Next day I camped at Albina Creek, and after that arrived at Birthday Bay. I followed the shore after Lagoon Creek, traversing beach after beach - some crowned by lofty sandhills and backed by swamps and stunted bush.

The ten days spent at "the Birthday" were pleasant enough if one could forget the cold winds, the loneliness and the constant feeling of hopelessness regarding the fulfilment of my mission - to film the "tiger". I had learnt to camp under trees, where the force of rain and wind was damped and successfully weathered out one "blow" this way. Leaf mould interlaced with fine rootlets - the natural floor of the bush - made a warmer bed too.

Nearby was a vantage point where I could watch over my domain - the broad beach and lagoon of Big Creek. Here I regularly watched three or four hours daily wrapped in all my clothes. Wombats and birds were all I saw here however. Old "stripes" never came by. I would never use this futile method again. One must trap one's animal, then film it in a natural enclosure in the bush as Mr. Disney had done in North west Tasmania.

The weather for the period was fairly good for this part of the world, which means, blue skies dotted with cloud, then overcast, plenty of wind and some rain - fairly evenly mixed. The one and only day of 100% blue sky was my last. I was actually able to realise an almost hopeless ambition - nude sunbaking.

In two days I was back at "the Bay", as the locals call Macquarie Harbour. I spent two nights in my Haven, a rock overhang, or cave, once frequented by a wombat. I had allowed myself one day for exploring some of the shoreline of the Bay, and I was given a perfect day to do it. Macquarie Harbour is unbelievably peaceful and beautiful at times, especially at dawn and dusk. On this afternoon, up to dusk at 8, as I sat watching a brown-green natural paddock, listening to the ringing call of the rosella and the shrill cries of black cockatoos, the scene was all grandeur and peace. Macquarie Harbour was a deep blue, and behind it the great mass of Mt. Sorell was made pink by the rays of the setting sun, then purple and blue. Gone was the wind and the grey skies. This could have been Hinchinbrook Channel.

On a fine day, this shoreline is enchanting, with its gleaming white pebbly beaches and green forestry. The clear streams, free of button grass staining in some places, are the champagne of the bush. Black tiger snakes come out of the forest in droves, to sun themselves on the pebbles. I saw many, killed some, let others live.

The day came for me to be picked up at the end of Liberty Point by launch. I had had enough by now. This land both charmed and repelled me. With good company it would have been very different, but alone, my task was so formidable so near hopeless. As it was, I may have had to hoof it back to the Heads after all, as I waited all day for the launch, straining my eyes to see it but came it not. At 7 pm I had given up hope, and was preparing to pitch camp again when out from Double Cove came a little boat. I touched off my massive bonfire signal, then lit another on the beach. Just when I was convinced they had seen neither, they turned in, and my Crusoeing was at an end.

This is not the whole story. I could go into a description of the interesting characters I met solid, tough bushmen, fishermen, their wives, ex seamen and others. I could tell you how I found "Tiger" traces in a limestone cave, and how to earn £13.10.0 in two and a half weeks, picking raspberries. But these are other stories.

THE TWO LIES.

By Ellen Mautner.

I admit two lies are told in this report. However, one was necessary for the sake of honesty and the other is not worth worrying over.

We were all experienced bushwalkers being eight in the party. On a Friday night we met at Central Station and boarded the train for our starting point. Bushwalkers are held in high esteem by the community, so the train guard gave us preferential treatment and placed us so we did not have our legs cramped and were not forced to lift our rucksacks on to high luggage racks. We also had plenty of fresh air. The trains in New South Wales connecting the country towns with our capital are among the finest in the world. It is generally agreed they could be worse. So, although we had felt drowsy when we started the journey we were so invigorated when we left the train that we decided not to make for the nearest camping spat, but to walk through the beautiful starlit night.

Early in the morning we reached a grassy plain, surrounded by beautiful mountain range with a waterfall forming a shallow pool. It was not the place we had been aiming for but it was just a bushwalker's paradise. We settled there, had a hearty breakfast and then proceeded to map out the district. This was not as easy as we thought and finally we gave up the effort.

For some reason we could not fix the compass. Every time Edwin took it out, it seemed to show another direction. Edwin's hand was quite shaky. Sheer nervousness we assumed, because he was the leader and it worried him we had become side-tracked - although he had followed the compass needle throughout the night. However, the rest of the party took it easy. The area was so attractive we vowed to see to it that it would forever be preserved for bushwalking, untouched by civilization.

Later, we split the party to do some exploring. Four of us paddled along a sandy river bed. We stopped and let the multi-coloured sand rinse through our fingers. Suddenly Mary uttered a little shriek and held out her hand to us. We looked at it startled. There was no doubt. The stones in her hand were mingled with gold.

Immediately we began to take tests. The result was amazing. We had found several more traces of gold. We hurried back to the camp and in great excitement awaited the return of the other part of the party. They were away quite a long while. However, we could see they had been back whilst we were away and had taken tools and implements from their rucksacks. What for? Had they too found gold? It was not likely as they had gone away from the river to explore.

At last we heard their voices. We ran to meet them, shouting our news up the hill. They too shouted something to us as they came running downhill. Lo and behold our gold seemed to turn pale. They had found uranium. Now we realised why the compass had troubled us. It had acted as an uranium detector.

We sat around the campfire discussing the future. What a change for all of us. What a change for the area... Oh, the area? Had we not vowed to see it would be preserved in its natural state? Did not bushwalking come before monetary gain? Solitude before industry? Were we going to betray our bushwalking friends?

Those are the reasons we did not report our find to anybody. Mary says she inherited the grains of gold on her mantelpiece from her grandfather. When Edwin had his compass repaired he said it was damaged when it was dropped on a rock.

These, of course, are the two lies I referred to at the beginning of this report. Mary could not betray our ideals, so it was really honesty. Does it really matter why a compass was damaged so long as it can be repaired?

KARIONG - A NATIONAL PARK.

By Gordon Robinson.

Midway between Sydney and Newcastle two long necks of land flank the northern bank of the Hawkesbury River as it enters Broken Bay - the dual peninsulas of Kariong and Patonga separated by Mullet Creek. These lands form the bulk of the proposal for a "Kariong National Park", being readily accessible by the Great Northern Railway at Woy Woy and Wondabyne, or by the Pacific Highway and the main Woy Woy road.

The Caloola Club proposal for a National Park will offer opportunity for the preservation of a strict sanctuary, a roadless primitive area for the mental satisfaction of the type desired by the nature lover.

This is an area of exposed Hawkesbury Sandstone tops, deep gullies of rain forest remnants and the seclusion of sheltered saline waters in Patonga, Mullet and Mooney Creeks. These creeks are surrounded by virgin bushlands of loosely grouped Scribbly Gums, Grey Gums, Peppermints, the beautifully contorted smoothness of the Sydney Red Gum and many species of Acacias, Banksias, and Hakeas. The call of the lyre bird is common in certain regions where the creeks are heavily filled with brush. To our knowledge no check list has ever been prepared in the area. Thus we feel sure many surprises await the investigator. Ideal camping areas abound.

(Condensed from Yarrawonda No. 11)

Interested!

Not much is known about the area officially but don't think that primitive native tribes are lurking in the scrub. Fishermen tramp the banks of Mooney Mooney and Mullet Creeks seeking to hook some elusive fish. Local inhabitants no doubt have canvassed the area but for all that interesting pleasures await us. This area seems to be more suited for winter walks as there is a scarcity of good swimming pools. However, now is the time to explore so likely walks can be placed on the Winter Schedule. There are some known aboriginal rock carvings in this area but I can't find the exact location. Why not get some friends to accompany you and re-discover them?

CARLONS FARM WEEKEND.

By Alan Sugarman.

Eighteen Club members gathered at the Explorer's Tree for the walk to Carlon's Farm via Nellie's Glen. Beside the Glen are rocky crags. A stream of water falls a hundred feet and at the foot of this are giant ferns, mosses, and vine entanglements.

We had lunch an hour's walk into the Megalong Valley from the Glen, at "the Hotel Site" where once was the hotel for a vanished coal mining settlement.

At afternoon tea we rested on a high ridge overlooking the farms and forests of the surrounding valley. The starkness of the cliffs was veiled by mists. Rainstorms and sunshine beat down upon the expanse.

A car drew up and our leader was in earnest conversation with its driver. Old Mr. Carlon had passed away in Katoomba the night before. His wife's brother

and nephew, with our assistance, would attend to our board this weekend. Some of the older members knew Mr. Carlon quite well.

We descended to the farm by a short cut, the road Mr. Carlon had built over sixty years ago. The farmhouse was a pioneer's wattle daub hut with hessian ceiling. In the home paddocks were cows, horses, fowls, turkeys, geese and pheasants. A flock of gold finches, smaller than mice, flew to the back door at dusk to be fed by hand.

Having made our beds, we swam in the creek. After dinner, stories about recent outings were told. Later, some of us walked in the starry night, singing songs and telling jokes.

The next day nine returned to Katoomba via the chains and spikes - Carlon's Head. On leaving the farmhouse we climbed grassy hillsides, walked through a high open wood, then clambered several hundred feet until we reached a rock ledge. Here a narrow spur broke the precipices which surrounded the valley.

There were three series, varying from thirty to a hundred feet of chains and spikes assisting the walker up sandstone walls and steep inclines. The spikes were driven a few feet apart into the walls, and an occasional foothold had been carved. The height effect was intensified by the steepness of the land below.

On the top of Carlon's Head there were fresh pools of water. We had lunch with a gulf of space on three sides. After a shower of rain, a mist swirled in a valley far below.

We walked along the spine of Narrowneck. Below us on one side was the Megalong, and on the other side the Jamieson Valley. The rain and mists closed in and we seemed to be walking on a never ending piece of land, detached from the

When we reached Katoomba we were drenched. However, the weekend had been worthwhile and we did not mind this discomfort.

DANCING THROUGH THE YEARS WITH THE BUSH CLUB.

By Wally McGrath.

This is a condensed and abridged account of a bushwalker's experiences and thoughts gained after having attended for a number of years the dances held and conducted by the Bush Club.

In my early days in the Bush Club, I was, socially, a flop. So in order to be in the fast set, I decided to add dancing to my other activities. To this end I made arrangements to attend the next dance arranged by the Club.

The Barn Dance was my first attempt. Just one dance for one night. Better to learn one thoroughly than many haphazardly.

At the Rucksack Club's Christmas night, I attempted another dance and also did the Barn Dance again. Soon I knew the whole repertoire. There were a few dances I did not like as well as others, these I generally sat out and studied the style of those who participated.

How I enjoyed those years! One met the same people at each dance and it became like one happy family. As one person dropped out, another came in, but one hardly noticed the changes.

Our Club; or was it the Rucksack Club; or perhaps the Federation Ball, used to put on "Strip the Willow". I can still remember Flossy Flatfoot, a plump

young member at the time, making her first attempt at this dance. She was swung around by the young blades entirely out of control. Alas! She dances no more. Domestic chores are her sole entertainment now.

Where are all my dancing friends? I could count on the fingers of one hand, those who polished the floors with me in my early days and who are still active at our dances.

Where is that fresh and fair young lass who used to come to our dances, and who smiled and spoke so encouragingly to me? Bushwalking was not her pasttime. After discovering that the male members were not up to her ideals, she left the bush lovers and their lonely ways of life for the motor car and the night club. I have not seen her since. She would not be still young. I doubt if she is still fresh. I have forgotten about her these many years and would not even know her now if I saw her. Others have taken her place.

What has become of my friend Willy Lovell? His black long wavy hair, his stylish dancing and his polished small talk always attracted the young ladies. Whilst he was talking, a happy crowd of damsels surrounded us, but when he walked away, the laughter and the miles stopped for I could not carry on in his style as much as I might try. He is now burnt out, whilst I still carry on.

In my melancholy moments, I occasionally look at my collection of "Leica Flashes". What has become of those partners? The majority have no doubt come across "Mr. Wright". The remainder still hoping - I hope.

It is natural, that to each of us, some dances appeal more than others. In some, we know all the fancy steps and variations, how to put in extra body movements especially when dancing with a partner upon whom we want to make an impression.

I give a short description of some of the commoner dances which have afforded me great joy during my year.

THE BARN DANCE:

The most popular dance of the night. Some attempt this dance- who would never attempt any other. You have to be quick or you will find all the good partners have been taken. What does it matter anyhow? Partners are soon changed and who knows, what the next movement may bring forth, for did you not notice that bevy of lovely young ladies seated on the opposite side of the hall. They are now up on the floor.

Oh dear! There seems to be a run of partners whose curves and bulges are not in the places my aesthetical mind admires the most. I hope the dance does not end before I get among the glories of youth. Now I am with the young lasses, I try to do all the fancy steps I know of and put all the vigour I have into the dance. A sweet young thing said something to me just then. Unfortunately, I could not hear her too well because she was so petite and I so tall. She spoke softly and I am hard of hearing. To make matters worse, the drum beat louder and the cymbals crashed, I just smiled and said "Yes", then she was gone and I had a very matronly matron in my arms. I could hear her raspy voice all right. And so it goes on and on around and around.

GYPSY TAP.

The fastest dance on the programme. One need not be too good at the art but to enjoy this dance, it is necessary to be sprightly, gay and frivolous in mood and to be free from stiffness of body. This is the dance in which I select the athletic type of partner. A fast floor is required to make the most of the slide. If your partner is willing, great fun is in store for you. In this dance, I have had more success than any other in winning a smile from my partner. In fact, I even went so far once as making a date.

STRIP THE WILLOW:

The introduction to Scottish dancing. The men on one side and the ladies on the other. For this reason, one can pick the lonely unattractive girl sitting in the corner, for it does not matter if your rival picks the one you have your eye on as they will not get a chance to talk to each other or to hold one another tightly in this dance anyhow. If the Bagpipes are playing, a dance, "Gloria in Excelsis" is in store for you.

Start gaining your experiences by coming along to our next Annual dance, to be held at the I.O.O.F. Hall, 100 Clarence Street, Sydney, on Friday, the 25th July, 1958. We look forward to seeing a good roll-up.

GAY JAMES.

By Alan Catford.

There was a young fella called James,
Bushwalking was one of his aims,
He went out with the mob,
But he had quite a job,
To remember their perishin' names!
As it happens, he was quite a lad,
To the girls, he was not at all bad!
But he thought May was Bell,
And he thought Gwen was Nell,
What a helleuva mix-up, you cad.

FURTHER INGENIOUS SUGGESTIONS.

By Frank Macken.

After reading recent articles on the extra uses of water bags for rain hoods, bootlaces for versatility, and finger nails for pot scraping, I now have a few suggestions of my own.

A very useful addition to one's kit is an ordinary steel shoe horn, which if sharpened on one side can be used either as a knife or a spoon, as well as for digging shallow trenches and hip holes.

A hunting knife should always be carried on the belt for skinning animals when living off the land, as well as for that sporting debonair appearance. The knife can also be used as a tent peg on Paddy Pallin's hired tents, in the event of a shortage of pegs. A fork can be used for the same purposes. The gashes thereby caused in the hired tents can easily be invisibly mended with a bandaid.

The fork is very handy for unpicking knots in tent cords and for picking the teeth.

An effective aid to eating a meal is the use of a sharpened stick or chop sticks, whereby steak and other food can be conveyed to the mouth.

A bandaid can be used as a bandaid for strapping the cut and bleeding cheeks together after eating with the sharpened shoe horn. The shoe horn can also be used as a shoe horn. (I can't stand any more of this either)

Q. Why are bushwalkers greedy?

A. Because they often go to Glenbrook Creek and Gorge.
