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* NOTE: Article on "CONSERVATION OF CAVES - MT. ETNA AND LIMESTONE
RIDGE - CENTRAL QUEENSLAND" by R.M. BOURKE.

"HEYBOB" is the annual magazine of the University
of Queensland Bushwalking Club

Editor: Wendy Sullivan

Business Manager: Ian Crellin

Cartoons and Sketches by
Jolyon Parslow and Doug Straker

Assistance in preparation of maps by Doug Straker

Cover photograph Sunset from a southern beach
on Moreton Island.

Photograph by Doug. Straker
Camera Asahi Pentax Spotmatic
55 mm. lens.

EDITORIAL

Wendy Sullivan

HEYBOB 1969 returns in similar form and quality to last year's edition. One difference noted, however, is that during this year there seems to have been far less criticism directed against the club's production of such an expensive magazine. This welcome decline in opposition can probably be attributed largely to the club being preoccupied with other pressing issues, such as "to be or not to be".

Despite increasing membership year by year, according to statistical records, actual active membership at present seems to be declining. Many experienced members are leaving Brisbane and there seem few sufficiently experienced or motivated younger members to take over their leadership. The lack of training in leadership has been commented on in meetings and this aspect of the club's activity will most likely be reviewed next year as the need for more leaders becomes apparent. It has been suggested that talks be given during meetings on such aspects of bushcraft as navigation, equipment and first aid. This at least would provide a background to practical experience.

Most members feel that freshers have not had a fair go this year, lacking both encouragement to walk and opportunity to get to know later year members. An unfortunate beginning was made when six freshers got bushed during freshers' trip. Most of us realize that during orientation week freshers are faced with a bewildering array of clubs and societies, all of which they are invited to join. Many pay their membership fees haphazardly, unsure in which direction their interests will turn. Perhaps a follow-up meeting soon after orientation to provide new members with more detailed information on equipment and arrangements for freshers trip, with old members making a special effort to get to know younger ones, could provide a better beginning for new walkers.

During 1969, conservation has continued to be a major concern involving many club members, some of whom have recently helped established the South Queensland Conservation Coordinating Committee. Others with dual membership being both spelios and bushwalkers, are assisting the continuing campaign to save caves at Mt. Etna and elsewhere. The Littoral Society, too, is getting a share of support in its efforts to protect the Barrier Reef and other threatened "wet" areas. As bushwalking enthusiasts it seems that we could be more actively involved in the conservation of natural phenomena throughout the mainland, actively agitating for larger areas to be set aside as protected sanctuaries and national parks.

In June this year during the EXPO Uni. science week display, a group of bushwalkers and rock climbers staged a spectacular demonstration of abseiling and climbing on the main tower. This created a lot of interest among spectators and gives more reason for the club to prepare for an enthusiastic influx of freshers in 1970. Looking further back, in April representatives of several of the societies already mentioned got together and produced a float for the commemorative procession, emphasizing dramatically the need for conservation. One member even submitted to the indignity of being buried under a pile of rubbish in support of the cause.

Articles in this year's magazine reflect a broadening of interests and experience among members. Much appreciation is due to the absentee members who have found or made time to write such interesting and informative accounts of Heybob Vol. II, including writers, typists, the printer, advertisers and our business manager.

THE DISCOVERY AND FIRST ASCENT OF MOUNT BARNEY

Rev. Dr. John G. Steele

It is suggested in this article that the discoverer of Mt. Barney was John Oxley. He was the first of the explorers to record seeing it.

While the first settlement was being disembarked at Redcliffe in September, 1824, Oxley, Cunningham and Butler explored the Brisbane River beyond the point (Goodna) reached by Oxley in 1823. They established a base camp about a mile upstream from College's Crossing, and on 22nd September, Oxley and Butler climbed Mt. Crosby. "A more magnificent view it has not often fallen to my lot to behold," Oxley wrote in his field book, which is now in the Archives Office of New South Wales. He took compass bearings on Mt. Walker, Mt. Edwards, Flinders Peak, Wilson's Peak and Mt. Barney. He wrote, "A distant peak in the Mount Warning Range on the coast, bore 178°."

With the aid of modern maps, and using the fact that the magnetic variation in 1824 was about 10.5° East, it is possible to identify this as the West Peak of Mt. Barney. Compass bearings taken by the author recently at Mt. Crosby confirm this identification. The West Peak attracted Oxley's attention because of its conical shape, but he would undoubtedly have seen the East Peak also.

The reference to the coast is due to the fact that Oxley at this time assumed Wilson's Peak to be Mt. Warning, and reasoned that any peak to the East of it must be on the coast. Oxley corrected this assumption a day or two later.

Mt. Barney was first inspected at close range by Patrick Logan, the Commandant of the penal settlement of Brisbane Town, in June 1827. Logan had travelled on foot from Ipswich, climbed Mt. French and Mt. Toowoona, and followed Burnett Creek down to its junction with the Logan River. He camped on the right bank of the Logan near Mt. Barney, which he mistook for Mt. Warning. On 13th June he tried unsuccessfully to climb it, but the following day he reached the top of a subsidiary peak (possibly Isolated Peak). The following extract from his journal is taken from The Sydney Gazette, 17th August, 1827.

June 13th – Continued my route eastward, over a very difficult and mountainous country; at length perceived Mount Warning (actually Barney), direct in my course; on approaching the base found the principal branch of the Logan; the stream was so rapid, I had some difficulty in passing; encamped on the right bank, and immediately commenced to ascend, in hope of reaching the summit, but could only gain a peak, not more than half-way to the top; all attempts appeared hopeless at the east and north sides, and it would have detained me two days longer, to have made a detour to the westward, probably with as little chance of success; I therefore returned to the encampment, with the intention of proceeding on my journey in the morning; distance 14 miles.

June 14th – Made another attempt to ascend the mountain on the north side; got to the top of a peak, considerably higher than yesterday; had a very extensive view; found Limestone Hills (now known as Ipswich) bore due north; recommended my journey to the east ...

The first ascent to the summit of Mt. Barney was by Logan on 3rd August, 1828. Cunningham, Fraser and Logan had walked from Brisbane Town via Beaudesert with the intention of climbing Mt. Barney, which Cunningham realised was quite distinct from Mt. Warning. They camped "at a short distance from the spot whereon Captain Logan had last year bivouacked" (Cunningham's report). From compass bearings recorded in Cunningham's field books (in the Archives Office of N.S.W.), the campsite can be located.* It

is near the road, about 4 or 5 miles north-east of the East Peak, and is indicated on the map attached to this article. In his report to Governor Darling, Cunningham wrote,

We had now approached within three miles of the actual base of the stupendous range of mountains ... whose broad dome-like and conical summits, of rock for the most part, denuded of vegetation, and now fully open to our view, presented a specimen of bold and rugged scenery not to be found in any explored part of the country.

Fraser wrote in his journal as follows:

We entered a valley of the richest and most varied character from which Mount Lindsay (now called Mt. Barney) rises With a grandeur; that baffles all description. Downwards from its summit, which is about 5500 feet above the valley, it presents a perpendicular front of rock at least 2000 feet high, and the whole springs, as it were, from a base-line of fine flat land, stretching for more than five miles, uninterruptedly, between Mount Clanmorris (Mt. Maroon) and McPherson's Range.

During the afternoon of their arrival at the mountain, Logan and Fraser inspected the lower part of Logan's Ridge, and encountered a tribe of natives. The next day, all three explorers set out at 6 am to climb the mountain. When they were at least two-thirds of the way to the summit, Cunningham and the servants abandoned their attempt. While waiting for Logan and Fraser to return, Cunningham sat on the mountain and drew sketches in his field book, including a view of the landscape to the east as far as Mt. Warning, and a view of Leaning Peak. His position on Logan's Ridge, deduced from his compass bearings, is shown on the map. The magnetic variation assumed in the map differs from Cunningham's measurements of 11° East, but is considered more accurate.*

Unfortunately, Logan does not seem to have recorded his activities on the mountain. However, Fraser's account is most graphic, and is given here almost in full:

August 3rd – Morning cold and frosty. At day-break, Captain Logan, Mr. Cunningham, two men and I began the ascent of the mountain. On attaining the summit of the ridge, over the lower part of which, as I mentioned, we had passed yesterday, we found that it conducted to the centre of the mountain's northern front, at an elevation, assuredly, of 2000 feet from the Logan, which flows at its base. Here that front presents a really terrific appearance, being a perpendicular mass of rock, unvaried by even the smallest trace of vegetation, except a few straggling lichens. From the above-mentioned ridge, we scrambled, with considerable difficulty and some risk, over masses of detached rock, lightly studded with trees and shrubs, by which our progress was much aided for about 1000 feet farther, till we reached the summit of one of the defiles, where, for a while, all farther advance seemed to be forbidden. Hence, we saw Mount Warning bearing east by south, and about twenty-five miles distant.

On a careful scrutiny of the fearful precipices which overhung us, Captain Logan detected a path by which it appeared possible, to ascend; so, putting off our shoes and stockings, and leaving the rest of the party behind, he and I began scrambling on hands and knees to the first peak, a height of about 300 feet, with great difficulty, but having once attained a certain elevation, we had no alternative but to proceed, any attempt at returning in this direction appearing totally impracticable. To cast a glance downwards was most perilous, for a dreadful chasm, 1600 feet deep, yawned below us; while to the right extended a trackless labyrinth of detached rocks: to look forward was enough to quell the firmest courage, by displaying the dangers and difficulties that beset our path; so that all we could do was, by clinging fast with our great toes, to trust ourselves to small nodules on the surface of the crags, and thus to affect an

advance by suspending our weight on slender twigs of Casuarina and Metrosideros, whose appearance scarcely warranted them strong enough to support a goat. When the summit of this peak was gained, my nerves were so much agitated that I was forced to lie down on a rock, resting myself against a bush till I recovered.

Captain Logan now proceeded towards the next peak, and, as soon as I possibly could, I followed him, leaving my shoes and collecting-bags behind. From the size of the detached portions of rock, and the stunted nature of the shrubs of Casuarina, Eucalyptus, and Banksia, which start up here and there between the fissures, our progress was both difficult and dangerous; and finding it hopeless to climb far on such ground without shoes, I returned for them, and was thus thrown considerably in the rear. I hallooed continually to Captain Logan, who always answered me while within hearing, but the number of echoes, at least five, which repeated backwards and forwards the different sounds, had such an effect in confusing me, that I knew not whence the voice came; and it would have required the speed and agility of an antelope to overtake him. I continued scrambling onwards till half-past eleven, when I perceived Captain Logan near the summit, and then relinquished all hope of joining him; I also struck into a brushwood. From the dampness of the earth, I hoped to obtain here some water wherewith to allay my parching thirst, but I was disappointed. Through this brush I at length penetrated, and advanced about 500 feet higher still, when my strength became so exhausted, and the day so far advanced, that after waiting an hour in expectation of seeing Captain Logan, I commenced my descent, the summit of the mountain rearing its gigantic head full 800 feet above me.

The descent proved a more difficult task than the climbing had been, from narrowness of the ridges, in many places not exceeding six feet, with huge precipices on each side, and the danger of slipping between these masses when leaping from one to another, many of them being as slippery as a piece of ice, in which case an instantaneous death must have been my portion. After prodigious exertions, I succeeded in regaining the point where I had left my collecting-bags and shoes, and now I was still more puzzled how to descend thus encumbered; but, mustering all my courage and caution, I began sliding gently from bush to bush, often narrowly escaping being dashed to atoms, and by carefully lowering my boxes and shoes before me from one point to another, I at length got within sight of Mr. Cunningham and the rest of the party, by whose assistance I was lowered down the rocks, having almost all my clothes torn off my back.

Meanwhile, Logan had reached the summit. He joined the party at 4 p.m., and reported his findings to Cunningham, who entered the following notes in his field books:

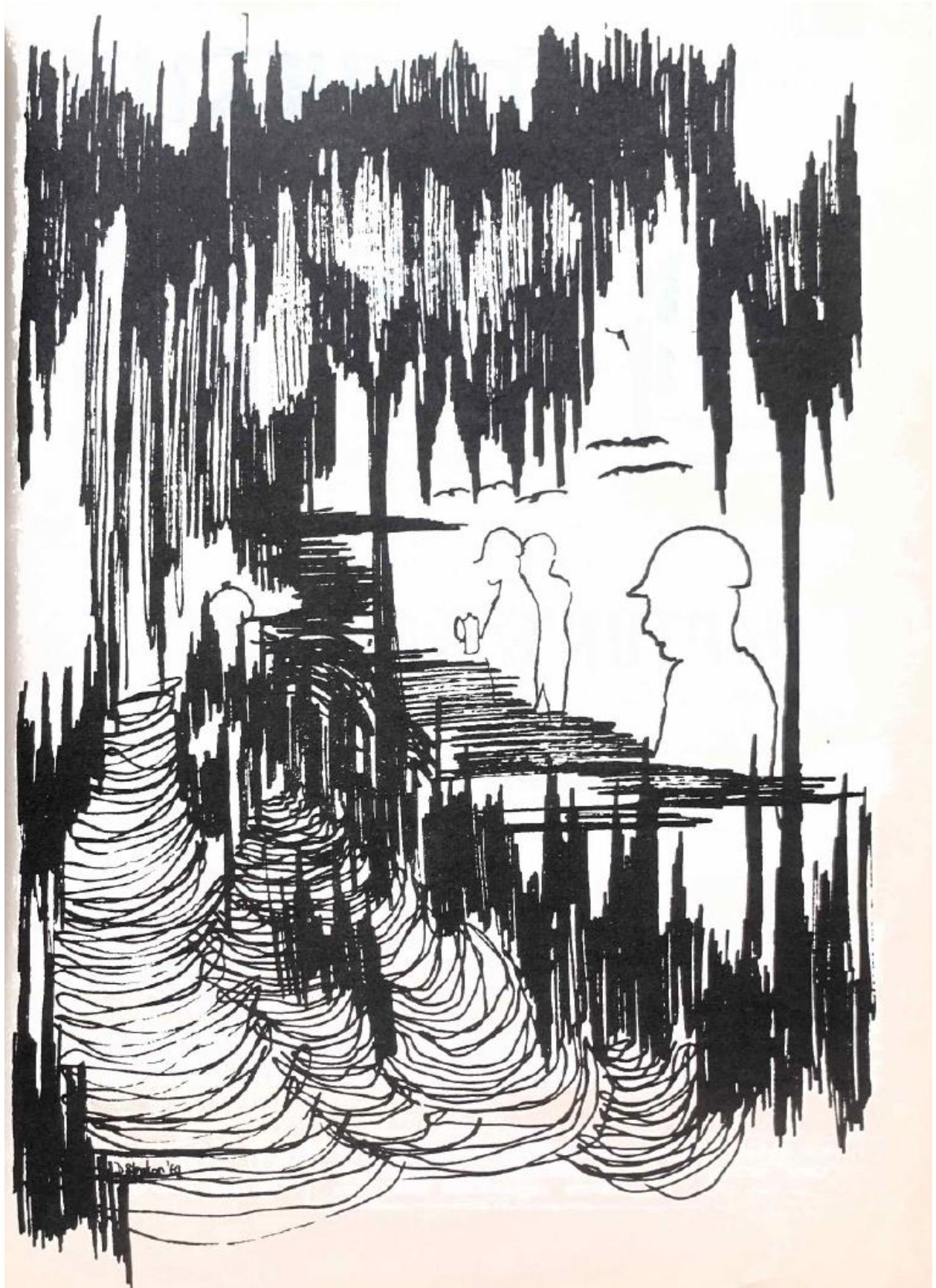
Bearings taken by Captain Logan from the extreme summit of Mt. Lindesay:

| | |
|---|--------|
| Lake or lagoon or river | W by S |
| Gap in Dividing Range | N 30 W |
| H. Taylor's Range, i.e., Glenmorrison's Range | N 3 E |
| Telegraph Hill | N 6 E |

The party remained in camp the following day, during which Cunningham drew a sketch of Mt. Barney and estimated its height by triangulation to be 5703 feet. Meanwhile, Logan visited Collins Cap, through which the Mt. Lindesay Highway now passes.

The full texts of the journal of the explorers are given in J.G. Steele (ed.) *The Explorers of the Moreton Bay District, 1770-1830*, shortly to be published. This book will also contain the explorers' own maps and sketches.

* NOTE: since this article was written, further evidence has come to light, showing that the campsite used by Cunningham, Fraser and Logan was near the bridge about three miles north-east of the East Peak of Mt. Barney, and not as shown in the map.



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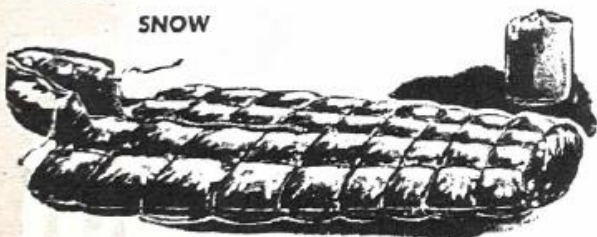


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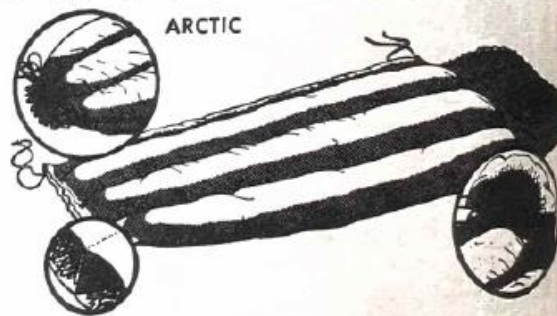
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HINCHINBROOK HEXAPODS

L.A.J. Radunz

As we glided across the tranquil tropic sea, a state of euphoria was prevalent amongst the group – all eight of us who later proved to be nine, due to the presence of a beach-comber. My elation soon subsided, however, as I viewed the immensity of the towering mountains above us and I pondered on the magnitude of the onerous assignment that lay ahead – that top sure looked a long way off.

While the rest enjoyed a dip in the “big blue”, I decided to examine some of the local species. Suddenly an iridescent violet flashed above me in the irregular flight characteristic of Lepidoptera. This could only be the Ulysses blue, the apogee of butterflies except for some tropical species of New Guinea. Vociferations poured forth as it quickly withdrew from sight – well, maybe I'll get another chance at one.

In the supra-littoral zone at the base of the marginal tree area, I found some Planipennian larva or “ant lions” to the layman. These interesting insects excavate the familiar conical ant traps in sandy soil. Several of these were placed in 90% alcohol - oh! pity: death, but what a way to go, assuming, of course, that ant lions can appreciate the joys of inebriation.

Next morning brought the evanescent beauty of the unpolluted sunrise. Two species of dragon flies constituted the results of a pre-breakfast netting session. A Dermapteran was also taken. These harmless fellows are called “ear wigs” after several were found in medieval peasants’ ears, this resulting from the insects’ desire to have as much of its body surface as possible in contact with solid objects. What better place is there than a yokel's ear lobe – besides, it's warm.

Our dilatory tactics exhausted, we reluctantly set off burdened by incomprehensibly heavy packs. On the ridges are to be found Heteroptera (bugs), some of which are noted for an unpleasant odour (okay, call it foul if you wish) secreted by, would you believe, odoriferous glands. At about 700 feet up, a shout was heard from up front, “Where's the entomologist?” I hurried up to find Rod grappling with 5 inches of Mantid. A few minutes later this fine specimen was set out in the pinning box.

As the altitude increased, I noticed fewer insects, or maybe the hard climbing left me less inclined to be on the lookout for small movements. The creeks were conspicuous for their lack of ins tars, the only nymphs found being those of the dragon-flies.

We traced a creek from its tintinnabulating upper reaches till it joined the Zoe River and then to the sea. On reaching the beach, we were all languid from the previous day's exertion and really felt pooped. This being a suitable recuperation centre we all collapsed.

That afternoon still stiff but sufficiently recovered, I managed to collect some Hymenoptera and small green beetles. The evening descended and with it came hoardes of crepuscular Ceratopogonids which are biting midges and erroneously called “sand flies”. The repellent I took proved totally ineffective and Kokoda seems the best control method.

The next few days brought us to our appointed pick-up area. That morning another Ulysses blue made a fleeting appearance but quickly vacated the scene. These are fast flyers and keep to the tree tops.

Maybe next trip to Hinchinbrook I'll catch one.



SAGA ON HINCHINBROOK – WITH APOLOGIES TO VERGIL

Susie O'Donnell

“So we rushed upon them, weapons in hand,
And called upon the gods, even great Jove
Himself, to share our plunder. Then we
Spread seats along the curving shore and
Addressed ourselves to a delicious banquet.”

-- Coconut binge.

“So once again we set out tables, moved our altars,
And kindled our fires in a deep recess hidden
Beneath an overhang of rock and hedged in by trees.
But once again from a different quarter of the sky
The raucous flock swooped down from their hidden lairs
And fluttered round their prey with their hooked claws.
Then I commanded by comrades to take up arms; we
Must wage war with this loathsome tribe.”

-- Unsuccessful attacks against mosquitoes, sandflies and other assorted bities. But, however, opposition devastated catastrophically by AEROGARD!!! Hooray for pressure paks!!

“And from their number chose an elite few
To accompany him on an embassy of war.
The rest went coasting easily downstream”

-- Mutiny ... five insanely faced the wasteland, bolstered by a spirit of scientific empiricism to see whether that Cossack standing on top of the ridge opposite Mt. Bowen with his back to us, was really urinating. But the Cossack from every point of the compass, remained stubbornly modestly polite and discreet, turning so that his back was always cast in our direction. The other three sensibly returned to white sands, blue seas and infested mangrove swamps .

“Where shall I begin to search for you
Unwinding all the twists and turns of the way
Through this deceiving wood?’
Even as he spoke he began to trace his backward tracks
And wandered through the still thickets.
Suddenly he heard halloos and signals of pursuit.”

-- Lost . . . amid that infernal, scratching, clawing, aggressive, possessive scunge, extremely defensive when confronted with a machete; and those arrogantly confusing ridges.

“But now from afar, the trumpet from its
Brazen throat blared out its terrible call.”

-- Bloody Hell!!! – that mean, sneaky, insidious little worm of a goblin that hides under slippery rocks in creeks, just gloating at opportunities to trip unsuspecting twits, scores again as another candidate shrieks in exasperation and frustration at being catapulted into yet another involuntary bath.

“While a long and increasing hunger

Nags his dry and bloodless jaws.”

-- Try rousing enthusiasm when all you've got for lunch is peanuts, peanut butter sandwiches and more peanuts and no water and no hope of it for God knows how long.

“Then in a calm reach of the firmament
They saw arms, wrapped in cloud, all
Glowing red in the sun's rays and
All were stunned with amazement.”

-- The sheer stupefying beauty of waking up in a sea of cotton wool cloud tinged with pink from the early morning sun, with the summit of The Thumb majestically rising from the snowy swirl encircling its base.

“Hold out your cups in your right hands in honour
Of so worthy and great a deed and invoke the god,
Both yours and ours, and willingly pour the libations!
Meanwhile the evening crept up on the lower slopes of The Thumb.”

-- Imagine the sensual, intemperate, unrepentant, indulgent slurps of five parched throats gulping endless cups of tea after the trials of perseverant self-denial in a continuous five day drought in the ascent of Mt. Bowen, and an original, arduous, pioneer-spirited, courageous (naturally) descent off Bowen; followed by harmonious silence intermittently punctuated by contented belches or moans of bloatedness.

“The feast began again and the tables were heaped
With new provisions, brought for a second session
And the altars groaned with high piled dishes again.”

-- Two days of enforced (we didn't mind) continuous concentrated eating – a recommended cure and preventive for back strain.

Expedition Members: Timothonius Venerablegod, Petronius Bulkstorecarrier, Lizistrata Tolkeinreader, Andronicus Pathfinder, Nurkelonius Machetewielder, Leonides Butterflynatcher, Susisyphus Pancakemaker, Grantium Beachbum-simulator

Footnote: Read J.R. Tolkein The Lord of the Ring

TRAVELLING AROUND EUROPE

Carol O'Donnell

Greece is rather a good place to begin a hitch-hiking tour of Europe. Everything, especially food and hotel accommodation, is dirt cheap, the people are amazingly hospitable, and apart from all those ancient ruins, the present-day political situation makes it a fascinating place to be.

We began our trip in Athens, saw the Acropolis and viewed the city below; a maze of white stone flat roofed apartments, crowded haphazardly together and grudgingly making way occasionally for only the narrowest of streets.

Sometimes a street would lead unexpectedly to one of the rotund Byzantine churches, where the constant stream of worshippers reminds you what a force religion is in Greece, and where old ladies in black sell candles and then snuff them out almost immediately the faithful have left the church. St. George and his dragon leap out from the gloom of stone walls, and people kiss the pictures of Jesus and Mary. Every few miles along Greek roads we saw shrines decorated with flowers or strangely enough with empty bottles, and every Greek car and bus seems to contain its plastic crucifix.

Since the coup of April 21, 1967, the army is paradoxically the other big force in Greek life. "Zhito Stratos" or "Bravo the Army" triumphantly proclaim huge signs in towns and villages, proudly showing the phoenix rising from flames behind an armed soldier. Every match-box bears the same legend, and in a thousand different ways, (e.g. compulsory military service of two years for all men) the propaganda of the new regime is disseminated. Pictures of Papadopoulos look out from shop and car windows, and pro-Papadopoulos chalk slogans are scrawled everywhere. The people we met spoke hesitantly about the regime then anxiously dismissed the subject as being too dangerous to talk about.

In Greece too we did our first hitching in snow, a miserable experience, alleviated only by the many friendly Greeks who urged us to give up such crazy pursuits and come inside for a glass of wine or ouzo.

We went to Crete deck class, which was a colourful, noisy and somewhat unhygienic trip, and enjoyed seeing there the ancient Minoan ruins, the peasants picking olives or leading donkeys laden with wood. We enjoyed the seething market place in spite of the occasional mouse, and were fascinated by the hippy colony, where flower children from all over Europe are living in dubious bliss by the seashore in scores of natural cliff caves. But most of all in Greece we loved the people; the couple who took us home and insisted on us sleeping in their double bed, the policeman who flagged down a truck and got us a lift, and all the others who fed us, gave us lifts and were kind in so many ways.

Italy, on the other hand, was remarkably modern with its autostradas, impressive engineering and mouth-watering shops. But we saw poverty too, the slums where the rubbish never seems to be cleared away, the beggars whom everyone ignores at the church doors on Sunday and the abundance of Communist posters which inevitably spring up under such obvious class differences. In Salerno we were hard pressed to find buildings that weren't part of the tall, grey and crowded tenement complex where children grow up playing in alleyways.

In Naples we spent Christmas furtively cooking chicken in our hotel room which overlooked a typical Neapolitan scene of markets, rubbish heaps. and tenements flying lines of washing from all available windows. Everything in Naples is alive, people argue and sing on the streets, park cars on pavements in sheer frustration and express their feelings in a constant cacophony of car horns. We loved it, but were

glad too, to arrive in a more sedate and culture-conscious Rome where practically every building you look at belongs to an ancient and historic past. Shops were wonderful in Rome beautiful women in fur coats sipped drinks in pavement cafes and the fashionable penchant for big dogs has left the streets in a state of uncleanness quite perilous to the unwary.

Besides the Trevi fountain the Pantheon and all the other tourist “musts”, I'd recommend a visit to E.U.R., the opulent model suburb begun by Mussolini and completed for the Olympic Games. The parks, wide and almost deserted streets, and clean-limbed modern buildings are an ironic contrast to the seething life of the rest of Rome. Spend a morning viewing Renaissance masters at the Borghese Gallery and the afternoon at the Modern Art Gallery where whirling stroboscopes dazzle you, and iron filings creep crab-like over magnetized walls. Go to the Vatican and buy a certificate of blessing signed by the Pope for only \$3.00, or if that doesn't appeal, the Pieta in St. Peters is magnificent.

Florence is like a trip back to the 15th Century, and is, of course, the home of Michelangelo, and Venice is beautiful, for all the picturesque reasons that everybody knows about. A word of warning about hitching in Italy; all those stories you hear about Italian men certainly do seem to be true.

When we were in Spain, Franco put the country under martial law, and as our English papers informed us a month later, there had been riots and student disturbance all over the country. It seemed pretty tranquil to us, however, with armies of street sweepers, cheap chickens roasting on spits and people in general seemed to have most basic needs satisfied. Food is, of course, very cheap and accommodation in pensiones often as low as fifty cents per night. We stayed in Barcelona for a few days roaming round the old Gothic quarter the clean and colourful markets, the red light district, and most fascinating of all, Gaudi's unsymmetric art nouveau buildings.

We carried on down the coast until the country becomes desert bright red and like cowboy movies of the American badlands. Many Westerns are indeed made up in this wasteland, where the people live in caves in the barren cliffs, scraping a living from God knows where. Then we came suddenly to Granada with its blooming almond trees and Sierra Nevadas white in the distance, and spent a sunny day walking round Alhambra, the old Moorish palace dominating the town.

From dusty Algeciras we went to Morocco for a weekend of wandering round the narrow souvenir-filled alleys of the Casbah and arguments with black marketeers over exchange rates (whom even the tourist office advises you to deal with). Tangiers is another world with its veiled Moslim women and hordes of little boys speaking a disconcerting number of languages and offering anything from marijuana to a prostitute at bargain prices.

Back in Spain, we travelled to Toledo, home of El Greco, and then to Madrid, where we “discovered” Bosch and Breughel, the Prado gallery and ate roasted chickens for only 60 cents each.

My memories of France are now almost completely dominated by Paris, so far, my favourite city of our trip. We arrived at night in light snow and found a cheap hotel in Montmartre where the Moulin Rouge gleams brightly among the other neon signs, and the keepers of strip joints stand on the pavements proclaiming the attractions to be seen inside. Brightly coloured, exorbitant little bistros are everywhere, mussel and waffle vendors do a roaring trade and almost every brick wall still bears the defiant painted slogans of the anti-Gaullist student riots of May 1968. Near our hotel was the imposing bulk of Sacre Coeur, and of course the little square where Paris painters gaily display their works or wheedle tourists into sitting for outrageously flattering lightning portraits. In Montmartre, postcards display seductive

nudes, instead of the usual views of the city, one's eyes turn inevitably to the pictures gracing the scores of strip joints, and lingerie shops are full of garments which customs officers would undoubtedly confiscate if they ever reached Australia's purer shores. Glamorous ladies ply their trade on street corners and the whole atmosphere is colourful, noisy and exciting.

We ate our lunch on the steps of the Louvre and spent an exhausting day seeing a fraction of it. We loved the Jeu de Paume gallery where all the impressionists are displayed and puzzled over the loads of miniature free modern art exhibitions in little shops on the Left Bank. This continual progression of exhibitions of art and architecture in all its forms is one of the things that makes life in Paris so stimulating and the interest shown by Parisians in these and the myriad theatres brings home forcefully the comparative cultural stagnation of Australia.

From Quartier Latin, the student area, to the Bois de Boulogne where the men play boule even when snow covers the ground, each section of Paris has its own character completely different from others. From the flag-decked Champs Elysees, to the "Comedie Francaise" (where one can see performances for only 40 cents), to the sprawling belligerent markets, Paris is a city whirling with life and contrast.

The only thing slightly dampening my eulogy is its expensiveness. We rapidly got used to doing without meat which averaged at \$1.50 per lb. and became quite stoic about resisting those tempting morsels of French pastry which sell at a mere 20 cents each. A word on hitching: from experience and conversation we've come to the very strong conclusion that success is amazingly dependent on the shortness of one's hair.

After a couple of weeks in Belgium and Holland we arrived in England, very thankful to be once again with familiar voices and cheap food. London, with its ten million inhabitants is understandable huge, and sight-seeing became a mammoth venture. London, like Paris, has more things to see than the average man can manage in a lifetime, and consequently, one is miserably reduced to spending a day at the Science or British Museum, selecting about ten plays from the multitude of tempting choices in the offing, and leasing out less vital pastimes like that splendid old tourist sport of brass-rubbing. Even after that, life is hectic as you master the intricacies of tube and bus travel and charge from the ghastly Albert Memorial to the even ghastlier and more militaristic St. Paul's Cathedral, to Westminster Abbey and the Tate Gallery and collapse that night in a fifty cent balcony seat at a play, the ballet or the opera. One of the pure joys of British theatre-going, by the way, is that you can get such good seats for so many interesting plays (some of which, thanks to the censor, will obviously not reach Queensland shores for another century).

Sunday in London is the best day of the week. First of all, there's a visit to the markets of Petticoat Lane where the Cockney Jewish vendors of anything and everything harangue the crowd and exchange caustic comments with the customers of every description who mill round the stalls. Then there's lunch in Bayswater Road admiring the paintings, pottery and art of all descriptions lined up for a mile against the park fence. And best of all Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park, where something of Britain's racial tension is revealed in the violent attacks of coloured speakers, where every conceivable grievance or viewpoint is aired to the motley crowd, those enjoying an afternoon on the grass, and the occasional bobby. We saw an anti-Vietnam demonstration in Trafalgar Square and the lines of reasonable policemen. They don't take off their numbers and charge protestors in London, even if the turnout is mainly made up of nasty communist groups as this one happened to be.

Economically, Britain is quite obviously in a mess, and with everyone we spoke to, Wilson was No. 1 enemy. Yet I retain admiration for many aspects of life there. I respect the intellectual enquiry and

experiment that goes on in social and educational fields and the way that problems are constantly and critically argued and examined on TV, especially, and in the papers. It is this constant air of enquiry and self-criticism that is so impressive in Britain, and even though many mistakes are being made, the important thing is that they are made because of experimentation and not through lack of it.

Elsewhere in England we visited Coventry Cathedral, which, built on the bombed ruins of the former Gothic one, is magnificent in its artistic conception and execution. Many British churches have plays performed in them these days and we saw Elist's "Murder in the Cathedral" being rehearsed in gloomy, echoing Salisbury Cathedral, which was wonderful. We loved Oxford, and especially Cambridge; and hated the acres of grimy semi-detached houses in Manchester. We visited the Lake District where we climbed Scafell Pike, England's highest mountain and a mighty 3200 feet. It was jolly snowy and bleak on top though, even at that height. To please Rod we saw lots of British bridges and then spent time in Scotland and Ireland. The latter was particularly interesting as in the North political upheavals were rampant and the garrulous Irish were not ones to keep quiet about it, so we heard stories from Catholics and Protestants, Civil Rights protesters and their enemies. We returned to London via the beautiful countryside of Snowdonia and caught our Pacesetter flight to Vienna.

Austria impressed us mainly with its scenic beauty. The grass is lush, laced with flowers, the cows are fat and in general it seems to be a kind of dairyman's paradise. Little wooden chalets are intricately carved, stone houses have delicate religious frescoes on their walls and many of the women wear national dress. Indeed, outside the sophisticated pavement cafes and theatres of Vienna, it is very easy for the tourist to associate Austria mainly with pictures of Van Gogh-like peasants working in fields, and the occasional romantic castle. We stayed in Salzburg where "The Sound of Music" was made, camped under huge white peaks which could be seen from the doorway of every Baroque church, and at the end of every narrow alley hung with artistic wrought iron shop signs. We explored the old castle which dominates the town and which is quite ghastly and lovely when lit up at night.

Innsbruck had a wealth of old buildings to look at, and then we hitched quite easily on to Switzerland where Grindelwald was one of the nicest parts of our whole trip. Grindelwald is a tiny village deep in the Alps, overlooked by the Wetterhorn, the Jungfrau and a whole range of huge mountains. When we were there haymaking was going on, the flowers of all colours were being swathed from the meadows and our campsite was under the North Wall of the Eiger with terrific views in every direction. Here we took a cog railway ride to the top of the Jungfrauoch leaving the valley far below, traversing the face of the Eiger until we were in a grotesque wasteland of overpowering whiteness. That afternoon began the most spectacular bushwalk I've ever been on. Leaving Grindelwald we set off to climb over the 9" Rosse Schiedegg Pass at 6000 feet, watching the village in the valley grow smaller and more beautiful as we climbed, and watching more and more of the huge 12,000 footers swing into view as we got higher. We sloshed through miles of deep snow on the other side to camp by fir trees and a racing stream under the mountains.

In Germany we hitched first through Bavaria, the scenic South full of old Baroque associations. Outside of Munich we visited Dachau, where, as a monument to what is now officially regarded as a terrible mistake, the concentration-camp has been left intact with part of it turned into a history of the camp and of Hitler's rise to power. Jewish former inmates have erected in the bare gravel yard a most impressive bronze sculpture – twisted black forms reaching upward through barbs and spikes.

From Munich we went to the Rhine Valley where the beauty of the castles and vineyards is rather spoilt by the ubiquitous German factories and by such large scale exploitation for tourism. Take Rudesheim for instance, “the most famous wine town in the world” completely destroyed during the war and rebuilt and restored with a vengeance. The result is a kind of German Surfers' Paradise only worse, with too many over-decorated “historic” old buildings, souvenir shops, and taverns playing amplified peasant music.

We much preferred Berlin which is a historically and politically fascinating place bearing full evidence to the gigantic American investment in West Germany since the last War. American money, building and troops are everywhere, spawning a zealous allegiance to the American idea of freedom (or should I say anti-Communism), to such an extent that the Communist Party is banned in the West. Modern buildings, particularly apartment blocks, are everywhere and the whole place is a paradise for those interested in architecture with buildings by Gropius, Le Corbusier and many others rising in imaginative and astonishing shapes. We saw the Wall which is patrolled on the Westside by machine-gun carrying guards while towers of armed guards are dotted along the Eastern side. Little observation platforms are built in the West so that tourists can see over the wall, and tall notice boards glare across the barrier informing Easterners that 64 have been shot whilst trying to escape. We spent one Saturday only in East Berlin, passing through a lot of red tape at “Checkpoint Charlie” into a place contrasting most unpleasantly with the West. The huge amount of bomb rubble everywhere, even right in the centre of the town, the sparseness of cars and people and the occasional banner extolling the virtues of the workers' state gave the place a most depressing air. Old buildings have been left to decay due to bomb damage or have been shoddily repaired and the new architecture we did see seemed to be rather of the “concrete jungle” variety. But the most noticeable feature of all to us was the almost complete absence of the colourful and tempting shops that one finds in the West. At first, we were hard pressed to find a food store, even in the centre of town, and when directed to a supposedly large one, we were taken aback by its meagre and spartan fare. The milk we bought there turned out to be sour. It must be remembered that unlike the West, East Berlin has not benefited from generous Marshall Plan aid and American investment, but even so, as we returned that night through what our East Berlin tourist brochure calls “the anti-fascist protection wall” we felt very disquieted by our first brief glimpse at a Communist state.

We left Berlin and went to Hamburg, Germany's sin city (after an interesting lift with an Ex-Nazi S.S. man) where the Eros Centre and other pleasure palaces display their human wares on the Reeperbahn and where there is a street where all the girls ply their trade, sitting in their windows in near nudity or calling over their gates to passers-by.

So, after travelling through “wonderful, wonderful” Copenhagen, Oslo and the fjords of Norway, here I sit in the camping grounds at Stockholm scribbling this on a supermarket bag while Rod fixes up our communist bloc visas. I pray that postage won't be as expensive as everything else in this otherwise very impressive city.

Best wishes to everybody for exams and for the rest of the bushwalking year.

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EUROPE ON \$3.00 (U.S.) PER DAY

Rod O'Donnell

Before we left in November last, we had idea of what it would cost us to live in Europe. Now, after eight months of continuous travel, we have found that it is possible to live quite comfortably in Europe on an average of \$3.00 US per person per day, provided:

- a. You hitch-hike,
- b. Stay in youth hostels, motor camps or cheap hotels and pensions,
- c. Do you own cooking most of the time.

In a certain sense the figure of \$3.00* is normal. It is possible to get by on as little as \$2.00 per day and many young people do, particularly if they're only travelling for a month or two. However, for trips of several months and more, the figure of \$3.00 is a suitable one to reckon with and will enable you to have an occasional luxury tram ride. Also, the \$3.00 is an average figure. One can certainly live on less in the southern European countries, but a little more than \$3.00 will be needed in Scandinavia. By the way, the \$3.00 includes everything – food, accommodation, transport, entrance fees to galleries and museums, etc.

Carrying Money

There are two convenient ways of carrying money with you on a trip over-seas; in the form of Travellers Cheques or a Letter of Credit. Travellers Cheques are the most convenient as they can be cashed almost anywhere, but they are also the most expensive, as they cost 1% to buy and a second 1% is deducted for the service of changing into local currency.

A Letter of Credit on the other hand is more suitable for a larger amount of money. It is cheaper, usually costing ¾% or less to purchase, and most banks charge no commission to change into local currency. However, with a letter of credit, one is restricted in that one must deal with anyone of a set number of banks, but the list of banks is quite extensive, and there is no real inconvenience.

For a long trip, such as ours, I'd recommend that the bulk of the money be carried by means of a letter of credit and that \$1-00 or 80 be carried in travellers' cheques for emergencies, etc. The best currency to use is American Dollars. This is the strongest and most ought after currency and always has the better exchange rate. Do not use Australian, as they are relatively unknown, and the exchange rates are lower than they should be. Also, if you use American Express Travellers Cheques, you automatically have access to the very useful American Express Mail Service. If you are visiting England, the easiest way of transferring money is simply to get your Australian bank to open an account for you in London.

Changing Money

If you want your money to go as far as possible, always be conscious of exchange rates. In general, always change in a BANK, or a money change shop where rates of exchange are on display. Banks are more or less bound to the international exchange rates whereas anybody else can give you what they like. Unless you like losing money, don't change in travel agencies, railway stations, shops or petrol stations, etc.

* \$1.00 (U.S.) = 0.89 cents Aust. All prices etc. are quoted in U.S. currency. A quick way of converting to Australian currency is to reduce U.S. dollars by 10%.

Carrying Valuables

The loss of a passport or money on a journey can cause considerable inconvenience, and to minimise the risk of such a disaster, a thin canvas bag slung around my neck carries all our valuable documents; viz. passports, letter of credit, travellers' cheques, local money, and student and youth hotel cards. Such a device also makes a good party trick when you have to unbutton your stomach to pay the hotel lady.

Cost of Living

The cost of living-varies considerably over Europe, showing a general increase from the south to the north. A roughlist of countries in order of increasing cost of living would be; Greece, Spain, Italy, England, Austria, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, France and Scandinavia. To give you some idea of the price variation, eggs sell for 3 cents each in Spain and 8 cents in Norway. Fruit prices also vary considerably. In southern Europe, even in winter, fruit is cheap, but fruit in Scandinavia becomes a near luxury. Even now in July, a reasonable sized orange costs 12 cents in Stockholm. While red meat is very expensive on the Continent, chicken is not, and even as far north as Germany a roasted chicken can be bought for \$1.00. Also fresh fish is quite cheap all over Europe and this is important in France and Scandinavia.

Foodwise, England is quite cheap. Australian butter and cheese sell at half the Australian prices, and meat sells at more acceptable prices than on the Continent. It is worth noting that in many countries, imported foods are often cheaper than the local products, e.g., Danish bacon and Polish eggs are much cheaper in England than their English equivalents.

Once the relative expensiveness of a country is known beforehand, it is useful to buy up or buy “down” before entering it. For instance, we crossed from Spain into France carrying, among other things, 40 eggs, 4lb. cheese, 4lb. dates and 10 soups, and these lasted us well into our Paris sojourn. Also, it is a good idea to buy up food in England before departing for the Continent.

Shopping

In southern Europe, the traditional town market place is easily the best place to shop for fruit, vegetables, eggs, cheese and sometimes meat. In the more prosperous northern Europe, the larger supermarkets generally give best buys. Remember also that supermarkets in Spain and Greece tend to cater for the higher income buyers. If you are on a tight budget, we have found that it is a good idea to keep an account of everything you spend. Otherwise, you tend to spend more than you realise, and besides, the book makes a useful diary.

Hitch-Hiking

It is possible to make another great geographical generalisation about hitch-hiking in Europe, but bear in mind that there are many exceptions to every simplification. Generally, then, hitching in Northern Europe is easy compared to that in the South. In Greece and Spain there are fewer cars and the people themselves don't travel as much, mostly because they are poorer. Italy has relatively more cars, but there it helps a great deal either to be female or to have a female hitching partner. Central and Northern Europeans are richer and hence there are more cars on the road. Also they travel a great deal themselves and are more sympathetic to you. In Germany and Austria just about everyone goes in for hitch-hiking; we've seen women of 40 or more hitching rides home.

Apart from these differences, hitch-hiking is a splendid way to travel. It gives you the maximum exposure to the people of the country and a wonderful chance to practise your second language. As well as that,

innumerable acts of kindness will be done for you, things that make your trip much more memorable than travelling in a car or train would be.

Of course, hitch-hiking is inevitably insecure and not for the schedule-conscious person. Also, you are at the mercy of the weather which in Europe can be excruciating. We have hitched for 90% of our trip, even in freezing conditions with snow and mist all around, but now and then we have taken a rest from it by seeking out alternative modes of travel. One reasonably cheap way is to find someone with a car in a Youth Hostel or Motor Camp and share petrol expenses with them as far as is convenient. Alternatively, train travel in southern Europe is relatively cheap and can be accommodated now and then on a \$3.00 a day budget.

Health, First Aid and Water

Bouts of constipation and diarrhoea, (lasting a couple of days), are such a common travelling hazard that remedies for these, at least, should be carried. However, some sort of first aid kit should be considered essential, containing, as well as these, an antibiotic and remedies for the usual cuts, sores and headaches. Consult the Student Health Service for more extensive advice and brand names. They can also advise, and give you the necessary vaccinations.

However, your greatest security against illness is making sure of a healthy diet and keeping warm. While this sounds obvious, the temptation is there to eat cheaper food when finances are running low. Outside of a few bouts of constipation in the early months, our most common disorder has been a heavy cold and a useful diet supplement to bring with you is 100 vitamin C tablets.

By the way, if you are worried about drinking water in Europe, relax right now. We have drunk water in all the countries we have visited and not been the least bit sick. (Also, there is plenty of bottled pasteurized milk all over Europe at eight to ten cents a pint).

Language

Knowledge of a language, however rudimentary, is of great assistance in any country. The most useful single language is German, as it is spoken in three countries and so many other countries border on Germany. However, regardless of whether you speak any language at all, it is very useful to learn some basic phrases in each language. We have found that learning the number system and words such as “how much”, “yes”, “no”, “thank you”, “toilet”, and “where” has been most useful. Nowadays there are several small books available, giving everyday phrases in seven or eight languages.

Tourist Information

One of the first places to make a beeline for when entering a town is the official tourist office for free maps and folders, etc. They can direct you anywhere and indicate the main tourist attractions to you.

As well, some sort of guide book to Europe should be carried, giving an overall description of all countries and listing the historical sights, galleries and tourist attractions, etc., in each of them. One of the most popular books is Frommer's “Europe on \$5.00 a Day” which, despite the \$5 in the title, is still used by kids bumming their way round on \$2.00 and less. We are using Buxton's “Penguin Guide to Europe” half of which is useful and the other half rubbish. Whatever guide you choose, however, remember that weight can be saved by ripping out the section on the country you have been through.

Equipment

Any person well equipped for bushwalking can equip themselves for such a trip as ours, with only a few extras. Travel in winter demands a very good sleeping bag and good warm clothes. We attempted to avoid as much of the cold as possible by travelling across Southern Europe in winter and spending summer in Scandinavia. Even with these plans we were very glad of our New Zealand “Twenty Below” sleeping bags and N.Z. Polar Down Jackets.*

A good tent and a small cooking stove will save you quite a lot of money in Europe. The best kind of stove is one which runs on petrol (which can be obtained everywhere) and I’d recommend the small Swedish “primus” brand stove. This stove is convenient and cheap to run – ours costs 15 cents a week. “Camping Gaz” stoves, while having certain advantages, are much more expensive to run, and refills are less easily obtained than petrol.

You can get by reasonably comfortably with two to three changes of clothes and, with careful choice of equipment for lightness the weight of packs can be kept to reasonable levels. Carol’s pack weight 35 lbs. and mine 55 lbs. including food.

Make sure everything is insured before you leave

Youth Hostels

Another must before leaving is to become a member of the Youth Hostels Association and get an International sticker on your membership card together with the European hostel book. Hostels abound in most countries now, including Poland, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, and they are located in all the main towns as well as out in the scenic countryside. Together with the advantage of being cheap, they are very useful as a means of winter accommodation and as a means of meeting travellers. They are also good places to glean tourist information, or the names of cheap hotels, pensions, etc.

International Student Card

This little card is worth far more than the \$1.00 it costs. It gives you access to galleries, museums, ruins and castles, etc. all across Europe for nothing or for half the price, and when you start adding up the money it saves you, it runs well over \$50.00. In addition, student concessions are granted by some shipping lines, e.g., Greece to Italy, and the International Student Card is also your passport to student flights in Europe. These charter flights offer an extremely cheap way of travelling in summer, e.g., fly from London to Madrid or Prague to Moscow for \$3.00. Apply for your International Student Card at the Students’ Union Office where they also have booklet information about student flights and other concessions.

Afterthoughts

Don’t forget if you are on a really tight budget, that you can save a night’s accommodation by sleeping in a building under construction, or if you are travelling by rail, take a night train and sleep in the waiting room.

A word to people thinking of working in England. Don’t plan on saving a lot of money unless you have got a plum job lined up for yourself. England is a mighty place in lots of ways, but wages are lower and taxes higher, and most people we’ve met who had worked there, hadn’t managed to save much at all.

Good luck in your preparations.

* Both obtainable through Graeme Lacey’s “Chamoi Mountain Equipment”.

YOUTH CAMPS IN EUROPE

Andrew Tod

The recent travels of Rod and Carol have jogged my memory regarding a trip of mine in Europe in my far distant youth – about 1958. By a twist of fate, I arrived in Paris on my way to Spain, in the brief inter-regnum before De Gaulle came to power. There were riots, (or so the papers said), but it would seem that I was never in the right place at the right time, because, apart from posters proclaiming “De Gaulle au pouvoir” and “Vive La (4th) Republique”, I have never seen a city more placid. In fact, France seemed to function remarkably well without a government, or perhaps it wasn't too different from the type of governments they had had under the Fourth Republic.

In Paris, I discovered two organisations which organised holiday working camps for an international polyglot of youth. These camps varied enormously in size, purpose and functioning. Generally, getting there was your own responsibility, and the type of work was usually of an unskilled type, like construction work. For example, I remember one offering work building a swimming pool at a hotel in Norway, and many others gave seasonal work like fruit picking. Some were of a charitable nature, with tucker provided, but no pay, while others gave the rate of pay of the local peasants, which was practically nothing.

That summer I went to two work camps. The first of these was in Algeria, at the height of the war which De Gaulle was expected to save from the doves. The purpose of its sponsors was heartily encouraged by the French government; namely to produce an atmosphere of international comradie. We were in fact the propaganda pawns of one of colonialism's last rearguard actions in Africa. Apart from the uniqueness of this experience, much criticism could be levelled at the organisation of the camp itself. The standard of leadership was inadequate for a camp so large (about 70), particularly since there was considerable cleavage into the three major national groups represented; French, British and German, and these did not always live together harmoniously. There was not much contact with local youth, who were mostly working in the towns, studying in France, - or possibly fighting for the rebels. The work was digging a ditch beside a mountain road; tedious and hot work (even if you didn't get dysentery), and of questionable value to the local populace, who were sullen Berbers who appeared to have mixed feelings for the French. Politically, the situation so closely resembled Vietnam that many of us had second thoughts about the cause we were in effect supporting, (a fact which further alienated the French in our party). How many more times must history repeat itself?

A contrasting success was a camp on the grape harvest on a Cote du Rhone vineyard near Avignon. The group was considerably more congenial by virtue of being smaller (about 25), and was more racially diverse, including French, Germans, English, Scots, Belgians, Dutch, Polish, Argentinian and – one Aussie (a nurse from Melbourne). The Poles were particularly interesting since at that time they were enjoying a brief thaw in their regime, and it seemed that Gomulka would ‘do a Dubcek’, until he too was towed into line.

The work was back-breaking and the view ahead showed only a depressing expanse of parallel rows of vines stretching far into the distance. We were followed by an overseer who lost no opportunity to tell us that we weren't working hard enough. We worked along side the local peasants, many of whom were Spanish and Italian immigrants and who, in good Mediterranean style, delegated the slack jobs like tractor driving to the most virile young men, while the manual toil was done mainly by old women – but don't underestimate the latter, they left us for dead at grape picking.

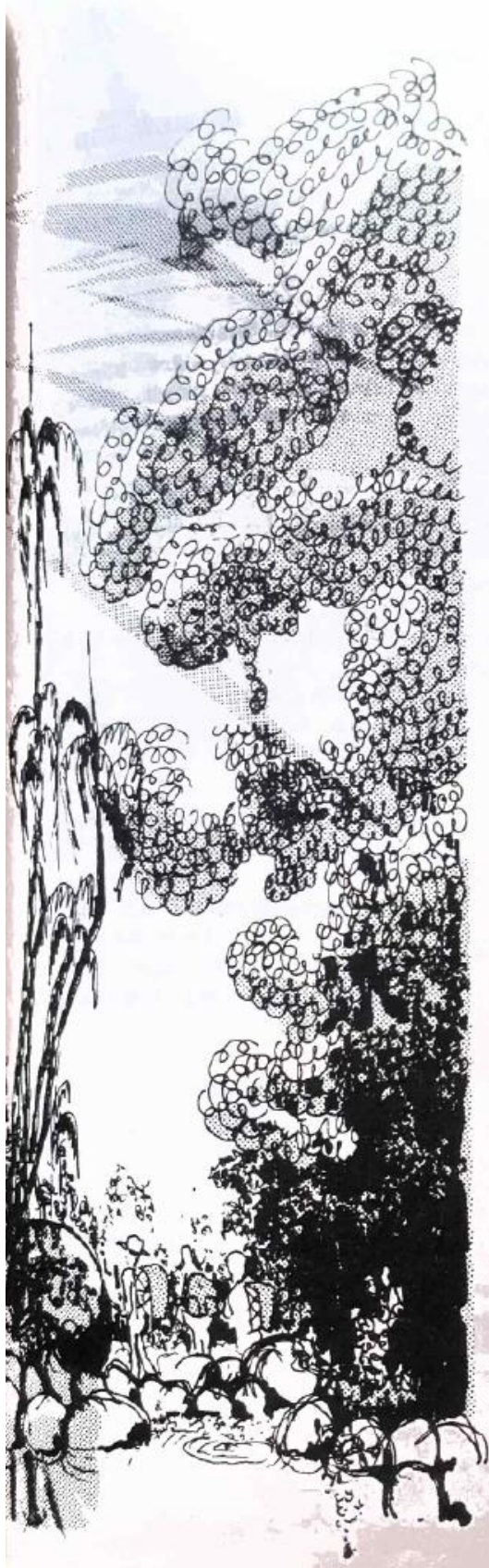
Six days only shalt though labour, so after a hitch into the nearest town, Saturday nights were spent sampling the product of our labours; wine, which ranged in quality from the matchless vintages of Chateau Neuf du Pape down to Vin Ordinaire which tasted like vinegar and the locals drank like water (Ugh!). It deserves comment that in that country with no licensing laws, and where even children drink wine with every meal, I don't remember ever seeing a drunk – apart from ourselves!

It seemed that throughout history from the Caesars to the present day, Popes, nobility and bards have settled in the beautiful and equable Rhone Valley, and left behind them a legacy of history and antiquities. Sundays were spent exploring these, for example at Aries we went to a bull fight held in the old Roman amphitheater - most spectacular. Veterinarians note: the skill and danger to the matador is considerable, particularly since the ethics of bull fighting require him to inflict the coup de grace, facing the bull over its horns, and thrusting his sword between its scapulae and between its ribs to reach its heart at the base of the thorax.

Our pay was not princely, but it afforded me several weeks hitching around France since living can be very cheap on bread and cheese and sleeping in barns, construction sites or under bridges. Under a bridge over the Seine with the Parisian tramps, I was rudely woken by the Gendarmerie who were making swoop for Algerian terrorists. I was discharged.

I have vivid memories of the Alps, the Riviera, St. Marie de la Mer and the Bouche du Rhone, Frejus and Carcassonne. Early November found me at Perpignon at the foothills of the Pyreneese, but winter was closing in and regrettably, it was time to head for home - a feed and a bed.

Environments are invisible. Their ground rules, pervasive structure, and overall patterns elude easy perception. – Marshall McLuhon



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SNOWY MOUNTAINS IN WINTER

Andrew Tod

In the August vacation an exploratory trip to the Snowy Mountains was made by Dave Gillieson, Andrew Tod and Pauline McMahon, to investigate snow and ice climbing possibilities.

Our objective was Watson's Crags, which is said to be the best snow climbing to be had in Australia. In spite of a relatively poor year for snow, some excellent climbing was had, and we also experienced camping in snow which, for a well-equipped and organized party need not be such an agony as one might imagine.

It was regrettable that due to the inaccessibility of Watson's Crags and consequent time spent getting there, only a short time remained for climbing. This can at least partly be blamed on the Kosciusko National Park authorities restrictions on access to the Perisher Valley, which are apparently designed to avoid the remotest danger of having to organize a rescue. But our own unfamiliarity with the area can also be blamed. However, this was all valuable experience and we learned a lot of ways we should not have gone about our trip. In particular, the long bushwalk to get there included a freezing wade across the Geehi River, and then a long steep climb through thick scrub with heavy packs, which would have been practically impossible with the depth of snow which can normally be expected in August.

It would seem that two possibilities are available for future trips:

1. Get sweet with the Snowy Mountain Authorities at Verandah Camp, and thus get the use of their road (normally blocked by a locked gate), from the end of which you can get through to the Crags via a dry (or almost) water diversion tunnel (and next time, don't get stuck in the middle with a truck bearing down on you!).
2. Take a chair lift from Thredbo on the opposite side of the range, and then cross-country ski across the Perisher Valley thence attacking the Crags from the top. Ski hire from Paddy Pallen is moderate, but at Thredbo it is extortionate.

It is not too late to join the trip of August 1970! Please form an orderly queue.

How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings. – Isaiah 52:7

THE ART OF BUSH-BLUDGING – or How to Survive a Bushwalk Without Even Tiring

Janine Samuel

First, in order to achieve a truly slack bushwalk, one must choose one's area with care. A through walk, such as the insanity of bushing from Tallebudgera to O'Reilly's, is useless for the purpose; so is any country where leeches, ants, snakes, yabbies, or other nasties launch a rear-guard attack at every rest. A round trip at Cataract River, where the ground is soft and the scenery attractive enough to provide an excuse for pausing, is ideal. The weather should be chosen carefully: cold in the morning, to discourage pupating walkers from emerging from their cocoons; hot by day, to encourage drink pauses; for such conditions one cannot beat an Anzac weekend.

Second, one must select one's party. Size is the most important factor: the larger it is, the more likely to include that abomination – a stirrer, one who suffers from the horrible affliction of being unable to see a bend without wishing to go around it. It is also desirable to maintain an exact balance between the numbers possessing a Y chromosome per cell to those who merely possess two X's. Half a dozen is a figure which seldom has been found wanting.

Careful consideration must be given to the leader of this select group. Young members are to be avoided, as they have seldom acquired sufficient immunity to the affliction known to veterinarians as Walkabout Disease, its chief manifestation being the compulsion to win recognition by covering impossible distances. An example of a genus suitable for leadership is:

Grimus: A particular species sometimes found in the Brisbane area.

Grimus Beggingbolus is fairly adequate, although, as its name suggests it does have certain drawbacks.

The suitable party, under suitable leader, once having been assembled in suitable area at suitable time, it is often advisable to provide an initial stimulus to ensure the correct degree of slackness. A slight stimulus, such as the excuse of a delayed Timminsmobile, is usually sufficient. More important is the provision of correct literature. It must be improving to the mind, stimulating to the diaphragm, and suitable for reading, aloud. An example is "1066 and All That". For some reason not yet determined, the best way to ensure success is to start halfway through, and having reached the end, begin at the beginning.

If all these requirements have been met, the system should be self-perpetrating. By the time the reading is over, it will be lunch time; by the time lunch is over, the mood is set. A short spurt of energy to quieten the last stirrings of conscience, a long pause to admire a waterfall, a sandbar in which to bury a member of the party (preferably female) neck deep, a section of creek ideal for dam building, and finally a perfect camp site which just might be the last one for miles, and success is assured. A late night around the campfire will ensure a late rise next morning. Then one of the party should express a desire for a swim, for hygiene's sake, "When the sun is on the water". (The party has of course been careful to camp on the eastern bank, behind a large hill). This swim when it finally eventuates, may be almost indefinitely prolonged by such harmless subterfuges as trying to drown each other or launching the leader's thongs upon the tide. With luck, this should prove so exhausting that a sleep in the sun is needed for all to recuperate. (An added advantage is gained if the males are still somewhat wearied from their night's duty as Kidney-Warmers).

Once again, a leisurely lunch may be followed by a mild spurt of activity. A good way to halt this before it gets out of hand is to have the Club Martyr bash its shin on a convenient rock. However, this measure should only be practised if no members of the Vice-Squad are present. The afternoon's activity may easily

be curtailed by the finding of another, less slack party, setting up camp on the right bank. The select group should under no circumstances, join the disrupting influence, but should establish itself on the exclusive left bank, just outside missile range, being sure to maintain a strong defence line of quick sands and stinging nettles.

It is quite permissible, although probably futile, to attempt to elevate the cultural experience level of the right bankers with a performance of Mahlyn's (or is it Merler's?) 13th. on the tent poles, with billy percussion. However, performance over, it is well not to allow the wonder of the bushland night, and each other's company to dull the senses, but to keep one's ear open, and billies loaded, lest the uncultured right bankers penetrate one's lines of defence.

Unfortunately, no one has yet perfected a system for maintaining this high standard of slackness on the third day. It has been found necessary for the party to exert itself somewhat, even to the appalling extent of climbing hills, and, starting before lunch, in order to return to base before the subversive right bankers (who returned along the creek), have consumed all their tea.

There are other minor disadvantages in this system which have yet to be ironed out. For instance, the procrastinatory and red herring-bone activities advocated are so strenuous as to render one as scarred and weary as if one had been on a walk a la mowed meadow. However, further research by dedicated members will undoubtedly solve these problems, and bring within the reach of even the worst afflicted bush-basher, cliff-scaler and seven-league-booter, those prized and honoured letters: S.A.

One half of the world cannot understand the pleasures of the other – Jane Austen

THE BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS

David E. Phillips

It is hoped that this article will be of interest to Heybob readers, despite its medical orientation. Although originally intended for a medical audience, it provides information of value to students planning to visit the territory as part of the N.U.A.U.S. Volunteers Abroad Scheme. The writer cannot recommend too highly this scheme allowing students to do voluntary work on these wonderful islands.

In January, 1969, a group of five Australian medical students visited Lau Lagoon, a group of small artificial islands enclosed by a coral reef and situated off the east coast of Malaita – British Solomon Islands Protectorate. The following is an account of the people of Lau Lagoon, their culture and the difficulties of practising western style medicine in such an area:

Historically the people of Lau district can be divided into two distinct ethnic groups – the bush people and the salt water people. The ancestors of the salt water people, with whom we lived, have not always lived on their islands, but came from the bush about thirteen generations ago to build a new home by the sea.

By laboriously piling up dead coral rock, they built a number of small artificial islands about a mile out to sea. These they surfaced with coral sand and white river stones, then planted trees and built their leaf houses. The result today is a calm lagoon spotted with some of the most beautiful little tropical islands one could hope to see – almost completely free from the malarial mosquitoes and fly-borne diseases which continue to plague the bush people. The sea provides for the people's every need – a high protein diet, waste disposal, and a barrier to insects and disease.

Our visit to Lau Lagoon followed as the result of a medical and anthropological expedition to the area by a team from Harvard University in 1967. During their stay they diagnosed about 300 cases of trachoma (an eye infection) among the islanders and it was to be one of our tasks to attempt trachoma eradication in the area.

To do this a base camp was set up on a previously unoccupied island – Manaafe – conveniently situated within about a mile of all the island we wished to visit. This island was so incredibly beautiful that I feel I must make some attempt to describe it. Set in a jewel blue sea, the island of Manaafe was about 30 yards in diameter. Its surface was paved with smooth white river stones, which also formed the floor of our single, thatched leaf hut. Coconut palms with their yellow nuts overhung the hut, and red hibiscus bloomed briefly before being picked by the local children who constantly visited us in their canoes. A more beautiful spot could hardly be imagined. Just why such a beautiful island should be unoccupied was something of a mystery, considering the over-crowding of some of the other islands. Evidently one of the former occupants of the island had broken a local taboo and in the quarrels which followed the families had left one by one. The people of Lau Lagoon are still mostly pagan and even on our island there was a small area enclosed by a low stone wall which was taboo to the girls of our party. Even more amusing, the only toilet facilities on the island, a platform over the water, was in the men's area. But now on with the more serious subject of treatment –

The first problem to be overcome was to persuade about 500 primitive, pagan people, most of whom spoke little or no English, that they should present themselves twice daily to perfect strangers to receive six enormous sulphur tablets and have ointment in their eyes – not once but every day for six weeks. The fact that people did co-operate so well can be attributed very largely to the recent Yaws campaign.

With one prick of the “needle” terrible ulcerating lesions cleared in about ten days, almost as if by magic. Little wonder that these people now have a faith in western medicine which almost borders on hypochondriasis.

Originally the plan had been to give treatment three times daily, but we soon realised that this was quite impractical. Although the people sleep on the islands, they are absent during the day. The women work during the day in their gardens on the mainland and only return home at night with fruit, vegetables, drinking water and firewood. The men may go fishing. As a result, the islands are practically deserted during the day and treatment had to be modified to morning and evening sessions only. Even then treatment tended to be rather irregular. These people have always enjoyed such a wonderful freedom that they do not regiment easily. The words “tomorrow” and “the future” are quite synonymous in the Lau language, and are both covered by the word “bobongi”. If a man says he is coming for medicine tomorrow, you may not see him for a week.

Our mixed party proved advantageous on more than one occasion. Although malaria is relatively less common on the islands, it still occurred occasionally, and in the absence of more sophisticated tests, this involved feeling spleens to confirm a diagnosis. The local women, although naked above the waist were careful to cover their thighs at all times, and would not lie down to have their abdomens palpated by men. Thus most of the women patients were looked after by our ladies. The devil priests, on the other hand, could not lie down in public, and must go to their own house where they could be examined only by the men. Devil priests we found to be quite normal, friendly people with two exceptions; they could not eat or drink in public (and this included the taking of tablets), and secondly, they must avoid women. Most, however, had many children which seemed just a trifle incongruous.

The general health of the island people was, for the most part, extremely good, little wonder when you consider the environment in which they lived. An ample diet of fish, fruit and vegetables, and several swims daily in the sea. The children take to the sea in their canoes at a very early age, and by six years most can be seen a mile out to sea paddling or swimming by their canoes. I still remember vividly one evening following a sing-sing on our island, these little boys racing down the beach to their canoes. They paddled out singing into the night, towards their own island – not even visible in the black gloom. Most European children of this age are scared to go to sleep in their own bed without the light on. As a result of all this paddling and swimming the young men are magnificently built although somewhat short in stature.

The attitude of the indigenous people to disease and medicine is perhaps also of interest. Disease was previously very much accepted by these rather stoic people as a normal part of life. Some people, although partially blinded by trachoma, did not come forward for treatment. On the other hand, medical treatment, once on the spot, is regarded as a right and not something which must be paid for. The British government had to pay hire on the dugout canoes which we used for transport every day, even though we dispensed \$1700 worth of drugs to these same people. This attitude, I feel, is almost a carry-over from the old cargo cults – a belief that the European has so much that he can easily afford to give. This attitude has greatly frustrated the nursing sisters at mission hospitals in the area. The local people gladly accept treatment but do not feel obligated to contribute anything in return. Perhaps in this sense these “noble savages” are rather more like “spoilt children”.

Strangely enough, lack of a common language with many of these people proved to be little barrier to the success of our work. The young boys who spoke some English, were only too willing to teach us sufficient

of the Lau language to be understood by the women and children. When actually living with people it is quite surprising just how easily vocabulary can be acquired, especially in a language as simple as “Lau”. I find it hard now to express the warmth which I feel for these people who I knew really for such a short time. Many will always be among my closest friends.

The future of these island people at present hangs in the balance. Life for them has always been so easy and so free. Whereas the Australian aboriginal spent his whole day searching for a subsistence diet, these people lived in comparative comfort on a few hours’ work daily. They have a peace of mind and a capacity to enjoy life which I have never seen before. They have laughed and sung their way through the long, warm days. But now change is rippling the calm waters of Lau Lagoon. Improved medicine has brought an inevitable population explosion and on an island, there is no room to expand. Young boys are going away to mission school, and while some go back to the old ways, many are dissatisfied.

How can the island life be modified without its complete disruption? There is no room on an island for industry. What will be the effect of draining off the most enterprising young men to the towns, leaving the women to rear the families as has already happened on some island?

The spoilt children of Lau Lagoon may well be in for a rather stormy passage! I sincerely hope that these, my friends, will successfully make the transition to improved Solomon islanders, preserving their wonderful dignity, culture, pride and tradition, and neve become merely second-class white man.

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CARNARVONS – AT LAST!

Lawrie Yakimoff

So much has been written about the Carnarvon Gorge in recent years, that some will probably throw up their hands in horror at the prospect of reading yet another article on this well-worn topic. But, believe me, this is such a tremendous area that, anyone who doesn't derive some enjoyment from reading about it, and who doesn't wait impatiently until he can visit it for the first or for the "nth" time, doesn't deserve to call himself a true lover of the Australian Bush.

My first acquaintance with the general region was made during the UQBWC May Vacation trip of 1968. Because of wet impassable roads, and the exasperating misfortune of a broken down bus, we could only get to within about sixty miles of the Gorge – a genuine case of so near yet so far!

As a result of this, six of us, four of whom had been on the May '68 trip, at last visited the Carnarvon National Park during the Easter long weekend this year. For the trip we hired an ancient and somewhat decrepit VW Kombi Van, which we had been assured was quite reliable. It was comfortable, and seemed ideally suited for our purpose while driving in the city, but on the open road where speed is required - - - !! We were quite elated when we reached 50 m.p.h. on a downhill run.

Between Brisbane and Toowoomba, our trip was almost brought to a messy end by a new invention – the flying surfboard. We had been following a carload of surfies with about six boards on their roof rack. Suddenly, one of the boards stood upright – the rope tying it to the front board rack had come adrift, and the board was prevented from sailing away solely by the strap at the tail-end of the board. When this also broke, the board sailed over our VW, closely followed by a few more. It was rather strange to see those surfboards, firstly balancing on their tail end against the wind, then tossed in the air, spinning and gyrating like blades of grass in the breeze. Apart from that episode, the trip was quite uneventful as we chugged for one cold hour after another through the sleeping towns along the way. At last, in the early morning light, we could see the Carnarvon Gorge and the Consuelo Tableland taking shape, and twelve hours after leaving Brisbane, we finally pulled up at the camping area at the mouth of the Gorge.

The Carnarvon National Park is a popular place during Easter, with literally hundreds of people visiting it during the long weekend. On seeing the large number of people present, one rotund, bearded member of our party, with a gleam in his eye which could mean only one thing, immediately started estimating how much gear he could sell to the tourists. People arrived at the gorge in all types of vehicles – from a beat up old VW Kombi Van to a fancy Land Cruiser towing an outsized caravan complete with a portable Honda generator. The scouts were present in their thousands, all wearing their frilly camp shirts, while the members of another party were completely rigged out in brand new army disposal gear – bush hats, jungle greens, army webbing, gaiters, boots and water bottles. It looked like a little boy's dream – a do-it-yourself soldier's kit, but without the weapons.

One of our group – a veteran of three Carnarvon trips (he repeatedly told us how "gorgeous" the scenery was) – had brought a rope in anticipation of great things to be done. Just before starting up the gorge, he realized what type of trip this would be, and left the rope behind. After a quick breakfast, we started walking. Because of our overall degeneracy and the all-night drive, we gladly reached the campsite at the bend in the creek just below Cathedral Cave, some four or five hours later. After a swim and some lunch, we slept until late in the afternoon – we were all quite exhausted.

This campsite below Cathedral Cave is possibly one of the best in the Gorge. Carnarvon Creek is fed from a spring higher up the gorge, and at the campsite, it makes a sharp bend, cutting into the sandstone cliff face and depositing a coarse sand on the inside of the bend, forming a cold deep swimming hole and a comfortable beach for lazing in the warm sun. Ochres of many different colours are also to be seen here – reds, browns, and even purples. One group of people who stopped here for a swim, painted themselves with ochre – and had difficulty in removing it. The swimming hole served us two purposes – as a way of cooling off after the hot walk up the gorge, and as a cooler to chill the bottle of wine we used to toast our eventual arrival at the gorge.

Not much wildlife was seen in the gorge, but this was to be expected, considering that there were a few hundred people there during the weekend. However, the not-very-small goannas which we saw were quite cheeky. We found one individual brazenly stealing a piece of steak from a pack left lying on the sand, while at Cathedral Cave, another friendly fellow posed for us for a small fee (we paid only a few eggs and some meat – quite cheap really) while we photographed him from within a few feet.

Just across the creek from the campsite, the cliffline drops down, and by scrambling up a steep sandy slope slightly upstream of the swimming hole, this saddle may be reached. From here, a short climb leads to a vantage point on the cliffline about 150 feet above the floor of the gorge. From here one can see upstream and downstream of the bend in the creek, and by looking at the ant-sized people far below, some idea can be gained of the immense size and grandeur of this outstanding example of Nature's artistry. The top of the saddle lies on the edge of a smaller valley, and in the white sand along the base of the next cliffline was evidence of some large animal – a trail of paw-prints, each print measuring approximately four inches across.

Saturday was spent in the vicinity of Cathedral Cave, an immense overhang in the sandstone cliff face, where examples of Aboriginal paintings and carvings may be seen on the soft rock. The last Aboriginals lived in the gorge about eighty years ago, and their artistry has withstood wind and rain over this period of time and probably longer, so that succeeding generations of people might admire it. Unfortunately, some "civilized" people have seen fit to disfigure these works of primitive art, either by scratching their names over the paintings, or by trying to remove rock carvings and breaking them in the process. Such is the greed and selfishness of some elements of our society.

The many small side gorges are interesting and quite surprising. As this is sandstone country, one might expect the floor of the side gorges to be sandy. However, as the sandstone is eroded, the sand is washed out of these gorges and deposited in the main gorge, leaving the bed of the side gorge strewn with boulders varying in size from inches to a few feet in diameter. The boulders are composed of much harder basalt which overlies the sandstone in this area. These make progress up the gorge somewhat difficult. The least tiring way to move up them is to run, leaping from rock to rock, stopping now and then to admire the fantastic erosion forms left in the rock by the streams, which at various stages of their development formed the gorges. Many of these small side gorges are even more picturesque than the main gorge, and if water is flowing, ferns grow profusely.

A party of Brisbane Bushwalkers was camped at Cathedral Cave, so we went visiting on Saturday night, and sat round their fire for a sing-sing. We also managed to keep awake a group of scouts camped in the cave itself. The fresh air and beauty of the gorge had a strange effect on some members of our party, and after visiting BBW, various people went swimming. As if this wasn't enough, one large bearded gentleman

was seen wearing a lap-lap on a number of occasions, and someone else rolled his own cigarettes – of pipe tobacco and all-purpose.

All day Sunday was spent walking back to the mouth of the gorge. The usual tourist places were visited – the Art Gallery, Fairyland, the Amphitheatre, Pott's Point, and others. Fairyland truly lives up to its name. At the head of this very young gorge is a cave. Through a hole in the roof of this cave, water pours into a deep and very cold swimming hole from a creek above. The gorge gradually widens out and ferns grow profusely in places. The creek finally tumbles over a waterfall to the floor of the main gorge below.

Rather than describe all the places of interest, I would refer the reader to page 100 of “Heybob”, Vol. 9, 1967 where a complete list of articles describing the gorge, may be found.

We finally stumbled back to the VW late on Sunday afternoon, where a shower, a stubby of beer and a meal of “flying lice” was much appreciated.

Civilization is gradually encroaching upon this portion of the timeless land still pervaded by an air of mystery and grandeur that must have appealed to the imagination of its original inhabitants. As it was dark when we finally left the main campsite at the mouth of the gorge with its running water, amenities blocks, motel and bright lights, one member of our party registered his disapproval – a Coca Cola sign on the roadside at the entrance to Carnarvon National Park mysteriously disappeared. We camped a few hours later at the spot where our bus had broken down during our first attempt on the gorge, and ambled back to Brisbane the next day.

So much for my ramblings. This is truly a place well worth seeing, even if for only a few days. Such a short trip can infect one with a disease similar to “Tazzymania”, including one to visit the area again and again, making one increasingly aware of the stark beauty of the Australian Bush.

FIERY BUSHWALKING IN TASMANIA

Paul Caffyn

Almost every year, there appears an article on how to bushwalk in Tasmania. I don't want to bore people stiff, but the following article is oriented towards showing how Queenslanders can have a fantastic but cheap "see-Tassy" trip. I spend over two months in Tasmania last vacation, and I spent just under \$100.00 – i.e., \$32.00 on air fares (return Melbourne to Hobart); \$20.00 for films; \$48.00 on tucker and living etc.

1. Spontaneity and Disorganisation

Your trip must not be highly organized and tied down to a tight schedule. The weather is too often the success or failure of trips, and it is better to sit out a "low" in Hobart and then flash into an area with the next "high". So don't set dates for trips.

All through the year you have been thinking of a Tassy trip, and when the exams are over, chuck a few things in your rucksack and blow. When the urge strikes you, go! Trips aren't made to order in Tasmania, they happen.

2. Clothes and Gear

The few things "chucked" in your rucksack would include:

- a. Sleeping gear – Fairy down or better paddy bags are essential. A cheap lilo (\$2.00) will last a season and keep you off the mud. Groundsheet or plastic sheet.
- b. Tents – A blizzard-proof tent with storm guys and sewn in floor would be ideal.
- c. Clothes:
 - a. Strong ankle-high boots.
 - b. Long strides of strong wool etc. (wool retains heat when wet)
 - c. Strong shirt with long sleeves.
 - d. Blizzard-proof parka – oily Japara.
 - e. Several pairs of woollen socks and a nylon pair to stop blisters.
 - f. One warm jumper is enough.
 - g. One spare set of lightweight clothing (for wearing in the tent). It's best to keep one set of dry clothing and put on wet gear in the morning.
 - h. Japara overmitts would be a worthwhile item. Even in the Reserve, my fingers got so cold in a NW gale, I couldn't do up my fly, or strike a match – big trouble.

Blizzard-proof gear sounds ominous, but as I said before, the most changeable, unpredictable factor in Tassy bushwalking is the weather. Overnight a blue sky can become a howling gale. Two chaps who went into Federation the day after we came out were snowed in for two days on Stuart's saddle.

Hint: be prepared.

3. Hitching and Transport

Don't waste money on trains or planes to Melbourne but stand on the side of the road and put your finger out (not your thumb) and you can be in Melbourne in 21 hours. There are two possible routes:

- i. Down the New England highway to Sydney and down the Hume Highway – two points: the Pacific Highway is far too slow and unless you get a lift right across Sydney you can be in trouble.
- ii. Bypass Sydney and go down the Princes Highway via Narrabri etc.

Hitching as a pair or solo doesn't make much difference. Margot and I hitched back within 35 hours. In the heart of Melbourne people aren't very friendly so catch a tram out to the airport where there may happen to be a seat on the next flight to Hobart. No worries about bookings. Although the boats are cheaper to Tasmania prior bookings must be made and with hitching, arrival at a specific time is a little uncertain.

A few hints about hitching at night:

- a. Don't go outside the 35 m.p.h. zone i.e. don't get stuck on the open road (get off at the last town).
- b. Set yourself up under a bright street light e.g. outside a petrol station.

4. Areas

The South West and Frenchmen's Cap are written up elsewhere in this Heybob, but to sum up:

- a. Frenchman's Cap – only 14 miles off the road – allow four days or so - one day in, one day out, one day bad weather and a day to climb the Cap and the other peaks.
- b. P.B. – a must for the "hards" – easily done in six days with fine weather.
- c. Fedda – can be done in five days car to car with fine weather.
- d. The Reserve – an easy ramble which can be done in four or five days but allow yourself ten days tucker and climb every flaming peak in the park and enjoy yourself. It may be best to do this trip first if you are not very fit. Plenty bids in the Reserve, but go from south to north for you meet many more.
- e. Fortescue Bay – a beaut R and R spot on the south east coast near Port Arthur, with swimming, relaxing, and walking – barracouta can be scunged from the fishermen by blond birds.

5. Air Drops

Forget them, unless you are going on a trip longer than two weeks. An average male consumes two pounds weight of tucker per day on a hard walk, so allow 14 pounds of tucker per week. The advantages of air drops are:

- a. Boost to morale when you find them.
- b. Less to carry.

The disadvantages are:

- a. They can break up on dropping.
- b. They can get lost and foreshorten a trip.
- c. They are expensive – freight to Hobart plus dropping charges.
- d. They take time to work out, pack etc.

- e. You may come upon air drops too quickly and have too much to carry.
- f. You may hurry a trip to get to an air drop.

Show these air drop-happy Tasmanians that Queenslanders are true blue bushwalkers.

6. Food

Sandy Bay supermarket (South Hobart) is the best and cheapest place to buy food. Work out your food list for a trip – allow a few extra meals and when you have bought the food, pack perishables such as sugar and powdered milk in two plastic bags each sealed by a rubber band. Toss out cardboard containers, but keep a set of cooking instructions. Tucker on walks amounted to about \$1.00 per day per person. This seems a lot, but bacon, salami, chocolate, honey and dried fruit are expensive but essential.

Our daily diet on walks consisted of:

Breakfast

- a. Raisin infested pog with wheat germ.
- b. Bacon and onions on toast or on wheatmeal biscuits when the bread gave out.
- c. Milo or coffee.

Lunch

- a. Salami and cheese sandwiches or as above biscuits.
- b. Honey sandwiches.
- c. Cold creamed milo.

Tea

- a. Soup – usually on alternate nights.
- b. Either a Vesta meal (freeze dried)
 - a. Chicken chow mein
 - b. Beef curry and rice
 - c. Chicken curry and rice
with surprise peas and dried potato, or spaghetti with chopped onions, salami, curry etc.
with peas and potato.
- c. Dried apples with boiled custard or raisin infested creamed rice.
- d. Milo or coffee.

Snacks consisted of chocolate, peanuts, etc. the above proved to be our staple diet on all our walks and you will note the absence of any tinned food. Bacon and other meat will keep for a week at a time in Tassy. One last thought on food – around Hobart there are scattered cherry plum trees – we took ten pounds of this delicious fruit into the Reserve and had them with pog, rice, etc. They lasted for six days, and that doesn't mean they went bad!

7. Cookers

The only time we used cookers in Tassy was in Exit Cave. On all the other trips we didn't take or need a cooker. Wood on the high tops although sparsely scattered will burn green or dry (especially scoparia). But I think one cooker per two or three bods on a long trip would be a wise precaution.

8. Hughie

Remember, Hughie is your friend. In Tassy especially you have to be on good terms with him. this does not seem to be achieved by ardent church-going or constant bible reading but by a good sacrifice now and then and try, try to keep the abuse down to a minimum in the next four or five months.

I hope this article is of some use to someone. The noble art of bumming certainly cuts the cost of an extended trip, and we were most fortunate in that people we met in Hobart let us use their home for a base camp. I hope to see in the future Queensland University students bushwalking in Tassy without this “wet nurse” business of air drops every second day or so.

Come away O human child.
To the waters and the wild.

Yeats

FEDERATION PEAK – NORTH WEST FACE

Paul Caffyn

1,105 feet : 5 + (Hard Severe)

“A truly magnificent climb of considerable length which offers rock of a quality unsurpassed by any other in the country. A serious nature is given to the climb by its length and by the atrocious weather of the area. A real climb that must be highly recommended”.

The above is the introduction to the route guide to a climb in South West Tasmania. On the night of my arrival in Tasmania, I met Donn Groom (who was on a working holiday from Binna-Burra Lodge) and he asked me to join himself and Allan Keller (an ex-B.B.W. member and now T.C.C. and C.C.T.) on a five day trip to climb the face. After Donn had finished work on Christmas eve, we borrowed a route guide to the face, and drove through Greeveston to the end of the Arve Valley road. We left the car and walked six miles to Blake’s Hut where we slept the night on the banks on the Huon River.

Next morning as we staggered over the Yo-Yo track to the Cracoft Hut, low cloud obscured the distant peaks. Much has been said about the Yo-Yo Track – an analogy – think of it as walking half-way up South Ridge, Mt. Barney and down again, with a heavy pack, 14 times or so – enough said? The boggy button grass plains beyond Cracoft Hut were remarkably dry and we walked over a low saddle, then along to the Pass Creek dropping zone where camp was set up. What a way to spend Christmas Day.

The track up Luckman’s Lead was steep and in part through thick scrub, but although we were the first party in since last summer, it was easy to follow. Mist draped its invisible curtain upon us as we were halfway up the lead, and it was through a strange, deathly silent world that we picked our way from rocky cairn to cairn along the top of the Eastern Arthur Range. Snow drifts still clung to the tall Scoparia on Stuart’s Saddle. The mist was as thick as proverbial “pea soup” on Little Goon Moor, but as we settled down for lunch on the moist plateau of Goon Moor, patches of blue sky began to appear. As we broached the ridge on the far side of Goon Moor, a jagged quartzite fang came into view, dominating the skyline. The old heart missed a few beats as Allan pointed out the cold grey North West Face of Federation Peak. We walked past the Gables – along the Four Peaks – and down onto Thwaite’s Plateau, where we set up camp.

The alarm clock woke us up before dawn, but outside, a misty chill white curtain was tumbling and swirling about the tent. We waited for the mist to rise but eventually set off in the very vague direction of the peak. Many hours later, a blue patch appeared in the mist. Two bods in a tent, when we reached it, said they were camping at Hanging Lake. “Impossible”, said Allan, “We’re on the Southern Traverse!”. Water, lapping audibly nearby, but still invisible in the mist, decided the matter. Finally, we found cairns leading around a traverse on the Western side of Federation. The mist had risen by the time we arrived at the base of the “Tourist Route” up the peak, but valuable time had been lost while we were floundering in the mist. It was 1 pm. We donned climbing gear and walked delicately (tight friction boots) to the top of a steep rocky couloir on the left hand side of the North West Face. Scrambling and two long abseils took us some 300 feet down the couloir. The climb began.

Donn tied on to the rope and began to climb up on Scoparia encrusted, steeply inclined rock. Three pitches of such climbing saw us on top of the blade ridge. This ridge, as its name implies, is a sharp arete which projects from the face, part way up. Allan climbed out along the blade and posed for photos. With his red beard and red helmet, he looked like a Viking. The climb now began in earnest. Donn, continuing to lead,

climbed up a steep ramp, greasy places, for 120 feet to a sloping ledge. The next pitch involved jamming with difficulty up a very steep crack, then for 50 feet upwards on a delicate, exposed wall. A magnificent pitch and a good lead by Donn who used crackers and slings alone for protection on this pitch.

The next pitch was 120 feet long. Allan took over the lead and climbed up to the left on a steep ramp, then up over some loose blocks, then a traverse right, and back left took him to the “Bus Stop” ledge. We had a quick snack on this large but sloping ledge. Our view of the face above us was blocked 150 feet up by a 30 foot wide belt of overhangs which extended across the face. Donn led out from the “Bus Stop”. he went slowly up and out to the left to the base of a deidre (v-shaped) crack which ran up the face for 50 feet. 40 feet up, the deidre bulged outwards, and Donn put in a piton runner. Above the deidre, the wall was steep and lacking in handholds. Donn reached a large flake, mentioned in the guide as “The bloody thing’s loose”. Above the flake, the wall steepened – almost vertical – but the holds were a little larger. Donn then reached the stance, which was right underneath the belt of overhangs, and clipped into a piton which had been left in place from the three previous ascents. Allan, while Donn was climbing, had been taking photos with the four cameras that we had between us.

Donn pulled in the slack rope, and I began to jam up the deidre. I had so far no worries carrying the pack on the climb, but I was in trouble at the bulge in the deidre. The pack contained parkas, spare tucker, and the cameras. By swinging out of the crack, I managed to pull up over the bulge. The wall above was terrifying exposed. I removed the sling which Donn had used as a runner, from the large flake and tapped up the wall to join Donn on minute footholds at the stance. As there was barely room for one on the stance, Allan stayed on the last ledge, and Donn began to traverse.

The “key” passage to the route on the face is an overhanging chimney which cleaves the wide belt of overhangs which were just above us. At the end of the traverse line, leading to the left, was the base of the chimney. While I belayed him, Donn had to climb down 20 feet to the large flake which marked the start of the traverse. The gods were with Donn, and he cautiously disappeared into the chimney at the end of the traverse. As we were climbing on double rope, I sent the pack around to Donn. Then, using a cunningly contrived running belay, I abseiled down to the flake. I pulled the rope down behind me and tapped out onto the traverse. It was hairy to say the least, with 2,000 feet of clean air to the valley bottom. Donn then belayed Allan as he climbed, and he was able to avoid the last stance underneath the overhangs.

Donn then began to jam up into the now cold, shadow-filled chimney. In this chimney, on the first ascent, a party of climbers were forced to spend a cold, cramped night, tied to chockstones, etc. in the chimney. The start of the chimney was the most technical part of this pitch, and it was only after some difficulties had been overcome, that Donn reached the first chockstone runner. He draped a sling over it and clipped the rope into a krab on the sling. Donn was able to chimney up to another chockstone which he used as a runner. The left hand wall of the chimney was smooth, and it was by friction alone, that he forced his way into the vertical plus. Donn then reached a cramped resting-place. The next part was the most strenuous part of the chimney, and the difficulty was due, in part, to the smooth greasy nature of one wall of the chimney. More chimney lay above, but it was not as strenuous or difficult as that which he had just climbed. 90 feet of overhanging chimney lay below Donn as he dragged himself onto a large ledge.

Donn tied onto a large chockstone and belayed me up. While Allan was climbing up, Donn indulged in some rock-rolling. The view and the exposure from this ledge was unimaginable and indescribable. We climbed for 150 feet up a wide crack, then through some loose blocks to the summit. What a feeling of

exhilaration and achievement. Even this, however, could not overcome our worries of descending from the mountain. It was now 8 o'clock and we had less than half an hour to get back to Thwaites before dark. The sun had almost sunk in the horizon as we began the descent down the "tourist route". In the south, the 4,000 feet dolerite mass, Precipitous Bluff, reared its sheer outline into the dying sun's rays. To the east, Mt. Hopedown lay in shadow, while in the north, snow-capped Mt. Anne shimmered.

We quickly scrambled down 100 feet or so down a gully and left onto an arete. A sloping ledge traverse line, generously supplied with undercut jugs, led us to an abseil point. We abseiled down 150 feet to end up at the end of the southern traverse, where we had been in the morning. We decided not to go back along the southern traverse as only minutes of daylight were left. We ran down the scoparia-covered slopes to Bechervaise Plateau. The shrouds of darkness fell upon us as we leaped from boulder to boulder down the scree chute. The normal walkers route from Thwaite's to "Fedda" drops down the forest chute to the Northern Lakes, and up the scree chute to Bechervaise Plateau. With the feedable aid of a dying torch, we stumbled from blaze to blaze in the moss covered beech forest near the Northern Lakes. It was 2 or 3 am, when we decided that we couldn't find the forest chute. We slept where we fell in a crumpled heap, but shivering of teeth and limbs would not allow the blissful peace of sleep for long. For the remainder of the seemingly endless night, we alternately shivered and fed a feeble fire with Pandanus leaves.

As the first rays of dawn lit the forest around us, we raced up the forest chute. The light grey quartzite fac towering into the skies above us, was impressive, to say the least. We slept till 1 pm on arrival back at the tent, and then walked out to Goon Moor. We almost ran down Luckman's Lead next morning, but Green Plate Corner, half way out along the Yo-Yo Track was the "bloody limit" for one day. Next morning, we took the riverside track along the Huon to Blake's Hut, and so missed out on part of the Yo-Yo Track. Then – out to the car and homeward bound.

Boy, what a trip. A 60 mile walk and a 1,105 feet face climb in five and a half days and with two of the best bods you could wish to meet. We were extremely lucky with the weather, for I met two walkers later on in the Reserve, and they were snowed-in for two days on Stuart's Saddle, immediately after we had emerged from the South-West.

LE FRANCAIS MAGNIFIQUE

Dave Bayliss and Dave Gillieson

The sunlight began to filter through the thin walls of the tent. We slowly dragged ourselves out of our sleeping bags and began the task of putting on boots and sorting gear. This day we planned to climb Frenchman's Cap a climb which had been our ambition for several months. The cold made us clumsy as we moved around the campsite.

“What about breakfast?” asked the thin and underfed-looking Bayliss. “Have it when we get back” replied the quick-thinking but alas, also thin and underfed-looking Gillieson.

We stumbled towards the couloir at 6.30 am., burdened by a rope, krabs, slings, and our basic mountaineering foodstuff (jellybeans). “Wandering aimlessly” up the couloir we crossed several patches of snow-ice, which gave a bit of variation from the rock scrambling. A cold wind greeted us at the North Col, a bare notch between the summit and the Lion's Head. Below us Lake Gwendolen's black waters mirrored the rocky slopes around it.

Between the col and the summit lay several short cliffs, and at this time of the year, steep snow slopes. The best plan was to avoid steep snow by traversing to, and climbing up, the short cliffs. This worked well until we reached the final snow slope. A brief reconnaissance convinced us that the risk was too great, so we traversed to the top of the S.E. face and reached the summit via a short chimney.

The view was amazingly beautiful. The low valleys and plains were covered with fog while the ridges and peaks gleamed in the early morning sun. In all directions the hills and mountains, green and grey, stretched to the horizon; overhead a few high clouds raced across the deep blue sky. To the north-east were the snowy mountains of the Reserve, to the west were those around Queenstown. There was no sign of human habitation in the whole panorama, and this added to the tremendous feeling of isolation and exhilaration. Eventually hunger and the freezing wind drove us back to Lake Tahune some 1,500 feet below.

* * *

One hundred and twenty-four miles from Hobart, on the Lyell Highway, a curiously adorned signpost marks the start of the Frenchman's Cap track. A collection of sandshoes, boots, and gaiters (not to mention the odd shirt) testify to the rigours of this route.

After crossing the deep and fast flowing Franklin River by means of an ingenious suspension cage, the heavily laden walker struggles up through thick forest to a patch of buttongrass plain. Degenerate types, like us, can make a cache of food and equipment and so reduce their load to about 45 lbs. (necessary to avoid the “piledriver” effect so commonly experienced in bags).

The well-blazed track climbs through open forest to a clear, grass saddle below Mt. Mullens, from which superb views of the Cap and the surrounding peaks, are obtained. The whole approach route is visible from the point, and the brown buttongrass and forest contrast well with the grey quartzite and gleaming snow.

Descending from the saddle, the track heads for a patch of forest at the Loddon River crossing. This is a first-class campsite, with good shelter and plenty of firewood. The next few miles are hell. The track wanders across soggy buttongrass plain, and many walkers, sinking to their knees in mud, cannot

appreciate the beauty of the wildflowers, and the magnificence of the surrounding peaks. After crossing several small creeks, a fork in the track is reached – one branch to the south over the Counsel Pass and the Jane River, and the other to the west along Philps Lead, at first through buttongrass bog, and then up a creek (literally!). The walker then reaches a flat boggy valley and making a dogleg to the left and crossing a low saddle, arrives at Lake Vera. This nestles in a volcanic crater, and wildfowl swim in its clear reed-fringed waters. At the eastern end of the lake is a small hut, or, if this is full (unlikely), a campsite can be found at the northern end of the lake on the track. The first day's walk should finish at this point.

The next stage involves traversing around the steep side of the lake through highly gungurous rainforest. The truck then heads up a narrow valley between Sharlands Peak and Philps Peak. This valley is full of horizontal scrub and due to the steepness of the ascent, you lose your patience and energy very quickly. Under an overhang near the top of the valley the C.C.T., have a bivouac site, a series of narrow ledges on the slope. Evidently, they clap out too!

A final struggle through scoparia and other beaut vegetation brings you to Barron Pass at 3,100 feet, a narrow col from which magnificent views unfold in every direction. The pass is flanked by two magnificent rock spires; on one side White Needle and on the other, Nicholl's Needle. To the east one overlooks Lake Vera and the horror track leading from it to the pass, all enclosed by a steep rocky ridge, and further away the sombre hills and plains. Immediately to the west an abrupt rainforested slope ends in a glacial valley with Lakes Cicily, Getrude, Magdalen and Millicent. On the other side of this valley are the cliff-bounded Clytemnaestra and Frenchman's Cap with its towering south face and gleaming snow.

Pausing to admire the smooth, vertical walls of Nicholl's Needle, the walker traverses a scree slope to reach a saddle between Sharlands Peak and the Cap. From here the route leads down to a grassy flat called Artichoke Valley. One step onto this flat tells you it's not grass, but a layer of moss, on deep mud. You wipe the mud off your grasses or else resign yourself to it, and then climb to a burnt-out saddle and traverse around the side of a ridge to Lake Tahune. The lake nestles under the Tahune face of the Cap, a wall about one thousand feet high, topped by some fearsome roofs. After setting up camp in the scrub on the western side of the outlet creek, we investigated the area and found that Lake Tahune was truly beautiful; dark, clear, ringed by glistening quartzite cliffs and with an unruffled reflection of the mountain and the clouds.

A stay of several days at Lake Tahune would allow investigation of the area around the Cap, which is of exceptional beauty. This wonderful mountain is a bushwalking area that should be visited more frequently by members of the club.

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PRECIPITOUS BLUFF

Margot Greenhalgh

When you are fed up with sharing Pine Valley hut with 17 miserable wet West-Australian schoolboys and plodding around Lake St. Clair on churned up, over-used tracks, race off to P.B. (Precipitous Bluff for the non-Taswegian). You can get to it and have a great trip with no fuss, no planning, and no expensive air drops. It's a hard trip requiring especially perseverance, prickle tolerance, and scrub-bashing ability.

If you've managed to wade through the above raving, typical of any Queenslander who has been to Tasmania, you can anticipate a little more relevant information about this "great trip". I intend to describe the trip in as much detail as possible for according to the log book, we were the first U.Q.B.W.C. party to go there. Anyway, in January this year, Paul Caffyn and I persuaded an ex-Queenslander, Brian and a Tasmanian, Boris, both of whom had been to P.B. to drive us down from Launceston and show us the first bit of the way. The next day after an all night party, we did this and camped on Moonlight Flats that night. (See map and footnote for details how to get there). But in the morning amid rain and thick clag, they preferred their sleeping bags, so armed with a mediocre map Paul and I too off alone. They gave us some advice which I'd pass on to any others tackling the trip – stick to the tops of the ridges and perform ritual devotions to Hughie each evening – you need good weather.

From Moonlight Flats to Pigsty Ponds takes about three hours. The track around the four hills is marked to a varying degree by stakes and cairns. The main thing is not to vee right between hills two and three as this is Moore's bridge and goes to nowhere. We know a few Tasmanians who spent two days at nowhere. The route is obvious in fine weather, but can be confusing and dispiriting in clag as we found. If you think you're lost or seem to be endlessly thrashing around in scoparia, head up to the ridge tops as the going is a little easier. (The voice of experience).

From the big erratic block near Pigsty Ponds, climb up the creek/gully to the saddle where you turn right and climb up grassy slopes (passing two small tiers of cliffs) then traverse left until you come out on the left hand side of a bare ridge. Now lose some height and walk along the foot of a long line of cliffs heading for a saddle. From the saddle the track is well marked with coloured tape through the scoparia to Lake Ooze. There are good campsites beside the lake which is shallow but clear. Usually in this area you suffer from an overabundance of water, but on fine days the small water holes do dry up surprisingly quickly. You can however get water (relatively easily) by digging, and on most ridges, there are holes which people have enlarged – it's just a case of backsides up and slurp.

The track after Lake Ooze has cairns for about half a mile and you climb up over open ground to the saddle past Lake Mountain and then wander up the ridge to Pinder's Peak. It's quite a pleasant diversion to drop packs and climb Pinder's (4100 feet). This "climb" is only a pineapple grass and rock scramble and the views of the South West (accompanied by the too familiar Yea Fedda cry) are spectacular on a fine day. From the top you get a good idea of the ridges linking Pinder's and P.B., but you don't really understand the secrets of vegetation from there. After a fairly high traverse along the Northern side of Pinder's, the ridge leading to Pandani Knob is reasonably open and grassy.

But from Pandani Knob the fun starts. There follows a succession of hills and saddles with scoparia and scrub of varying degrees of badness. The track between Pinder's and P.B. is not marked but with each trip a few more prickles are trampled on or broken. June Ridge, just after Pandari Knob is one of the worst sections so don't be too discouraged. Animal pads and remnant tracks of other parties form some good

leads but in general it's best to stick to the ridge tops. There are usually small pools in the lowest parts of the saddles and near them a number of possible campsites. Between No. 3 hill and No. 4 ridge we have named Powdered Milk Saddle, as, oh joy, oh rapture, we found a three pound tin of Sunshine Milk. Needless to say, we overfilled our bag of powdered milk and then proceeded to overfill ourselves on chocolate drinks. We hid the half full tin to be collected on the way out and enjoyed chocolate cream shakes at Lake Ooze a few days later. It is amazing how much powdered milk we consumed in six days, but cream does make porridge, sweet rice and apples, etc., taste tremendous. Anyway, back from these gastronomical delights to the scoparia. Mt. Wylly is another good example if you want to escape from the scunge for a while and scores you one peak-bagging point.

Lake Ooze via Finder's Peak and Mt. Wylly filled one day for us, without hurrying. We then found a campsite on the ridge just past Mt. Wylly where the scoparia has been cut and pushed back to form just enough room for a tent and eating space. It also gives you protection from the winds, as this is rather an exposed ridge. From the tent you can look down onto the white sands and blue ocean of the South coast and the greyer waters of New River Lagoon just behind the coast. The next day we experienced the changeable weather for which this part of the world is famous. Consequently, we bludged in sleeping bags and climbed Mt. Victoria Cross in the afternoon. It seemed that at this campsite we were most aware of the isolation, yet revelled in the knowledge of the inaccessibility of our situation.

The next day was perfect and leaving at 7 am we took four and a half hours to reach the summit of P.B. The section marked very bad low saddle really lives up to its name and we spent two hours on what is supposedly only one mile. You climb up from this saddle and veer left onto the morainal ridge which is equally hard going. This consists of rock scrambling and scrub-bashing and would be rotten with packs. It has been rumoured that I was heard to utter certain words on this ridge on the return from P.B., but this is emphatically denied. After this ridge there is more thick scunge up one of the gullies onto P.B. We found it easier to climb out onto the rocky buttress between the two gullies, and from there up to the saddle between the double peaks of P.B. The more northerly pinnacle is higher and has the log book which in January had only 30 or so partiers' signatures in it. From the rocky summit you can peer down onto New River Lagoon as well as contemplate on all the familiar peaks of the South West.

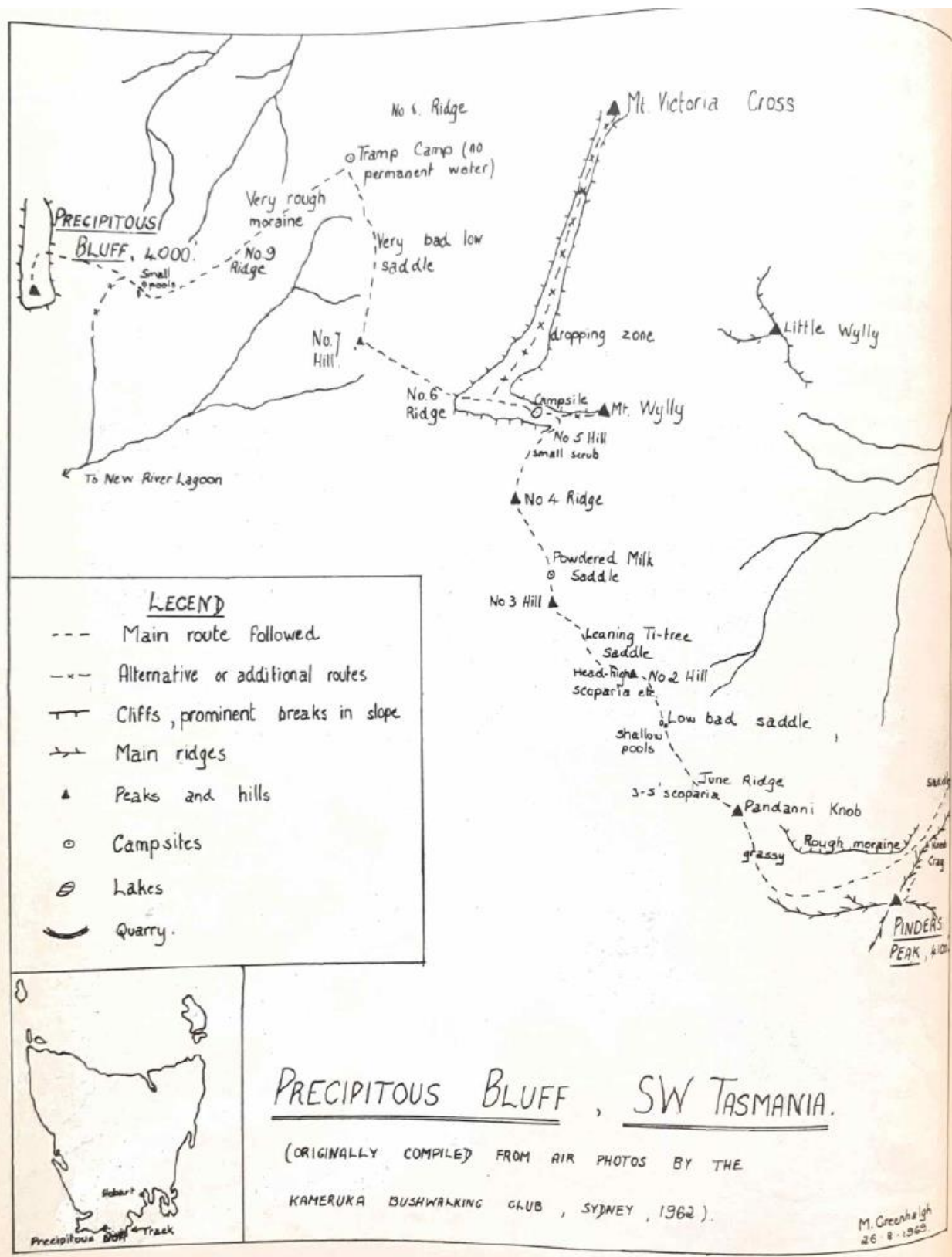
From P.B. you could drop down to New River Lagoon and the coast and go on to Port Davey. The route is either down one of the gullies on the far side of the mountain or down a ridge just after the end of the morainal ridge near P.B. However, for us the goal was P.B. and we returned the same way covering Victoria Cross to Moonlight Flats in a marathon 12½ hour day. So, the trip could be done in three or four days, but it's far more enjoyable in five or six. It's also better to have a couple of extra days to allow for beaut old Tassy weather. Just a final word for those who like to display naked knees – shorts are fine up to Finder's Peak, but from there to P.B. even “tiger” walkers wear long strides.

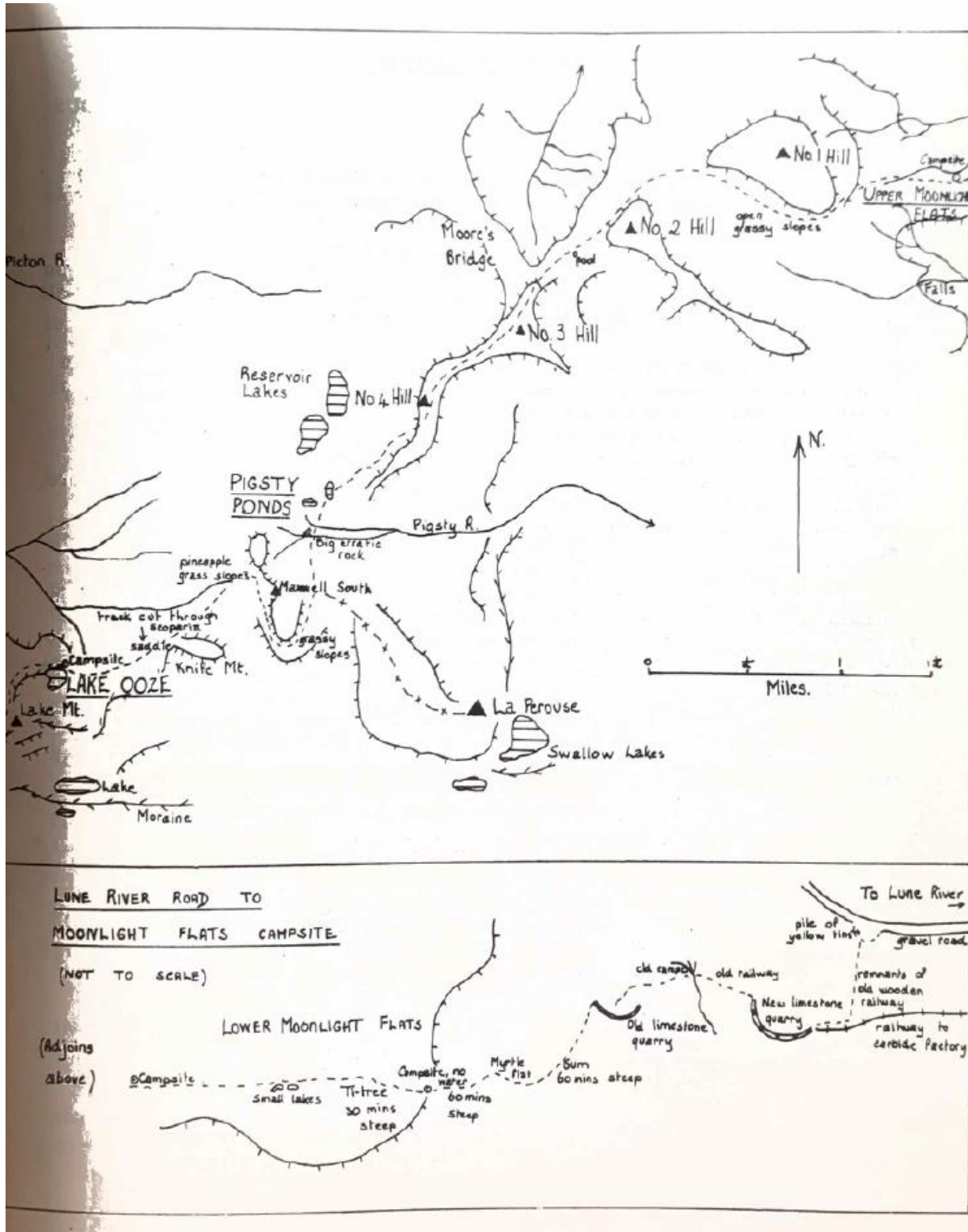
FOOTNOTE

From Hobart go south through Geeveston, Dover and Hastings. Just past Lune River on the Catamaran Road turn right on a gravel road heading to the limestone quarries. (If you are hitching ask at the carbide factory at Lune River if any empty trains are going up to the quarry). About 1¼ miles (?) along this road, having crossed a railway and having passed a small road metal quarry, there is a small clearing on the left hand side of the road with a number of yellow painted tins. Follow the remnants of an old wooden railway track uphill to the new railway where you turn right and follow this to the limestone quarry. Go past this quarry and continue to follow an old railway line to the old quarry. On the right of this there is a pile of

yellow tins marking the start of the track. The track is well marked up to Moonlight Flats and is a steep climb for about two hours. There is a campsite at the top, but no water. Another short climb through thick scrub takes you to upper Moonlight Flats where you follow a well-marked track for half an hour to a small creek and a good campsite.







FRESHER'S LAMENT

Anonymous

I can't help but be alarmed at the lack of participation by this year's new members in club walks, meetings and associated functions. This is not to suggest that, in 1969, there has been an unaccountable dearth of interested bushwalkers' in our fresher intake for, in fact, the financial membership of first year members is quite a substantial one. What then is it that has prevented these people some of whom may be "blessed" with those superior attributes known to all great bushwalkers, from lending their support to the club?

My suggestion is that the club as a whole has given insufficient attention to assimilating newer members into the club, almost to the extent of ignoring them. A fresher not having been introduced to the older membership of the club and being equally unfamiliar with bushwalking, really does find difficulty in establishing his identity with the club. It is unfair that those who have had previous bushwalking experience should be so much more easily assimilated. Furthermore, there is a tendency among our seasoned members to stay within their own little groups in apparent ignorance of those only too willing to learn the art of bushwalking.

Therefore, if our club is to claim any sense of self-preservation (I find this a debatable point) then it must urge its younger members to attend at least some trips so that they will take the opportunity to enjoy bushwalking as I have this year. It should also be pointed out that first year students, most of all, do have adequate time to attend trips and should gain as much experience as possible while they may.

So please, people, let's do a bit more towards welcoming our freshers next year.



THE OLD QUESTION

Jolyon Parslow

Why do you go bushwalking? You know all the old answers. Here are several that some of you may not have heard before. Bushwalking is:

1. A religion and
2. An assertion of individual territorial needs.

Bushwalking a religion? Well, it depends on your definition, but just listen this author's definition,* and see if it doesn't seem to be so:

Religious activities consist of the coming together in large groups of people, to perform repeated and prolonged submissive displays to appease a dominant individual. The dominant individual concerned takes many forms in different cultures, but always has the common factor of immense power.

The submissive response may consist of closing the eyes, (come on now, be honest, how many times have you done that while bushwalking? – at least 100 times a night) and/or lowering the head, e.g. (a) watch that log, (b) “wait awhile” now threshing towards your ear at 100 mph., (c) well aimed rock, rucksack and frying pan after you have just put out the fire and ruined everyone's breakfast following a six hour climb to get half way up a cliff in a 50 knot wind, driving rain and minus temperatures. Submission continues with clasping the hands in a begging gesture, (“no, please don't make me go up THERE!”), kneeling, kissing the ground or even extreme prostration, (definition of prostration; position attained by majority of sensible bushwalkers the majority of the time) with frequent accompaniment of wailing or chanting vocalization (“Heybob!” or “Let's lynch the leader!”).

Because the bushwalkers' gods are so great, the appeasement ceremonies have to be performed at regular and frequent intervals to prevent their anger rising again.

Question: Should we be given more large areas of land to perform these elaborate group rituals? After all, other religions have their churches and synagogues. In other words, here is another reason for conservation. Write to your local M.P. and tell him.

Some people in this club are worried that bushwalking is going downhill (ahem!). In this age of science and technology perhaps bushwalking, like other religions is failing. But there is hope, for bushwalking can fulfil other needs.

Throughout the advances of history, when people have a choice, they choose their own distinctive territory rather than a communal one, or a common type.

They still show a tendency to conform, as they live in great congregations, but they do stake out their own bit of territory in which to be part of the congregation, rather than choose to live in a communal dormitory.

In modern society, blocks and rows of identical flats or houses are erected. (Who knows how much psychological damage may be done by not recognizing one of our basic needs, that of having some place to ourselves).

* Desmond Morris – The Naked Ape

Fortunately, people impose their own form of territorial uniqueness by adding their own creative impulses in the form of paintings, unusual furniture, etc. These too are stylised and conform to social pressure but still they show a person's individuality. They are a signaling system within his group, both personalize and defend it. These conformities exist in varying degrees including the knotting of ties, and the positioning of handkerchiefs in breast pockets for example.

Perhaps bushwalkers need to have their own territory too, but they have an even better chance to assert themselves in this regard being able to choose and explore their territory. For example, the omnipotent feeling of being on top of a mountain and feeling it belongs to one, or to the group. Here are just a few of the little touches of individuality I have observed.

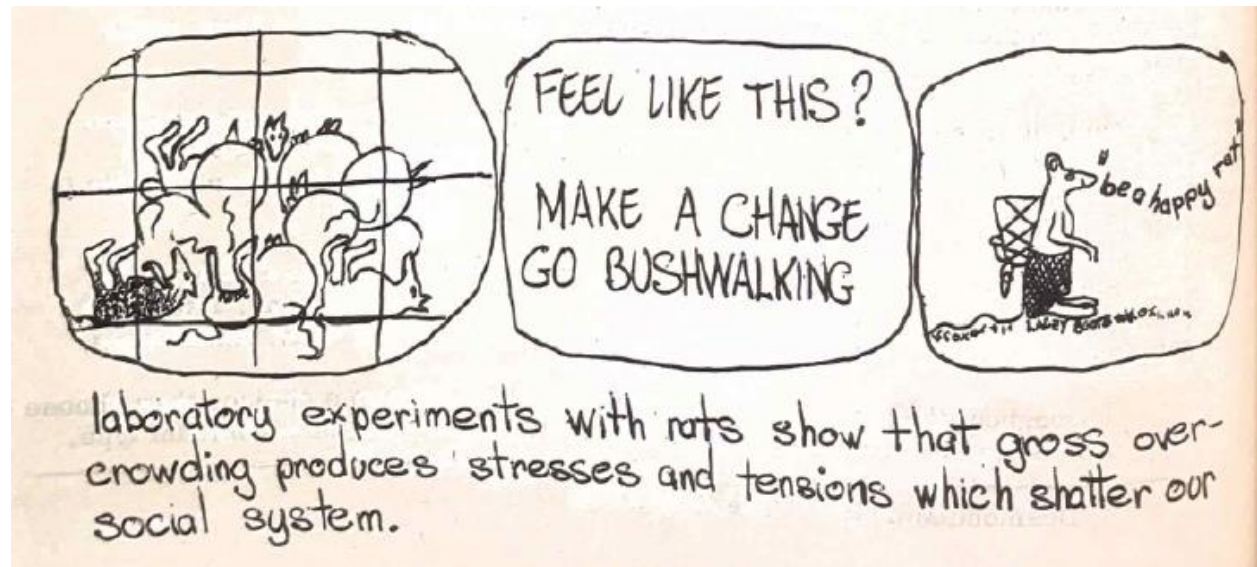
Bloke No. 1 who always wore a red wool shirt and a pair of swimming togs with a hole in the back, even in the snow.

Bloke No. 2 who always carried a suit, five white shirts and 20 paperbacks.

Bloke No. 3 who always carried Mark Twain's "Roughing It" under the top strap of his rucksack, fair weather or foul.

Bloke No. 4 who insisted that sandals were great in any country and any weather.

NOTE: This article is not anyone's opinion, and is not to be taken seriously. I have fought off the Editor for so long that I finally gave in. May your bushwalking be happy and well adjusted!



WEARY WOBBLY WALKERS WORDS

Up! Up! my friend, and quit your books;
or sorely you will grow double
Up! Up! my friend and clear your looks,
why all this toil and trouble?

One impulse from a vernal wood
may teach you more of man
Of moral evil and of good
than all the sages can.

William Wordsworth

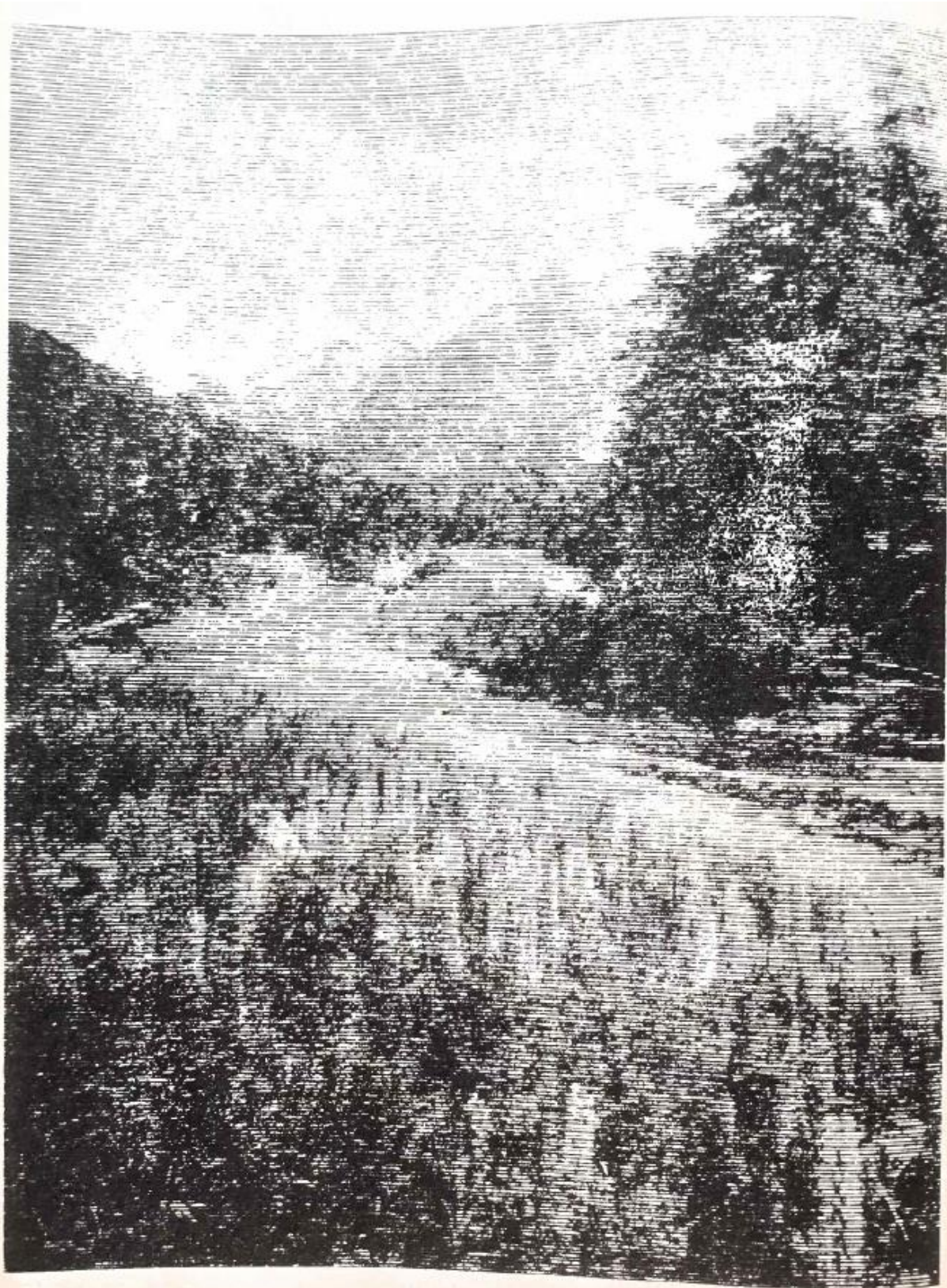
It is better to wear out than to rust out.

Bishop Cumberland

Careful you don't get itchy resting on your laurels.

W.G.P.





HOLYFORD REGION -New Zealand's Best Tramping

I.R. Crellin

What is at Holyford? Tramping, and plenty of it.

Tucked away in the southwest corner of New Zealand in an area similar to the southwest of Tasmania, lies the premier tramping are of New Zealand. Here the east-west road to Milford Sound crosses the east-west watershed at the Divide the lowest of the major passes of the South Island, at only 1742 feet to bring us into a rugged land scarred by glacial actions – a land of lakes, glaciers and fast dark rivers flowing through dark beech forests. It is a gentler land than the mountains of Canterbury where one has to be a mountaineer to move from valley to valley and where passes are often at the 7000 feet level or higher and where mountains with permanent snows rise steeply from the glaciers, still active. It is a land where trampers can undertake long extended trips, akin to those of Tasmania's southwest – but, beware, it is a land of cruel conditions, of summer snowfalls, of icebound passes and frozen lakes (even in summer) and of high rainfall and rapid river rises.

The Holyford River flows from the region of the Homer Tunnel which takes road traffic westward to Milford Sound, swinging north around beech-clothed snowy peaks, flowing into Lake McKerrow, and eventually reaching the sea at Martin's Bay, some twenty miles north of Milford Sound. To its east it is dominated by the majesty of Tutoko, one of the most magnificent peaks in all of New Zealand. It reaches 9042 feet, and is permanently clothed in magnificent glaciers, the meltwater of which cascades off its faces in milky waterfalls and in milky rushing streams, “smoking” with the cold. Milford Sound and the valley of the Claddau River also lie to the east.

To the southeast lies the famous Milford T-rack, where the Tourist Hotels Corporation conducts its “luxury in the wilderness” tramping trips, but where also the Park Board provides facilities for the more Spartan normal trumper to enjoy using the track.

To the north, trips can be done up the valley of Pyke River, a tributary of Holyford, and across to Big Bay; and if you have a week to spare, you can continue up the coast to Jackson's Bay and the Haast Highway. From the Pyke one can get into the Olivine Country. This is perhaps the most difficult, remote, tramping country in New Zealand. It is strictly for experienced people who can carry ten days food plus an ice axe, ropes and crampons through thick bush country, up and down slopes and through cold N.Z. rivers.

The Routeburn Track goes off to the east. People usually take three days (plus one for weather problems) to complete this track. It is similar to Tasmania's Cradle Mt. Reserve in its track and hut standards, but more likely to be blocked by snowfalls in spring and early summer, and is less crowded. The Routeburn Track flows into the Dart River from where one can catch a steamer to Queenstown, or can do a trip up Dart River valley. From the upper Dart the hardy can cross to the Olivine country, possibly involving climbing on ice and snow; or go into the West Matukituki Valley over the dangerous Cascade Saddle. Alternatively, one can cross the Rees Saddle and come down the Rees River valley to Glenarchy where one can arrange transport to Queenstown. The Greenstone Track also goes east and provides an easy tramp down the Greenstone Valley to Lake Wakitipu and thus to Queenstown.

Holyford, besides being the centre of the vast tramping region is also the starting point for a lot of small sidetrips to Mountain huts (and other sides) ideally situated by alpine lakes, frequently used as climbing bases for attempts on the peaks of the Darrans, which provide better climbing rock than the broken loose rubbish which makes up most of the Southern Alps of New Zealand. Holyford Camp, or Gunn's Camp, as

it is better known, is ideally suited as base for trips. A cabin may be hired, or your camp may be made here, limited provisions may be purchased and above all the vast knowledge of the owner, Murray Gunn, can be tapped. He is the son of David Gunn who was one of the pioneers of the area, and what he does not know about these mountains and, in particular, deershooting and fishing in the area, is just not worth knowing.

From the area it is possible to go up Deadmans track to Routeburn Track or up a sidetrack to Lake Howden Hut and do the Greenstone track, climbing Key Summit, spending a day at Lake Marion or going up to Moraine Creek Hut which should be arranged with the N.Z.A.C. (who own the hut). It is also an ideal starting point for the weeklong trip to Martins Bay and back or for the longer trips to Big Bay and beyond or into the Olivine Country.

The Martins Bay Track starts at the end of the road past Holyford Camp. From here it is four hours walk across low lying country to the Park Board Hut at Hidden Falls Creek. Further road extensions, however, are planned for this route. The next hut is some four hours on at Lake Alabaster. This is slightly off the track near the lower Pyke Swingbridge. Here begins the notorious “Demon Trail” to Martins Bay. Like the “Yo-Yo” Track in Tasmania, it goes up and down the ridges for many hours along the shores of Lake McKerrow. It takes four hours to get to the huts at the south end of the lake, then a further ten hours to the Hokuri River Hut at the northern end of the lake. A further two to three hours walk brings on to Martins Bay. An airstrip and a number of private huts are here, but no public huts. The trip to Big Bay around the coast may then be done returning along the Big Bay Track down the Pyke River.

The Big Bay Track branches off the Martins Bay track from Alabaster Hut at the Pyke River Brige and travels up the valley of the Pyke River past Lake Alabaster and Lake Wilmott to the Upper Pyke Hut. From there the track swings west to Big Bay.

Big Bay-Jacksons Bay Coastal Track – Moirs guide gives directions for the long trip north to Jacksons Bay and the Haast Highway. It suggests that a week be allowed, and a rifle taken for protection against Wild cattle. Apparently, this track includes a lot of beach-walking (with plenty of boulders and rock-hopping) but has a shortage of campsites, if you dislike sleeping on a shingle beach. Rivers too can be a problem, particularly following a week of heavy rain (SEE MOIRS GUIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS ONE).

The Moraine Creek Trip leaves the Martins Bay Track just past the end of the road and goes up the valley of Moraine Creek to the small N.Z.A.C. high hut. This is a difficult track and accommodation in the hut is limited. Arrangements should be made with N.Z.A.C. for its use. Check with Murray Gunn about using it if in the area. Lake Adelaide lies nearby high up in the valley and glaciers and magnificent mountains surround it.

The Lake Marion Track leaves from near the junction of the Holyford and Milford roads. A round trip can be done in four hours, allowing time for a brew up at the lake. Beyond the lake lies a wall of rock preventing entry into an inner basin at a higher level, however this has been entered only by those few people with the climbing skill to get there. Camp could be made on a grassy spot where the track crosses the moraine at the end of the lake.

The Tutoko River Track leaves the Milford Road about four miles from Milford Sound, on the western bank of the Tutoko River and goes several miles up the valley terminating at the Leader Creek Falls below the glacier. It has suffered badly from tree fall damage in the wild storms of 1968, but it is still one of the most worthwhile tracks in the area, taking one up into the heart of the Darren Mountains. A similar track in bad

conditions exists up the nearby Donne River! A camping ground with no facilities and infested with millions of sandflies, exists to the east of the junction of the Tutoko and Claddau Rivers, just off the Milford Road.

The Milford Track is a well-known route from the head of Lake Te Anau up the Clinton River, over McKinnon Pass and down the Arthur River to Milford Sound. This track is well maintained for respectable “tourist trampers” to spend money on, but the Park Board provides facilities for normal tramping. A fee is imposed and bookings necessary, but those who walk it find it worthwhile. It is a four day trip with a boat connection from Te Anau to the head of the lake and from the end of the track to Milford Hotel. Alternatively, entry can be gained from the Eglinton Valley over the Dore Pass. This can be a tricky route and should be attempted only with the Route Guide in hand and a strong party. The cost of a trip from Te Anau is about \$12.00 for Park Board accommodation and many times more with luxury accommodation and food supplied, cooked by the guide.

The Routeburn Track is one of the best known in New Zealand. It starts at the head of Lake Wakitipu and crosses over into the Holyford Valley, then follows the valley along high up its walls, just below the snowline, giving magnificent views of the peaks across and along the valley where Lake McKerrow and the sea can be seen clearly.

It is usual to start at the eastern end because here one has to get a steamer to Kinloch one of several days of the week during which the boat runs. The only other access to this end is by fording the Dart River which is a braided stream reported to have treacherous quicksands in its bed. The fording can be done from Paradise using horses. Huts exist at Routeburn Falls and Routeburn Flats, then the track winds its way up the sides of a high basin to Lake Harris and the Harris Saddle.

When I went through the area it was still snowing and deviations had to be made around dangerous snow on the bluffs around the lake as one’s weight could start a small avalanche onto the lake below. The lake was still frozen, and it was late December. The ranger with whom I had been talking the day before told me that up to the end of November it had been an alpine crossing to get through the saddle. It was a hard winter in 1968. Through the saddle, the track travels south at about 4,000 feet, high above the Holyford Valley. Exposure conditions exist here and the wind howls like a banshee. A memorial to a party of school-children, who died of exposure, is passed about one mile from the Lake McKenzie Hut. Some hours past the L. McKenzie Hut is the L. Howden Hut. Here is the junction with the Greenstone Track and the track up Key Summit, from which views of surrounding ranges, lakes and valleys can be had. It is only an hour or so’s walk to the Milford at the Divide and buses pass both ways at about 9.30 a.m. in season.

The Pass Ck. Track connects Lake Howden Hut with the Holyford Valley road, just south of Gunn’s Camp.

The Greenstone Track is perhaps one of the less spectacular tracks in the area, going west from the isolated Elfin Bay Landing on Lake Wakitipu and joining the Routeburn Track at Lake Howden. It is pleasant and does not involve any climbing or rough country, but is along river flats most of the way. It would be ideal for an inexperienced or out of condition party to use as a warmer for better things.

The Dart and Rees Rivers Trip – Starting from Paradise one can tramp up the valley of the Dart River, traverse the Rees Saddle and return down the valley of the Rees River. This route involves the circumnavigation of the Mt. Earnslaw Massif – a very beautiful mountain of 9341 feet. Scrambles on its lower ridges include the ascent of the Turret Head on its southwestern ridge. The Diamond Lakes Scenic reserve to the south of Mt. Earnslaw is also deserving of a visit.

The journey up the Dart starts at Paradise and the first day involves a sixteen mile walk up the valley to the Dredge Hut, originally built for the crew of a gold dredge in the area. A further day brings one to Dart Hut. Here, day trips can be done to the Dart Glacier and Cascade Saddle. The descent from the Cascade Saddle to the Aspiring Hut in the West Matukituki Valley is considered EXTREMELY DANGEROUS and has claimed several lives over the years. A direct descent has never been completed, although several indirect dangerous routes exist.

To travel from the Dart to the Rees over the Rees Saddle takes a day.

There is a hut in the upper Rees not shown on my map, which I believe is the private property of the Rees Valley Station. The Rees Valley is pleasant, easy tramping. Only a few hours away is the 25-mile hut of the Otago Tramping Club, which is available for use at a fee (as are most Park Board huts in the area). The Earnslaw Hut is located across the river but is rather rough and run down. It is a good base for scrambles up the eastern ridges of Mt. Earnslaw. An easy day brings one out to the Rees Bridge on the Paradise Road. A side trip can be made here to look at the old Invincible Goldmine up the slope behind McDougal's Creek, from where good photographs of the valley and Mt. Earnslaw can be obtained.

THE OLIVINE COUNTRY – THIS AREA IS EXTREMELY ROUGH, AND UNLIKE ANYTHING ON MAINLAND AUSTRALIA. AUSTRALIAN PARTIES SHOULD ARRANGE TO HAVE AN EXPERIENCED NEW ZEALANDER WITH THEM TO ADVISE THEM ON MOVEMENT ON SCREES, RIVER CROSSINGS, ROUTE FINDING AND SNOW-WORK.

North of the Holyford and west-of the Dart one finds the relatively isolated country which the New Zealanders talk of in the same manner as we discuss the Western Arthurs of Tasmania. Trips in this area can be made from several directions, but all take about ten days minimum, unless one flies in, which is quite expensive.

New Zealanders have not yet developed air dropping compared to the “matter-of-fact” attitude with which the Tasmanian dispatches his cheap drop for his four day trip. Here, parachutes (as opposed to “free” dropping of gear without parachutes) are usually used and have to be hired and carried out again – if lost, paid for. A lot of rough strips exist in the most remote areas for those daredevil pilots who fly the hugely profitable, but highly risky flights for deer shooters, transporting them in and the carcasses out.

The usual routes into the Olivine country are:

Rockburn (north of Routeburn) via Park Pass and Cow Saddle to the Fiery Col and Fohn Saddle. .

North branch of Routeburn via North Col to Park Pass and as above.

Lake Alabaster (Big Bay Track) to Olivine River via Alabaster Pass.

Trail from Pyke River to Olivine Flats, starting at Olivine Falls (see Moir).

The Forgotten River leads into the heart of the Olivine country. Most routes above the valley floor involve the use of ice axes and climbing techniques.

For a detailed description of routes in this area, particularly those which are suitable only for very fit, experienced people, see Moir's Guide.

INSECT LIFE

A word of warning – all the west coast river valleys are plagued with angry, biting hordes of sandflies, which can drive you mad. They also cause swelling in the bitten areas, so take your bottle of repellent.

One can rejoice, however, in the knowledge that there are no snakes in the region (or in any part of New Zealand).

REFERENCES

Moir's Guide Book

- Northern Section
- Southern Section

Fiordland National Park:

- Park Handbook
- Routeguide to Milford Track
- Routeguide to Routeburn Track
- Routeguide to Martins Bay Track

Safety in the Mountains

- New Zealand Federation Handbook

MAP LIST

New Zealand Alpine Club

- N.W. Otago. 3 miles to 1 inch Sheet for Rees-Dart-Olivine
- Darran, Wick and Earl Mountains Sheet
- Darran Mts. Climbing Map. 1 mile = 0.75 inch.

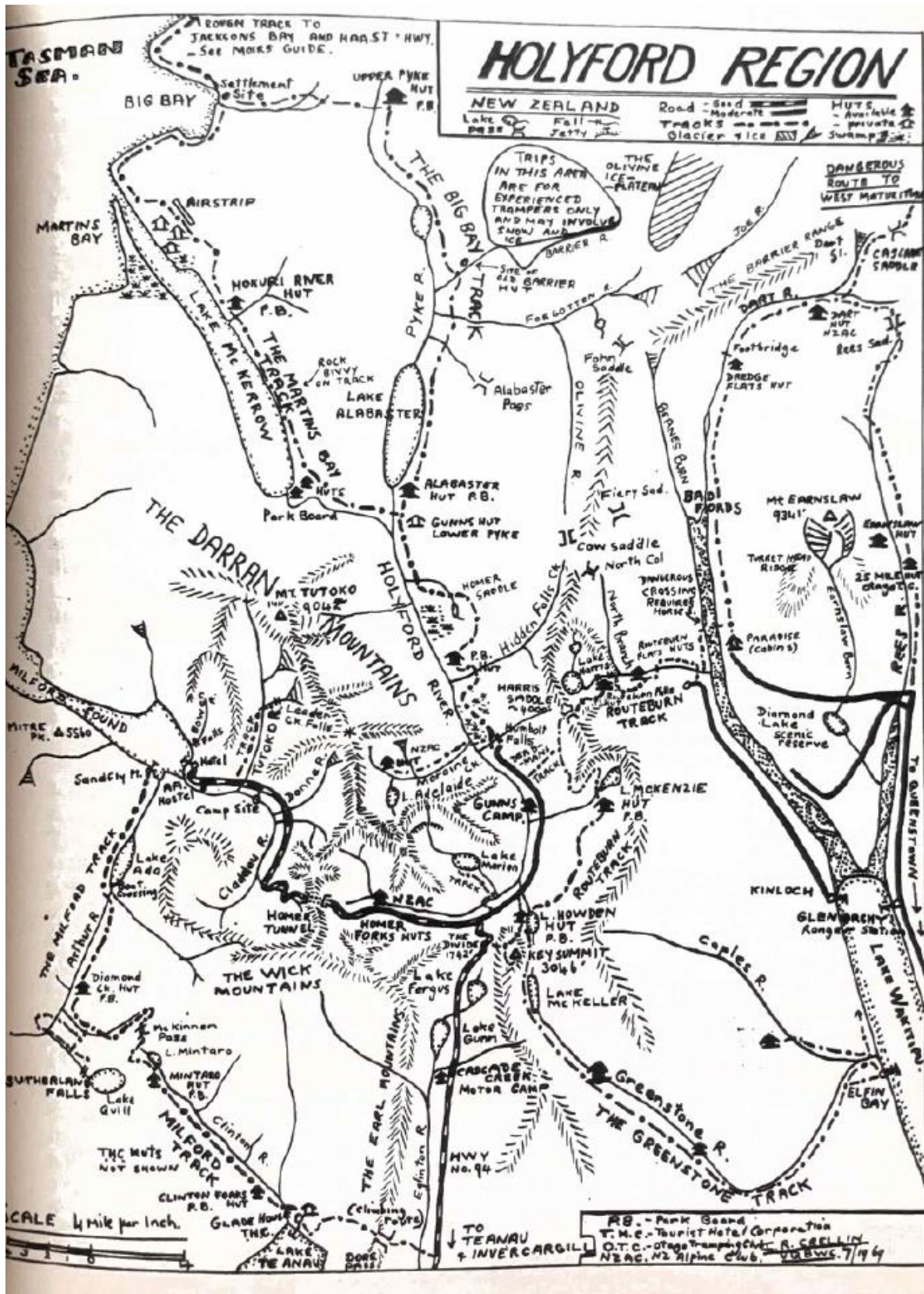
New Zealand Mapping Service

- N.Z.M.S. 122 – Fiordland National Park
- N.Z.M.S. 155 – Lake Te Anau and Environs
- N.Z.M.S. 156 – Lake Wakitipu and Environs

NOTE

This article should not be used for planning trips in detail – always consult Moir's Guide Book and the Park Handbook. For climbing information, the N.Z. Alpine Journal is the best reference and expert knowledge should be sought.

Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky. – Wordsworth



ARTHUR'S PASS THROUGHWALK

Denis Townsend

The train lurched to a halt at the end of the bridge. Beneath, the swift waters of the Bealey River passed between banks of boulders that filled the valley floor to the distant, thickly forested valley walls. Above these deep-green forests, snow-clad peaks thrust their summits skywards.

We waited with many others to collect our packs from the guard's van, from which an amazing assortment of these objects tumbled forth. Self-consciously clutching our unfamiliar ice-axes, we quietly took our leave and struck out for the rendezvous with the remainder of our party who were arriving by car.

In the early afternoon, our reunited party, five in number, set off up the valley of the Waimakariri River stepping from boulder to boulder, some of us with less proficiency than that displayed by our leader, a New Zealander and his wife. Innumerable river crossings, necessitated by the meandering course of the "Waimak" along its river flats, varied the monotony of boulder walking and fumbling to find a satisfactory way of carrying our ice-axes, but left our legs and other immersed parts of our anatomy bright red and tingling from the icy-cold of the water.

After a night in the Greenlaw Hut, shared with two young climbers, we pressed on up the river to arrive in time for a morning "cuppa" at the Carrington Hut, offered by the three female occupants who were having a "rest day" from their climbing in the area. Within half an hour we were on the move again, led by the wife of our leader. One minute later we arrived at a rubbish pit, the terminus of the track we were following. A rapid, embarrassing retreat and subsequent search were made amidst a barrage of good-humored derogatory comment on her abilities as a leader, till the correct track was located and followed to the north along the banks of the "Waimak".

The weather, so far questionable, took a turn for the worse, and a light but wind-driven rain swept along the valley. The route became misty as the track beside the river led higher into the mountains. It was late afternoon by the time our cold, tired party reached the Waimak Hut and "biv" which are set on a rock platform above a gorge and below the snow-covered col separating Mt. Rolleston (7,453') from Mt. Armstrong (7,026') and Carrington Peak (6,605'). The mist closed in, as did the night.

It had come to our notice that the hut, a comparatively small, rectangular structure painted a conspicuous orange colour, was held firmly in place by cables – possibly to prevent its removal by Keas, the notorious alpine parrots of New Zealand. The "biv" is an even smaller, A-shaped shelter, very spartan in design, but no doubt very welcome in bad weather should the other hut be full. As we were well above the bush-line, all cooking was done on primuses, and with the aid of a small pressure-cooker, even a stew based on freeze-dried meat, our main meal, was rendered quite palatable. It was a good feeling, that night, to snuggle into a sleeping-bag in that tiny, warm hut and listen to the wind howling and gusting against the outer walls.

After a morning of instruction in the rudiments of snow and ice climbing, we retired to the hut to await better weather. As the resident literature in the hut consisted of an old copy of "Newsweek", part of a Giles cartoon booklet, and a novel of dubious merit entitled "My Flat and Her Apartment", it was little wonder that some of us ventured out towards the col, simply for "something to do". Much as we had hoped to climb one of the nearby peaks, the weather decreed this to be out of the question, so on the following day, we kicked our way up to the false col, across a snow basin, then up to the lip of the true col where we were met by an incredibly beautiful, mist-free view of the blue and white peaks of the Westland

side of the Main Divide. We carefully descended the steep snow slopes and rocky bluffs on this side of the col, which passage was marked only by the temporary loss of one of the girls in our party into a crevasse.

Glissading and tramping down from the col, we finally reached the headwaters of the Rolleston River which we followed downstream to make camp on a boulder-strewn site in the vicinity of an avalanche-crushed “biv”. Next morning, Christmas Day, I was awakened by the dulcet tones of “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” performed by what must be one of the scruffiest angels imaginable, who bore a distinct resemblance to our party leader. The Rolleston River was followed out to the railway line, and this painfully followed to Otira. By the time we reached this thriving metropolis, the clouds of dissent had gathered – we were footsore and tired, and on being presented with the Otira railway refreshment room as the only source of Christmas cuisine, spirits fell. We celebrated the day with cold pies and warm soft drinks.

Our leader cunningly handled the upwelling mutiny by ignoring it completely, and several hours and five to six miles of rail travel later, we were at Aickens, a whistle-stop to the north of Otira. Soon we were plodding up the valley of the Taramakau River, our mutiny forgotten. Turning south up Pfeifer Creek, we entered the Arthur's Pass Wilderness Area. Pfeifer Creek is one of the prettiest areas I have seen for quiet beauty, with its open-forested banks, ferny and mossy floor, and a golden carpeting of fallen leaves. Next morning, we farewelled one of our party who was pulling out of the trip because of sore feet, and who, loaded down with all our surplus climbing-gear, was returning to Christchurch.

Heading east from our campsite, along the southern edge of Lake Kaurapataka, we crossed a low saddle and dropped into the valley of the Otehake River and followed this upstream to the Otehake Hut. This trip was particularly strenuous since the track followed the steep true left bank of the river and varied in height between the top of the flanking ridge and river level in abrupt descents and ascents. For a while, man-handling our ice axes through the roots, branches and Vines on and across the track proved to be quite a task for we are tramping neo-phytes. Frequently, unstable scree slides cut across the route and required careful negotiation to prevent injury to oneself and others.

From the Otehake Hut, the valley leading up to the Taruahuna Pass is composed of avalanche debris, as is the snow-free pass itself, and the river has incised its path deeply into this rubble. Once over the pass, we descended to a tussock-grassed alpine valley down which we raced in friendly competition with another party of trampers who were heading for the same hut. The following day, we departed from the Edwards Hut (“Vae victis” – the other party had camped on the river flats) and by lunchtime, we had reached the Bealey River and the railway line and road of Arthur's Pass. Suddenly – all too suddenly – it was all over.

We had not “bagged” any peaks, for this was not our intention, but we had experienced and learned much of the countryside and of ourselves and each other. We are more than content with this.

FOOTNOTE

The Arthur's Pass National Park straddles the Main Divide in the Southern Alps of New Zealand and is approximately 90 miles by road or rail from Christchurch, en route to the West Coast.

A description of the area and details of tramping and climbing routes are given in: “HANDBOOK to the ARTHUR'S PASS NATIONAL PARK” which includes a relatively useful map of the park area.



GRAEME LACEY

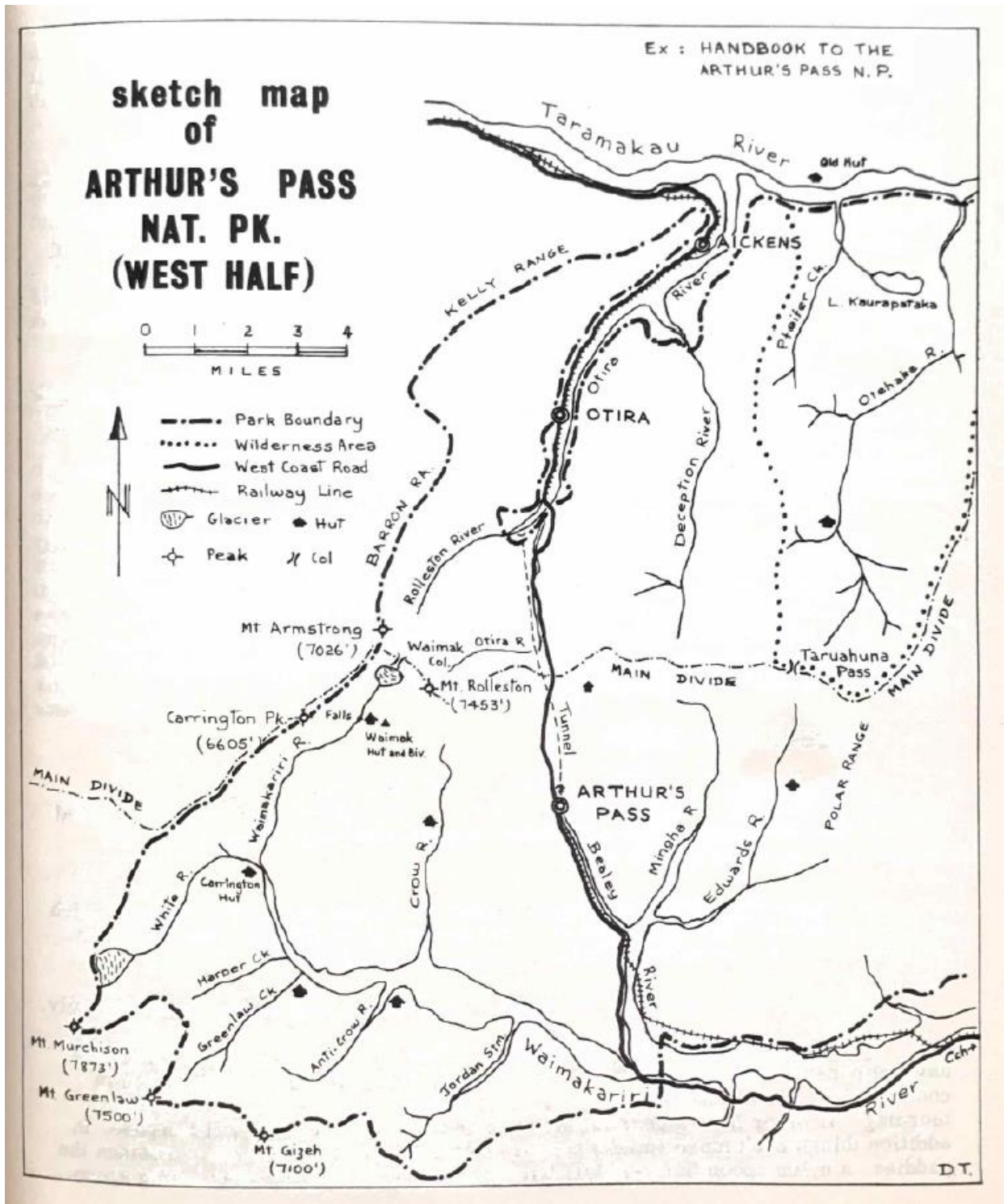
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THOSE EXTRA 7 LBS

Jocelyn Whight

I'd been wondering why my pack was always at least 33 lbs. for a weekend through walk. Every Friday when I'd pack, I'd cut everything down to "the minimum". I'd leave anything behind that I might no need in the way of clothing or food. I took no tent, no tinned food, enough milk sugar, rice, bread, fruit, meat, etc. to last two breakfasts, two inches and one dinner, with a little bit extra for bartering purposes. I'd even resorted to taking cut lunches, but still my pack was about 33 lbs. Why and how could others take lighter packs than me? That's when I took out and weighed all of those things which live in my pack, besides my ground sheet, sleeping bag, mug, toothpaste and toothbrush. Then I found those extra 7 lbs., they're only little things, but they weigh 7 lbs.

Extra Food. In case we 're caught out overnight. 2 packets soup, enough tea for a billy, 2 sachets sugar, 2 sachets coffee, 1 sachet salt, 1 handful rolled oats, 1 packet dehydrated curry stew, 2 tablespoons Deb potato, 2 chicken cubes, 1 packet of Greenhead matches. That's not much food, but it could save the hunger pangs of three or four people for an extra night.

First Aid Kit. This is the barest minimum to cope with minor discomforts. Cotton linen thread, needle, two buttons, piece of cloth, 2 large safety pins, few smaller pins, half dozen code in tablets, 2 'knockout' barbiturates, small sample tube ophthalmic ointment for eyes as well as body scratches, two gauze bandages, 1 elastic bandage, 2" x 8" strip 'Elastoplast', an 18" length of tubing for a temporary ligature or for syphoning water from cracks or puddles, 1 razor blade.

A Compass – (Silva type).

Nylon Water Bag for 'wet' camps. (I only take 20 fl. oz. water bottle normally). This has been carried for miles on a few 'dry' camps. Once we filled small, heavy duty plastic bags with water, sealed them with rubber bands and carried them up out of a steep gorge!

A Second Nylon Ground Sheet has assorted strings attached to eyelets which can be erected as a fly or snapped on to my normal ground sheet either to throw over me, or to use as an extra-large 3-person ground sheet.

A Torch with one battery reversed to prevent it being turned on accidentally.

A Teflon Pie Dish and paddy fingers. This is a lazy girl's luxury. Now I have no pan-sticking problems, be it pog, stew, sausages or pancakes that I'm cooking, i.e., there's no burnt food or burnt greasy pots to clean out the next morning. If water is at a premium the pan can be wiped out with All Purpose. In addition, things cook more rapidly because of the larger cooking area. Besides the paddies, a nylon spoon is essential, but then this scoop/spoon is my eating spoon.

Stove. My 45c. metho burner, 2 plastic bottles of metho, matches and piece of alfoil (which keeps out the wind and intensifies the heat) fit snugly into my 5½" diameter billy – another water-carrying object. On a wet night in a sodden rainforest, the metho stove has been welcome; on less miserable nights the metho on damp wood has saved a lot of anxious puffing and smokey eyes.

Being a girl, I indulge in real luxuries, yes, even on a bushwalk! A pillow cushion covered in nylon is marvellous to sit on in the 'squaw position' while you cook, and everyone gets quite numb from the cold

ground. It's a bit bulky but the foam crumbs can be squashed quite successfully if more pack space is required.

¼" Foam Plastic Sheeting, 18" x 26" just fits from my shoulder to my hip. It doesn't soften the underneath sticks or rocks, but it insulates me enough to sleep soundly.

Finally, there's my Brushed Nylon Inner Bag, which gives a maximum of warmth for a minimum of weight during the winter months.

Individually these aren't big or heavy and maybe I'll never be caught out overnight – maybe I've been carrying that extra food bag and the second ground sheet for nothing on all of those walks. Perhaps I'll never need the first aid kit or the 15 foot hemp waist rope and the two aluminium carabeneers with locking gates. But I feel prepared for the emergency which might call for them. The stove could be left behind, and so could the pillow and the foam sheeting, but I think their convenience is worth the extra grunt. I know that I could scunge someone's paddy fingers or use someone's frying pan if I asked or bartered expertly enough. In fact, I could rely on the rest of the party to provide additional food, a band-aid, a cup of tea, to share a ground sheet and so on. But I think it's worth carrying that extra 7 lbs, because what would happen if no-one else brought what I needed?

THE EASTER THROUGHWALK THAT WASN'T

Peter Greenup

Spirits were high as we set off from Cunningham's Gap at 11.30 p.m. on Easter Thursday to climb moonlight bathed Mitchell, along its graded path. Six Walkers - John Shera (our fearless rain-loving leader), John Walduck, John Leah, Joe Malynski, Ken Cragg and myself – discussed with great optimism what the through-walk of the south bound party along the Main Range would bring in the next four days. Camp was made on Mt. Mitchell Saddle at 1.30 a.m. on Good Friday and we slept until woken next morning by a party of club members doing a walk to Mt. Roberts and on to Emu Creek. Dave Bayliss and his three companions called us all sorts of names for still being asleep at that ridiculously late hour of 7.30 a.m.

After descending the south-west ridge off the West Peak of Mt. Mitchell and meeting Dave's party in Spicer's Gap, we ascended Spicer's West Peak via its north-west ridge and then went on to East Peak at about 4 p.m. We then set off for the Spicer's Doubletop Saddle where we had agreed to camp for the night and would probably meet up with Dave's party. Boy! Were we mistaken!

About 4.45 p.m. and 300 feet below the summit of Spicer's, as we were descending towards our intended campsite, the trouble began. Ken, by taking a slightly wrong turn from the walkers ahead of him, slipped over a 15 foot ledge, made a rough landing which was stopped by a log and brought his head down on the log which had stopped his fall – thus breaking his nose and causing it to bleed profusely. As I was the last and only member of the party behind him, I ran to the ledge to see what happened, slipped on some loose leaves and was airborne on my way down to join Ken the same way he went. Fortunately, I did not go over at the same speed as Ken, (but I still had a sore backside for a week), fell into Ken and then landed on my back with my pack jammed under the same log. Upon freeing myself, and with the help of the others we got Ken on his feet and attempted to stop the bleeding. It was decided that the walk was over, and we had to get him back to help, that night if possible.

Upon re-reaching the summit of Spicers, I suggested that we all spend the night on top and get off to an early start the next morning – but this was howled down. We all had a quick, but welcome meal and then threw away any unnecessary items to try to lighten our loads. John Walduck, Joe and myself took some of the load from the other Johns, and Ken – the former two because they were going ahead to bring a car into Spicer's Gap from Cunningham's Gap.

After descending the first small cliffline (unfortunately they are much harder to descend than ascend), our party was very slow in getting across the second. As it was almost dark and I was last, I decided to spend the night by myself above it whilst the other three camped below it about 200 feet below me. That was the longest night of my life – huddled on a steep grass slope at an angle of about 45 degrees with my feet against a black boy to stop me sliding. I spent eleven hours like that, watching car lights approaching the Gap, the twinkle of lights in Aratula, Boonah and Ipswich and listening to the conversation of my companions below who were evidently not much better off position-wise, but at least had a fire and each others' company.

However, early in the night I saw a campfire down in Spicer's Gap. I knew it could not be the two Johns going for help as they would not have had time to get down, especially in the dark, and no moonlight, and knew also that Dave Bayliss' party should have been in Spicer's Doubletop Saddle by now, wondering where the hell we were. Could it be campers? If so, would they have a car with them?

At daybreak next morning, after leaving the peak, I set off to join the three camped below me. Upon reaching the cliff I was afraid to come down the previous night, I saw just how rotten and loose it was after five others had used it, each one making it progressively weaker and more dangerous. I was halfway down when it gave way and left me hanging by my right hand and partly supported by my right foot. I was slipping and had to dispose of my pack, and fast! Fortunately, the waist strap was not done up, and with one movement of my left hand the clip was undone releasing the right strap, and then I was able to drop the pack over my left shoulder. Wow! Did it go? Down the grassy slopes over two small cliffhines and then I lost sight of it. My startled companions (the first they knew of my coming to join them was the sight and noise as the pack crashed past them) saw it go over the third and largest rockline, heard another couple of dull thuds and then silence. This was immediately broken by five minutes of strong oaths by me at the thought of my camera, etc. being smashed to smithereens.

The four of us quickly got below the remaining two cliffhines discussing the faint hopes of finding the pack, let alone in one piece. When it was seen however, going over the third rockline, all straps were holding, and thus it was not distributing its contents as it went. This at least gave me some hope. I expected to salvage, at least my sleeping bag and clothes from it.

After an hour's searching Ken found it; it had been stopped by a dead black boy which had been smashed in two in the process. To our amazement, the frame was only bent, the canvas not torn at all, the camera and its accessories appeared okay (later photos verified this), several tins of food were badly misshapen, and the only casualty was 2 lb. of sugar, which was evenly distributed throughout the entire pack – Great packs these Flinders Ranges!

Upon reaching Spicer's Gap, to our surprise we met not only John Shera and John Leah, but Dave Bayliss and his party and one car. As it turned out, upon ascending the final rockline on the north-east ridge of Spicer's that afternoon, Dave was hit about the kidney by a large falling rock which sent him reeling. After waiting for him to get over it, his party realised that he was hurt (later diagnosed as a possible chipped rib and bruised hip) and decided that their throughwalk was finished reaching the Gap as dark fell, hence the mystery of fire the previous night in Spicer's Gap.

Evidently after finding Dave's party at the Gap, John Shera and John Leah Walked through the old Spicer's Gap Road to the garage and phoned Ipswich for John Shera's brother to come up by car. The injured and a couple of others went to Ipswich whilst five of us drove round to Emu creek to bring the cars back to Cunningham's Gap for the members of the north bound party.

We all arrived back at Ipswich to find none of the injuries serious (although Ken's nose had to be rebroken and reset again a week later). I arrived home two days early to the remark of "What happened to you? You're early". I answered "Ah, it was easy – it only took us two days instead of four" and dropped into bed for a well-earned rest.

GEO. W. EEDY

Ph.C., M.P.S.

(Sydney University)

Dispensing Chemist

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WEEKEND ON MORETON

Wendy Sullivan

Seven of us were glad to be leaving the hot smoky city that Friday evening as we awaited departure of the ferry to Moreton Island. Undaunted by the unwelcoming response our unexpected arrival on deck had caused, we watched the coppery sun darken as it sank slowly through the murky atmosphere. Our packs were roped together and tied down under canvas as we chugged slowly past Luggage Point and into the bay beyond.

While our fellow passengers dined below on cool chicken salads, some stale meat and pickle sandwiches were thrust up to us on the baggage deck. We realised we were strictly steerage cargo and responded accordingly by discussing mutiny and singing songs of protest. The remainder of the voyage was relatively uneventful, however, and several hours later we disembarked and began the eight mile trek along the dark water's edge. Although one member was heard to grumble about the long walk, his objections were overruled, and the distance was soon covered. White crabs played around our feet sometimes defying gravity and running up our legs, sometimes getting scrunched accidentally underfoot.

Judging the distance walked by the progression of time, we estimated our speed at three miles per hour. This worked well, despite a sit down while our timekeeper patched up a cut toe and in due course, we found the traditional campsite at the base of the big sandhill. Several members of the group still feeling energetic ran up the sandhill while the rest of us wriggled gratefully into our sleeping bags.

The sun's increasing warmth as it rose above the sandhills awoke us next morning and after a leisurely breakfast we began the walk across to the ocean beach. The small waterhole from which we were dependent on obtaining water turned out to be a shallow, bird polluted pool. Further up we dug a hole and left this with water trickling in hoping to find it filled with clean water on our return.

The walk across the sand ridges is full of interest. The scattered, sandblasted scraps of timber are delicately beautiful, sometimes assuming weird shapes. For walking on the sand, we found thongs provided the easiest walking boots were useless as they were soon uncomfortably full of sand. The beach was deserted and the surf inviting. We parked our gear in the shade of a pandanus and plunged into the surf. For me, the first plunge was short lived, as I disturbed a large stingray basking camouflaged by sand in the shallows. I don't know who got the biggest fright, but we both dashed in opposite directions. However, I braved the water again a little later without sighting any more monsters.

After digging again for water above the line dividing salt water from fresh we walked several miles up the beach to the wartime observation bunkers and had lunch in one of these, thinking how our predecessors must have felt watching the yellow submarines.

On returning to our campsite in mid-afternoon the tide had ebbed until the waters edge seemed miles out – it was about the lowest tide of the year, and we found it tremendously interesting wandering over the littoral zone observing the varied, colourful forms of life. The boys collected some huge oysters and scallops which we cooked for tea liberally salted with sand.

Next day four of the seven had to return and began the tedious rather painful walk in soft sand at high tide, allowing plenty of time to swim and relax on the way. Three of us remaining for an extra day walked along the bay aide towards the southern end of the island. The bay was extremely calm and clear and as we walked through the shallows, we disturbed hundreds of lazy shovel nosed sharks. Feeling primitive we

made long spears out of the debris along the shore and tried to stab the shark but once disturbed they were too quick for us. It was a marvellous feeling to feel so far removed from civilization and return to what seemed a dreamtime existence.

That afternoon we again walked out on the sandflats revealed by the tide and got as far as the edge of the deep “blue hole”, a favourite haunt of fishermen before the tide rose. After sunset we climbed the big sandhill and looked across the bay to the lights of Brisbane, a necklace of glittering gems beautiful from a distance.

To the north we watched regular flashes from the lighthouse and southward lay the scattered lights of Pts. Lookout and Amity on Stradbroke Island.

As we wandered back to Tangalooma next morning with sunburnt shoulders and sore feet we felt the discomfort was well worthwhile and reflected on our seemingly impossible dream that the island could remain as it is, undisturbed by destructive exploitation.

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shores,
There is a society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar,
I love not Man the less but Nature more.

- Byron

CONSERVATION OF CAVES – MT. ETNA AND LIMESTON RIDGE CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

R.M. Bourke

Introduction

It isn't a very original title for a "Heybob" article as both Mike Graham (1965) and Robert Headland (1967) have written on the same theme. However, limestone mining on Mt. Etna is continuing and a large fraction of the eastern face of the mountain is scarred by a quarry. Mt. Etna is a cave-bearing peak 930 feet high, just north of Rockhampton, while Limestone Ridge is a long ridge adjacent, that also contains eaves.

The justifications for conservation of the caves have been well summarized by Headland in Bulletin 3 (U.Q.S.S. 1967) and a paper to the 1968 Australian Speleological Federation conference. Briefly the reasons are the aesthetic and social interests associated with the eaves; the associated surface vine scrub flora and karst topography; the faunal aspect encompassing the rare false vampire bat, the large colony of bent-wing bats, other bat species, the unusual cave insects, and surface fauna such as the rock wallaby; the economic reasons associated with tourist industries and the large number of possible agricultural pests destroyed by the bats.

Mt. Etna today

The quarry is situated some 45 feet from the entrance of one of the major caves and overlies much of the cave. Besides damage that has occurred to the formations in a very attractive cave opened by quarrying operations, structural damage is occurring to other caves in the vicinity of the quarry. Some irregularity has been reported by Dr. Dwyer in the habits of the breeding bent-wing bats using the Bat Cleft. Further observations in the 1969-1970 breeding season may be able to establish whether the expansion of the quarry is responsible for the changes. So, this is Mt. Etna today – aside from surface destruction of the vine scrub and grikey surface and damage to some of the caves, it is intact. Limestone Ridge, while bearing two quarries, is largely unscathed and a series of beautiful caves is being opened up to adventurers and cavers. There is no evidence that the largest Australian population (and hence the world's) of the rare false vampire bat is being exterminated. An agreement exists between the cement company in question and the Mines Department that no mining will occur within 66 feet of any known cave entrance. If it is conceded that removal of the quarrying operations from Mt. Etna's not a feasible objective, it may be asked what is the conservation problem?

Apart from the agreement referred to earlier which protects cave entrances there is no formal protection for the caves, fauna, and unusual surface features of Mt. Etna and Limestone Ridge. The present company has stated that quarrying caves is not desirable from a mining viewpoint, but this does not safeguard caves from being destroyed in part or bats being exterminated. During this year, the University of Queensland Speleological Society has postulated a detailed policy for conservation. The society members feel that this can be effected, giving the required protection to cave fauna and caves (excluding caves opened by quarrying operations), yet allowing quarrying to continue. The salient features of this policy are that Limestone Ridge should be preserved as a National Park or Fauna Reserve in toto; that no mining should occur within one chain of any part of a major known cave to protect the cave and false vampire bats resident inside; that no quarrying should occur within three chains of the Bat Cleft; and that the area of Mt. Etna where most of the caves are located should be preserved either now or in the future.

Previous Conservation Activity

The U.Q.S.S. first developed an interest in the subject after the first trip was run in 1962. At this stage Mt. Etna was still untouched, whilst Limestone Ridge was being mined. The Society has been engaged in a continuing conservation battle with varying intensities since this time. Headland in his paper to the 1968 A.S.F. Conference has summarized the history of conservation activity up to October 1968 fairly comprehensively. The principal result of much newspaper and radio publicity, production of three bulletins and interviews with the company was the initiation of a Government interdepartmental committee with a representative from each of the Forestry, Lands and Mines Departments. The recommendations of the committee were that an area on Mt. Etna encompassing most of the known caves should be made into a National Park. However, the company refused to surrender the appropriate leases and the matter lapsed.

Recent developments

In October 1968 the quarry was suddenly expanded, and it moved closer to the cavernous area. This action led to publicity and protest by the Society. Following notification of the National Park decision, a fresh conservation campaign was initiated by the U.Q.S.S. in February 1969. A large amount of effort was spent in categorising ideas and gathering of information – much of which had been done by earlier generations of speleologists. In April, the Queensland cave conservation Committee was formed. This committee consists of people whose professional knowledge is relevant to the situation, conservationists, and a U.Q.S.S. representative. The output of the committee has not as yet been very high. Further expansion of the quarry early in 1969 brought the quarry very close to Winding Stairway cave and the agreement was breached. Extensive protests were made, but little real response was received.

Fund raising activities, gathering of information, limited publicity and soliciting support have constituted the principal activities during the year by the Society and the Q.C.C.C. In July, at very short notice a report on Limestone Ridge was prepared for presentation to the Minister for Lands by Mr. Sherrington. The report of about 7,000 words and 35 pages of typed foolscap and maps consisted of papers describing physiography, geology, flora, fauna, the caves, the history, etcetera.

It is envisaged producing a publication on Mt. Etna and Limestone Ridge covering all aspects of scientific work performed, with a chapter on conservation. The different papers are in varying stages of completion. Approaches are being made to the company and Government Departments and several other avenues are proposed. As this is written in late August, further reports of damage to caves are being received.

Conclusion

I feel that the unusual and valuable features of Mt. Etna and Limestone Ridge can be preserved for the future at the same time allowing the continuity of an important cement industry. If quarrying operations continue in their present manner, increasing damage will be suffered by caves that are both attractive and exiting, while species of our flora will be rendered extinct from a large area. Surely the long term social, economic, and scientific consequences outweigh marginal short term gains derived from unfettered quarrying operations? The case for conservation rests on some form of restriction of quarrying activities so the quarry and caves do not interact, destroying caves and their fauna.

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Noosa River Trip, February 1969

Janeen Samuel

Not a bird at all,
That streak of royal purple amid the Wallum scrub,
Electric, slung between
The tea-tawn river and shoddy paperbarks.

Not a bird at all, but a man's soul flying:
Soul of a blackman who might have been a poet,
Pennless among the paperbarks
Stifled in sand-scrub;
Dead in the Wallum country, dead long-gone.

LETTER FROM CAMP BANG BANG

K.G. Grimes

Dear U.Q.B.W.C.

What I have seen of the Gilbert Range (during an eight day traverse around the whole of the southern part of the Gulf), suggests that it could have some very interesting sandstone gorges in it. We saw a few which were fair, but the air photos show some big fissures cutting back into the ranges. We dropped in on Galah Gorge (north of Hughenden, see John Milnes article in Heybob 1967). It would make a good through walk and has permanent water holes. However, there are few side gorges, and it might get a bit boring after a few days. Actually, it would be more suited to horse riding along the rim, dropping down to the bottom at intervals.

The precambrian country around Cloncurry has some terrific scenery; big jutting rocky mountains, black or dark brown masses with red scree slopes and red sandy valleys in between, spotted with stunted timber and spinifex clumps. The trouble is the heat – mid-day temperatures have been in the nineties until this week when they dropped into the eighties (and this is the winter!). There is NO water, the creeks are all dry and only run for two days each three years. Bores are scattered and sometimes salty, and the spinifex is very nasty. It has long needle pointed leaves that spike out of the clumps at you; they go straight through long trousers and bore pinpricks in legs and hands which can be very painful. A bush-walker with standard pack would probably last the first day, but the second would get him. If anyone is thinking of visiting the area they should have a landrover AND KNOW HOW TO USE IT. The scrub bashing, I used to do in the V.W. is like a bitumen highway compared to what you face in this area. I would suggest travelling in the 'rover and only getting out to walk in the early and late parts of the day. The area is rewarding but rough.

We are camped on Bang Bang Waterhole, about 200 miles north of Julia Creek (our main supply depot and communications point) and about 70 miles south of Normanton (a subsidiary supply point and the nearest town). We now have all mod cons, like a hot and cold shower (very nice after a week on traverse), electric light in the mess and office tents, and a "swimming pool" if you don't mind sharing it with a croc. We have classified him as "freshwater" and therefore harmless.

The geological staff is quite varied. The boss is an Aussie but has been all over the place. We have a Scotch couple straight out from Glasgow and with accents as thick as your arm. The other geologist is a Pommy but tries to pass as an Aussie as his accent is not very strong. Naturally we have a lot of ragging with the Aussies versus the "Noo Strines" or the Poms versus the Scots, etc. Scotty is always quick to point out that term England applies only to the southern part of Great Britain and implies that it is only part of the U.K. because Scotland let them join up with them.

An idea of some of the fun that goes on can be gained from the conversation that occurred in the mess last night:

Young Scottish Lassie: "Why do they make the dog fences so big? Can the dogs jump that high?"

Dinkum Aussie: "Yeah, and what's more when the fence is too high to jump, they run along it until they find a tree leaning over it and climb up and run along a branch until they can jump down the other side."

Young Scottish Lassie: "Really! I dinna think your dogs were so smart."

Dinkum Aussie: “My oath, and if the tree is too far from the fence they get on the end of a long springy branch and bounce up and down so as to use it as a spring board to get over”.

Young Scottish Lassie: “Arrr, you hood, yourrr having me on!”

Dinkum Aussie: “No fair dinkum. Have you ever seen them catch a snake?”

Young Scottish Lassie: “No!”

Dinkum Aussie: “It’s worth seeing, they stand on the snake’s back like this – you see – and when he swings round to bite them they jump up in the air and old snake bites himself and dies”.

Young Scottish Lassie: (in a sceptical tone) “Yeah”

Dinkum Aussie: “Honest, them dogs is might ruddy intelligent, why when the dingoes first came out to Australia they brought the abos with them to catch their tucker. Mind you, the ones you see now-a-days ain’t so smart, you see when the first white men came out here they brought all these dumb pommy dogs with them they’ve been interbreeding and thinning out the original blood.”

At this stage, the pommy geologist at the end of the table splutters over his cup of tea and the conversation switches to rubbishing the “bloody poms”.

Anyway, that will do for now. If any other interesting events happen I will write another letter.

LETTER FROM VENEZUELA (Extract)

C. Murray

4th August, 1969

Caracas, Venezuela

Dear U.Q.B.W.C. I guess it's too late for an article now. I didn't do any bushwalking while at Princeton – if you know what New Jersey is like you would realise why. There is very little bush left I which to walk. There is not an active bushwalking club at Princeton, either. The Geology Department did organize a trip to the Adirondack Mountains in New York state, but apart from that, I haven't as yet seen much of the big wide wonderful U.S.A. This state of affairs is about to be rectified. Shortly I'm flying back to the west coast (San Francisco) and will do a grand tour for three weeks or so. I hope to meet John Holmes either at or near San Francisco.

10th August

San Juan de los Morros

There has been considerable delay I am continuing this letter. You will no doubt be interested to hear something about Venezuela. If it is not too late, and you have a couple of spare pages in Heybob, you might care to include something. If not, it could go in Mini Heybob or Heybob 1970 (the earliest article received ever).

I'm down here to do some field work for my dissertation which forms part of the Ph.D. requirements at Princeton. There exists a rather strange but very beneficial arrangement with the Venezuelan mines department (Ministerio de Minas e Hidrocarburos). I am actually employed (and paid) by them, but the work I do can be used for my dissertation. Naturally, a great deal of laboratory work has to be done in Princeton. This will occupy me during the last year or so of my stay, probably from 1970 onwards.

I've thoroughly enjoyed my stay down here. One hears all sorts of terrifying reports beforehand, but most turn out to be highly exaggerated.

Venezuela is most prosperous country in South and Central America. There is one reason – oil. I think this country is the largest exporter of crude oil in the world. Not surprisingly, the wealth is distributed very unequally, but the situation seems to be improving since the constitution and the republic have been stable. I suspect it was much worse under the dictators. There are quite a number of people who earn their living by begging, but there are beggars on the streets of New York, also.

The thing that impressed me most about Caracas, the capital, was the traffic. In a city the size of Sydney, the only transport is by car and bus. The streets are narrow, collisions frequent. If there are any road rules, except every man for himself, I haven't been able to discern them. There are traffic lights at many intersections, but these are no help, as everybody disregards them. Driving through red lights is a popular practice. If you stop at one, the drivers behind get most impatient, and show it in no mean fashion. The gestures of Venezuelan drivers are quite indescribable. Caracas has its slum, but T.V. antennae protrude from nay of these "houses".

Venezuela is about half the size of Queensland, and mountainous along the northern coast (Cordillera de la Costa) and in the west (Andes). The centre is the Llanos (plains), and the south-east is the Gran Sabana (Angel Falls and all that).

I've been working at the southern edge of the Cordillera de la Costa, based in San Juan de la Morros, the capital of Guarico state. San Juan is a concrete statue 82 feet high. The Morros are limestone crags which overlook the town. They are mainly vertical, with faces up to 500 feet high.

The country in the region surrounding San Juan is green. The hills (up to 3000 feet) are covered by low, green grass, only in the valley is there thick vegetation. The best exposures of rock occur along the creeks, so I spend most of my time wandering through scrub that isn't too different from Queensland rain forest. Makes me feel quite at home.

North of San Juan, in the higher parts of the Coastal Range, there are magnificent rain forests. I was most impressed, but I'm told that you ain't seen nothing till you venture to the Gran Sabana, or along the Orinoco River, and wrestle with 19 foot anacondas. I'm coming back next year, and one place I'm certainly going is to the Caraima Lagoon, on the edge of the Gran Sabana, and not far from the Angel Falls. Photos I've seen indicate that it is the most beautiful spot on earth. Another inviting place is Merida, in the Andes. Bolivar Peak just tops 5,000 meters (16,000 feet). Would make a good climb, especially since there's a cable car to an adjoining 15,000 foot peak.

The rain forests in the Coast Range certainly look fine, but I gather that one doesn't go merrily tripping through them without a great deal of caution. I've read recently that Australia has more species of venomous snakes than any other continent, but none of them sounds quite as nasty as the Tigre Mariposa, which inhabits the high rain forests. I have also seen signs reading "Peligro! Zona de peste bubonica" in some areas of rain forest. Peligro is translator as "danger".

In the area where I've been working near San Juan, there is nothing worse than numerous garrapatas (ticks), and various other biting insects. I thought I was going to be enveloped by a swarm of bees one day, when a small green bird appeared, with wings vibrating furiously. I assume it was a hummingbird. There are monkeys in the area, but I'm quite used to them now, since there are three who come to visit at the house I rent. Very amusing, but it becomes frustrating when your washing disappears.

The people are extremely friendly; once you've met a person, you're their friend for life. If you come back a year later, they remember you. This rather worries me, as I plan to return, and I certainly haven't got a good memory for faces.

The most important person in Venezuela is Simon Bolivar, Libertador (not liberator, but the same meaning). He's been dead 140 years, but every town, city and village in this country has a plaza Bolivar, with a statue. The size of the statue varies with the size of the town, roughly as follows: city – mounted statue; town – standing; village – bust only.

The only other thing I can think of worth mentioning is the food. Very tasty, if sometimes of doubtful cleanliness. Their coffee is the best in the world. Caracas probably has more varied and excellent restaurants than most of the larger cities which perhaps are more noted for this sort of thing. Where else can you eat bulls' testicles? I haven't tried these yet, but I am assured ...

And remember, if you decide to come to Venezuela, Spanish is an easy language to learn. Note my change of address in Princeton, to 218 B Marshall Street. Give my regards to all who might remember me.

Best wishes. Cec Murray.



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