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* THE NEWS *
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of

No. 59

..... THE MELBOURNE BUSHWALKERS

14th December, 1951.

HAPPY XMAS, BUSHWALKERS !!
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This time next week many of us will either be on the way, or will be packing the last few items for the long-planned trips to the remoter parts of the State - here's hoping the reality will be all that we've anticipated ! But however it turns out, we can be sure of enjoying ourselves, and look forward to the New Year when we can come back and compare experiences. Others of us will be looking forward to a good lazy holiday at home or at the beach, and others, alas, will have to work, but to all "THE NEWS" wishes a happy Christmas and good bushwalking in the New Year.

Club celebrations began with our Dance last week. This was really a Xmas Party this year, and all who shared it enthusiastically agreed it was a bumper success. As well as the actual dancing there was a realistic camp-fire with a formidable array of Bushwalker socks hung above it - we presumed they must be there in anticipation of a visit from Santa Claus. Our hopes were fulfilled when, after some camp-fire songs, "Mummy and Daddy Xmas" arrived and distributed presents from the Christmas Tree to everyone present. All were appropriate walking gifts - we make special mention of the light-weight outfit presented to the President: a box of various commodities, all packed in good solid glass jars ! (Ask Marie and Lorraine what it feels like to distribute "alms to the poor at Christmas-tide" !)

Tonight we'll be continuing to celebrate with our traditional Marie-made Christmas cake, which will be cut in the Clubroom at supper time. Thankyou, Marie.

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" W A L K ", 1952

arrived from the printer last week, and many members have already bought a copy and enjoyed the many interesting articles . The cover, with full-page photograph, is one to be proud of, and will present a challenge in future years to equal it - it should certainly appeal to the general public who will see it displayed in bookshops and be attracted to buy it. (N.B. Members are asked to buy copies for themselves and their friends in the Clubroom and save the "middleman's profit", 33 1/3%) Fred Soutter is our Sales Manager, and will be pleased to sell you as many as you like. Each year there are a few members who make a great effort and sell a big number among acquaintances outside the Club - we noticed one or two going out with a couple of dozen under their wing last Friday - and we hope others will follow their example. We suggest you have a few spare copies with you when you're on holidays, and bring it to the notice of likely buyers whom you may meet in your travels.

Editor, Norma Richards, is to be congratulated on producing this fine issue, and we must also thank contributors of articles and photos for their support.

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NOTICE OF MOTION:

Gerda Schwerin has informed the Secretary that at the next General Meeting (January 25th) she intends to move the following:

"Nominations for office-bearers and committee members shall be made in writing by proposer and seconder, and such nomination paper shall also be signed by the nominee. Nominations shall be in the hands of the Returning Officer not later than seven days prior to publication of the last "NEWS" preceding the Annual General Meeting. The names of nominees shall be published in the above-mentioned edition of "THE NEWS".

"In case of failure to receive the required nominations, these shall be called for at the Annual General Meeting prior to the elections."

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The Clubroom will be open every Friday as usual during the holidays, but there will be no General Meeting at the end of December.

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NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

We were sorry that George McKinnon was unable to show his films as we had hoped, but as it happened there were two matters which roused considerable interest, and it was lucky that no time limit had to be placed on discussion.

The matter of a new Clubroom at 161 Flinders Lane (which was outlined in the November "NEWS") was very fully discussed, and it was finally moved that the Committee be empowered to proceed with negotiations to share the top floor of 161, and to investigate the possibilities of having the matter handled by the Federation. As it may be necessary for us to change our Club night, a show of hands was taken to gauge members' preferences, taking each day of the week in turn, and although a proportion were strongly in favour of retaining Friday night, the majority were impartial. The Committee will bear this, and other points raised during discussion, in mind when any arrangements are being made.

An appeal from Gerhardt and Vilma Harant to be allowed join the Christmas trip to Bogong High Plains, although they had not booked on the trip by the time the list was closed, caused considerable discussion, but the meeting finally voted that the appeal be allowed.

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FROM THE WALKS SUB-COMMITTEE:

IMPORTANT: Will all those taking part in extended trips take note of the C O N T A C T ' S for the Christmas - New Year period. In event of any unexpected delay the leader of a party will endeavour to get word through to the Contact, who will then be able to pass on information to parents or others, and save anxiety.

DECEMBER 22nd - 26th Mrs. Coutts, WX3910
DEC. 27th - Jan. 3rd Gordon Coutts, WFL372

A FURTHER REMINDER : Make sure you have your MAPS, COMPASS, SNAKE-BITE and FIRST AID OUTFITS. These are as essential as any other part of your equipment.

SPARE A THOUGHT for our hard-worked Program Organizer, Lloyd Reynolds. He is busy now, and will be during the holidays, preparing the Autumn Program - is your name among those of volunteers to lead walks? Can you suggest a new walk, or a variation of an old one, suitable to the season? Anzac Day and the Easter period are times to which he especially draws your attention. See him in the Clubroom. ring him at home or drop him a line. He won't knock you back on any walk suggested, even up to 15 months ahead.

While mentioning the Program - have you made note of the correction of date for Heinz Wolff's walk, which is on January 7th. Don't forget to bring swimming togs.

NEW YEAR WEEKEND WALKS - Those who would be interested in a one-day or two-day trips at this time should get in touch with Heinz Wolff, who is arranging a walk and invites anyone interested to join him. (Tel. U2678)

EQUIPMENT OFFICER - Tom Stoodley has agreed to take on this job, and has been busy issuing and looking after equipment. We'd like to thank Harold Soutter for the work he did before resigning.

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OPENING OF THE BATHING BOX, SANDRINGHAM .

When it was arranged that the Club Bathing Box was to be officially opened for the season on Dec. 9th, no one guessed that it would happen quite the way it did. The eight and a half members present enjoyed a warm morning on the beach, but later heavy rain drove them inside - and suddenly part of the floor disappeared, and the box was literally as well as officially opened! As his pram descended towards the sand, Master Peter Baker went on record with the following sage comment, "No good."!

Willie, our Bathing Box Manager, reports that several of the bearers have rotted and will have to be replaced, but meantime it can be used, with care. The number of the box is 799 - directions for getting to it were in last month's "NEWS".

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CLUB CHRISTMAS CARDS

Tonight is your last opportunity of obtaining Club Christmas cards, so don't forget about them. As there will be a Committee Meeting during the evening, Fay will not be in the Clubroom until after nine, but anyone wanting to get them before that can enquire from Bobbie Soutter when collecting "THE NEWS". (Price 6d for card and envelope.)

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REMEMBER : "A MATCH MAY BE DOWN BUT NOT OUT !"

DO YOUR SHARE TO PREVENT BUSHFIRES!!

There is no need to draw your attention to the disastrous fires that have already caused so much damage in Australia this year. But we do remind you that the risk is especially bad this season, with high grass and prolific undergrowth, and every threat of a hot summer ahead. Slight carelessness, or under-estimation of consequences, may be the start of uncontrollable fires - as a Club we must be beyond reproach in the care we exercise with our use of fire. This means that every individual walker must be aware of his responsibility. Before lighting a camp-fire, clear the area around it of all inflammable material. When you light it keep it small - those who jeer at the "blackfellow's fire" should recall the saying, "The bigger the fool, the bigger the fire" and remember, anyhow, that the small fire cooks your food more efficiently. Never leave even the "safest" fire unattended. And put it out thoroughly when you are finished with it - stamp it out, saturate it with water (we don't suppose you'd have beer to spare anyway!), and cover it with earth.

AND NOW ABOUT SNAKES

Snakes have been seen on two or three walks lately, and those who have seen them have been impressed with their speed of movement. (No doubt the snake could have made the same remark about them, as they retreated from the encounter!) Those taking part in summer walks are urged to take all reasonable precautions. Keep a careful eye on the track ahead, even if you are following other walkers - on a recent trip half a dozen of the party had walked over a snake, partly hidden in short grass, before it was noticed, and it was just luck that none of them had trodden on it. In attempting to kill a snake, use a green stick, as a dry one will probably break as you whack it down, and then you'll have the problem of dealing with a reptile whose temper has been in no way improved by your attack on it. Don't try to kill a snake which is in an inaccessible position - you're not likely to succeed in doing anything but put it in an ugly frame of mind. If, in spite of precautions, the very rare thing occurs and someone is bitten, act immediately by applying the ligature, which you will be carrying in a position where it is available for instant use, then use the razor blade to induce copious bleeding about the bite. If you don't know exactly what to do, find out before your next trip - it may be the crucial one.

ALONG THE TRACK

We hope that most of the January "NEWS" will be taken up with descriptions under this heading, as, with the co-operation of leaders, we hope to publish an account of all the extended trips, and others that take place between now and then.

During the last month we've had some remarkable contrasts in weather - some have been very lucky, some maybe will be luckier next time! Kitty Mitchell was among the lucky ones, for she and her party of twelve had ideal weather for their weekend in the Brisbane Ranges. It was quite an eventful weekend, beginning with a climb up the Bluff, which seems to consist entirely of brown basalt thickly covered with Scotch thistles - Jock, needless to say, was in his element! This led to several miles of walking across grass-covered plateau, which was decorated not only with fences, but with double fences (about six feet apart) trimmed with plenty of barbed wire. It was here, too, that they found a real snake-in-the-grass, which was despatched with well-aimed lumps of rock, and for a while members of the party could be observed stepping very carefully! When time to camp arrived, it was seen why the leader had turned up carrying nothing but a strange fat sausage-like bundle slung over one shoulder and under the other arm - she was travelling commando-style (no tent, no pack, no sleeping bag) and this thing was a groundsheet containing her provisions for the trip. With a good log fire for warmth she slept like a log, she said.... The Brisbane Ranges provide contrast in scenery - dry tree-clad spurs, leading up to level areas covered with large "black-boys" or grass-trees, or with scrub and timber, where many varieties of orchids were seen in large groups, or leading steeply down to rocky-bedded streams with peaceful grassy banks. It was in such an idyllic place that the party stopped for lunch on Sunday - a grassy stretch, tree-shaded, with the babble of a cascade from the creek a few yards away. Later, they were thrilled to come on a koala at the base of a large gum-tree, which he quickly ascended as the walkers approached. On the Saturday of this weekend a good party of Bushwalkers were busy at the Sydenham Wildflower Sanctuary, weeding, and admiring the results of previous work done there. On the Sunday Des Tubridy led a party of 19 from Croydon to Wonga Park and back to Lilydale, and encountered plenty of fences and plenty of cattle on the way - strange to say, no one was gored by a bull, but we did hear something about a very dead cow. The party was called on to execute quite a feat - namely, to cross a creek about twelve feet wide and deep enough to make them do it, on two wires, walking on the lower one, and hanging on (like grim death, no doubt!) to the upper, with the two wires showing a decided inclination to stretch in opposite directions as the voyager reached the middle. There was a movie camera on the spot, so we look forward to seeing this in the Club some time. (So that you won't be disappointed when the time comes, we'll tell you now - no one fell in.)

STILL ALONG THE TRACK

The following weekend provided perfect weather for the party of thirteen, led by Mario Juszczak, on the Cathedral Range trip. On the Saturday they climbed the Sugarloaf, where they met large parties from the University Mountaineers and the Men's Club, and had a very pleasant spot for the night's camp. Next day they went without packs to the Cathedral Peak, getting splendid views, and back to camp for lunch before returning to Buxton.... On the Sunday Ron Eaton took a party of 18 back to one of our old haunts, St. Helena, for a pleasant day's walk. Ron had done the right thing, and previously asked permission from various landowners to pass through private property. One old chap had been particularly pally, and very willing for Ron and party to pass through. So he confidently led on when they came to this place, only to be confronted by a very irate owner who ordered them off the property in such terms that they all made haste for the nearest exit - which just shows you (we're not sure what!) It's reported that at one stage he had to maintain discipline by throwing a mug of water over one of the girls... well! Lorraine Richey's weekend was a memorable one. It started off well, for after walking a short distance along the road the whole party was offered a lift on a beautiful lorry, which saved them several miles' road-bashing. This led to an early lunch, then an afternoon of steady climbing as the road wound through the hills, past at least one lovely gully of tree-forms and beech trees, to a good camp at Starling's Gap. Next morning, away before 8.30, the party started immediately along the once-lovely Ada Valley, now spoiled by logging operations during the last couple of years - where once the graceful beeches grew, shaded by towering gums, with the clear waters of the Ada River sparkling through grassy banks, now great logs lie across the stream, the beeches are broken and exposed, and the way is difficult. The old timber tram line which provides the route is badly overgrown, both along the Ada Valley and down the High Lead, and the party spent a great part of Sunday, head-down, ramming a way through the scrub. Some variety - we couldn't say relief - was provided by crossing the many old bridges, some 15 or 20 feet high, all in disrepair, with many gaps revealing the depths below. Some of the girls found a helping (male) hand steadied the nerves! Many wild bushes were in flower, mostly white, except for the delightful-smelling mint bush. Although this trip is famous for its snakes, only two were killed - one by Norm Freeman in the vanguard, one by Ken Grant in the rear..... Willie Baxter's Maroonah trip on the Sunday attracted 21 to enjoy it. The leader is proud to say that they returned to the pick-up spot punctual to the second, and the van arrived at the same moment. After a short stay in Lilydale for refreshments on the way home, they were hailed by the weekend party and, since Mr. Gronow had sent the big van, were able to make room for them to travel to the city..... Last weekend brought far from good bushwalking weather, but Horst's weekend party of 20 enjoyed the Donna Buang trip in spite of it. (Horst looked up the rainfall report and found that Warburton had had 212 pts. in 48 hours!) But they were in Millgrove in time to meet the van at 5 o'clock sharp - just as well, as the van broke down at Burke Road, and the party had to find their way home by tram and bus..... Joan and Jim Dyall were at Flinders Street to meet the moonlight walkers, but there weren't any. However, Joan and Jim had their moonlight walk after all, as in searching for possible walkers on the Ferntree Gully Train they missed their own train home, and had to walk to Marumbeena - they made it by 3 a.m..... Earl Lavender took over John Palmer's walk on the Sunday, and started off with 13. But Frank Burt and his companion went to change before getting the bus to Sassafras - and so didn't get the bus, but apparently no one noticed this until the bus was well on its way. The party waited at Sassafras for some time in the hope these two would get a lift and join them, but had to give it up. The morning's walk was good, and lunch was just over when the rains came, so they bid Silvan Dam adieu, and 8 made for the bus while three stalwarts walked to Lilydale.

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PERSONAL*** "THE NEWS" has lost one of its sub-committee members in Kitty Mitchell, who left for New Zealand on the "Wanganella" on November 29th. She left Melbourne by the "Spirit" the previous day, farewelled by no fewer than 8 men and two girls from the Club. However Bobbie Sautter, who was co-opted some time ago and has been doing a good job on the distribution, will carry on.

**** Tess Maddison was welcomed back by several Club members when she arrived in Melbourne last Sunday, and we'll be happy to see her in the Clubroom with us tonight. We hear she's full of beans, and glad to be back after 20 months abroad.

**** Pam Abbott received a hail when she came into the Clubroom a couple of weeks ago. She also had just returned from overseas, and was also looking very well and lively.

**** Yet another traveller due to return is Betty Horsley, still in Switzerland at the moment, but leaving Naples on Christmas Eve, and arriving in Melbourne on the "Orcades" on January 16th.

**** Nancy Morgan is due to leave for twelve months in the United Kingdom and Europe early in February.

**** A certain Club member was at the scene of an accident on the Wood's Point Road. One of the victims appeared to have a fracture, and our member, having studied First Aid, knew that one of the first rules was on no account to move such a patient. However, a rather carelessly dressed individual pushed forward, and started to pick him up. "Hey, you mustn't do that," says our member. "Wait till the Doctor comes." "Get out of the way, will you," was the reply. "I am the doctor!!"

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LIBRARY

Do you want to borrow something from the Club Library for holiday reading? We have current and past numbers of "WALKABOUT" and "WILD LIFE", and many volumes of "The National Geographic Magazine". See Librarian, Keith Murray. Keith tells us that a most interesting article is to be found in the November "WALKABOUT", dealing with aboriginal lore about snakes; which is not only informative but good reading matter. In "WILD LIFE" there is an interesting article centred about the old Tonnangatta Station, and especially interesting to those who have done trips in this area.

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SO LONG IT'S BEEN GOOD TO KNOW YOU!

(Sung to the tune of this popular song, with the camp-fire congregation joining in the chorus, this was first launched at the last Barbecue at Mt. Disappointment.)

We came to a river with sides rough and steep,
I looked at the water, 'twas fifteen feet deep.
The leader said, "Come on, let's give it a go,
The water's quite clean, 'cos it's just melted snow!"

Chorus: I said, "So long, it's been good to know you. (Repeat twice)
It's along time since I left home,
And I've got to be drifting along."

We walked fifteen miles in the fog and the rain,
We climbed up the hills and we climbed down again,
And when we got through to the north of Mt. Slide,
The leader said, "Sorry, we're on the wrong side!"

Chorus: We said, "So long"

We came to a clearing with trees all around,
With a rippling stream, and grass on the ground.
We put down our packs and we hoped we could camp
But the leader said, "Come on, there's four miles to tramp."

Chorus: We said, "So long....."

We walked for a week in the bush near Glen Wills,
Then came to a township surrounded by hills.
The leader said, "Right boys, we'll tackle the scrub."
But we all hung back, for we'd just seen the pub!

Chorus: And said, "So long,"

I'll end with a word of advice to you all
In case into difficulties you should fall:
If the leader starts putting the spurs into you,
You just shoulder your pack, and you bid him adieu!

Chorus: Saying, "So long,"

(Apologies to the long-suffering race of leaders - we hope they'll allow us the indulgence of Poet's Licence for the sentiments expressed! They'll be pleased to know there are a few more verses not about leaders, which we'll publish in the future.)

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GREETINGS FROM OVERSEAS

We've just received a card from Jill Butcher with Christmas wishes to all Bushwalkers - it's a most attractive photograph of Stybarrow Crag, from Ullswater. Have a look at this and other cards which we generally receive - they'll be displayed on the notice-board in the Clubroom.

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* S P E C T A C L E S *
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