



2/2 COMMANDO COURIER

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Editorial

The Value of Country Conventions

Having just completed another convention at Katanning it appears a propitious moment to make an evaluation of this type of Reunion.

There can be no doubt in anybody's mind that there is a ton of enjoyment to be had by those who attend. The city folk who travel to these functions have a marvelous time and this is proven by the number who go to the various conventions year after year. It also appears that the country folk who make the effort to be in it also have a wonderful time. Naturally it depends largely on the area chosen just how many country people can be in it. Also there is the factor that most of the work in organising these functions falls on very few and therefore we have to consider the point of view of these particular people.

The original idea of the Country Convention was to take the Association to the country members. A case of "When Mahomet can't come to the mountain, the mountain must go to Mahomet".

It was felt that for the Association to be complete it was necessary

to include everybody in it over a reasonable period and if the boys in the bush couldn't make it to the city then at least some of the city folk would go to the bush. Generally speaking the idea has worked out admirably for both parties. Basically we had got many new ideas for the future conduct of the Association from these get-togethers and to be able to meet our country lads on their own ground is a wonderful thing.

The only second thoughts on the subject arise from the fact that so few of the country people have to do all the work and this can be a bit of an imposition. Unfortunately it is difficult to get reaction to this facet as the hosts are always reluctant to express contrary views.

It is certain that if the proposition was left to the city visitors these Conventions would go on for ever but as an Association we must be sure that the country folk are also just as deeply in favour. Perhaps this will afford an opportunity to members to advise us of their thoughts on this matter as one thing we do not want to do is impose on good hospitality.

**CHILDREN'S PICNIC
YANCHEP — 6th DECEMBER**

West Australian Whisperings

Association Activities

NOVEMBER MEETING

For once we made a departure from the normal and this meeting took the form of a look over the A.B.C. Radio and Television studio in Adelaide-tce., Perth. This was arranged by Geo. Fletcher who is employed as a set maker in the staging section of the television studios. Unfortunately owing to your Editor being a bit on the tardy side the "Courier" did not arrive in time to put everybody in the picture and so the roll up was a bit on the light side.

The tour which was most properly conducted was highly informative and we were shown what is said to be the most modern radio and television set up in the Southern Hemisphere. The various studios, and there appears to be dozens of them, are the acme of modernity and working conditions are marvelous. The record library and the index methods used are an eye opener. The various recording set ups have everything.

The tour of the television studio also included a look at a show being produced. This also included a good look at Geo. Fletcher's particular domain. All in all the visit was a complete success and there should be more of it.

We adjourned back to Anzac House after the tour and found quite a few of the gang ensconced around a nutmeg and enjoying their evening too. We promptly settled in to help them lower the contents and so bring a little more cheer to a good evening.

We would like to thank the A.B.C. for making us so welcome and especially Geo Fletcher who made the arrangements.

COUNTRY CONVENTION

The long weekend of 14-16 November saw the city contingent descend on Katanning for our first Convention in that area. Those making the trip were Arthur and Beryl Smith, Len and Dot Bagley, Jack and Norma Hasson, "Spriggy" McDonald, Geo. Fletcher, Ted

Loud (who was in Perth on holidays) and Col Doig. Not a big party but fairly representative.

After a leisurely trip, which included sight seeing at a few historic old hosteleries we eventually made Katanning by 6 p.m. in time for dinner. After dinner mine host the publican, Frank Southern, threw open the Commercial Room for our convenience and Bert Burges had arranged for a pianist to be there to provide music. On arrival at Katanning we were greeted by Ron Sprigg who was down from Albany, and Alf Hillman and his good wife Elsie. Bert Burges couldn't make it because sinus trouble.

Later on in the evening as the result of phone calls Geo Timms made it and we were tickled pink to see him. The President and Vice President of the Katanning R.S.L. and their wives also attended. This proved to be a real crackerjack evening in which every one enjoyed themselves till midnight.

Sunday was another day. Col Doig reckoned he was just a light shandy this side of the rats.

Breakfast saw Bert Burges and family move in and greet the mob just as the snappers and eggs hit the table. After breakfast half the gang did a sight seeing tour of Katanning while the rest went to Bert's farm for a look-see. Bert showed us his water set up and his contouring and all over the place including the sheep dogs and goats and kittens.

Back to the hotel for a couple before lunch then after lunch the big meeting. Tony Bowers and wife Carol made it from Kojonup (couldn't make it the night before had to take the kids to the drive-in, only place big enough for Tony to see the pictures), Alf Hillman, Bert Burges and of course Ron Sprigg. A very successful meeting ensured ably chaired by Arthur Smith.

Quite a few good ideas originated from this informal discussion.

After the meeting a few more noggins then we repaired to Alf Hillman's property for a barbecue and to do our best to quit a "ten".

Alf has a nice place and was

rightfully proud of his new shearing shed replete with ribbons won at the shows over the years (78 in all). His good wife, Elsie, reckons it ought to be good as it takes the place of the house she thought she was going to get.

Hasson about this time was howling for grog so Alf headed into Broomehill and returned with the cool "ten". Then to a tea-cum-barbecue that was fit for royalty. Food to burn. The steak so good that even the worst barbecuers couldn't ruin. Fruit salad, chicken and you name it we had it. What a performance. Elsie you are a beauty and don't let anybody ever tell you different, you take all those ribbons and trophies of Alf's all for this one performance. Boy those strawberries!! Even Ted Loud reckoned Pemberton couldn't do better and he is in the big timber country. Elsie you earn our undying gratitude for the greatest personal effort of the century so take a bow and then a hundred more. You deserve them in a big way.

While we were at Alf Hillman's Alf Blundy joined us for a couple of hours and it was good to see him once again. What a night! Everybody in top form and laughs a plenty. Yours Truly pounded Carol Bowers' ear unmercifully but she seemed pleased to take it.

Home to the hotel and then next day we wended our way home via other scenic attractions all of which are perfectly set up to cater for the needs of the weary wayfarer in the way of alcoholic fluids and in the words of Samuel Pepys "And so to bed".

What a weekend!! Most lost but so gorgeously enjoyable. Have never laughed so much for years. Will be two months trying to recover especially with Christmas looming up but can assure you it was worth it and I'd repeat it again in a couple of months.

Committee Comment

The usual monthly Committee meeting was held at Anzac House on Nov. 17 and once again we had a top attendance and were pleased to welcome Ted Loud along to take part.

Main business was arranging for

the working bee in Kings Park to lay the kerbing. This was fixed for Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 28 and 29, and it is hoped that this job will be completed in this weekend.

A special sub-committee to arrange the Children's Picnic at Yanchep on Sunday, Dec. 6, was formed and it was left in their hands to straighten out this fixture.

The President gave a resume of the tour of the A.B.C. and also the Country Convention at Katanning which were both voted world beating successes.

Personalities

Firstly from Your President, Executive and of course your Editor we wish all the best for the coming festive season and hope the New Year will bring you all that you can possibly imagine even unto winning the lottery.

Ted Loud has been in town for over a week (what a week!) getting dental attention and giving your Editor an attack of the jitters (lager induced). He had a wonderful time at the Katanning Convention and was one of those who were the life of the party. He has now returned to Pemberton. My nerves are gradually subsiding and I will be pleased if he omits me from his next schedule.

What a couple Jack and Norma Hasson! With Yours Truly and Ted Loud in tow we did the greatest trip in history. The enjoyment was colossal. Thanks a million both of you.

The Bagleys, Len and Dot, especially that Len, should not be allowed out without due warning to all comers that you are liable to splutter in the soup as Bags drops some witticism. He never stopped having the gang in stitches.

Athur and Beryl Smith had a wonderful time. Beryl especially gaining fantastic information from Bert Burges on his dams, contours, salt patches. Thanks for the sandwiches and salad Beryl at the Williams, they were really acceptable. Have assured him that he will be on the mailing list from henceforth

Inevitably met Don Turton of course and had a couple and we in company with Ted Loud and Leo

"Spriggy" MacDonald and Geo Fletcher were the terrific twins of the Convention and boy did they have a good time. "Sprig" a bit subdued on Sunday morning for very good reasons, but he was my life saver on a couple of occasions early in the morning with the medicine that makes the difference

It was good to see Ron Sprigg with the gang. He had a great time and is trying to sell us on the idea of a Convention at Albany in the near future. He looks real well if a little on the lean side.

Alf Hillman never stopped laughing the whole time except when the gang insulted him over his bridge work. He and Elsie were hosts par excellence and were the ones who made the Convention really tick.

Bert and Marie Burges also did their bit towards the success of the show. Bert by ill luck, had a bad sinus attack and couldn't fully move into the scheme of things.

Tony and Carol Bowers looked in wonderful form and the big man looks bigger than ever. He and Ted Loud really bashed one another's ears while Yours Truly gave Carol a cauliflower ear. We think we have them sold on the Great Safari East when it occurs.

Alf Blundy looks a bit lean but otherwise in good nick. He is back at Katanning and still earning a living shearing woolly backs. Said he had spent a hectic night in Fremantle with Mick Morgan at the Fremantle Club.

Geo Timms also looks as ever in great fettle. Pity we couldn't have seen more of him but apparently he is an ultra busy man.

Bill Epps recently saw Syd Jarvis who is now at Muchae. Syd is looking a bit on the thin side and is suffering badly with arthritis but still manages a wry smile. Syd has promised some oranges for the children's picnic. Thanks a million old timer.

Another in town for a bit of treatment and seen for the first time for ages was Leo Criddle who is ganger at Three Springs. Had more than my fair share of grog with Leo and Ted Loud and between us the pace was a bit hectic. Leo has a bad arm and was receiving medical treatment for this.

Criddle went down to see Mick Calcutt at Hollywood.

Saw Fred Sparkman briefly the other day and he looks terrific. Always big framed he has now filled out considerably and is a really big man. Still manages an easy laugh and in that he hasn't altered a scrap.

STOP PRESS

Just as we were going to press news has come to hand that our old mate, Mick Calcutt, passed away this morning, Nov. 26, at 4 o'clock. We will give further details next issue.



Heard This?

NO HUNGER — JUST THIRST

A young lovely was having her house painted, and when she got up one morning she noticed a spot where her husband had leaned against the door jamb.

She called downstairs to the painter: "Would you come up here a minute? I'd like to show you where my husband put his hand last night."

"If it's all the same to you, lady," he replied, "I'll settle for just a glass of beer."

* * *

Then there was the Aussie soldier who was about to be led before the firing squad.

"You have five minutes of grace before you die," said the officer in charge.

"Okay," said the Aussie, "bring her in."

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Random Harvest

JOE BURRIDGE, again writes from "Overseas":—

I last wrote from Lucerne in Switzerland and since then we have come a long way. We had another wonderful train trip via Zurich to Innsbruck in Western Austria. It was in Innsbruck that we really experienced snow. The first snows arrived six weeks early and it didn't do it in half measures. Halfway up to the pass, near the Grossglockner, we were turned back. They had three metres—or over 10 feet—of snow.

The next morning we awoke to find heavy snow falling in Innsbruck itself. I have been 46 years without experiencing snow and how wonderful it is the first time. Every tree is a Christmas tree and the scenery, beautiful before, becomes a veritable fairyland.

That morning we reluctantly left Innsbruck, by train again, en route for Venice. We went over the Dolomites through the Brenner Pass. Snow was thick until just on the Italian side of the Pass. Those with a knowledge of physical geography will understand it but I'm a bit clueless at that stuff: as soon as we started down the southern slopes of those Alps the snow started to diminish and very soon petered out.

From that point on we were in Italian fruit country and it continued all the way through a series of mighty valleys to Bolzano and, seemingly without interruption to Venice.

Venice, as the guide books will tell you, comprises 118 islands, which are separated by 160 canals and joined by 400 tiny bridges. What the guide books don't tell you is that there are about 118 different smells too! However, once you get used to this you can start to appreciate this amazing city. Soon, regretfully, you find you have to get used to something else which stinks and that is the everlasting tipping problem. It has now reached shocking proportions in Italy: for example, every restaurant adds from 12½ to 17½ per cent to your bill to cover "service". Just try to leave without giving an extra 10 to 20 per cent! of course you CAN refuse the ex-

tra tip but you'll be sorry you did. Then there are always two blokes to pick up every case and they all expect something. The gondoliers are reputedly the biggest ratbags or all and perpetually cheat and flumox the weary and perplexed tourist.

Italy, which has so much to offer, has followed France and is kicking the tourist to death. More and more rackets are starting up; the quick substitution of Spanish notes for Italian notes, which does not succeed with the average traveller but apparently has great success with the few unwary or careless people. Two menus with different scales of charges in restaurants. Rigged tabulating machines in hotels. Pick pockets, counterfeit money, the gold watch con. game, etc. Of course I haven't experienced all these but I have been "tried out" twice by hotel cashiers when changing a travellers cheque. Once he made a bit of a mistake—about 10 per cent, and on another occasion gave me the equivalent of 10 dollars instead of £10 stg.

Despite these drawbacks, Italy is still a wonderful place for the tourist. The climate is very diverse and ranges from Perth climate in the south to snow and bitterly cold winters in the north. The shops are the most magnificent in Europe and offer a tantalising array of every conceivable merchandise, however prices are now very high—some say the highest in Europe.

We saw a glass factory in Venice and what those craftsmen can turn out with two simple instruments, a hollow steel tube and a pair of pliers is just amazing.

We enjoyed the gondola rides but the exorbitant rates took the pleasure out of it. We did enjoy the historical side of Venice—the ancient buildings and churches, the absolutely magnificent St. Marks Square and St. Marks Church, the Doges Palace, the clock built in 1499 which works on the original machinery (with maintenance and replacements of course). We saw the Bridge of Sighs leading to the prison dungeons and the Rialto bridge—a stone structure replac-

ing the wooden one which spans the Grand Canal. You remember "The Merchant of Venice"? — "What news on the Rialto, Good Tubal?" Venice is sinking at the rate of three inches per 100 years so they're no need to worry for some time yet!—although St. Marks Square is a foot under water every morning during winter.

After Venice came Florence with its amazing art treasures — churches and museums with sculptures, paintings, pescoes and the wonderful magazine work. We saw the leaning tower of Pisa, which despite foundations of only 10 feet and a height of 157 feet, has a lean of eight deg. from the perpendicular—that's one for Bernie Callinan. It's keeling over one twenty-fourth of an inch every year and the experts reckon it will collapse in 2027 if allowed to.

We came from Venice to Florence to Rome to Naples by motor-coach which is far superior to the train travel in Italy. An English-speaking guide goes with each coach and you visit centres of interest en route—such as Assisi (ref. St. Francis). Of perhaps most interest in Florence was the visit to the birthplace of Leonardo da Vinci and seeing the original plans and modern working models of his most famous inventions. He was surely at least four hundred years before his time. Imagine a man over 500 years ago preparing blue prints for an army tank, a machine gun, a man directed glider, etc.—no wonder the people of his home town are so proud of him.

In Rome we did nothing else but sight-see. St. Peters—surely the most breathtaking sight in the world, the Colosseum, the Circus Maximus where most of the early Christians were butchered and the marvellous Pantheon. Now, how about this Pantheon; built in 27 B.C. with a big opening at the top of the dome where for 2,000 years the rain has poured through to the floor beneath. This rainwater filters through holes in the floor and is carried away in the original drains constructed 2,000 years ago. The Pantheon is the only Roman building, erected B.C., which remains in its original form (except for repairs to the floor).

We are now on Ischia, an is-

land close to Naples and Capri and the idea is to sunbake for a week. However, the weather has at long last (for the first time, actually) caught up with us and winter may just be setting in. We were to have come from Naples by helicopter but all flights were cancelled as the weather was really shocking. We therefore came by boat, and Joan wished we hadn't. I've seen old Turton a bit squeamish on a crayboat at the Murchison but he had nothing on my ball and chain on this little craft.

In a few days we go back to Naples and after two days, during which we will visit Pompeii, we will get on the boat for home. During the voyage we have shore excursions at Messina, Port Said and Aden. I will not however write any more and will sign off here. You're probably mighty sick of my scrawling anyway.

Just in conclusion. I must say that of all the 15 countries we have visited, and despite the many natural and some man made attractions they all have, my honest and definite opinion is that Australia is No. 1. Ours is a land of freedom and of opportunity, our standard of living seems to be as high if not higher than all of them. It is for us to avoid the mistakes of others and continue doing what we have done in the past—make Australia the best place on earth to live and to raise a family.

JOHN J. POYNTON, of 63 Thames Prom., Chelsea, Victoria, writes:

Sorry I did not see you as expected, but I have been very ill for months. It was our intention to be present at the unveiling of the Memorial at Albany, also Tidal, but too sick to make either.

I have just been looking up my diary. I note that the Sydney pulled out of Convoy to engage the Emden a long time ago, 50 years since I enlisted last Aug. 19.

I note that John (son) has returned to W.A.

Cheque herewith to do as you think with. Thank you for the "Courier". Always pleased to get it. All the best.

PADDY KENNEALLY, 28 Wilkins St., Yagoona, N.S.W., writes:—

I am enclosing an article I read in the "Catholic Weekly". It

gives a brief outline of life in the Bundi Crea of the Bismarcks. The problems being met, and overcome, to bring these stone age people to a level more in keeping with our age and day.

Bundi has the only fully English speaking syllabus from the word "go" for its pupils. St. Frances of Assisi Boarding School, takes in youngsters from five years onwards. The younger the better, as they find the tiny tots are quicker on the mark, assimilating knowledge and new ideas. There are dedicated lay teachers there and tradesmen, from Australia (3), Germany (2), United States (7). All giving their knowledge and part of their life to this work for the Bundi people, and doing it for nothing in the line of wages.

We, as a Unit, were more than familiar with this area. Some of these people were wounded by our booby traps or in some of our actions. For example, Bundi Joe. He must have been entitled to more wound stripes than most diggers. They served in the kai lines bringing up our supplies, or as couriers on our patrols. Well I reckon we can do something for them now by helping this school, to give their youngsters the education they will need to progress with the emerging New Guinea. By doing this we will at least be making some effort to show our gratitude to all natives for the help they gave us when it was so badly needed.

What do you reckon? Do you think, as a Unit Association, we could adopt this particular project, as a kind of war memorial dedicated to our fallen mates. Who knows, but from that particular school 50 years hence could come the future leaders of New Guinea, who could well serve Australia also. Give me a line on what you think.

I am enclosing some photos I procured about this school, plus the very sketchy article. In conclusion I wish all members of the 2/2nd a very Merry Christmas and a bright and prosperous New Year.

CURLY O'NEIL, now in London,
writes:—

You will find enclosed, new and untarnished, an Old Etonian tie.

Wear it with pride, Col, as you sing that old sweet song of the school.

You remember that song, of course. The second line goes: "The long and the short and the tall."

I have been a long time gone from that wood, two years in fact. During that time I have pushed relentlessly the cause of the U.S.O. (United Shickers' Organisation). This has been the main purpose of the trip.

Now at last I can report that the Bushies are in full retreat. In all the capitals of Europe the Townies are on the march. I even penetrated the Iron-bark curtain in Berlin and found an anti-Griffen movement flourishing.

The neon lights flicker on, symbolising the triumph of the Townies.

Well, I must acknowledge that I owe the following true Townies letters: Dick Crossing, Peter Campbell, Jack Hartley, Ron Hilliard, Buck, Bruce MacLaren, Paddy Kennedy and the Cabramatta mob. I owe others letters too. So I hope that in some way this serves as a penitential beating of the breast.

Unfortunately, my wife had to return home recently to nurse her sick parents. It was a blow to both of us. We had intended staying much longer. Being bone-headed, I decided to stay to the end of my tour of duty. At the end of next month I shall be singing Bye Bye Blackbird and flying home.

Right now I get so tied up in rather pathetic attempts at cooking, washing and ironing as a bachelor in the heart of London that my correspondence is limited.

However, the Great Griffen, King of All Bushies, can be assured that he will get his surrender ultimatum. It will be delivered to him in the nose cone of a high explosive shell. That evil black tea he is forever drinkink will come pattering down with the rain in the North Sea.

I hope to get as drunk as usual with the U.S.O. (Sydney branch) after I get back. Mind you, I don't do badly over here. The grog is better than they say, and the people have been wonderfully pleasant.

I should be starting to pack

about Christmas so there'll be no cards from me. But Happy Christmas to you—and everyone. As Tiny Tim cried: "God bless us all."

Sorry that I will not be seeing you on the way back, but I have to arrange the crushing of the last Bushie resistance in the U.S. and Pacific Islands. Forward the boys with the feathers in their hats, on with the peg-topped pants and make way for the lads in the cut-away collars. Here come the Townies. Yippee! Sorry, that's a Bushie cry.

Look after yourself. The kindest regards to all.

"Smash" HODGSON, of 14 Everard St., East Ringwood, Victoria, writes:—

May have something further, or to, that article about "Conley" and also the editor of the article, especially if it concerned a native called "Djochine" and a bee robbing expedition.

I wrote to the editor of that article a feller called Douglas Lockwood. He is Darwin (and possibly) Northern correspondent for the Melbourne Herald. For you see I was the joker who conned that native up the tree.

Under the repeated assurances of Conley, I built him his tales, because he said it would be hugely enjoyed and appreciated by his wife, who had that necessary sort of humour to appreciate the agony of Djochine in his luckless foray after that honey.

Ralph Conley came to us in that batch of sturdy stoics who trekked it from Koepang. I recall him speaking of his job of gunnery sergeant at one of the Heads but I can't remember whether his base was North, South, or Hiddle Head.

Any road, he told me he was a heavy battery man from Fortress at Sydney Heads; that he had plagued his superiors for some assignment more arduous than the sedentary job of hoisting his guns up their lift wells by their electric power, lowering them again, and all this without the right to fire them at anybody.

I gathered that Ralph possessed all the necessary virtuously righteous anger in which the guns should be discharged but the wily Jap just bided his time, sharpened his wiles—and appeared not!

Yakking it back and forth, I thought I caught profound and gloomy regret that certain officers of Ralph's regiment did not scan the seas from in front of Ralph's gun muzzles.

I am a mighty suspicious man, and constantly thinking the worst of my fellow man; but I did seem to understand that certain of his superiors were excellent second-best material to enemy ships. But ... as the man said about himself!

(I find it increasingly difficult to remember that Honi Sois junk and no one ever bothered to explain it to me, so what the hell?)

So Ralph had several wishes gratified at once. In one swoop he had shed all those Sydney slickers for postal and paper protocol, and he was decorated with a slab of coastline on the hauntingly beautiful island of Timor.

His guns, few though they were in number, had no challengers in the lineage of antiquity. Veritable heirlooms I heard him say they were. I heard him refer to the culverins of Nelson's day, but I couldn't see what wolves or she-wolves could have to do with guns although, wait a bit! Can't go on with that though. He said that he had worked it out to where enemy photographs were endless, and probably nearly accurate, as to his ability to fire the guns.

He theorised on further in what he called "abstract and academic possibilities". These appeared to be the highly probable effect of death by fright on, any, or all Japs who saw the guns go off, but then he irritated me beyond any further interest in his problem by saying that this brought him into conflict with some set of laws called "applied science and results of."

Lost interest in it I did. "Cost and values, laws of relativity, collision course of gunner's survival with problematical Jap mortality."

He also bumbled on about "calculated risk" but he had lost me long before.

Some time later we "wongied" about the guns again and he said: "Oh them! They blew my guns to—bits! I set about rebuilding them but lots of 'em seemed to be still navigating in, and through the air, and when a couple of the biggest bits of the metal jig-saw zoom

ed past I saw Massey Harris written on 'em. I merged with what seemed to be general and extremely noisy confusion. I felt I had the greatest affinity and therefore a perfect right to be in, of, and with it!"

Ralph was with my section just before the natives put the pinch on me at Bobanaro saddle. Where we tried that painfully abortive attempt to show the native apiarist just how, was quite close to the "bare marnis" the hot water which bubbles in that river approx half way between Hatolia and Atsabe.

Skipper Turton will remember that area pretty well because it is quite close to that colossal sheer rock face boulder that looms over the trail between those two towns. So would Dr. Dunkley because that big rock was quite close to the hacienda from which the Doctor and Skipper, and Anthony (Alf Grachan's credo) left to extricate that wounded man (was it Alan

Hollow?) from inside the Jap territory.

If they don't, I do, because I was staining my pants that they would ask me to go too, and I was counting the risk, and I had completely forgotten the duty. Hell, some things stick out. That one of the Doc's and Skipper's!

I still hear Skipper Turton ask Doc Dunkley: "Will we go over a plan, Doc?" The Dr. saying: "Anything you work out Don, will do me." Whereupon that bloody Doctor actually dozed off to sleep! I tried to make 14 stone look inconspicuous but I think the stripe showed because Skipper didn't ask me to go. But worst of all it showed to me.

Hey, but aren't they great racy articles from Joe BurrIDGE?

That man from Sydney who used to write the "Courier" quite a lot. I wish he'd write some more. Controversial matter must be looked at and handled. He was a treat to read.

Victorian Vocal Venturings

Once again our Melbourne Cup Sweep has come round and financially it will be a great success with increased sales both in N.S.W. and Victoria, and our thanks to all those who helped make it a success. We held the drawing at the Commando Drill Hall in Ripponlea in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting and election of office bearers, and as usual when this takes place we get a very poor response from our members which is very hard to understand. Years ago we always had a good turn-up to this function but soon as we made it the annual general meeting it has fallen away. Thirteen of our members turned up, namely Bruce McLaren, Jim Wall, Bert Tobin, Jim Robinson, George Kennedy, George Robertson, Alan Munro, Alf Grachan, Smash Hodgson, Wally Wordy, Bill Tucker, Harry Botterill and Bluey Southwell, with apologies from Bernie Callinan, Gerry McKenzie, Gerry O'Toole. So you can see that a lot of mem-

bers were very conspicuous by their absence, and as this Association is for the benefit of all members it's no wonder that the same few hard workers get very despondent and wonder if it is really worth while. So what about some real honest thought on this state of affairs and get behind the Committee and let us feel the work we do is appreciated.

The meeting took place with Bruce McLaren in the chair and as Bruce has been in the chair for three years he asked to be relieved of this position, and does so with our appreciation for a job very well done. He has held this position with distinction and I cannot recall many occasions when Bruce has not been at meetings. A real stalwart and as he said he deems it a great honour to have been President for his term. Thanks for a job well done Bruce.

Bert Tobin was elected President and we all wish Bert the very best during his term.

Vice Presidents are Bernie Callinan, Harry Botterill, Alan Munro. Secretary is Bill Tucker who volunteered for the job and we certainly thank Bill for this as most office bearers in the past have been "dobbled in", and we will be right behind Bill. Jock Campbell who has been our secretary for quite a few years has found it very hard to fit these duties in lately as he has a mixed business to run and his wife Faye has been laid up a couple of times with sickness, and Jock has done a terrific job under these circumstances and our thanks to him also.

Treasurer went to Alan Munro again a willing member and we wish him all the best in this job. Jim Wall who has done a wonderful job for quite a while is having a well earned rest and this is how it should be spreading the jobs around. Jim has been a very conscientious treasurer and we are really indebted to him for the job he has done over the years, but not to let him off the hook properly he was elected Auditor.

Trustees are the same again, Bert Tobin, Bernie Callinan, Harry Botterill. The delegate to the Commando Association is to be shared between Bruce McLaren and Bert Tobin.

So with the meeting concluded we got on with the job of drawing the sweep, and when the Commando boys came in from their parade they really made it a great crowd, as they are enjoying a very good period of recruiting at present, and are a wonderful bunch of fellows and topped off a good night for us.

We managed to get quite a bit of news from various members, mainly in N.S.W. who sent it with their ticket butts and we are very grateful to them all.

Bill Walsh, from Hempsey, N.S.W., writes to tell us that of interest to the Association is that his daughter Cheryl was a flower girl at the Diggers Ball recently and she wore the colours of the 2/2nd in the shape of a rosette red in colour outer edge trimmed with grey with two red ribbons hanging from the rosette, and he was very proud to see her carrying the old 2/2nd colours. He enclosed a snap of the Macleay R.S.L. Club with memorial in front and its a beauty

built on the bank of the Macleay River, has approx. 1,400 members. Bar trade last year was £38,000, poker machines netted £32,000. A lot of this is given to charity, Legacy, local town band, the next of kin of any member is paid £75 on his death. Seems a very well run club.

Noel Buckman had been a member until he moved down to Newcastle. Curly O'Neil, Snowy Went Bob "Beakie" Smith, and Cliff Paff have had the pleasure to visit this club. Noel Buckman's address is 206 Dunbar St., Stockton, Newcastle.

Bluey Sargent from Lake Eppalock, Axedale, Victoria, who is in charge of this lake, says he sees Kev Curran occasionally and would welcome any of the boys to drop in if they are up that way. Said it is planned to develop the reservoir and surroundings to a degree not seen in Victoria. We are planning to make an Association day outing up to see Bluey at the end of February. Members will be notified later.

Kiwi Harrison is at Bega, N.S.W. Doesn't say what he is doing but was asking for more tickets so that is a good sign.

Ken Jones wife Edith dropped a short note to thank Jim for sending up literature on the Victorian Branch activities and the Tidal River Project. They are at "Murrawalli", Edgroi, N.S.W.

Bill Holstein from Harrington, via June, sends his regards.

Betty Craig writing for Keith, from Young, N.S.W., saying that Keith enjoys the "Courier" but hates writing. Says Keith has been busy with the stud and show sheep and doesn't have much time. Would be good if it belonged to them and not someone else. They live a reasonable distance from Young, have good schooling for Phillip and Janette both of them learning music (piano) and doing quite well at sporting activities.

Kevin Curran did a mighty job selling tickets I think around £30 odd. So it was nice to see the winner going to one of his clients.

Sgt. Len Mitchell is still at Bandiana and still sells a good lot of tickets. Said he has been very busy out on the latest exercise, "Longshot". Sends his regards to all the boys.

Keith Beers from Nemur Park, Mallan, N.S.W., sent his regards to all the boys. Often sees Kevin Curran and bumped into George Kennedy at the Swan Hill races.

Theo Adams writes from Ansett M.A.L., Madang, New Guinea, that life up there goes on as usual, hot, humid and enjoyable. Had a look at Geroka show with thousands of natives wandering around in their plumes and colourings singing all night and day. May be down in Melbourne some time in November and hopes to see some of the boys

Ross Smith, of Clare, South Australia, wonders if we would remember him of 5 Section, but is still the short fat man, with a few grey hairs, but can still play four quarters of football. Has three boys who played with colts this year and they were beaten by one point in the grand final.

Bob Smith, of Point Perpendicular Lighthouse, via Nowra, writes that life is much the same for him except that the lighthouse is now running on 240 volts A.C. power and automatic, which means that it will go all night without anyone being in attendance. The change-over took nine men three months. Had a spell in Gosford hospital last Christmas and was off duty for four months. Had a burst appendix and very nearly gave up the ghost but has recovered again.

A terrific letter from "Happy" as follows: Dear Jim, no mates seen of late. No news. All well. Regards Happy. Lazy blighter. What about your move back to MacLean. What about a letter with more detail, mate?

Tom Snowdon, from Narra Bundah, Canberra. Didn't make the football finals this year as he has had his share of sickness since the beginning of September. As a matter of fact he had the chicken pox when he intended to go down to Melbourne.

Arthur Edward Earl Coats, commonly known as "Boy", is now working in Melbourne with the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission. A real "con" job if ever I heard of one. Has acquired a house at Broadmeadows, but is waiting for it to be renovated.

Paddy Kenneally, of Yagoona, N.S.W., having trouble finding his sweep tickets. We have wisdom Paddy and will take your £3 and

give you a chance to win. Knowing the luck of the Irish and you particularly mate. Hope I can meet you one of these days Paddy, as it is a long time no see.

Jim Smith, of Normanhurst, N.S.W., sends his regards. Was very sorry to get the sad news of Bill Davidson. In fact quite a lot of the boys mentioned this.

Joe Tell, of Mortdale, N.S.W., writes that he has been very busy running a sweep too as he is on the committee of the Commando Association and is organizing the trip down to Tidal River. Is also a welfare officer with the Arncliffe R.S.L. Joe is coming to Tidal River with Alfredo Dos Santos and we look forward to seeing them there.

Max Davies, from Cobram, has been out of action for a while. Was down at Heidelberg with his old leg trouble. Only expected to be a couple of days but was in for two weeks. Sorry you didn't let us know Max, as we could have called in to see you. Max had a trip to Sunny Queensland last August and met up with Bash Adams at Southport, who was in the middle of packing as he had just received word of his shift to Rockhampton. Still the same old Bashier who sends his regards to all the boys.

Also notes from Tex Richards, Dick Adams, Peter Stafford, Bill Peterson, Mick Devlin, J. Went, J. Foot, Spud Murphy, Leith Cooper, Ted Cholerton, Bob Snowdon, Stan Weppner, Jim Cullen, Doc Gallard, Alfredo Dos Santos, Les Collin, Tom Yates, Wally Kerr, George J. Smith, Bill Bennett, Alan Luby, P. S. Crow.

My personal thanks to all these good people because it is a pleasure to be able to write some lengthy news and should bring a grin to Col Doig's face.

It was with regret that we learnt that Alex Boast's wife passed away recently and I know that all members will want me to pass on their sympathies to Alex and the boys. I represented the Unit at the funeral and Margaret and Ken Monk came down from Koo-wong and I know Alex appreciated this very much.

Yours as always.

—HARRY BOTTERELL.

Historically Yours!

(Continued)

CHAPTER IV.

SOJOURN IN KAILAKUK AND SAMORO

I proceed to Fatuboi — River Motaai — Crystalline rocks — A weird village — Rare additions to my herbarium — Butterflies — Move on to the Rajah of Saiboro's — Vegetation by the way — Geological notes — Penalties of theft — Samoro — Visit Sobale Peak — Botanising under difficulties — Large herbarium — Return to Samoro and leave for Manuleo

From Saluki I proceeded with a fresh cavalcade towards Fatuboi, a conspicuous quadruple - crested mountain of remarkable configuration, in the Suku of Kailakuk. We had to commence with an inevitable descent of more than 1,000 feet, to the bed of the Motaai, which, like all the Timor rivers I had made the acquaintance of, ran in a deep bed within precipitous walls, which in some places rose nearly 300 feet in height, clothed with unfortunately for me inaccessible vegetation. After following its course for four or five hours, we turned off to the right, up the bed of a small tributary, in which I found blocks of pure white crystalline limestone, a kind of rock I had not encountered before.

Hence ascending a long steep ascent of 1,500 feet strewn with disrupted blocks of limestone, we reached the top of the mountain, and by a narrow rocky stairway winding through a belt of impenetrable jungle of thorny shrubs, were guided into the most weird spot conceivable for human habitation, into a small plateau on the summit of one of the rugged eminences of the mountain. Guarded on all sides but one, by vertical walls of limestone, the plateau was dotted about with gigantic blocks of rugged and warted coral-like limestone, against and between which dwellings standing on piles on the bare rocks, were scattered about.

To right and left rose immense rough, almost inaccessible pinnacles of the same black withered calcareous crags, riven in all directions with cracks, caverned into dark forbidding caves, and traversed by chasms many feet in width and to the sight reaching down to unfathomable depths.

In front of one of these caves an aged fig tree, adding its awesome effect, had dropped its tendrils and wound its roots into every crevice in weird and gruesome shapes. The place was just such as would overawe the timid and superstitious native mind, and I was not surprised to see that there were nearly as many Luli houses as dwellings, and that before the door of the caves stood a Luli stone on which to propitiate the spirits that haunted their gloomy recesses.

The whole summit of the mountain looked as if it had been shattered to its very foundation by some gigantic convulsion of nature. The natives told me that earthquakes, which were the result of Maromak nodding and letting the world slide off the straight for a moment, were frequent and severe.

Here I made some most curious, interesting, and very rare additions to my herbarium; the most attractive an epidendric orchid, and a beautiful species of passion-flower which overran with its bright star-like blossoms the spiny vegetation I have mentioned; while the rarest was a curious aroid, *Remusatia vivipara* growing in soilless cracks in the calcareous rocks, whose seeds, as its name implies, germinate in their capsules before dropping; and the most annoying a shrub with intensely prickly foliage, called by the people there *Silatik*—a plant much dreaded by them; for when my face was stung badly, by having come in contact with its leaves, they exhibited great concern especially for my eyes, and conducted me away from it. I tried by rubbing several succulent leaves on the affected part to allay the severe smart-

ing, till a little urchin who was following me, after shaking his head in the most significant way to say that they were no good, proceeded to pound down some of the calcereous rock into a fine powder, which he brought to me to rub into the wounds. The application was, if not curative, very cooling, but the pain did not subside for a long time.

After I had left the place I learned that it is the juice from this tree that is applied to the tips of their arrows as a poison.

Among the few butterflies I obtained I netted, with a heart palpitating with pleasure, the lovely *Cethosia lamarkii*, whose azure wings had tantalised me by flying along the front of the inaccessible cliffs of the river bed below.

The trees on the perpendicular faces of the rocks were crowded with the only mammalian animal I had yet seen, a lively grey monkey (*Macacus cynomolgus*), which chattered and squeaked most lustily at my intrusion.

With a few extra porters, necessitated by the considerable additions to my herbarium here, we started north-east for the Rajah of Samoro's, in whose territory stood the Peak of Sobale, whose summit I wished to visit.

The road thither, which like all others in this grooved and excavated island never betook itself along a plain, was a hot and weary up-and-down trudge through fields thousands of acres in extent, of tall grass and canes, sparsely dotted with bamboo clumps, with *Casuarinas*, *Acacias*, and *Euphorbiaceous* trees, which simply cumbered a vast extent of what seemed very fertile black land.

Starting at 2,500 feet above the sea, we meandered through a shallow hollow up to 2,700 feet, thence we followed a long winding descent—which, though interspersed with humps and hollows might in Timor we called level—to 1,400 feet where we struck the highway of the Fahiletan river bed which brought us 400 feet lower to the residence of his Majesty of Samoro whose son received us.

The river banks were wooded with *Casuarinas*, *Myrtles*, and *Gum trees* (which had again become abundant), interspersed with dense and impenetrable thickets of

Bamboo-durie (*Schizostachium durio*), which offered a splendid hold for the beautiful feathery *Asparagus racemosus* and the tendrils of that grand Timor lily, the *Gloriosa superba*, whose curiously coloured corolla, half scarlet, half orange (entirely changing after fecundation to scarlet), overspread its great clumps with a fiery blaze of flowers, while that once so rare and highly prized of orchids, the *Panda insignis*, rejoiced our way with its fragrance.

The strata cropping out in the river bed were quite different from any I had noticed elsewhere on my journey. They were pale gray rough crystalline sandstones in beds half a foot thick, alternating with black bands of about the same thickness of what had been once fine mud, whose lower surfaces exhibited rocks, which dipped into the river at a high angle, were in many places clearly seen to be entirely embedded after they had begun to be attacked by some eroding or denuding agency, in the horizontally laid down black shingly detritus which I have already so often referred to, plainly indicating that at some epoch not geologically very remote, they had been long submerged, as the whole of Eastern Timor seems to have been, below an arm of the sea, or possibly beneath an inland lake; and after some hundreds of feet had accumulated on them they were again subjected to elevation—which has gone on so long, and may still be progressing—that the rivers have cut their way down through hundreds of feet in height and cleared out ravines a thousand or two of feet in width. Such is the story of the strange vicissitudes of Eastern Timor revealed by the buried rocks in the valley of the Rahiletan.

At the entrance to the Rajah's compound I was startled by suddenly coming on a tall pole with a fringed triangle near its summit, the pole, as I thought at first sight, impaling a human body, and the outer corners of the triangle transfixing each a human head. These were happily only made-up representations of what at no far-back date would have been realities.

This ghastly sign-post, called a kero, had been erected as a warning to all thieves and offenders of

the dire punishment that would be mercilessly meted out to them, just as it had been (or would have been but for the intervention of European law over riding their own) to the three whose cranial effigies were exposed on the kero, who had been convicted of stealing fruit, as the bunch of cocoa- and pinang-nuts hung on a railing below them indicated.

The law of the different kingdoms is a *lex non scripta*, and thus has been handed down from generation to generation. The Leorei is judge as well as king, but acts only, however, on the rare occasions when a case is brought before him on complaint, his judgment being for the litigants always a costly boon. Every man or his family exacts justice by his own individual arm on the person or his family by whom he has been wronged. If the wrong-doer has goods or chattels on which a fine may be levied, the wronged as a rule exacts a fine in expiation.

Homicide is revenged by death, but this penalty can be averted by the payment of the equivalent in money or goods demanded by the relatives, and the substitution of some one of the offender's family to take the place of the slain.

A robber taken in the act, used to be executed on the spot—and is even now when the avenger is likely to escape punishment by the European authorities, who have rightly interfered with the old savage administration of justice in the rajahships—and if the theft consisted of a living animal the head of the animal was struck off and affixed near that of the robber on a stake.

Every crime, however small, could be avenged by death, but if the offender were sufficiently rich, they could all be expiated by a fine except two: adultery with any of the rajah's family, and the being a Swangi or sorcerer, for which the punishment—or perhaps it ought to be called cure—was impalement with all his family, and confiscation of their goods for the benefit of the accuser and of the lord of the soil.

Law and justice are to be seen in Timor, at the present day, emerging from the rudimentary stage. Hitherto each native has exercised "the right which formed the main

check upon lawless outrage, the right of private war. Justice had to spring from each man's personal action, and every freeman was his own avenger. The bloodlife, or compensation in money for personal wrong, was the first effort of the tribe as a whole to regulate private revenge."

As the taking of life is strictly forbidden by the Portuguese, and punished with the utmost severity when proof can be obtained, causes before the Rajah are becoming more frequent in order to obtain the fines which the wronged claims from the wrong-doer for his offence, which in former times, if not paid, would have been atoned for by his head.

After a day or two's botanising at Samoro, accompanied by the king's son, I started on the 30th of April on a sure-footed little pony I had purchased from the Rajah of Bibicucu, for the top of Mount Sobale, travelling in a direction N. 20 deg. W., up a more gradual slope than usual to 2,600 feet, whence we looked down into the valley of the Buarahu. Here some of the wildest and grandest scenery of our whole journey met my view. It is impossible to describe the castellated crags and lines of perpendicular and inaccessible cliffs that reared their giant masses sheer above the landscape, or the irregular blocks that thrust themselves through the grassy slopes, as if they had been dropped about without any relation to the geology of the region. Meantime they remain in undisturbed keeping for the tourist of the future in quest of striking and impressive scenery.

Turning to the left, we followed a path on another of these inevitable razor-edge ridges, only the width of the path broad, up which our ponies carried us with scarcely a rest to an elevation of 4,000 feet above the sea—a brave feat of climbing which well earned for them the hour's relaxation at Manulu, where we rested before setting our faces towards the steeper shoulder of Sobale.

This farther ride took us round the head of the valley of the Buarahu by an eerie and dangerous path, dilapidated and often land-slipped, in which at many points a single stumble of our ponies would

have left nothing between us and a fall of 2,000 feet into the river bed.

At 5,000 feet, where we reached a safe road on the mass of the mountain itself, I could freely turn my attention to the thousands of violets, geraniums and labiates that decked the ground, and the profusion of ferns that loaded the banks and the trees, among which I observed, in the forest that covered the upper 2,000 feet of the peak, abundance of Pandans, Casuarinas, and other Pines. To my infinite disgust and disappointment, I overheard the Rajah's son tell my interpreter to warn me that all the forest was rigidly Luli, boding ill for my next day's prospects.

By dropping behind, however, out of sight, I that night made sure of all that I could possibly carry and followed quietly through little belts of vegetation of the greatest interest to Funuruan, the little house-cluster on a lower spur of the mountain where we had arranged to camp.

I retired to rest with a well-laid plan of rising early and slipping off to the mountain without being seen or followed.

There was little inducement to lie late, for my couch was uncomfortable and the night-wind cold. I was therefore easily ready for the field before daylight. After a hasty breakfast I stepped quietly away for Sobale attended by my Hindoo corporal; and thought I had succeeded in escaping unperceived, especially as a dense mist enshrouded the mountain.

Alas! we had not gone far when I discovered that quite a little crowd, following the Dato of the place, was on our trail. There was no time to be lost, so I hewed away right and left on the slopes below the summit, building up a high pile on the ground of the most delightful specimens.

The unwanted operations of a white man, the first who had probably ever ascended their mountain, kept them for a while at a little distance watching my operations in silence. My hopes began to rise that perhaps I was mistaken in what I had overheard the day before. It was a vain delusion; for their low murmured reproaches at last found distinct utterance in complaint and remonstrance.

The corporal was besought to restrain me, and save myself as well as them from the retribution of sickness and death that certainly would follow on the violation of the sacred precincts. I told my Dilly interpreter to express my deep regret, and that I would at once desist; but I gave him to understand that he was not to bring me any more of their messages nor heed me in whatever I did.

Moving off to some distance higher up, I recommenced on a new clump, which perhaps might not be Luli, and, like a drowning man catching at his last opportunity, I gathered with a will, unhindered for a long time; and it was not till I had another great pile heaped up on the ground that their excitement and superstitious fears became too marked to be longer disregarded.

Luckily, the thick mist which had been resting on the mountain tops all the morning came down in a heavy shower of rain, and gave me a good excuse to return to quarters, with my trophies a five-men's load, without appearing to have recognised that I had been offending.

It was useless to attempt to force an ascent to the top; there would have been an outbreak, for the crest of the mountain was evidently one of their most sacred spots. What I had already done excited them greatly.

The rain that fell cleared off with it the mist, and revealed from our high vantage ground a magnificent view of the country, both to the south and to the north—especially to the north, as far as the islands of Kambing, Wetter and Allor—which was of itself worth the long climb from Samoro's guards.

The careful arranging and packing of each species in separate bundles of cool banana leaves, convenient for the seven or eight porters to transport, took a long time, so that it was late in the afternoon when we mounted for our return journey. If our ascent in broad daylight round the face of the Euarahu valley was eerie, it was foolhardy when, by the time we retraced our steps, it was so dark that we could not see a single foot of the way. I threw my horse's reins on its neck and trusted to

my general good fortune; and it was really with no affected thankfulness that I embraced the neck of my sure-footed black steed, when I leaped down safely on the little flat plateau of Manulu homestead.

Here after a deal of boisterous shouting to the inhabitants to awake—they seemed to sleep with the soundness of the dead—on the part of the Rajah's son, in whose harangue the most intelligible word to me was the vigorous use of Diabo, an old man the only male in the place, made his appearance.

Finding the quality of his guests he was at once all alacrity as far as it was possible for a Timorese to be, and proceeded to rouse the womankind to prepare for us some thing to eat, and a place to pass the night in. A kid and some Indian corn supplied the first, and for sleeping quarters we were actually installed in a Luli hut, from which, however, the sacred weapons were most carefully removed and at the owner's earnest request all our tobacco was excluded.

Notwithstanding my sore disappointment that I had not set foot on the highest peak of Sobale, I slept with my head on my saddle the sleep of the contented, for I had gathered rare plants enough to delight any botanist's heart.

At five o'clock in the evening of the next day I reached our old quarters, but it was the early morning hours before all the plants

were, under torch and lamp light, safely put away in botanical paper and placed over the fire of the drying house, in attending to which and turning the bundles several men were employed all through the night. Before eleven o'clock in the forenoon they were dry enough to carry safely to Manuleo, my next station, where they would be again placed over the camp fire.

Retracing our steps, as if to Sobale, we descended to the right into and across the Buarahu River, ascending to Manuleo—4,000 feet above the sea—through a rich grassy landscape in which thousands of sheep ought to have been pasturing, were a shepherd's not too peaceful a calling to be attracted to a region where keros might be a possible feature of their fields. Such a warning pole raised its gnastly arms against the sky before us. It was surmounted this time with the veritable head of a thief caught in the act of abducting a horse, whose skull seemed to mock with its grinning line of teeth, its abductor's, to which it was joined by the halter which in former time encircled its neck. It does seem a singular custom for the owner to sacrifice his stolen horse the moment it is recovered, to add to his retribution of the thief. A horse once stolen is gone for good, it would seem.

(To be continued)

**DECEMBER MEETING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1
ANZAC HOUSE BASEMENT
BUCKS' NIGHT**

Bring a guest. Come along prepared to enjoy yourself

**CHILDREN'S PICNIC
YANCHEP
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6**

We can be certain that this will be a beauty if only you will come along. If you have transport problems contact Col Doig or Arthur Smith and we will iron them out.

Remember — NO MONTHLY MEETING in JANUARY