

Ideas and Ideals for the Great Outdoors

Riches in *New Boys in the Bush*

- Read, Mark, Learn, and Inwardly Digest
- practical wisdom woven into an adventure
- with unusual insights missed on a first 'read';
- see *Handouts* n. 54, especially 4th column.

GOD

- **Creation School Room** - for a schooling studying the how, when, where, why and what of nature, man, and his works of mind and body; preparation for life.
- **Detective work** of the ultimate '*who done it*': the why of creation shows that God did it, that man has a soul, and God has revealed Himself to man.
- **Secret agenda** of Dad and Mum: an apostolate to visitors by the whole family in their isolated home.

MODERNITY

- **Electric slaves** make us excessively dependent on gadgets: yet we live more happily with fewer of them.
- **Microchips could be zapped** by atomic explosions or rays: best learn to cope without over-dependence on cars, phones, computers, calculators, satellites etc.

ECOLOGY

- **Camping-out Indoors** means simpler living without electricity; plus lots of walking rather than motoring for health, environment and economy.
- **Rural living** has great advantages, but disadvantages in getting emergency services.
- **Solid Solar Energy**: Burn firewood without shame since carbon dioxide is food for trees and vegetables by photosynthesis; global warming or cooling is *not* due to man; however, man must **stop polluting** air, sea and water, and **stop wasting** the earth's resources.

BUSH

- **'Reading the sun'** for direction without a compass, time without a watch (and do sums without a calculator).
- **Landforms of creeks and ridges** more important for navigation than maps, and a basis for making maps.
- **Learning to swim** by discovery and experiment.
- **Heat exhaustion** and **heat stroke** (see over, col. 2).

HOME

- **Family jobs - subsidiarity and solidarity**: "all for one and one for all", the Church's social teaching.
- **Mum's reasonable requests**: no waterfights indoors and no wet towels for making extra work.
- **She teaches her husband to smile**: it bears fruit in smiling children; also to give spankings at need.
- **Skirts** for girls usually — with a few exceptions.

MIND

- **Physics** to teach math by demonstrations/experiments: safer than chemistry with its poisons or explosions.
- **Discovery Technique** for schooling and upbringing is one part of good teaching and self-discipline.
- **A Permissive Upbringing** - the Discovery Method's cousin: Dad *discovers* that neither is sufficient since they fail to teach what not to do. Negatives need to be taught, especially on Safety First in the Bush.

Antidote for Bees and Bull Ants

AMMONIA is the infallible antidote for the stings of bees and bull ants, and all formic acid stings.

Cloudy ammonia (laundry) is totally effective. In a First Aid Kit it can be stored in a small bottle or phial, but it is hostile to rubber seals and tends to leak or evaporate over time. Howling children are guaranteed instant transformation into smiling cherubs.

Baking soda, sodium bicarbonate NaHCO₃ (kitchen) is very good. In water, it partly ionizes and the NaOH neutralizes acids. Such a powder is easy to carry. Use a wet finger (i.e. lick it!) to dab it on the bite.

Bees actually leave a stick-like spike. Remove it, *not by squeezing*, which injects more venom, but by flicking it out sideways with a finger nail or a pocket knife blade. What, you haven't a pocket knife? The question is irrelevant to a *real bushy!* In NSW adults must supervise under 16s with knives; and need a good reason themselves. Without the Natural Moral Law, rules multiply, a disciplined upbringing is weakened, and *sissification* is imposed on boys.

Wasp and scorpion stings are non-acid and ammonia won't neutralize them. Antihistamine cream (chemist) and methylated spirits may work. Metho is carried in a small phial or bottle. Beware of its flammability: soaked into the skin both burn.

Tea tree oil is not instantaneous but eases the strings of bull ants, bees, wasps, jumping ants, mossies and stinging nettles. Like salt, it makes leeches drop off, and is good for killing ticks. Also, it is antiseptic and anti-fungal, and important for a First Aid Kit.

Shorts Versus Long'uns

FOR BUSHWALKING, the choice between shorts and long'uns depends on several things. Comfort is not a luxury and obviates weariness and collapse.

SHORTS	LONG-UNS
Freedom of leg movement	Protection from abrasions etc.
Cooler (so safer) for strenuous summer walking and often even in winter	A health hazard from overheating in summer or with strenuous winter walking
Add gaiters against snakes	Some protection from snakes
Add nylon or japara over-pants to preserve body heat against wind &/or rain	Warmer for cold windy weather <i>but only if kept dry</i>
Can be swum in	Hard to swim in
Can be worn wet from rain or falling in the creek	Cold and chafing to wear wet after rain or falling in creek
Easier to dry	Harder to dry
Favoured by bushwalkers	Favoured by the army
Girls do not need privacy to add a skirt for ennobling men with proper respect for their femininity, also for Mass	Girls need privacy to change into a skirt - which upholds the complementarity of the sexes against unisex

Hindsight for the Future

THE TRAGIC DEATH of 17-year old schoolboy **David Iredale** on 12th December, 2006, was examined by the coroner from 14th April to 7th May, 2009. His report appeared on the internet at once. David died alone, in a dried-up gully, just off the main negotiable route down the steep side of the eastern side of Mount Solitary at Katoomba NSW. May he rest in peace.

The coroner's recommendations are important for all bushwalkers and campers. He said:-

"The role of the Coroner is not to apportion blame... any commentary on the evidence that may identify shortcomings or system failure are made with a view to avoiding similar deaths in the future." (Inquest, §7)

A WILD LAND STANDING ON ITS END

MOUNT SOLITARY is the spectacular "Lone Mountain" straddling the southern view looking across Jamison Valley from Echo Point, Katoomba.

It is framed on the east by the seemingly endless line of cliffs of Kedumba Walls, and on the west by the cliffs of Narrow Neck Peninsula, to which it is connected by a lower ridge via The Ruined Castle.

I confess to the vanity of bringing my parties, after successfully negotiating it from east to west, up to Echo Point, to gloat in the hearing of the mere tourists:-

"See the ridge going up on its left? see the last, very steep bit? The small shelf where we camped the night before last is at its foot. You can't see the hidden water channel from here. See that deeper gully above the cliffs towards the western end? That's where we slept last night in Chinaman's Cave.

"On the right, coming half towards us, is the Korrowall Knife Edge where we scrambled down this morning on our way to The Ruined Castle" — pointing at it dramatically — "and along the old pony tram track for the kerosene shale mines." Then, regretfully, "You can't see the Dog Face Land-slide from here — where we kept our footing across those fallen rocks as big as houses. But see! There's the counterweight for the Scenic Railway the tourists use. But our track up was just this side of it — *and better*. So here we are!"

I HAVE WALKED Mt Solitary many times, east-west and west-east, with big and with small groups on three-day camps. A number of times I have walked, together or alone, down the Golden Stairs to the track to The Ruined Castle, up Mt Solitary, and either as far as Chinaman's Gully, or even to the east end at Singa-Jinga-Well Swamp and the Couchant Lion — here at The Col is the log book. Thence back again.

Once we did a one-day tiger walk, from The King's Tableland (at Wentworth Falls) down Kedumba Pass and trackless bush to Kedumba River, up the eastern slopes of Mt Solitary to The Col, had lunch, then returned to the River and back up the Tableland — total up and down, 8,000 feet. It left us very stiff.

IN THE LIGHT of such experiences, I would like to add a few things to the coroner's report:

- **Personal Location Beacons** (on free loan) may be more help to Rescue Services than mobile phone, and intrude less *civilization* into a wilderness experience.
- **Yet an Aussie phoned home to Australia** when he broke his leg walking alone in the Swiss Alps! *His home* then phoned Swiss police for a quick rescue..
- **A detailed itinerary** should be left at each home: when to expect you back, and whom to contact if

overdue.

- **A party with four is safer** than three, two or alone: one stays with an injured man, while two go for help.
- **Knapsacks** (ruck sacks, back packs) must not be too heavy. See *Bush Boys on the Move* Appendix 2 pp. 456-494. Food should be budgeted to run out on the last meal, with a minimal extra for emergency.
- **Water**: find out where to look before starting. Bushwalking Clubs are better than National Parks or Police. Most water needs boiling or tablets. It is counter-productive to carry more than a litre each, since extra weight is exhausting and contributes to accidents.
- **Tank-up with Tea** at breakfast and other meals (like a camel with water) but don't drink water when labouring hard till the pulse and lungs have slowed down, and don't guzzle it. Water discipline!
- **Hot Meals** properly cooked sustain body and morale. A leader should treat seriously any refusal to eat, and deal with it before moving on.
- **A Leader** with bush knowledge is essential:-
What must a, good leader do?

A good leader must be both friendly and strict, control the group and look after them, tutor them to look after each other, prevent accidents by Safety First, be able to give First Aid, and find the way there and back.

Only go camping with friends you know well. Don't risk taking 'the friend of a friend' until he has proved himself on day trips.

(Q&A §39 and Note in the ABC of Camping, *Bush Boys on the Move*, p. 462)

- **A leader does not let one of his group race on ahead and split the party**, lest he wander off the route and the rest of the party passes by and he is lost.
- **Snail-slow speed** is a danger sign: put the slowest in front as pace-setter, and he will go a lot faster.
- **Clothing** must suit the walk, wearer and weather.
- **Downhill** is more dangerous than uphill: it's where people get lost and have stumbles, falls, mishaps.
- **Weather** hot or cold decides the last two of The Seven Deadly Dangers leading to death in the bush: n. 6, dehydration / heat-exhaustion / hyperthermia (i.e. sun stroke or heat stroke), and n. 7, hypothermia.

See *New Boys in the Bush* amendments to the ABC of Camping §41, and examples within the story, chapters 47-48 and 49-50

FICTION WITH A PURPOSE

"Now, it is written — though few be that are wise enough to read before the punishment comes for disobedience — that **the wilderness has rules of her own**. To follow these without question is to be safe, violate therri is to invite the inevitable:"

Allan Sullivan, *Under the Northern Lights* p.115

One of my reasons for enflashing the 50 Q&As of the Camping Catechism in the five **Bush Boys adventure books** was to equip readers with detailed information, safety attitudes and rudimentary skills to run their own expeditions without an adult.

See Appendix 3, pp. 495-498 in *Bush Boys on the Move*, on how Dad, over several years, can tutor his sons and their friends from home.

Father James Tierney