

Tasmanian  
Field Naturalists'  
Club



**EASTER CAMP**  
1928

at

MEREDITH RIVER,  
SWANSEA, EAST COAST, TASMANIA



GENERAL ACCOUNT

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## 1928 Easter Camp at the Meredith River, Swansea, East Coast, Tasmania

### GENERAL ACCOUNT

By CLIVE LORD, F.L.S

A QUARTER of a century has almost elapsed since the first Easter Camp of the Club was held. Since the initial camps at Bream Creek (1905) and Cole's Bay (1906), the club has made much progress, and as regards its camp outings conditions have changed in a marked manner. In the early days the camps were regarded as rather a unique form of outing by many people who had not many opportunities for leaving town. Nowadays conditions are entirely different. The advent of the motor car has "brought the bush very near to the town," and every holiday sees an extension of camping. In fact, during the recent holidays there were dozens of different camps on the East Coast.

With so many attractions of a similar nature it might have been expected that the Field Naturalists' camps would have died out, but this has not been the case, and the Easter camps still continue to be a prominent feature of the club's activities.

This year the Meredith River at Swansea was the chosen site, and, thanks to the kindness of Mr. Edward Shaw, of "Redbanks," we were allowed to camp on an ideal site on that estate. Beyond the rocky bluff to the north of Swansea lies the great white arc of sand marking the beach at the head of Fleurieu Bay. On some maps this great bay is marked Oyster Bay, owing to a mistake in relation to the bay named by Captain J. H. Cox in 1789, the true location of which is on the western side of Maria Island. At the eastern side of Fleurieu Bay beach the granite rises and extends to the south in romantic shapes and richly coloured hues, as Freycinet Peninsula (the "Van der Lyn Eylandt" of Tasman) and Schouten Island. The even sandy pavement of this great strip of sand is broken in two places—at the far east by the Swan River and near the western end by the Meredith River. This latter stream winds from the hills, and where the East Coast road crosses it, it is flowing in an easterly direction. In this vicinity interesting studies may be made of the earlier river terraces, showing its meanderings in earlier times. The present course of the river, after leaving the road, continues east for a few hundred yards and then turns towards the south and the sea. At the bend of the river the two historic and picturesque homestead of "Cambria" and "Redbanks" are situated. As one looks at these houses today, surrounded as they are with English trees planted by former generations, the romance of their early days is brought home to one, and to myself these links of the past were even more forcibly brought to mind when viewing

some of Mr. Shaw's early relics and records, and discussing matters of long ago in which our forefathers were mutually interested.

From "Redbanks" the river leads to the sea, and beyond the cultivated paddocks a fringe of eucalypts and other trees has been left. It was within this belt of scrub between the sand dunes that our camp was pitched.

Camps, like other residences, take a certain amount of time to prepare, and an advance party left Hobart by car on Wednesday morning, April 4, in order to prepare the camp. Upon reaching Swansea at lunch time we found that our varied impedimenta had arrived by the s. Koomeela, and our good friend Mr. Frank Morey had made all arrangements to have it carted to the camp site for us.

When this had been done, and a tent or so erected, the Easter moon was already lighting up "The Schoutens" and sending golden beams across the bay. Turning into bunk early, one naturalist was rather annoyed to discover a poisonous red-backed spider in his blankets, but another considered it quite a good find, and labelling it "*Latrodectus hasseltii*," prepared to preserve it in alcohol, whilst his tent mate, who considered he had been nearly bitten, thought that the name was well deserved, but that better use could be made of the spirit. It is well to have varied natures in a camp, otherwise life is apt to become monotonous.

Thursday morning proved a trying time for the small but enthusiastic advance guard. A northerly breeze gradually developed into almost a gale of wind, and the erecting of numerous tents was not the easiest of tasks. However, good headway was made, and towards the afternoon the wind died down and the weather assumed a quieter tone. In fact, from this time on the weather proved ideal, and it is many years since we have been favoured with such splendid conditions for camping. Apart from a bolting horse, which might have caused serious damage, but didn't, and the arrival of the advance guard of the junior contingent, there was nothing to interrupt the preparation of the camp, in view of the anticipated arrival of the main party, who were to come by motor late in the evening.

Their arrival was awaited around a glowing camp fire, and soon after 11 the headlights of the motors were observed coming over the hill. Within a short time coffee and buns were being partaken of in the large dining tent, and soon after the various tent parties set to work to sort out their belongings. The ringtail opossums in the eucalypts were not the only animals who



kept chattering that night, even after the moon had risen towards its zenith, but this did not affect the swimming party, however, for the sun had barely risen before the beach echoed with those peculiar noises so beloved by early morning bathers, especially of the fairer sex.

Swimming from the beach, the granite peaks of "The Hazards" appeared far off on the horizon, and one's thoughts went back to other Easter mornings and the clear water of Cole's Bay as it greeted some very early swimmers in years gone by. But this tale is one for around the camp fires, when the records of the past are being recalled, and so we must return to our present camp and the natural sequence to the swimming party, namely, a very joyful group assembled at the breakfast table. Here plans for the day were discussed, and it was decided that after the various tents had been put in order and the finishing touches put on the camp generally, that a picnic would be held up the Meredith River, and this proved an enjoyable outing. After lunch some of the junior members began fishing for jollytails (*Galaxias attenuatus*) with rather primitive fishing tackle.

The small jollytails of our streams are an interesting species, but, like so many of our fishes, little research work has been done in regard to them. In New Zealand certain investigations have been made, in view of the

economic importance of these small fish and the important bearing which they exercise on other forms of life. In the Dominion the immature jollytails are known as "whitebait" and the adult as "inanga." The jollytails, which represent our closest link, as far as native fish are concerned, with the salmonidae of the old world, descend the rivers in the autumn of each year in order to reach the sea and spawn. In the springtime the young ascend the rivers in great numbers and reach maturity in a few weeks, probably about 15, but the rate of growth depends upon the food supply.

The introduction of the brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) and other such species has had considerable effect as far as our native jollytails are concerned, and in New Zealand the position is more accentuated owing to the fact that in the past large numbers of immature jollytails have been taken each year as "whitebait."

When the English trout were first introduced the jollytails provided splendid food for the new arrivals, and the trout would follow the spring migration of jollytails far up the stream. With the decline of the jollytails from year to year there has naturally been a decline in the trout, as many, owing to the scarcity of food such as jollytails in the upper reaches, now stay nearer the mouths of the rivers and derive their food from such small species as the "Argentine" or



At Meredith's Fishery, Freycinet Peninsula.



"Silvery" (*Retropinna richardsoni*), as this species enters the rivers during the spring and early summer months for the purpose of spawning, and does not ascend far beyond tidal influence.

Mr. Hope has contributed an interesting paper to the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury on the habits of the New Zealand forms, and there is a field for the study of this particular subject in Tasmania. It is a thousand pities that certain of the Freshwater Fisheries Commissioners do not spend some of their time investigating such problems instead of spending their time reviling the platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*) as being the reason for fish being scarce in some of our rivers.

The tales that have been told by fishermen concerning the platypus are typical of the tales usually told by the followers of Izaak Walton, but so far they have not introduced the "bunyip"—perhaps he is being saved up for next season.

The sport initiated by the juniors proved too fascinating, and it was not long before some of the senior members of the party were performing rather extraordinary antics on the banks of the stream in order to lure the unsuspecting jollytails from their natural habitat.

The size of a species bears no relation to the sport it affords, for it is often the smaller forms which provide the better sport. As an instance of this, reference might be made to an interesting paper by Mr. Knut Dahl, published in the proceedings of the Norske Videnskaps Akademi i Oslo (1927), in which he describes a dwarf variety of land-locked salmon (*Salmo salar*) which rarely exceeds 12in. in length, but which provides even better sport than the large trout.

Some excitement was caused by one naturalist observing two or three fresh-water flathead (*Pseudaphritis urvillii*) in the shallow waters, and his efforts to secure them by means of a piece of string and a bent pin gave proof of his enthusiasm as an ichthyologist, if not as a fisherman. The bream fishermen further down the river may have had larger hauls, but it is doubtful whether they derived more enjoyment from their outing than did those of the searchers after jollytails—especially the junior members, one of whom carried home several small fish in a billy, and in his enthusiasm attempted to establish a miniature aquarium in his tent. The escape of the aquarium's tenants during the night resulted in the sudden awakening of another junior member, and the resultant melee caused the guard to turn out.

It may be mentioned here that for some years past the club has been endeavouring to interest schoolboys in the work of the club, and largely owing to the interest displayed by Mr. Norman Walker the boys of the Hutchins' Junior School have done very good work. Several of the boys attended the camp, and their interest in camp life was clearly shown. Anyone who could have answered fully the numerous queries of the junior section would have proved himself a naturalist of most profound learning.

As an instance of questions asked one may be quoted, as it later gave rise to considerable discussion. Why does sand run up-hill? In-

vestigation showed that if a groove was made down a sandbank the sand above rapidly filled in, and it appeared as if the sand really ran up the groove. So effective was the optical delusion that several unsuspecting people were rather taken in by the demonstration given, and the phenomenon became known as "Tucker's Law." Whilst these references refer to the lighter side of camp life, there is another side of far more importance, for the juniors are given a good chance to study natural history, and if they have natural ability in this direction their membership of the Field Naturalists' Club may mean much to them in the future. There is a great field for scientific research in Tasmania, and the study of natural history by the juniors of this generation may lead to far greater works when the boys of to-day become men of to-morrow.

When the picnic party returned to camp on the Friday afternoon there was a further batch of members to greet, as several had come in their own cars and motor cycles, and they had not left town until Friday morning.

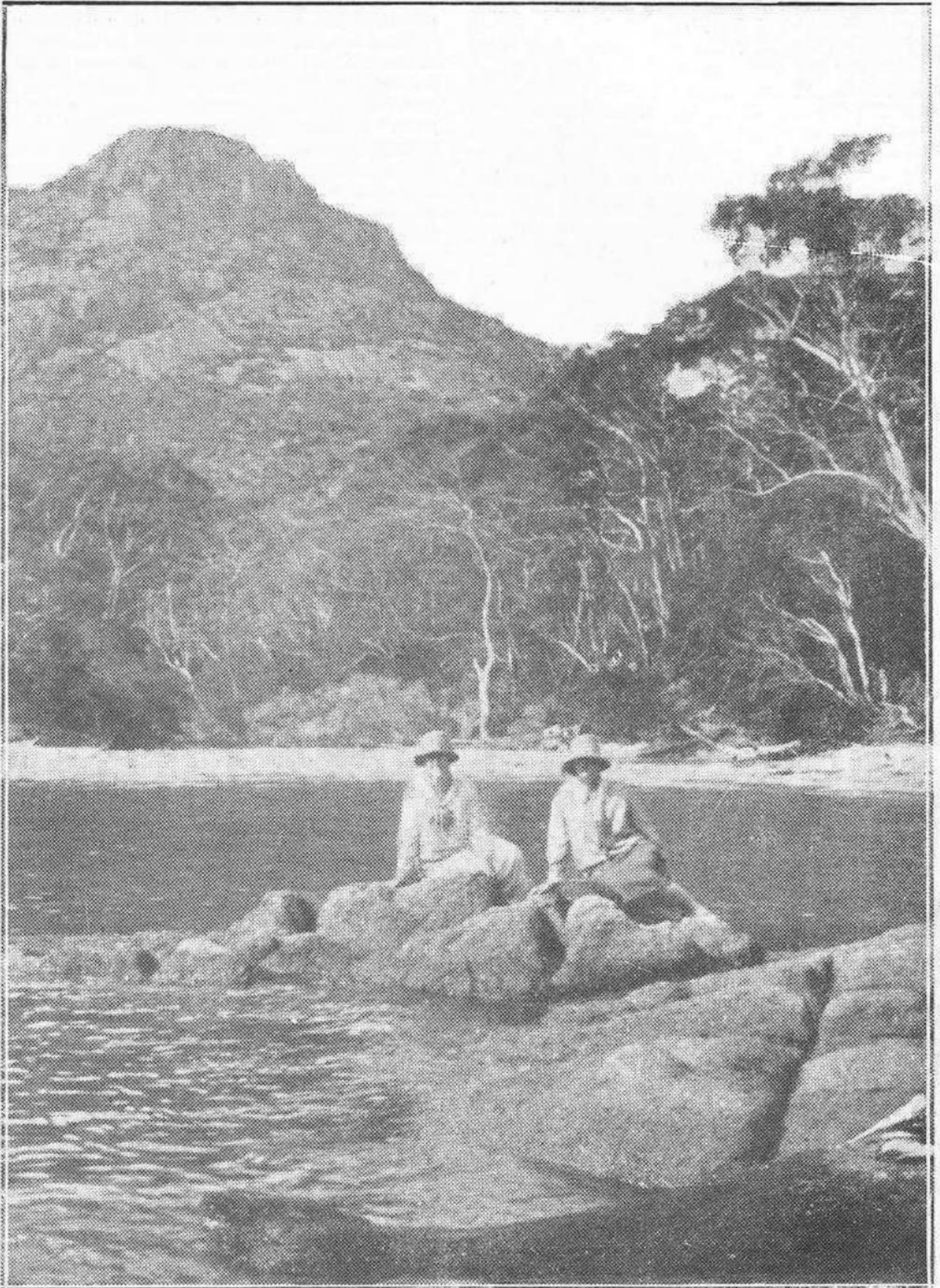
On Saturday two parties were formed. One proceeded by car to Bicheno, about 28 miles north of Swansea, and the other went along the beach towards the Swan River. The motor party had a pleasant day. Some splendid views were obtained along this section of the road, particularly from the top of the hill some miles beyond Cranbrook. Looking towards the south-east, the valley of the Swan River lay below like a Streton landscape, the bright sunlight serving to pick out the various greens of the cultivated areas and the surrounding forests, whilst the Swan River and Moulting Lagoon stood out like polished silver. Away to the south were the green-tinted waters of Fleurieu Bay, beyond which the rosy-tinted peaks of Schouten Peninsula merged into the misty grey tones of the distant horizon. "The Hazards," Mount Freycinet, Bear Hill, and the other major peaks of "The Schoutens" stood out as a fitting background to this wonder scene. The granite peaks of the east are always beautiful, but in this instance

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view  
And robes the mountain in its azure hue."

Our road was northward, however, and it was necessary to follow the winding way until the eucalypt-tainted air gave way to the ozone of the sea, and the granite outcrops on the roadside showed we were approaching the coast. After running down into Bicheno it was decided to have lunch on the shores of the picturesque cove known as Waub's Boat Harbour, where a small granite island forms a cove which provides shelter for small boats. Here in the old days Waubadebar, the aboriginal whose grave is still cared for at Bicheno (although what is left of the skeleton is in the Tasmanian Museum), probably deftly brought the sealing boats to rest, for she was a great boatwoman. Later the harbour was used as a shipping port for coal, and part of the old store is still standing.

The second party who visited the country in the vicinity of the north of the Swan River had





A Quiet Corner at The Fishery, Cole's Bay.



an interesting day. Leaving camp and crossing the mouth of the Meredith River, which was then closed by a sand bar, it was only a short distance to where the remains of the s.s. Moonah lie embedded in the sand. As one looked at the timbers of the old ship one's thoughts went back to the Field Naturalists' party which she conveyed to The Schoutens at Easter, 1906, and to the adventurous trip of 1908, when the famous episode of the swimming horse took place, and to other incidents of former Easter trips with which the Moonah had been connected.

Beyond the wreck the beach stretched in an unbroken line for miles, and after travelling a fair proportion of the way the party turned inland, as the Swan River curves to the west after leaving the sea, so it was not necessary to go to the extreme end of the beach to gain a sight of the river.

A fair number of black swans were seen, but they were very restless, and no wonder, for the Easter sportsman was everywhere in evidence with his gun. The question of the swans in this district has been mentioned several times in the club's journal, and in the annual reports of the club.

Moulting Lagoon and the Swan River are one of the great breeding grounds of the black swan, but with the raids made upon their eggs and excessive shooting the future of the swans is giving many of the leading residents some concern. The local council has also taken the matter up. The control of the swans is in the hands of the Police Department, in accordance with the terms of the Animals and Birds Protection Act, and during recent years a police trooper has been stationed at the Lagoon during the nesting period, but it is hopeless to expect one man to look after such a large area, and judging from even a percentage of what we were told by one and another whilst we were camped in the district, it will be necessary to afford still further protection if the large flights of swan are to be seen over the lagoon in the future as they have been in the past. The advent of the motor boat has meant still further destruction of our wild life, and the black swan has been one of the species to feel the added forces of destruction which each year are being brought to bear upon our fauna, in spite of all the protests of such societies as ours. That night as we gathered around the camp fire and heard the swans honking as they flew overhead one recalled the lines written by Mitchel concerning the swans at Lake Sorell.

"And the snow-white swan that on St. Mary's Lake floats double—swan and shadow—does he float more placidly or fling on the waters a more stately reflection from stately neck than thou jet-black, proud crested swan of the Antarctic forest waters?"

On the following day the camp was astir at an early hour, for it had been resolved that all the campers would board s.s. Koomeela in order to visit Meredith's Fishery at Cole's Bay, the site of our Easter camps of 1906 and 1910. Once aboard the good ship we were pleased to renew acquaintance with the skipper and other members of his crew who had done so much to make

our trip round the Lemon Rock a pleasant one during Easter 1925. The skipper even promised the ladies of the party another trip round this now historic rock, but the invitation was declined, rather abruptly perhaps, so, just to keep up the story of the sad sea waves, conversation turned to the episode of the doctor and the crayfish, as well as the agitated faces of the two members of the deputation who so longed to turn back—"for the sake of the ladies." Yarns such as these wiled away the time until we reached Meredith's Fishery, once the site of an old bay whaling station.

This picturesque cove, backed by the great rounded granite peaks of "The Hazards," faces across Cole's Bay, to where a new jetty has been built in order to connect up with the proposed railway from Dalmayne Collieries. A certain amount of work has been done on this line, and the future may yet see Cole's Bay the terminal port of the East Coast coalfields.

Meredith's Fishery is little changed from years gone by, except that Mr. Parsons has built a camp at the eastern end of the bay. The granite rocks of the neighbourhood defy Father Time, and the visitor, returning to this scene of beauty after an absence of some years may well quote P. R. Chambers:

"I find," said 'e, "things very much as 'ow I've always found,  
For mostly they goes up and down or else  
Goes round and round."

There is something sphinx-like in the towering boulders of "The Hazards," and as one scrambles up the hill and round the great projecting granite rocks one rather loses sense of scale, and the sight that meets one's eyes when the crest of the divide or the summit of the hill is reached causes a hasty readjustment of distances. Far below lies the silvery arc of Thouin or Wineglass Bay, that scenic gem of our East Coast. To the south lies Mount Freycinet, backed by the granite ranges. To the west a narrow strip of sand, and then the Hazard Beach, off which lies Refuge Island, the nomenclature of which recalls the plight of the French explorers of 1802 and their enforced stay at this small rocky outcrop. To the south-east, off the entrance to the bay, is the Lemon Rock, a locality well known to certain members of the club.

The foregoing are but the main features of the panorama of sea and land which reaches out at one's feet, the changing lights of which serve to add to the beauty of the scene, and to recall former sunrises and sunsets in this area, for it is at the dawn and end of the day when the rosy-tinted hills and purple valleys of the peninsula and island really appear at their best.

Whilst the mountaineers of the party were viewing a wide range of country, other members were giving detailed attention to small areas along the foreshore, for it was here in days gone by that the dusky aborigines had their camps, and scattered over the ground are the last relics of these nomadic hunters—the stone implements which they used for so many purposes.

The sunlit waters of the Cove tempted several swimmers, as well as serving a most useful pur-



pose as far as one junior member was concerned, for the sight of this youth before and after he had met the water was referred to as "a most perfect example of the evaporation of pugnacity."

Meredith's Fishery derived its name from the early days when there was a Bay Whaling Station at this spot, and traces of this can still be found. The whaling area was a very definite page in the history of our state, and it commenced even before settlement. After the foundation of the colony numerous Bay Whaling Stations were formed—the first being that of William Collins at Trywork (or Droughty) Point, in the Derwent River. Under this system the work was carried out by small boats, and their crews had many adventures, not only in the pursuit and capture of the whales, but also in the long and tedious tows back to the stations, where the whales were partly treated and the products shipped to other centres. By the middle of last century this phase of the industry was declining. Excessive hunting of the black whale had the natural effect of reducing the numbers to such an extent that the industry gradually ceased, but out of it arose the era of pelagic whaling, and in place of the black whales, sailing vessels were fitted out to search the oceans for sperm and other whales. Hobart whalers went far afield, but again excessive hunting had its natural effect, and even sperm whaling ceased to pay. In our day we see attacks being made, with all the weapons of destruction which civilised man can invent, upon the last resort of these huge cetacean mammals, namely, the icy waters of the Antarctic.

As with the whales, so with the seals. In the early days there were, to quote a French naturalist, "innumerable legions of seals" on the East Coast. To-day there are but a few scattered herds.

In spite of the lessons of the past, the present generation pursues the policy of destruction, utterly disregarding the future and the great scientific and economic value of our fauna. Take our marsupials, for example; in the last five years over 400,000 Bennett's wallaby have been killed. It may be mentioned that Bennett's wallaby is commonly called the kangaroo in Tasmania owing to the fact that our only Tasmanian kangaroo—the forester—has been hunted almost to extinction.

Of the scrub wallaby, 577,900 were trapped, whilst opossums were snared to the number of 3,010,100. It is impossible to continue without serious results, but in spite of all this club and other such societies have done, the Government for the last few years has declared open season after open season, without regard to the disastrous economic consequences which must follow.

The present unsatisfactory state of affairs was fully brought home to the members during their camp at Swansea, and their visit to "The Schoutens" in particular. This club was largely instrumental in having the peninsula declared a sanctuary for native fauna, and has always been interested in the reserve. A sanctuary it is on paper, and a line across the isthmus notes on the map, where in Byron's lines, man

"Marks where his carnage and his conquests  
cease!

He makes a Solitude and calls it—Peace."

When we gather the evidence which pours in upon a club like ours on all matters relating to fauna, we can realise the amount of "Peace" which the animals in this so-called sanctuary obtain. Little attention is paid to it, and hunting and snaring take place in an unrestricted manner. If we allow even our sanctuaries to be trapped out, how can we ever hope to keep our fauna and develop it on proper economic lines, for it is recognised that sanctuaries, in the true meaning of the word, are essential if a country's fauna is to remain. Our Tasmanian fauna consists to a very large extent of primitive types which, when brought in contact with more advanced species, decline rapidly. Our smaller marsupials give way to the rabbit, and our native birds are dominant by starlings and sparrows, in consequence of which the native pests upon which they used to feed flourish unchecked.

The importance of our fauna has yet to be realised. Its scientific interest, its value to medical science, and its economic aspect have all been overlooked of late years by the Government in their endeavour to gather in a few thousand pounds of revenue by means of hunting fees, etc.; and so far out of these fees funds have not been provided in order to safeguard the sanctuaries. It is the clear duty of every member of this club to work for a more enlightened policy in the future. We have been placed in charge of a most wonderful heritage as regards the flora and fauna of our wonder island, and it rests with us to respond to the trusteeship which has been granted us.

Such thoughts as the foregoing were in our minds as we steamed westward back to camp. Astern, the last of the sun was tipping the peaks with hues of salmon pink, which merged into the greys and purples of the valleys and ravines. A more peaceful sunset would have been hard to imagine, yet will there be peace within these hills this winter for the soft-eyed creatures who place their trust in "sanctuary."

Monday morning arrived all too soon, and some of our party left in order to return to town. The remainder arranged to visit certain old buildings at Swansea, and later to follow the coast down for a mile or so. One of the main objects of this outing was to examine the shore line for traces of the old aboriginal camping grounds. These abound all through this district. At Bicheno some splendid examples have been secured, and stone implements of a rougher character had been gathered at Meredith's Fishery. South from Swansea every headland and bay afforded traces of the race which formerly roamed over this area and whose final history was so sad. Their hunting grounds invaded, their coastal camps raided by sealing gangs, who shot the men and carried off the women to the islands in the Strait, and generally their whole lives made one of abject fear, by the rougher elements of the early days of the island. After almost 20 years of such persecution, is it to be wondered at that the blacks failed to discriminate one white from another,



and that attacks were made on travellers and isolated farms? Before condemning the aboriginal inhabitants for their part in the "Black War" it is well to study the various events which led up to it.

Very considerable collecting can be done in the vicinity of Swansea, and several of the campers returned well satisfied with their outing. Among the stone implements collected there was one type which was very common in the district—a rather crude, roughly flaked dark stone implement. If the water-washed stones on the beach are examined it will be noticed that a percentage of them are of a much darker and more flint-like character than the average, and these appeared to be favoured by the blacks for a certain form of implement, as numbers of a similar nature could be found at most of the old camp sites visited.

That night round the camp fire we discussed these and other interesting items of the camp, but as it was our last evening the musical members also had their fair share. One item almost caused trouble, as a competition had been arranged and a prize offered. Each member had to think of a song, and at the word "Go!" to start singing, the one that kept going the longest to be the winner. The resultant discord was awful, and just at the stage when the singer of "Nellie Bly" was trying to outlast "Waltzing Matilda" a number of local visitors arrived. We still wonder what they really thought when they first came over the sand dunes. If only they had

arrived a little earlier they would have found a most interesting discussion proceeding concerning palaeolithic man!

Tuesday was our last day. After breakfast (the fish having been provided by the junior members), compliments were expressed to the chef (Mr. Parker) and his assistants for the manner in which they had studied the interests of the campers, and then the breaking up of our happy homes commenced. The advance guard, considering they had done their duty in erecting the camp, left early and returned to Hobart by motor via Campbell Town, calling at Grimes' Lagoon en route in order to collect more stone implements. The main party, after their work was done, spent the day in the vicinity of the camp, finally leaving Swansea late in the afternoon and reaching town that evening.

Another Easter camp has come and gone. This year's outing at the Meredith River may well be classed among the best of the club's excursions, for combined with the perfect weather there was a true spirit of camp comradeship, and all tended to make the fixture a pleasant one. Writing as one who has had the privilege to organise many such outings, I can only state that one could not wish to manage a camp under more pleasant conditions than those which existed last Easter.

Finally one must not forget the debt that the club is under to our many good friends at Swansea, who helped in so many ways to make the camp a success.



A section of Swansea, showing the jetty and one of the beautiful beaches.



# NOTES ON THE ABORIGINAL CAMPS

By NORMAN WALKER.

THE Field Naturalists were camped in the very home of the Oyster Bay tribe, who, with their friends the Big River "mobs," were so well known to the early settlers. Our friends and foes have mingled their dust with the land they both loved. The houses of the settlers still stand along the coast road, and so little changed that one almost expects to see a crinoline or frock coat in the old doorways. Of the earliest inhabitants of all nothing remains but the chipped stones, lying where their makers dropped them, and the pathetic heaps of oyster shell along the shores. It is easy to condemn the early colonists for the disappearance of the natives, but the former were not all blackguard stock-keepers and sealers. It is very easy, too, to censure, for not feeling the modern popular interest in anthropology, the pioneers who were busy from dawn till dark in hewing their homes from the wilderness. Certainly the loss to science from the disappearance of the last warriors of the Early Stone Age is nothing short of a tragedy. We feel that keenly, and we feel with equal keenness, let us hope, the sufferings of the poor people themselves. They perished within the lifetime of one black woman who was born when the first white settlement was made, and who died 52 years ago, the last survivor of her people. What we of to-day can do is to preserve what knowledge we may of the vanished race. It seems to be a debt that we owe their memory and, if it is so, it is a debt towards the payment of which the Field Naturalists are trying to do their part.

On this Easter expedition some collections were made of the native implements, commonly called "flints." There is no true flint in Tasmania, the chief substitute for it being a baked mudstone or chert. It is almost as good a material, and the natives got it when they could, but were ready to use any suitable stone that lay at hand. Thus, on Swansea Point, beyond the ruined church, hundreds of flakes are to be picked up, having been struck off from the masses of beach pebbles that lie on the shore just below. At "The Fisheries," on Schouten Main, use was made of pieces of a snow-white quartz, that is found in the granite boulders of "The Hazards." There was a midden on the little headland next the Field Naturalists' camp, and on the day when a party went to Moulting Lagoon, scores of patches of oyster shells among the sand dunes showed where the natives had held their feasts. The

limy incrustations on the roots of vanished scrub showed that these meals were held in shelter. It was hard that these deposits were for the most part smothered in sand, for had the wind elected to expose the old soil level, flints could doubtless have been found. As it was, only two or three were obtainable.

Part of the charm of flint collection lies in the prediction of likely spots for finds. The writer has a number in front of him, together with hammer stones (used probably for breaking shells or bones), together with a number of little round throwing pebbles. But a description would be tedious. Some classification of the different shapes can be undertaken, but one cannot escape the uneasy suspicion that they are as much the result of accident as of design. Generally it may be said that the Tasmanians were a people of scrapers, and, as every collector knows, the bevel of the edge is almost invariably on one side only. Nearly all the implements would be efficient for trimming a tea-tree spear. Sharp natural flakes were used for cutting up animals. Specimens that are definitely shaped to a balanced outline are hard to come by, and it is here suggested that the aborigine cared little what his implement looked like so long as it did his business. As to the really beautiful specimens that gladden the collector's heart, did they require a rare artist, or are they the result of a fancy taken in a leisure hour?

Of the life of the natives nothing can be said here, though it would be easy to say a good deal. Should a beginner decide to collect flints, let him visit the Museum to get an eye for them, though by most people the more obvious specimens are easily recognised. His finds should not be allowed to chafe against each other as this destroys the edge and patina, the surface having usually been softened by exposure. Should the collector tire of his finds or find it impossible to carry them with him when moving his home, let him bestow them where they will be appreciated and cared for. At present there are plenty to be had, though for the most part they await the plough. The river banks and coasts of the island must be sown with them. Nevertheless, when they are gone there will never be any more, and we have a debt to the future as well as the past. In any case, a collector will find, as certain Field Naturalists do, that his hobby has given him some very happy outings.



# GEOLOGICAL NOTES

By A. N. LEWIS, M.C., LL.M.

THE camp site, near Swansea, is not a locality of any considerable geological interest, but several features were observed which provided sufficient material to keep those members who were interested in geology busy during the camp.

The most interesting of these features is a very fine series of river terraces extending up the valley of the Meredith for about three miles from its mouth. All the evidence in the locality points to a recent rise of the land surface—perhaps to the extent of 50ft. An old shoreline is clearly visible, extending from the rocky point half a mile north of the Swansea jetty in a roughly half circular sweep—first north-westerly, and then northerly, then north-easterly—extending for over a mile west of Bicheno-road, and reaching to Moulting Lagoon at the mouth of the Swan River. The Meredith has filled in this wide bay and covered its surface with river drift.

Over the delta formation thus deposited the river has cut several courses, the present course being the most southerly of any. Each course in succession to the south has been cut deeper than the previous one, and on the banks of several of these are some of the finest examples of river terraces to be seen in Southern Tasmania.

The Apsley River and Swan River, with their estuaries, known as the Moulting Lagoon, also provide some interesting studies in the development of river topography. Several

changes of course are clearly noticeable. All these have probably been induced by the building of a line of sand dunes now forming the spit across the entrance of the lagoon. A recent sinking movement on the lines of the two faults, which regulate the eastern and western coast of Fleurieu Bay, is probably responsible for the action of the sea in forming lines of sand dunes in succession to the south across the mouths of these rivers, and has been responsible for the peculiar topography in this vicinity. Probably the process will continue, and the head of the bay will be gradually filled in. The continuation of this movement would divert the Meredith into the Swan River.

The rocks in the vicinity of the camp were entirely triassic dolerite and recent river and beach rocks. Some interesting recent limestones occur somewhere in the vicinity, many pebbles and boulders detached from these being found on the beach south of Swansea. The rock is of a peculiar nature not hitherto observed by the writer, consisting of a remarkable hard limestone, almost too hard to be broken by a hammer, and containing fossils of modern shells of typical recent species. The rock apparently occurs only below low-water mark.

The members of the camp made an excursion across to Schouten Peninsula for one day during the camp, and had a further opportunity of studying the granite there occurring, but no facts of interest beyond those already recorded in previous reports were observed.



Members of the Camping Party near Swan River.



# NOTES ON GREAT SWANPORT'S HISTORY

By G. MUSGRAVE PARKER, M.B.

THE history of the district of Great Swanport, in which the 1928 Easter camp of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists' Club was held, presents many points of interest. It first figures on the chart of the coast of Van Diemen's Land, prepared by Tasman, when he cruised off the coast in 1642, and put the name of Schouten and Van der Lyn's Eylandt on his chart. But it remained almost unnoticed until after the arrival of the first fleet, and the foundation of the settlement at Botany Bay. From this point the early whalers and sealers of the settlement pursued their trade around the South and East Coasts of Australia, and in the bays and islands of Van Diemen's Land collecting oil, whalebone, and sealskin; and there is much evidence to show that such enterprises carried them round Schouten, Maria, and the other islands of the coast. In 1802 the bays were charted and the islands explored by the French expedition under Admiral Baudin in the ships *Naturaliste* and *Geographe*, which lay at anchor on the west side of Maria Island; whilst boat expeditions were sent out to explore. One such party, under the command of M. Freycinet, jun., explored the shores of Fleurieu (or Oyster) Bay with a view to determining the existence of Van der Lyn's Eylandt, and if there was any communication between the head of the bay and the open ocean. Thus was discovered the great peninsula known as Freycinet's Peninsula, and the strait between it and Schouten Island, named by them *Geographe Strait*. *Ile des Phoques*, later named the White Rock by Surveyor Cross, was so called on account of the number of seals seen there. Captain Kelly, in 1816, when he circumnavigated Van Diemen's Land, caught several seals on it.

Never again did the locality relapse into its previous obscurity, for it became a frequent thing for the merchants and seafarers of Hobart Town to send up the coast boat expeditions to obtain seal and kangaroo skins, swan skins, and swansdown. Sometimes lives were lost. One tragedy which happened with a party of hunters sent up by Mr. Birch, of Hobart Town, is detailed in the *Gazette* of November 28, 1818.

In December, 1819, the first real attempt to inspect the possibilities of the district was made. Governor Sorell sent up a party under Henry Rice on foot to explore and report on the locality, and it was as a direct result of these enquiries and the glowing report of the explorers that settlement took place.

There arrived at Hobart Town on March 17, 1821, after the long and tedious journey from England, the ship "*Emerald*," and among others on board of her were Lieut. Geo. Meredith (late Royal Marines) and Messrs. Adam and John Amos, together with their wives, families, household goods, and stock. When presenting their orders for land to the Gov-

ernor he brought the district under their notice, and without delay Mr. Meredith and Mr. Amos hired a whaleboat, and on April 5 crossed Storm Bay, hauled her on rollers across East Bay Neck, and proceeded up the coast to inspect the land lying by the Swan River so highly spoken of. Arriving at the Swan River mouth, they proceeded up the stream; but failing to find the river channel, they dismissed the boat, ordering it to proceed to the head of the bay—near the small river—whilst they explored on foot.

As a result of this trip Mr. Meredith decided to take his grant at the head of the bay—now the estate of Cambria—and Messrs. Amos located higher up the river at the point now known as Cranbrook, where their descendants still reside. In October of this same year (1821) the three families moved up to Swanport with their belongings and stock. Several other settlers came up shortly afterwards, and the new settlement was fairly launched by the end of the year. Amongst those were Wm. Talbot (later of "*Malahide*"), Thos. Buxton (who eventually settled at Mayfield), and J. de Courcy Harte.

In 1826 another batch of settlers came to reside in the district—the Allens, who settled at Milton, between the Merediths and the Amoses; the Webbers, who chose Piermont, about two miles south of Swansea, for their grant; and the Lynes. The Lyne family settled on the banks of Moulting Lagoon, on the N.E. side of the tier above Cranbrook, and called their grant Apsley, after the eldest son of Lord Bathurst, who had given Mr. Lyne an order recommending him for a grant of land. The year 1827 brought them a neighbour in the person of Captain Thos. Watson, who, with his family, took a block of land just south of Apsley—a property they called Sherborne Lodge. In 1828 Capt. Robert Hepburn, R.N., settled at Roy's Hill, on the St. Paul's Tier; and 1829 saw the arrival of Francis Cotton and family, who took up land at Saltwater Lagoon (now Kelvedon), about six miles south of Swansea. E. C. Shaw arrived in the district in 1830, and purchased the grant to G. Meredith, jun., now known as Red Banks Estate, on which our camp is placed.

The difficulties and dangers which had to be faced by the early arrivals cannot be overestimated. The journey from Hobart Town was made either in a whaleboat or by a small vessel. One party got wrecked on the way up. Shortages of food, especially in the first few years, floods, fires, bushrangers, and native attacks all had to be faced—not only by the men, but by the women and children of their families.

As in all isolated communities, after the first few years the products of the farms had to be sold, and to do so it was necessary to have a shipping place for the goods. The point which came into general use was a small



reef about 400 yards west of the present jetty at Swansea. The products were loaded into carts, which were backed out into the water to the rocks, and there loaded into boats, to be taken to the vessels lying out in the deeper water. Around this shipping point sprang up a store, in which the goods might be placed, and several houses for the refreshment of the carters and others. Such was the beginning of the township of Swansea. Then about 1827 the Government of the day stationed there an assistant police magistrate, with a few field police, to keep order in the district, and a small Public Works Department, with a few skilled prisoners, such as sawyers, stonemasons, plasterers, etc., with a small military guard. The buildings in which all these men were housed were on the point at Swansea now the golf links; and as the first magistrate—Capt. Hibbert, of the 40th Foot—had served his Majesty at Waterloo, he called the station Waterloo Point, by which name the budding township was for many years known. Gradually more people settled there—officials, such as chief district constable, poundkeeper, postmaster, police clerk; and private individuals, such as innkeepers, storekeepers, etc., until the township reached a respectable size.

Owing to the absence of roads settlers living to the north-east of the Cranbrook Tier usually placed their products on boats, and sent them down the River Swan and across the head of the bay, where they were shipped direct into the large vessels which were to take them without transshipment to Sydney or London.

Before leaving the subject of Swansea township, there are one or two assistant police magistrates who are worthy of mention—Thomas Daunt Lord (late 2nd West India Regt., lately Commandant at Maria Island), Lieut. Aubin (63rd Foot, afterwards Warden of Spring Bay municipality), and Lieut. Thos. Wharton Young (21st Foot), who, whilst on duty, was drowned on July 1, 1837, by the capsizing of his boat crossing the bar of the Little Swanport River.

Of the public works station little remains—The old commissariat store, traces of foundations of buildings, and the aloes on the crest of the point, which formerly grew in the Commandant's garden.

In 1840 a civilian, W. T. Noyes, was appointed as the Chief Magistrate, and he held office until his transference in 1856 to Latrobe, when E. C. Shaw was appointed Visiting Magistrate. He held office till 1860, when the municipality of Glamorgan was established, and the Warden, ex officio, became the Chief Magistrate of the district.

Some notice might be taken of the articles sent away. From the farmers came mostly wheat, bark, and potatoes. The bark was shipped just dry, after being chopped up and put into bags, or else, in some cases, the extract of tannin was made with water and the result shipped in casks. Wool in the early days was of but little value, and was either burned or dug straight into the ground as manure; but, of course, later became a great article of export. Skins, both of sea

and kangaroo, were also shipped, but in no great quantity. Another valuable article of export was the product of the Bay Whaling Stations, with which, for a long period, the coast was dotted. These were mostly owned by Hobart Town men, but Lieut. Geo. Meredith had a whale fishery of his own, and had stations at Maria Island, on the harbour at Spring Bay, and one which you have doubtless visited on the eastern side of Oyster Bay, in the shadow of the Hazards. All these stations, of course, forwarded whalebone and oil to Hobart Town and London.

Towards the end of the period 1830-40 coal had been discovered on Schouten Island, and during the 1840-50 period was being worked and exported; but the discovery of the field lying just north of Bicheno and its subsequent development by the Douglas River Coal Company rather overshadowed the efforts of the Australian Smelting Company on Schouten Island. The Douglas River Company built, with the assistance of the Government, a tramway to Bicheno—of which the embankments in many places remain to-day—where their coal was shipped. Both these ventures eventually were stopped by the water, which entered their workings.

There is one way of showing the growth of this district which will probably be of interest, and that is the following figures of returns of population:—1823, 69; 1833, 341; 1847, 1065; 1859, 1191; but to give any regular series for comparison is misleading owing to the alterations in the area in which a census was taken.

As regards the religious life of the community, a few remarks may be inserted. The Society of Friends held their meetings at Kelvedon, the residence of Francis Cotton, in 1833, probably the first meeting to be regularly held South of the Line, being founded by Messrs. Backhouse and Walker. A Church of England chaplain was appointed in 1839—the Rev. Joseph Mayson, who administered to the needs of his flock for the long period of 38 years. At first services were held in the schoolhouse, later in the old church situated on what is now called the Recreation Ground, until 1868, when the building was vacated as unsafe, and the present church commenced. A chaplain of the Church of Scotland was appointed to the district in 1844—the Rev. Thos. Dove—who also ministered in the locality until 1882. The kirk was built at Gala (Cranbrook) in 1845, the one at Swansea being opened much later.

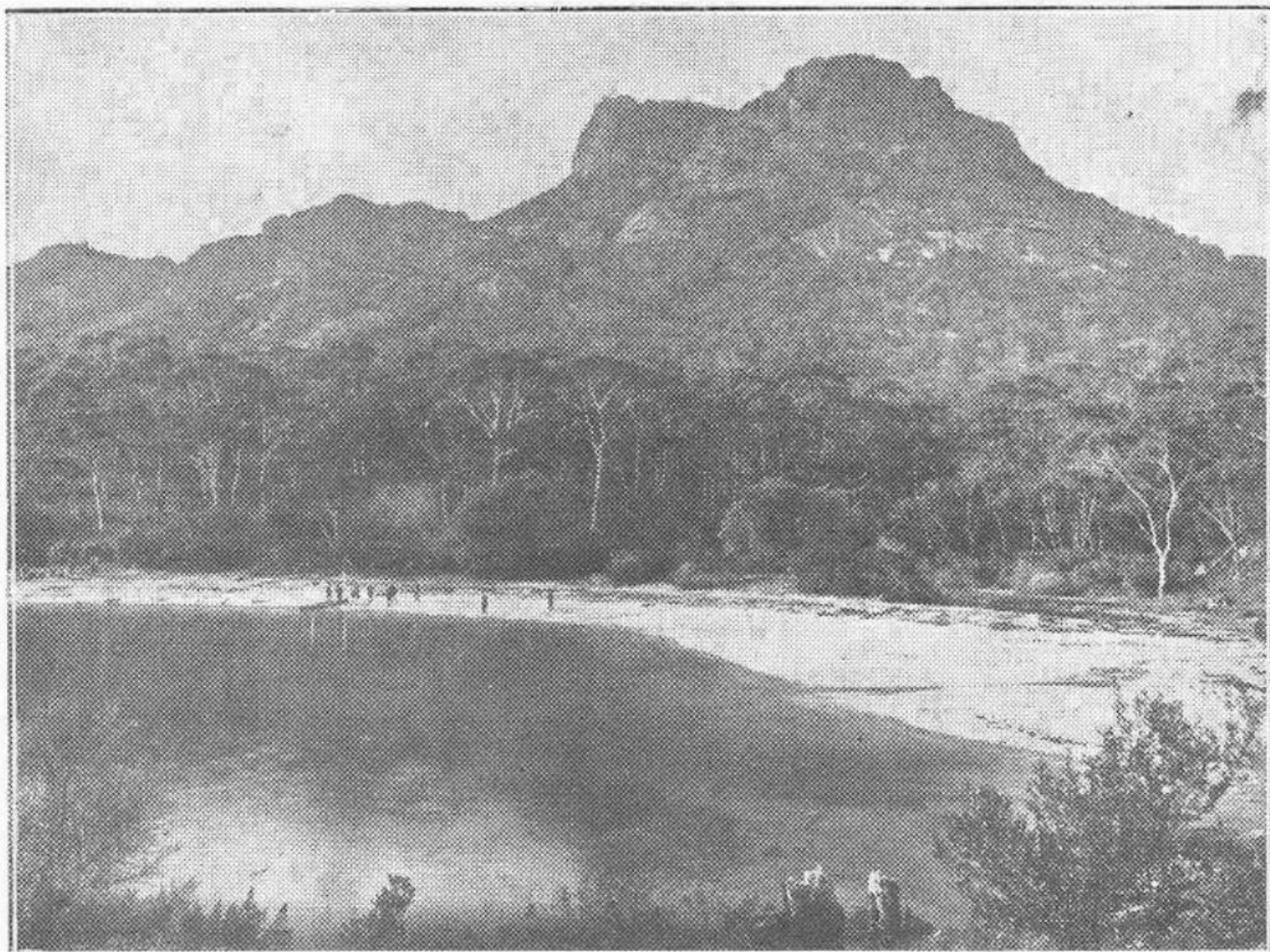
A few remarks on political history may here be inserted. As regards the Legislative Council seat—For the first partly Elected Council the district was included in the Oatlands group, and was represented by Hy. F. Anstey, who beat Chas. Meredith. After the granting of a wholly Elected Parliament in 1856 the Legislative Council seat was in Pembroke group, and was held by Messrs. James Whyte, James Lord, W. Hodgson, H. Lamb, W. W. Perkins, and James Murdoch in succession. For the Lower House, Glamorgan, in 1855, was constituted a separate



district, and the seat was in turn held by Messrs. Chas. Meredith, John Meredith, John Mitchell, John Lyne, E. T. Miles, and F. Shaw, until the "grouped electorate" system came into force. There are many tales of the early elections, which were conducted with much animus.

Among other disabilities with which the early settlers had to contend were two which so far have not been mentioned in this sketch. They were the natives and the convict population, who had escaped from lawful control. The natives, who resided in, or, more correctly frequented, the district were known as the Oyster Bay Tribe, and had a reputation for ferocity greater than that of any other tribe, but for the first two or more years gave but little trouble. This was, however, only the lull before the storm, which broke on November 5, 1823. On that day, at Grindstone Bay, some four miles north of Spring Bay, a mob of natives under the guidance of Mosquito—a black tracker brought by the Government from New South Wales—murdered William Holyoake, a servant of Mr. G. Meredith's, returning from Hobart Town, and Mammaoa, a native of Otaheite, a shepherd of Mr. G. Gatehouse's; whilst the white shepherd of the latter (John Radford) only escaped with his life by running away after being speared.

From this time onwards for the next eight years there runs a tale of tragedy — isolated shepherds, stockmen, and others murdered in lonely spots, and their huts plundered; attacked near the residence of their masters, and finally even the residences themselves besieged in a most determined manner. Amongst the latter was the attack on "Mayfield," the residence of Mr. Buxton, where the affray lasted two days. The thatch was fired, and had it not been for the bravery of two of the occupants, who put the fire out, all would have been burned or speared. A similar type of attack was made on the Meredith homestead, and in each of these cases valuable life was lost. In fact, such a reputation did the locality acquire that Messrs. Backhouse and Walker, in their extremely interesting "Narrative," drew attention to the long sequence of native outrages in Great Swanport district; and they were men of moderate views and extreme accuracy. It should be kept in mind, however, that the blacks had been very badly treated by the rougher elements of the population; and when all the records are considered, it is not to be wondered at that the blacks attempted to retaliate on those who had come to take possession of the aboriginal hunting grounds.



A view of Meredith's Fishery, Cole's Bay, near Swansea.



In 1830 the Government made the attempt to round up the natives by the operation known as "The Black Line." Waterloo Point was a base depot for rations, and the old ration books are still in existence. As in other districts, parties were raised by the leading settlers—Messrs. Amos, Lyne, Meredith, Buxton, Harte, Allen, etc.

The following year a similar operation conducted locally met with the same (or about the same) amount of success. Hearing that a large body of natives were on Freycinet's Peninsula, Messrs. Jno. Lyne, Chas. Meredith, and Jno. Amos raised parties, and formed a line across the peninsula between Oyster Bay and Wineglass Bay with about 100 parties of two men each, 40 yards apart, and fires lit between parties. However, one night before the moon had risen the natives rushed through the line, and all that was found was a piece of a hairy black scalp on a sheoak limb.

After this episode native outrages practically ceased; and before long, by the tact and bravery of one man (George Augustus Robinson) the natives were induced to give themselves up, and were removed to Flinders Island.

The presence of convicts on the island led to the same difficulties and dangers from the parties of those who had escaped as in other places. Great Swanport had several visitations from renowned parties such as the Bradyselves, and left in one of his whale boats. It dence of Geo. Meredith, reprovisioned them. McCabe gang, who in 1825 plundered the residence of Geo. Meredith, reprovisioned themselves, and left in one of his whale boats. It is said that Mr. Meredith was hidden by his quick-witted wife in an empty cider barrel, as they had previously threatened to take his life.

For many years similar persons, but of less importance, made themselves objectionable to the settlers, but there is no record available to show that any of the leading members of the profession operated there.

In 1857 two local men—Driscoll and Flaherty—the former known as "Dido," caused trouble in the locality by a series of highway robberies, but were captured in that year at a spot about 3½ miles north of Swansea known as "Dido's Hill;" but as no case of murder stained their record they were given sentences of imprisonment only, and "Dido" eventually "made good" in other spheres.

The subject of convicts cannot be left without some reference being made to the establishments founded in this district for their reception—one which has already been spoken of was at Swansea itself—and was mainly a depot for the supply of skilled labour in the very early days.

Another establishment, of a different type, was opened in 1841 at Rocky Hills, 10 miles south of Swansea. This was a station for the reception of probationers. These were at first employed in making a good road over Rocky

Hills itself, and later in agricultural labour. When at its zenith it held about 400 men. The ruins of the station may still be seen by the tourist, and until recently one was shown the treadmill, but that has now gone. The Commandant's house is still inhabited, and also another cottage, but all the rest is in ruins. Among the Commandants was William de Giltern, formerly major in the Brunswick Oeis, and later Usher of the Black Rod in the first House of Assembly. Thomas Griffiths Wainwright, forger, prisoner, and artist, spent a short period of his life at Rocky Hills, and there were also some eight or nine prisoners who were transported in 1840 after the rebellion in Canada. The stone bridge on the main road four and a half miles south of Swansea was built by men from this station.

Some of you may have noticed on the beach at low tide the remains of a vessel. They probably represent what is left of the *Welcome*, which took fire in 1868, and was run ashore there. Varying with the state of the tide and sand, there may be visible portions of the wrecks of the cutter "*Resolution*," blown ashore in 1850, or the s.s. "*Moonah*," lost there recently (1925).

After dealing with the destruction of vessels, it is of interest to note that Mr. Geo. Meredith built and launched sideways into the river, near our camp site three fairly large vessels for use on his whaling enterprises. One of them was a 50-ton ship.

Most of the trade of the coast has been carried on in cutters, fore-and-aft-rigged schooners, and ketches until recently, but as far back as 1855 the Eastern Steam Navigation Company, with £20,000 capital, was formed to trade up the coast as far as George's Bay, and many local people held shares. They had three steamers — "*Mimosa*," "*Fenella*," and "*Duncan Hoyle*," the first two being paddle steamers. But the attempt to run such a big affair was premature, and it ended in failure. Before closing this short sketch the names of Messrs. Wm. John Lyne, Charles Meredith, and Bernard Shaw should be noted as two of the three were natives of the district, and the third came to it as a boy.

William John Lyne was the son of John Lyne, many years M.H.A. for Glamorgan, and was born at Apslawn on April 6, 1844. At the age of 20 years he went to Queensland, but in 1866 returned to Tasmania, and was appointed council clerk at Swansea, a position he held for about nine years. In 1875 he went to Albury (N.S.W.), and represented the district of Hume in the N.S.W. Parliament for some years, holding the portfolio of Minister for Lands and Works. He was afterwards Premier of New South Wales, and when the Commonwealth Government was opened in 1901 he was Minister for Home Affairs. He was granted a K.C.M.G. in 1900. He died at Sydney on August 3, 1913.

Charles Meredith was the second son of Lieut. George Meredith, Royal Marines, and was born at Poyston, Pembrokeshire, on May 29,



1811, and arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1821. In 1834 he went to New South Wales, and thence to England, and returned to New South Wales in 1839. In 1840 he returned to Glamorgan and resided at Riversdale. In 1842 he built Springvale, but the following year was appointed Police Magistrate at Port Sorell. In 1848 he resigned his appointment and returned to his home at Riversdale. In 1856 he was appointed M.H.A. for Glamorgan, and later for Kingborough. He held the offices of Colonial Treasurer under the Hon. James Whyte for 3½ years, and Minister for Lands and Works under the Hon. F. M. Innes. In 1878 he was Warden of Spring Bay municipality. He died on March 2, 1880, and is buried in St. George's Cemetery, Hobart.

Bernard Shaw, the eldest son of Edward Carr Shaw, who was for several years Visiting Magistrate at Swansea, was born at Red Banks on October 12, 1836. In 1853 he entered the Civil Service, and was appointed police clerk at Swansea until 1860. He then went to Port Sorell district. He was appointed Police Magistrate at Devonport. He then returned to Hobart, and was assistant clerk of the House of Assembly. In 1869 he was appointed Police Magistrate and Gold Commissioner at Waterhouse, in 1873 Usher of the Black Rod, and in 1883 Secretary for Mines. In 1886 he was appointed Sheriff and Commissioner of Police in Hobart, an office he held until 1899. He received the Imperial Service Order in 1905, and died in Hobart on September 5, 1910.



Members of the Field Naturalists' Easter Camp "a-breaking up the happy home" after a most enjoyable time under canvas.