

# ***The Bushwalker***

A full-page photograph of a rugged, layered rock cliff face. In the foreground, two hikers are sitting on a rocky ledge, looking out over a deep, forested valley. The hiker on the left is wearing a red jacket, and the hiker on the right is wearing an orange jacket. The cliff face is composed of dark, layered rock with some lighter, yellowish-brown patches. The background is filled with dense green vegetation and more distant, hazy hills.

Carne Creek,  
Newnes Plateau

**Volume 32**  
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# ***Then and Now***



**F**rom 1930 to 2007 - on the Jump Back Pass or the 'one in four' This road off the end of McMaho's Lookout (Bimlow Topographic Map) was a key access for the residents of the Burragorang Valley.

The 1930's pictures are from the John Hollingdale collection. The car is a 1930 Model A Ford. The car was different to the previous US made vehicles as the Australian salesmen had

requested more legroom, so they were 3 inches longer in the body. Locally they were known as "New Beautys."

The road surface 77 years on is in excellent condition but off limits.

The car in the pictures is The Improved 'A' Sport Coupe. For petrol heads wanting more consult The History of Ford in Australia, by Norm Darwin, 1969, page 50.



# The Bushwalker

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The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc represents approximately 65 Clubs with a total membership of about 10,000 bushwalkers. Formed in 1932, the Confederation provides a united voice on behalf of all bushwalkers on conservation, access and other issues. It runs training courses for members, helps to provide a free wilderness search and rescue organisation, and helps runs bush navigation competitions. People interested in joining a bushwalking club may write to the Confederation Administration, at the address above, for a list of Clubs, but a more up-to-date version can be found on the Confederation website at www.bushwalking.org.au, broken up into areas. There's lots of other good stuff there too.



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Also please indicate if you are a member of a bushwalking club, and if not whether you would like a copy of the list of our clubs.

## From the editor's desk. . .

The front cover for this issue is filmed in one of the more challenging areas of the western Blue Mountains - Carne Creek. Located on the western edge of the Wollemi NP (and should be incorporated in it, subsurface mining notwithstanding). The unique combination of canyons, pagodas, narrow fingers of land and variety of micro- environments make it one of my favourite exploring grounds. Bushwalking colleagues Stephen Murray and Tom Brennan agreed to 'experience the vertigo' so that this shot could bring you some idea of the huge dimensions involved.

Inside the front cover are some memories of times past - of a valley now lost to bushwalking. As I culled the collection for this material I reflected on how fortunate we are to have so many very dedicated and skilled bushwalking historians, who are documenting and recording for posterity the changing times. Even so, much is still being lost when well- intentioned relatives clean up after a deceased bushwalker by 'chucking out all that rubbish.'

Andy Macqueen, Brian Fox, Jim Smith, Jim Barrett, Wilf Hilder, Robert Sloss - are just a few names on a distinguished list of bushwalking historians. Jim Smith's dedication to understanding and researching and documenting our rapidly disappearing Aboriginal culture is to be applauded.

Having a podium such as this inspires me to implore all of you 'to record the bush' in words and pictures as you see it. The pressure of our so-called civilization puts it at increasing risk almost daily.

Articles in this issue record the sterling work of the BWRS in saving lives; A search for the Wolgan Pillars; overseas adventures in Nepal; recognition of a Dog called Ben; the magic of Yerranderie country; ANZAC Day 2007 at Splendour Rock and more.

To 'sit in the chair' of editor Roger Caffin even for one issue of the Bushwalker is a privilege accorded very few. Without upsetting too many egos I hope that the selection of articles together with their excellent photo images meets with your approval. Without the enthusiastic and dedicated assistance of Barry Hanlon this issue would not have appeared on time. Thank you Barry.

Please note that opinions expressed by authors may not represent the official opinions of the Confederation or any Club. The acting editor's opinions are just that - his opinions.

Michael Keats  
Acting Editor



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# The Almost Makalu Base Camp Trip



Chris Bennett,  
The Bush Club, Sydney

**O**ur Bush Club group of ten flew out from Sydney on April 4, overnighted in Bangkok and flew into Kathmandu the next day. At Kathmandu airport one of the questions on the customs form is whether you are carrying more than the equivalent of two thousand American greenbacks. Given that we were to pay the trekking company in cash, we all answered yes to the question. The officials don't really look at the forms, so you just hand them in and walk through.

However, one of our group, John, perhaps under the influence of his South African heritage, felt compelled to personally explain to an official what he had written. The Nepalese bureaucracy quickly flung into action, but fortunately, after a long twenty minutes, he emerged into the sunlight unscathed but wiser. Nima our Nepalese trek organiser then greeted us. If ever struck for the correct English response to a question, especially one which featured the word 'money', Nima's response was steadfastly consistent: "yes please".

The drive from the airport bisected an unfortunate socio-economic truth: to the left, typical third world conditions and on the right a private golf links for the privileged few. Prior to starting the trek we had a couple of days in Kathmandu. When returning from a monkey temple we encountered a massive traffic jam, evidently caused by a queue of people bound together like a conga chain. As our vehicle slowly moved down the crowded street there was no sign that the queue had an end. Eventually, about four kilometres later our rough estimate would have been twenty thousand or more. And the reason for the Guinness-worthy attempt at the longest human chain: the issuing of new mobile phone sim cards! Things we take for granted assume a different importance in Nepal.

On April 7 we flew east from Kathmandu to Tumlingtar - about one

hour's flight. The landing on grass was a first for most. There we met our support crew, (chief guide, sherpas, cook, kitchen staff and porters). Yes, they numbered 26 to look after our group of 10!

Everything has to be carried. The loads they bore and the ease with which the porters would traverse over all types of terrain was nothing short of unbelievable. For our trek, each porter carried about 40 kilos; village porters, who carry goods between villages, loads can be up to 70 kilos. Later in the trek, Bob hoisted a porter's load on his back. I think he soon realised he shouldn't give up his day job.

So we individually did not have to carry much - a daypack with water, rain gear, munchies, camera etc. Typically each day we walked for 5 to 7 hours.

The first night we camped at Khandbari the largest town of the region. Khandbari dogs undergo a Jekyll and Hyde transformation - docile by day, Hounds of Baskerville by night. Curious children surrounded us as we camped in the villages, captivated at the images on our digital cameras. In this setting John and Helen came to the fore and displayed a wonderful ability to entertain and hold their attention.

Many of the smaller villages we passed through did not have electricity; some did have satellite phones powered by solar energy.

**A** couple of days into the trek and the track was beginning to open up - literally. A rudimentary road was being constructed. Road construction in the West is highly automated but not out here - everything

is done by hand. Large rocks are broken up by sledgehammers and used in retaining walls for the road. Dirt is moved about mainly by pulling it along on hessian sacking (virtually no wheelbarrows!). The local villagers do all the work: men, women and children (some very young!).

Normally we slept in tents, two to each tent, but at Num (day 5) we faced torrential rain that forced us into accommodation that the locals would use. The accommodation was spartan: made of mud bricks, no electricity, no glass windows, just small openings with wooden shutters and the beds were hard as nails. Yet this was heaven in comparison with the prospect of getting cosy with soggy campground - isn't everything relative?

Several days later we camped at Tashigoan (2000 metres). That night most discussion was centred on the next days climb to Khongma Lha, which would elevate us, another 1400 metres to a very respectable 3400m. Naturally, thoughts of altitude sickness and the difficulty that lay ahead pervaded our thought, but, as so often happens, the climb was not as hard as we imagined.

We started to reach temperate/sub alpine regions. Towards the later part of the day we hit snow and what a feeling it was going through forests of snow-covered rhododendrons. We wondered if Kaye's Dunlop volleys would hold up.

**A**t Khongma Lha our sherpa guide became the messenger that so often plays the target for some easy shooting when he relayed the news that due to severe snow conditions ahead we would not be able to get to our ultimate destination of Makalu base camp and would need to turn back. Apparently just before we arrived in Nepal, they experienced the largest April snowstorm in 40 years - great timing hey. Understandably we all were disappointed, but this trip was a lot more than just reaching a destination, the journey was the experience.



The local children were always fascinated by the trekkers' activities

We stayed one more day in Khongma Lha and all of us climbed about 200 metres higher, a few made it 300 metres further. Spectacular mountain views ensued and no photo could ever capture the feeling of being on top of the world.

**T**he next day we faced the 1400 metre descent from Khongma to Tashigoan. The first part was through the snow. Most of the kitchen staff and porters left before us but, curiously, were asked to wait before we descended. We couldn't quite work out why we should not start our descent but when all the kitchen staff and porters climbed back the answer was clear. Apparently we as a group were perceived as (to use 'western speak') requiring "individualised value-added aged-care services". So a helper took each of us by the hand individually, and we merrily went on our way down, looking a little like a Moonie group wedding.

At the end of the day, nearing Tashigoan, we passed a fast-flowing mountain stream, about 20 minutes before campsite. Normally our body washing was limited to the bowl of warm water each evening, so the prospect of being able to wash all the body was very attractive as fasting is to Paris Hilton. So after we set up camp Bob, John W, Trish, Kaye and myself went back. The men, not wanting to flaunt their tired bodies, went down stream and discreetly completed their bathing. However, Trish and Kaye decided to bathe right by the path. In the two weeks of trekking we only saw three Europeans but at the exact

time that Trish and Kaye were in their birthday suits a portly bearded Englishman with about 20 support staff appeared, once again, great timing hey. He did make some comments, which I will not repeat here, but apparently all the porters had wide grins on their faces at the sight of these naked nymphs.

We continued our return journey and after 5 days arrived back at Tumlingtar for the flight back to Kathmandu. As per tradition on this night the support staff received their well-earned gratuity. As a group we then presented an acted out rendition of Waltzing Matilda. Erith played a fine jumbuck and obviously enjoyed being stuffed into a tucker-bag. For some reason, the group decided that a New Zealander - me - should have the starring role of the swagman. Maybe they thought my acting skills would be better than my singing skills. The night concluded with a slow gyrating Nepalese dance. Fortunately learning the lyrics did not require mental inspiration - recite one verse then repeat, repeat and repeat. By the end of the night Jacqui seemed to be getting the hang of it.

**S**o the Makalu trek turned out to be two weeks instead of the originally planned twenty days. Most of the group went on to do another five-day trek in the Helambu region, at a lower altitude, whilst I decided to head home. They no doubt had a fun time on that trip, but that's a story for another day. There are many stories of trekking in Nepal bringing out the worst in people but I'm pleased to report our group all



Typical scenery in the lower areas of the Makalu Trek

got on incredibly well.

It was Disraeli who said there are lies, damned lies, and statistics. Our trek stats: 10500 metres climbed in the first trek, 13100 metres in total for both treks. Point of reference: Mt Everest is 9800 metres.

Each of us had our own reasons for undertaking this trek but for me it was to be out of my comfort zone, to be in a vastly different culture, to be part of a team and of course to be close to the world's highest mountains. Life is very tough

for most Nepalese yet they still laugh and smile and I think we all realised what a privileged life we have in the west.


And finally a large thanks to our leader Tony for his planning, leadership and patience. Without Tony this trek would not have taken place.

The trekkers: Tony Hickson (leader), Jacqui Hickson, Kaye Birch, Trish Molinari, John Wilson, Bob Wood, Erith Hamilton, John de Coque, Helen Fastovsky and Chris Bennett.



Camp at Chongma should have been on grassy flats


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# A Whole Different View of Kanangra

Caro Ryan, BWRS

**Q** When you get a phone call from a respected leader to spend a weekend hanging around Cloudmaker and Strongleg in perfect early Autumn conditions, you'd be crazy to say no. Right?

**A** Absolutely Right!

But this was a phone call with a catch and an agenda. And as an operational member of the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS), it is phone calls like this that I'm starting to get used to. And it's phone calls like this, that I invite you to start receiving.

The call came on Thursday evening and the instructions were to report to the base at Kanangra Walls carpark at 8am on Friday morning. Because of work commitments I was unable to attend on Friday, however I was able to join the ranks of searchers on Saturday. This is one of the great things about our squad of willing volunteers. There is an understanding that people have work and other things that can stop you from

attending. (But this is also why we need more people to join us!).

As so many of you know, Kanangra Walls is not an easy place to get to. It is handy to know that there are BWRS members all over Sydney and NSW, who are willing to car share. And so it was that myself and another local member set out from Neutral Bay at 8.30pm Friday bound for the Boyd River Crossing campsite. At midnight we bunked down in the shelter shed for a good sleep, surrounded by tents of school holiday makers, allowing us for a fresh start at 8am for a big day ahead.

You probably heard the news reports of this missing bushwalker. He was seen on Easter Friday at Gabes Gap and then never heard from again. Like me, you probably came up with a few thoughts on where or what might have become of him and it is within a structured organisation, such as the BWRS, that you're able to have these thoughts heard and actually get out there and do something about it.

It's these thoughts, matched with your experience as a bushwalker, that would make you a valuable asset to what the Police Rescue leaders on site called, 'our primary search resource in wilderness areas'.

The BWRS started life as a consequence of a search in the Grose Valley in 1936 when a party of four young men failed to return from a three-day trip. It was famous walkers of the day such as Paddy Pallin and Max Gentle, who were involved in the search that decided an organisation of experienced walkers was needed for future searches. Back then, it was known as the Search and Rescue unit of the Federation of Bushwalkers, and these days it is known as the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad, a member



Discussing search patterns

unit of the Volunteer Rescue Association who come under the authority of the State Rescue Board. It's the State Rescue Board who are the body given the responsibility by the NSW State Government to ensure the state is prepared for all types of disasters, rescue or emergencies. It is the body that sets the accreditation and training standards of all rescue services in NSW, including Police Rescue, Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service and Volunteer Rescue Association.

Having this structure and clear chain of command is comforting and gives us a definite and firm foundation and framework for all our operations and decisions. In the field this is translated into us understanding our role within the rescue team, not only at command base, but also out in the bush.

We are the only voluntary organisation called on by the Police who focus solely on skills in wilderness and bush areas. As a group, we come from all walks of life and from all areas across NSW. We meet, mix, walk and train with people from many different clubs, backgrounds and experiences. We are invited to gain training through nationally accredited courses, being offered free of charge to members. These courses include such modules as VM (Vertical Mobility), V1-3, i.e. abseiling (as well as the opportunity of being accredited as a trainer), navigation, first aid, helicopter winch training, casualty transport, RAVA (Remote Area Vertical Access), tracking techniques and radio communications just to name a few.

**O**ur training and skills are being increasingly called upon as we have proved ourselves to Police Rescue command in not only the two recent high profile searches, such as this Kanangra one and the search for David Iredale the 17 year old teenager lost in the Jamison Valley just before Christmas. There have also been many searches with less media attention. But it's not about media attention and the kudos in doing something heroic... It is about putting our abilities to good use within our

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community. It's about going bush for reasons other than ourselves.

On arriving at the Kanangra carpark, there was already a steady stream of Police and SES vehicles, not to mention the thump, thump, thump sound from the first of three helicopters that would be working the search over the weekend. Polair 1, 2 and the NPWS chopper - taking off from the cleared area just past the low fence line to the south of the carpark. With the search area running from the carpark north to the Cox's River, west to the steeps on both sides of Kanangra Creek, east to Ti Willa and south to the Kowmung River, for efficiency it was essential to hitch rides with the various choppers. All members who did so were speaking enthusiastically of the buzz of a helicopter ride over the walls and down Kanangra Creek - Thurat Spires rising majestically as they swept up the valley. Different teams were dropped at a variety of landing spots such as Ti Willa plateau, Mt Moorilla Mooroo, Konangaroo Clearing (where several teams camped), beaches along the Cox's and some members getting the ride of their life as they were winched up from the depths of Moko Creek. It was here that the chopper crew were overheard reporting on the radio to Police Rescue their astonishment at our ability to be in such rugged terrain. And of course our winching out of down stream Dex Creek, during which extrication the unfortunate discovery of the missing person was made around midday on Sunday.

Unfortunately, it doesn't matter how experienced you are as a bush person, unless you're a member of a recognised squad, you can't be involved in searches. Being a member of BWRS meant that I was able to be part of the solution.

**T**he fact is that your skills and your experience are needed. The Police are now looking to us in BWRS, that is, experienced bushwalkers to be out in the field with skills that they don't have. For us to be able to be involved every time we get called, we need to ensure that we have enough operational members, trained up and ready. The reality is that we are very short on members. Not just people to get out in the field, but even people at base to operate radios and be involved at administrative levels.

There are already a good number of SBW people who are also members or trainees in the BWRS. Why don't you become one too?



Dave Drohan using HF radio above Moko Creek

Check out the website for all the details:  
[www.bwrs.org.au](http://www.bwrs.org.au)

Some employers, particularly the public service, allow staff days off for voluntary community service leave and the squad can provide you with letters from the Police to confirm your participation in a search.



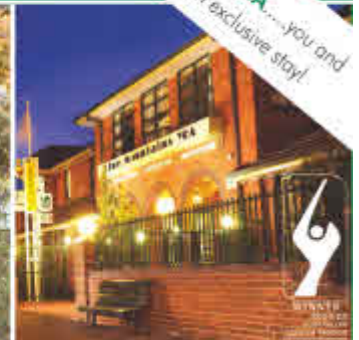
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# In Search of the Wolgan Pillars



Below the Pillars

Michael Keats  
The Bush Club

**T**he gateway to the walk is Newnes - a vestigial ghost town where the world's richest deposit of kerosene shale oil (yielding up to 720 litres/tonne) was first exploited in 1905. The town and the various coal and shale enterprises finally came to an end due to the combined effects of cheap imports, the Great Depression and the transfer of moveable useful assets to Glen Davis to extract shale oil during WW2.

We drove up to the historic (and now unlicensed) Newnes Hotel and had a short chat to Thomas Ebersoll, owner and part time operator of modern chalet type accommodation for visitors planning an easy explore of the industrial ruins. After briefing Thomas on our plans we said we would join him two days later in the afternoon for coffee.

Our way of route took us along Benby's Pinch and then through some of the old Shale Oil processing plant ruins as we climbed the track on the talus slope opposite Petries Gully. Spent some time admiring the massive and beautifully crafted brick retaining wall that used to protect the Exhauster House and Ammonia Scrubbing Plant (circa 1934). The brickwork is as sound today 80 years on as it was when constructed. Large eucalypts now crowd the platform where

the buildings and other structures used to be.

The rusting and decaying relics of an old grazing property started about GR 497 260 and continued for several hundred metres. Of particular interest was an old McCormick - Deering Tractor with the rubber tyres still intact. It made a good photographic subject, as did an old chair and other artifacts.

Being an exploratory walk and always on the lookout for something a bit challenging, we left the track at GR 505 238, (the topo map is quite inaccurate in showing the location of the track) and headed into wild, deeply dissected country with multiple ravines, many rocks and lots of fallen timber. The further in we penetrated the more challenging this area became. At GR 498 230 a relatively, flat cleared area big enough for the group to make camp resolved out of the bush. It is about 100m from the Deanes Creek - Rocky Creek junction. This was going to be our base campsite and coincidentally also lunch as it was 1330.

Whilst munching away we gazed across Rocky Creek to the cliffs above - the northern edge of the Mount Cameron Plateau. Most of this plateau is shown on the Rock Hill sheet. We mused and speculated that once camp was established perhaps we could scale these cliffs and find a way to the top. There are magnificent 'orphan rocks' and toothed and barbed projections into the sky all around the area. If we could find a way of route, then such an access would open up possibilities for camping on the plateau and doing pack walks from Natural Bridge right through to Newnes. The options for exploring would be endless and only constrained by available water.

At 1445 camp was well established and water drawn from Deanes Creek, so we commenced our cliff assault armed with carefully packed daypacks. There was a bit of rain in the air and in spots a bit more on the undergrowth of the lower slopes. After a while we were wet so more wetness did not matter. Anthea had elected to stay in camp and tend the fire, (although she would have preferred to have some kip!). As we emerged from the lower slopes the cliffs started to look rather steep. They are.

**W**e could discern a possible way and as each obstacle was overcome we pushed on to the next. I did some interesting balancing on an old log across an impossible ravine before Ian and John found a much easier rock climb. Oh well, them's the breaks. Soon the top of the first big climb was conquered. We emerged onto a small level area that led to a commanding view to the north and east. It was real wow stuff. Real Wow! The view, which was cut off to the west by a sheer cliff allowed us to see up the Wolgan River for several kilometres and similarly downstream to where the Wolgan turns sharply south. Lots of

pictures were taken even though the weather was dull with low cloud.

We then moved out onto an unsupported projecting platform that was even more 'Wow' than earlier, (GR 505 225). We were euphoric with our discovery of a doable route up these cliffs that are just over 200m high. We could see easy ways forward from this point to explore so much more. To the south of our little platform was a great vertical cliff with a drop in excess of 100m. It glowed pink and fawn in the afternoon light. More pictures.

We reviewed our rapidly diminishing time allocation to get down and make dinner while there was some daylight. As it was there was simply not enough time to go further. We needed several days... as we descended I mused on a name for this Pass. My choice is to name it Yerra Yerra Pass deriving from an Aboriginal dialect for 'sharp' or 'tooth-like.' We entered camp full of enthusiasm for the discovery and rapidly moved into happy hour mode...

**I** was first up at 0600, coaxed the fire into life and boiled water for tea. Geoff emerging from his tent reckoned he had one of the best nights rest he could remember. Left camp at 0730 - our objective to view the famed Wolgan Pillars. As we negotiated the way of route back to the Wolgan River Trail we kept glancing up at Yerra Yerra Pass. Maybe if we returned early enough and if we had the energy we could give it another go...

0800 we returned to GR 505 237 where a cairn marks the take off point for the way of route to our camp. It is not really to identify the way to our camp - it is a marker for any walker wanting to explore Rocky Creek or Deanes Creek above the junction.

The topo map shows the Wolgan River trail on the wrong side of the river for the next 4km. The trail is on the north side,

One of the teeth of the Yerra Yerra Pass







Ian and John on top of the Yerra Yerra Pass

not the south as shown. With only daypacks to contend with our progress was rapid. There are flourishing beds of nettles along much of the trail and we all had our share of tingling reminders for many hours.

Along here we did also have the joy of two majestic red tailed black cockatoos giving us a colour show and noisy reception. It is something to see these birds where they belong - in the wild.

As we approached the area where the Pillars are supposed to be an all out effort was made to climb every high peak in search of these iconic pillars that we understood were something very special. It was not until we were standing on the very last little knoll (1100) as shown on the map that the penny dropped. The pillars are there but they are like Hanging Rock in the Grose Gorge - huge sections of cliff about to calve off and sometime, way in the future they will crash into the valley below. For the moment they are only discernable as separate pillars when the light casts a shadow and you can see their separation from the cliff!

Corner post of the 'Wire Yards'



We could now understand why rock climbers just love these pillars. They are possibly over 100m high and have outward curved as well as straight sides and just enough distance from the main rock face to present a real challenge. Now we know why there are no spectacular pictures of "The Wolgan Pillars" - they just do not present that way.

Although we would have been a good 300m from The Pillars we took photos and I had an inward chuckle how I had duped myself into believing that we would see soaring, freestanding pillars in the middle of the valley. I also now know why bushwalkers can walk right passed them and yet not see them.

As none of us had a desire to return the way we had come we took a bearing and headed NE generally and wended our way down to the Wolgan River. The river was reached at 1130 and the famous wire cattle yards at 1150, GR 558 229. These yards have been constructed using plaited wire cable that has now been incorporated into the trees that were originally selected as corner posts. Any animal impounded in these yards would have no chance of escape.

**D**ay three dawned bright and sunny. Just after 0630 the cliffs above Deanes Creek glowed as the sun and then the whole valley complex was illuminated. Under such circumstances we made a fire for tea and then began the sad process of breaking camp. As we were packing up the brilliant morning was disappearing fast as the clouds returned.

0805 the campsite was cleared and we filed out. There were some spectacular plays of light on the 'teeth' of the Yerra Yerra Pass, so more pictures were captured. Once on the fire trail we soon got into an easy rhythm of walking and the kilometres



There is only one way

just passed by. 0940 there was a revisiting of the old grazing property and some inspection of the derelict sheds. A cache of dated empty beer bottles put the last phase of occupation between 1965 and 1967.

Thomas was a genial host with tea and plunger coffee- served on the verandah while we ate our lunches at a table - a gentle re-introduction to the civilised world. I will be back as the door has only just opened on the possibilities to do so much in this area.

## Kathmandu 17th October 2007

### 19 DAY CAMPING TREK

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#### 3 NIGHTS POKHARA

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# Day walk across Cathedral Rock

David Lawrence

photos by Colin Wood

**W**e were a split party, with 1 driving solo from Guyra to park at Native Dog, and the Armidale contingent coming in three cars (needed for the car shuttle). Dropping most off at Barokee, cars and drivers headed around to Native Dog. Somewhere on the way James had a puncture and found that his wheelbrace didn't fit his wheel nuts. Luckily, Betty was behind him, with one that fitted- though oddly enough, not her wheelnuts! There's a lesson there somewhere. Anyway, a change of tyre and they arrived around Native Dog, left two cars, and all drivers headed back to Barokee.

With the shuttle and the puncture, it was close to 11 before we all assembled and started off. The day was fine, with a high overcast and a hint of clouds to the East. We walked the good track past small granite tors and open grassy woodland of Messmate Stringybark, Mountain Gum, New England Blackbutt and Hill Banksia, with an understorey of Snow Grass and Bracken Fern, and arrived at the southern start of the Cathedral Rock circuit on our right after about 850 metres. Ignoring that, we walked on for another 1.25 km to the ridge junction for the Cathedral Rock climb.

The smaller track was pretty clear, with directional arrows where it crossed open rock expanses. However, if you weren't watching for the next arrow, it would be quite easy to find you'd strayed off into some rocky cul-de-sac- or over some cliff edge. We took our time, and were careful of our footing as we crept up between, over and once under the jumbled mass of granite tors that leads up to the summit. The last 15 metres is a matter of hanging onto a chain (which looked strong enough to lift several elephants) while edging around a boulder and up to the top.

The high point is at about 1550 metres, with a view that is almost 360 degrees, with just the top of Round Mountain at 1584 blocking a slice to the southwest. The cloud we'd seen earlier was cloaking Point Lookout and another slice of the horizon to the east, but in between we could pick out many of the landmarks of the Eastern New England- Chandlers Peak, Mount Duval and the Macleay Valley.

Soon the chilly summit wind blew us back down, and we were glad to hit the junction of the main track to eat our lunches out of the wind. We chatted about other trips- which covered a fair bit of the world, as James, Yuval and Mohammed were visiting from their home countries- and the bushwalker perennials of best footwear and foodstuffs for walking. Our late start meant we soon packed and headed on to across the park.

A few hundred metres further on, at the northern junction of the track around Cathedral Rock, we passed through a mini-forest of Mountain Honeysuckle, the tall banksia common around these parts. In spring, you'll see Orchids, Buttercups and Native Violets, especially around the watercourses in these parts. We also saw a weird little plant that looks like a 40 cm Christmas tree- Bushy Clubmoss. It is a something of a relic from early days of the plant kingdom, from before seed plants evolved- but is widespread, and grows happily beside the track in a few places.

An hour or so later, we reached a significant stream divide. Behind us, all the waters flowed south via the Oaky, Chandler and Macleay to enter the Pacific at South West Rocks. In front of us, they ran north via the Guy Fawkes, Boyd, Nymboida and Clarence to meet the Pacific north of Yamba. The divide is crowned with granite tors, to about 1400 metres at Woolpack Rocks. We had a lazy afternoon tea here, and spread out the map so Penelope could point out Crown Mountain and Nightcap Mountain, near her place about 56 kilometres away to the Nor NorWest.

**S**oon we moved on, to skirt the swamps that are a major feature of the park. They are richly endowed with sedges and rushes, including the "Button Grass" so well known to Tasmanian walkers, plus a lovely array of Spring-Summer flowers- Lilies and

Pennyworts and Daisies and Forget-Me-Nots and Bluebells- it's a wonderland for those who tread carefully into the soggy stuff. Gradually tiny streamlets appeared, and we crossed Native Dog Creek - just a couple feet wide- to arrive at our cars about 4 o'clock. We farewelled Penelope for her solitary drive home via Guyra and points north, and shuttled our cars round to pick up the lone car at Barokee. Then home by dark after a very pleasant 17 km, our last autumn walk for 2007.

## Maps

1:250 000 Armidale Special SH56-10 Edition 2

(Not needed on the track walks)

1:25000 "Ebor"

1:25000 "Maiden Creek"

NPWS Cathedral Rock (sketch map)

## For more information:

NPWS North Coast Region,  
Dorrigo Plateau Office,  
PO Box 170, Dorrigo NSW 2453.  
Ph: 02 66572 309.



The party gathering on the weather worn granite



# A Dog Called Ben

Brian Fox.

**W**alter Herbert Botting (1887-1985) commonly referred to as Wally by his mates even though his mother called him Bert was just one of Katoomba's original bush track makers.

Wally as I shall refer to him migrated to Australia from England as a young man and was employed by the Katoomba Municipal Council and later Blue Mountains City Council as a Ranger from 1913 to his retirement in 1953. Wally had a faithfully little dog which he named Ben born about 1926. When Ben was fully grown he was Wally's constant companion. Vera Smith, Wally's daughter described Ben as "A great little mate to the family and sadly missed".

Wally as a ranger was involved in a number of track making projects around Katoomba and Leura these included areas near Katoomba Cascades, Leura Falls, Giant Stairway, Prince Henry Cliff Walk and Wally helped to clear the track after the Katoomba Landslide in 1931.

When Wally was working in this area he would use the coal skips or as it is today the Scenic Railway to carry himself and his tools to and from his work place, when he was working at the Leura end he daily used the steel ladders which led to the old sewage works. Wally usually worked alone or with Ranger James McKay and each day when Wally went out to work his faithful dog Ben went with him. Some of the unusual things that Wally did included during times of drought damming up the water upstream of Katoomba Falls and then releasing the flow of water so photographers could obtain a

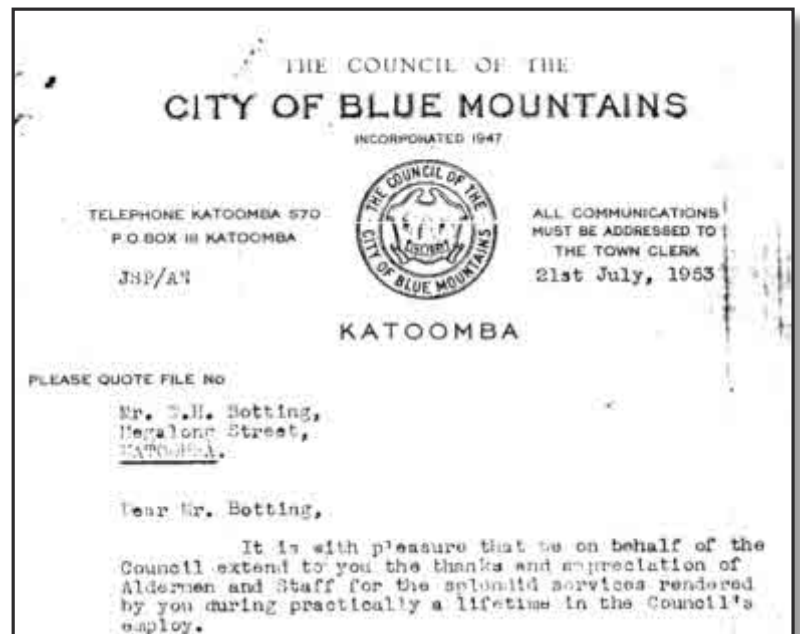
spectacular photo of the water flowing over the falls.

A sad occurrence happened when Ben was 14 years old, the day started just like any other with Wally and his faithful companion accompanying each other to work. On this particular day Wally was clearing the track near the base of the landslide when a tree fell and killed his beloved Ben. Years later after Wally had also passed away, Vera Smith (daughter) wrote to the Blue Mountains City Council to request if a lookout could be named in her father's honour. Whether by accident or design the council allocated a viewing area 180 metres below the top of the Golden Stairs off Glenraphael Drive, Narrow Neck which is now known as Bottings Lookout. This lookout has direct views across to the Katoomba landslide where Wally and Ben spent there last time together.

**A**t this lookout a brass plaque has the words inscribed "This lookout is dedicated to Walter Botting (1887-1985). A pioneer track-maker of the Katoomba District. His spirit remains always in the mountains".



Quite Achiever — Walter Botting



## Conscript Pass

**D**eep in the Lane Cove River valley, in pleasant side creek is a small stream. The Great North Walk crosses the stream a few metres ahead, and a little further on is 'Conscript Pass'.

The 'Pass' is a narrow gap between two large sandstone outcrops. A gully on the left is covered in leaf litter but also sports the carved words, 'Conscript Pass'. There is nearby, also an engraved caricature of a well-dressed man. This site was created by a work gang in the 1930's, part of a public works program during the Great Depression.

Why? It was a tumultuous time. The Premier, Jack Lang had just been sacked by the Governor, the men faced unemployment, and an uncertain future. Bertram Stevens, the man who replaced Lang was the object of the caricature.

Why was it called Conscript Pass? The economic uncertainties probably evoked in the men's minds, Jack Lang's oratory when he burst out against the iniquity of the Bank of England's plan to 'fix the currency'. Lang, in his powerful style thundered, "The same people who conscripted our sons and laid them to rest

in Flanders fields... now demand more blood, the interest on their lives..."

The men working on this Pass who created these images were echoing Lang's words: they were still conscripts to British Banks, and their unemployment would be 'interest demanded', on top of the thousands of lives so tragically lost in Flanders and Gallipoli

So here in this quiet reach of Sydney's bushland, standing in the heart of the Northern Suburbs, is a poignant record of Lang's oratory and a rare echo of those difficult years.

Based on research by  
Garry MacDougall



# Batsch Camp to Yerranderie

Easter 2007

Steve Deards  
Sutherland Bushwalking Club

Three of us drove to Mt Werong on Thursday afternoon & camped at the abandoned hut. It was rather cool during the night, getting down to seven degrees. We met George, the guy who had originally built the hut, who was visiting the area after many years absence. He had a few interesting yarns to spin. Sandra & Lloyd arrived early the next day, then we all drove down to Batsch Camp from where we started the walk. Our route took us through open country to Bent Hook swamp, which we followed easterly until it got very scrubby. We then headed north to Mt Myanga, Roaring Wind Mt & Mt Colong.

On top of Mt Colong, there is a very large truncated conical pile of rocks that forms the Trig Stn. There is also a visitors book that had an entry for 1996. Bill, Margaret, Mick & Trippy, where are you now? There were also quite a few other familiar names. We then descended a ridge to near the base of the mountain, but some navigational problems & a sheer cliff line meant extra time spent reaching the road at Tonalli Gap. From the Gap, it was a road bash into Yerranderie, where we arrived at 7.30pm. We camped at the Government Town camp at the top of the hill, and although there were quite a few groups car camping, there were still plenty of good spots available. A lady from a nearby camp must have taken pity on us - she came over with a large

plate of freshly cooked lamb & vegies, which we devoured with gusto.

Day two we did some exploring. Firstly, climbing Yerranderie Peak, where there are great views of the surrounding area. On our way down, we detoured to Bartlett Head. It was so nice there on the flat rock plateau that we stayed quite a while, enjoying the view, the occasional sunshine & lunch. After descending to the road, we walked down to the Tonalli River, where we checked out an old campsite of mine. I was disappointed as the river was very low & the camp was overgrown. We investigated an old mine shaft, but couldn't find the swimming hole with the waterfall nearby. Nobody seemed inclined to want to walk through the wet bush to look for it, so we returned to camp.

On day 3, we decided to move on & explore new territory. After checking out the Silver Peak mine, we walked back along the road to Tonalli Gap. We turned right, following the road through Squatting Rock Gap until we came to a high point. We left the road here & walked down to a saddle then up to Mt Milo for lunch. From here, we followed a clear easy ridge all the way down to the Kowmung River.

Following the river upstream, we eventually came to Lannigans Creek & the Uni Rover trail. Campsites were scarce, but a good one was found 200m above the creek on a terrace. There was just enough room for 4 tents & an abundance of firewood. The creek also had some clear pools of water.

On day 4, we walked upstream along the open creek, only occasionally having to push through thickets of spiny Bursaria. This plant, although a native, is taking over the area, & the banks of the Kowmung are now lined with it. The weather had been iffy all weekend, with sporadic showers & sun, making the vegetation wet & unpleasant to walk through. We had morning tea at the "Roman Bath", a pretty rock

## Anzac Day

Early on the morning of April 24, I set out for the Blue Mountains with a small group from my club. From the carpark at Carlons Farm we walked over the stile onto the fire trail. It was drizzly all day so we covered up in rain gear before we started. At Breakfast Creek we stopped for lunch, then continued to Medlow Gap, and before long picked up the side track off to Mobbs Swamp. Past the swamp the track took us on to the turnoff to Splendour Rock. Here we climbed up through the rock



Group at Trig

pool and cascade. Soon after we reached the base of Acetylene Spur where we dropped our packs and set off to quickly visit Colong Caves that had a distinct smell of bat guano. After ascending the very steep spur, it was a short

walk back to the cars, stopping briefly to look at a red belly black snake sunning itself in the sun beside the track.

Participants: Steve Deards (leader), Col White, Peter Wherry, Sandra Laws & Lloyd Egan.

On Bartlett Head



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## 2007 at Splendour Rock

outcrop to Splendour Rock. Some groups were already camped here and others continued to arrive.

Anzac Day next morning meant an early start - up at 5.30 am ready for the dawn Anzac service at 6 am. In 1948 with memories of fellow bushwalkers lost in World War 2 not far behind them, the then Federation of Bushwalkers erected a war memorial here, a plaque on the rock, overlooking the spectacular wilderness valleys and ranges beyond, and annual commemoration services have been held there. In recent times Nepean Bushwalkers have organised this, as was the case this year. One of their members, Bill Sanday, conducted the service and reminded us all of the sacrifices our soldiers had made for us. Our thanks go to Nepean Bushwalkers for carrying out this commemoration each year. Apart from Nepean Bushwalking Club, members of the Watagan Wanderers, Springwood Bushwalking Club, Out of the Blue walkers, scouts & others attended, about 25 people altogether. Usually we look forward to a spectacular sunrise at Splendour Rock. This year clouds covered the sky, and threatened rain, which held off

for the service. There was no sunrise, and light just filtered through the clouds to herald a start to the day by the end of the service.

This year is the 40th anniversary of the founding of Springwood Bushwalking Club, and their inaugural activity was a walk to Splendour Rock on Anzac Day, 1967. They were there this year to celebrate this. They held their own commemoration after Nepean's service, and further formalities at 11 am after we had left.

The ceremonies over, it was time for breakfast & packing up, & then the return trip. To make our excursion a round trip, we walked over Mt Dingo, The Playground of the Dingos, Warrigal Gap, along the path on the side of Mt Warrigal and down Blackhorse Gap to the track to Medlow Gap, and on over the ford at Breakfast Creek, where we stopped again for lunch, and then back to Carlons Farm for the trip home. Again much of the day was drizzly, but we later heard on the news that on the coast it had teemed rain, & some Anzac marches had been cancelled. Margaret Covi, Watagan Wanderers

Margaret Covi

## Adventure Journal 2007

This is a rather hefty and very glossy 'annual magazine', covering 'adventure and exploration'. The pictures are good, but the articles are rather short. On the other hand, there are plenty of them, covering a wide range of activities. There are also a lot of very glossy gear and services ads all through the 148 pages. It sells for \$9.95, and can be purchased via the web at [www.adventurepublishing.com.au](http://www.adventurepublishing.com.au) if it is not in your local newsagent.

If you want a bushwalking magazine, this is not it. It focuses far more on extreme sports and 'special cases': adventure and exploration as the cover says. Things like an interview with John Muir, an article on the Franklin, one on rock climbing in Greenland, several others on other rock climbing exploits, and accidents, an article by a girl who very nearly fractured her neck while surfing (but she recovered), and even a brief write-up of the Editor Lucas Trihey's unsupported crossing of the Simpson Desert. And there are more.

A sister publication is the Adventure Gear Guide 07, but the Adventure Journal does also feature some gear testing - a



mini-version of

*BackpackGearTest*

as it were. These supplement the copious glossy advertisements. I was intrigued to see that it even has quite a few ads from Australian guiding companies, including one which offers to take you on hikes in National Parks from B&B to B&B - I am not sure how many B&Bs there are in National Parks in Australia though!

It will be interesting to see how long the magazine can continue to find new articles on such extreme sports and activities. I guess you will just have to wait for the 2008 version to find out.

Roger Caffin

## WILLIS'S WALKABOUTS

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## Walkers wild weeding in Southwest Tasmania

Andy Macqueen  
Springwood Bushwalking Club

**I**magine the coastline of Southwest Tasmania, from the mouth of Macquarie Harbour to Cockle Creek. Most of it is untracked. There are rugged rocky shores to negotiate, river mouths to swim, and occasional thick scrub to push through.

The only person known to have walked the whole distance in one go (Tasmanian Jon Marsden-Smedley) took 38 days. He



Digging out an outbreak of sea spurge

had the assistance of a boat to get across Port Davey, and a helicopter to drop food supplies. He was surveying the shores for the invasive weed 'sea spurge' (*Euphorbia paralias*) which, if left unchecked, will devastate the landforms, plant life and sea-bird habitat along this marvellous wilderness coast.

Recognising that the spurge threat was beyond its resources, the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife recently decided on a pilot

project involving volunteer bushwalkers. Its attention was drawn to the track record of the Friends of Colo, which has been controlling willows and other serious weeds from the Colo gorges. As a result, last February four of us from Friends of Colo (all members of Springwood Bushwalking Club) found ourselves being helicoptered into a section of the coast north of Port Davey, together with four other bushwalkers from the Blue Mountains and Tasmania. In two teams and for 10 days, we worked 50 kilometres of the coast. Apart from having a great time, we succeeded in primary removal of sea spurge from 56 sites.

There is much more to be done. Even the section just treated will require many return visits before this aggressive weed is controlled. And although the Parks and Wildlife Service supports the project, the work is beyond its budget and organisational resources.

We of the NSW contingent were so enthused that we have now started a Tasmanian volunteer group known as SPRATS (Spurge Remote Area Teams), under the umbrella of Wildcare Incorporated. We are hopeful of obtaining

substantial grant funding. If the project proceeds as intended, in each of the next two summers eight teams of four bushwalkers will be inserted (mainly by helicopter) to walk different sections of the coast, searching for and treating the sea spurge. Beyond that there will be a need for ongoing patrols, though the amount of weeding required should be greatly reduced.

SPRATS is hurriedly expanding its membership base so that it can put the required number of bushwalkers into the field and boost the group's management team. Every participant in the fieldwork has to be a fit, experienced and self-reliant wilderness bushwalker, accustomed to carrying a heavy pack over rough ground.

**P**riority is being given to Tasmanian walkers, but it may be necessary to seek additional people from the mainland. At the time of writing it is not known whether this will be the case. More information can be found under 'Groups' at [www.wildcarea.org.au](http://www.wildcarea.org.au), or to find out the latest you can email me (the inaugural president of SPRATS) at [andymacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:andymacqueen@gmail.com).



Southwest coast near the Lewis River



Liz and Andy Macqueen with Carol and Phill Isaacs



Removing sea spurge from Endeavour Beach





Cameron Barrie crossing the Snowy River en route to Blue Lake.  
Photo: MVP / Taryn Miller



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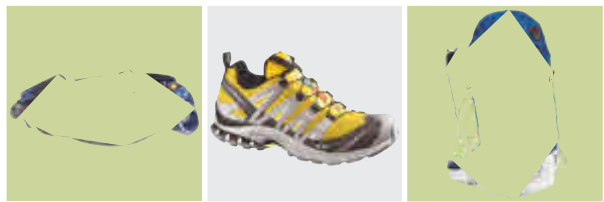
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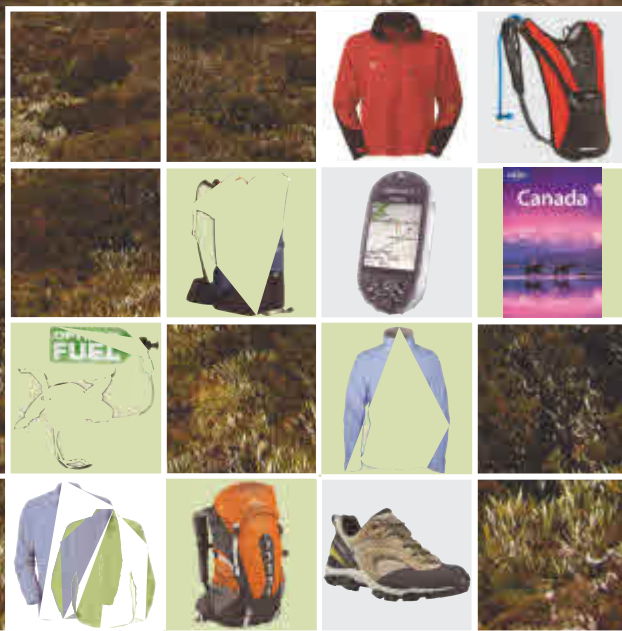
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