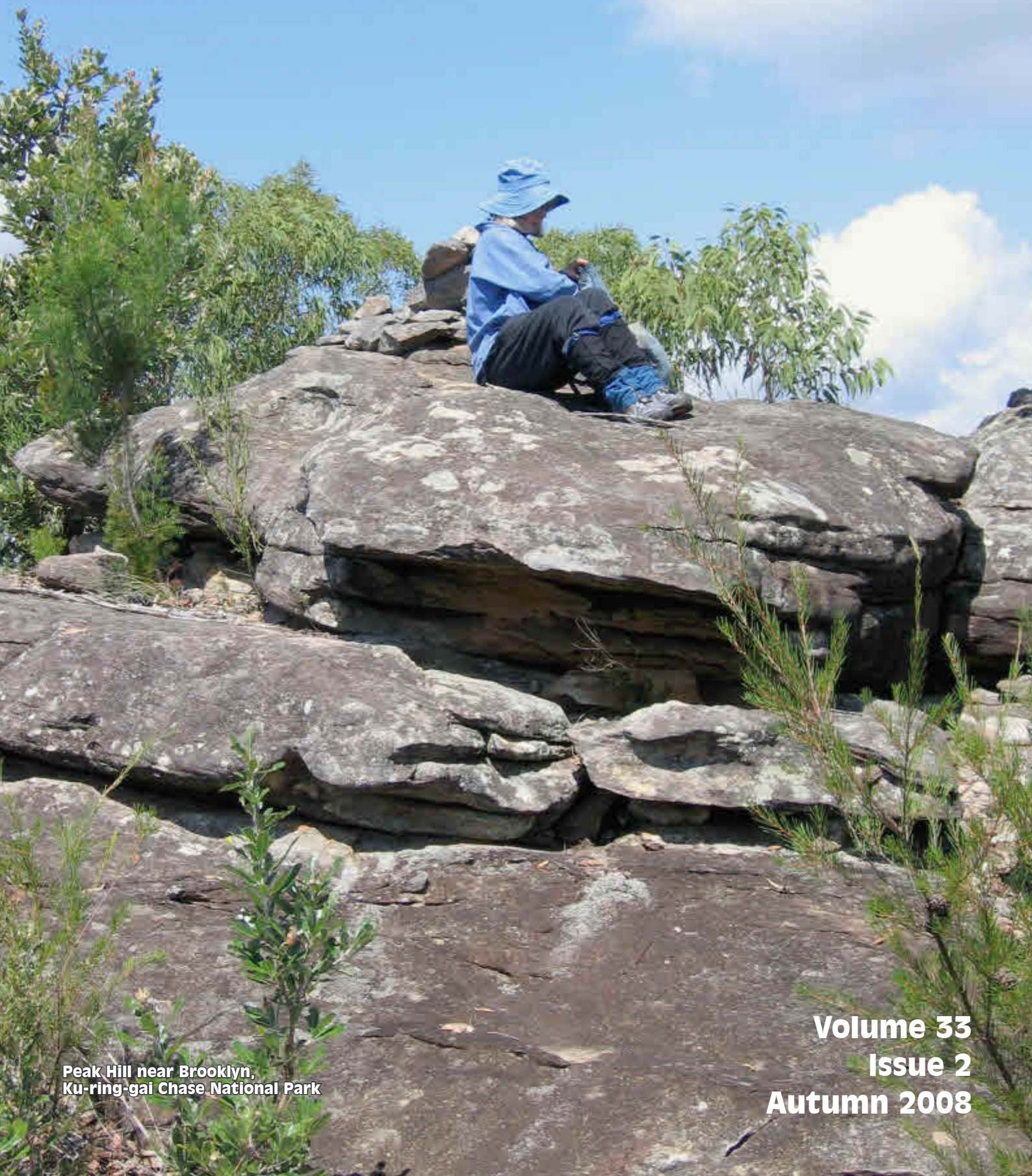


The Bushwalker



Peak Hill near Brooklyn,
Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

Volume 33
Issue 2
Autumn 2008

**Don't you wish
you were here?**



**Crossing the Cox near Jenolan Creek,
Blue Mountains National Park**

Photo: Bruce Mckinney

**Contributions of interesting and spectacular bushwalking photos are sought —
you don't want the same photographers all the time, do you?**



Photo: Roger Caffin

**A small waterfall on Banks Creek
near Berowra Waters,
Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park**

The Bushwalker

The Official Publication of the
Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW

Volume 33, Issue 2, Autumn 2008

ISSN 0313 2684

Editor: Roger Caffin
editor@bushwalking.org.au

Graphic Design & Assembly:
Barry Hanlon

Confederation Officers:
President: Wilf Hilder
president@bushwalking.org.au
Administration Officer:
admin@bushwalking.org.au

Website: www.bushwalking.org.au

Address all correspondence to:
PO Box 2090, GPO, Sydney 2001

The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc represents approximately 66 Clubs with a total membership of about 8,700 bushwalkers.

Formed in 1932, the Confederation provides a united voice on behalf of all bushwalkers on conservation, access and other issues.

People interested in joining a bushwalking club may write to the Confederation Administration for a list of Clubs, but an on-line list is available at the Confederation website www.bushwalking.org.au, broken up into areas. There's lots of other good stuff there too, including the bushwalking FAQ.



Subscribe to The Bushwalker

Keep up with all the news and developments happening in the NSW bushwalking scene for only \$10 per year. This is to cover posting and handling: the magazine itself is free.

Send your name and address and cheque or money order to **Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc**, PO Box 2090, GPO Sydney 2001. Make the cheque or money order payable to the **Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc** as well - please don't abbreviate the name!

Please indicate which issue you want your subscription to start with. We don't want to duplicate copies you already have.

Volume 33, Issue 2, Autumn 2008

From the editor's desk. . .

From a scorching hot and dry summer straight into a cold wet winter - or so it seems. We went on a late summer trip around the Jagungal Wilderness at the end of March - and one night got down to -7° C! The cairn at the summit of Mt Jagungal was sheathed in ice, although we only got to see it close up in the howling fog. Whatever happened to our balmy autumn weather? Ah well, just have to dig out the fleece clothing.

In the news recently has been the demise of the New Zealand company Macpac. First the manufacturing in NZ proved uneconomic and it was moved to Asia. But the management types who took over the company didn't understand the outdoors community, and made a mess of it. Now the remains of Macpac have been bought out by a different NZ company called Mouton Noire ('Black Sheep'), who also own the outdoors bits of that other NZ company Fairydown.

The new owners have commented that it is hard to fight for shelf space on the main street shops against the cheap Chinese imports - don't we know it! But rather than give up, they are going to open their own-brand shops. They already have 6 in NZ, and looking to open in Australia. Well, we await this new development with great interest.

Articles for Publication

Clubs and members are encouraged to submit relevant articles, with a very strong preference for those with good pictures. Both the author and the author's club will feature in the Byline - this is a good way to advertise YOUR club. We will also accept articles from outside bodies where the articles seem relevant to members.

Articles may be edited for length and content to help fit into our page limit. Pictures should be sent at maximum available resolution: at least 300 dpi, preferably in their original unedited form. JPG, PDF or TIFF formats are preferred. The text should be sent as a plain text file (*.txt), NOT as a Word file (*.doc). I repeat, please send the pictures separate from the text file; do NOT send them embedded in a Word doc file. Pictures taken from a Word doc file are simply not good enough. And, of course, the Editor is always interested in receiving bushwalking books and maps for review. All enquiries should be sent to editor@bushwalking.org.au.

Please note that opinions expressed by authors may not represent the official opinions of the Confederation or any Club. The Editor's opinions are his own.



Roger Caffin

Index

Don't you wish you were here?	2
From the Editor's Desk	3
Haughton and Hoddle Exploratory	4
Growee River Explorations	6
Kiandra to Kosciuszko	7
Abseiling Upper South Bowen Creek and Yileen Canyons	10
Navshield 2007 Daltons Defence	12
Dot Butler—The Barefoot Bushwalker	13
Fraser Island	14

Haughton and Hoddle Exploratory

Paul Ellis,
Shoalhaven Bushwalkers

Photographs,
Paul Ellis & Brett Davis

On Saturday 22nd September 2007 I joined up with 7 other members of the Shoalhaven Bushwalkers for 3 days hiking in the Budawangs. Three of us headed along the Braidwood Road towards Sassafras on Saturday morning, arriving at the NPWS car park at 7.50 am. The other 5 hikers in our group had walked in on Friday afternoon and camped overnight at Camp Rock.

It was a relatively overcast morning as we headed down the trail for the arduous and boring 8 km hike to Newhaven Gap. The forecast for the next 3 days was for warm sunny conditions and even now as we battled the chilly winds on this exposed heathland plateau we could see patches of blue sky breaking through the dark clouds. For the first time ever I was carrying my new 35 litre rucksack. As we planned to camp overnight in caves there was no need for tents and in my quest for the lightest possible load, I had managed to fit everything I felt was required.

The size of my rucksack was to cause much conversation during the weekend. It contained my palm-sized summer season down sleeping bag, my Thermarest sleeping mat, a new Mini Trangia, a small bottle of fuel, a 3 litre hydration bag, some warm clothes for the evenings, my wet weather jacket, toiletries, torch, eating irons, pack cover and first aid kit. On the belt I had attached my camera bag and GPS. Despite the load, in the 10 - 14 kg range, it was very comfortable.

We passed by 'The Little Sisters', 3 small rock monoliths beside the track that resemble Katoomba's Three Sisters, though much much smaller. Normally this would be our first rest point, with great views across the Clyde Gorge, but not today. Brett was keen to reach Camp Rock by

Looking east from the top of Mt Haughton



Checking the map near the top of Mt Haughton

southwards, past the track to Folly Point, now marked with a very large rock cairn. The Budawangs had received a lot of rain recently as there were a lot of wet spots along the trail. This meant we would have no problems getting water on this trip.

As we crossed a small creek I could smell smoke and knew we were close to Camp Rock. At 9.00 am exactly we walked into the Camp Rock camping area to find the other 5 members of our group sitting around a small campfire. We soon moved off, passing Red Johnny's Cave (a possible overnight camping spot) and entering a rainforest area known as The Vines with its red dirt coloured track. By now the clouds had cleared and we were walking under a clear blue sky. Around here we were overtaken by a large group of cyclists who had ridden in from Sassafras this morning. They were planning to ditch the bikes at the Quiltys turnoff and hike to either the Mt Haughton or Mt Cole camping caves for the night. When they learned we had planned to use the caves on Haughton, they gallantly offered to continue to Mt Cole. We were to continually bump into these hikers until lunchtime today.

We turned left at Quiltys and followed a faint track up Quiltys Saddle, bypassing the track to the Bora Ground on top of the mountain and following a track that winds through the forest as it descends to the rainforest in the gully between Quiltys Mountain and Mt Sturgiss. Once in the rainforest we followed a track that sometimes became quite an obstacle course as we battled small saplings growing in the middle of the track and climbed over, or crouched under fallen trees, some quite large. We passed by the ravine, where the old log bridge had long ago fallen, requiring a short detour across some mossy covered rocks before connecting with the track once again.

Soon after we came to an open section that featured not only a number of fallen logs,

but was open to the sky above. Morning tea! Comments were made about the size of my rucksack and that it seems to get smaller with every trip. Everyone was convinced I'd forgotten to pack something for the trip and they were keen to see what I unpacked that afternoon at Mt Haughton Camping Caves. After the break we descended to a small creek with fast flowing clear water and then ascended a steep ridge to a long flat open forested saddle between Quiltys & Sturgiss, passing a very picturesque camping area. We soon arrived at 'The Halt' - a collection of logs placed next to a brilliant lone Fern Tree at the trackhead for Hidden Valley. We now descended the ridge to Styles Creek and Styles Camping area. Soon the views across Styles Plains came into view. We could see across to Mt Haughton, Hoddles Castle and Pagoda Rocks (the western side of Mt Sturgiss).

We had planned to lunch at Styles Camp, but we were ahead of schedule and stopped only to collect water before heading across the plains. More comments were made about the size of my pack when I was seen filling up my hydration bag and a 4 litre wine bladder and putting them into my pack. I simply told them I was the 11th incarnation of Doctor Who and my rucksack was my Tardis.

In past trips across Styles Plains we had followed the main track for some distance before heading through the swamp to meet up with a faint track that took us through thick scrub to the ascent up the ridge to Mt Haughton. However, Brett & Karen knew of a side track that skirted not only the swamp, but was quite well defined and very scenic. Within 200 metres of leaving Styles Camp we turned left onto a small side track and followed this as it crossed a creek. On the other side we followed a faint pad which seemed to get wetter as we went further: we had lost the original track. Suddenly a shout from Jim across the creek told us he had found the correct track, so we found an animal pad through this small swamp to dry ground and a well worn foot track.

The track headed towards Pagoda



Rocks but soon veered away towards Mt Haughton. We went up a small ridge with excellent views across the plains to Quiltys Mountain and Fosters Mountain on one side, and down Hollands Gorge to Mount Elliott, Island Mountain and Folly Point on the other. At 12.50 pm we found an open spot next to the track with these views. It had a few rocks to sit on: lunch time. I enjoyed my lunch while laying back in the grass and enjoying the warm sunshine and the views.

Half an hour later we shouldered our packs and descended to a line of trees that signaled the start of the climb up the ridge to the base of the cliffline at Mt Haughton. A hard tiring climb in the heat along a faint track that was marked only by the occasional rock cairn, but this new route seemed to be less steep than the older route through the swamp and certainly better than the torch-lit ascent Kynie and I faced last year. Just after 2.00 pm we arrived at the base of the cliffs at Mt Haughton. We inspected the caves here but decided to follow the short track on the eastern side of the mountain to the larger cave our club has always called the 'Haughton Hilton'.

It was still early in the afternoon, so we decided to go for an exploratory walk



Collecting water at the Mt Haughton cliffline

around the north-western end of the mountain. I emptied my rucksack of everything I needed for the weekend - to the amazement of my companions, and then repacked with the requirements for the exploration. We scrub-bashed our way around the north-western side of the mountain, hopefully locating a large cave that was marked on Jennifer's old 1978 edition Budawang Sketch Map. Strangely, the cave has not been marked in on subsequent editions of the map. The scrub was thick, and in places the ground cover so loaded you couldn't tell whether your feet would end up in a hole or on a rock. Thankfully no one was injured. We found a small grotto where clear water dripped through a crack in the roof and formed in a large pool. Many of us would utilise this later to top up our water supplies.

Not far around the next rock slab Jim found a narrow pass that ascended through the cliffline. Thoughts of locating the mysterious cave were put on hold as it looked like we had found a way up on top of the mountain. The pass was a very narrow scramble for the entire climb, but

the pass was only about 40 metres in length and we were soon at the top. It wasn't the summit, just a very small plateau, and we could see higher ground further on. We now had to negotiate a swampy area full of long grass (probably supplying the water to the grotto below) and we were careful of snakes, but saw none.

We now scrambled up a rocky section to another small plateau with excellent views to the north and west. Cameras were brought out. To the north we had Quiltys Mountain, Fosters Mountain and Square Top Mountain, while to the west was Mount Hoddle and its adjacent Hoddles Castle Hill. We still weren't at the highest point, so continued scrambling up another incline, shorter than the previous, to suddenly find ourselves on the eastern cliff edge, probably right above our camping cave. From here we had great views - to the east Mt Sturgiss, Mt Elliott, Island Mountain, Folly Point and Mt Talaterang with the impressive Hollands Gorge straight below; to the south the top of Pigeonhouse Mountain, Shrouded Gods Mountain, Mt Donjon, Mt Cole and part of Mt Tarn.

Finally it was decided to return to camp. Some of us stopped at the little grotto to top up water during the return journey but it wasn't long before we were at camp preparing our dinner before it got too dark.

Sunday was our main exploratory day. The sky was clear and blue again. We left all our cooking and sleeping gear in the cave, confident it would still be there when we returned. At 8.30 am we moved off and followed the faint track along the eastern flank of Mt Haughton. We checked several possible passes to the top of the mountain, but these turned out to be dead ends. We passed a number of overhangs but these proved unsuitable for overnight camping, though one had a good supply of water dripping from the roof.

Within 45 minutes we had reached the turnoff for the track to Mt Tarn at the southern end of Mt Haughton. This was just after a small dead-end canyon which we explored for a few minutes. Ignoring this turnoff we followed the track around the southern end of Haughton and soon found a pass onto the mountain. Some minor scrambling and scrub bashing then a final scramble up some rocks found us on a platform at the top of the mountain at its southern end, for morning tea.

Sitting in the hot morning sunshine we had more great views to enjoy. To the east straight down Hollands Gorge with Mt Sturgiss, Folly Point, Talaterang and the conical hill known as 'The Sentinel'. To the south Mt Tarn, Donjon, Shrouded Gods and Mt Cole. To the west Mt Hoddle - our next destination.

We descended to the track and followed it to what appeared to be a small overgrown saddle between Mt Haughton



The narrow pass off Mt Haughton

and Mt Hoddle, and this sight took me back 9 years. In 1998 Gary and I had done a walk through the Budawangs, and somehow we missed the track to Mt Tarn, instead crossing this saddle to the cliffline of Mt Hoddle and discovering a difficult looking pass onto the mountain. We had explored the cliffline for some hours looking for an easier pass, thinking the mountain was Mt Tarn until we gave up and returned to Mt Haughton and found the correct track across to Mt Tarn. This memory was to prove most valuable today.

Once we arrived at the cliffline we found the well hidden pass, covered by the debris of fallen trees near the entrance. It looked harder than ever before and I wondered how we had ever considered this to be a suitable pass. After removing some of the fallen branches we attempted to climb up, and this proved quite difficult. Somehow, aided by Karen and Jennifer, Kynie managed to get close to the top and suggested we may need Brett's climbing tape.

The tape was passed up to Kynie who secured it to a small stout tree growing near the top. Who was going to be first to use the tape? It just happened to be me. Wrapping it around my arms I used the tape to lever myself up the steep rocks of the pass and I found it very easy, though our rucksacks had to be passed up.

We found ourselves standing on a small rock platform surrounded by scrub on one side and a large drop on the other. We weren't on top, so Jim tied some white

Climbing up the pass onto Mount Hoddle



Growee River Explorations

Trevor Henderson,
Newcastle Bushwalking Club

When our scheduled walk to Mt Buthingeroo was deferred I decided to arrange a quick exploratory trip into the upper Growee River near Rylstone. A Saturday morning start from Newcastle makes for a long day but Jenny, Paul and Theo were all enthusiastic.

I can remember some glowing reports about this area by Robert Vincent from the late 1970s, but no one from NBC had been there for over thirty years. The area of interest is in the extreme North West corner of Wollemi National Park. The local ranger gave me some good information about access and commented that it was "wild pagoda country" and "not many people go there".

Our hastily prepared plan was drawn up from the Growee map; a sheet of the infamous 20-metre contour variety. We intended to follow Spring Log Ridge to the west of the Growee River for several kilometres before dropping down to the River to camp Saturday night. Access is through some private property but fortunately the land owners turned out to be very friendly and helpful. We left our cars at the locked gate on the Park boundary and followed a fire trail for about one kilometre before heading

north-west into thick dry woody scrub of the scratchiest variety - which was to torment us for the next 5 hours.

We headed up and sidled around the first of the pagodas, gaining altitude via the narrow slots between the formations. Sometimes our progress was halted by vertical walls, and then we retreated and found other ways up. Eventually we reached the top by midday. Lunch was eaten with spectacular views in every direction. But from our mid-day vantage point the way ahead seemed particularly challenging. About half way along our intended route progress was blocked by 20 meter sheer rock face. We searched around to the east side, which looked the most promising, but we did not have enough time and rope to proceed with safety.

There was no water on top so it was an easy decision to head down and around end of the ridge to reach the river before dark. We were setting up camp just on sunset. As we were erecting the tents a Lyrebird opened fire from only a few metres away with its full repertoire. After this encounter we knew every bird that lives in or visits the area! There followed a traditional bushwalkers' Saturday night, a real campfire in the wilderness and



Pagodas, pagodas. . .

good company to enjoy a meal and many cups of tea.

On Sunday we had time to explore the river valley for several kilometres downstream. There was a good flow of slightly turbid water. Walking along the river was relatively easy although there were some thick patches of blackthorn bush. The views along the river are as spectacular as those from the top. There are house size boulders, caves and natural arches and always above, the bulging rounded pagodas leaning into the sky above. There were no signs of other people visiting the area.

Sunday afternoon we headed back upstream to the cars via Hefrons Gap and then to the 'Globe' in Rylstone for refreshments before the long drive to Newcastle. ♦

Continued from page 5

tape around a small gum tree to mark the pass. I got the GPS out, took a position fix and marked it. Then we bashed our way through the scrub and a small swamp, coming out onto a rock platform which we found was quite easy to follow across the mountain. The rock platform was bisected by small channels of thick scrub at intervals of ever 50 metres or so. Although quite prickly, the scrub wasn't too difficult to negotiate.

At first we headed north and soon came out above a large saddle which obviously led to the northern end of Mt Hoddle and eventually (out of our line of sight) Hoddles Castle. Then we headed SW to locate Mt Hoddle's highest point - the map showed this to be on the SW end. Eventually we found it, marked by a small cairn in thick scrub. We now made our way to the W end of the mountain and found a rock platform with great views, including an Australian Kestrel which soared up the thermal draughts just as we arrived.

We had lunch here, sitting on the rocks enjoying the views of the western Budawangs: Mt Tarn, Bibbenluke Mountain and Ridge, Burrumbeet Brook, Profile Rock Hill, Corang Plateau with its conical peak, the headwaters of the Corang River and behind all this the unmistakable peaks of Mt Budawang, Wog Wog Mountain and Currockbilly Mountain.

After lunch we again headed N across the top of the mountain, to look at the

'Tail' of Mt Hoddle, a section of rock which curves away from the mountain midway along its western flank. However the views were blocked by trees, so we followed rock platforms and bashed through scrub to the NE, to again we find the low saddle towards Hoddles Castle Hill. We tried to find an alternative route off the mountain across the saddle: there were some gullies but all led to sheer drops.

Eventually we decided to return. The going seemed relatively easy compared to the scrub bashing we had done higher up and we must have walked a fair distance before I got out the GPS to check the direction and distance to the pass. I was surprised to find we were only 50 metres from the pass. Sure enough, within a minute or two we had reached the point where we had climbed up this morning. We would have found the pass without the GPS but it was comforting to know we had it as back up just in case.

Once down we crossed the saddle back to the cliffline of Mt Haughton. Instead of returning to our cave the way we had come, we went around the western side of Mt Haughton. The track soon disappeared and we had to scramble and force our way over the rocks and through the scrub. But we found the large camping cave marked on Jennifer's old sketch map, and it turned out to be quite magnificent, leaving our present campsite for dead. There was plenty of room there but no water supply. However, about 500 metres further on we found a small grotto with an impressive cascade of water dripping from the roof. We all refilled.

We scrambled up, down, around and over rocks and through more thick scrub. I must have been prodded by branches and trees in just about every part of my body. We rounded a large boulder and saw the pass we had climbed yesterday: we had now circumnavigated Mt Haughton. The route was familiar as we made our way back to our camping cave, and dinner.

I woke at 6.30 am on the Monday morning after a great night's sleep. Sandra was already up and had spent the previous 30 minutes collecting Brett & Karen's eating utensils from the bush. During the night we had received a visit from the local possums who had a field day with their cups, bowls and cooking gear.

I had to leave early, so by 7.45 am I was packed and ready to go. I farewelled the other 5, collected Brett & Karen, and we headed down the ridge towards Styles Plains, up the hill to 'The Halt', through the forest to Kilpatrick Creek and to the Quiltys intersection for morning tea. We now had the open track all the way back to Newhaven Gap, then the long and arduous slog to the car park.

We stopped for lunch at the Sassafras camping area, just 300 metres from the car park. The campsite is quite luxurious, with a water tank, pit toilets and a covered eating area complete with picnic tables - most out of place with the rest of the Budawangs. After lunch we headed to the car park, arriving there at 1.40 pm and the finish to a most successful, enjoyable but hard 3 days of hiking. ♦

Kiandra to Kosciuszko

Graham Wright,
South Coast Bushwalkers

We woke at Thredbo YHA on the first day of our walk to cool, foggy and rainy weather. Looking up the mountainside you could see the ski tows disappear into the gray gloom. We were about to depart for Kiandra and then walk back to Thredbo over eight days on the classic K to K walk. There were three of us: me, Megan and Lisa (NPA). The weather was not uplifting, but we had forecasts of better conditions in a few days time.

At the appointed time a large 4WD appeared, we loaded our packs and set off. By the time we got to Jindabyne, the weather had cleared up with plenty of blue sky. We enjoyed a pleasant ride up to Kiandra, entertained by our very chatty driver. As we neared Kiandra and the sub-

there to eat as the fog and rain had not relented. Four Mile Hut is a must-see on this walk. It really captures the spirit and culture of a past age. It is built of timber, corrugated steel sheeting and many large tins that have been opened out and nailed to the outside walls as cladding. There are a lot of small holes in the walls. Inside, there is a large iron stove and fireplace and some interesting bush furniture.

After lunch we headed back to the main trail and continued on to the Nine Mile Diggings, which we unfortunately missed in the fog. I guess that we would have needed a clear day to get a good appreciation of this area, so this will have to wait for a future trip. We were hoping to climb Tabletop Mountain as a side trip: it would have let us see a lot of the country we were to cross in the next few days. In the fog this was a futile exercise. When we looked up we could only see 20-30 metres before the snow gums disappeared into the mist.

As the weather was still not the best we decided to push on for Happy Jacks Hut. This made for a rather long day, especially considering that it was the first day out and our pack weights were at maximum. This hut is accessed from the north by walking about 1 km off track from the fire trail, down a steep slope. To save time I used my GPS to help with the navigation to it. We walked along the trail until the way point was at right angles to our direction of travel and then used the GPS to home in on the hut. I kept an eye on the map and compass to ensure that things did not go astray.

We had to negotiate a very steep, grassy, downhill slope to get to the hut. This was extremely slippery and treacherous. Unfortunately I slid and fell part of the way down. As I slid, my right toe snagged on something, which twisted my foot around much further than it was meant to go, resulting in a sprained ankle. I paused for a minute or two thinking dark thoughts of EPIRBs and helicopter rescues, then stood up and started to walk again. About two steps later, I fell again and twisted the same ankle again in exactly the same way! This situation called for a re-think.

I took my pack off and Lisa carried it a short distance downhill to where the slope was less steep. Megan found me a stick to use for support, and I gave her my GPS as I knew that walking/hopping would take my full attention. I set off very slowly using the stick for support. We were about 800 metres from the hut, so Lisa and Megan

did some scouting to find the easiest route. As we neared the frost plain Lisa went out in front with the GPS to look for the hut. Fortunately all went well and we were able to travel straight to the hut, probably taking around 40 minutes or so from where I slipped over.

On arrival at the hut, we settled in and cooked tea, dried our socks and did all the usual domestic stuff. I was able to walk on my ankle - just. It appeared that I had not damaged the tendons and ligaments that are used to support weight when walking, but had damaged the stabilisers. It was not easy walking down steps, or over anything that was uneven.

We slept in the hut and were entertained during the night by a rat scratching around in a box of newspaper. We had carefully hung our food in bags from the supplied hooks, so the rat had lean pickings while we were there. During the night I remembered the roll of duct tape in my first aid/repair kit and this gave me an idea. In the morning I strapped up my ankle with it. This was very successful: it immobilised my ankle in the side to side direction, while still allowing the ankle to pivot front and back so that I could walk. Using the stick I found that I could get around well enough to continue walking, so we packed up our stuff and set out for Mackays Hut.

We walked down the the access trail and rejoined the Tabletop Mountain Trail. The weather was a bit better than the day before, with clearing fog and patchy light rain. The country was attractive, with hills covered in snow gums and frost hollows in between. The frost hollows were carpeted with an abundance of wildflowers of many types and colours, providing an uplifting display. It was pleasant, easy walking. There was plenty of water



High camp on Mt Anderson

alpine country again, the same weather we had experienced at Thredbo re-appeared. We were dropped off at the start of the Tabletop Mountain fire trail. There is something very committing about being dropped off in a remote area by a vehicle that then subsequently disappears and leaves you there, hoping that you have not forgotten any vital piece of gear.

We shouldered our packs and started walking. My pack was heavy as I was carrying a two man tent with no-one to share it, plus other bits I could have left behind. The going was fairly easy, up a track that basically consisted of two wheel ruts. The scenery (what we could see of it) consisted of snow gums and grassy frost hollows with many wild flowers in bloom. We passed ski trail markers as the trail is part of a popular cross country ski route.

We got to the Four Mile Hut turnoff at around lunchtime and decided to head



Inside Four Mile Hut

available in the many small streams that we passed.

About mid-afternoon, we arrived at Mackays Hut. We set up our tents outside as sleeping in a tent is much more pleasant than inside a hut at this time of year. My ankle still felt OK, but I was now experiencing a fair amount of shoulder pain and my pack was feeling very uncomfortable. We cooked tea and had a pleasant evening drying our socks around the fire. Mackays hut is in very pleasant and picturesque surroundings, with grass, snow gums and granite tors set in gently undulating country, with a clear alpine stream running through.

The next day found the hills got steeper as we were closing in on Jagungal. The weather was now much better: no rain and some blue sky. Cresting a hill we were rewarded with a fine view of the imposing mountain. We continued on past the weather station that marks the northerly ascent route to a very pleasant camp site at the Tumut River crossing. We intended to climb Mt Jagungal (2061 m) as a side trip, but decided to wait until the following day as it was getting late and we had walked a considerable distance.

Next morning we took the track up Mt Jagungal, with Lisa carrying a pack with a few essential things inside. The track passes through typical frost hollow vegetation, crosses a bog then ascends through snow gums to the southern ridge.

It then follows this ridge to the summit, with the snow gums giving way to the real alpine vegetation, much of which was in flower. There is a very easy scramble to get to the top.

We were fortunate that the day was fine as the views from the top of Jagungal are



The party on Mt Kosciusko

really impressive. It seems like you can see half of Australia! We could see Tabletop Mountain, which we had walked past in the fog a few days before, and some of the Main Range. There were great views toward Gungahlin and out west as well. It

was cool and windy on top and all too soon, it was time to head back down to our camp.

Back at the camp, we packed up and set off again on the Gray Mare Trail. We walked along, occasionally looking back to enjoy the view of Jagungal. As we neared Gray Mare Hut and our left hand turn onto Valentines Hut Trail we could catch some views of part of the immense Geehi Valley. We visited Gray Mare Hut on the way past and had a look at the hut and all the old machinery that is lying in the bush nearby. Being an engineer I would have liked to have spent more time here.

My pack was still uncomfortable and was causing me some grief. I was having a lot of trouble keeping the weight off my shoulders. My ankle was doing OK though.

We turned onto the Valentines Hut Trail, which runs down a valley,

crossing and re-crossing many creeks in the process. It then goes steeply uphill over the end of the Strunmbo Range before descending to the Geehi River, which we also had to cross. At the top of the hill after this crossing we were hit by a sudden and very intense thunderstorm with large amounts of pea-size hail and rain. The lightning and thunder were very close together and we were right on top of a hill! We put on our rain jackets and headed off a bit faster down towards Valentines Hut which was now only about 2 km away. We stopped at Valentines Hut as we were rather cold and wet and the hut is a particularly nice one. It was rather hot to sleep in though.

The next morning, we decided that, as we were halfway through our walk, it was time for a swim. Valentines Creek which runs near the hut is an ideal place for this. Megan and Lisa went down first and when they were back I went down for my turn. The water was rather cold: my feet became numb in the process of wading out to a deeper section where I could submerge myself. I managed to get right under, but my time there was not long!

Refreshed, we packed up. I put on my long trousers to walk in (a first!) as the March flies were getting a bit annoying. We decided to have a short day to recuperate a bit and set off with the aim of getting to Whites River. We had pleasant easy walking except for my pack and Megan's achilles tendons, which were becoming irritated by her boots. We had our first human contact on the road near Schlink Pass when a Snowy Mountain Authority truck drove past. The mountain views were great as we were now getting very close to the Main Range.

We set up our tents at the rather seedy Whites River Hut and had a long restful afternoon reading and relaxing. Being rather irritated with my pack, I removed the waist buckles and sharpened the edges that bear against the straps with my pen knife as it appeared that the buckles were slowly and insidiously slipping, transferring the pack weight to my shoulders. This done, the buckles were much improved. Unfortunately the next days walking revealed that this had not fixed the problem.

While at the Whites River Hut, I also decided that my duct tape ankle brace was due to come off as my lower leg was looking a bit red. I cut it off with my penknife and lost more than a few leg hairs in the process. Duct tape sticks superbly to skin!

The next day we set off up the old vehicle track onto the Rolling Ground. This area has a reputation for people getting lost as there are no tracks and map and compass navigation is very difficult if the land features cannot be seen. We were heading toward Conssett Stephen Pass, which links the Rolling Ground to the Main Range. After some careful terrain matching on the map we easily found the pass and crossed it to the northern slopes of Mount Tate, with no real need to refer to my GPS.

While crossing the Rolling Ground we were careful to walk high up on the sides of the slopes to avoid walking over the many green and lush sphagnum bogs that are found there. When you do step on one of these it is like walking over a springy mattress! They are very spongy underfoot.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Join one of our treks across the Kokoda Trail.

Savour the atmosphere, history and challenge of this unique destination.

Small group departures operate most months of the year. Alternatively, canoe the Sepik

River, hike with Huli Wigman or bike through New Ireland.

PNG has a special adventure for you - without the crowds

For further details contact:

NIUGINI TOURS PTY. LTD.

(lic. 2TA 000 1455)

GPO Box 7002

Sydney, NSW 2001

Ph (02) 9290-2055

Fax (02) 9267-6118

info@newguineatours.com.au



Air Niugini

We picked up a pad on Mount Tate that contours around and followed it for a while. At a likely looking spot we dropped our packs and climbed Mt Tate, for our second 2000 m summit. There were great views from the top. We could see Jagungal behind us, and in front some of the Main Range.

We lost the pad when it crossed a boggy area and we continued contouring around looking for it. After a short time it was obvious that something was not working out right so I called a lunch stop and checked the map while chewing my hard tack and jam. I realised that we had to cross over the Tate East Ridge and that the pad must have turned and headed upward at the boggy area, so after lunch we headed up the hill on a compass bearing that should intersect the pad further up. After ten minutes of so we got out of the rough stuff and walked across a grassy, flower-studded meadow with our pad visible running across it.

Back on the pad we walked past Mann Bluff, which Lisa bagged. We camped on a knoll on the Geehi side of Mount Anderson for our first really high camp. We had a fantastic sunset and amazing views from the top of the rocks next to our tents. We did not have the energy at this stage to climb Mount Anderson, we will have to leave this until next time.

The next morning we continued on southward along the range. We soon picked up the rough 4WD track that only consists of two faint wheel ruts and followed this. This track passes quite close to the summit of Mount Twynam. We dropped our packs here and climbed up the rest of the way, to stand on Australia's third highest peak.

From here we continued southward along a high, very exposed ridge which soon joined on to the Main Range Track. At this stage we started meeting other walkers. We went over Carruthers Peak, another of the 2000 m ones. The view into the Geehi Valley from here is awesome. The frighteningly steep slopes plunge downward into the depths below, making me think of the abyss that the ancients believed existed at the ends of the world.

Tearing ourselves away from this spectacle, we went past the magnificent Lake Albina, tucked away in it's deep, glacially formed valley, to the Wilkinson's Creek bowl between Townsend and Kosciuszko. We walked down the valley a

short distance and found a flat spot to camp, with the idea of climbing Mount Townsend. The valley contained a profusion of wildflowers, of many types and colours.

Once camp was set up we had to reconsider our plan. Black clouds had started to roll in and we could hear distant thunder. We decided to wait and see. The storm got much closer, the temperature fell and hail and rain started. The hail continued for some time, forming into piles at the edges of our tents. By the time the storm had cleared it was too late to climb Townsend, so we settled in for the night.

This camp site is a classic one for observing spectacular sunsets. The sun went down over the end of the valley, bringing the rows of mountain ranges to the west into sharp profile in a red and orange glow. The light shone off the meandering creek, making it glisten like a mirror. The red and orange light also painted the landscape, bathing it in colour. I took a lot of photographs ... By about 9:00 pm the show was over and it was time to head for the sleeping bag.

I was pretty fed up with my pack at this stage. Talking about this with Megan sparked my reasoning processes, and I decided to increase the torso length adjustment by 5 cm. I was a bit reluctant to do this as I thought it had been set properly by the shop I bought it from. However, I have a couple of smaller packs that are not adjustable which give me no problems with shoulder pain, so I knew that there was something wrong with this pack.

The next morning was our last day. We headed up the pad to Townsend, which was two km as the crow flies from our camp. We soon arrived at the top after a fairly easy climb and enjoyed another lot of amazing views. There was still some unmelted hail around near the summit from the previous afternoon's storm.

Back at camp we packed up and headed in the direction of

Kosciuszko. As we got closer to this mountain, we started to encounter crowds of people - a real shock to the system after a week of solitude. We followed the spiralling track up to the very crowded summit for some more great views. By the time we had got there the wind had blown up and it was time to put our jackets on as the temperature was also pretty cool. From the top you could also see the new toilet block at Rawson's Pass. It does not blend in very well at the moment. I hope that the NPWS will improve things here.

Once we had taken the obligatory photos we descended to Rawson's Pass and took the steel walkway to the Thredbo Chairlift, enjoying the views of Lake Cootapatamba and the Ramsheads on the way. By this time it was evident that my pack adjustments had worked well. I was now able to keep the pack weight off my shoulders and my discomfort from this had ceased. This was a particular relief as I have a long walk in Tasmania coming up and I was keen to get the problem fixed before going.

We arrived at the top of the chairlift at Thredbo around lunch time and decided to wimp out and ride the chairlift down to the bottom. We did not want to tangle with the downhill mountain bikes on the way down, and we had my ankle injury and Megan's achilles tendons to consider. We arrived safely at the bottom and found the car still there and in working order, which is always a relief.

I was really pleased with the walk and can't wait to get back there again. I was already planning a walk for next summer in my head while we were doing this one! ♦



Join us on an amazing trek!

We offer:

Larapinta Trail • Cradle Mountain Overland Track
Inca Trail to Machu Picchu • Annapurna Circuit
Mount Kilimanjaro • Tailor made adventures
...and many more

1300 796 618

gapadventures.com/bushwalk

G·A·P
ADVENTURES
the great adventure people



Camp at the Tumut River Crossing



A long drop

On Friday evening Paul, Steve and Doug left Newcastle about 7:20 pm and drove up to Mt Wilson Via Richmond (for Kebabs) and Bells Line Of Road, to arrive about 10:45 pm. Jim was already in bed and of course didn't stir, but the fire suggested he wasn't long gone. A clear mild night for a change in this area. The forecasts varied by source but BOM promised rain in the early morning with a change. By 3:30 am it was overcast with a faint drizzle; by 9 am when Tania arrived the sun was starting to show and the vegetation was hardly even dewy.

Autumn colours have arrived to the immigrant trees of Mt Wilson, brilliant reds, yellows and many hues of brown. Some trees are already losing their leaves so as you drive down the avenues a swirl of colour follows. Prolific growth along the roads mean the verges are softened by the hanging ferns and other greenery.

A quick car shuffle saw us walking down the ridge 400 m from the Pierce's

One slip and . . . you're wet



Abseiling Upper South Bowen Creek and Yileen Canyons

Doug Floyd, Newcastle Bushwalking Club

Pass car park, at 9:30 am. A very defined track most of the way made for easy walking, with ample opportunity to watch the scenery, see the flowers and watch the birds.

Jamison's book mentions two ways into the canyon. We chose the right side, with abseils. Near the end of the ridge we drop into the creek on the right and follow it downstream, skirting around above the short, wet, scrubby, canyon section onto the first abseil. This is about 10 m, to a small ledge to bypass the pool (except Tania that is, who tipped in). The second abseil, again about 10 m into the creek junction with Bowen's, but we need a 40 m rope because the anchor is a tree back up on the right.

This junction is delightful: high narrow cliffy section with flat sandy/pebbly floor that winds away down stream. Black waterworn cliffs, covered here and there by patches of green moss or ferns. We soon come to a broader section of creek with sand banks covered in tree-ferns and vines amongst the typical coachwood and sassafras trees. We walk on down a creek with tree vegetation on both banks, pass lots of ferns and moss, wade through short shallow pools, negotiate boulder jams over, round, down, through, under, any which way. An altogether delightful walk, pleasant temperatures, fascinating lighting due to the autumn sun and the most unbelievable scenery and little creatures. Enough obstacles to make things interesting and enjoyable without being difficult.

We come to a place where an abseil can pass a waterfall tumbling down through a boulder jam and over rock slabs. But Steve has been here before. He takes his pack off and disappears through a small hole in the rocks, emerges below us and wriggles over the next couple of drops to the sand beside the pool below. We all follow and continue our journey down through an area where, long ago, the walls of the canyon above caved in forming a chock-stone roof. The narrow section continues past the chock-stones through some short waist deep wades, more challenging obstacles but still well within our capabilities. A few 2+ m jumps onto soft sand, some narrow slots to chimney down, and some narrow ledges to walk around to save a swim. One person hangs and dropped down a 3+ m jump and then wedges a small log for the others to scramble down. We slide down a sloping log across a pool, one by one, each in turn sliding off into the water unable to negotiate the obstacle where the log touches the wall under a slight overhang. Doug is lucky and finds a hand grip that enables him to pass - the only one still dry.

We pass side canyons: some you don't even notice unless you look back at the right moment. The walls are quite high now and much of the cliff-face in this area is a hanging garden of ferns and bright green mosses. Eventually the creek widens a little and we can see the gap in the skyline that indicates a bigger junction on the left. This section is more overgrown than last time I was here: I wonder if we have passed the exit.

The others ahead of me do miss it, but I sight the dead branch propped from the bank up to a convenient tree 3 or 4 m up. We all scramble up and have lunch in a sunny spot at the foot of the cliff line above. We follow the well-defined foot track around the series of short cliff-lines to the top. The only tricky bits are seeing the small hole where you scramble through the fallen boulder to break one cliff-line, and later scrambling up at the place where there used to be a length of rope to steady you.

We recover our cars, Tania returns to Sydney, and the rest of us head back to Cathedral of Ferns Camping area for a laid-back tea and talk around the fire. Sydney University Astrological Society is having a field trip with many people arriving all through the night to peer through telescopes at the planets in this clear sky. Steve and Paul invite themselves to look through a 12" telescope at Saturn and Jupiter where they can see the rings, but are disappointed by the small image size: about as big as a 1 cent piece. This is the highest magnification because with any higher the atmospherics cause fuzziness.

A pleasant warm night with clear starry skies and the call of night birds. Again a lazy start as we pack up camp and get ready to drive to Yileen by 9 am. We do the car shuffle to Pierce's Pass car park and are walking along the ridge by 9:30 am. A very nice day for a stroll: views of the huge cliffs in the Gross Valley and beyond the rolling hills to the Sydney skyline in the far distance.

We soon reach the end of the ridge and drop into the creek. 40 minutes later we are in the start of the real canyon section. This is markedly different to yesterday: mostly rocky with not much vegetation. A number of shallow wades, many climb-downs, some a little tricky, then we reach the 6 m jump into a pool of clear water. Everyone jumps and the water temperature is very tolerable – about 17 degrees.

A short swim and a few more wades brings us to a more open part of canyon with tree-ferns and coachwood trees. Huge slab cliff walls towering all round, every now and again we catch a glimpse of the Gross valley ahead. A 15 – 20 m

abseil down a clean face amongst the huge square blocks of stone. We are soon at the main event - the 55 m abseil. From the abseil hook-in point you can't see the landing immediately below, just the valley centre way way down below (probably 700 m down). We have brought 2 x 60 m ropes to do the whole face in one go.

I show a different knot for this abseil, one that will not pull through the chain link added to the anchor slings. Doing things this way would enable you to descend on one rope and use a light line to recover the rope.

It is an impressive abseil and everyone enjoys it, especially first timers Paul and

Steve. The scenery whichever way you look, up, down, left right and behind is unbelievable. Paul in particular is stoked that he has managed this face so well.

The two canyons we have done this weekend are particularly enjoyable, each markedly different to the other. We are all pleased that water temperatures and air temperatures are still not that cold we experienced in November. The lighting is different to summer - much gentler, giving the whole scene a particularly pleasant feel. The section of Bowen's Creek we did would make an excellent bushwalk since it is possible to do it without abseils. You will not find a more beautiful place. ♦



Success!

Down the hole in Bowens



WILLIS'S WALKABOUTS

The Kimberley

has it all!

Rugged mountains, spectacular waterfalls, deep gorges, mighty rivers, cliff-lined coasts, a wealth of Aboriginal rock-art sites — **and more.**

And we see more of the Kimberley than ever before.

Mitchell Plateau. 4 trips, Apr-Aug. Helicopters let us maximise our time in the most spectacular places.

Isdell River. A great walk along a major river and its even more interesting tributaries.

Durack River. Fascinating from the air, even better on the ground. Boat in, walk out.

Drysdale River. The roads have been closed, but we've found a more interesting way to get there.

And more, much more ...

Helicopter, seaplane, light aircraft, boat and 4WD... we have the access.



See our website...

or give us a call for details.

www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au

Willis's Walkabouts 12 Carrington St Millner NT 0810 Email: walkabout@ais.net.au

Phone 08 8985 2134 Fax 08 8985 2355

Navshield 2007 Daltons Defence July 7 - 8

Doug Floyd,
Bushwalker Wilderness
Rescue Service

Introduction

For 2007 we were in the picturesque Wollombi Valley. Wollombi Brook split the course in half. Yengo National Park lay to the west, with steep spurs, long ridges separated by deep thickly vegetated creeks, and rugged high points like Daltons Defence and Mount Dalton. To the east lay the Pokolbin State Forest - flatter, with long interconnecting ridge lines dissected by deep rainforest gullies. Both areas had their own "interesting" navigational challenges and confronting route choices through unmarked cliff lines and rocky outcrops.

The lead-up for this NavShield had been anything but standard due to wild weather over the preceding few weeks, and many of the Hunter emergency services still hadn't finished the backlog of jobs from the storms. Wollombi Brook was uncrossable on foot after the floods of the June long weekend. We couldn't access any of the course at all for two

weeks and were only able to access the Yengo NP from the Base the last weekend after a thigh-deep wade. Two weeks before I didn't know if we could use the Yengo NP and was thinking of extending the Pokolbin side. The wild weather and the emergency services work-load could have been a reason for the slightly fewer than usual numbers.

Friday

Today the water level in Wollombi Brook was only knee deep, and most of the roads were drivable again. The Killeen's had done a great job laying out Base and radio check points; the water drums are a great innovation and will save a lot of driving. Tents were soon erected and gear distributed, ready for registration at 7:30 pm. A steady flow of participants were arriving. Everything was running smoothly, showing the excellent preparation of the administration staff. WICEN and the SCAT teams were in place, tested and ready for action. Camp fires sprouted all around the paddock as teams settled in for the night, renewing acquaintances and meeting new players. It was a great atmosphere, a pleasure to be here. We had a clear starry night with a 3/4 moon later, silhouetting the rugged terrain around us.

Saturday

A cloudless cold morning dawned as the camp woke up to instant activity in preparation for the days competition. The Singleton Rotary Catering van did a brisk business for breakfast of cereal, fruit, coffee and egg and bacon as required.

At 7:00 am the Bushranger teams were briefed and set out to their allotted locations.

At 8:30 am the participants were welcomed by the President and the Course Setter gave last minute valuable information: "watch for those stinging trees and unmarked cliffs". There was a count down to 8:45 am, followed by a rush to the clothes line of control cards. Suddenly the camp seemed empty, just a few remaining

who wanted to check locations on the master map and ask last minute question.

Everything was running smoothly and those left in camp wandered around chatting to each other, or eavesdropped at the WICEN communications tent hoping to hear something that might call them to action. The 'hurry up and wait' that all emergency service workers know so well. A message came through of distress whistle blasts near point Alpha. A Bushranger team investigated and found that a "lost" team member had just reunited with their team and 'all is well'. A phone message came through for a member in a two-day team: "pull out after one day and contact home immediately". Messages went out over the radio network and the team was located on the Yengo side: they returned at about 2:30 pm. This was a good test of our bushrangers and communications and they were up to the task.

About 3:30 pm teams started to trickle back into camp, some to cross to the other side, others to call it a day and lounge in the Brook on deckchairs. By 7:00 pm the steady stream of returning 1 day participants grew to a constant stream with a sudden flurry in the last 10 minutes. That included one team soaking wet and shivering after swimming the Brook, while another team that was beside them had arrived 2 minutes later nice and dry, having walked to the crossing. Still, the wet team from the Blue Mountains NP were the winners and winners are grinners. All teams were accounted for by 7:45 pm, with just one team to return from Charlie (in the end they decided to walk back).


At 8:00 pm we had the presentation to the one-day teams after they had partaken of the excellent meal provided by our caterers. There was general approval of the course, with the usual comments like control point 35 was worth more points or we couldn't find points 33 or 63. One problem was that the contours on one of the maps were not very clear and very hard to read at night. We are not sure what went wrong this time. There was just one protest about a team member seen without a pack. This turned out to have been on a 'rest stop'. There was one near case of hypothermia - the only real action for the SCAT team today apart from a couple of thorn removals for first aid (and we were all glad there was little to do).

After a general exodus of homeward-bound one-day teams it was quiet again. Another clear cool starry night with no action, the way we like it.


Sunday

A cold clear dawn with just the odd team returning to base to register as a radio control point. The breakfast was again satisfying as we all fired up for another quiet peaceful day.

The only excitement today was when a Bushranger team found someone who had lost their team, but they were soon reunited by returning to the point last



THE GREAT ALPINE WALK
Traverse Victoria's high country on foot and in style.
Hike from one alpine ski lodge to the next each day.
Luggage is moved for you. Guided and fully supported
self-guided walking holidays from December to April.
Many other destinations around Australia too.



AUSWALK PTY LTD
Ph: 03 5356 4971
info@auswalk.com.au www.auswalk.com.au

seen and making a noise. Three teams were sure point 45 was not where it should be because they did a combined search of the whole spur. However, a Bushranger teams managed to find it ok.

The teams started to return and all were still smiling, even if some looked a bit tired or were “walking funny”. By 2:30 pm everyone was accounted for and the Bushranger teams were all back. Everyone had lunch while we waited for the Minister for Emergency Services, Nathan Rees, who wanted to meet the participants and present the prizes. The presentation went very well. There was universal approval of the course, congratulations again to everyone involved, it isn't a one person task.

Conclusion

This was another great NavShield, enjoyed by everyone. The location was thanks to the generosity of Snow Brickman, the use of Broken Back Range was thanks to State Forests (and Graham Price), the use of Yengo NP was thanks to NPWS (and Debbie Colbourne). Very picturesque and the navigation just right for all levels of competence from beginner to expert.

A big thank you to:

WICEN who provided the communication links between Base, the radio check points and the roving Bushrangers.

The Ambulance SCAT team on hand at Base. They were not needed, thankfully, but they were there ready to go.

Belinda the first aid person. She had only minor damage to fix, but was there if really needed.

Singleton Rotary, who stepped in at the last minute when local emergency caterers couldn't help us due to the strain on their resources caused by the storms.

All you BWRS members who participated and did so much to make this event the success it continues to be.

2008 will be the twentieth NavShield I hope we can make it even bigger and better. ♦

Dot Butler

12 September 1911 - 21 February 2008

The Barefoot Bushwalker

Alex Colley OAM,
Sydney Bushwalkers



In the early hours of the morning of Thursday 21 February 2008 in Hobart, bushwalker Dot Butler passed away. Her family were at her bedside; her death peaceful. A Wake was held in the Warrumbungles and on Easter Sunday her daughter Iluna and granddaughter Chloe scattered her ashes from Grand High Tops. In attendance were approximately 30 friends and fellow bushwalkers.

In June 1989 Dot Butler, then 77 and SBW's first Honorary Active Member, was awarded the 1988 Australian Geographic Adventurer of the Year gold medal “in appreciation of her contribution to bushwalking and mountaineering and encouragement of a sense of adventure in young people.” Dot was the third recipient. At the time she was bushwalking with a group of Sydney Bushwalkers in their seventies making the

most of their retirement with mid-week walks. A couple of years later she climbed the Three Sisters as part of the Youth Hostels Association's 50th birthday celebrations and three years later in 1992 she abseiled down the south east pylon on the Harbour Bridge as part of the 60th Anniversary of the Bridge opening; an appropriate event since she had watched from the top of the arch when de Groote slashed the opening ribbon.

Dot's walking career started in childhood when, together with her three brothers and sister, they set out from their Five Dock home to explore the mangroves of Homebush Bay, climbed trees and even cranes, went to Callan Park and Rookwood Cemetery and even to Prospect Reservoir in which they were caught swimming. In her teens she joined Wally Balmus's acrobatic club which performed on Bondi Beach. At the age of 20 she joined the Sydney Bushwalkers. Although she did a lot of cycling and mountaineering, bushwalking was her first love to which she always returned.

In 1936 she and Dr Eric Dark accomplished the first climb of Crater Bluff in the Warrumbungles. Next year she went on the first tiger walk from Wentworth Falls to Mt Cloudmaker and return to Katoomba lead by Gordon Smith and Max Gentle. At the end of the year she went on a trip to New Zealand led by Gordon Smith and Jack Debert, the first of many trips to NZ. She returned to NZ where she took a job as a typist, joined the Alpine Club and soon became a guide at the Mount Cook Hermitage. Returning to Australia in 1941 she resumed bushwalking with the Sydney Bushwalkers where she met and married Ira Butler. After the war she started a family, two girls and two boys who were taken out bushwalking and camping.

In the days when bushwalkers didn't own cars and traffic was light, cycling was a pleasant form of road travel. Dot was a keen cyclist and cycled not only in Australia but in Spain, Ireland, Russia, Germany and Cambodia.

Dot was also a keen conservationist, having participated in the Garrawarra, Boudi, Era and Myall Lakes campaigns



Dot Butler and Alex Colley share the warmth of a campfire in the MacDonnell Ranges near Alice Springs—1991

and worked with the Rangers League. She has been a very generous donor to The Colong Foundation for Wilderness and was a founding member of Natural Areas Ltd. From the Sydney Bushwalkers' viewpoint, the organisation of the purchasing, financing, conveyancing and surveying of the SBW-owned property “Coolana” was an achievement for which the club will be forever grateful. As the era of permits, party limits, stoves only, leadership licensing and litigation advances, we will be ever more thankful for “Coolana”.

Dot not only contributed 127 articles to SBW's monthly magazine, many illustrated by her drawings, but was Editor in 1954, 1955, 1956 and was a long time member of the collating team.

Although Dot excelled in all her activities she was no feminist. Oblivious of convention, she did what she wanted and did it better than almost everyone of either sex. Nor was she competitive.

This article covers only some of the highlights of Dot's career. Those who would like to read the full story should read her book “The Barefoot Bushwalker” now in its second print. As the publisher ABC writes: “It reveals a personality of warmth and charm whose sense of fun and abundant enjoyment of life characterises all her experiences.” ♦

Fraser Island

Julie Cox,
Watagan Wanderers

Fraser Island is 280 km long by approximately 15 km wide and is the largest sand island in the world. Approximately 400,000 people visit the island each year. The Fraser Island Great Walk is 90 km long, begins at Dilli Village, and winds through the centre of the island. It uses old tram ways and pathways of the Butchulla people who inhabited Fraser Island for more than 5000 years before being almost wiped out by the early 1900s. We took a leisurely 8 days to walk the track, walking as little as 6.3 km to 16.2 km per day. This left plenty of free time to swim in the wonderful lakes and explore. Each camp site (except for two) was beside a lake and all camps had toilets and water.

Thursday 30th August – Thirteen Watagan Wanderers met at Hervey Bay. Next morning we took two maxi taxis to River Heads, 20 minutes away, to catch the 8.30 am barge. The crossing to Fraser took 35 minutes and the captain informed us that from the barge we could only see a quarter of the island. We were met on the other side by Steve, the owner of the island's only taxi, who relayed us to Dilli Village. This involved a 16 km crossing of the island to the beach and then a 10 km run down the beach - twice. The beach is

a 'national highway' and all road rules apply although it can only be used safely 2 hours either side of low tide. So our taxi pick up times were dictated by the tides.

Our walk began. It was 12.30 pm before we got underway, crossing a boardwalk over a sedge-filled creek and climbing through open forest to reach Wongi Sandblow, which we climbed after dumping our packs. This afforded us wonderful views over the surrounding forest and let us have some play time in the sand. It was now quite hot as we trudged up more small hills, but before long we were looking at our fenced campsite, with dingo-proof food boxes and swimming in Lake Boomanjin. Pure bliss.

Next day we passed through more open woodland and rainforest with kauri pines and staghorns, palm lilies and mosses. Lake Benaroon was tonight's camp and we didn't need any coaxing to get into the swim of it. Sunday morning was Father's Day but I didn't see any TV sets or electric drills being passed out to the dads in our group. Instead they had another perfect day where we saw our first dingo footprints on the lake edge,

before an easy days walk into Central Station, again with a dingo fence around the camp. This afternoon some hardy souls did a 16 km walk while others wandered around Wanggoolba Creek and the historic station while learning more about Fraser Island history.

We departed Central Station at 8 am - which was now our usual departure time, and within 90 minutes were beside the most beautiful little lake. Basin Lake - and it was 'last one in was a rotten egg'. Next stop, the famous Lake McKenzie. This lake is very popular with the tourist coaches and until 3 pm it was like Nelson Bay. After that it was all ours. Till then though, our hardest walkers elected to



walk 21 km to visit McKenzie Jetty and old rail lines and the remains of an old Commando School and historical site. Some of us walked around the lake and others relaxed.

We passed through some of the island's tallest forests to Lake Wabby and the Hammerstone Sandblow, which is gradually encroaching on the lake and will probably engulf it one day. Again the afternoon was spent swimming and two sturdy walkers walked the 7 km to the beach and back. Lake Wabby was a ceremonial site for the Butchulla people. That night down came the rain, which is not surprising as the annual rainfall for Fraser is 1.8 m.

From Lake Wabby we walked along a high ridge and visited the Badjala Sandblow, before descending into the Valley of Giants which contains some of the largest trees on the island. The rain was set in now, but most went off to see a large Tallowwood tree, I was happy to snuggle into the tent.

Thursday 6th September: our 7th day and it was a day of walking in the rain. Most of us didn't mind as it added a new perspective to the walk. We passed through impressive stands of Brushbox and Satinay trees and rainforest - magic, before reaching Lake Garawongera. It was quite windy and only a couple of hardy souls went for a swim as we huddled under picnic shelters to drink hot soups and teas. In the early hours of the morning I heard what sounded like a dog snuffling, and two of our group saw a dingo opening a container. He soon lost interest in it as soon as he got the lid off, to find it contained only water.

An early start got us into Happy Valley to meet up with our taxi for another shuttle back to the barge.

This was a great walk, I would recommend it highly. ♦



tasmania...



adventure seekers wanted

- For a unique, small group guided adventure in Tasmania contact World Expeditions, Australia's most experienced adventure travel company. Raft the Franklin River, trek the Overland or South Coast Track, walk the Cradle Mountain National Park, cycle the spectacular east coast and more.

call us or visit our website to request your Australian Walking Holidays brochure today:

1300 720 000

 **WORLD**
expeditions
worldexpeditions.com



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



Sydney 491 Kent Street (02) 9264 5888
email: info@mountainequipment.com

Chatswood 72 Archer Street (02) 9419 6955
web: www.mountainequipment.com

trek&travel®

WALKING JOURNEY OUTFITTERS

GEAR & ADVICE FOR...

Kokoda Track

Milford Track

Everest Base Camp Trek

Torres Del Paine Circuit

Larapinta Trail

Climb Kilimanjaro

The Camino

...YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE

www.trekandtravel.com.au



447 Kent Street Sydney 2000 T: (02) 9261 3435
E: sydney@trekandtravel.com.au

Pat, Naar Valley - Nepal



WALKING THE WALK SINCE 1930

MELBOURNE • RINGWOOD • HAWTHORN • ADELAIDE • LAUNCESTON • PERTH
SYDNEY • CHATSWOOD • MIRANDA • KATOOMBA • CANBERRA • JINDABYNE
FORTITUDE VALLEY NEW STORE OPENING APRIL

MAILORDER • Customer Service & Information 1800 805 398
ONLINE SHOPPING • www.paddypallin.com.au

Paddy Pallin