

The **Bushwalker**

A hiker with long blonde hair, wearing a blue jacket and a large backpack, stands on a rocky ridge, looking out over a vast, forested valley. The valley is filled with dense green trees and shrubs, with a winding river visible in the distance. The background shows rolling hills under a clear blue sky.

Colo River in flood—
From the T3 lookout

Volume 33
Issue 3
Winter 2008

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

**Eagle Rock
Royal National Park**

Photo: Peter Vaughan, NPA

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

Photo: Brett Davis,
Shoalhaven Bushwalkers

**Near Sunset Cave and
Mount Donjon,
Budawangs**

The Bushwalker

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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 **admin@bushwalking.org.au** for a list of Clubs, but a far more useful 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.



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

Volume 33, Issue 3, Winter 2008

From the editor's desk. . .

The Future of Gear Shops

Let me start with some background. Some years ago I made some ultralight sleeping bags for my wife and I, with 300 g of 800 loft down in each. They were lighter and warmer than any Australian models then available, and were meant for summer use only. But we have actually used them as low as -7 C and in the snow - by accident, I promise! We thought it might be a good idea to get something with a little more down in it, but with the better ultralight shells and 800 loft down found mainly in overseas gear.

First I looked at what I could buy from a top US sleeping bag manufacturer, and I found three bags at AU\$495, AU\$640 and AU\$735. They looked more than suitable. Then I checked with a large Kent St shop to see if they sold them here. Yes, and they were priced at AU\$1,000, AU\$1,370 and AU\$1,450. I boggled. This represents a markup of about 1.97, 2.14 and 2.02 over the US RETAIL price. It would be even more over the US wholesale price. Now I know there are freight cost and so on, but this sort of markup is utterly ridiculous! I can import one of these bags for about \$25 in postage. Whether I have to pay GST is a moot point, depending on fine details, but at the worst that is only 10%.

I am sure the local gear shops have to make a living, but will any experienced bushwalker stand for this sort of gouging? I very much doubt it. Increasing numbers of walkers are going straight to the web these days, and it is no wonder. Does that mean the shops will end up selling only street clothing to the hordes and cheap gear to novices? Very possibly.

Can we get this message across to the local shops? I am not hopeful. It seems to me that parts of the retail market are going to undergo a serious change as experienced shoppers bypass the shops for the web. Where do you shop for gear these days?

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

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Fractured Fairytale Canyon

Mick Dulihamy
Sutherland BWC

In January of this year I led a canyon walk/exploration up in the Glen Davis/Glen Alice area for Sutherland BWC. While exiting Bridge Canyon and seeking a pass out, I explored a side gully and found a canyon (later to be named Fractured Fairytale) entering the main Gully. It was narrow and damp with a fall blocking our way. Further down, I spotted a small ledge cutting its way into the spur to the north. We found this to be an exit that required 1 person to boost the other, to aid the climb up to place a handline of 3 metres around a tree.

The next day, after exploring Grassy Canyon, we went to find the top of the new canyon. On arrival there was not much in the way of anchors to be seen and I felt it better to return with more hardware and sling. Some months later I returned with some friends from SBW, CMW and Katoomba.

This western Numietta Creek area has mostly dry canyons and this seemed the best of all canyons. Sporty, more interesting and slightly more dangerous. Its picturesque beauty is only rivaled by Midwinter. We descend parallel to the creek in the green lush glade until we struck the creek, and then headed down until the walls formed. Spotting a small Eucalypt on the east side a few metres past the first drop, we used it to abseiled 20 metres down and over the two-part falls - the 2nd fall has no anchor. We turned a right angle corner and commenced pushing our way through the native brambles. Even with gaiters and gloves I wished I had a pair of secateurs. We found a slippery log concealed in the brambles, sticking out over a 2 m descent. With care and a knife John and I removed the brambles from the log so we could scramble down. This drop is now known as John Bradhams Bramble scramble. Shortly we arrived at a large dead tree and a nice-sized live tree. Colin climbed up and attached a sling around the live tree, then we abseiled the Colin Skinner falls (12 metres). I was the last to descend, before we set up the next drop.

Soon we entered a chamber-like feature. This is the most picturesque section of the canyon, with a 1 metre scramble to the right immediately followed by a 2 metre down-climb. There is a rock jammed into the crack which allowed a hand over hand climb down a slippery rock into a narrow slot to be done with sufficient safety. Straight away we were at Dulihamy Fall. Both Johns and Colin had safely abseiled to the canyon floor when I arrived. I attached myself to the rope while James fiddled around, and then I stepped off the edge. I took two



Up and away

steps and heard a strange crumbling sound. Everything went a blur for 3 seconds, and then I hit the ground and screamed in agony.

Fortunately I landed in 16 inches of humus and the mud softening my impact! John B had thought I had let go of the rope and tried to stop my fast descent, but unknown to him the anchor had broken. James was still 8 m above and wondering what had happened and how he was going to descend safely!

Both Johns and Colin came immediately to me and removed my pack and set about organizing me somewhere to lie. A few metres to the north and a metre above the creek bed there was an overhang where they could lay me out to give me shelter in comfort. With care and order John B supported my left side and John L the right. Colin raised me by my harness and, as carefully as possible, they all moved me slowly to a bed of packs, dry bags and foam to insulate me. John and John covered me with clothing and a space blanket. While this was happening Colin set off to find a way to enable James to descend to our level in the canyon. Colin found a ledge above and with some belaying, managed to get James down to me safely.

Colin set off to find a way out, and found a pass out that is now named after him. Poor John B's space blanket was that old it fell apart as he tried to open it out to protect me, so remember to replace them every few years. I knew where the exit back to Grassy Mountain was, and told them about it. John and John headed back to Tayra Station to organise an air lift to Hospital.

We had settled in for the night, and I was surprised to hear the distant roar of rotor blades a little after midnight. With some searching they spotted us and

lowered 2 paramedics. Unfortunately they lowered then 10 metres away further down the canyon. Colin had to abseil down the next fall to them (Paramedic's Fall) and help one up as he didn't know how to prussik and to get the stretcher up to us. The other paramedic, Hugh, was able to prussik up the Falls. He first consulted with (Dr) James and then examined me. They gave me 10 milligrams Morphine to try to ease the pain. Meanwhile the helicopter returned to base. Not much happened after that till just after first light.

There was much discussion about the air lift and the rescuers insisted that Colin and James be lifted out and taken to the valley first. James tried to get the rescuers to drop them at Grassy Mountain, so the overnight equipment could be retrieved without having to walk back. However, unknown to us John and John had returned there and carried all the equipment back to the farm. There they had contacted emergency services and given them detailed information as to where I was located.

After first light I was placed in a special sleeping bag with handles and placed on the stretcher. I was strapped in and given a neck brace and glasses, plus my helmet was placed on. When the helicopter arrived shortly after, they first picked up Colin and James and flew off with them, but they weren't able to drop them at the Station. Instead they landed them 20 km the other side of Tayra Station, where they were picked up by the police and taken to back to Tayra Station.

The the VRA turned up, having been told the farmer had a trail bike accident. Just how the cops came to that conclusion I'll never know! Apparently the VRA senior officer of the rescue party was very

interested in all the canyons marked on my map: even he learnt something that morning.

Once the helicopter returned and Hugh had been strapped to the stretcher, we were winched into the helicopter with precision and little drama. Next came the 2nd paramedic and we headed straight to Nepean Hospital. The journey was that smooth, I didn't realise we were moving till I noticed a cloud going by. We were fortunate that the weather held that morning as strong winds hit the area that afternoon.

All that drama and fuss just to rescue me, and you never think it will happen to you. Even though I always take the safest option, you can never know. One day something can happen to you or someone you know, whether you are experienced or not. When your number is up that's all there is to it and you will be taken, no matter what you are doing. But safety is a necessity we all should strive for. I will be changing the way I abseil slightly, but this hasn't deterred me from canyoning. I will return to finish exploring and completing the rest of that canyon. There are too many unexplored canyons out there! You may think I am a little strange But Fractured Fairytale Canyon is one of my favourites and I will always have strong memories of the events and I look to it as a lesson.

I'd like to thank all involved in my rescue: my party members, the lovely people at Tayra Station, the VRA (even though they were misled), the emergency staff at Nepean and the staff at Liverpool hospital, hip specialist Dr Richard Walker, the St Johns Ambulance Organisation and especially the professional crew of the Air Ambulance!

In a subsequent email. Mike added:

We are not sure exactly what happened, as it's strange that 3 others had previously abseiled off that anchor. I do remember a strange noise as everything went blurry for about 3 seconds. I



Abseiling the day before

think the anchor, a rock jammed in to a pile of boulders, just slowly degraded and gave away: it was just my bad luck. I landed leg first slightly, and that's how the femur was driven up into the hip socket, causing the three fractures in my right hip. Fortunately I landed on soft mud, or things could have been worse. I was on the operating table for 3 hours, and it was worse than the specialist had initially thought. I now have some Titanium plates and screws holding my hip together. I'm on pain killers at present as I have pain all through my right leg, but it comes and goes. I don't recommend breaking your hip! I'm just glad I didn't damage my femur or anything else. However, I was walking with a frame 2 days after the operation and doing squats. ♦

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South Coast Track — Tasmania

Leanne Baird
Sutherland Bushwalking Club



Rounding a point

In 1980 on my first trip to Tasmania I walked in the South West National Park from Scotts Peak Dam to Melaleuca where I discovered there was much more to explore, and I vowed to return one day. I wanted to finish the South West Track along the South Coast, which in 1982 was declared a part of the Tasmanian Wilderness Heritage Area. Twenty-eight years later, after serious consideration and six months poring over a map and my friend's book on South West Tasmania (John Chapman), six of us set off to walk the South Coast Track. Easter dictated our schedule, and we choose to walk the week after the holiday as April usually has the most stable weather - or so we thought. But, off

course, the days are shorter. We expected long days walking and wet feet. I planned for eight days, which included 1 ½ contingency days – expecting to enjoy the beaches east of the Ironbound Range.

Christine, Ian and John were driving to Tasmania. Judy, Col and I flew out of Sydney at 9:00 am. We had good views en route of southern New South Wales and the dunes at Cape Howe, and landed in Hobart at 10:45 am where Par Avion were to meet us and transport us to the neighbouring Cambridge Airport. There we met up with the others at the Par Avion Terminal. We checked the weather forecast, which said it would be fine tomorrow, then winds and clouds but fine again by the weekend. The gear was

weighed, we went to the aircraft and stowed everything into the eight seater plane. The pilot gave us safety instructions before he started the engines. We put headphones on and then we were off. Col was the co-pilot.

For the previous five days the weather had been wet and wild and no small planes had been able to take off, so we felt rather lucky. We were warned that the flight might be rough and we might not be able to go directly to Melaleuca (80 km or so away), over the mountains as the visibility was poor and we would be following the coast. It was rough, and there were quite a few seat-grabbing, stomach-turning, sudden drops and a few squalls. We flew south above the blue Derwent River and the D'Entrecasteaux Channel towards the Southern Ocean. We had great views of fish farms, islands,

coastline and mountains and we glanced down and sometimes up trying to pick out our intended route. The ground had glistening lines, which I assumed would be water, and the Ironbound Range looked intimidating as it rose straight up from the coast and was higher than our plane. I was glad to see Cox Bight about forty minutes into the flight and we landed soon after at Melaleuca. But the flight was five minutes too long for my stomach and the paper bag came in handy.

As the plane came to a halt near the airstrip shed, it poured with rain and we sat there a bit overawed, before making a dash for the shed which was very much like a bus shelter. We filled our metho bottles and donned our Gortex jackets and pants. We met two women, cold, tired and carrying heavy, sodden boots, who could not wait to fly out. Oh, dear! We watched the plane leave.

Melaleuca used to be a tin mine on Bathurst Harbour, which is now a Conservation Area surrounded by National Park. The airstrip provides for easy access. There are a couple of huts there, including one for hikers which we entered to have lunch. We saw no activity and we started walking at around 2:00pm. We found the Track Head at the southern end of the white gravel airstrip.

We crossed Moth Creek on the only bridge we were to see for over a week and then followed duckboards south. They required some concentration as you had to balance on the narrow planks of wood. On either side the water looked deep. We soon warmed up. The skies cleared as we followed the valley down to the turn-off where one branch of the track leads to the South West Cape. The track was well formed, but we had a couple of tricky creeks to leap across. The views were good and we ended up at the picturesque mouth of Falls Creek at New Harbour. It looked different to the map and the guide notes but there was a camping site and a sign-in book. It was 5:00 pm. We chose a site sheltered by low dunes, besides a glassy little lagoon, surrounded by emerald green grass. I was impressed at having ended Day 1 with dry socks.

Next day was bright and we planned a day trip towards South West Cape. I was not keen to wade through the creek and insisted we backtrack and look for the

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(Sutherland Bushwalkers used James as their guide in 2007)



Crossing Louisa Creek

track we missed on the previous day that offered a shaky log crossing of the creek. We wasted a couple of hours, saw many deep sections of Falls Creek and found no track. Then I discovered that my map had a different track marked than Ian's New Edition map! We headed back to camp and set off again after morning tea. We waded through the creek at low tide. Some tried the water displacement method; others de-shoed. New Harbour is attractive with small rocky outcrops guarding its entrance.

At the other end of the beach we headed up through lush, green forest to the exposed ridge, 200 metres above the beach, with great views and a good track that eventually took us down through white sand dunes to the pristine Hidden Bay. We had lunch here before venturing up the next headland for a glimpse of Ketchem Bay before then turning back. Here I almost stepped on a dark snake - a Copperhead, I decided after studying specimens at the Hobart Museum. Back at camp John and Judy both reported seeing a Tasmanian Devil, although the photo subsequently showed it to be a quoll. Rain drove us to bed early that night.

Next day, Wednesday, was to be a long day. 24 kilometres had to be covered if we were to make it to Louisa River. It was light by 7:00 am, so we headed off at 8:00 am. We backtracked around the New Harbour Range to rejoin the main track and to head south again. It skirted on the side of the hill and a dry quartzite base, with good views beyond Cox Bight towards the Ironbound Range. On the

broke the monotony of beach walking. The last one, Buoy Creek on the eastern end, was aptly named, as many buoys and flotsam and jetsam marked our track inland and a climb of 260 metres over Red Point Hill. It was cold up there and our socks were getting wet. The track was tricky as what looked firm wasn't and what looked soft wasn't and there were quite a few deep, muddy sections to negotiate and the wind was cold atop the hills. The views were good but we were getting tired and I decided that we'd stop at the next inviting spot. We came to a creek that had steps at both ends and a rope, which was pretty impressive. Some were still taking boots off to cross but my feet were wet, so I could not see the point. That was Faraway Creek according to the signpost and a further 10 minutes of muddy track east was Louisa Creek. An excellent sheltered campsite attracted us and I could not see the log crossing. There was a rope with a knot in the middle, which didn't impress the fellows much. We pitched our tents where the ground was level. Getting water out of the creek wasn't real easy as the banks were steep. We cooked just before dark. And I heard a little voice saying: "Always camp on the far side of a stream just in case."

No one slept well that night. It rained most of the night, sometimes heavily;

beach of the Bight we walked east towards Point Eric where our lunch was cut short by a shower. There is a nice camp site there but it was not very sheltered, as we were told later. A strong wind was blowing, the sand on the beach developed pretty patterns and the water in the waves looked pinkish.

We had to wait, wade, jump and run around a rocky bluff and several creeks

some hail and lots of sticks came down. The roar of the wind was fascinating. It would come in cycles. We could hear it coming and going and it was loud. Ian wondered whether he had camped beside a runway as the noise was like a jumbo landing and taking off all night. But the wind was not blowing the tent around and we felt cosy as we listened and waited. Some water trickled in and I was hoping there would be no large branches overhead. In the morning Chris was up first beckoning us to come out and have a look at the creek. One look at the creek made us think that we would not leave the campsite today. It was very impressive. The creek had risen to the crest of the banks and was flowing swiftly and quietly. We could not see the creek bed through the clear, orange brown tannin-stained water. The flimsy guide rope was skimming the surface.

It rained on and off all morning. We could not venture far. There were puddles all around us. Judy's Gortex gear was a



Track through button grass plains

sodden mess in the dirt as she had left them out during the night. I noticed we were nestled amongst high, thick scrub and any trees were spindly. We spent a lot of time in our tents; some read, some slept and some talked. We were able to study the cautious sneaky habits of a bandicoot as it discovered the crumbs at the tent door. And we were able to study an amended itinerary. The book says to be



Walking along Cox Bight



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patient and sensible as the creeks usually subside in a few hours. Well, Louisa Creek rose further, no doubt fed by those clouds atop the mountains, to our north. The water in the creek did not start receding until mid afternoon and then only very slowly - we were not going anywhere today. I had never been tent-bound before and it was quite relaxing physically but this one day delay would actually put us two days behind. That was ½ day longer than I had calculated.

Then not long before dusk two bedraggled walkers stumbled into camp. We had run into John and Anika at Melaleuca and New Harbour where they did not have much to say. But now they had a tale to tell. They had spent the previous night at beautiful Point Eric. A tree had fallen beside their tent at 4:00 am so they had spent rest of the night shivering on the beach. They had bravely battled across Faraway Creek, which was chest deep. No way would I have relished doing that. But he was young and big and strong, ex-Army and capable. They also had a satellite phone they offered us to cancel our bus pick-up at Cockle Creek on Monday.

In the meantime, Col realised that he could not afford the extra day delay and decided to walk back to Melaleuca. John decided to accompany him. Judy was undecided. The creek looked very

intimidating to her and she had started the walk with a bad cold. Chris, Ian and I decided to go on regardless. John offered to pick us up on Tuesday. He would wait 24 hours for us. That was our mood, reservedly optimistic. We had a lot more streams to ford! The spotted quolls came out just on dark and persistently searched for our food, which kept us entertained until bedtime. We slept well.

The creek was down in the morning and we were off. Judy decided to stay with us. The water was about one metre below the knotted rope and mid to high thigh deep. We farewelled Col and John and went our separate ways. There would have been nowhere to camp on the far side. We had a steep climb up, about 40 m into the Spica Hills. There were pretty pink stones amongst the white quartz on the track. You look a lot at your feet.

The Ironbound Range was looming now and we could see a track going up a ridge. We were soon down in the wet button grass plains. There was good duckboard and I was grateful for it even if the water came up to the top of my boots. I mentioned this to Ian. He looked at me as if I was mad. He was disgusted. He could not understand why they bothered to build a duckboard below the water level! Soon we reached Louisa River, which was wide and fast-flowing, but there was a strong-looking rope and John

and Anika, already on the other side, encouraged us. The water was top of thigh deep and the crossing invigorating. We found a lovely campsite amongst the magnificent forest, very green, lots of ferns and thick-trunked tall trees festooned with mosses and lichen. We had lunch while we dried out in the sun and had a relaxing afternoon around camp. We came across the first official toilet: its novelty deserves mention. Shielded by vegetation only, there was a small wooden platform with a keyhole lid over a deep hole, with ground cover

and leaf litter, it blended well into the bush. It was not an eyesore.

The next day was Saturday, and we were all psyched up for a big day, one 1000 m and 4 hours ascent, a treacherous descent and 13 km to Little Deadmans Bay. We headed east, feet wet, before starting uphill on that track I had seen from the distance on previous days. A steep and stony but easy to follow, track. The breeze was bracing. There were fantastic views when you stopped and turned back. The Louisa Plains with streams snaking through it, the Red Point Hills and in the distance, New Harbour Range. Also picturesque Louisa Bay and the island that we had not had the inclination to explore closer. To the south was Wilt Island, Flat Witch Island and the sheer Maatsuyker Island and a few others. Poor Judy, Chris and Ian were frozen by the time slow-coach-me reached the top. We were fortunate to have clear views and could see South West Cape, 40 km or so away.

We still had to climb actually, for a bit, until we reached the crest where we lost our western views but gained glimpses to the east. We could not see the south coast as the land dropped off so steeply and the horizon was misty. To our left (north), were ridge after ridge of mountain ranges, the distant ones shrouded in clouds, and we could not see Federation Peak. The vegetation was stunted alpine-like, in autumn tones. There was a good wooden footpath, at times high over creeks, which would be tricky in bad weather. There was a strong, bitterly cold wind blowing. It nearly blew Judy off her feet a few times. There were good views to the east.

After 3 km we started descending through forest, looking for a sheltered spot to have lunch. We had to settle for the track and were lucky to find a dryish wet spot to sit on. Initially the forest was magic, lots of lichen and pretty pink and red little flowers, but we really could not take our eyes off our feet. It was steep. We were looking for foot holds while trying to avoid puddles and roots to trip over. It was tiring and I had two impressive falls as foot holds gave way and I lost my balance. We were keen to avoid injury as help would have been very difficult. We heard the second plane for the day; we could not see it and wondered if Col and John would be on

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Fording a stream



Track approaching Cox Bight

board. The track went on and on and on. We were hopeful as we glimpsed Lousy Bay but onwards we had to go. At long last we reached Deadmans Bay about an hour before dark and we flopped into bed as soon as we could.

Sunday dawned bright and I expected an easier day, 18 km in 6 to 8 hours. We started off on rocky Turua Beach, up onto a wet plain and down again to a beach. We had to run between waves around another small rocky headland. Then there was more track until we reached Prion Beach. From there it was an hour to the New River Lagoon boat crossing. There were great reflective views of Precipitous Bluff. We met John who helped us row across and, as he was camping there, he offered to row the boat back for us. We had lunch and then left John and Anika not expecting to see them again. Next we walked through lightly ti-treed sand dunes, which ended with a steep descent to Milford Creek which wasn't a deep wade - only thigh deep.

We were soon back up to open Rocky Plains, in light rainforest and supposedly easy sections. But there were lots of trees down, hiding the track and making our progress slow and tedious. We blamed the storm, which had blown a few nights earlier. We battled on and could not be tempted by easy side trips. We had some



View west from South Cape Range

views anyway. Surprise Bay was our goal and the sooner we would arrive, the better. It was well-named, a pretty little beach. We had to cross a knee deep ford at its eastern end and then do some rock hopping before we reached the track. This was actually a climb up a limestone rock face, facilitated by a fixed rope, to the Surprise Bay View campsites. It was the nicest campsite, in amongst trees with a good view of the sun setting on the Ironbound Range.

Monday promised

to be brilliant, and we expected to do 11 km in 9 hours. We had good views as we scaled Shoemaker Point, at a height of 160 m. From there it was all the way down again to the Bay and along Granite Beach. At its eastern end we had to climb up 10 m beside a waterfall before continuing up a steep and muddy path into a forest that opened out to Flat Rock Plain. From there we had fantastic views west again toward all the previously mentioned landmarks: the bays, mountains and islands. A bit of down and up to the 429 m high South Cape Range.

The mud! How come there is so much of it way up here? It went on and on and on and we went to great lengths to avoid the deeper holes, twisting around low branches and making precarious leaps to exposed timber. We became very tired of this: it was depressing and oppressive. The black mud stinks and makes a loud squelching noise as you sink into it, never knowing how deep you would go. The surrounding jungle was green and brown and lovely to look at. But the mud! It looked like the wilds of the Amazon to me. There was no escape; even finding a lunch stop proved difficult. We were so tired that any place would do.

Eventually the descent started. The 250 m seemed never ending. We had to cross Blowhole Creek and ascend 100 m again. This was getting too much. Still, there were some nice views of South Cape Bay in front

of us. Finally we descended to South Cape Rivulet. What a welcome sight. There was another knee-deep ford to reach the obscure campsite. It had been a long day. Ian was having a scrub in the lagoon when four kayakers appeared seemingly out of nowhere. They had started from Macquarie Harbour 18 days ago! They had left Maatsuyker Island that morning and were heading for Hobart. They had had enough too but thought paddling was easier than walking. They certainly were moving a lot faster.

Tuesday was another brilliant day and we were buoyed by the end being in sight. After breakfast we heard desperate pleas from Judy, somewhere in the bushes. In her rush to the toilet she had not recognised it, had ran right over it and now was lost in the bush. She was soon located and we went off to discover that the high tide meant that we had to go up over Coal Bluff, which gave us more good views, then down to Lion Rock.

We went along the beach, ascending the headland at the end and then following Blowhole Valley for 7 km, pleasant enough, to Cockle Creek, which was a most welcome sight. We signed out and looked around for John and his truck. He had been seen but we had time for lunch and a look around before he found us. We demolished his tomatoes, ham and bananas and bread and then started from the most southern road in Australia north to Hobart, a shower, a drink, knife and fork food and a bed. ♦



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Podgers Glen

Brian Fox

Podgers Glen is a small valley located NE of Bodington Hill, Wentworth Falls. This glen is one of the tributaries which feed into Blue Mountain Creek. Walking access is via the southern end of Booth Street, Bullaburra. It was described many years ago in *The New Walk*¹ as “a secluded narrow glen walled in by precipitous mountain sides clad with a luxuriant growth of a native flora”.

Edward Podger married Caroline Castles in Sydney in 1896². Edward owned a produce store in Tempe, an inner suburb of Sydney. But during the course of Edward's working life he became an alcoholic and as a result lost his produce store. Caroline and Edward had three children. Henry Edward, born 1889 and the eldest, established a very successful business – “RAYNOR'S”³, manufacturing badges in Punchbowl, greatly assisted by contracts obtained during the Second World War. Stanley George Podger was born on the 22nd August 1892 and his mother Caroline died not long after the birth of their third child Lilian, so that the children were raised by a series of housekeepers.

Stanley's education began at Tempe Public School. After leaving school he undertook an electrical apprenticeship with the NSW Railways at Eveleigh workshops in Redfern. His railway employment record card indicates that his probation commenced on the 20th September 1910⁴. Most of Stanley's working life was based at Newcastle. He married Theodosia (known as Doddy) Hall on the 12th September 1914, at her parents' home “Letona” in Addison Road Stanmore. They in turn had three children Eunice, William (Bill) and Edward (Ted).



Stanley Podger

Stanley rose up through the ranks from Assistant Electrical Engineer Class 3 to Assistant Electrical Engineer Class 1, but died one day after his 51st birthday on the 23rd August 1943⁵ of a massive heart attack while getting into an elevator at work. His wife, Doddy, died at Merimbula in 1963.

In the early 1930s Australia was still in a depression, times were tough and many men faced the unemployment lines. In an effort to lower unemployment the NSW Railways undertook the construction of a 66kV transmission line from the Commissioners' power station at Wallerawang near Lithgow to their substation at Lawson. The line was officially

placed in service on the 1st July 1931. Stanley was sent to Lithgow as this became the headquarters of the construction team.

In a phone interview with Stanley's daughter Eunice⁶ she recalled the family's time in Lithgow during the construction of the transmission line and the subsequent walking track called Bruces Walk. Eunice recalls that her father rented a cottage for 2 pound and 10 shillings a week while earning 6 pound 10 shillings a week wages. Most employees were under canvas and changed location as construction of the transmission line progressed. Owing to his position Stanley drove a vehicle, a Ford Beauty Tourer with the NSW Government Railway insignia on the side door. One of the saddest days in Stanley's working life was the day that one of his fellow workmen was killed in a tractor accident while working in one of the valleys. As all of the men's pay was handed out in cash Stanley was given a revolver by the Lithgow Police as a means of deterrent to any robbery, but his daughter commented that he couldn't hit a tin can set just a few paces away from him.

As well as constructing a transmission line, a walking track was also constructed to roughly follow the line from Lawson to Mount Victoria. This was called 'Bruces Walk', so named after the departmental surveyor Arthur Albert Bruce⁷. Many of the geographical features along this track were named after Blue Mountains Shire Councillors, residents of the shire, administrative staff and officers of the railway department, including Stanley Podger. Bruces Walk was officially opened Saturday, 21st November 1931⁸.

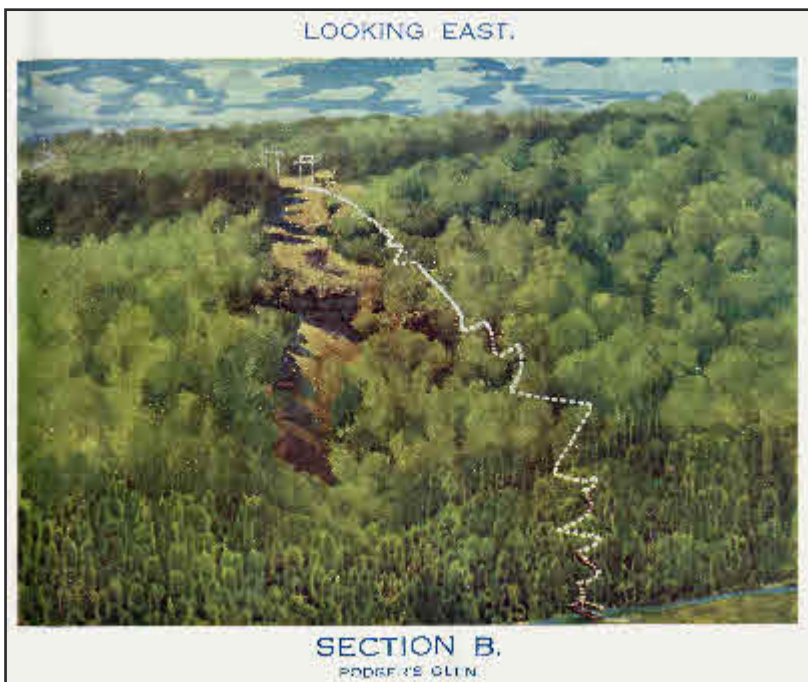
Eunice vividly recalls in 1931 walking the track (Bruces Walk) most unwillingly, miles up and down with her equally unwilling younger brothers, dressed in good shorts and jumpers, and her father Stanley in his three piece suit dragging them on. Eunice mentioned her laced up black shoes, and how her red woolen jumper shrank after they were caught in a storm.

During the war years in Newcastle Stanley was responsible for keeping the electricity grid functioning, and it was very likely the stress of this job led to his untimely death. His only real outlet was playing bowls with the NSW Railway team and poker on Sunday nights. A number of times the family invited Walter Myers (Chief Electrical Engineer of NSW Railways) home for tea, Eunice describing him as, “a charming little Jew”.

I was surprised to learn from Eunice, the only living child of Stanley and Theodosia, that until recently she had no idea that a geographical feature, Podgers Glen, was named after her father. I also informed her that on the Kings Tableland at Wentworth Falls there is also a Podgers Trig Station. ♦

References

- 1 *The New Walk across the Blue Mountains*, issued under the authority of the New South Wales Railway Commissioners.
- 2 NSW Register of Birth, Death and Marriages. Rego. No. 6035/1896
- 3 Email correspondence from Pam Organ, granddaughter of Stanley Podger
- 4 Railways NSW (SRA) employment record card for Stanley George Podger
- 5 Deceased Estate files. NSW A 58235. 20/3221
- 6 Phone interviews Eunice Flynn (daughter to Stanley Podger) 30th March 2008 and 3rd April 2008.
- 7 NSW Government Gazette No. 154, pp. 4216-4220. List of persons employed in the NSW Railways, Electrical Branch on 31st December 1929.
- 8 Sydney Morning Herald 23rd November 1931, p. 6; col. 5.



Podgers Glen, illustration from 'The New Walk' guide book

Budawangs: the beauty and the beast —

Wog Wog to Currockbilly

Lee Cordner

Are you thinking about hiking from Wog Wog to Currockbilly Mountain and return in 2 days? Then take a sedative, have a good lie down and think again. If you still believe it's a good idea, either seek medical advice or read this article. On the 2008 Anzac Day long weekend, six experienced members of the Southcoast and Shoalhaven Bushwalking Clubs joined forces to explore one of the great ridges in southern NSW.

The initially proposed plan was to follow the track notes titled "Wog Wog – Wirritin Ridge – Currockbilly" in Pigeon House and Beyond: A Guide to the Budawang Range and Environs, 2nd Edition, Revised 1987, pages 74-77. The notes suggested "2 (long) days" with "12 hours of walking" on the first day and a "water bottle is essential" (!). The recommended route went south from the Wog Wog entrance to the Budawang area, across the Yadbore River then via Wirritin Ridge to Currockbilly Mountain and return to Wog Wog via the Budawang Range. This route appeared to be very ambitious for 2 days, being approximately 46 kilometres return with considerable ascents and descents, and mostly off-track or following rarely used footpads through some tough country.

Following a suggestion by Brett we decided to shorten the hike considerably by planning to exit from Currockbilly Mountain to the west via Valeston Property. Permission was gained to walk through the property and park a vehicle there. This meant the overall length of the hike was reduced to approximately 28 kilometres, including approximately 1885 metres of ascent and 1830 metres of descent (the end point was 55 metres higher than the start point). We still anticipated a very challenging 2 day hike.

We car-camped at Wog Wog on Anzac Day evening so people could participate in Anzac events and to enable a very early start the next day. At 6 am Saturday morning we were on the track in cool, clear conditions, with mist rising out of the valleys in the early morning light. We made very brisk progress along the main walking track through open, wooded country, crossing Wog Wog Creek, then north and east before curving south onto Corang Plateau.

Graham pointed out aboriginal artwork just off the track and everyone was travelling well. At that stage the idea of making the recommended campsite at Wirritin Basin, some 22.5 kilometres from the start, looked possible. However, seeds of doubt were sown when discrepancies between the 2nd Edition (1987) of Pigeon House and Beyond, being used by Lee and the 1st Edition (1982), being used by Brett became apparent. Both editions suggested 2 long hard days and 12 hours

for the first day. However, the 1st Edition recommended a start from Wog Wog property, which the 2nd Edition advised was no longer accessible. This meant that the revised walk was now 4-5 kilometres longer, but the recommended walking times remained the same!

We made very good progress east along Corang Plateau until we were fortunate to find the start of a faint footpad about 1 kilometre before Korra Hill and heading south toward Snedden Pass. We found, lost, then found again the pad, which was overgrown and passing through at times impenetrable heath country. Our rate of progress reduced considerably and we took turns in leading the fight. Our labours were rewarded with the first of many spectacular vistas across the Budawangs features to the east, including Corang Peak, Admiration Point, Mount Owen, and Pigeon House Mountain in the distance. The pad became clearer and the going easier as we approached and then negotiated some short "interesting" scrambles down Snedden Pass and skirted to the east of Cockpit Swamp and Wog Wog Property.

Further dense scrub and steep, unstable descents kept our focus as we stumbled and tumbled our way southeast along a ridge until a well-made bridle trail was located that took us to the Yadbore River. The river was cool, clear and delightful in the midday autumn sun as we slipped and splashed our way southwest. We enjoyed lunch by the river and reviewed our



The ridge beckons

progress and options for the rest of the day. It was clear that our initial objective of making camp at Wirritin Basin that night was not achievable. After much discussion we decided to carry sufficient water from the Yadbore River to enable progress southward along the dry Wirritin Ridge, and to camp before dark.

The Wirritin Ridge ascent provided an excellent cardiovascular workout as we climbed 550 m up often loose, rocky ground. The lack of track fitness of some members of the party was soon revealed. At around 5 pm, after almost 11 hours of walking, we made camp in a saddle to the north of Wirritin Mountain, weary and

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We haven't given up yet ...

pleased with our progress but 7 km short of our original day 1 objective.

Sunday morning dawned cool and clear after a night of strong winds, and we were underway by 7 am. Our plan was simple: bag 3 summits; Wirritin Mountain, Mount Roberts and Currockbilly Mountain, then exit via Valeston Property. Wirritin was soon achieved and we enjoyed the first of many magnificent vistas of the Budawang area: Pigeon House and Talaterang Mountains, Byangee Walls, The Castle, Mounts Nibelung and Owen and other features were spectacularly silhouetted to the northeast, north and west in the morning light. However, progress was already slower than desired due to thick scrub and much loose rock.

As we approached Mount Roberts, Brett and Frank decided to continue

to the summit (to allow Brett to consummate his "conceptual" passion for summit-bagging) while the remainder of the party took a high-level traverse, following the 850 m contour. The traverse proved to be slow going across steep and crumbling rock. The party was reunited in the saddle below Mount Roberts. We enjoyed a second morning tea then commenced a tough scramble through sometimes dense scrub for the 350 m ascent until we were above the 1000 m contour line on Wirritin Ridge. We had lunch on the ridge and enjoyed

views seaward to the coast, with Jervis Bay and Tuross Heads clearly visible.

In an effort to avoid some of the steeper climbs and thicker scrub we tried contouring to the north into a copse of trees. However, we were soon confronted with a long and slow obstacle course through a tangle of fallen timber. One saving grace was that we found the upper part of a small creek with good water; our first chance to replenish since lunch the day before. We pushed through dense scrub up to the spine of Wirritin Ridge, where the going was a little easier. Our final scrub bash for the day occurred when we decided to traverse to the south east of a knoll, where we again plunged in to extremely dense, over head high scrub, for a further energy and time consuming struggle, taking an hour to cover 500 m. By this stage it was late afternoon, very dark clouds were building to the north

and west and the decision was taken to find a suitable campsite. We were able to get a strong mobile telephone signal from the ridge top to inform our families that all was well, and that we would be spending another night in the bush.

The going finally became easier, with a clearly defined footpad leading along the spine of the ridge towards Wirritin Basin, with Currockbilly Mountain visible a little over 2 km to the southwest. However, the "mountain gods" were not yet done with us. In fading light, the dark clouds to the west rapidly closed bringing spectacular lightning and strong, gusting winds. Suddenly we were pelted with horizontal sleet, as the temperature plummeted.

Fortunately, we only caught the tail of a storm that passed to the south, and we were soon on our way to the illusive campsite. Lee received a scratch in the eye from a grass tree, adding to a scratch in the other eye from the previous day, so the hike became the "blind leading ...". As darkness was closing in we made rough camp amid bracken in Wirritin Basin. We were able to collect good water from soaks near the source of the Yadboro River and shared some of our scarce food, before settling down for a cool and occasionally showery night above 1000 m.

Monday morning was cold and misty. We slept in to 6:30 am before sharing our remaining food, so we all had something for breakfast. We were on the track by 8 am, and after a short bash through dense scrub, we found a footpad that took us on to the ridge line. We climbed to the Currockbilly trig point, at 1132 m, for a photo opportunity, although views from the summit were very limited by trees and scrub. A chilly, westerly wind kept us moving briskly in the bright sunlight as we descended along a well-defined footpad, then fire trails and farm tracks to arrive at our vehicle at 12:30 pm. As we enjoyed meat pies for lunch at the Nerriga pub we reviewed our "2 long hard days" hike that had become "2.5 long hard days". Our total walking time was about 26 hours for a hike much reduced



Step 1: a cup of tea

in length from that suggested in the track notes. Although there were few new lessons, several old lessons were reinforced: be wary of track notes written 20 plus years before, "saplings" can grow to be big trees, "footpads" become overgrown and disappear, and dense scrub can appear where none existed before; in high country, always carry appropriate clothing and shelter, as the weather can (and does) change very quickly (we learned there had been widespread dustings of snow across the tablelands overnight); it is useful to carry some extra food; carry sufficient water; make the decision to camp earlier rather than later; eye protection is a very good idea when scrub bashing; a GPS and mobile phone are very helpful aids; and the Budawang remains one of the most beautiful, spectacular and challenging hiking areas in Australia. We'll be back. ♦



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Book Reviews

Larapinta Trail

John and Monica Chapman

ISBN 978 1 920995 04 1
RRP \$29.95

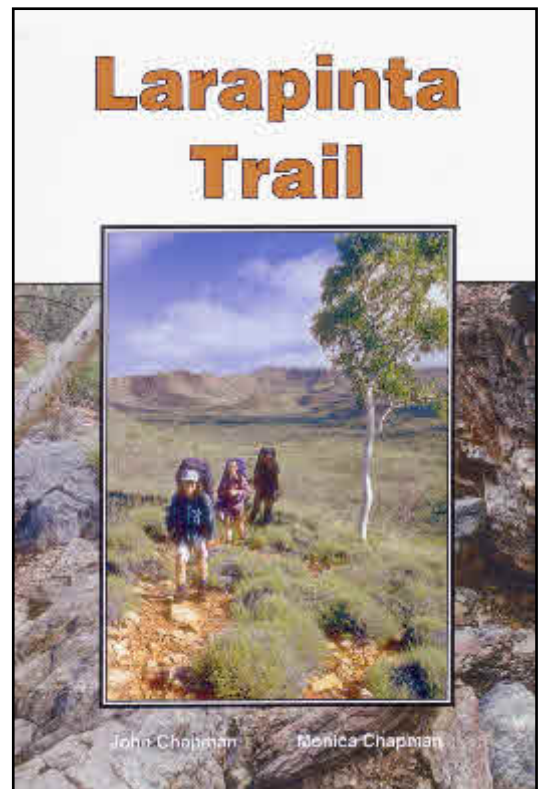
While John and Monica were writing this book I had the advantage of using the then-current text and maps for our own walk along the Larapinta Trail, from Sonder back to Alice Springs. On our return I was able to provide the authors with some updates. Reading through the book as it finally turned out brings back a lot of very good memories of our trip.

The book describes the walk from both direction, in 20 stages. We took less than that, completing the route with a side excursion to Mt Giles in 11 days. But the guide book does provide quite enough information about each 'stage' that the walker can decide what stages to amalgamate. There are maps with useful details, profiles, and lovely photos.

What this book does provide and the maps you can get elsewhere don't provide is a detailed discussion of the geology, botany and flora and fauna of the region, plus some history. These notes should be read before you start the whole walk and before each stage. They are detailed and provide so much more to the enjoyment of the walk. Without them you could easily miss many of the fascinating features along the Trail.

160 pages in full colour throughout with detailed walk maps and track notes, and much background information.

Roger Caffin



South West Tasmania

John Chapman

ISBN 978 1 920995 03 4
RRP \$37.50

Whereas the Larapinta Trail book covers just one fairly easy route, this book covers much of the South West National Park, the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, Frenchmans Cap,

and some other fairly wild areas. Popular highlights include:

- South Coast Track
- Port Davey Track
- Southern Ranges
- South West Cape
- Mt Anne
- Western Arthur Range
- Federation Peak
- Frenchmans Cap

It is therefore a good compliment to the author's other books on Tasmania which cover mainly the Cradle Mountain - Lake St Clair area.

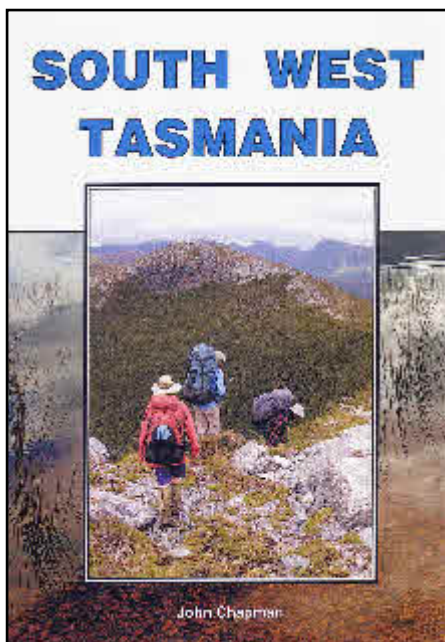
This book follows the same style for the more popular routes as the other Chapman guide books, with detailed maps showing key bushwalker features, profiles and many lovely photos. It too brings back many memories of our trips there in the mid-1960s, when tracks were much less defined and the area seemed a bit more remote. But John makes the point in many places that this area is still not for the inexperienced, even with this guide book clutched firmly in one's hand!

Not all of the routes are given the full detailed treatment however: some are described very briefly. John makes the point that if you aren't happy with such brief descriptions, you should start with other better-described routes. I have to agree.

This book does make me think about returning to the South-West, despite our memories of the weather and the mud. Yes, the photos are very good.

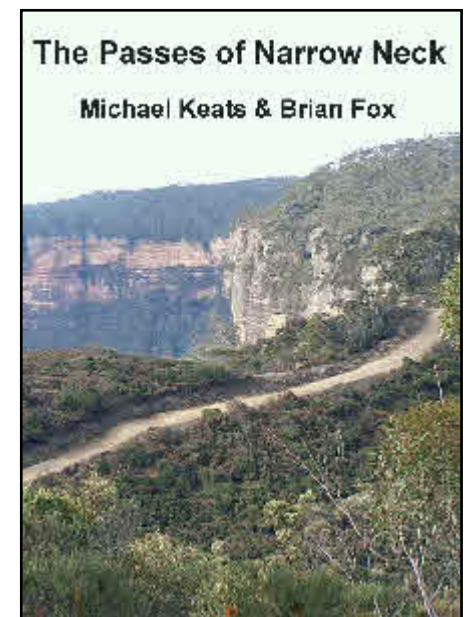
224 pages in full colour throughout with detailed walk maps and track notes, and much background information.

Roger Caffin



Passes of Narrow Neck

Michael Keats and Brian Fox

ISBN 978 0 646 48112 8
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from mjmkeat@easy.com.au

Narrow Neck, that long thin stretch of land jutting out 15 km south from the cliff line on the southern side of Katoomba, divides the Jamison Valley from the Megalong Valley. Many of the Passes of Narrow Neck have been known

Continued on page 14

ANZAC Day, Splendour Rock, 2008

Bill Sanday



Damp mountain air with the threat of further rain was an apt backdrop for Highland pipes intoning "Abide With Me" and, later, a "Lament" to further solemnify proceedings at the A.N.Z.A.C. Day Dawn Service, Splendour Rock, this year. Wet weather didn't deter the forty or fifty who'd made the journey to camp on Dingo Hill or who made their way through wet darkness to be at Splendour Rock for



the Service for bushwalkers killed, cited missing in action or who died of privation, in the Second World War. Proudly, in the occasional wind, our rain-soaked flag flapped from the rough stick to which it was attached as evocative strains echoed briefly to leave some with tears in their eyes, the plaque bearing the stirring words "Their Splendour

Shall Never Fade" barely distinguishable in the gloom from the Rock which has been its home since 1948 when anchored there by notables of outdoor pursuits as a lasting Memorial.

With Tributes placed and Tributes spoken the Service once again fulfilled its unique purpose for those departed who'd loved the bush... loved walking there and

communing with the Natural World and for those present who delight in doing the same... of Remembrance.

A debt of gratitude is owed Mr Ron Smythe of Grafton whose ambition had been to play the pipes at Splendour Rock, an ambition realised with great dignity.

Photos by Ian Partridge

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Passes of Narrow Neck

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page 13

for thousands of years – ever since Aboriginal tribes used the long plateau as a trade route. European interest in accessing the area was stimulated by early prospectors searching for kerosene shale and, later on, coal deposits. Bushwalkers 'discovered' Narrow Neck when steam trains made the Blue Mountains readily accessible from Sydney. Keen walkers could catch a train after work on a Friday night, camp out, go exploring, and catch a late train back on Sunday night, often arriving just in time to go direct to work on Monday. More than any other destination, Narrow Neck at that time offered an opportunity to go deep into the wilderness. It wasn't long before athletic walkers were seeking ways up and down the 'Neck' to explore the Wild Dog Mountains to the south and

the Megalong Valley to the west. Inevitably the old routes were re-discovered. Michael Keats and Brian Fox, together with adventurous members of the Bush Club, have not only rediscovered all the old routes but also added a new one. The addition of some rare historical material and maps makes this book a must for every bushwalker who claims to 'know the Blue Mountains'. Fit explorer types will be dusting off their abseiling gear and planning their next adventure; those not so able will find themselves encouraged up and down the more doable Passes. The book also provides insight into those passes that are now regarded as folklore. 128 pages in full colour throughout with historical maps and notes, detailed walk maps and track notes, and edited by Roger Caffin.



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



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Pat, Naar Valley - Nepal

A photograph of two hikers on a rocky trail. The hiker in the foreground is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, dark pants, a white cap, and a red backpack. The hiker in the background is wearing an orange jacket, grey pants, and a green backpack. They are walking on a dirt path that is partially paved with stones. The background shows a rocky landscape with green shrubs and a small body of water in the distance under a blue sky.

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