

# ***The Bushwalker***

**Descending from  
Augustbordpass  
to Zermatt valley  
Switzerland**

**Volume 34  
Issue 4  
Spring 2009**

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



Photo: Linda Broschofsky

**Larapinta Trail,  
Central Australia**

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



Photo: Michael Keats

**Red Rock Range,  
western Wollemi**

# The Bushwalker

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Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW  
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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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## From the editor's desk. . .

**W**e have two articles this time about 'senior' bushwalkers - both celebrating their 80th birthdays on the top of mountains. I find this very encouraging, as that age is still a bit off into the future for me! It does sometimes seem that it is only when someone 'gives up' an active life that 'old age' really grips them. In fact, I remember meeting a very old guy near Carlons (Packsaddlers) once. He was walking up one of the horse tracks there leading a horse. He was, I think, well over 80. I asked why he wasn't riding the horse; his reply was that the horse was getting a bit old. What was he doing there anyhow? Oh, he was making the horse riding tracks, with pick and crowbar! Yeah - and he was over 80! We have some discussion about nomenclature, following on from the article about Venus Beacon in the last issue. It seems that interest in nomenclature is still strong - fair enough too.

There is also a letter criticizing the contents of The Bushwalker in recent times. While I understand the concerns raised by the writer, I would point out that I have published nearly everything which has been contributed. If you aren't seeing what you want in this magazine, perhaps that is because YOU haven't contributed anything?

## 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 won't be published. 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  
Editor



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# He's the King of the Castle

Gordon Grenenger with Byangee Walls and Pigeon House Mountain beyond

Most readers of this magazine will be familiar with The Castle – the large imposing lump of rock in the Budawangs. First climbed in 1948, just 5 years before Everest, it is quite an undertaking even for your average walker.

With Gordon Grenenger's 80th birthday looming, fellow Shoalhaven Bushwalkers decided he needed a fitting challenge to celebrate his 80th. Gordon is, after all, one of the fittest members of the Shoalhaven Bushwalkers. Although he no longer does his age in push-ups every day, he does still do 60 – 80 on most days.

August 12th was the day, and most of the group camped at Long Gully the night before the climb to ensure an early start. Along with Gordon were 12 other Shoalhaven Bushwalkers members, one of whom was over 70 and several more in their 60s. Also joining us was Tony, Gordon's 41 year old son who had driven down from Canberra for the special occasion. Tony had been training for the event for fear of not being able to keep up with his old Dad.

We set off soon after 7 am with Gordon setting a cracking pace. Some of us younger members struggled to keep up with the oldies up front. It took us about 3 hours to reach the base of the climb via the Tunnel. The Tunnel posed some difficulties for Michael who was carrying his big pack with the birthday cake inside and under strict instructions to keep his pack upright.

The climb, which had had a few people nervous prior to the event, proved to be

Gordon descending the difficult top section of the tail of the Castle



## An 80th birthday party on top of The Castle

Lani Imhof  
Shoalhaven Bushwalkers  
and SPAN Outdoors

not as scary as many of us remembered it. There were some excellent fixed ropes in place which certainly made the climb easier and much less scary than normal. Thank you to whoever placed the wonderful yellow rope with all the hand loops in just the right places.

The summit was reached by 11 am, and an early lunch was decreed as we were in a lovely sunny spot, sheltered from the very cold strong wind that had accompanied us for the last part of the climb. After lunch we walked out to the far end for the wonderful views of Byangee Walls, Pigeon House and the ocean. It was a lovely clear day and it was time to party.



Gordon with fellow Shoalhaven Bushwalkers

The birthday cake was dug out of Michael's pack (with most of the decoration intact), the 'Super Gordon' gingerbread men came out of Gill's pack and the champagne bottles were pulled out of John S and Peter D's packs. We even managed to get the candles lit briefly. Gordon was thrilled with it all – and then to top it off, he was awarded his Shoalhaven Bushwalkers OBE by our new club president Peter Dalton. This is something all active club members who reach the age of 80 receive, and stands for "Over bloody eighty".

With the party over it was time to beat a hasty retreat as the wind was getting stronger and colder and there were dark clouds rolling in. The descent was done in a very speedy fashion and most of the group were back at the cars by about 3:30 pm. Some of us younger ones once again had trouble keeping up with the cracking pace that the oldies were setting.

On talking with some of the group members a few days after the climb, it appears as if the younger walkers were the ones to suffer afterwards with extremely sore quad and calf muscles. Gordon? Nah, he was just a bit stiff!

They certainly don't breed 'em like they used to! ♦

Joan's

80th

Birthday Party,  
Wisemans Ferry

Greg Powell  
Newcastle Ramblers

## Ten Years Ago

On the 27th of March 1999 many Newcastle Ramblers and friends made their way up Finch's Track or Devine's Hill to partake in a celebratory breakfast in honour of long standing club member Joan Robinson's 70th birthday. This was Joan's Country – a flat sandstone slab overlooking the Hawkesbury River and Wiseman's Ferry, with a convict built road running right by and the markings of the Daruk people scratched in the sandstone not far away.

Many of us said then, whilst sitting at this magical vantage point, that we would meet here again in ten years time for Joan's 80th birthday, but this time we would backpack up the hill and camp here. This we did!

## Ten Years Later

Nineteen walkers made their way up Finch's Road Walking Track or the Great North Road on Devine's Hill. Joan and her Wiseman's Ferry luncheon party headed up Devine's Hill at around 4 pm, at about the same time as the Finch's group got going. Some walkers arrived later, after dark, and some even enjoyed the climb up next morning.



At the start of the climb up the hill



Tents and tarps on the flat rock at the top

The Finch's group arrived first after a climb of less than an hour, sought out some tent sites in the scrub, got the fire going and put up the decorations. By the time Joan's luncheon party arrived there was quite a jolly settlement at the cliff-top lookout, complete with pointy party-hats. Many photos were taken of the birthday girl and the view. This habit would continue for the rest of the weekend.

The sky remained overcast and rain threatened but never arrived, thankfully, as I couldn't vouch for the waterproof qualities of my small cave home. The heavy clouds behaved but we didn't get a cliff top sunset nor sunrise and the moon remained hidden. Can't have everything!

Nibbles were enjoyed on the cliff top as the lights of Wiseman's Ferry township came on below. The ferry, which ran all night,

was particularly impressive with its coloured lights reflecting in the calm waters of the lazy Hawkesbury.

The evening wore away with cooking and chatting and marveling at our wonderful view. Most headed off to the tents at a reasonable hour for a very mild night of camping, with the clang of the ferry ramp as it reached each side of the river rocking us to sleep.

We were up early and breakfast was enjoyed at rocky vantage points. Some people climbed up the ridge to explore the caves and the abseilers planned future trips. The Happy

Birthday Strudel was produced intact from a backpack by you know who, and the sweet notes of Happy Birthday To You wafted down the Hawkesbury Valley and far out to the Blue Mountains.

A few campers had to go early to attend other functions and some new arrivals wandered in, as we were packing up. There was still some strudel for all. With last looks at the vista, everyone made their way slowly down Finch's Track to the cars or car shuttle. On the way, we tried the great echo in Rose's Valley and inspected the historic features of the 1 Mile mark, stone embankments, quarries and powder magazine.

Joan, the advance walks program says we'll do it again on 27 March 2019.

See you there! ♦



Dinner time at the top



## WILLIS'S WALKABOUTS

# Bungle Bungles in the Wet

14 – 27 February 2010

The road will be impassable and the park will be closed to the general public. We, however, have **special permission to fly in** and see this area at its spectacular best. We will experience the magic of Purnululu in a way that few non-Aboriginal people have ever done.

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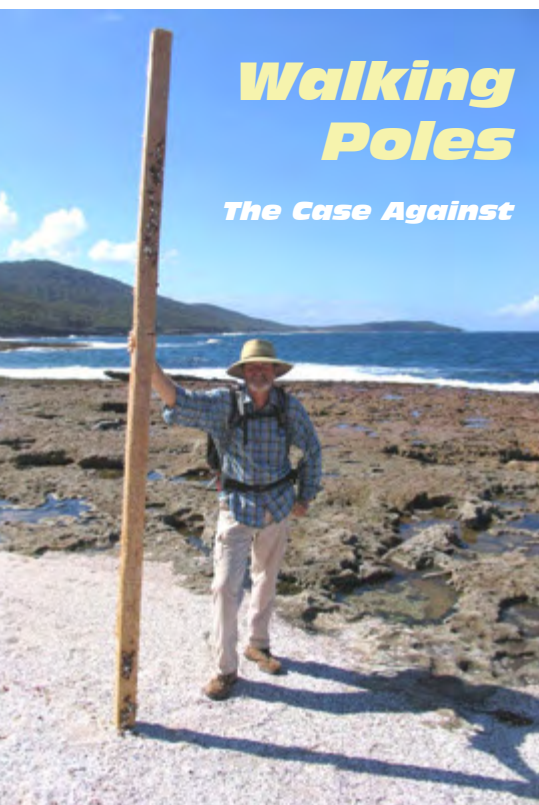
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## Walking Poles

The Case Against

"That's not a walking pole - this is a walking pole!"

**M**arketing people love totally useless inventions. Remember pet rocks? Or how about non-stick cello tape, inflatable dartboards, pedal-powered wheelchairs or ejector seats for helicopters? Their latest useless invention is walking poles - and the whole world thinks they are the greatest thing since sliced bread (yet another marketing ploy).

Much has been written about walking poles. Some of their supposed benefits include the following:

- they help with balance, prevent falls and give stability in wet and slippery conditions
- they strengthen upper body and arms and help with good breathing
- they prevent swelling of the hands and fingers
- they improve posture
- they take 20% of your weight off your knees and hips and prevent wear and tear to these joints

### Let us examine each of these points.

If your balance is so poor that you fall over a lot, should you be out walking at all? If a lack of coordination causes your falls, how are you going to control four supports when you can't even control two?

Should we be trying to strengthen our upper body and arms when walking? Isn't walking hard enough without extra effort? If we want a weights session, why not carry hand weights? And what about

Brett Davis  
Shoalhaven Bushwalkers

the claim poles 'help with good breathing'? Isn't breathing always good? How do poles help?

Ever had a problem with swollen fingers while bushwalking? If so, how do walking poles prevent it? And if walking poles give you 'better posture', then normal walking must give you bad posture, right? The only way a pole could give you better posture is if someone jabs the pointy end right up your clacker!

When poles are used correctly (which is rarely the case) one pole is lifted and placed for each step taken. The normal stride length is about two feet (pun intended) or 60 cm, but let's assume it is 66.67 cm, just to make calculations easier. For every kilometre we walk, we would therefore lift each of our fandangle poles 750 times. How much weight is this? Leki, a leading manufacturer of walking poles, state that a single pole of their lightest model weighs a tad under 200 grams. If we lift two of these 750 times per km, it means we lift  $2 \times 750 \times 200$  grams, which is 300 kg every kilometre! On a typical 12 km walk, people with poles would lift 3.6 tonnes!

However, this calculation only assumes that we are lifting the poles up and putting them down - it does not assume that we are actually applying any weight-bearing downward force. With the median bushwalker being a female aged about 60, and with Weight Loss International telling us the average weight for a woman aged 60 is 70 kg, then 20% of the weight of an average walker is 14 kg. Therefore, each pole plant allegedly takes 14 kg off our legs, 1500 times per km, which equates to a 21 tonne weight reduction every kilometre. On an average walk, our average pole-using bushwalkers are lifting over 250 tonnes with their arms!

Why do this? Our legs are designed to support weight. The large muscles of the leg are much more efficient than those of the arms and shoulders. All of us tried supporting our weight by crawling on our hands and knees for the first year of our lives - and found it wanting. A 2001 study at Massachusetts University found that hikers using poles expend more energy than normal hikers. The Cooper Institute in Dallas found that walking with poles increases energy expenditure and oxygen consumption by 20% compared to regular walking at the same pace. Using more energy makes us more tired. Tired walkers are less coordinated, more prone to errors of judgement and navigation, and more prone to accidents resulting in injury or death.

**W**alking poles are essentially just sticks, so why buy something you can pick up in the bush for nothing? And why buy something you don't need in the first place? Any price you pay is too much.

The hard tips of walking poles dig holes in tracks, increasing wear and tear,



John Souter, a Shoalhaven Bushwalker who uses his walking poles everywhere

and erosion. On some walks such as the Inca Trail, hard tips are banned and soft rubber tips must be fitted to all walking poles. In the bush we should leave only footprints, not a trail of holes and crumbling surfaces.

**P**oles have carbide tips. Carbide, used on the cutting edges of saw blades and drills, has a hardness of between 8 and 9 on the MOHS hardness scale - only diamonds are harder. By contrast, the human eyeball registers about 0.2 on the scale, similar to marsh-mallows and Aeroplane jelly. Accidental impact involving the tip of a pole and the human eyeball is catastrophic - a real eye-opener! Impaled ear-drums, throats and stomachs are also likely, to say nothing of the damage that could be done to our nether regions and private parts. Luckily, most bushwalking club members are post-procreative.

Like all mechanical things, poles will eventually fail, probably when you need them most. They will slip when you are crossing that crevasse on that log; they will collapse when they are supporting your weight on that cliff edge; and they will break (and probably impale you) when they get jammed between those slippery rocks. Also, inevitably, you will put them down when you take a break, and forget to pick them up. This will happen often, and repeatedly, until finally, if extremely lucky, you will lose them forever.

In summary, poles are expensive, dangerous, exhausting, destructive and potentially lethal to both yourself and those around you. The best thing to do with walking poles is to give them away to someone that you hate. ♦

[I tend to agree - Ed.]

Walkers on the Tour du Mont Blanc, 2007





Mount Dawson  
—Michael Keats, The Bush Club

On Mt Dawson, looking into the Wolgan Valley

## Mount Dawson

Michael Keats  
The Bush Club

**T**his is the story of a day walk in an area rarely visited but I suspect on many individual walking agendas, listed as 'one day I want to do that'. Walks in this area are a challenge and it is recommended that you have the full range of bushwalking skills, personal fitness and some courage before attempting any of them. On top of that you will need to negotiate with several landholders to obtain permission to gain access.

As arranged, we met at the gates of Goollooinboin Station at 0920. At the property office we were greeted by three hopelessly wonderful working dogs—eager to bestow on us their favours—complete with lots of licks and furiously wagging tails. The manager escorted us through the maze of property roads (and many sets of gates) to Red Rock Flat. As agreed we established camp before setting out on a shortish day walk, then we settled down for the night to be ready for the morning.

An absolute cacophony of birdcalls woke the camp at 0555. Roger had a billy of his famous bushman's tea available in no time and soon we had efficiently completed breakfast, packed lunch and were ready to go.

Amazingly, by 0715 we had driven to GR 369 252, parked and were walking. That is really the sign of a keen team ready to explore. An almost scarified ridge dotted with ironbarks and little else but rocks was being left behind as we pursued our way upward. The morning air was still cool but this would not last. It was forecast to reach 30 C and we wanted to try and complete the ascent before conditions became unbearable.

By 0723 we notched up GR 371 249, by 0740, GR 373 249, and 0801, GR 376 246. By 0820 completed the scramble up a one-in-one slope to the base of the cliffs. Here a narrow but very variable ledge of decomposing shales was followed for about 150 m to the semi-enclosed gully that we hoped would be a pass to the top.

Looking up was daunting. Looking down was more so. Looking straight ahead at the uncompromising rock scree, rock face and balancing logs was the only way to go. Each time that it looked insoluble a way was found. Up, up and up we went. It was a mix of rock scrambling, occasional inaudible prayer and sheer tenacity that drove us upwards and onwards.

About 50 m from the top there was a 5 m slot that did not look good. A cave to the north looked like a good spot to rest and have morning tea if we could go no further. A scout went to it and then he disappeared for a while. When he returned he was jubilant: there was a way around that was just a walk up!

All thoughts of morning tea vanished as we entered this cave. It is large and could accommodate perhaps 6 tents. It has a good sandy floor and its colours are glorious. I called it the Infra Red Spectrum Cave. After posing for pictures and noting a brilliant flowering Boronia we walked through the cave and followed the ramp up to the top of a broad gully. The cave is at approximately GR 378 243.

We then headed back south to pick up the headwaters of the gully and encountered another obstacle, a set of dry waterfalls, called by Steve the Horse Shoe Falls for obvious reasons. Having scaled 200 m of cliffs we were not going to let a set of falls get in the way so a ramp was climbed and, after about 10 minutes more, we were able to cross the very beginnings of this at times turbulent waterfall where it is nothing more than an indentation in the sandstone.

**O**n top and in the open the wind became a huge issue. It was blowing a gale and keeping your hat on was hard. We headed south-west climbing a series of pagodas and adding another 50 m to our elevation. We were still not at Mount Dawson, but in a sheltered

spot we sat down for morning tea with a view so special.

All the high points of the Wollemi Wilderness were in profile: the reference cone of Tayan Pic, the hump of Mount Marsden (near Kandos), closer to us was Gindantherie Pinnacle and the incised valley of Little Capertee Creek draining to the Wolgan Valley. Shifting the eyes through another 30 degrees gave the whole of the Capertee Valley with Cottage Rock, and to the west Mounts Genowlan and Airly. It was one of those times when I wish I had been carrying a high-resolution camera to capture this experience.

**R**efreshed we pushed on to the top of Mount Dawson. Now the view became 360 degrees. As well as all the



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Anne Corbett climbing Dawson Pass

above we now added the whole of the Wolgan Valley to the south and Pantoneys Crown to the west. This was a singular experience for each of us, inured as we are to spectacular views and sensational horizons.

Well, we had been successful in the most ambitious part of our walk. Now it was the cliff edge walk to Point March. By now the sun was really beating down. The cliff line walk has virtually no shade and the wind became quite erratic with occasional burst of fury when it exceeded 20 knots. In short, conditions were not at

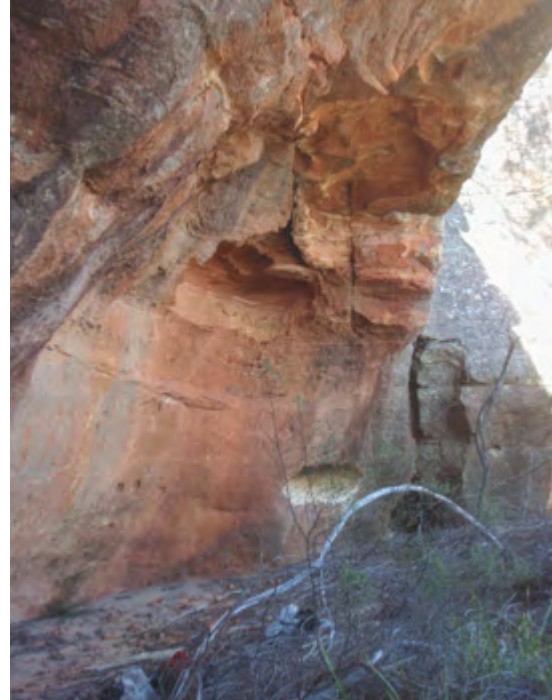
all pleasant, although the views and the rare opportunity to take pictures from such a spot made it all worthwhile.

**W**e kept going along the ridge until we could see Point March and the way down into the top end of Red Rock Creek. The more we looked into the tangle of trees and convolutions of the upper reaches of it the less attractive it was as an option. A decision was taken that in view of the heat and that the views would not get any better we would return the way we had come and at the same time prove that our “pass” was just that – a real pass that could be negotiated without resorting to ropes or abseiling equipment.

At a very early 1145 we were back under the lee of Mount Dawson and 20 minutes later sitting in the Infra Red Spectrum Cave having lunch in the cool. As we had time we had a good look around the cave for any evidence of Aboriginal art or micro bats or other creatures. The only discovery was of a chrysalis-like object about 60 mm long attached to the wall that had been vacated.

At 1227 we commenced our careful descent. The roaring wind up the gully made for a lot of flying fine debris that was a menace to eyes and noses. Every movement we made sent clouds of material into the air so it was a very measured descent to minimize the discomfort. We arrived at the base of the pass at 1249. I have called this the Mount Dawson Pass.

Once down at least the wind abated but the reflected heat of the sun from the



The Infra Red Spectrum Cave

cliffs was desiccating. We moved slowly down the scree slopes finding the descent here more challenging than the 200 m dry waterfall. Much of the early section was done as a bum slide, it being the safest option. Once we could stand up the going was still tough and the heat in the confines of the valley oppressive.

**A**t 1345 we made it to the fence line about 300 m south of the vehicle. An air-conditioned drive back to camp was really welcome. Even more welcome was another of Roger's cold beers, which was enjoyed while we packed the cars. ♦

A Pagoda Adjacent to Mt Dawson

At the base of the Mt Dawson cliffs



# Shining a Light on Venus Beacon

Colin Gibson



Looking towards Venus Beacon (the western of the Boorong Crags) from the eastern crag, with Mt Hay in the background.

I have written to the Geographical Names Board to draw its attention to the fact that it has made an error in renaming a geographical feature that it had been led to believe had no official name. This is the feature that was designated Venus Tor, as submitted by Mr. Brian Fox in 2002 and accepted by the Board the following year. I have not seen Mr. Fox's full submission, but I have read the summary of it as published in *The Bushwalker* Vol. 30, Issue 4, Winter 2005.

To begin with, Mr. Fox pointed out that bushwalkers Marie Byles and Marjorie Shaw had originally named this feature in 1935, and that they had called it Venus Beacon Tor. This is not strictly correct, for there is no record of Marie or Marjorie ever using that exact name. The

article co-authored by Byles and Shaw in *The Sydney Bush Walker Annual*, November 1935, states: "Venus hung like a lighthouse lamp above the rocky pile on our left, so we called it Venus Beacon and set off to climb it." These words emphasize that Marjorie and Marie were co-namers of the feature Venus Beacon.

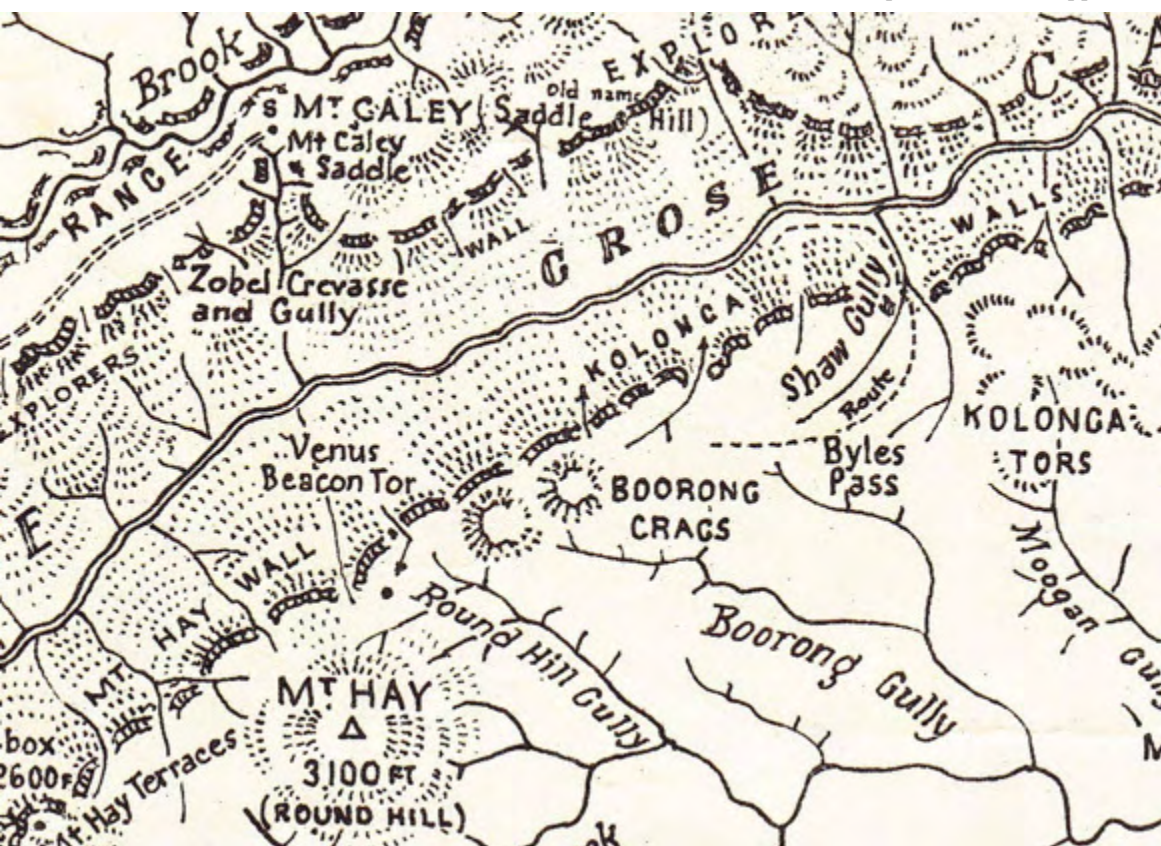
Despite the publication of the name Venus Beacon in 1935, it does not appear to have been commonly used by bushwalkers. For instance, when *The Warrigals* passed by it in 1937 Harry Whaite referred to it only as "that interesting knob with the 'lawn' around its foot" (*The Warrigal*, September 1937). By the time Myles Dunphy was proposing his system of names for the northern section (Grose River catchment) of his Central Blue Mountains concept, in 1965,

the precise position of the Byles and Shaw feature was not clearly understood. Dunphy was mistakenly under the impression that Byles and Shaws' Venus Beacon lay closer to Mt. Hay than it actually does, positioning it on his Central Blue Mountains sketch map under Mt. Hay, almost equidistant between Mt. Hay and Byles and Shaw's original location for it (the rocky pile, as referred to). It was Dunphy, also, who added the appellation Tor to make Venus Beacon Tor.

Having situated his Venus Beacon Tor, Dunphy felt that the nearby sandstone residuals needed naming, so he applied the name Boorong Crags to the two sandstone hills (crag) further to the east of Mt. Hay. The larger is the more westerly and closest to Mt Hay - a flat-topped sandstone residual. This is the

Venus Beacon of Byles and Shaw. The smaller is the more easterly, furthest from Mt. Hay, and has a wooded summit with a comparative fragment of residual sandstone. Dunphy took the name Boorong, meaning Big Rock, from an aboriginal word dictionary. From what part of the country that word comes from I do not know, but in the Sydney aboriginal language the word (in the form Birrong) means a star, which, even if accidentally, accords well with the name given by Byles and Shaw.

Dunphy's name for the two crags was approved by the Surveyor-General in 1966 and gazetted in 1970. In 1971 it appeared on the Lands Department (Central Mapping Authority's) Mount Wilson 2 inch to the mile map sheet. All names on this map were approved under the provisions of the Geographical Names Act 1966. The successors to this map are the metric 1:25,000 sheets that first appeared in 1982, with subsequent



Section of Myles Dunphy's Central Blue Mountains Sketch Map 1965 showing the dual feature Boorong Crags and the incorrect positioning of Venus Beacon.



Looking towards the eastern of the Boorong Crag from the summit of Venus Beacon. Note old cairn probably placed by Byles & Shaw in 1935.

editions. Dunphy's name for the crags is present on all of these. Mr. Fox states that the larger feature on the 1:25,000 at WGS84 605 778 (for which he has proposed to reinstate a form of the original name from 1935) is unnamed on this map and that the name Boorong Crag applies specifically to the adjacent smaller feature at WGS84 607 780. However, in assuming this, he has made a similar mistake to Myles Dunphy, who, after misinterpreting Byles and Shaws' Venus Beacon, also believed the feature at 605 778 to be unnamed.

On all versions of the Mount Wilson sheet the designation is printed over the more easterly feature at 607 780, the one Mr. Fox interprets as Boorong Crag. But, if anyone were to go there, they would only require a single digit to count the number of crags, for Dunphy's 'crag' plural applies, as stated, to the features at 605 778 and 607 780 together. It doesn't seem to have occurred to Mr. Fox how improbable it is that Myles Dunphy would have given a name to a relatively insignificant feature while leaving a more prominent landform right next door unnamed.

It is also worth noting Dunphy's description for his Boorong Crag as submitted to the Surveyor-General: "Boorong Crag. Abo. Big Rock. Great residual rocks standing on South rim of Grose canyon one mile north east of Mt. Hay, directly opposite to Mt. Caley." Dunphy also notes: "Boorong Gully... having its sources at the crags". Always he refers to 'crag' plural, and that the original Venus Beacon at 605 778 is included in this concept is implied in the translation, Big Rock. The feature at 607 780 is hardly that, Mr. Fox himself calling it "an insignificant feature by comparison".

That 'crag' plural applies to a dual feature is apparent on Dunphy's Central Blue Mountains map of 1965, and this designation has been accepted by bushwalkers ever since. It was submitted for approval by the Place Names Committee of the Blue Mountains

National Park Trust, and gazetted in 1970. Mr. Fox, simply, has misinterpreted the designation on the metric sheet, and also on the Dunphy map. The draftsmen of the Mount Wilson sheets could have done better to place the designation less ambiguously on the maps, but Dunphy's concept is clear on the 1965 map.

Venus Tor is neither a Byles and Shaw name, nor a Dunphy name; if the idea is to reinstate an original name, then

Venus Tor fails, simply because it is not the original name. Dunphy's name is closer to the original, but it is not quite the original. Dunphy wanted to perpetuate the Byles and Shaw name, although he put it in the wrong place, and added the appellation tor only to make clear that the name applied to a physical landform. At least it can be seen that the names of both Byles and Shaw (Venus Beacon) and Dunphy (Venus Beacon Tor) conform very closely, whereas the name Venus Tor is further removed from the original.

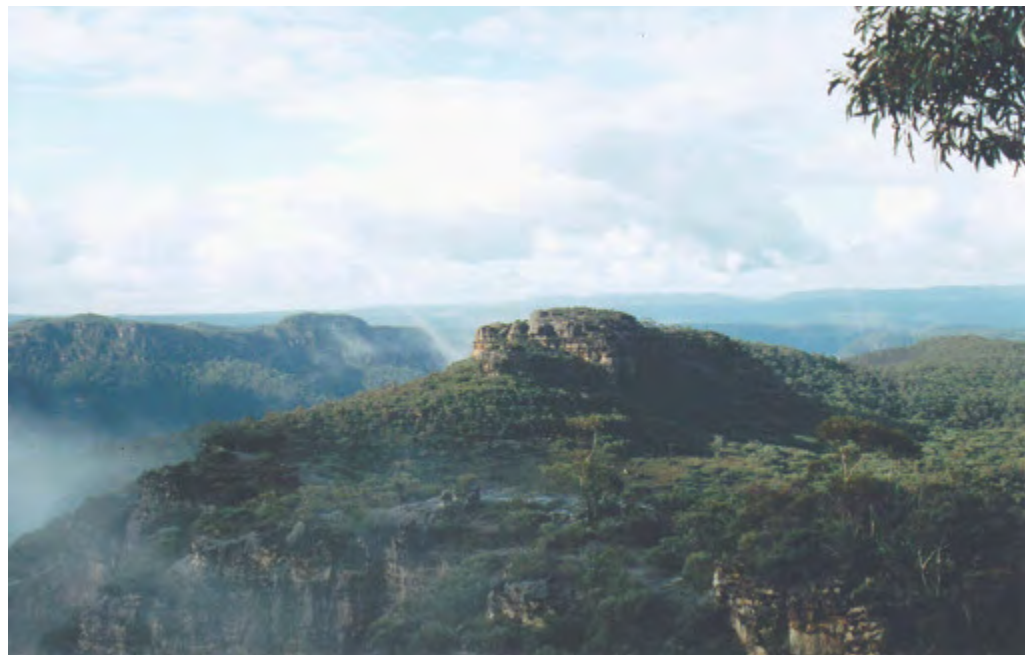
It is worth examining Mr. Fox's statement that "The word[s] beacon and tor are analogous". The Concise Oxford says that a 'tor' is "a hill or rocky peak", whereas 'beacon' has a much broader application, including "a conspicuous hill suitable for a signal or a signal fire" – this is the context of the word as used by Byles

and Shaw, as an indicator 'beacon' for the planet Venus. Therefore, the context of the original name can only be preserved if the word 'beacon' is included in the designation.

Despite Dunphy's error, I think that to relegate his name of Boorong Crag to only one of the two is to effectively compound his original error. That an earlier name (particularly one so obscure) was once applied should not automatically mean that a more recent name in common usage should be dispensed with. Mr. Fox's reasoning for wanting to apply the name Venus Tor is based on a misnomer; he concluded that the feature in question had acquired no other name since the unofficial one proposed in 1935. This is not the case, as many bushwalkers have known and continue to know it by the name Myles Dunphy gave it in 1965; the name approved and gazetted in 1970.

I do, however, think that the names given in 1935 and 1965 can and should be reconciled. Firstly, Myles Dunphy's name for the dual feature should be restored. His name, Boorong Crag, never applied only to the more easterly feature, but always to both. If this name was to be retained for the dual set of crags (as was originally accepted by the Surveyor-General, the Central Mapping Authority and the Geographical Names Board) then the crags themselves could be named individually. One of the crags had a name given to it back in 1935, the larger, western crag – Venus Beacon. This should be approved in its original form; it is one of the two Boorong Crag, and, as such, should not require the appellation 'tor'. The smaller crag has never been given a name of its own; it is probably straightforward enough to continue to refer to it simply as the eastern of the Boorong Crag. ♦

[Note: Brian Fox is grateful to Colin Gibson for his feedback - *Editor*.]



Venus Beacon (part of Boorong Crag) as viewed from the side of Mt Hay at or close to Dunphy's incorrect positioning. Note Venus Beacon obscures the eastern crag from this angle.

# March Flies

Mike Robinson  
Bankstown Bushwalking Club

It's January in Kosciuszko National Park and the air is packed with big buzzing flies. March flies actually, but it's not even March! They're not supposed to be around for a month or more yet, are they? They are just everywhere! And from where I sit it seems their only job on this planet is to torment the life out of everyone and everything around.

Having been constantly hassled by them I note they don't "march" either. They fly, they land, and they fly again. They don't even walk much. They do supply a loud slow deep buzz that can be heard from 4-5 metres away so you know exactly which direction they are coming from. But they seem to think they are invisible, so just buzz around in complete oblivion from the knowledge that they are bloody annoying.

It's not so annoying that they buzz constantly around your face or the fact they land on you. It's when they settle out of sight on your body somewhere, jiggle their legs around nonchalantly pretending they are just resting, and then think its great fun to stick their long sucking tube into you and take one huge bite which hurts like buggery and often draws blood. That's when they really tick you off.

Though, sometimes they are fun to watch. They like blue. My car is blue and to a March Fly must appear as quite a large object but they continually bang into it anyway. Fly towards car; bang; shake head; buzzzz; fly away; return; bang into car; shake head; buzzzz; fly away; return; bang into car!! After doing this for a bit they call their friends "Hey, this is tops. Lets head butt the car." So they all join in and merrily bang away at my car. My esky is blue too. They don't bang into that but prefer to settle on it and use their proboscis to try to suck the colour out, but

aren't having much success. (Not like us). And having blue gaiters is not all that clever with these guys around!!

And why doesn't anything eat them? There are multitudes here. This big loud buzzy, rather dopey fly, just waiting to be munched. No birds swooping on them, no lizards stalking them, no dragon flies or mantises, nothing to cause them alarm. Hmmm, perhaps evolution has taught would be predators that they just don't taste any good!

So, how can you counteract them and get some vengeance? Picture this: you return from an energetic walk and plan a nice quiet hour relaxing. But they know you are back and come straight at you. Nothing productive gets done as you constantly try to swat them. You yearn for something to hopefully blunt their enthusiasm and give you lots of satisfaction. And I discovered just such a weapon. The 1:50000 Khancoban topo map. You would think with those big multifaceted green eyes they would see something coming but they don't see the map whipping through the air to belt them. (My apologies to the next borrower of this club map!). Bzzzzzz; whoooosshh; foomp; bzz'ffff' and down they go! Excellent! The annoying thing is you swat one and another takes its place. It's like the next one sees the first get "foomped" by the map but



Alpine Snow Gum (photo RNC)

thinks "That won't happen to me". So in he comes. Foomp, the map does its job again and another one goes down. Then another, then another, until there is a little fly pile at your feet. But they are tough beggars and only get a little shaken by the foomp so to finish them off a size 10 Volley does the trick.

Having said that, the best way to get respite is to find somewhere cool, as March Flies prefer the heat. Down by a creek in the shade is good. A few will decide to follow you so just take the map for protection. As the temperature cools they begin to leave for wherever they go at night and once the sun sits near the horizon they have all gone. Ah, bliss at last..... Then the mozzies turn up!! ♦



The Kerries, Kosciuszko NP (photo RNC)

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# Mt Kinabalu, Malaysia

Jocelyn Booth

I had long wanted to scale this huge mass of granite in the state of Sabah in Malaysia. The mountain, at 4095 m, is the highest peak between Mt Wilhelm in PNG and the Himalaya. When I noticed that a trip to Sabah was being organized by Ted and Joce Booth from The South Coast Bushwalking Club, the temptation was too great to resist. The trip involved walking the route of the World War 2 POW Death Marches, a little known chapter in Australia's wartime history, and then a climb of the mountain. Another attraction was the wonderful flora and fauna of Borneo - the main attraction for me being the orchids and pitcher plants.

We started the trip proper from Sandakan on the east coast of Borneo where the POWs landed before being interned at the camp. As the war progressed, the Japanese were slowly and surely being overrun, and when they expected an allied invasion at Sandakan, they marched the remaining POWs 250 km to Ranau. Of the 2500 prisoners interned, only 6 survived. The route was over mountainous jungle country, and having previously walked the Kokoda Track, it was interesting to compare the two.

We finished the Death March walk at Ranau, and then headed off to the entrance of the Kinabalu Park. Entrance fees, accommodation and guides had all been organized previously, so all we had to do was catch the shuttle bus to the

entrance gate, register in the log book and start walking. The start of the track descends to Carson Falls, and then it's up, up, up. Along the way, there are shelter sheds with toilets and tank water. Mountain squirrels were common at a couple of shelters. The track is quite eroded in places and would be pretty muddy in wet conditions.

On the way up, we passed lots of walkers coming down. One had a broken arm. Unbelievably, some young women were being piggy-backed down – I cringed when I thought about the poor carriers' knees! Still, it's quite good money for

them - \$60 per kilometer. They would probably spend all that on knee surgery later on. The vegetation changed as height was gained. At around 2500 m the pitcher plants became common on the ultramafic soils, then ceased as the soil strata changed. Unfortunately, one of the most spectacular species died out during the severe drought in 1997/98. We were also too late for the main orchid flowering season. Oh well, at least the weather was perfect – much nicer than the awful hot and sticky conditions of the lower areas.

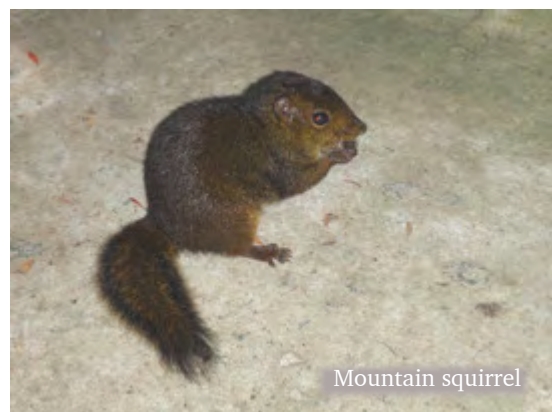
Our party of 11 reached the Laban Rata, the largest guest house on the mountain, in dribs and drabs. By late afternoon, the summit had clouded over. How I prayed for a fine clear morning; thoughts of the total whiteout on Mt Wilhelm in PNG still haunted me. We all freshened up with a nice shower, and then sat on the balcony to enjoy the view over the valley as the setting sun lit up the gathering clouds. Magic. At dinner, the restaurant was packed as the Laban Rata is the only place where you can by hot food. All the other lodges are accommodation only. We had an early night because we had to be up by 1.50 am and walking by 2.30 am!



Leanne and South Peak



View from the top



Mountain squirrel

I was still very full from breakfast as I started shuffling up the track guided by my trusty head torch. I realized that something was wrong when I had to dash off to the toilet as soon as I got out of bed that morning, then again shortly after. Oh no – a case of the runs! Was I going to be able to summit today? Like an idiot, I had left my first aid kit including medicines back at the guest house for a light dash to the mountain top. Another lesson learnt, not to be forgotten. As I emerged from the scrub minus certain underclothing (lucky it was dark) I saw Leanne from our group. I hoped that she would have anti diarrhea pills. A took a Lomitol and then another soon after which did the trick.

As we gained altitude, the air thinned and people started to slow down. I passed a lot of people as we hit the granite slabs below the summit. The thick white guide rope would certainly be necessary in cloudy conditions and was handy anyway as a guide to the shortest route to the summit. Lucky the Lomitol

were doing their thing as there is nowhere to hide near the top. It was quite surreal to see the long snaking line of head torch-bearing summiteers slowly working their way up. I selected my spot on the rocky top and waited for the sun to come up. Whilst I was quite warm walking up, the cold was very noticeable when I stopped and I soon put on all the warm clothing I had brought with me. There was a cool breeze blowing too, but the weather was perfect for a spectacular sunrise. There was a bit of jostling for the 'right spot', but we were all in 'high' spirits.

As the sun peeped above the clouds on the horizon, the entire mountain was light in an eerie orange glow. We had to leave all too soon. All that had to be done now was to walk back down to the guest house, pick up our packs and descend to the entrance gate 2300 m below. The descent was much worse than the ascent, and seemed interminable.

We all had very sore thighs for two days after. ♦



*Nepenthes villosa*

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# Letters

The Editor  
Dear Sir

## Adventure Activity Standards

In the autumn issue of The Bushwalker the article "The Looming Nightmare" concerning the possible implementation of the Adventure Activity Standards (AAS) sounded a timely warning to clubs Australia-wide. On the whole, the proposed standards are sensible, if somewhat bureaucratic in style. Bushwalking clubs in NSW have been aware of the need for risk assessment strategies for some years and Confederation has assisted them by preparing a framework document.

Of course we all want our leaders to be knowledgeable and experienced, however the "skills expected of a leader" as defined in the Victorian AAS are quite another matter. I note that the author of "Looming Nightmare" thought that the appropriate skills were not obviously defined and that it is not possible to define them. In fact, to anyone familiar with Vocational Education Training (VET), they are very precise. In the Victorian Bushwalking AAS (page 15), sections 2.1.2, 2.1.3 and 2.1.4 clearly define the "benchmark" referred to in section 2.1.1 as the required standard. It lists skills which leaders must be qualified prior to taking people into the bush.

This list has a name and a code for each skill. This enables you to consult the National Training Information Service (NTIS) website for a definition of each skill (see details below on how to access this information). This is a standard *modus operandi* for a vocational teacher, but I suspect it will scare the wits out of any potential leaders. It is written in "education-speak" and is quite intimidating to the uninitiated.

The skill sets are written by Industry Skills Councils who advise the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) on course content that is appropriate for their given industry. These qualifications and skills are reviewed every 5 years. Anyone can access them if they know where to look on the NTIS website.

The main worry is that although the AAS say that a formal Statement of Attainment (ie a TAFE certificate or equivalent) is not required, in practice the only way for a commercial operator to ascertain a leader's qualification will be to require a certificate from a TAFE or Registered Training Organization (RTO). On an amateur basis, club leaders are not going to study at TAFE in order to lead a bushwalk.

I actually oppose this aspect of the standards for commercial operators as well as for amateur clubs. Small operators in remote rural areas without access to TAFE courses, or a large population base to provide a pool of job applicants, will find it virtually impossible to meet this section of the standards. Clients naturally will prefer "accredited" tour operators, so will gravitate towards the larger city-based tour companies rather than the local tourist operators, who have intimate knowledge of the local landscape and a lifetime of bush skills to apply to it.

Another real club trip



For those of us who are experienced bushwalkers, it is obvious that we would prefer an experienced local bushwalking guide to a relatively inexperienced, certificate-holding leader. The general public will be none the wiser and will be the worse off for it.

These requirements are symptomatic of a world that is infected with the American disease of suing people whenever they have a problem, instead of taking responsibility for their own lives.

Unfortunately we can't ignore it and hope it will go away. It is a regrettable part of modern life that is here to stay. As an individual we are powerless to stop the juggernaut. That is why it is essential for Confederation and Bushwalking Australia to have a voice in the establishment of these standards and to take a stand against applying them to amateur clubs. According to the Victorian AAS, the Scouts and Guides endorse them. It must be difficult to get enthusiastic youth leaders now. How can they recruit volunteer leaders prepared to do a Certificate III or IV in Outdoor Recreation (1-2 years full-time TAFE), which is what acceptance of these Standards implies?

Let us not make the same mistake. Don't be an ostrich.

To find out more go to [www.ntis.gov.au](http://www.ntis.gov.au), click on the "Search Courses and Qualifications" box. In the "Search for" box, type in either the full name of the subject or preferably the code eg Respond to emergency situations or SRXEMR001A. Select the buttons: "This exact phrase", "Units of Competency" and "NSW". Click on "Search". You will then have a dozen or so pages of the requirements for this subject. Try doing this for all 16 subjects they suggest are essential to lead a bushwalk on tracked or easy untracked paths and you will give yourself a fright. The subjects are listed in the following table. There are 12 more subjects listed in the AAS for more advanced off-track walking.

Skills required for leading tracked or easy un-tracked bushwalks:

Yours

Subject	Code
Respond to emergency situations	SRXEMR001A
Provide first aid	SRXFAD001A
Facilitate a group	SRXGRO001A
Deal with conflict	SRXGRO002A
Apply sport and recreational law	SRXINU002A
Follow defined occupational health and safety procedures	SRXOHS001B
Undertake risk analysis of activities	SRXRIK001A
Operate communication systems and equipment	PUAOPE002A
Navigate in difficult and trackless areas	SRONAV002A
Plan for minimal environmental impact	SROOPS002B
Apply weather information	SROOPS003B
Use and maintain a temporary overnight site	SROOPS006B
Plan outdoor recreation activities	SROODR002A
Guide outdoor recreation ACTIVITIES	SROODR005A
Demonstrate bushwalking skills in difficult and trackless areas	SROBWG002A
Guide bushwalks in tracked or easy untracked areas	SROBWG008A

Leonie Bell



What a real club trip looks like

## Has "The Bushwalker" gone downhill?

Dear Editor

I have been reading the Bushwalker newsletter/magazine for many many years and I thought I would write to you and give you my critical appraisal on the modern magazine and the history of the magazine and what it should be. First of all I think you have gone away from the original purpose of the Bushwalker.

I would like to quote Bruce Vote, editor in 1975. He says "firstly a large number of people believe that this newsletter is the key to the continuation and success of the Federation. Federation cannot realize it's full potential unless every club member is aware of the relevance of federation to them, personally, and gives support accordingly. Thus this newsletter primary task is to keep members informed and interested in what federation is doing."

All the magazine is doing now is to do an unending walks reports, some of them written OK, but many badly written. The previous editors had stories on all sorts of Issues: conservation, tracks and access, even the occasional poem and bushwalking recipe. Stories on our Flora and Fauna would be a nice change, like the L D Baker editor issue in 1947. In 1992 when Robyn Arthur was president and Gordon Lee was Editor there were some great historical stories. In 1993 when Robyn Cox (Arthur) was president and David Noble Editor he improved the mag greatly with lots of different and interesting stories.

Even as far back as 1937 when Tom Herbert was president and there were only 13 clubs in Federation the story by Paddy on "How to get lost" is a classic story and the occasional poem used to be a small feature of the mag. Then in 1995 Colin Wood took over and improved the mag even more with lots of different articles some controversial with some 'clubs' news. A President's report was a quarterly feature and logo's depicting the different aspects of Confederation was attractive, walks conservation etc, stories about conserving our native forests and wildlife. I remember a story about the aboriginal takeover of some of our National parks with opinions from the aboriginal community. The Confederation calendar was a help and an occasional book review.

We then come to the modern Bushwalker magazine. A great improvement in design and the colour is great, it's a shame the content is so boring. All we get is walks stories, some very badly written and some quite good but the history and style of the magazine has been lost.

We had editors like Dot English, L D Baker, Roger Lembit, Gordon Lee, David Noble and recently Colin Wood. You have a great responsibility and tradition to uphold and I think you are dropping the baton a bit. Most of my criticism (I hope) is constructive and is taken in that way.

Patricia Hanson

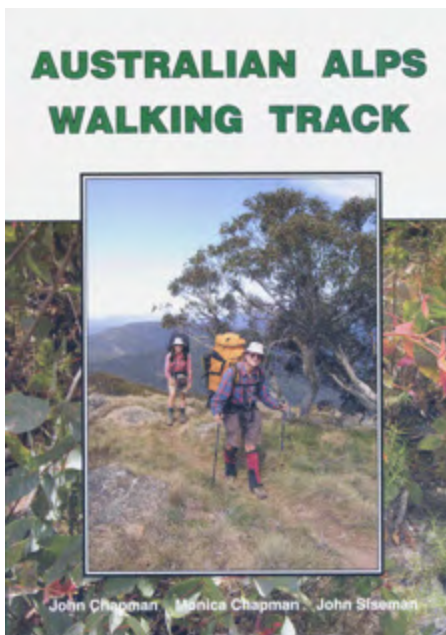
## Note from Editor:

The letter has been edited to improve the English and the spelling.

I would welcome contributions along the lines suggested, but we have to make do with what is contributed.

Ed

# Book Reviews



## Australian Alps Walking Track

John Chapman, Monica Chapman and John Siseman

This is the fourth edition of this now-classic guide book to the AAWT, from Walhalla in Victoria to Tharwa in the ACT. I have the first and third editions (by John Siseman) for comparison, with all my track notes in the latter.

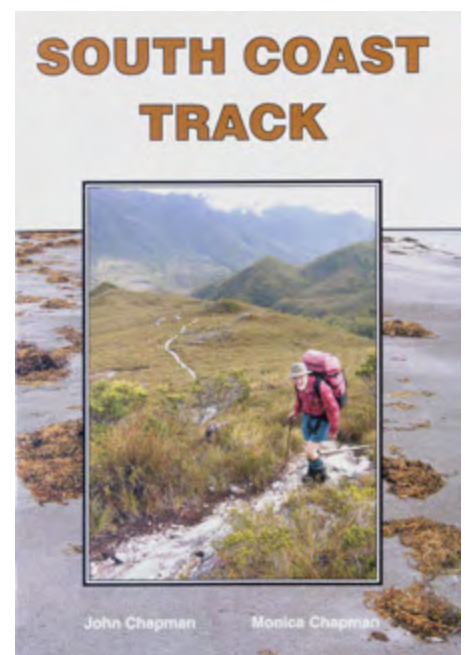
This fourth edition is now in the fairly standard Chapman format. The big changes are that it has gone all colour, there are more (and newer) photos of the track and the three authors on it, and the sketch maps have been changed to topo maps in the 'Chapman' format. In addition, the track notes have been updated to take into account the fires of 2003 and 2006, and some interesting side trips have been included. Mind you, we

managed quite happily in 1999 by combining the sketch maps with the relevant topo maps, and the signage was quite good (but not enough by itself). But the inclusion of bits of the topo map is good.

Reading through this fourth edition brought back lots of memories - the text is good enough to do that, and even more so with the new photos. However, I must repeat the warning given at the start of the book: while most of the AAWT is signed and on tracks, this is not a route for the inexperienced. On the other hand, there are many sections where the book gives quite enough information for you to undertake a section walk.

The book can be bought from the John Chapman web site <http://www.john.chapman.name/> for AU\$34, including GST and P&P. Please check the web site for further details.

*Roger Caffin*



## South Coast Track

John Chapman, Monica Chapman

In this case 'South Coast' refers to the south-west corner of Tasmania: the coast route running from Cockle Creek to Melaleuca Inlet. This book is a slim guide aimed at walkers doing just this route. In essence, it is an expanded version of the same chapter in the book 'South West Tasmania' by John Chapman. It is lighter of course, and with more photos. It has some good topo maps as well.

Originally a bit of a rough track dating back to about 1966, where there was anything at all, it is now 'generally well-defined and easy to follow' (according to the book). Most of the deep mud sections have been upgraded to prevent further degradation, which is nice. Experienced walkers will know what this means!

The track can be a quite a pleasant 6 - 8 day walk if the weather is fine and all goes well. The book says the track 'has a

cool and changeable marine climate', so that should be OK, shouldn't it? But remember: that could also describe the coast of some of the storm-lashed islands down near the Antarctic. Of course, Tasmania could be correctly described that way as well. So once again, this walk does require some experience, and the book makes that quite clear.

The route described goes right around the coast. It can be combined with the Southern Ranges walk for something a bit harder - we did it that way back in the late 60s. The photos and descriptions managed to bring back many of those memories too.

The book can be bought from the John Chapman web site <http://www.john.chapman.name/> for AU\$16, including GST and P&P. Please check the web site for further details.

*Roger Caffin*

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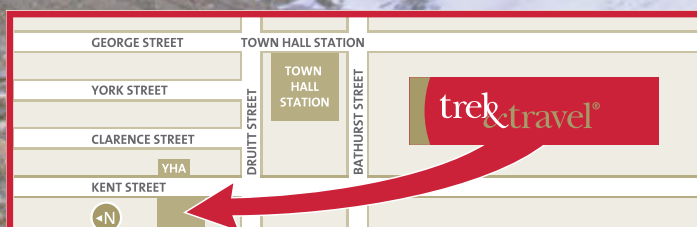
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Pat, Naar Valley - Nepal

Bent Allsop on Mount Northcott, Main Range Track, Snowy Mountains, NSW  
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