

# *The Bushwalker*



**Volume 35**  
**Issue 4**  
**Spring 2010**



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



Photo: Lyn Brown,  
Batemans Bay Bushwalkers

**A wombat at Newnes**

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

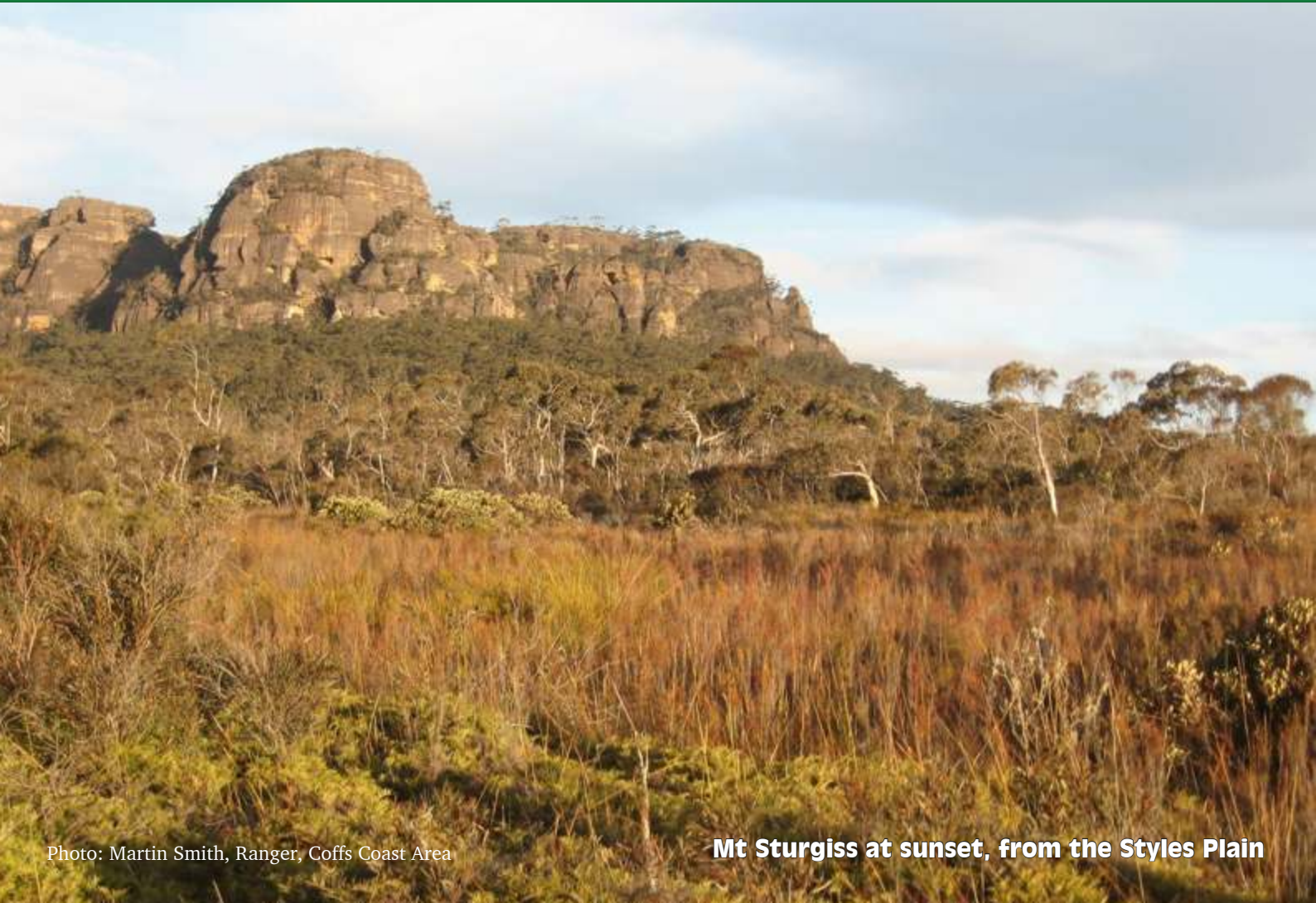


Photo: Martin Smith, Ranger, Coffs Coast Area

**Mt Sturgiss at sunset, from the Styles Plain**



# 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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**Front Cover:** Mt Wilworral above Jones Hole.  
Photo by Roger Caffin.

## From the editor's desk. . .

**T**hings have been quiet recently. The AAS has been brought under control (I hope), the retail stores are being displaced by lower-cost web sales for some, and ... However, recent legislation by the NSW Labor Party is threatening our National Parks, and must be watched. Brian Everingham has an article in this issue about what YOU can do to help limit the damage.

The snow season this year was lousy, in more ways than one. So I don't have too many good snow photos for this issue. A pity, and I fear it will only get worse over the years.

As for the front cover - we couldn't find a way down into Harris Hole from the ridge. But the view was excellent.

## 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. I cannot guarantee that all articles will be featured: like any other organisation we have budget limits.

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](mailto:editor@bushwalking.org.au).

In addition, we need landscape-format photos for page 2 - inside the front cover. These should be originals, NOT shrunk at all. Otherwise I will have to use my photos. (My thanks for some recent contributions.)

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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# Tree of Heaven

## The Plant that Threatens the Shoalhaven

Photos by Basil Slade

**T**he Tree of Heaven (the 'ToH') (*Ailanthus altissima*) is a noxious weed that has spread along the Shoalhaven River. The NPWS is appealing to bushwalkers to help map patches of infestation. Would anyone seeing the ToH in the Shoalhaven, please take a GPS reading on it and report it either to the Bungonia local office of the NPWS or to myself (see below for details). I am happy to collate any reports and pass them on. The more accurate the information on its distribution, the more likely the NPWS is to have an adequate budget for eradication.

The ToH appears to have spread from a large patch growing in Nerrimunga Creek, with floods washing the seeds down into the Shoalhaven. Patches of the ToH occur from Nerrimunga Creek to at least Badgerys, some 20 km as the crow flies and a lot further by foot. The plant is usually found 2-6 metres above water level, frequently in places where an eddy would form, eg at junctions with side creeks or where flood channels rejoin.

The ToH suckers rapidly and grows as a densely packed cluster of straight stems (see photos) with a dense foliage of long compound leaves (quite like a pencil cedar) with a single unpaired leaf at the tip. New growth may be knee high, but the plants mature into 20 metre high trees. Two notable characteristics are the foliage has an obnoxious smell and there are 2 glands near the base of each leaf (see photo). The only common native in the area that could be confused with the ToH is the White Cedar (*Melia azedarach*) that grows on the hillsides, but can easily be distinguished by crooked stems and much smaller compound leaves with all the leaflets paired.

The ToH needs to be controlled by poisoning to ensure the root system is killed. If the plants are just pulled up the root system resprouts, and worse, fragments of the roots can grow and spread the infestation. Obviously, only the NPWS can authorise and supervise the use of herbicides on the land they manage, especially as this is drinking water catchment.

Patches of ToH can be seen at the mouth of Bungonia Creek and just downstream of the Badgerys Track. For further information see the Southern Tablelands and South Coast Noxious Plants Committee website at [www.southeastweeds.org.au](http://www.southeastweeds.org.au).

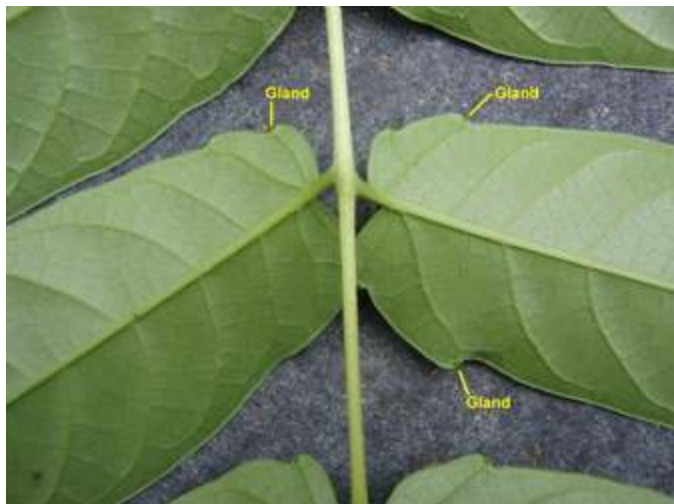
The Ranger involved with the Tree of Heaven problem is:

Audrey Kutzner, Ranger  
National Parks and Wildlife Service  
Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water  
Telephone 4844 4277

[Editor's Note: it isn't just the Shoalhaven which has this problem! I have seen ToH on the Jenolan River, and there was a big thicket in Carlon Creek for a while. Report ANY patches you see.]



The likely source of this outbreak



Leaf underside and glands



Some typical young trees

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# South Coast Track, Tasmania

Dennis Baker,  
Newcastle Bushwalking Club

All nine of us gathered at the TASAIR office at 2:00 pm on Saturday the 9th January keen to get going - well there were some who were a little apprehensive about the flight in a small plane. Names were registered, body weights and pack weights checked and gas bottles purchased. Pilots finally worked out their paperwork and we were on our way. There would be three planes, the slowest ones taking off first.

Fran and I drew one of the slowest

lower sections duckboards. We reached the campsite before dark at about 8:30 pm and found good water 200 m east along the beach. Following the cake ceremony we all went to bed.

The following day we headed off at about 8:00 am and headed for Louisa River via Red Point Hills (elevation 200 m). Once we left the beach and headed inland toward the Red Point hills we traversed numerous duck boards and mainly dry scrubby plain. Once over the "Hills" some decided to do a side trip to Louisa Bay while the remainder of the party moved on to the camp. The weather was quite warm and the sun on the duckboards made our feet burn requiring frequent stops. Louisa River campsite was excellent with a big swimming hole to cool off.

The third day was the big one. Everyone was well aware that the biggest obstacle was the "Ironbound Range", a 900 m climb and long slippery descent to Little Deadmans campsite. Because the weather had been quite hot it was decided to start early so we left the campsite at 6:30 am. This kept us in the shadow of the mountain most of the morning, arriving at the 800 m

elevation point at around 11:00 am. What a view! After having soaked up the views we headed off up to the summit crossing point and then down the duckboards. Water was getting low. Fortunately we found a creek not long after entering the bushy descent and decided to have lunch in the shade. After lunch we passed through varying conditions - slippery wet sections to boggy holes, all within rainforest. Both Paul and myself agreed you could not have had any closer comparison to the Kokoda track if you tried: the humidity was right up there. Finally we reached "Little Deadmans" camp and as we were all just about out water we quickly refilled and set up our tents.

That afternoon some had a good swim in the bay while others tried bargaining for crayfish from nearby fishermen, washing sweaty clothes and just relaxing. The fishermen informed us later that evening that the forecast for the next day was for 40 knot winds and rain at about lunch time



Flying past Federation Peak

so we decided to get another early start to reach New River Lagoon by lunch time, to get the boat crossing out of the way.

After another early start we reached Groto Creek where we had to scrub our boots and filled up with water before setting off along Prion Beach. The wind was picking up but we reached the boat crossing point just before lunch. The wind was from the northwest and creating "white caps" in the lagoon so we wasted no time in getting across the 200 m of water. We had been told that we could probably wade across further down toward the outlet to the sea but the boats provided a bit of fun for all, particularly if you couldn't row very well.

We had "sand" sandwiches on the other side and were unsuccessful in finding water before setting off through another campsite then behind the dunes where once again we were so protected from the wind but you could hardly breath with the heat and humidity. Milford Creek afforded us another opportunity to have a cool swim and relax. The rain then started but with little conviction. We decided it was getting cool so we should set off for our next campsite at Osmiridian Beach. On leaving the forest we started crossing "Rocky Plains" and by now the wind had picked up with some light rain making things a little cold so it was on with the raincoats again. This time, because we were exposed, the wind was literally blowing us off our feet but it wasn't long before we reached the turn off to Osmiridian then it was all downhill to camp.

As with all the others, this campsite was well protected so the tents went up

Louisa Bay from the Ironbounds



Descending to Freney Lagoon

planes but we had valuable cargo in Fran's pack (Lisa's birthday cake) so her pack occupied its own seat all strapped in. The pilot issued us with our own headsets so he could give us a commentary on the trip as it was going to take about one hour to reach Melaleuca.

As we passed Federation Peak and Lake Gieves on our right we could look to our left and see some of the terrain we would cross along the South Coast, then in the distance the Western Arthur Range and Bathurst Harbour. The flight was quite comfortable just below the clouds, then the airstrip appeared, a small white strip of gravel in the middle of the plains. We landed second and were able to watch as the third plane touched down, naturally giving the pilot a score out of ten.

Everyone was quite "revved" up after the flight and once a group photo was taken and we gathered our gas and fuel the planes left in quick succession. We all decided to check out the "orange bellied parrot" (*neophema chrysogaster*) from the hide provided and the shack that Denis King had built (tin mine owner) in the 1930s and the huts provided for walkers.

At 4:20 pm we left Melaleuca and headed across the white quartzite track past the open cut tin mine and onto the button grass heath plains. We had a 4 hour walk to reach our first planned campsite at Point Eric. The weather was quite cool and good for walking, the route was a mixture of gravel track and in the





Surprise Bay from the campsite

then we started looking for water once again. Tylers Creek was our water source but when you fill your water bladder you couldn't see through it there was so much tannin. A group decided to explore the beach, so with raincoats on they headed off heading west along the beach and found about a dozen oranges that had been washed up, they were beautiful! That afternoon we played cards with Theo as the reluctant banker (he doesn't like parting with match sticks either).

**W**e decided the next morning to explore Rocky Boat Inlet, get some good water then set off for camp at Surprise Rivulet with the aim of reaching the rivulet by low tide around 2:00 pm. The morning was still a little cool and we had already had a light shower but by about 11:00 am it was warm again so all the raincoats came off. The day was cooler than previously so we made good time through the rainforest reaching Surprise Bay in 3.5 hours. We set up camp then decided to do some exploring along the western edge of Shoemaker Point. We were able to see quite a lot of wildlife in the rock pools and our first tiger snake before returning to the rivulet and having a swim and of course replenishing our water reserves. That night we dined on black lipped mussels collected from the rocks. Everyone was having a relax with the campsite overlooking the ocean, though we still couldn't get a good sunset because of the cloud.

Thursday saw us at Granite Beach before lunch after having a pleasant walk through some open forest so we once

again made camp. This day was particularly short as in our planning an extra day was built in in case we had bad weather and had to sit it out but the weather was almost perfect, I don't think anyone was complaining we were just soaking it up. There was no access to the Fluted Cliffs so we headed back along the beach to a creek we had seen

entering the beach and all headed off up the gully to check it out. The water was good but we had plenty at camp (Sandstone Creek). We then headed back along the beach to western edge where we once again walked along the cliff edge, this time picking up some really big mussels. More tiger snakes were encountered on the way back. Once in camp everyone freshened up and washed clothes before sitting around preparing dinner after which we played a peculiar game that Theo produced from his pack. Finally a good sunset. The next day we had to cross South Cape Range, a 5 to 7 hour walk.

We set off around 8 am and climbed almost straight away. Water was once again scarce so at every opportunity we filled our bottles. The vegetation varied from rainforest to open sclerophyll forest with occasional glimpses of the ocean. We had lunch at "Trackcutters Camp", but grossly outnumbered by March flies we moved on quickly. We took 6 hours to reach South Cape Rivulet and after setting up camp went exploring once again. The main object of the sightseeing though was to find water which we were all out of. We found more mussels but no water even after trying the next campsite so we had to suffice with water carefully collected from the brackish lagoon - we survived. After hanging all our food up out of reach of the rats we called it a night because

Saturday was a push of about 3-4 hours to Cockle Creek.

Saturday we got away to a nice start around 8 am, although Fran and Lisa had left earlier for Cockle Creek. We found good water at the eastern end of the next beach and emptied out the lagoon water and replaced it. Soon we reached Lion Rock and South Cape Bay. We were well and truly into civilization



Crossing New River Lagoon by boat.



Crossing the South Range

now with a number of surf board riders in the water. A few of us had a swim while other explored the eastern headland. After regrouping we set off heading inland up over into Blow Hole Valley following a nice stream. Once in the valley the duckboards re-appeared and it was hot once again. We stopped for lunch in some trees at around midday with the ever present flock of March flies.

**W**e had almost finished eating when a group heading in the opposite direction informed us that the bus was waiting for us: Fran and Lisa had talked her into waiting. So Theo, Steve and myself quickly walked the last half hour to Cockle Creek and met Fran at the sign-off register - she was still waiting. After a very quick vote on whether we stay the night at Cockle Creek as planned or return to Hobart we quickly downed a COLD beer, organized by Fran the previous night with another group of locals, took a group photo, then ran to get into the bus. We were all smiles, the trip had gone well, the weather could have been a little cooler, but there were no mishaps, we could have eliminated one camp but then we wouldn't have seen as much - the scenery was excellent. I think Lindy's smile was the biggest. ♦

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# Victoria Brook

Hugh Speirs,  
*Blue Mountains Conservation Society*



Tree hugging, or just hanging on!

**W**e parked on the Victoria Falls Road at 470 806 at 0910. The route: first go eastwards along the now tree-blocked Odin Ridge stanchion access trail, then at a small clearing near some rusted fuel drums (4724 8037) find the old track which turns SE. Follow it to ~4761 8016, then turn off S and downwards, aiming to find a spectacular nose of rocks hovering over Victoria Brook ~477 797. A short break was had at this excellent photo spot. Access by the dry creek gully to the east is very much downhill but not difficult until the creek is reached.

'Moving forward' we were often unable to see where our feet might land, but continually having to climb over a maze of high debris. Long sticks helped in finding any waiting holes. Trees which had fallen and washed to creek level were a frequent hazard as we manoeuvred over or around them. Belly-crawling under some I wondered whether Odin himself was watching and vicariously lapping up some bizarre genuflection to his presence.

The cliffs on the N. side were becoming increasingly rugged as the creek twisted E and NE. Creek crossings were frequent. Then at ~479 7963 (no GPS

('Lotti's Escape') offers a sharp but interesting exit point. On the recce we'd found a short tape handy.

We pushed on, turning S. The cliffs were a spectacular sight for anyone who wished to take time to enjoy them. Eventually ~481 795 we discovered a possible exit. A tape was handy for the climb to the top. But the top wasn't the top, and a 25 m vertical cliff confronted us which defied the brave efforts of even a few loonies. The last 250 m had taken 45 minutes.

It was time for lunch. Later, Emanuel reced to the N and found a way to skirt the monster via a series of roughly 2 m steps. With not a lot to hang onto, some long-ish security tapes for the oldies helped us to the ridge-top. Particular thanks to those young mountain goats: Lotti, Emanuel, Ann and Peter for helping out their older (and ergo wiser? companions), This climb shall henceforth be known as the LEAP.

**A**t the top we looked E to the next amazing ridge: 'Alice's Heights' from whence first came the desire to explore this 'brook'. Between that and us was a gully (~4825 796), broad, beautiful, and seemingly park-like from above. From the map it had been in my mind to try it today, but the going had been so slow and some were coping with degrees of mild pain, so we decided to leave it until another day. If it is practicable, then it looks easier than the way we came up.

We'd travelled only a short distance, but at the suggestion we might head E to find more views the consensus was that time was a factor - our coffee time would be curtailed. So, 2 km back up the ridge to the cars then to Wentworth Falls and il Postino's for coffee. Today's walk was rated 12.5 out of 10 by one member - thanks Barb, the cheque is in the mail! ♦



The walk-through cave

Soon we were in the creek, metaphorically speaking (at a junction at 478 796), although one log crossing could easily have changed that to 'literally'. For reasons not clarified (perhaps an elfish response to the magic of this place, or gamin desires to compete or show off), the proclivity of most of the group was to engage in a race through the difficult going typical of what we've encountered around creeks since the flood rains of last Feb. As expected the terrain is constantly changing almost with each step, from steep up and down to that plus the addition of steep-ish sideways. That's not the main problem: the Dec 2006 fires seem to have missed this creek - the undergrowth is very thick, very high, and very ornery by nature. And those floods had ripped down more trees. We've been through worse, but it should still be classed as difficult.

reception there) is 'Barb's Arch' the most wonderful walk-thru cave. Astoundingly beautiful! A morning tea spot par excellence! As Jim remarked, "If this is morning tea, the Lunch Spot must be something!" It was!

We had a bit further to go before lunch and the going never improved. Our first 400 m in the gully took about an hour. By then we'd reached 480 7974, opposite two narrow gullies. The easternmost

Tape-assisted descent





# A place called Hades that is more like Heaven

Michael Keats,  
The Bush Club

Photos by  
Peter Medbury,  
The Bush Club



Sunlight in the slots

**F**irst a bit of geography. The Hades section of the Poseidon Arena lies west of Baal Bone Gap. It consists essentially of two parallel, elongated, ellipsoid pods or clusters of pagodas orientated NW - SE, and separated by a deep ravine<sup>1</sup>. The overall western and southern boundaries are defined by the Moffitts Trail and the eastern boundary by the Crown Creek Trail. The northern boundary is proscribed by an unnamed creek that starts at approx GR 288 195 near the cliff edge north of Baal Bone Gap.

The Hades is the eastern ridge of the Poseidon Arena complex<sup>2</sup>. It contains some of the more exotic residual landforms and sculptures that are a feature of this pagoda country. It is also one of the more challenging pagoda areas to visit, requiring good balance, surefootedness and a willingness to accept some exposure. That being said it is a fabulous destination that also includes stunning views, particularly from the Lower Hades looking north-east over Baal Bone Gap towards Point Cameron.

Vehicles were parked on a high point just before the Moffitts Trail descends through three 20 m contours where only the most robust of 4WD vehicles can presently negotiate in comfort. We started

Serried ranks of Hades Pagodas



walking at 0915, heading SE down the Moffitts Trail then entering the timbered valley of an unnamed creek to the north. Immediately we were surrounded by tall forest and lots of evidence of logging in times past. Several large isolated pagodas, many covered in carpets of ferns and mosses, provided contrasting features.

Crossing the formative creek, we headed generally east up a ramp into the first pagodas of the Upper Hades Ridge, and enjoyed sweeping views NE of Crown Creek and the Capertee Valley. The profile of Pantoneys Crown was just visible. Noted amongst the vegetation were some very old, gnarled specimens of *Isopogon anemonifolius*, heavy with mature seed heads. We moved to the cliff edge to enjoy great views over Baal Bone Gap and Point Cameron. As it was a crisp, (2 C), brilliantly clear day we enjoyed a stunning panorama of the circling mountains of the north and east Capertee Valley rim. Great landmarks such as the volcanic cone of Tayan Pic could be easily seen.

Now we headed generally south along the ridge top, noting amazing delicate ironstone residuals in fantastic shapes and configurations. A pair of pagodas representing two figures in the underworld, Orpheus and Eurydice were visited. Orpheus is the slightly higher and eastern most in position. Eurydice has a weight problem and is the larger of the two. We climbed to the top of Orpheus increasing the scope of our total view.

After a compulsory picture session, we pushed on southwards, treading ever so carefully all the time, and where possible avoiding thin ironstone. At 10:45 we sat in a protected sunny alcove for morning tea. The wind, although very light and intermittent, cut like a knife when it did blow. After morning tea some local exploring took place. Many ironstone forms presented as mythical and impossible creatures that could be 'ridden'. Yuri posed on one such creature, "riding it into the eastern sky."

The next spot to visit was the boot of the 'fleet of foot' god, Mercury. The 'boot' is about 3 m high, and is an almost perfect facsimile of a bushwalkers boot! Steve offered to climb the boot, not realising that it is separated by extremely deep ravines on all sides of its natural plinth. Having made successfully, it he posed sitting on the toe. The scale of the boot made him a Lilliputian diminutive. Lots of pictures followed.

From this point the view west of the Poseidon Ridge is stunning, particularly towards the location of the stone Seahorse. We continued with our exploration pushing towards the southern edge of the

Upper Hades. After passing through a wonderful, dry and protected high cave, complete with Lyrebird tracks, we emerged onto yet another contiguous platform that terminates in more pagodas and stunning views. Here the pagodas form a crenulated revetment above the great chasm that divides the Upper and Lower Hades.

**I** knew the way down the chasm, having been involved in the previous discovery. This time we found another way that was much easier. I have to confess that it was not nearly as exciting as the previous one. No one however volunteered to climb back up and do the original one with me<sup>3</sup>. Disappointing!

Down on the floor of the chasm it was a carpet of ferns. A study of the large scale map also showed it as a possible way down to the road, but a tame one. Not for us as we wanted first to go to the Lower Hades and explore even more.



Pagodas, pagodas

The climb up the southern wall into the Lower Hades is easy, and near the top we decided to explore a long overhang to the west. As expected the floury sand floor was full of animal and bird footprints. Exiting the overhang at its western extremity offered a promise of a way to the top pagodas of the Lower Hades. Not to be - just too many deep slots. We retraced our steps and secured the top via a shallow, dry, inter-pagoda canyon immediately east and above the commencement of the long overhang.

**O**nce on top we explored a set of compound contiguous pagodas with stunning views. To the immediate north were the compound revetments of the Upper Hades, grim and forbidding; raising the eyes to include the northern horizon there was a special view of the cliff line from Baal Bone Gap to Point Cameron. This was especially good as the sunlight was reflected off the remote cliff walls, illuminating the background.

Panning to almost due east, the view was of part of Hecates Cauldron revealing an array of pagodas and a long stretch of sheer sandstone walls. Moving around the pagoda tops we noted several pockets





The Boot

where a compact *Banksia* sp. had grown, giving this area a precise, manicured garden appearance.

At 12:03 we looked over the southern end of the Lower Hades. From here the now-drained and dead wetland swamps of Baal Bone Creek could also be seen<sup>4</sup>. Also from this point and to our east there is a deep and spectacular, sculptured slot. I knew from previous exploration that this canyon was not negotiable from the top down.

**P**rior knowledge provided the time and opportunity for the group to explore to the very end of the Lower Hades pod of pagodas. Where the deep non-negotiable canyon starts on the tops there is a small, doable bridge where it is possible to get across to the next set of otherwise isolated pagodas. Once over this good progress was made until we were confronted with another apparently non-negotiable slot. A couple of parallel ramps to the west were then explored, the party dividing into two search groups.

Group one headed down the southern most slot and then found a way to the top via a climb or two. The second group enjoyed a walk down ramp that led almost directly to the bottom access of the deep canyon sighted earlier from the top. As we (I was leading group 2) were 'almost there' the irresistible temptation was to go and look at it. We did, causing some consternation for group 1.

Minutes later, group 2 having sidled east around the base of the cliffs, we decided that a possible slot was a definite goer. Well, it was, and the squeeze we went through under a chock stone and the exposed climb that followed just added a bit of adrenalin to an already action packed day. Once all of group 2 were all through this exciting process, the group 1 team led us up another exposed climb to the top of the last set of pagodas.

This, the southern most outcrop of pagodas on the Lower Hades, provides the most spectacular viewing of the entire Hades complex. To the south there is a panoramic view over Baal Bone Creek and its associated former wetlands; to the east the amazing complex of Hecates Cauldron and to the NE the successive skyline profiles of Mounts McLean, Jamison and Davidson. Point Cameron is the disjunct before the sweeping view of the Capertee Valley. It is real 'wow' country.

Right on the end of the point there is a shallow natural pool (not reliable as a water source) that acts as a mirror creating great photo opportunities. If we could only remove the colliery head works from the scene and repair the damaged cliffs and wetlands caused by long wall mining the view would be perfect. Many pictures later we turned north in search of a perfect spot for lunch. It was an absolute must to be in the sun and out of the wind. We picked a good spot, but 25 minutes was all we could take before the cold started to permeate through the layers of clothing and into the bones.

**W**e now headed down the ramps once more, noting at least four Lyrebird nests in the pockmarked walls of the slots. We had earlier noted a high number of recently groomed Lyrebird 'dancing grounds' in the Upper Hades area. The ramps were now familiar territory so a quick progress was made to the cliff base.

Next it was time to explore once more a special slot discovered on the last trip, which is memorable for having a broken whiskey bottle on the floor about 4m in. As I wrote about it after the last visit, "inside it opened right up into a super little canyon, up to 4 m wide, maybe 30 m high and with a great light play. This was way beyond what I expected of the Hades Ridge."

Even though it was early, 13:45, the shadows were lengthening rapidly and the temperature was heading down into lower single figures equally fast. Joining the Moffitts Trail at 13:50 we commenced walking back towards the vehicles.

**Note.** The Moffitts Trail is currently in very poor condition. The bypasses across the swamp area in Jews Creek have been gouged deep and progress is necessarily slow. Further rain could mean that only powerful 4WDs could go all the way. Several areas where the Trail crosses clayey sections on steep slopes closer to Ben Bullen are also dubious for traction. ♦



Delicately over the ironstone formations

### Notes:

1. The northern most pod is the Upper Hades and the southern one the Lower Hades.
2. There are three pagoda ridges within the Poseidon Arena - The Hades (east ridge), The Poseidon Ridge (centre) and the Zeus Ridge (west ridge)
3. Extract from the walk report 21st May 2010. "A slot-cum waterfall seemed as though it would work. Better still there appeared to be a corresponding way of route up the other side. The descent was a thrilling experience but not to be attempted in the wet." Also noted a possible third route to the east.
4. This is a consequence of underground mining.

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Doubtful weather near the Porcupine Rocks

# Wandering the Snowies

Joan Collins, Watagan Wanderers

**M**id February 2010 and the last to arrive at the ski lodge in Jindabyne was greeted by sixteen happy colourful walkers waving enthusiastically from the balcony. That set the tone for the next four days. We are a group who walk together regularly; how great to have the opportunity to spend a few days together.

At seven next morning Helen conducted half an hour of Tai Chi. The fresh air perfumed by the scent of mountain trees, plus the calling of a variety of birds - parrots, magpies, crows, peewees and some unidentified calls made this a magical half hour. Most of us were familiar with this relaxing activity.

time. Following a hearty breakfast four drivers loaded up their cars and off we went to Perisher Valley for our first mountain walk. Alf, our walks leader, knew the mountains well and generously shared his life-long passion with us.

The Porcupine track walk he had told us the previous evening would be a good start. We shouldered our packs and followed Alf up the snaking path. A wide variety of wild flowers slowed us down as we spent time inspecting them and deciding what they could be. We regretted our Australian plant expert had been unable to come on the trip.

Interestingly, the main wildlife apart from the birds was surprisingly long worms.

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Alf decided the weather would only worsen so we would not complete the final circle. A hasty retreat was in order. The track was now a steady stream of rainwater. Back at the lodge we were glad of the drying room to dry out sodden shoes and clothes. A hot shower and a cuppa soon revived us. A delicious dinner and a glass of wine were appreciated. Toni and Graham had transported a variety of food to the lodge including lots of fruit and vegetables.

Next morning after Tai Chi we were ready for our next walk, Eagles Nest to Dead Horse Gap then return to Thredbo via the Cascades along Thredbo creek. A car was left at Dead Horse Gap as a precaution against emergency. It was a glorious sunny morning.

We looked up at the mountain with a fair amount of trepidation, glad the chair lift would carry us up over the one kilometer to Eagles Nest. We would be keeping on our right the ridge line of Ramshead South which is a continuation of the Crackenback Range. Alighting from the chair lift the walk commenced with about half a kilometer uphill. A young fit athlete passed us running up and down the hill.

Finally the track began to descend to Dead Horse Gap. Two kilometers would normally be a short walk, but our descent was slowed as we concentrated on winding around rocks and avoiding

Up top of the mountains



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puddles. A cheery group of young walkers, obviously having bivouacked overnight, strode past us up the mountain side towards Eagles Nest. Their heavy overnight backpacks seemed not to worry them at all. It was a while since we had that sort of strength and wondered where they would have spent the night. Probably at Dead Horse Gap someone suggested.

Morning tea was enjoyed under a clump of those great Kosciusko National Park icons, the mountain snowgum, *E pauciflora*. Following tea we began to negotiate about a hundred steps obviously made for those longed legged men who stride down them barely glancing down. Slowly, steadying ourselves we descended the mountain, stopping occasionally to admire the wonderful scenery.

We arrived at Dead Horse Gap and chatted with a group of Newcastle walkers resting in the shade. It was a hot day. They left to continue their walk while we settled down to lunch.

A further walk was suggested along the Cascades Hut track to see the brumbies. Some of us went. It was a steep hill with lots of evidence of the brumbies, but they had more sense than to be out in the sun in the middle of the day. 'MadDogs and Englishmen' someone quoted. Meanwhile a brown snake had wandered towards the walkers still enjoying a rest. And that was the end of that. . .

The last five kilometers return to Thredbo was mainly in the shade along the river. The cascades were splendid. We were all tired as we drove back to the chalet. We went to the club for dinner but it was disappointing. Our own cooking was superior, all those years of experience I suppose.

Our last day was spent at Charlotte Pass. We studied the terrain from the lookout platform. That grey brick path looked steep. We might walk to the Blue Lake. Maybe. Never the less we shouldered our packs for the last time and walked down to the Snowy river. Perhaps some of us were not sorry when it was obvious that we would be lucky to cross

Charlotte Pass Lookout



Heading for Dead Horse Gap

the stepping stones without falling in. We sat in the sun and admired the long steep walk to Blue Lake. However, as crossing the river was not an option we sat in the sun and enjoyed the scenery. Well, actually, some walkers did cross it. The mountains and valleys looked delightful in the full sun

including the track winding up to Blue Lake just out of reach. At Charlotte Pass we took a breather. Then back to our lodge for our last happy hour, dinner and hilarious entertainment.

We had a wonderful time and felt quite chuffed at what we had achieved. The walks were fun. The drives out to Perisher Valley,

Thredbo and Charlottes Pass were a treat in themselves and what wonderful majestic scenery; it has to be seen to be believed. We were grateful to Robin for organizing such an excellent trip. Next morning we packed, cleaned and headed for home. ♦

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# Cuba in the Footsteps of Fidel

Roy Jamieson

Pico Turquino  
in the Sierra Maestra



When I was planning my first trip to the Americas, Cuba really wasn't on the radar, but the more I thought about how close it was to where I was going, the more sense it made to go there. I quickly figured I needed to go to this Caribbean island while the Castro revolutionary influence remained.

My main focus became the area that spawned the revolution of the 1950s, the Sierra Maestra mountain range, inland from Cuba's second city, Santiago de Cuba. The range is incorporated within a national park called Pico Turquino (Turquoise Peak), which includes the Pico itself, at 1975 m, Cuba's highest mountain. Nearby lies the revolutionary headquarters of Fidel Castro and his followers.

When I arrived at the park headquarters to get a permit I intended to do the walk to the summit of the Pico (26

km) in the normal two days, spending a night at the refugio (hut) named Camp Joaquin. Imagine my shock, when I was told "you can't do it because the refugio is booked out."

Horried, I said to the head ranger, "But I've come halfway round the world to do this." That seemed to have little impact so I then had to start thinking quickly.

That's when I asked if I could do the trip in a day. The ranger was taken aback by that and said "OK, if I can find you a guide prepared to do it, but you'll have to negotiate a separate price with him."

So I waited for about half an hour and when he returned he said "I've found a guide for you." So, besides handing over the equivalent of US\$35, I did a separate deal with the



At the summit of Pico Turquino

guide for US\$40. We arranged to meet at 5.45 am the next day for a 6 am start.

The next morning the weather was good as we drove up to the track head and set off under headlamps.

Soon after dawn I could see the target in the distance. To begin with, the terrain was good, but soon became rugged and reminded me so much of my Australian winter haunt, the Kanangra Boyd Wilderness. Some sections were almighty steep but we made good time, getting to the summit at 11.45 am. There were others there and they raised their eyebrows when they heard we were doing this in a day.

After an early lunch we headed off on the return journey and actually ran down the first section. Later I wished I hadn't run because I needed all my energy to finish as the temperatures rose to about 26 C with a fair amount of humidity. But we arrived back at the car at 5 pm, not a bad effort, 26 km in 11 hours. I celebrated the achievement by buying my guide a beer at the bar of the Villa Santo Domingo.



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The track to Fidel's old camp



Fidel's old shack

I then drove the 12 km back to my hotel to prepare for the next day. Fidel Castro had climbed the Pico at least once, so I felt good about going where Castro had been and I knew the morrow would bring me even closer to his past: a visit to the Comandancia La Plata, his 1950s revolutionary headquarters.

The next day we were blessed with good weather and set off early because the tourist hordes would be following later. The sign at the beginning of the walk - "Sendero Sitio Historico", said it all (path to a historic site). It really wasn't a difficult track but it would've been a deal more isolated 50 years earlier. Everything was there, forward sentry post and then other buildings including Fidel Castro's own shack. The museum, with artifacts and photographs from the period, was amazing.

Some distance away was a small hospital with many drug bottles and other paraphernalia from the period.

We were only here for a few hours and it was time to move on. As we hiked out the foreign tourists were on there way, in sizeable groups. This was what I had primarily come to Cuba for, to walk in the footsteps of Fidel Castro, before Cuba perhaps, becomes a very different place. ♦



## WILLIS'S WALKABOUTS

# It's Free, It's Informative and It's Interesting.

### Every month or so, we send out an email newsletter.

Besides our trips, we cover environmental and other issues which should be of interest to every bushwalker in Australia.

Recent newsletters included articles about:

- The ecology and natural history of the areas where we operate
- Bushwalking equipment
- Adventure activity standards which could threaten the existence of bushwalking clubs.
- Commercialisation of national parks
- Bush photo and art exhibitions
- Dehydrated foods for bushwalking

**And more, much more.**

Many have made a point of writing to tell us how much they enjoy it. The issues we publicise from one state may later turn out to be relevant to all.

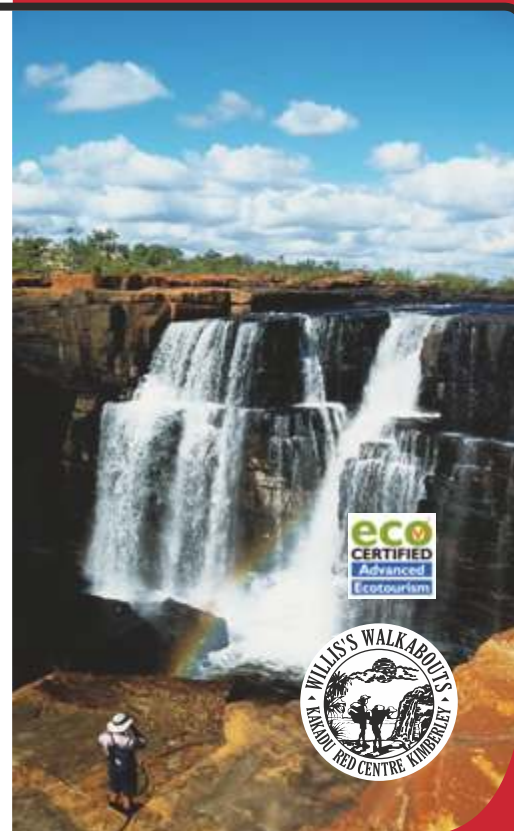
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# Innes National Park

## Yorke Peninsula South Australia

Barry Hanlon, *The Bush Club*



Cape Spencer Lighthouse



Limestone cliffs near "The Gap"



One of Victoria's missing "Apostles"?

Four members of the Sydney Bush Club, visiting Adelaide and the Barossa for the Australian National Orienteering Championships, took time off to visit the beautiful coastal national park at the foot of the Yorke Peninsula, SA.

European colonisation of the Innes area began in 1847 with land occupied for sheep grazing near Cape Spencer. Small scale cropping occurred increasingly throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The park is named after William Innes, who discovered commercial quantities of gypsum in the area in the early 1900s. In 1913 he set up the mining township of Inneston where gypsum was produced until 1930. During the boom phase the township boasted a population of around 500 people. Although isolated, Inneston was completely self-sufficient, having its own school, post office, bakery, general store and tennis court.

The more substantial buildings in the ghost town have been renovated for visitors accommodation. Our small group enjoyed a very comfortable stay at Norfolk Lodge at the eastern end of the township, which is an ideal base for several short to medium distance day walks.

The Stenhouse Bay jetty was built to enable ships to berth and load the bagged gypsum. The gypsum was processed locally at Inneston and transported to Stenhouse Bay by narrow gauge rail. The old rail right-of-way is now a walking trail between Inneston and the licensed restaurant and general store at Stenhouse Bay. Mining ceased in 1932 and in 1970 Innes National Park was declared to save the rare Great Western Whipbird.

The geology of the park has a lot in common with Kangaroo Island, which can be seen on a clear day from the Cape Spencer Lighthouse. The coast and nearby Althorpe Islands are rugged with many shoals and the skeletons of several shipwrecks. Being on the windward side of the "roaring 40s" it must have been a significant hazard in the sailing ship days.

One of the most spectacular parts of the coast is "The Gap" where ferocious winds have taken their toll and exposed the limestone layers revealing their sedimentary history.

From Inneston it's only a short distance to Ethel Beach - one of the Peninsular's many ocean graveyards. The skeletal remains of the Ethel lie on the beach. In 1904 the 700 ton iron sailing ship had lost a battle with a force seven gale - one life was lost. Now boogie boarders try their luck in calmer waters. Pondalowie Bay, the next bay west, is famous around the country with surfers.

In the spring Innes National Park turns into a rich carpet when wildflowers and shrubs come into bloom. Further inland, a chain of salt lakes occurs amongst extensive mallee woodlands. ♦



West Cape's all stainless-steel lighthouse



View towards Pondalowie Bay



The old gypsum wharf at Stenhouse Bay





## NSW Bushwalking Confederation

# Enlisting bushwalking club members

Conservation organisations National Parks Association of NSW Inc. (NPA) and the Nature Conservation Council of NSW Inc. (NCC) have appointed Delegates to the National Parks & Wildlife Service's Regional Advisory Committees and Brian Everingham, NPA's newly elected Confederation Delegate wishes to enlist club members as follows:

Members of the various clubs within the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs usually go bushwalking in the national park estate managed by DECCW; our old National Parks and Wildlife

Service. We get into the bush, often off track and often into the wild areas a long way from the regular picnic locations and commercial facilities. We appreciate those wild places and we know them well.

Indeed, we are probably more familiar with the back country of the national park estate than the rangers who manage those parks! Let's face it, most rangers are desk-bound, writing reports and/or Ministerials, doing the various chores that we ordinarily do in our own work but from which we escape when we "go bush".

In other words, members of the various walking clubs are the eyes and ears of the Service and there is a conduit through which those eyes and ears can ensure that what we observe gets through to the managers. The NPA and the NCC, collectively, has the right to have a member on each and every Regional Advisory Committee in the State. Sometimes there is more than one representative. They are the ones who can take your concerns forward.

What can you report on?

Track conditions, facilities such as toilet blocks, car parks, etc, illegal rubbish dumping, conflicting recreational use that is outside the scope of the Plans of Management, etc. In other words, what you observe and what you think is in order to report. It is even possible that you walk in areas that about the national park system and are in such condition that you wish it be added to the national park. Let us know. It helps make our national park system more robust.

The NPA/NCC delegates on the Regional Advisory Committees are communicating effectively. I have offered to coordinate that communication and I am the route through which ideas also filter to the Park Management Committee of NPA. Feel free to send me your findings (brian.everingham@gmail.com) and know I will pass them on and let you know what is happening to your issue.

One crucial issue at the moment is how the Sustainable Assessment Criteria will be interpreted in response to the changes to the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Visitors and Tourists) Bill 2010. NPA delegates are currently negotiating how the terms will be interpreted and I will endeavour to let you know of the outcome when the situation is clearer.

Brian Everingham  
NPA Delegate to the  
Confederation of  
Bushwalking Clubs  
NSW Inc.

## Book Reviews

### Frederick Robert D'Arcy

*Colonial Surveyor, Explorer and Artist*  
Andy McQueen, 2010  
ISBN 9780646533599

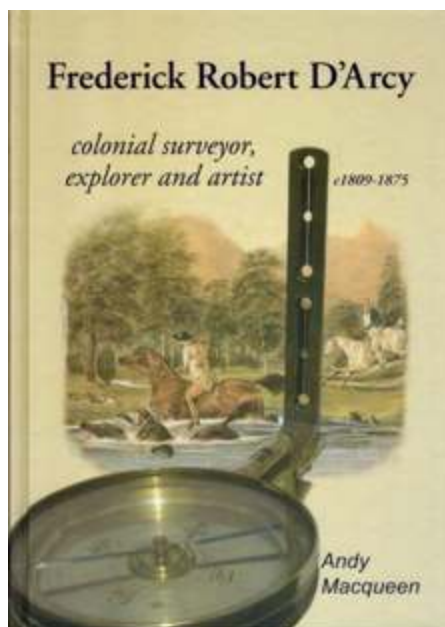
This is not a book about bushwalking, nor is it a guide book about a bushwalking route. It's a biography of Andy McQueen's great great grandfather. But those of us who have explored the Wollemi Wilderness will be very familiar with the name of D'Arcy, because he was there before us, without any maps at all, and without any modern bushwalking gear. What was he doing there? Surveying the rivers and the ridges for the first maps. I can only say he was one hell of a competent bushman!

Andy has written a warts and all biography. D'Arcy was a wild character to be sure, but the book makes the modern carrying-ons in the NSW Government seem like child's play in some ways, compared to how the Colony was run in those days. D'Arcy worked for Surveyor General Mitchell, and seems to have spent half his time warring with him. Mitchell fired D'Arcy a number of times for a whole range of reasons, only to have to rehire him because D'Arcy was the only one who could lead a party of convicts through Wollemi without having them all run away and still come back with a decent survey of the area.

For the rest of the story, which is long and involved, you will just have to read the book. At ~270 pages, with colour pictures, reproductions of original documents from the settlement, maps etc, all in a hard cover, it will keep you occupied for quite a while. Fascinating stuff, and well-told.

The book retails for \$45 and is available post-free from the author at [andymacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:andymacqueen@gmail.com).

Roger Caffin



### Discovering the Colo Wilderness on Foot

Second Edition  
Anthony Dunk  
ISBN 978-0-85881-227-7

This is quite a slim book, and I would hesitate to call it a 'Guide Book'. In addition to a bit of background, it covers several areas around the Colo region: the Colo Gorge, the Putty area, the Northern Blue Mountains, the Newnes area and the Rhylstone area. But rather than give detailed descriptions of a route and a detailed map for it, it gives just a sketch map and a precis of the walk. As none of the walks described are hard, this leaves it to the walker to do his own 'discovering' (as the title implies), and this has some merit. There are 20 walks, plus 3 extended walks. I have done all of them over the years.

Available from Envirobook at:  
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Roger Caffin



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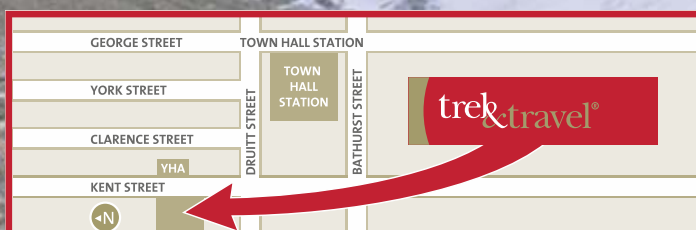
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