The Bushwalker

The Kerries,
Kosciusko National Park

Volume 35
Issue 3
Winter 2010

Don't you wish you were here?

Photo: Graham Wright,
South Coast Bushwalkers

The old 'loo with a view' at Valentines Hut, now superceded, KNP

**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?**

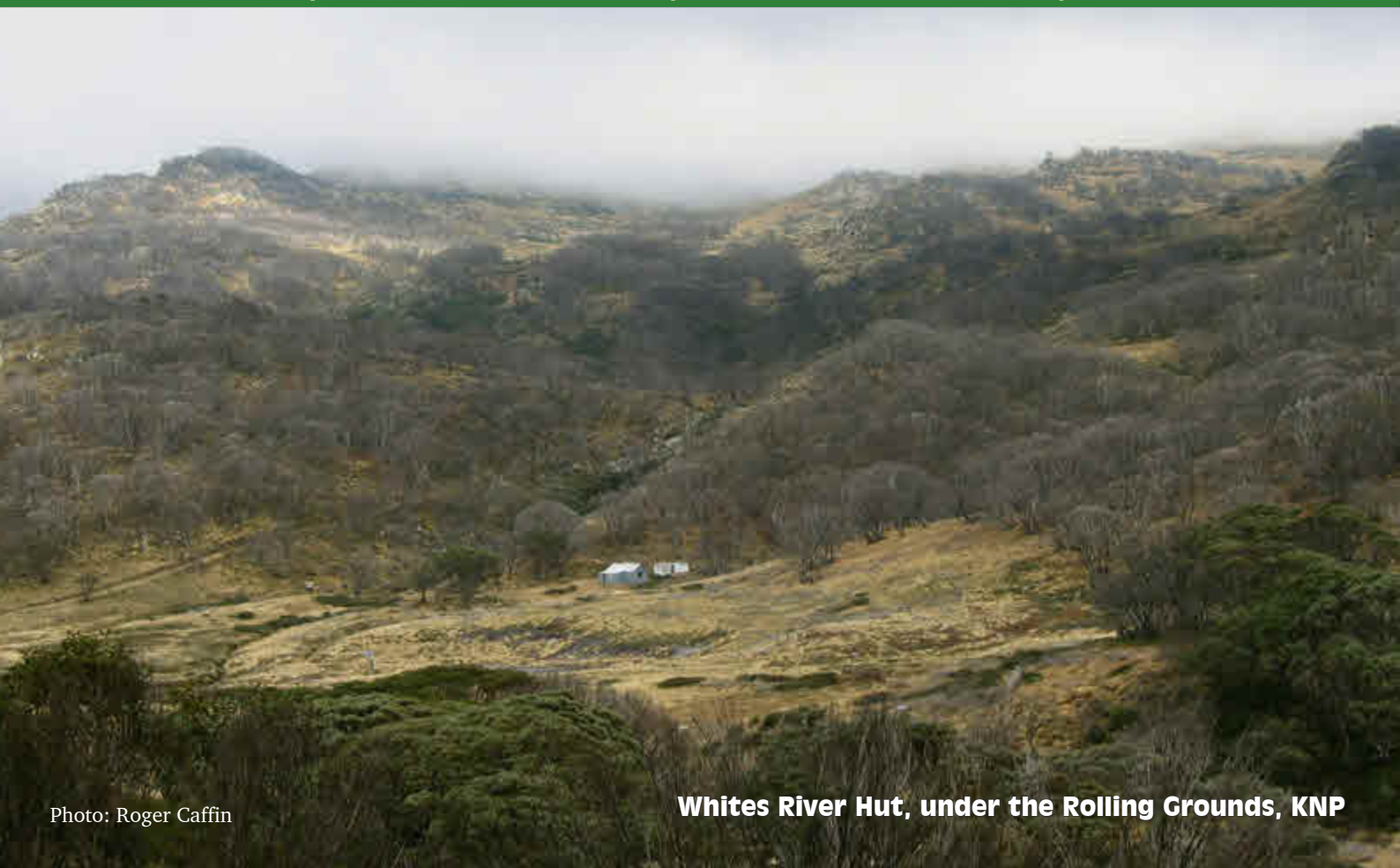

Photo: Roger Caffin

Whites River Hut, under the Rolling Grounds, KNP

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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.

BUSHWALKERS of NSW

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

From the editor's desk. . .

The hot topic of the AAS in the last two issues seems to have been somewhat resolved - I think. The good efforts of the Confederation seemed to have convinced some in the bureaucracy that trying to apply commercial guidelines to volunteer bushwalking clubs would be an exercise in futility (or stupidity). So far so good - but vigilance will be required.

The second item was the action of the government in their attempt to turn our National Parks into prime developer sites. I had suggested that there were *malign forces in the system which are hell-bent on turning our internationally-renown icons of beauty and conservation into money-making exercises for the benefit of a small number of favoured developers and rip-off merchants*. Sadly, this seems to be so. We have some further developments in this area in this issue. One can only hope that a future State government might reverse this malign destruction.

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*.

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.

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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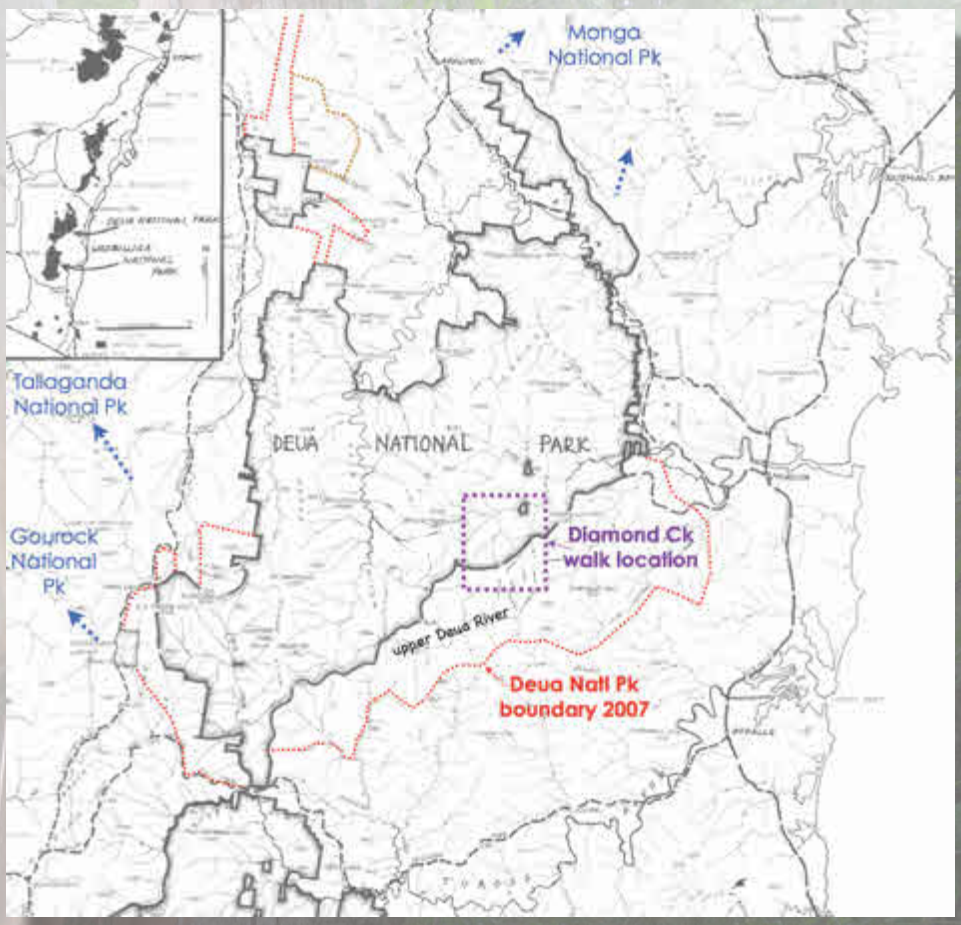
Diamond Creek

Deua National Park

Rob Jung



Deua National Park with approximate present boundary in red overlaid on original gazetted 1980 boundary in heavy black. The base map is Nick Fisher's from the ***National Parks Journal***, April-May 1979. Newer adjacent national parks are indicated in blue.

Inland from Moruya on the NSW south coast, lie the rugged escarpment forests and ridges of Deua National Park. Its wonderful country, the kind that Myles Dunphy thought compared in quality with his beloved Kowmung, on his walk through there enroute from Nowra to Harrietville in 1920.

Later Dunphy proposed a reserve for the area - "the Moruya Ranges and Upper Deua Primitive Area", but it was not until much later that a National Park was gazetted - Deua National Park in 1980. Initially the Park area was 803 km2, but that was drawn up after protracted negotiations with the previous land manager, Forestry. Important though this was, the Park boundaries were expedient more than logical, and did not include important headwaters of stream catchments, such as the upper Deua River and upper Diamond Ck. It was only after years of protracted argument, including through the Regional Forest Agreement, that these areas finally were merged within the National Park. For Diamond Ck this happened in 1994 and the upper Deua in 2003.

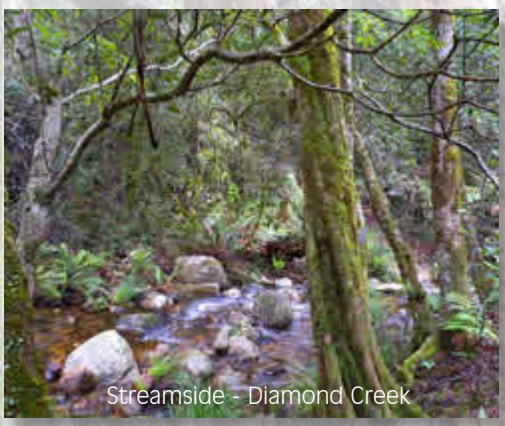
The Coondella Fire Trail follows part of the watershed of Diamond Ck.

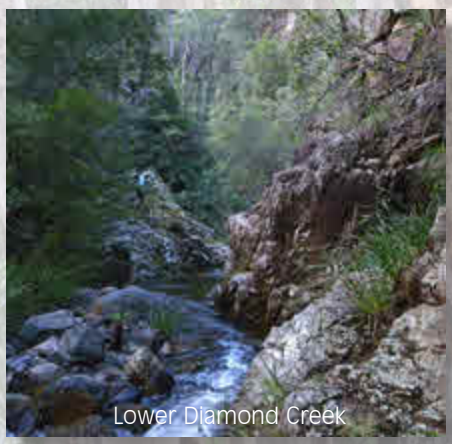
The upper Deua River and upper Diamond Ck have sections of rainforest, featuring in particular Pinkwood or eastern leatherwood (*Eucryphia moorei)*. Some areas of former freehold land, such as the Bendethera caves area, have also been purchased, although the extent of these acquired inholding areas, is not as extensive as suggested by the recent South Coast Forestry Map. The Park's area is now 1220 km2.

The wild nature of Deua is recognised through its two declared wilderness areas: Burra-Oulla in the NE, which includes Diamond and Burra Cks; and Woila-Deua in the SW. The latter features that intriguing peak Mother Woila, as well as the upper Deua River. Many excellent walks of 2 days or longer duration, are possible within these boundaries.

In the early 1990's I walked quite extensively in the part of the Park accessible from Moruya, in particular the Upper Deua River, Georges and Diamond Cks. Recently I revisited the area on a weekend walk to Diamond and Coondella Cks. This was in mid March 2010, about 3 weeks after very heavy rain - Moruya's rainfall for February was 420 mm.

We followed these Creeks, using the Coondella Fire Trail and its offshoot (GR 612 171) to access Diamond Ck. The old track leading into the upper part of


Streamside - Diamond Creek


Lower Diamond Creek


Signs of recent high flow in Coondella Ck

Diamond Ck from the Bendethera / Lt Sugarloaf road (GR 598 133) which I had used previously,

is no longer very obvious. Although this upper part is where the most of the rainforest is, it is the lower section which contains all the major waterfalls and with the recent rain they were well worth coming to see.

Traversing the creek was a slow process, but we found bypassing all of the drops a straightforward matter. Finding places to camp was not so simple - suitable places were scarce and they were only small and rough. We camped near the junction of Coondella and Diamond Cks. The most pleasant campsite on our walk route was near the area marked as freehold land on the topographic map. This was not marked (incorrectly) on the South Coast Forestry map. One surprising feature of the walk to me, was how little signs of visitation there were now, apart from the campsite on Diamond Ck at the end of the Coondella Fire Trail branch track (GR 598 170).

Our weekend was pleasantly cool, but on a warmer day the many plunge pools would make swimming tempting. It was obvious the stream flow had recently been so much higher; the stream side vegetation was flattened with many tree-limbs piled up. It would have been a place to avoid during the storms! Our trip turned out to be a mycologists delight - with many different types of fungi visible.

Coondella Creek was different. Its rocks were granitic, rather than sedimentary and its course was rather more gentle. Nevertheless it still contained rough sections to traverse. It was also a bigger creek with greater flow. We left it via the ridge at the junction of its first major tributary (GR 574 185). This NE facing ridge was a good one, typically consisting of tall open forests with little scrub. One half km further upstream at the next major junction, is reputedly another good exit ridge.

The grid references refer to the Bendethera 1:25,000 map with the 1966 grids. The South Coast Forest Map (1:150,000) shows land tenure, bush camping and picnic areas and is a useful road map for access. *Wild Places* (P Prineas and H Gold, 1983) remains a useful useful reference on the Deua Wilderness area. Further information about Deua can be found in the NSW Wilderness Red Index.♦


A Diamond Creek waterfall


Forest adjacent to Coondella Creek


Open forest on the exit ridge

View at morning tea

Exploring Penrose Gully

Michael Keats, The Bush club

Penrose Gully[1] on the Cullen Bullen map is a familiar name noted by every bushwalker who has ventured from the Glowworm Tunnel down the old Wolgan Valley Railway alignment to the Wolgan River, or even further afield to the old hotel at Newnes. Most walkers are focused on their destination and refreshments – not the mysteries that may be hidden in Penrose Gully.

Unlocking the secrets of Penrose Gully is a painstaking exercise. Whilst it was only my second visit into the upper reaches, two of the party with me have several visits to their credit, including side trips north to Windows Canyon as well as abseiling the Penrose Gully Canyon. The impetus for the current walk arose from my love affair with Constance Point, with its heavily dissected terrain and pagoda-capped cliff lines. Although the walk had been planned months earlier, recent reports by colleague Geoff Fox as to how and where he and another accessed the Penrose Slot 'from the bottom up' rather than the tedious fire trail walk in from the 'top down' led me to recast the walk, making it more interesting and hopefully allowing more time for exploring.

It was a glorious sunny winter's day. However, removing our footwear to walk in the icy water of the Wolgan River at the ford crossing was a wake-up call that, although the sun was out, confirmed it was winter. Initially our route was along the former access road for the Newnes Coal Mine. This mine was closed in the 1980s and most of the surface infrastructure was removed. The only remaining item is a large concrete water tank sitting high above the old mine site.

At 0911 we reached the junction of the Old Coach Road and the Wolgan Valley Railway bed, GR 418 208. Our way of route was to follow the old railway alignment, now a primitive cycle way[2]. Excellent progress was made along the way of route as all fallen timber has either been removed or cut through for cyclists. As you walk along, many of the old railway sleepers are seen in situ, being left when the rails were pulled up during WWII and, according to some unverified reports, shipped to Tobruk for use as fortifications.

At 0920 we reached a spot where an unnamed creek crosses the alignment, GR 422 208. Originally a trestle bridge would have spanned this creek, but successive fires and floods have removed all evidence. For us to cross it was a descent into the creek and a clamber up the other side. About 50 m further on we left the relative ease of the alignment and headed up what has been euphemistically labeled a 'pass'. Essentially it was a rock scramble with a section of loose shales that was just a bit hairy.

The most fascinating discovery during the ascent was two old sections of steel railway line and a section of 3" steel pipe buried in the shale, GR 423 206, 0939. This was on an incredibly steep slope and I can only suspect it had been placed as a support for a pole for a telephone service down to the Constance workshops on the Wolgan Valley Railway. It is certainly in an appropriate spot. Finding a piece of telephone wire nearby was no surprise and seemed to confirm this use.

Reaching the top of this pass we then hugged the cliffs and headed south to negotiate a much easier second pass, GR 423 205, 0950. From this pass we headed generally east to the crest of spur, leading to a third pass surmounted with stunning, platy pagodas and expansive views, GR 425 203. This was real 'wow' factor country, particularly the views west. However we were not done with climbing yet. Finally at 1005 we stood on top of a great pagoda where it was agreed that morning tea would be a grand idea. It was.

An adjoining pagoda was the focus of my immediate attention. It contained a series of perfect tubular ironstone formations as well as many other typical advanced pagoda erosion residuals. I took a particular delight in photographing a perfect tubular section, which was lying like a section of pipe waiting to be joined into a natural plumbing system. The GR of this spot is the same as the previous one although we were now somewhat higher and 50 m further south. It is just beyond the accuracy of the GPS to effectively distinguish.

During morning tea there was much consulting of maps and recalling previous walks. Dave Dash confirmed that the exposed pagoda at GR 419 214 to our west was a spot where we had taken morning tea on 8th April 2009 when exploring the wilds of that huge bluff circumscribed by part of the former Wolgan Valley Railway and the Old Coach Road.

After morning tea we had a delightful ambling walk generally south for about 800 m through open forest, gently climbing as we did so. At approx GR 425 207 we started heading SE to avoid the network of tributaries feeding a deep gully, the south arm of Penrose Gully. Our most southerly point was approx GR 430 201. It was now time to head NE and after a few hundred metres we intersected with the old fire trail and track network to Tiger Snake Canyon, GR 432 192, 1055.

After the exhilaration of the three passes climb and a euphoric spot for morning tea it was a bit of an anticlimax to be on a made track, and able to walk two abreast with ease. Accordingly we picked up the pace and at 1120 we reached GR 437 206. At this point we left the much-used Tiger Snake Canyon track and walked the crest of the ridge that leads to Constance Point, going several hundred metres before turning due west at GR 436 207.

Breaking through the screen of trees we emerged onto a series of rock

View at lunch

Window in SE slot

platforms covered in low heath with superb views SW of the walls of Penrose Gully and into the Wolgan Valley. Another hundred metres or so and a very familiar pagoda came into view. It is a commanding spot with uninterrupted views and an ideal spot for lunch, 1155, GR 432 206. It was early but any leader would be hard pressed to find a better location.

Although Geoff, Kent and I were in familiar territory we held a discussion about the program for the rest of the day. We agreed that exploring the Penrose Slot down from the lunch site pagoda to the NW should be undertaken before heading down through the known SE descent of Penrose Slot to the base of the Penrose Canyon and the blind side canyon. We would also have a go at exploring the southern arm of Penrose Gully.

Lunch out of the way we congregated at the top of the NW descent of the slot. Packs were shed and the slot approached. Dave Dash was in the lead and soon discovered the need for a rope to come back up if it proved to be a 'no go' further on. A rope from Marion's pack was pressed into service and Dave went down, and down, and soon disappeared from view. Meanwhile three of the party descended the proven route whilst the rest of us kept vigil.

Next we heard Dave's triumphant voice coming from the base of the SE slot. He had been successful and been around the base of the lunch pagoda. An alternate way was now proved. The rope was retrieved and the rest of group set off down the SE Penrose Slot. It is an easy, amazing descent with a great 'window' half way down with stunning views over the Wolgan Valley. Near the base of the cliffs and before reaching a classic waterfall there is a rock fall 'tunnel' that delivers the adventurer into a tree fern filled glade with a delightful level pad where the waterfall tumbles ever so gently. Beauty plus.

After regrouping at this little bit of heaven it was time to move along to examine the end point of the canyoner's descent of Penrose Canyon. It looks like a challenge and certainly not a canyon for anyone carrying too much girth. Again a delightful area of falling water and ferns surrounds the canyon exit. A huge fallen tree adds character to the spot. Then from this special spot to yet another: the blind-ended slot.

This blind-ended slot is at the end of a 50 m fern walk. Huge and ancient tree ferns, a carpet of smaller ferns and a selection of strangler figs and rainforest plants crowd this slot. A walk up to the end is a must. The top or end point is

Base of Penrose Canyon

maybe 40 m above and the roof curves outward like a half dome. It is hard to work out what weathering processes are at work here as there is very little evidence of solutional weathering. Photos – well you can try. It is almost impossible to capture the essence of this spot, GR 434 204, 1251.

We press on wanting to use our 'time bank' to explore the south arm of Penrose Gully. For a while we did very well, progressing to the east under a major cliff line. We failed to appreciate just how rapidly Penrose Gully drops. Suddenly the floor of the gully is 100 m below. For a while we followed the cliffs that could possibly take us around into the south arm. We made it to approx GR 248 205. Two scouts Steve and Yuri pushed on hard but returned reporting a very deep slot, possibly a canyon[3]. It was now 1330 and given the uncertainties and the shortness of daylight we decide to return to a point where a descent into the Penrose Gully creek is possible and we could make our way out.


End of the Blind Slot

This decision consumed a lot of time, as the creek is full of great boulders and the talus side slope are covered with a great deal of fallen timber buried under ferns and sword grass. We stuck generally to the base of the cliffs on the north side but were forced down to the creek time and time again. Progress was painfully slow. At 1430 we regrouped for afternoon tea on a sand bank in the creek, GR 428 206. Looking at the map we realised we had covered a whole 500 m in an hour. Noted carefully that before encountering the railway alignment we still had another 100 m of descent to conquer.

At 1450 part of a massive railway embankment was in front of us, GR 426 208. At its high point it is built up 20+ m. Dwelling on the issues of construction, it is absolutely amazing. All this rock and earth was moved by hand – picks, shovels and wheelbarrows. The cubic metres of material involved are enormous. Where the Penrose Gully creek crosses the embankment there would have been another trestle bridge – now long gone.

We stood at the end of the embankment above the creek for photos. I don't know what others in the party were thinking but I was musing on the blood, sweat and tears that were expended not only on this section of the railway but all the works along the 60 or so kilometres of its construction. It would be a fitting tribute to the builders if the whole track could be reconstructed and have tourist trains run on it. You have to dream.

Again I reflected. This walk changed many times from hard bush bashing, scrambling, boulder hopping and creek gymnastics to sedate walking. A good strong pace was maintained on the old railway bed back to the intersection of the Wolgan Valley Railway alignment and the Old Coach Road. The walk finished with a second even more chilly, wet-foot crossing of the Wolgan River at 1525.

Great plans for coffee and a chat with Thomas Ebersoll at the Old Newnes Hotel came to nothing. He had had to make a special trip to Lithgow. We passed him in his vehicle as we were driving out.♦

Footnotes

1 Thomas Penrose (died 1901) took out a Conditional Purchase of 40 ac fronting the Wolgan River in 1869. Henry Deane applied the names Penrose Creek and Penrose Gorge in his reports on the construction of the Wolgan Valley Railway 1906-1907.
2 A group known as Conservation Volunteers Australia, based in Bathurst, NSW, developed a proposal (May 2009) 'to upgrade an existing overgrown and run down track into a world class Rail Trail'. Whilst not being successful in gaining funding for the project in its envisaged form, the trail does now exist as a crude mountain bike trail from the Glowworm Tunnel car park to the historic ruins at Newnes. The trail is 10.7 km in length. More information is at www.railtrails.org.au
3 Since returning home I have had a good study of the aerial photos of this 'canyon'. It appears to terminate with shear rock cliffs at GR 431 197.

Mount Bishop and Clerk in view

Maria Island Adventure

Lyn Mercer,
Newcastle Ramblers

Sitting on the top rock

Bob Clifton organised an enthusiastic group to accompany him backpacking for four days in The Walls of Jerusalem, one day at Wineglass Bay and camping for four days on Maria Island. This is about the Maria Island adventure.

We were very lucky to be joined on Maria by John Counsell, who was a member of our club before he and his wife Jan returned home to Tassie. John has been an official guide for Maria Island Walks and now has a lot to do with transporting the paying clients to and from Hobart. John, Jan and a friend from their local bushwalking club met us on the dock at Maria so we had our own personal guide for our Maria trip.

The campsite at Darlington was quite luxurious after roughing it in The Walls; covered BBQ area, nice camp fire, hot showers and toilets all for $8 a night, all this opposite the beach! John was a great guide, his wealth of information and enthusiasm for the island was most contagious.

Maria Island has the most complex European history of any National Park in Tasmania. Some of the original penal settlement buildings are still there and we enjoyed exploring and soaking up the history.

We sat in an old dining room that was set up as if the people were still there, even the wine in the glasses and gravy on the plates, while an audio recording of conversations of the day played. It was like stepping back into history.

There were lots of interesting stories and info about the people that had been prisoners on the island. Like Irish political prisoner William Smith O'Brien and also the people who tried to make their fortunes on Maria like Diego Bernacchi with his dream of growing grapes and making wine.

We were able to go through the old family home and look at the photo albums. I loved seeing what became of children and the school photos. All of us really enjoyed the historical side of Maria.

The wildlife on Maria was quite prolific. We all agreed that we had never seen so many healthy wombats just wandering around the campsite not at all worried about us. There were Cape Baron Geese everywhere, paddymelons and grey kangaroos.

The highlight of our visit was our day walk up to Bishop and Clerk at 653 m. The views from the top are the most amazing, right across to Mt Wellington on one side and up to Freycinet, and across so much ocean. It was so beautiful and a perfect day. John took us right to the summit so we were perched on some rock formations way way up!

I was only game to crawl to the edge, though we talked Robert into standing on one leg! We all agreed it was one of the best day walks any of us have ever done, so if you happen to be near Maria when visiting Tassie put the Bishop and Clerk on your must do list. ♦

Cliffs below the summit ridge

View from near the top

At the top

Letter to the Editor

I would like to comment on claims made in your story "Proposed Rip-off of our National Parks" (*Bushwalker* Vol 35 issue 2) about inappropriate helicopter use within Kosciuszko National Park.

There are strict rules surrounding the use of helicopters within the park and its airspace. All pilots must obtain permission before they are allowed to land in the park.

Only those helicopters engaged in delivering essential services or emergencies are allowed to land and there are a number of entities which do so. All helicopter services operating within Kosciuszko National Park are required to follow strict operational guidelines regarding minimal environmental and visitor impacts.

The helicopter pictured and its pilot is one we regularly contract for important work across the park. The pilot in question is extremely safety conscious and has a very clear commitment to the environment.

Without knowing the precise date of this flight it is difficult to know exactly which task was being performed but from the images in your magazine we strongly believe this particular flight was connected with work which involved water sampling, hence the person seen entering the water.

Helicopters are used regularly to conduct a wide range of tasks in Kosciuszko National Park. Being the largest park in NSW at 690,000 hectares, some work, such as pest and fire management, and scientific research, would be impossible to undertake without them.

We generally have no trouble with helicopters as the vast majority of pilots are very professional in their approach and work within the rules.

Dave Darlington, Regional Manager, Southern Ranges Region, NSW NPWS

Editorial Reply

I acknowledge the possibility that the group may have been legitimate. However, four people wandering for well over an hour around the old Lake Albina hut site does not strike me as 'water sampling'. In fact, I cannot see water sampling requiring the presence of four people, given the cost of fuel. And I did not like the way the helicopter strafed us on the ridge above Club Lake either.
In view of the subsequent passage of the *Land Rights for Park Developers Act*, I remain deeply suspicious.

Roger Caffin, Editor

In Praise of the Sandshoe

Andy Macqueen

Arguments have raged for decades about the relative merits of sandshoes and boots. This has mainly been a New South Wales phenomenon. In other states, most walkers wouldn't be seen dead in anything other than boots, and we New South Welshmen are held in ridicule. Not to be put off, back in the 90s we chose the sandshoe as the theme for one of the Confederation Balls, and called it the VolleyBall. The winning table decoration, assembled by SUBW, consisted of an astonishing mountain of used Volleys (which mostly came from Roger Lembit's cupboards I believe).

There can be little debate that the sandshoe is superior for rockhopping and wading down rivers or negotiating slippery canyons. The InterStaters just don't get it. Perhaps they have heard stories (probably true) about people losing a sandshoe in the depths of Taswegian mud or maybe Colo River quicksand. But of course every self-respecting sandshoe-wearer also sports a pair of gaiters (possibly home made) with a strap under the foot to guard against such catastrophe.

However, even in NSW the sandshoe has been on the back foot in more recent times, due to quality control on the part of a particular popular brand. I recall a river walk a few years ago when one member of the party found on Day 2 that his brand new pair was already falling apart. By Day 4 they were being held together by sardine tins and dental floss. [*Quality did suffered for a while when Dunlop moved production to China, but there have been some improvements since - Editor*]

Quality control or not, the decrepit sandshoe syndrome is not new. As I wrote in a 1998 'Wild' magazine article, at the end of the first successful (under 48 hours) circuit of the Three Peaks some of the party limped into Katoomba wearing their socks outside their Volleys to hold them together.

Mind you, I'd guess some of those Volleys were suffering quite advanced decrepitude right from the start of the trip. In many circles it has been de rigueur to appear at the start of every walk, no matter how long or rough, with one's footwear in dubious condition. On a recent four-day trip in the Wollangambe country I found myself dolling out sports tape on the first day to hold together a companion's Volleys. It has always puzzled me where these people wear their Volleys when they are new. Solo trips, perhaps, where they won't be seen?

Anyway, one might think that it was the SBW, or some such, who got onto the idea of sandshoes for bushwalking. We tend to think of earlier walkers clumping around in boots (or no footwear at all). But it seems that was not the case. Could it be that the NSW bushwalker's love of sandshoes was actually imported from Queensland? My old walking mate Peter Blackwood (these days an unashamed Banana Bender) was recently delving into the undertakings of one Archibald Meston (1851-1924), a Queensland explorer. In 1889 Meston led an official expedition to the Bellenden Kerr Range south of Cairns, and claimed to be the first to reach the summit. Peter came across Meston's account of the ascent in the 'Brisbane Courier' of 7 October 1889, and sent me the following extract. It seems that while rapid deterioration of sandshoes is not a new phenomenon, they are infinitely preferable to the 'detestable' boot, which is responsible not only for foot problems but also for headaches and heart disease. (Oh, and it seems that we should throw our hats away as they cause baldness.)

'Among the outfit was a liberal supply of sand shoes for all hands, kanakas included. No human bare foot will stand long in the country we were in, when the owner is ascending and descending with heavy loads. The sand shoe, or tennis shoe, with the grooved indiarubber sole, is by far the best for rough mountain country. Ordinary boots are unsuitable, uncomfortable, and dangerous. The weakness of the sand shoe is its inferior material. Occasionally, in very rough places, one pair barely lasted the whole day. Sometimes they hold out for four or five days. They are only unsafe when the sole is wet, on wet slippery rock. In that case nothing will hold like the bare foot, but the bare foot requires a prolonged practical experience before frisking at ease through lawyer scrub and over weather-worn granite rocks. That experience my own "mendowies" had thoroughly acquired. Constant wearing of boots is one of the most unhealthy and detestable ordeals to which civilised man is subjected by a blind-eyed mule-headed custom, which has no more reason for this outrage than a stall-fed Calabar fashionable female for covering the abnormal calves of her legs with brass rings, or a Papuan monarch for wearing a sea-shell through the end of his nose. The civilised man still remains in some respects a magnificent specimen of the human ass. He wears a close-fitting hat that excludes the sunlight from his stupid head, and is surprised - in the same intellectual fashion as an owl that has lost his tail - to find himself prematurely bald at an early ago. He jams his flat feet into tight boots that put a damper on the circulation, and then goes off to consult his doctor, under whose intelligent and disinterested advice he empties a large consignment of assorted drugs into his indignant stomach to cure the headaches and heart disease, and other infirmities which are but the earnest expostulations outraged Nature is making against the tight-boot wearing atrocity.'

'Having greatly relieved myself by these philosophic remarks, it is time to mention the overwhelming sense of responsibility thrown on me by undertaking to escort the Colonial Botanist to the summit of Bellenden-Ker, and bring him back right side up with every possible care ...'

Next time some young shop assistant tries to tell me I need such and such a boot for an off-track walk in Backerbeyond Range, I'll reply that I can't possibly wear them as they'll give me heart disease, quoting Meston of course. (Though I fear that might confirm the whipper-snapper's private view that this old beggar shouldn't step off the concrete path.)

Regrettably, like many items of outdoor gear, boots have joined the ranks of must-have sought-after consumer items. There is seemingly endless choice, yet they nearly all have Gortex linings. Why is that? Answer: to line the pockets of the boot manufacturers.

Surely if it was good enough for our traditional inhabitants (and Dot Butler) to run around in bare feet, the rest of us can get by with something minimal. Add that to your list of things to do for climate action: BUY FEWER BOOTS!

A final anecdote. It's one thing for a pair of sandshoes to fall apart after a few days, but it's rather more upsetting when a $300 pair of boots of a well-known European brand does a similar act - as happened to a companion in the Kimberley last year.

And do I wear sandshoes myself? I'm not telling.♦

Bush Navigation and Wilderness Walking

Tom Gleeson
President & Bushwalking Officer,
ANU Mountaineering Club, Canberra;
Past Committee Member and Trip Leader,
Sydney University Bushwalkers,

I am in Kanangra, camped atop the mighty Axehead Mountain. A cold wind dances across the exposed portion of my face; my cheeks burn with the chill of the winter morn. My sleeping bag is my only shelter - all that was needed under a starry vault. My fingers search for the sleeping bag's draw-cords, find the toggles, and with a pull release me from the embrace of the snug fitting mummy-shaped bag. I roll onto my right hand side, as my left arm emerges from the warm comfort of the bag and extends into the cold air around me. My left hand searches along the ground, finding my trusty Dunlop Volleys and my glasses stashed inside the left shoe. I put on my glasses and appreciate my surroundings; the eucalypts paint a ghostly silhouette upon the canvas of the pre-dawn sky. I reach into my other shoe and take out my camera. Then I get up out of my sleeping bag, put on a fleece and my shoes, and walk over to the mountain's cliff edge to sit and watch the sunrise. It is a spectacular show, for which I am soon joined by some other bushwalkers. We sit in silence and witness the rising of the sun, watch how its rays of light land on the cliffs and illuminate the valleys, and listen to the morning song of the birds as they soar high above the ground below.

What is it about wilderness areas, which draws bushwalkers to their remote peaks, trackless bush, and clear running streams? The unspoilt beauty of the Australian bush – here embodied in the delicate fragility of the orchid, there by the harsh intertwining of Banksia branches – is something special beyond words. A trip into the wilderness has a certain spiritual quality about it. What can compare with the thunderous power of the waterfall, the ancient architecture of a mountain range, or the cool taste of a mountain stream? What Botanic Garden can rival the array of a remote canyon, with tall Red Cedars, hidden and inaccessible to the chainsaw? What can surpass the simple pleasure of observing a platypus swim happily in a flowing creek?

It is in the wilderness that the bushwalker is at home. To witness the morning sunrise, to walk the valleys and ranges, to eat, sleep and wake again in this environment, is to experience something beyond that which words can express. The bushwalker leaves his cares behind when he sets off with his map and compass, and everything he needs within his pack. Unlike the explorers of the past, he relies no longer upon blazing his route, chopping down trees, or building trails and roads. The bushwalker's skill is in the use of the simple map and compass to navigate his way through the trackless bush. No misty day nor stormy weather, not even night fall, is an obstacle to the experienced bushwalker who can press on regardless with his map and compass.

'Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour.' - *T. S. Elliot*. It is the bushwalking clubs who pass on the traditions of bushwalking: the bushwalking songs, the annual walks to favourite places, and most importantly, the art and skill of bush navigation. The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW has published the 'Bushwalker's Code', its minimal impact policy document, freely available at *http://www.bushwalking.org.au/~documents/Policies/* for the public to download and read. To quote from the Code:

'Become proficient at bush navigation. If you need to build cairns, blaze trees, place tags, break off twigs, or tie knots in clumps of grass to mark your route, you are lacking in bush navigation skills. Placing signposts and permanent markers of any kind is the responsibility of the relevant land manager (such as the NPWS).'

Relying upon cairns for navigation is dangerous, as one cannot guarantee that they can always be found on the return journey, especially if mist comes in, night falls, or they are knocked over by a passing wombat. Some walkers claim that a cairn is often a reassuring find, when in trackless country with few navigational aids, though how they be sure that the cairn was placed by someone travelling along the same route, and not perhaps placed by someone lost and off-route, as sometimes occurs? More permanent actions, such as sawing eucalypt trees down to one metre posts in order to mark a route through tough, scrubby country, as has happened across the Ti Willa Plateau in the Kanangra- Boyd National Park, is a sad reflection that wilderness values are not shared by all walkers. Bushwalkers must take responsibility for ensuring that they become proficient in bush navigation. ♦

Culoul Creek
January 2010

Trevor Henderson,
Newcastle Bushwalking Club

The long weekend was going to be hot and Pieter and Linda were on their first overnight walk so we decided to do a shortened version of the original walk plan. From the Culoul track we would take the short ridge down into Culoul Creek and then via Tinda Creek to Wollemi Creek where we would camp for two days swimming and exploring.

Jenny being prepared to be winched out

We left Newcastle in the Rav4 at about 8 am Saturday, via Cessnock and down the Putty Road. There was a touch of sadness as we passed the burnt out shell of the Half-Way-House. Gone was the famous meeting place for so many of our previous expeditions in the Wollemi. Regrettably there was no sign of any rebuilding activity.

It was after 11 pm when we started walking, taking a generally northerly course along the ridge. The scrub was thicker on the flat sections and more open on the slopes but still easy going. We stopped for lunch about 300 metres up the ridge from the Culoul Creek. During lunch Jenny was not feeling well and was experiencing some breathing difficulty. As we were close to the creek we decided to push on to the water and reassess the situation there. The creek was series of isolated water holes separated by sandy beaches and regular rock jams.

Jenny's asthma did not improve and few hundred metres further on we stopped to rest. Her condition had deteriorated and she could not stand up. At approximately 4 pm we activated our emergency satellite beacon. We were in a fairly deep valley so I set the beacon off on top of a large rock where it was exposed to the sky. By this time the weather was overcast and a thunderstorm was developing.

At approximately 6 pm we heard a helicopter approaching, a few seconds later it appeared over the range to the south. It was flying high and in a straight

The chopper winching Jenny up and away

line directly towards us. It did a series of tight circles dropping and was soon hovering directly above us. Within a few minutes a NSW Ambulance Service paramedic was winched down beside us. He asked about the emergency and assessed Jenny's condition and immediately decided that she had to be evacuated. She was fitted with a harness, ear plugs, goggles and helmet and was winched up into the hovering aircraft and off to the Nepean District Hospital at Penrith.

Standing below a helicopter hovering 30 metres above you is an incredible experience: the fiercest windstorm and noise I have ever experienced. A 12 kg back pack was blow about 5 metres by the

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National Parks Tourist Development Bill becomes Law

Keith Muir,
Colong Foundation

The National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Visitors and Tourists) Act 2010 was passed by Parliament on June 9, 2010 with Bipartisan support.

The National Parks and Wildlife Act's protection of nature has been weakened for the benefit of private tourist interests and commercial gain. The NSW Greens fought to block the Bill and then to amend it. For various reasons, the NSW Coalition did not oppose the Bill, but importantly, the Coalition did support the key Greens' amendment to the Bill that would have removed Ministerial discretionary power over lease approvals. This amendment would have strengthened the community's ability to effectively defend national parks against Ministerial excesses in the courts. Sadly, the amendment was lost in the Upper House by just one vote.

The new Act will allow a broad range of buildings and activities in national parks for exclusive commercial use. Other changes introduced include commercial tours which can be conducted in wilderness for the first time.

The commercial use of wilderness provisions in the Act are said to just apply to commercial backpacker outfitters and the like. However, the Act will not operate that way, because there will be cross-fertilisation between various development opportunities under the new legal regime.

Wilderness areas are remote places and as such very costly for commercial operators to access, without the use of vehicles or helicopters and bases from which to support their operations. So economic pressures may well see vehicle access follow once commercial access is granted. The very concept of wilderness could be threatened.

The Colong Foundation sought the advice and assistance from highly respected barrister, Mr Tim Robertson SC, who in 2004 so admirably defended the Grose Wilderness from exclusive occupation by Fox Studios. Justice Lloyd in his judgment on that case found that the production of the commercial feature film "Stealth" (about rogue military aircraft), "has nothing to do" with the National Parks and Wildlife Act's objects or the purpose for reserving land as National Park. The case was thrown out of Court, but not until after several local conservationists had been arrested defending wilderness.

The legal action to stop "Stealth-type" activities will now be virtually impossible but vigilance can stop bad developments from sprouting up in our precious National Parks. In fact, the law overturns 20 years of case law that limited private commercial facilities in national parks essentially to inherited buildings and the ski resorts. Mr Robertson said that the legislation "destroys this delicate balance that the Courts have struck, which gives primacy to the conservation objectives of the Act."

The whole point of the new Act is to destroy the nexus between uses of the National Park and the conservation purposes for which the Park was reserved, and with it the power of the Courts to adjudicate on whether the Minister's decision accords with those purposes. Under these new laws, it is the Minister, and not the Courts, who will decide whether a use accords with the Park's purpose.

Mr Robertson advised that the proposed legislation "removes the legal protection of National Parks from uses which damage their ecology and landscapes, by destroying the principle that National Parks can only be used for a purpose which promotes the use of the land as a public park. It provides the legal authority for the privatisation of National Parks by enabling exclusive possession rights to be given for commercial purposes to private interests under the broad rubric of sustainable tourism. Under this rubric, National Parks will be able to be used for general tourist purposes, such as tourist resorts, convention centres, shopping centres, fast food outlets, sporting activities and fun parks, at the discretion of the Minister, even where those uses do not promote the conservation of the Parks."

Given the Coalition's stance on Part 3A planning laws, and their vote in the Upper House against the central thrust of this new law, it seems likely that the Coalition Parties will fix our park laws. Further, the Shadow Environment Minister, Catherine Cusack wrote to the Nature Conservation Council in November 2009 and advised that she and the then Shadow Tourism Minister, Don Page, "do not support private accommodation facilities inside National Parks." The Coalition has moved away from this stance, and must be encouraged to review this position while in Opposition, so that national parks can be protected by policy, if not by law.

National Parks and Wildlife should not be selecting development sites in parks with the aim of offering these sites to the tourism industry in an 'investor-ready' form. Our parks should not become profit centres for developers. There is no evidence whatsoever to support the notion that private development in national parks will boost the tourism industry or provide extra funds for park management. A stronger nature tourism industry for NSW with more people enjoying the parks is best achieved by encouraging tourism investment in nearby towns where it most benefits regional communities.

With our rapidly growing population, the integrity and protection of our parks is more important now than ever before.

Support needed to build the campaign

Last year a broad coalition stopped National Parks being opened up for blood sports: hunting wildlife with dogs, guns and bows and arrows. The passage of this Bill into law has tainted the environmental credentials of the NSW Government and to some extent to Opposition Parties who supported it.

National Parks must not become profit centres for tourism development. Let Premier Kristina Keneally and the Opposition Leader Barry O'Farrell know just how much you are opposed to the development of private accommodation and facilities inside national parks.

The Colong Foundation will maintain the campaign to keep nature's National Parks free of built accommodation or other exclusive developments, a policy that should be part of any enlightened State Government administration.

We need your generous support to keep the campaign momentum going, to monitor any new park development proposals and to help cover our campaign expenses. We must now press the cause of National Parks right through to the state election in March 2011. Call or email Keith at the Colong office 0412 791 404 (mob) 9261 2400 (wk), email *keith@colongwildenress.org.au*, send donations C/- the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, Level 2, 332 Pitt St, Sydney, NSW 2000.

Let the NSW Government and the State Coalition also know you want National Parks to remain public and permanently protected, for nature and quiet enjoyment, forever.

Email your concerns to:
Premier Kristina Keneally:
premier@www.nsw.gov.au and
Environment Minister Frank Sartor:
office@sartor.minister.nsw.gov.au
Leader of the Opposition, Barry O'Farrell
LOP@parliament.nsw.gov.au
Shadow Environment Minister,
Catherine Cusack
Catherine.Cusack@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Kiama Coast Walks

Several authors, all members of Batemans Bay Bushwalkers


Nature's art

Batemans bay Bushwalkers had a 3-day camp at Kiama on 29-March-2010, with several different day walks. Reports on these walks follow.

Mike , our leader, led us on of a lovely scenic drive up the winding Foxground Road to a grassy meadow, the start of the our Hoddle Track Walk. The track, heading east and steep in parts, led along the ridge to the top of Saddleback Mountain with its crown of Communications Towers and great 360º views, slightly obscured by the hazy atmosphere.

We stopped for morning tea and were diverted by two unexpected visitors. Not goannas, lizards, snakes or dive bombing birds who grab food out of unsuspecting hands but two roosters, one with beautifully glistening rusty red plumage, the other plain white, out for a forage to see what scraps visitors had left behind.

We returned along the same track pausing to admire a bull and his harem along the way then continued west to walk towards the Barren Ground escarpment up Noorinan Ridge.

This track was much steeper, constantly heading upwards, a section which seemed impassable with fallen trees deterred some of the group who headed back for lunch while a few scrambled onwards. The track cleared and we found ourselves under the escarpment with towering rock formations reaching upwards, twisting roots and vines, mosses and ferns. It was well worth the scramble and the odd leech. We would have liked to go explore further but turned round to join the others for lunch and the trip back to camp.

Below the escarpment

A small but dauntless group of Batemans Bay Bushwalkers were unfazed by the opening of Tuross lake to the sea. Instead of the original itinerary from Tuross they followed an improvised walk of 13 kms starting and ending at Bingie Point. The whole trip took place in the mild early Autumn sunshine and among the sights were a red bellied black snake swimming submerged in one of the many pools that lie along parts of the Dreaming Track since the great downpour and a lone small tern darting in and out as the waves advanced and retreated on the beach near Bingie Point .

Otherwise, apart from the new growth since the rain, birds and a couple of wallabies at Mullimburrah Point the only living things we saw were a two backpackers in a campervan at the end of the walk.

The Kiama Coast walk followed 2 days of excellent bushwalking in the beautiful Kiama area and was a fitting finale.

Recently another 6 kilometers was added to the Kiama coast walk, beginning at Werri Lagoon and going north, the walk passes through open pasture country with lovely ocean views most of the way, including very scenic headlands and rock shelves. There are challenging hills along the way and the surroundings are rich in history and geological interest. At one point there was a tiny remnant of original rainforest which gave us a view back into the past with its vast areas of warm temperate rainforests dominated by the glorious red cedar.

The remainder of the walk from Love's Bay to the Blow Hole near Kiama Harbour is mostly through built up areas but still mainly follows the coastline. Just north of Easts Beach there is a little blow hole which is more likely to be 'spouting' than the large blow hole near the lighthouse. ♦

Will she or won't she?

Continued from page 12

air blast. The trees above swayed violently and every bit of debris on the valley floor was whisked away. Despite being blown to the ground at one point I was able to video the evacuation. It can be viewed at *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7vM5vdM84U*

Within a minute there was silence as the helicopter disappeared into the clouds. It was now too late walk out so we made camp on the now well cleared site. Sunday morning we were away by 7.30 am and arrived back at the car just after 10 am and headed off to Penrith. At the Nepean District Hospital Jenny was still on oxygen and eventually the Doctors told us she would be kept in Hospital for another night. So Linda and Pieter decided to catch the train home.

This incident demonstrates how well the new 406 MHz personal locator beacons can work. The sequence of events flowed smoothly and efficiently. After the beacon was activated the signal was passed via satellite to Maritime Safety Authority in Canberra. MASA identified the club's beacon and contacted Bob (one of several emergency contacts on the list). Having confirmed that a party was in the area north of the Colo River and that the beacon activation was not a hoax, a helicopter from the NSW Ambulance Service at Bankstown airport was tasked to respond.

I cannot speak too highly of paramedic and helicopter crew who attended the incident. I was extremely impressed by the calm and professional manner in which the paramedic assessed the situation and prepared Jenny for the experience of winching to the aircraft hovering above. He also took the time inquire about the welfare of other members of the party and ensure that they would be able to return safely. We have written to the service expressing our gratitude.

No one should walk in the wilderness without an emergency beacon. ♦

[*But they didn't follow the AAS list of what to do in an emergency! Ed*]

ANZAC Day, 2010

Bill Sanday

Light rain and drizzle falling from leaves characterised the night and, stirred by occasional breezes, persisted as people gathered at Splendour Rock. A number of the gathering were already at Splendour Rock, bagging ring-side seats as it were, but many head-torches could be seen making their way toward that special place just before starting time. Youngsters scrambled to gain access to nearby rocks and the Highland pipers and drummers could be vaguely discerned assembling, just to the rear of the main outcrop, briefly silhouetted by the light of incoming torches.

Silence gradually fell as the flag was unfurled, whereupon the Service began with the Invocation and reading of The Roll of Honour. The recorded Recessional was followed by the laying of the wreath. To strains of "Abide With Me" played by solo piper Ron Smythe, from the upper North Coast. The wreath-laying was done with considerable dignity by young Connor. (Connor also assisted on the Rock by looking after the tape- recorder as had Josh in the past.) Directly following "Abide With Me" the pipes and drums of the East Hills contingent joined with Ron for the second verse of "Amazing Grace."

As frequently happens, tears mingled with the rain during The Last Post and eyes were barely dry by the end of the Minute's Silence. Bird-calls had echoed from the valleys just as Last Post died away ... an often-noticed occurrence. That evocative poem-fragment known as The Ode was intoned by many present. The Flowers of the Forest from the lone piper continued the solemnity and, after Reveille, bagpipes ... now affected by moisture ... valiantly led the singing of the National Anthem.

Concluding words mentioned the attendance of increasing numbers of young people ... an encouraging trend in that the tradition of the Dawn Service at Splendour Rock would be continued into the future.

Appropriately, Going Home from the musicians informed the gathering that the Service was over for another year. Waltzing Matilda could also be heard and, a little later after a well-earned photo-opportunity which, in the increasing light, would have shown their uniforms to good effect, snare-drums kept time as the pipers marched to their camp to take a break before the eleven o'clock formalities. The solo piper and the band members went to considerable trouble carrying heavy instruments and uniforms and the musical contribution to proceedings was much appreciated. ♦

Myrtle Rust

How to identify this menace

The fungus *Uredo rangelii* (Myrtle rust) has been detected on a commercial property on the New South Wales central coast. Myrtle rust is considered to be part of a group of rust fungi collectively known as eucalyptus/guava rust.

Early identification of this rust is vital to eradication efforts.

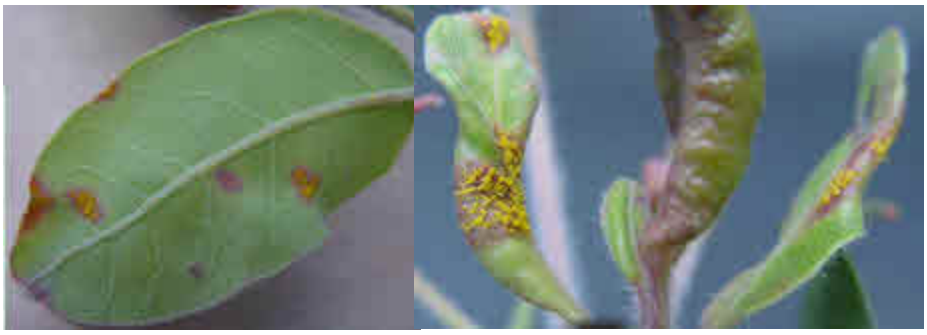
Host species: In Australia, Myrtle rust has recently been detected on *Agonis* (willow myrtle), *Syncarpia* (turpentine) and *Callistemon* (bottlebrush) species. Internationally, there are unconfirmed reports of infection on some *Eucalyptus* species. It has also been confirmed on *Myrtus*, *Syzygium* and *Heteropyxis* species overseas.

Spread: Rusts are highly transportable. The most common dispersal mechanism is via wind but they may also attract bees who work the spores on leaves. The spores can also be spread via contaminated clothing, infected plant material and insect movement.

Identification: Myrtle rust produces lesions on young, actively growing leaves and shoots, as well as on fruits and sepals. Leaves may become buckled or twisted as a result of infection. On turpentine and callistemon rust lesions are purple in colour, with masses of bright yellow or orange-yellow spores. Occasionally, they may have dark brown spores. Severe rust disease in young trees may kill shoot tips, causing loss of leaders and a bushy habit. **Any rust on Myrtaceae should be reported.**

Reporting: To report suspect cases of Myrtle rust please call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline: 1800 084 881

Uredo rangelii on Agonis flexuosa (Willow Myrtle)



Uredo rangelii on Turpentine

Caution: do not touch any infection or attempt to take samples. You will only spread the spores and the infection.