

The **Bushwalker**



**A wet day below Conservation Hut,
Blue Mountains NP**

**Volume 36
Issue 2
Autumn 2011**

Wouldn't you like to be here?



Carne Creek Valley, looking towards Wolgan River, Gardens of Stone NP. *Photo by Hugh Spiers*

The Bushwalker

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Editor: Roger Caffin

editor@bushwalking.org.au

Graphic Design & Assembly:

Barry Hanlon

Confederation Officers:

President: Dodie Green

Administration Officer:

admin@bushwalking.org.au

Website: www.bushwalking.org.au

Address all correspondence to:

PO Box 119, Newtown, NSW 2042

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: A wet day below Conservation Hut, Blue Mountains NP. Photo: Roger Caffin.

From the editor's desk. . .

Well, what a summer. For some of the time we stayed home in case of fires, then we piked out and stayed home (sometimes) because it was raining non-stop. Is Climate Change responsible for at least some of this? It would seem likely according to the latest research.

The front cover? That was taken below the Conservation 'Hut' at Wentworth Falls one rather wet day (OK, it was a total white-out) when we decided to visit Vera Falls, Wentworth Pass, National Pass and Undercliff/Overcliff despite the weather. And you know what? It was a great day!

Articles for Publication

I would like to thank the people who have been sending in articles for publication recently. I can't get all of them into a single issue, so I have had to hold some in reserve for another issue. But rest assured that every one of them will get serious attention. *Actually, I don't have much in reserve right now.*

We had an article in a previous issue about Volleys and footwear, which spurred some writing activity. Michael Keats has been at it, with friends. We have lots of other articles as well, not all of which will make this edition. But they are still in the queue!

Anyhow, please keep those articles rolling in. We need them. *Plain text please, and original unedited photos direct from the camera.* If you want to include a DOC file or a PDF (in addition to the plain text) to illustrate the sort of layout you have in mind, please do so as well.

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, if he can find them.



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Hecates Cauldron

Michael Keats, The Bush Club

Hecates Cauldron is a particularly beautiful and sensitive pagoda area around Baal Bone Gap and Mt McLean. It is one of many glorious dissected localities currently unprotected from the ravages of indiscriminate abuse by unregistered vehicles. The land area is part of a State Forest. Part of my aim is to encourage bushwalkers to discover this place and to bring pressure to bear on State Forests and the NP&WS to act urgently to protect this environmental heritage.

During the course of the walk lots of questions were asked concerning Hecate: whether Hecate was a male or female (witch or warlock) etc. What follows is enough for you, the reader to decide. Shakespeare added to Hecate's persona by his use of her as a senior, but very standoffish witch in Macbeth. In one respect the weather frustrated our day, on the other it created atmospherics that were in keeping with the witchcraft theme.

KATE (or Hecate) was the goddess of magic, witchcraft, the night, moon, ghosts and necromancy. She was the only child of the Titanes Perses and Asteria from whom she received her power over heaven, earth, and sea.

Hekate was usually depicted in Greek vase painting as a woman holding twin torches. Sometimes she was dressed in a knee-length maiden's skirt and hunting boots, much like Artemis. In statuary Hekate was often depicted in triple form as a goddess of crossroads.

A clear view up the pagodas



Her role and attributes are hard to sum up in a few words. She has the power of change, whether for good or evil, and is the one invoked when spells are cast. A good lunar calendar is essential as the power she gives is related to the phases of the moon. That's why it's best to start new projects when there's a full moon. (If nothing else, at least you'll be able to see what you're doing.)

Over the centuries, her esoteric nature has led to a lot of misunderstandings and bad press. The modern conception of a wicked cackling witch with broomstick and warts is more or less the result of early Christian anti-Hecate propaganda. (After all, any decent witch could cure warts in a jiffy.)

A large, low pressure system ensured that from the time we left Sydney, and for the whole day it was wet. Most of the time we walked in cloud, which every so often dissolved into rain. While mist blocked out expected views, it added mystery and colour intensity to the terrain close up. After parking we donned wet weather gear and stood in the rain for a very quick briefing – we would now walk the crest of the Great Dividing Range following the pad as far as McLeans Pass, then head west to commence exploring. Plans to walk the cliff line to enjoy the views were abandoned.

At 0939 after climbing onto the crest an elevated rock platform was visited. Normally this would make an exceptional spot for a group photo with the magnificent Wolgan Valley as background. We still did the photo shoot that portrayed us as a group of eleven desperate city escapees against a wall of white...

After noting a particularly fine pagoda we continued pushing north until at 0953 the first dissected, really big pagodas appeared through the mist. Now it was time to start exploring in detail. The rewards were great. We climbed, discovered, viewed vast slots, towering high pagodas, runnels of water and also many places where conditions meant only a frustrating look rather than an exciting climb – we have to return.

While exploring the numerous interstitial slots, crevices and runnels of the pagoda complex our focus was very much on novelty and trying to determine what passages and climbs would take us further a field. Imagine our consternation and disappointment at coming across a bike trail. The trouble is this area with all



A clear view down between the pagodas

its glory is not protected by National Park status. It is a part of the Ben Bullen / Wolgan State Forest, and Forests NSW lack the resources and commitment to prosecute the use of unregistered vehicles desecrating this glorious place.

The bike track led up to the very top of the pagodas on the northern rim so we followed it wanting to reduce the impact of forming any more tracks. We made fast progress, and it was not until we were about to descend into a truly stupendous canyon and slot complex that I realised we were missing one of our number. I called an immediate halt and three of the party went into reverse. Fortunately in less than 15 minutes we were all together once more and I had a volunteer act as Tail End Charlie. I should know better – with a group of 11 a tail is a must.

Given the time I said to the lead scouts that a dry cave for morning tea within five minutes would be perfect. Presto! In less than 2 minutes we had the perfect cave. Not only was it dry, it had a great view into a canyon complex and was tiered so we all could enjoy the canyon view. Better still, it was equipped with enough dry litter for a small, safe cheery fire. What more could you ask? Fifteen minutes later, fire extinguished, refuelled and invigorated we were back into exploring mode. This country is another world – a world of soaring rocky pagodas, tens of metres high joined by fern filled chasms and slots and peppered with large eucalypts. On the day this end of the Hecate Cauldron it was ethereally beautiful and distracting enough to forget how wet and clammy we were. The only downside was that photography to record the magic was very challenging.

It was clear that the bike riders had used the Bicentennial Trail from the Baal Bone Gap area as the starting point. We followed the track east and then north, and the rewards were instant and

fantastic. Again we were deep in pagoda country with more options for exploring than there was time to do. A huge chock stone of several hundred tonnes was perched across a wide slot of about five metres width and about 10m above the floor of the slot.

An approach from the low side was foiled by a tangled mass of dead vegetation, however climbing high and to the east we found an easy walk in and the opportunity for great photos. Whilst in the area we noticed a new rope attached to a boulder that would lead to the top of the chock stone. It was too wet and messy to attempt to climb and we puzzled about why it was there. Writing this report I think I have the answer. This rope has been installed so that access to the top of the boss via the chock stone is possible—another item for the next visit agenda.

Gazing up towards the top of the pagodas we had one of those special moments. We were just in the right position to view an erosion residual that looked just like a wild witch's head. The light made a photo impossible. The spirit of Hecate lives in this place.

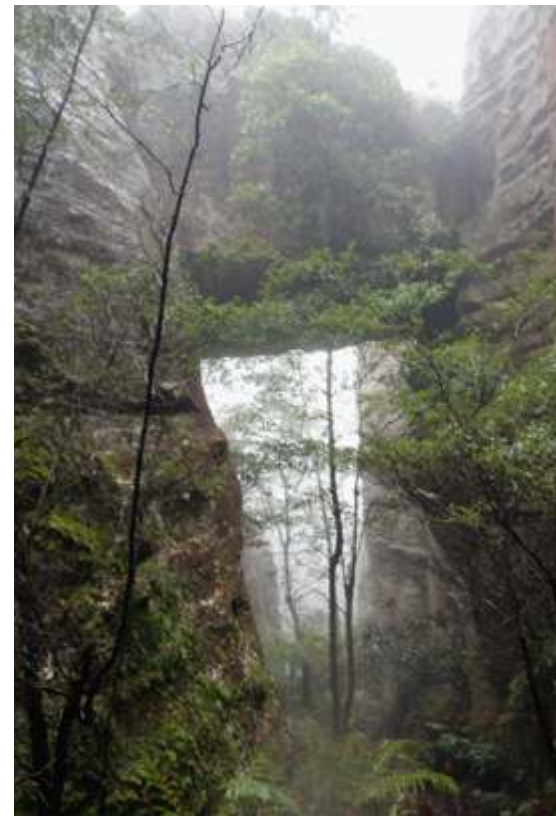
The weather continued to be depressingly wet and all of us were wet as well and cooling down fast. As Star Gate Tunnel was nearby I determined we should make for it and enjoy another dry destination, this one for lunch. This short

water-worn canyon with towering ceiling is just north of Mount McLean. A logbook in old biscuit tin records that this cave is regularly visited. The very first entry dated Sunday 17th August 1975 reads,

"Gary named this Stargate Tunnel. We stayed overnight and watched sunset from the cliffs overlooking Capertee Valley. And then we got up at 6:30 to watch the sunrise. Very cold but we consider it was worthwhile. John and Martin came too and we sprang around like callow youths. Terry Moesker."

We arrived there at 1210. It is unique and a wonderful refuge. We took the opportunity to make a small fire and warm up while enjoying our lunch watching the rain outside and numerous small waterfalls all actively further sculpting this masterpiece. At 1245, fire out, warm once more and with calories on board we set out to return along the ridge track to the vehicles. It was just too wet and visibility too poor to do more exploring.

The vehicles were reached at 1340. Changed and dry we headed back to Lithgow for coffee and more while plotting our return foray. There are many more days of exploring to do in this very small area. It offers so much spectacular scenery for so little effort. You do however need to be a competent navigator. ♦



The chockstone bridge



In front of the Wolgan Valley, so to speak!

BWRS NavShield 2011



Walkers are reminded that the 22nd NavShield will be held on 2-3 July 2011. For further details see the previous issue of The Bushwalker. Registrations for this year's event will open very soon and all information will be available on the BWRS website, www.bwrs.org.au.

For further details contact Caro Ryan, phone 0412 304 071 or email publicity@bwrs.org.au

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HENRY GOLD'S Images of the Wild



On St. Mary Peak, Flinders Ranges National Park. Photo: Henry Gold

Henry Gold has supported the environment movement for over forty years, as its honorary photographer. Henry knows wilderness intimately as a photographer and through his many adventures with the Sydney Bushwalkers, which he joined in 1956. His photographs are not just artistically appealing, they have been a major influence in campaigns for the preservation and World Heritage listing of, not only the Blue Mountains, but also the NSW rainforests.

In 1967, Henry's images featured in the classic campaign brochure "Quarrying Valuable Scenery" that helped to save the Colong Caves in the southern Blue Mountains. Throughout the campaign to protect the Colong area and Boyd Plateau, Henry Gold provided the photographic material for pamphlets, press articles and special issues of conservation magazines, such as *Habitat*. Henry Gold's photographs have been used to publicise wilderness protection ever since.

Henry has been instrumental in bringing threatened wilderness areas to the attention of decision-makers who cannot or will not visit these areas. He has photographed the Forbes River, Upper Hastings and Washpool forests,

provided illustrations for the former Australian Heritage Commission publications, and contributed to the Australian Conservation Foundation books "Australian Natural Heritage" and "The Gift of the Forest". There can be no doubt that Henry Gold has won many to the cause of nature conservation.

Henry has become one of Australia's foremost landscape photographers. He has contributed countless images to the *Journal of the National Parks Association of NSW*, as well as producing images for the "MacDonnell Ranges", "Wild Places", "The Colo Wilderness", the "NSW Wilderness Calendar". He has undertaken numerous lengthy field trips, often alone, to obtain images for the protection of wilderness and in 2006 was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for his service to wilderness preservation.

Major campaigns 1968–2000 in which Henry Gold's photographs played a key role:

Colong campaign 1968-71
Boyd Plateau 1972-75
Greater Blue Mountains National Park 1975
Kakadu National Park 1976

Colo Wilderness 1978
Rainforest campaign 1973-83
Old Growth Forest campaign 1992-98
Blue Mountains World Heritage campaign 1986-2000 ♦

An exhibition of wilderness photographs

Bondi Pavilion Gallery,
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Sunday June 12,

open 10am – 5pm daily

Rubber Duckies on the Colo

John Sharples
Newcastle Ramblers



Ready to Start



Under total control. . . Of course!

Five Ramblers plus our trusty porters made our way down the Canoe Creek track with boats, boat boots and packs for a projected six days down the Colo to Merroo Plantation. After inflating the boats the river crew camped at Canoe Creek while the porters headed back up the track to the cars and home. We headed off on Monday morning in glorious sunshine and soon had our somewhat coracle-like craft under a modicum of control, and by lunch time Monday we were quite adept at shooting the rapids, getting stuck in rock blocks and beaching the craft to tip out the gallons of water that frequently poured in over the side, front, rear or other side. Each day we did around 5 to 6 km of paddling then set up camp on a sandy shelf and relaxed for the rest of the afternoon.

On Wednesday morning we were preparing to break camp when a police helicopter appeared overhead. Having previously entered our trip details, against the appropriate PLB number on the AMSA website we knew they weren't looking for us. The chopper circled and came up river quite low and checked that we were OK anyhow. It then headed further upstream and landed some three or four hundred metres away. Shortly thereafter the chopper took off and then four young men in two Canadian type canoes appeared. Through discussion with them we learned they had walked some 10 km from the Putty road with the canoes on trolleys, one of which broke. Their supplies and preparation for the trip were totally inadequate and they were already overdue before they even reached the Colo.

The remains of one of their canoes



We continued down stream, occasionally sighting the drag marks of their canoes, for the rest of Wednesday and Thursday until we made camp. About 5.00 pm another chopper appeared overhead and continued upstream. This one also returned and landed on a nearby sandbank. They were still looking for two of the four canoeists and we gave them what small information we had they continued their search downstream.

Early Friday morning we spotted one of their canoes wedged between rocks and held by the full force of a rapid. We soon came on some abandoned gear and at Bob Turners Track we saw evidence of a canoe being dragged out of the water. We continued on and arrived at Merroo, in high spirits, just before lunch on Saturday.

Apart from the obvious, our trip had been exciting, hard work and uneventful. The scenery in that part of the Colo is breathtaking and we enjoyed fine weather for the whole trip. On arrival at Merroo, however, things changed for the worse. The rain set in and with our largish support team we spent the next two days confined to the shelter shed. Visits from members of Kuringai and Sydney Bushwalking clubs, as well as various others, kept our spirits up and Robyn's birthday party on Saturday night shook the rafters.

PS: If any of you have been awakened, in the dead of night and in a lonely bush setting by the mating call of a koala you will understand our reticence to spend the rest of the night in tents. ♦

How we spent the afternoons



Over the (next) Hill

Kaye Birch, The Bush Club

I think we should call ourselves 'We of the Never Never' (like, never, never will we climb these mountains again), I gasped after ascending Mt Despair. 'I was thinking more Picnic at Hanging Rock' replied Gay. Such confidence in the leader!

In early April 2011, our group of four women ranging in ages from 62 to 71 years and all members of The Bush Club in Sydney completed another stage of the Australian Alpine Walking Track which runs between Walhalla 180km east of Melbourne and Tharwa 30km south of Canberra. The whole walk is over 650 km long, with climbs totalling 24,400 m. This section, from King Billy 1 to Mt St Bernard (9 km SW of Hotham) is 70 km long and has climbs totalling 5000 m. For me it was to be the final stage, having blithely followed in the footsteps of Bush Club leaders/organisers Tony and Ian who have lead or assisted with the other stages. This section was reputedly either the best or the worst part, depending on such vagaries as the weather and availability of water.

I made 'the girls' an offer they simply could not refuse. After all, how could they say no to visiting places such as The

Terrible Hollow, Mt Buggery, Horrible Gap, Hells Window and Mt Despair?

Armed with the Chapman 'bible' on the track, our chauffeur Peter dropped us off at King Billy 1 in brilliant sunshine on day 1. Such weather was to continue for a large part of our trip. We ascended Mt Magdala then Mt Howitt, viewing layer



More of the Crosscut Saw

upon layer of distant blue mountains, eventually arriving at the only hut on this section - Vallejo Ganther Hut, which is accessible from other roads and therefore popular. A group of four men soon arrived with folding chairs on their backs - we concluded that they were doing a more laid-back trip than ours.

Early on the second day we were traversing the Crosscut Saw, so named for obvious reasons, with wonderful views in all directions. This was a section I had heard so much about, and I was not disappointed. Past Mt Buggery towards Mt Speculation our walk was 'enlivened' by several small cliffs to be scrambled up. At our camp site, Catherine Saddle, we collected water from a nearby soak for the night and the next day. Our timing was good - there had been considerable rain in the area in recent times, so water was available where it isn't often found.

So it was with very heavy packs we departed on day 3 for Viking Saddle. One pack - not mine - weighed a mere 29 kg. Fortunately it was a short day - some groups combine days 2 & 3, but for us it would have been too long a day, allowing no margin for error. And we were there to have fun! We resisted the temptation to take the side-trip out to The Razor, satisfying ourselves by looking towards it.



The Crosscut Saw

Some of the worst post 2006 fire regrowth was on the section heading down to camp.

The next day, our fourth, encompassed the big climb up to The Viking, the piece-de-resistance. We were glad that we had been advised to take a rope for hauling our packs up a chute before gaining the

summit in rather gusty conditions. The views from the summit were breathtaking. The track from there heads across the base of the cliff-line required vigilance so as not to end up too far south, and the scramble down the rocky chute to the valley floor was 'interesting'. Again some heavy regrowth slowed our progress so that evening's camp at the water-tank near East Riley Rd. It was early to bed, encouraged as we were by the day's big climb and a cold and strong wind.

At the start of day 5 it was a short walk to meet chauffeur Peter with a food re-supply. We enjoyed some chocolate cake and coffee and a change of clothes, before bidding him farewell. The sunshine was gone this morning, and during our short walk to camp at the top of Selwyn South where a water tank has just been installed, it sprinkled. Of course as soon as we started to set up our tents, it rained in earnest. But our chief fire lighter, with help from the rest of the team, eventually managed to get a welcome fire blazing.

Looking towards the Viking



Descending to the saddle below Hells Window

Day 6 was another day with big ups and downs. By now we were welcoming the climbs (how I exaggerate) - but we were gaining in fitness. Our campsite near Murrays Hut site was the only one where finding water was doubtful. In fact it was a very steep scramble down a blackberry & nettle infested gully - but I'm sure that the water tasted better than the muddy stuff in the tyre-ruts near our tents. The sunset that night made up for our scratched limbs.

The next morning was a very early start in a pea-soup fog. The decision was quickly made to take the bad-weather route past Mt St Bernard to the Great Alpine Road. The temperature continued to drop the nearer we got to our exit point. Little did we know that at nearby Mt Hotham it had been snowing heavily for over a day. Spurred on by the 0 C temperature we sped to the exit, covering the 13.5 km by mid-morning & climbed into our hired Landcruiser for a hot shower and some fresh pub food in Hotham.

It was at this point that I could tell that enthusiasm for the last days' walking, a mere 9 km to Mt Loch carpark, was definitely waning. My once easy-going friends were rebelling. (Thank goodness, I thought, now I don't feel compelled to walk in the freezing snow and fog).

So, only 9 kilometres separates me from the finishing line - completion of the entire AAWT. But I'm sure that Mt Little Blowhard & Mt Blowhard will still be there in spring, awaiting our return. ♦

Rove Beetle Health Hazard

The rove beetle is small: around 7-8mm long. It has a black head with an orange/red thorax (immediately behind the head). The body is mostly black, with a shiny metallic black area that conceals its folded wings. It has a distinct broad orange/red band towards the tapered tail. During daytime, rove beetles can look similar to ants, crawling around the ground swiftly with hidden wings. At night, they are attracted to light sources and will fly and land on objects near lights. The rove beetle is widely distributed in the eastern states of Australia. It usually lives near drainage lines and watercourses. During heavy rains and floods, the beetle may migrate to drier areas. Favourable conditions can lead to localised population explosions for short periods.

Risk to public health

The body fluids in the rove beetle are a poisonous animal contact toxin. Contact with the beetle can cause a severe skin reaction. If you crush the beetle the toxin is released and absorbed by your skin. The beetle can be crushed if you swat it like a fly or mosquito, or if it collides with you at speed (such as bare skin on a motorbike). The toxin causes reddening of the skin, and a 'burning' sensation. This is followed by painful irritation and itching, with extensive pustules and blistering of the skin after four days. The

affected areas remain irritated, blistered and sore for 10 days. Toxin on the hands, or near body joints, can spread the toxin to other areas of the body and to others. Personal protection

To help protect yourself and others from the effects of rove beetle toxin:

- Avoid any contact with rove beetles at all times;
- Minimise lighting in infested areas at night;
- Wear long-sleeved and long-legged clothing to minimise exposed skin;
- Keep insect screens closed on tents to keep the beetles out of bedding.

First aid

There is no specific first aid available for exposure to rove beetle toxin. If exposed to Rove Beetle toxin, wash the affected area immediately with soapy water. You can then use cold compresses, antihistamines or Aloe vera to alleviate the symptoms on exposed areas. Avoid secondary infections in blistered areas. Seek medical attention for severe skin reactions to the toxin. *Info from DECC.* ♦



WILLIS'S WALKABOUTS

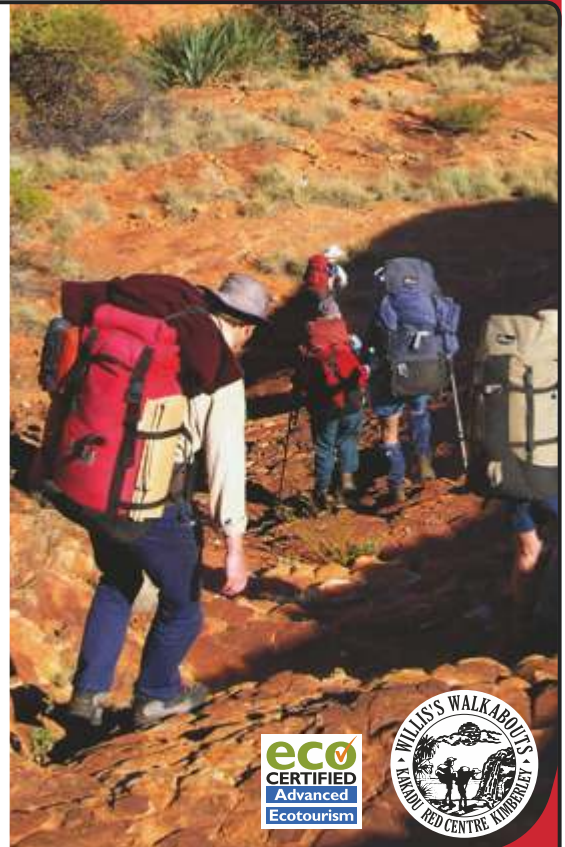
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Getting High on New Years Eve

Ian Smith



The summit track at Rawsons Pass

They came with poles, they came with backpacks, they mostly came with hats, they came with beanies, they came with scarves, they wore parkas, they wore board shorts, the older and wiser ones wore long sleeves and they brought their lunch. Some made it, some



Playtime on the snowbank at Kosci

didn't; some were to be found laying on the side of the trail; it was like a pilgrimage route to the mount; who would be anointed, who would miss out? What miracles might occur before the small pile of stones on the summit?

For me, the miracle was that so many people were trying to get there. From the sleeping babies (did they really care?) in prams, to the elderly (heavens, were we numbered among them?), to the loving couples, to the foreign travellers, they came in all shapes and sizes.

We chose the easy route; first riding up the chairlift to Crackenback and then commencing the walk. It still left us 6.5 km to the summit, invisible over the horizon for the next few km.

I always used to have a bit of a spit about the National Park entry fee but I whinge no longer. This walk has been laid for most of its length with steel mesh boardwalk which is superb to walk on. Drifting over the alpine flora in the cool winds of the mountains surrounded by an almost cloudless sky meant we were probably in one of the best places in Australia on New Years Eve. We were



Near Eagles nest, at the start

walking to Mount Kosciuszko, the official spelling of which Microsoft hasn't caught up with yet (it was changed in 1997). [Not that all of us accept the change yet - Ed.]

We were passed or passed others continually; one of our party kept taking photos which slowed us down a little. The undulating trail meant the drink bottles came in handy but we passed the 2 km point where the lookout was situated and didn't even pause.

For novices it's hard to tell just which overgrown hill is Kosciuszko. It's only the trail that gives it away after you reach Rawsons Pass, where it



The boardwalk - stroller-friendly

Letter to the Editor:

Re' Cairns

Some traditional cairns or markers are like old friends. You know where they are and why they are there. A turn, the "right" ridge, the access gully etc etc. They are like the huts in Kosciuszko. They are a landmark that makes you feel safe and you know exactly where you are. But you still have to navigate to that "marker". They are small helpful hints from bushwalkers past. True, we don't need large piles of rocks in well known areas but the traditional single or two rock cairns are part of bushwalking folklore. They were often initially placed by the early bushwalkers exploring new areas which has benefited us all.

I would like to highlight one in particular. It took a lot of people a long time to find Watson Pass off Folly Point in the Budawangs. Using your compass together with the latest photogrammetric topo, Budawangs sketch and GPS combined wouldn't help you find this pass. Navigational ability through this area only helps to a minor degree. It is the small rock cairns strategically placed that direct walkers safely through, around and over the rocks and gullies of both sections of the pass. It would take almost as long as the original discoverers to find the pass without the cairns.

There is no argument the ability to navigate is essential and that minimal impact bushwalking is a principle to be supported but I would rather enjoy my walk knowing I was navigating to a known traditional marker than be counting paces and constantly referring to a map or GPS checking my position.

Mike Robinson
Bankstown
Bushwalking
Club



Obligatory summit photo - fantastic weather

intersects with the Charlotte Pass Road, a 9 km easy gradient walk along the 4WD road from the resort of the same name.

From Rawsons Pass you can see the Main Range Trail and the one leading to the summit, readily identified by the number of bodies walking there.

I once read a story of a mountain climber who set out to bag the highest peaks on the five continents. He attempted Kosciuszko first but never made it. Foul weather ate up all his time and he had to return years later to complete the task. It's just a reminder that not all days are as benign as the one we were having. Skiers who've experienced Thredbo on windy days can attest to that!

We used the excellent toilet block at the intersection. It was a surprise to us that there was one there. Then we moved on, past the Main Range Trail and up the last 800 metres to the top. Judging by the number of people already here on this day, we must have been some of the last Australians to perform this feat this day.

It's a wonderful feeling to sit atop and know that there's nothing for a few thousand kilometres that's any higher. We shouted ourselves our pre-packed lunch and chilled out for 20 minutes, soaking up the atmosphere and sipping our cordial.

On the way back we took more note of the delicate flowers, pondering how hardy a plant would have to be to survive up here. The summer meadows are a windblown treat for the eye and all too soon we found ourselves back at the chairlift where we paused for afternoon tea in the Eagle's Nest, a favourite haunt for skiers in season.

We were distracted from its expansive views from time to time by mountain bikers alighting from the lift. What a great was to spend a day but, sadly, ours was nearly finished but, at least I'd ticked another box. ♦



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Walls of Jerusalem

Doug Slatter
Brisbane Water Outdoor Club

In keeping with tradition, our meeting at Mascot did not go as planned but we all arrived in time. After a pleasant but uneventful flight we landed and taxied to Launceston. Next a quick tour to find the camping store for fuel and other sundries, then we returned to await Paul Grigg to take us to the start. Paul is a bushwalker who runs a very useful shuttle service and is a wealth of knowledge for bushwalkers.

Arriving at the WOJ car park we found a bus & about 30 cars parked around. So

who camped and did local walks.

Off up the climb to Trappers Hut, a walk I was not looking forward to as I remembered the climb from a previous day trip. Surprisingly I handled it OK with a 20 kg pack. After photos at the hut we took a lesser used path to the left towards Wild Dog Ck. Marion displayed her skill in finding a perfect campsite just on dark. Not a lot of chatter as we'd had a long day and were soon to bed.

An early start and up the creek to the main track just below the camping platforms below Herods' Gate. Here the view of the Walls first appears, with the West Walls on our right hand side. The Walls are a row of cliffs about a 150 m high starting at King Davids Peak and running about 1.5 km to Solomons Throne. On our left was Lake Salome. Tasmania has had reduced rainfall for the past 8 years and most of the lakes we encountered were fairly low: this was evident in Lake Salome as when I saw it 12 years ago the lake was up to the track. Now there was a fair amount of marsh at the edge. We passed the lake and saw the first of many cushion plants. These look like rounded rocks with moss covering them. They are actually groups of tiny plants growing on a peat-like base.

A side trip to the Pool of Bethesda, a lovely little pool below the Temple and Zion Hill, then back to the track and off to

a campsite below some ancient King Billy Pines. Another great campsite on soft spongy grass with a stream nearby. After a bit of tucker we headed off to the top of Solomons Throne, a fairly easy climb around dolerite rocks and through a slot to the top. Here we had a great view south to our destination, west to the mountains of the Overland Track and all the rest of the features of the area. As there was a cool breeze blowing we decided not to wander north to King Davids Peak but to drop down to Kingdom Dixons hut.

Back down to Damascus Gate and roughly east about 2 km to the hut, a rough slab timber hut with shingle roof built in the 50s for use by Reg Dixon whilst grazing cattle. The hut is on the edge of a grove of Pencil Pines. Many photos were taken, then on a compass bearing we headed back to the tents for more dried food and to bed, (no campfires on this trip) after a pretty easy 5 km day.

Another beautiful day gave us a reasonably early start. The sun on the western Walls was a picture to delight.

Heading south we found the track to Lake Ball and another hut. This one and a few others in the area were built by an ex-Changi prisoner who couldn't settle down to 'city' life and spent his time trapping, fishing and living off the land. They were also built of rough hewn King Billy and Pencil Pine. At the hut we met a couple of other walkers trying their hand fishing, apparently to no avail.

We continued skirting Lake Ball, crossed a fairly flat area to Lake Adelaide



Lake Meston

much for wilderness walking! We found out that most were day walkers to what has become a very popular walk. The bus appeared to have hundreds of schoolkids



Junction Lake



Tarns on the Traveller Range



On the way to Lake Meston

joining the alternative track back to Trappers Hut. Turning south we now skirted Lake Adelaide for about 4 km along a slightly scrubby path on the eastern side till we came to a fairly flat section. Bypassing a pond we came over a hill to Lake Meston - another very pretty lake. We now continued on the western side for about 1.5 km to the Lake Meston hut. Here we set up camp on the flat area around the hut. Today's total was around 14 km easy walking. Fishing was tried to no avail so we had tea - then our visitors (hungry possums) arrived. It's amazing how fast these tree dwelling marsupials can move when missiles start flying.

An early start next day, and we followed above Lake Meston to the end across flattish grassland to Junction Lake, paused for a while then back to Junction Lake Hut. We found the track over the creek that becomes the Mersey River at the other end of Junction Lake. This track climbs steeply through a saddle along a scrubby path to Lake Artemis, thence Lake

Eros where we were climbing onto the Traveller Range. We wandered between scrub and rock outcrops till we found a small lake. The day had been overcast and light rain, it was getting dim so we camped around the lake. The days walk was around 12 km, mostly easy with a bit of scrub to contend with.

Another early start was made as we needed to be at Narcissus Hut by 3.30 pm for the ferry. We headed through spiky scrub up to the rock outcrops and roughly west along the Traveller Range, past many little tarns till a spot above a pretty valley (roughly MR260570). Here we decided that we should follow the valley north to a spot where we would drop down to Du Cane Gap where we would meet the Overland Track. This would have been great but for the trees, scrub, steep incline and anything else you could think of. Going was tough and Ken, who had had a bit of trouble with his shoulder, came to grief and needed a bit of assistance but we all made it down by

about 2 pm, leaving 19 km to the ferry.

Steve raced ahead and got to the ferry before it departed at 4.15, but stayed behind after cancelling our booking and rebooking for 9 am next day. We passed Windy Ridge Hut and proceeded along a pretty unexciting walk partly on boardwalks catching up with Steve at Narcissus Hut. Back along the track about 150 m Pete took us to a fantastic campsite by the river where we relaxed for the rest of the day, again having an early night.

Finally we packed up and head for the ferry. There were lots of Overland Trackers waiting, most put their packs on the ferry and walked the rest. We reckoned that we'd done the hard and pretty bits and the last 15 km would be a drag so we opted for an early breakfast at Cynthia Bay Resort. A feed, a shower (the best \$3 investment around) and after lunch Ken, Michael and I left the others on their further adventures to Frenchman's Cap while we went back with Paul Grigg to Launceston. ♦



In the slot to Solomon's Throne

Banner photograph at the head of the story:
South From King David's Throne

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Mogo State Forest

Lyn Brown
Batemans Bay Bushwalkers

The multitude of tracks and trails, twists and turns held no mystery for our leader. Betty had us wending our way up and down hills on old forgotten timber trails, along steep creek beds, and, clambering over and around fallen trees. Past interestingly shaped boulders, spiky Burrawangs, a profusion of pink flowering *Crowea exelata* and the occasional shy deep purple of a *Scaevola*.

She guided us to a monolithic granite boulder with room for us all to perch on, admire the view and take photographs while having our morning tea. The next hour had us stepping out till we reached her chosen lunch spot which was excellent, with our pick of a rocky seat in sun or shade and all around us a lovely sclerophyll forest with Spotted gums and Iron barks. Lots of other varieties of trees and shrubs, all lush and green after the wonderful rain we have had over the last few months.

More stepping out and ups and down till finally we turned yet one more corner to be greeted by our cars. Betty had led us back safely and another great club walk was over. ♦



Morning Tea on a granite boulder

Coming up the track



The lower Grose River From the Vale of Avoca Lookout

Photos: Barry Hanlon



Looking across to Springwood Ridge and Grose Head South.



The lower gorge. Patterson's Hill is on the right.

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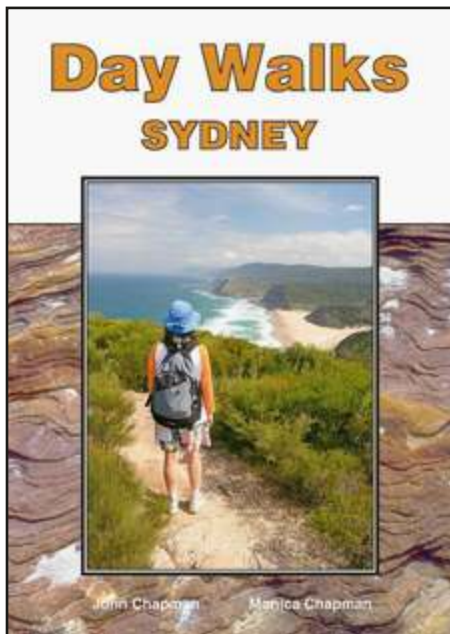
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Book Reviews

Best River and Alpine Walks around Mt Kosciuszko



Day Walks Sydney

John Chapman and Monica Chapman
ISBN 978-1-920995-08-9

Yet another book of day walks around Sydney, but done in the excellent style we expect of the Chapmans. Yes, they are all fairly easy walks, ranging from 5 to 19 km in length, and yes, we all know about them. But sometimes you need that jog to revisit old friends, and this book made us do just that - with very nice results.

The descriptions of the walks are generally clear, with just a few changes since John and Monica walked them, but overall they are very usable and keyed to the maps. The photos are nice, the maps and profiles are very useful, and the optional plastic cover you can get if you order direct from the Chapmans was very worth while in poor weather.

204 pages, 144 colour photographs, 40 colour topographic maps.

Available from some bookshops with a recommended retail price of \$34.95. or from the Chapman web site at: <http://www.john.chapman.name/>, for \$32 including GST and postage within Australia.

Roger Caffin

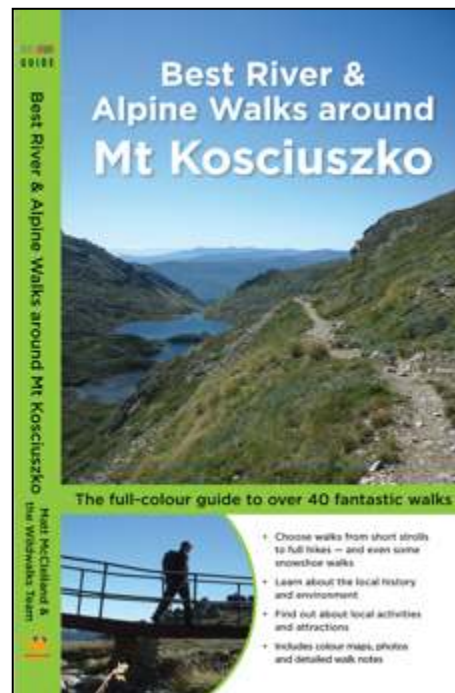
Matt McClelland and the Wildwalks Team
ISBN 978-1-9921606-04-5

A range of easy walks around Mt Kosciuszko, ranging from 3 km to 20 km, and all ones which can be done in a day. There's an unexpected extra at the back of the book: a small selection of snow shoe walks.

Lots of photos of that beautiful alpine region of course. There are simple sketch maps for the walks: whether those maps would be sufficient in every case is doubtful. In some cases where the walk is a standard NPWs track you could probably go without a map. The route descriptions are keyed to the sketch maps, although not to the fine detail you get in a Chapman book. In good weather the keying would still be fine. Each walk also has the expected short summary and a bit of history as well.

You can get the book from the www.wildwalks.com web site at \$30 including P&P.

Roger Caffin



Attack!

"We tried to shepherd him to safety off the track, but he turned and attacked us!"



Baby blue-tongue lizard

Advance Notice

Gardens of Stone National Reserve

Michael Keats and Brian Fox are working on a major, 8 book, 4,000 page, full colour work on the Gardens of Stone National Park. The newly declared Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area is central to the content of book 1 that is planned for release later this year. This is the first time that a book covering the

most magical sandstone-featured National Park has ever been written.

The eight informative volumes will include over 150 new walks as well as comprehensive insight on the Geology, Geomorphology, Climate, Aboriginal history, Historical Maps, the major Rivers and Water Pollution, Regional History and the Origin of Local Place Names, Flora and Fauna, the Last Three Centuries of European Settlement, together with information on threatened species and environments.

Book 1 detailing 24 walks, the regional geology and geomorphology and Book 2 detailing 22 walks centred on Newnes including regional climate should be released during 2011. Books 3 to 8 will be progressively released during 2012 and 2013.

Prepurchase of these books at a pre-publication price is available: contact Michael at: mjmkeats@easy.com.au or Brian at: brianandelaine@aapt.net.au.