The Bushwalker

The Totem Pole,
Wollemi National Park

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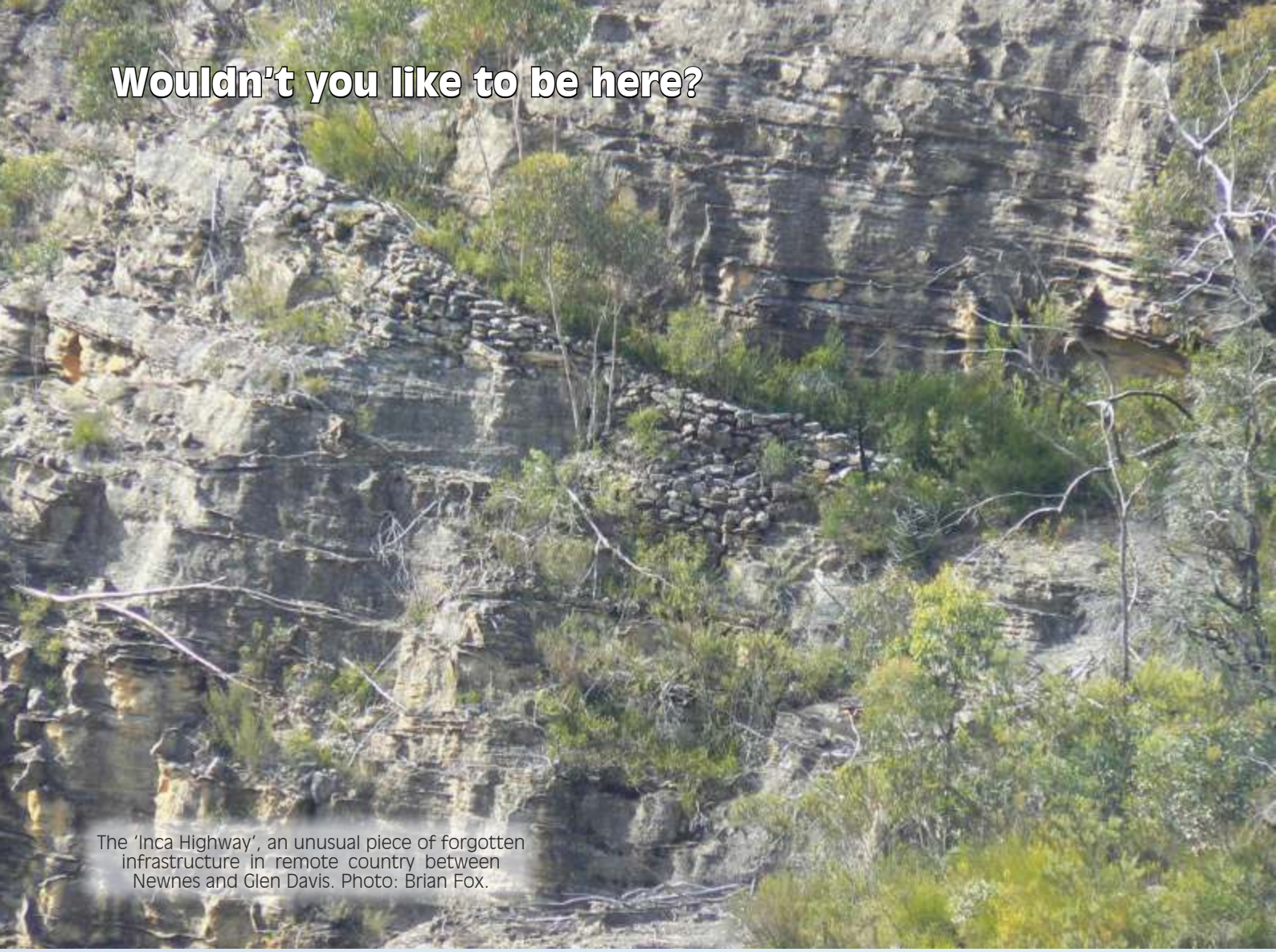

The 'Inca Highway', an unusual piece of forgotten infrastructure in remote country between Newnes and Glen Davis. Photo: Brian Fox.

Trampers on the Keppler Track, Fiordland National Park, New Zealand, January 2012. Photo: Cotter Erickson.

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The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc represents approximately 66 Clubs with a total membership of about 8,700 bushwalkers.

Formed in 1932, the Confederation provides a united voice on behalf of all bushwalkers on conservation, access and other issues.

People interested in joining a bushwalking club may write to the Confederation Administration **admin@bushwalking.org.au** for a list of Clubs, but a far more useful on-line list is available at the Confederation website **www.bushwalking.org.au,** broken up into areas. There's lots of other good stuff there too, including the bushwalking FAQ.

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Front Cover: The Totem Pole, Wolgan River, Wollemi National Park. Left to right Yuri Bolotin, Michael Keats and Brian Fox. Photo: Chris Woods, NPWS.

From the editor's desk. . .

Homo sapiens ssp. bushwalkerensis - a threatened species.

Before technology seduced young people into a world of synthetic outdoor experiences and parents became paranoid about 'safety' of their progeny, there was hope that a proportion of young people would learn to love the great Australian outdoors and enjoy the real world. Scouts and Guides are two youth groups battling to keep real Aussie values alive.

When I was visiting a branch of the local bank recently, the conversation with the young teller turned to weekend activities. When I explained I was going overnight camping and bushwalking in the Wollemi Wilderness, the first reaction was disbelief, the second was more worrying. He did not know where or what the Wollemi Wilderness was. I quizzed further and found he did not know where Lithgow was, and, he had never been over the Blue Mountains.

Legislatively, already bushwalkers are second class citizens. Why is it that shooters and hunters, plying their nefarious craft in state forests, and soon also in national parks, have precedence? I object to submitting to a process where my rights as a bushwalker have to give way to a group of killers who have a vested interest in maintaining feral populations to keep their so called 'sport' alive. Eradication of feral species is the very last objective of shooters.

When it comes to fitness, self reliance and traditional Aussie values, no one does it better across the age spectrum than bushwalkers, yet somehow we fail to ignite the passion that characterises other sports, even being outdone by activities on an electronic screen. In short, bushwalking is not a 'sexy' activity.

As a group, we have powerful friends in politics, yet they are compromised by the agendas of others. We need a new messiah who can galvanise broad support for protecting our long term economic future from the short term gains so beloved by our politicians. Where is the voice of reason that espouses the cost benefits of long term quality of life and tourism over rapacious short term greed?

The real champions of our cause should be the State and Federal Health Ministers, those supposed custodians of local food production, safe, clean water and air who have a vested interest in our lifelong health. Where are they?

We should worry that our State and Federal Environmental Protection Agencies are compromised. When nasty data turns up, it is either lost or conveniently overlooked, or worse, 'special concessions' are given so a licence from an EPA becomes a licence to pollute and desecrate with impunity.

The biggest threat is yet to come. Our national parks, and land that should be national parks will be made to be a revenue source or we will lose it. Already there are groups talking of national parks paying local government rates, an outrageous but not improbable proposition. The NSW NPWS Act now provides for commercial operators of accommodation and other services to operate within sensitive pristine areas.

Recent legislation allowing shooting in our national parks borders on the unbelievable. Inevitably there will be a fatal shooting of an innocent overseas tourist and or bushwalker. The folly of this move by a State Government desperate for dollars will end up costing millions in credibility of NSW as a tourist destination, to say nothing of endorsing a repugnant and uncivilised activity.

Ignorance by the populace is a huge issue. Education, promotion and easier access are all matters that make bushwalkers uneasy. Unless it happens, and soon, the chances of keeping bushwalking the joy it is will be lost.

Michael Keats, guest editor

From Our President

Well, thank you very much to Michael Keats for taking the reins from Roger Caffin for this edition, and a second round of thanks for the opportunity to be talking to you through this column.

The NSW State Government's changes to the Game and Feral Animal Control Act to permit licensed recreational shooters to cull feral animals in NSW national parks has focused the mind and energy of many concerned walkers, bushwalking and outdoor clubs. The passing of the bill has raised additional concerns with the bill naming 48 of 799 national parks in which shooting won't be allowed creating the potential for recreational shooting in many more national parks than the 79 originally announced by the Premier.

Fortunately groups such as the National Parks of Association of NSW (NPA) and the Colong Foundation for Wilderness are conducting vocal campaigns opposing the Government's use of recreational shooters to control feral animals in national parks.

The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW (the Confed) is strongly opposed to recreational shooting in national parks. Political machinations, ideology and party lines aside, the Confed is opposed to this because it is bad policy that puts at risk the use of national parks in NSW by a broad range of users and visitors.

There simply is not the evidence to support the Government's policy, as now legislated, that feral animal control in national parks be extended to include licensed recreational shooters. Additionally, we have concerns about the risks it introduces to the safety of other recreational users and visitors to NSW national parks. It is also a significant reversal of the O'Farrell Government's pre-election stance.

So, what has the Confed being doing about this? We have donated funds to the NPA for its campaign 'No hunting in our National Parks'. Our logo has been added to those of other organisations expressing their support for the NPA's campaign on the campaign's website (http://nohunting.wildwalks.com/). We have written to the Premier, Barry O'Farrell, expressing on behalf of our member clubs our strong opposition to his Government's legislation, asking him to overturn his decision immediately. We have also worked with Bushwalking Australia (BA) to develop a national policy on shooting in national parks, which can be found on BA's website at www.bushwalkingaustralia.org.

I have already mentioned the campaigns of groups such as NPA and the Colong Foundation. We would encourage all concerned clubs, their members, walkers and other concerned recreational users of national parks in NSW to write to their local member and the Premier, Mr O'Farrell, expressing their opposition to the amendments to the Game and Feral Animal Control Act and the use of recreational shooters for feral animal control in our national parks. There are a number of letter and email writing tools and templates to streamline the process for you on the NPA, the Colong Foundation, and I'm sure many other websites. The Invasive Species Council website also has a web page titled, 'is hunting conservation' with a number of useful essays and reports.

Shooting in national parks, feral animal control, weed management are all very serious issues confronting NSW national parks. Another is mining, and those familiar with the Garden's of Stone National Park in NSW will be all too aware of the impact of mining in the areas surrounding the national park such the subsidence of cliffs and the contamination of endangered swamps with mine effluent. This is another issue I would encourage you to investigate online or otherwise through the groups already mentioned in this piece.

Finally, Michael Maack the Confed's long time conservation officer, until 2011 would have been front and centre of the Confed's opposition to shooting in national parks. Michael is sadly suffering from a long term illness. He is a passionate and committed conservationist and the Confed thanks Michael for his long and outstanding service to the Confed. Michael would be the first to urge concerned Clubs, their members and walkers to write, email and call their local members voicing opposition to shooting in national parks. I also urge you to do so.

Safe walking!

Dodie Green, President
Confederation of
Bushwalking Clubs
NSW

Errata

In our Autumn edition the caption to the top photograph on page 2 "Fay's horizon walk" is incorrect. Andrew Miller, NPWS Ranger, advises that the correct name of the walk is "Fans Horizon".

The Totem Pole

By Michael Keats, The Bush Club

Left to right Yuri Bolotin, Michael Keats and Brian Fox. Photo: Chris Woods, NPWS.

The Totem Pole has been a 'must visit' destination ever since I first learned of its existence some eight years ago. When Brian Fox and I were researching the historical geology for the 'Gardens of Stone and beyond' book series, Brian was able to locate and access the original field notebooks of the then NSW Government Geologist, Joseph Edmund Carne. In field notebook number 3, Carne included a dimensioned sketch of what is now termed the Totem Pole.

A photo taken soon after, duly records it as the 'Earth Pillar, The Pinnacle, Wolgan Valley, c1908.' Carne's measurements of this amazing feature, as documented in his notes, were, height from base to top of the cap rock 20 feet, cap rock 5 feet maximum width, cap rock thickness, 5 to 6 inches, cap rock overhang of column, 18 inches on western margin, 12 inches on eastern margin. Base 1,135 feet above sea level.

A website, maintained by David Noble, includes two pictures of what we can assume is the same item, as being named the Totem Pole by Joseph Mack in 1975 . A useful comment at the base of the Noble's images is that the Totem Pole is located 50m from the Wolgan River.

It is easy to see with so many descriptors that there is confusion about the correct name. The Joseph Mack name, the Totem Pole, is certainly the most evocative.

On three separate occasions, I had listed this walk on the Bush Club program but for a variety of reasons, it never happened. A fourth attempt was made on 5th - 6th December 2011. The rushed, two-day trip, led by Peter Medbury, went ahead, but was unsuccessful.

Over a period of more than 18 months, discussions had taken place with senior members of the NPWS to gain road access to the end of the Wolgan River service trail, and thus make the journey in feasible as a very long day trip. The matter finally came to fruition, as a result of discussions with staffer Chris Woods, who as well as being a NPWS officer is also a keen bushwalker. Chris offered to use some of his leave, and his position to enable the project. Blessing for the trip was given by the Area Manager, Richard Kingswood, as well as use of a hefty 4WD NPWS vehicle. The party was to be confined to four people, including Chris, who would take responsibility for our safety and wellbeing.

To ensure that the opportunity was maximised, bushwalkers Brian Fox, Yuri Bolotin and I stayed at the Newnes Hotel Cabins the night before. Chris met us as arranged, at 0700 on the morning in cool, drizzling wet conditions. Mystery Mountain, opposite our cabin, was swathed in mist. The weather outlook for the day was absolutely depressing.

The access road had been recently degraded following the flooding of the Wolgan River in February 2012. Recent, subsequent rain had turned many track sections into liquid mud, so that the drive in and out was fraught, and indeed, we were about 700m short of the road terminus, when the vehicle could go no further. After making certain the vehicle was safe, and pointing the right direction for the return trip, we kitted up for the walk and started at 0840. The end of the access road was reached at 0857 in light rain.

At the first crossing of the Wolgan River, we had a 'no brainer' discussion about taking off our shoes to walk across. We were already wet everywhere else so taking off our shoes to keep our feet dry was a nonsense. Instead of being 90% wet, we were now 100% wet. It was fortunate that there was no wind and the temperature remained constant. While we kept moving, there were no problems with feeling cold.

The link section between the surveyed land portions, 2, 3 and 11, which comprise the former cattle holding, *Binnings Hole,* is now difficult terrain to negotiate. It involves a lot of rock hopping, rock scrambling and encounters with stinging nettles, wild raspberries and dense stands of an *Acacia sp*.

Once onto the surveyed portions, the going is somewhat easier, although hidden logs and rocks can be found under the remnant pasture grasses. We pressed doggedly on and reached the junction of Annie Rowan Creek and the Wolgan River at 1030. Wet and cold, we had a quick, stand up morning tea, noting the huge changes in the junction area caused by the February floods. There has been significant scouring of the riverbed; trees uprooted and washed away, and the Wolgan River bed has increased significantly in width, in places being twice what was in December 2011.

By 1040, we had left Annie Rowan Creek behind, and were pushing hard through large bouldery terrain and very slow country to reach the upper talus slopes to avoid the successive deep ravines that characterise this landscape close to the Wolgan River.

'A wet lunch'. Photo: Brian Fox

At 1105, we came across a loosely coiled length of rusting, plaited wire rope, as used by timber getters. It was far too thick to be the kind used by 4WD operatives, although during the 1970s several 4WD groups attempted to push a road down the Wolgan River beyond Annie Rowan Creek. We speculated that it was perhaps related to timber getting, when *Binnings Hole* was a going concern. Here also Brian sighted our first land snail of the trip. This was collected and documented for the Australian Museum.

Taking a higher route above the ravines enabled us to increase our rate of progress. It was almost 1145, when Yuri yelled out, "There it is!" What a sight! Through the grey mist, the column of The Totem Pole positively glowed vivid orange. It was positioned uphill from us about 10m away.

On viewing this iconic natural phenomenon, the sensation was comparable to finding the Holy Grail. We forgot how wet and cold we were. We just stood and looked at this amazing geomorphologic erosion residual. The column almost defies gravity. It is narrower at the base than elsewhere of its total length. The cap rock is so large and the water worn boulders in the soft poorly consolidated conglomerate all look set to topple this amazing piece of geological ephemera. The next 30 minutes were spent taking pictures from every angle. Such structures have a short life. We suspect this column in its existing form to be less than 10,000 years old.

We had heard rumours that there is a second, similar column. The closest item remotely comparable to the column of the Totem Pole is a short stump of a column and cap rock about 30m distant. It would not be more than a metre high.

Brian pulled out his trusty metric tape measure to record how the Totem Pole measurements are today. The circumference at the base he measured at 3.4m, the overall height at 6m, the cap stone width at 1.5m.

Time to go, we were chilling down rapidly. All thoughts of exploring Houstons Creek to the east were abandoned. We were cold and becoming colder. We needed to keep moving to keep warm and to return to the vehicle before the light failed. At 1245, we were back at Annie Rowan Creek where a very quick sodden lunch was consumed.

The route back became confused as we only had to miss one key marker and then the terrain and vegetation removed any opportunity to identify a reference point. We missed at least one. Perhaps the most useful position markers for this walk are the high cliffs of the Wolgan Valley. We used these on several occasions to verify our position. GPS and maps are irrelevant, when you are in deep, thick bush. Even in a so-called protective sleeve, our paper map was papier-maché.

For variety of walking, Yuri decided that, as we were so close to the end of the access road, we should boulder hop the river for a 'few hundred metres'. It was a shame we were still more than twice that distance from the access road. It was certainly an opportunity to use some different muscles and practice balancing feats and some limbo rock moves as well. In the end, we returned to the slightly less strenuous terrain for a while. It was in this period of walking from Annie Rowan Creek to the end of the access road that we had a five- minute, very watery sunshine break- the only one during the whole day.

In the last 400m or so, there is a boulder field of house size blocks, which combines the skill set required for river boulder hopping with negotiating deep, unfathomable drops, slippery logs, and wild raspberries. There is no doubt the Wolgan River country does not reveal its secrets easily.

The end of the access road was reached at 1500 and the vehicle at 1520. We were saturated, cold and more than happy when the vehicle heater was turned on during the journey back.

Rain and showers during the day had left the track in a very wet condition. There were at least two hill sections, where Chris's skill as a driver was tested to the limit. He did an admirable job. We returned to the cabin at 1720 where hot showers and dry clothes made a world of difference. ♦

In Search of Mouin Falls

Dorian Broadrick, The Bush Club

Photos: Cotter Erickson

Dictionary.com defines an obsession as "the domination of one's thoughts or feelings by a persistent idea, image, desire, etc". If that is the case then I admit to being obsessed with the Wild Dog Mountains- 'The Wild Dogs'. There's something about the place that occupies my waking thoughts and makes me yearn to return; the rugged terrain, verdant creeks and climbs that go on, and on, and on, and on forever!

Mouin Creek and Mouin Falls have long been on my "to do" list. There were a number of obstacles to the realisation of this dream.

1. It is close to the prohibited zone (Warragamba Catchment Area) so any walk needs to be carefully planned with these constraints in mind.

2. It is a tough challenge for a day walk - and having two young children, overnighters are out for me for now.

3. It is extremely hard to find any information at all about Mouin Creek or the Mouin Falls.

Notwithstanding this, I had seen a photo of the falls and heard that the creek itself was a hidden gem - so a plan was formulated, a walk for the Bush Club submitted, and on Saturday 28th April 2012, four brave souls put their trust in me, and we were off.

The weather had been wet - very wet in the couple of weeks before, as if the heavens were making up for lost time. We had had reports that Carlons Creek was virtually impassable, with the bush having reclaimed the track, and the nettles and leeches the true rulers of the domain. Various other options were considered, including a descent of Hobbles Spur or a double dip on the Black Dog fire trail. In the end we decided that we would try Carlons Creek anyway - I mean how bad could it be? Turned out - not too bad. The copious amounts of DEET and long pants helped combat nature's annoyances and less than an hour after leaving Dunphy's Car Park we were at the familiar foot of Black Horse Ridge ready for an all too familiar climb.

The ascent of Blackhorse Ridge was uneventful. I have done it so many times I know each corner of the track. It's like slipping into a pair of favourite slippers. Morning tea at the usual lookout was enjoyed. The views from the top of Blackhorse Ridge defy superlatives. The backdrop of Narrowneck stands against the sinews of Breakfast Creek and Slip Rail Creek, punctuated by the ridges of Bellbird, Lyrebird, Glenalan and Faithful Hound as you look left to right. The view makes the climb worthwhile and it gives you the opportunity to get your breath back after the 400m ascent.

Morning tea completed, it was time to follow the track along Blackhorse ridge to the four way junction, and continue straight ahead to take us up onto Blackhorse Gap and the start of our off-track descent to Mouin Creek. It was 11am and we had made good time as a group.

Next came the fun part! As we peered over the "other" side of Blackhorse Gap, I realised that once again the contours on the topo told only half the story. It looked as if we might be able to drop down from the ledge ahead, but there were no volunteers to "go and look"!

Everything was very slippery and the recent rain had not helped with the stability of the surrounding rocks and plants. Not to be deterred, a way of route was found by navigating to the left and following a natural series of platforms down through the scrub to circumvent the steeper section. From here, after less than half an hour of picking our way through the bush we were rewarded with the sound of running water, and soon the sight of Mouin Creek. The head of Mouin Creek starts at the confluence of two small gullies, forming a Y-shaped pattern at its inception. The beginning of the creek is very dramatic with a very large cave/overhang on the left hand bank greeting you on the first corner.

The top section of the creek is dry with the water flowing underground. The sides of the creek are very steep, but the going underfoot is relatively easy. The bushwalkers nemesis, lawyer vine, has a persistent presence - although that is worse on the lower sections. The creek twists and turns and sucks you in with its beauty - it's one of those places that you really could be anywhere in the world. It's very different from the other Wild Dog creeks such as Breakfast Creek or Merrigal Creek - it seems more like a misplaced creek from the tropics.

After about an hour, the water suddenly appeared again. One minute it was a dry creek bed, the next a fast flowing stream. The terrain became more rugged and the cascades started to appear in the creek flow. Round the next corner and we had found Mouin Falls. I had seen a photo of them from the top and, this was the place! The falls themselves are very pretty, but somewhat smaller than I had hoped. There was a double drop amounting to about 20m in total. Nothing to compare to Granite Falls, but this did not detract from the overall beauty of the surroundings. It had been a tough morning. Time for lunch!

It was now 1:30pm but it appeared to be much later. The creek faces approximately south east, and the massif

Moss encrusted vines near Mouin Falls

Hygrocybe sp, Fungi

formed by Mount Warrigal and Mount Mouin had blocked out a lot of the ambient light. It was a very surreal experience picking our way through the creek before 2pm with mottled filtered lighting. However, time was still on our side - but with a renewed sense of urgency we pressed on.

Progress was now somewhat varied along the creek bed. At the lower sections, the creek winds and twists a little more. This leads to stretches that are suddenly ejected from the overhead fern canopy and that have thus had the benefits of sunlight to aid the growth of surrounding plant life. This makes for both beautiful and slow sections as the side gullies continue to merge into the main creek flow.

A highlight of one of the portions we passed through was to see an owl spying at us from a nearby tree. I thought these were nocturnal birds, but with the low light level, I can understand the confusion! It didn't seem perturbed by our presence, more of a polite observer to these idiots invading its domain!

At last, but sadly, it was time to exit the creek. Care needs to be taken if you want to avoid the Warragamba Catchment Area. There are a lot of exit spurs at the lower confines of the creek and common sense needs to be applied. The spur we took was very pleasant and clear once the initial gradient had been conquered. A short time later and we met up with the fire trail near the base of Mount Mouin. The terrain is a maze of gullies, ridges and creeks at this point and care is needed to join the fire trail with the minimum of effort. A brisk march brought us to Medlow Gap and the well-trodden path home.

The light was against us on the return leg. As we passed Glenraphael Head, and the usual ascent point for Dunphys Pass, it was already dark! We had a half moon to aid us, and we were all prepared with torches just in case. Call it stubbornness but no one wanted to be the first to admit it was too dark and reach into their packs for a torch! In reality, there was something almost transcendental in the nocturnal walking with ample time to reflect on a fun day out.

This is also a long day out - there's no doubt about it. Travel along the creek is slow going at times - however it was an exceptionally rewarding journey with the knowledge of being one of the few groups to have ever visited the area and the privilege of being able to share some of the beautiful sections with the incumbent owl. A tough but rewarding day in the paradise and my playground - The Wild Dog Mountains. I hope you can join me on my next adventure.

Wild Dog Wanderers on the day, Dorian Broadrick, leader, Tam Khuat, Cotter Erickson, Melanie Ng and Michael Cook. ♦

Mouin Creek

Bungleboori Creek Exploratory

Helen Simpson,
Upper Blue Mountains Bushwalking Club

Life was bursting at the seams, bushes had grown to cover tracks and intertwined and curled together to form an impenetrable mat. Humidity and the scent of oils and earth was overpowering in a way that I haven't seen in a long time. It was into this primeval world that we ventured one steamy November day in order to check out a route that Gary Barnard was interested in along the upper reaches of the Bungleboori Creek.

We parked out on the Goochs Crater Fire Trail and set off north on a side fire trail and along a well worn track towards the Bungleboori Creek but it quickly became increasingly overgrown. We rested on some rocks, easily succumbing to Sandra's call for an "early morning tea". The view was spectacular, every hill topped by massive cone shaped pagodas. We lazed in the sun reluctant to move until a call was made to try to reach a side creek by following the gully below us. We managed to scramble down the hill without incident. In addition, we were rewarded on the way by sighting two spectacular slime moulds.

They were like, light fluffy, pink sponges, delicately clinging to a small, damp rock wall. One of them was covered in 'eggs'[1] , laid by some creature taking advantage of the damp conditions. On the ground, just below them was an equally spectacular moth (probably *Aenetus mirabilis*); it vibrated gently, displaying its pastel blue wings and body.

When I finally looked up, the others had moved on, but they hadn't gone far. Down near the creek the vegetation was increasingly dense. Gary was in the lead making a valiant attempt to get through but with little success so the decision was made to cross the creek. Gary had been down this creek many times before but had never seen it like this. We were feeling as though we were the last people left on earth, and were just discussing the remote possibility that others might have ventured down into this wilderness when we looked down and saw - a garden fork[2]!

The other side of the creek wasn't much better, but eventually we made our way down this side tributary of the Bungleboori Creek and found ourselves at our prime objective, the Bungleboori Creek itself. After the close confines of the scrub filled side creek, the wide expanse of Bungleboori Creek and the blue sky above came as a huge relief. The water sparkled in the sunlight and at the junction with the side creek, a sandy beach and huge log beckoned us to take another break. We lay on the sand watching the sunlight sparkling on the water. What an amazing section of creek this was. Unlike the lower reaches, which often involve arduous climbs over logs and boulders, this stretch was smooth and flat, free of any obstacles, and the water was cool and inviting.

Finally, we managed to get back on our feet and then wandered up the creek, revelling in our newfound freedom and the easy walking. Gary warned us not to go past a side creek coming in on our left, which we reached all too soon. It appeared just as we came to a shelf of siltstone, worn smooth and slippery by the rushing water. The ferns grew so thickly and luxuriantly here that it was hard to even see the branch creek coming in, a route Gary said he had walked quite easily on past trips. Maybe we should have seen that luxuriant growth as a sign of challenges to come.

However, it was time for lunch, so we climbed up the opposite bank, which was buried in ferns and Black Wattle, *Callicoma serratifolia*, and headed toward a promontory of rock towering above us on this prominent bend in the river. Scaling it had its challenges, but once on top we had amazing views up and down the river, and directly opposite we could see the large gully system up which we planned to exit. After a pleasant break, it was time to tackle the gully.

The gully looked so innocuous from a distance, but up close, it turned out to be a nightmare of dense vegetation. We started up the side creek, however since Gary had last been there it had become virtually impenetrable, so we headed toward the high ground. Surely, the vegetation would be thinner up towards

Morning tea view - pagodas galore!

Bungleboori Creek

Photos: Helen Simpson

Left: You couldn't pick a better lunch spot.

Far left: Dilwinia.

the cliffs.

We passed a huge fungus on the way, the size of a large dinner plate[3]. It looked as though a giant had taken a couple of enormous bites out of it. We kept climbing, but instead of improving, the vegetation closed in on us until we were not even walking on the ground but instead traversed a spongy swaying entangled mass of vegetation. It bounced under our feet, and as we passed small gullies, we fervently hoped that below this swaying mass at least lurked some solid ground.

We took it in turns to try to force a way through, virtually lying across the bushes on occasion as we tried to penetrate any available break. Eventually, we came to a small gap where a rock fall had wiped out an area of vegetation. Here I collapsed on the ground exhausted, glad my stint in the front was over, but there was still more to get through.

Seeking options, we examined side waterfalls; was there a way up there? We passed a huge amphitheatre, but as it had unscalable cliffs all around there was nothing for it but to keep on going. Eventually the creek became more like a canyon and we were able to walk a little more freely. At the point where the gully narrowed we passed a gorgeous shady grotto, where a mass of huge boulders had long ago tumbled from the overhang above to create a deep opalescent, blue pool, small but perfect, with the water cascading down the rocks beyond it to join the Bungleboori Creek below.

We hurried to catch the others who had already entered the mini canyon, our route out. In here, the low light had stopped the vegetation from growing as prolifically as it had in the gully. We walked the narrow creek, winding around and up, climbing rocky drops and encountered a small waterfall with a large pool below it, the sun shining on the water. Then up and on, winding along our narrow path until the rock walls above became lower and the vegetation thicker. We were out, but where were we? We contemplated the view through the trees from our position on a saddle between two watersheds.

Gary directed us up the bank on the right. At the top, mountains and thick forest stretched as far as the eye could see, and we contemplated several more hours of bush bashing, when before us, and only a few metres up the hill we came to a 'fire trail'!

We were overjoyed, it had been a colossal day and no one was sad to find themselves on the bush equivalent of a super highway. We followed it up, knowing it would soon bring us to the main fire trail. On this trail, we started passing many little animal traps. Thankfully, they did not appear to be set. Was there a diversity study in progress? The traps had netting to direct animals toward them. The traps were of several types, some were fixed to trees, while some were scattered in the undergrowth. We wondered at their origin as we walked out[4] .

We were also struck by the abundance of wild flowers, one good side benefit of all the recent prolonged rain and warm weather. *Thelmtra ixiodes, Comesperma Dillwynia, Davesia latifolia, Leptospermum macrocarpa,* all blooming with abandon, spreading their pollen through the air; some already with seeds ripening on their branches.

We soon arrived at the main fire trail junction, and an offer was made by some members with vehicles to come back for us, but buoyed by our adventures, we all decided to walk the last little section of fire trail and return to the cars together. While it had been an exhausting day out, it was also an amazing feeling to be swept up in the abundance that is currently transforming the bush. ♦

For Gary Barnard, an amazing navigator, and a senior, long-time member of our club, who is currently recovering from encephalitis in Queensland.

Moth, Aenetus mirabilis

Slime mould plasmodium/spongarium transition

Thelmitra

[1] Slime moulds can take on the appearance of thousands of tiny eggs in the sporangia phase. Ed.

[2] This area is a favourite spot for the cultivation of illegal herbs. Ed.

[3] From studying the photograph, this is most likely *Laetiporus portentosus*. The soft spongy flesh is the food of certain insect larvae, and old and fallen brackets are riddled with the resulting tunnels. Ed.

[4] Similar trap systems are deployed on a ridge south of Waratah Ridge. On a recent walk, a group I led countered more than 40 traps of various kinds spread over a distance of less than 1km. It is suspected these traps are part of an EIS study prior to an application for an expansion of underground mining. Ed.

Boots and All

Michael Keats

Some years ago when bushwalking veteran Neil Schaefer was cleaning out his old bushwalking gear he gave me a bag of small, strange looking, and rather lethal objects that looked like something previously used in the Tower of London when the rack and similar charming devices were in use. These multi pronged devices were hobnails. They were used to make ordinary boots into 'Hobnail Boots.'

Colin White of the Bush Club, who owns a veritable mini museum of Bushwalking Gear, took the time to send some sketches and notes about hobnails. In addition, Col also spells out some interesting information:

"Firstly I believe the Bush Club was born in 1939; secondly WWII started in 1939; thirdly and best of all I was born in 1939; fourthly Volleys were born in 1939. It was a very eventful year.

I started my bushwalking at 17 in 1956, and was convinced to buy some boots. So, off to Paddy's I went and bought the boots that I needed, which I then had to cover in Hobnails, clinkers and tricounies. Within a couple of months we did the Cradle Mountain-Lake Sinclair walk - bloody hell they were ghastly, after 2 days I took them off and put on my camp slippers which were a pair of Volleys. 54 years later I'm still wearing Volleys and proud of them, and the boots, they just rotted away in my garage."

During the Internet discussion that followed a lot of territory was covered on the whole subject of bushwalker footwear. As I have discovered from innumerable, and often heated on track debates it is a subject on which every bushwalker of any experience has an opinion. I venture to suggest that not many bushwalkers today would boast that they actual wear Hobnail Boots any more. Stories I have been regaled with are to the effect that Hobnail Boots were not only heavy, but also inevitably a one way trip to an accident.

More recently Neil rang me up and posed the question, "Could I find out what foot wear bushwalkers used to trust their feet with in the 1950's?" Neil did give me a couple of contacts who he had walked with in times past and suggested some interviews. I dared not ask Neil to look in his garage where some examples may still lie mouldering…

My research has taken me to some interesting websites and even more interesting conversations with veteran bushwalkers from the 1950's who made the transition to lighter footwear. Perhaps the best source of general information on this controversial subject, is the website "FAQ – Equipment Footwear (and Flame Wars)" created and maintained by the very thorough and questioning editor of the '*Bushwalker*' magazine, Roger Caffin.

I also sent an appeal out to a wider audience of bushwalkers for information. The results were much broader than I expected. A response from Jeff Betteridge, Ranger, Yengo National Park, provided a very personal insight, "My father in the 50's wore Tricouni's, metal toothed cleats on the bottom of his leather boots. He and his mates wore them all over the Blue Mountains walking. There is a pair in the NPWS [Heritage Centre] at Blackheath in the display that I presented to them."

"SWISS NAILED BOOTS We have obtained a few pair of real nailed boots, as issued to the Swiss Army! We estimate their age as 40-60 years old. These are identical to the boots worn by British, European and American climbers before (and after!) World War II, before Vibram soles took over. The boots have 77 edge and hob nails in each boot! Larger edge nails are marked 'TRICOUNI BREV SUISSE'. The leather uppers and soles are in well preserved condition. This is a phenomenal chance to get an authentic collector's item". (extracted from a web advertisement by Chessler Books, the USA.)

A discussion with Don Matthews, a one time walking companion of Neil's, elicited the story of what was going on in the Sydney Bushwalkers Club. Don joined the club in 1947 when hobnails were 'de rigueur'. He recalls that Jim Brown in 1954 began a revolution when he started wearing a sneaker type boot made by Dunlop. These boots had twill like patterned sole with leather uppers. The problem with them was that the leather uppers shrank after getting wet. There was also a problem with the stitching failing. Fortunately it was a simple matter to get a boot maker to restitch the soles to the uppers.

Don recounted a trip he did down in the Snowy Mountains in 1953-54. The idea was to wear hobnail boots during the day and change into sneakers around camp at night. Don became so frustrated with his hobnails that he left them at The Chimneys and completed the walk in his sneakers.

Correspondence with Roger Caffin, who has extensively researched the whole footwear subject, was illuminating. In commenting on the early Volley Style of shoe he says,

"Yeah, forget what they were called, but I don't think anyone wore them in the bush. Too loose. Ugg boots still have soles like that. For upmarket use a few

imported boots from UK or Italy. My wife Sue had some Robert Lawrie (UK) boots; others imported Scarpa or Blacks (UK).
Typical footwear was Paddy Pallin boots - but the leather was rather poor and stretched when wet. OK in NSW and Vic, but failed badly in the bogs of SW Tassie. Cheaper footwear was cadet boots - the schools all had cadet groups in those days. Yes, leather soles, hobnails and steel horseshoes around the heel. Rather good at going downhill: the steel edges really dug in. Big scars on the hillside! I would imagine that some wore work boots - whatever was the equivalent of Redback in those days".

The late Wilf Hilder weighed into the discussion with some personal recollections:

"Army boots had a double sole. We used to make a new pair wearable by boiling water and filling each boot. When the temperature was tolerable for inserting socked feet we would do so and then walk around the parade ground. This softening changed the boots so that when treated with Neatsfoot Oil and Dubbin they were almost comfortable. Paddy Pallin decided to go one better and offered a triple soled boot. These proved intractable to any softening process and soon disappeared.
I never wore sneakers but went straight to Dunlop Volleys.
Wilf also recalled that when he joined the Catholic Bushwalking Club it was mandatory to wear boots."

A visit to the Dunlop Footwear website tells the manufacture's side of the story. In 1939, the now icon product, the famous Volley Sport Shoe was introduced. Adrian Quist, a famous tennis player of the time, worked for Dunlop, saw the sole pattern on a boat shoe when he was in America for a tennis tournament. He convinced Dunlop to make Tennis Shoes with the same sole pattern. The shoe went from strength to strength, and never looked back, becoming the favourite footwear of all top tennis players for the next 40 years. Players who wore the Volley included Ken Rosewall, Lew Hoad, Frank Sedgman, Neil Fraser, John Bromich, Evonne Goolagong-Cawley, Margaret Court and many others.

In 1950, as the Dunlop Footwear business expanded, the huge new factory at Bankstown NSW was in production, and by 1954 was making more shoes and sporting shoes than any other factory in Australia, employing over 1000 people by 1957. Before someone asks the question, the KT 26 was introduced in 1977.

Sadly, today most shoes bearing the famous Volley trademark are made overseas in a variety of different countries and factories, and the quality is variable. Some pairs recently purchased have failed after less than three days walking by which time the sole had become completely worn away and all grip lost. Oh to return to the days of a quality, locally made product, where you could speak to a representative of the manufacturer and influence future design and specification.

For a fulsome discussion on footwear visit a website maintained by Roger Caffin:

http://www.bushwalking.org.au/FAQ/FAQ_Footwear.htm

This site will answer 90% of any questions you can think of regarding your feet and what you put on them. ♦

Hobnailed boots with clinkers and tricounies. Almost compulsory wear in the earlier days of the last century

[1] Hobnailed boots (known in Scotland as "tackety boots") are boots with hobnails (nails inserted into the soles of the boots), usually installed in a regular pattern, over the sole. They also usually have an iron horseshoe-shaped insert, called a heel iron, to strengthen the heel, and an iron toe-piece. The hobnails project below the sole and provide traction on soft or rocky ground, but they tend to slide on smooth hard surfaces.
They have been used since antiquity for inexpensive durable footwear, often by workmen and the military, including the trench boots of World War I. They gained particular notoriety during the Second World War as the standard footwear of German troops, which in conjunction with the distinctive goose-step march upon cobblestone streets, left a lasting impression of their martial entrance into countless towns and villages throughout Occupied Europe
(*source - State Library of Queensland*)

[2] Tricouni is the name of a mountain climbing nail created by Felix Genecand. Born in Geneva Switzerland in 1879, he became a jeweller-setter and an avid mountain climber. He started climbing on the nearby Salève Mountain and in the Chamonix Alps.
Following the death of a fellow climber who slipped in the mountains, Genecand decided to invent a climbing nail with teeth for better grip. The origin of the Tricouni name comes from an Italian climber he met called Tricouni. He was smaller, less sturdy than him but many times more agile. Knowing how much he admired the Italian climber, Genecand's friends ends up calling him Tricouni.
The climber established the Tricouni company in 1921 in Geneva and produced millions of nails. The biggest clients were the Swiss and French armies. Countless mountain peaks were conquered by Tricouni bearing climbers including the Eiger north face. In 1993, the Tricouni business was bought by a cow-bell manufacturer in the Gruyères region and they are still produced in Switzerland. (Source Tricouni Company website)

[3] Neatsfoot oil is a yellow oil rendered and purified from the shin bones and feet (but not the hooves) of cattle. "Neat" in the oil's name comes from an old name for cattle. Today, many[who?] consider the best quality neatsfoot oil to be that which comes from the legs of calves, with no other oils added. Neatsfoot oil is used as a conditioning, softening and preservative agent for leather. Source University of Queensland

[4] Dubbin is a wax product used to soften, condition and waterproof leather. It consists of natural wax, oil and tallow.It is different from shoe polish, which is used to impart shine and colour to leather.Dubbin has been used since medieval times to waterproof and soften leather boots.The name dubbin is a contraction of the gerund dubbing, describing the action of applying the wax to leather

BOOK REVUE

The Gardens of Stone National Park and beyond
Book 2

494pp, in full colour, A5 size,
by Michael Keats and Brian Kenneth Fox.
Self published by Keats Holdings Pty Ltd,
August 2012, RRP $50.00.

This book redefines the genre of bushwalking books. In book 1, the authors enabled the reader to understand the complex and beautiful geology and geomorphology of this unique area in the Greater Blue Mountains National Park. In book 2, we are given an insight into the climate, and an appreciation of the extremes of heat and cold, wet and dry, raging wildfires and catastrophic floods, which have shaped this amazing terrain.

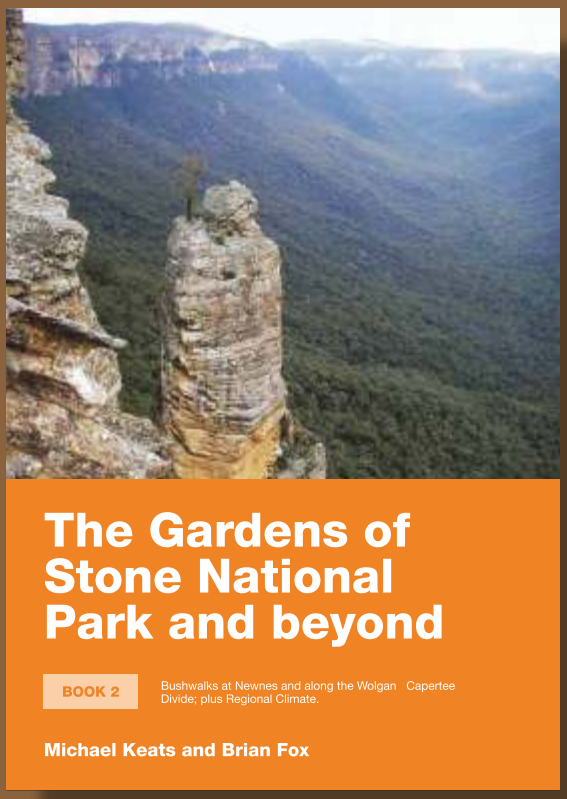
Twenty- eight day and multi day walks based on Newnes and the Wolgan- Capertee Divide, range from the easy traditional, such as The Pipeline Track, to the novel and challenging Minotaur Lair and Penrose Gully South. Having been on some of the walks, the glowing words used and evocative pictures included, only tell a part of the story. While the reader enjoys some of the incredible exhilaration experienced by the authors, this book will inspire you to up your fitness and retrace some or all of these amazing journeys.

If you cannot make the walks, then this book provides virtual journeys, where from a chair on the verandah of the former Newnes Hotel, or in one of the Newnes Holiday Cottages, you can be transported to the cliff tops via the climbs and canyons.

To ensure top quality photographs, and there is one at least on every double page spread, pictures have been selected from the portfolios of invited photographers. In every case, the photographer and his or her work have been personally recognised.

Every book has shortcomings, and although hard pressed to find one, thanks to tough editing, there is a nagging one, and that is knowledge that my bookcase for bushwalking books is going to have to be a lot bigger. There are six more books to come in this series, and space for a full set, about one of the most desirable places to visit and enjoy in NSW, is mandatory.

Yuri Bolotin



On Mount Palerang, May 2003, Ian Barnes pointing out the relative position of camp

Batemans Bay Bushwalking Club Camp

19-20 May 2012

Ian Barnes

Great Divide Explorations - North Tallaganda

The first of a series of Batemans Bay Bushwalking Club explorations of the Great Dividing Range between Bungendore and Countegany attracted 5 members - Lynne Beby, Michael Beby, Bronwyn Dunn, Lin Barnes and Ian Barnes. The weather was perfect - clear skies, little wind and cool temperatures - ideal for mountain top walking.

Using a comfortable base camp on the Mulloon Road near the Mulloon Creek crossing within Tallaganda National Park, two day walks were centered on two nearby peaks on the Great Dividing Range - Mounts Palerang and Lowden. Neither route had been walked before so some surprises were expected.

On the Saturday, Mount Palerang was approached from the camp along a western ridge line through mostly dry open forest and some rock outcrops. The 300m vertical lift soon had circulatory systems on full load until the cairn was reached and the lunch bags were opened. At 1,264m, Mount Palerang is conspicuous from the Kings Highway southward. It shows as a distinct sharp peak, a reflection of the highly eroded tilted coarse sandstone and cobblestone conglomerate in this area. The mountain lends its name to the local government area, Palerang Shire.

We continued south along the main Great Dividing Range, dipping and scrambling over the many rocky outcrops providing great views to the east and west. Vegetation in this area varied greatly. The sharp ridge top supported Snow Gum, the eastern fall had tall, moist Brown Barrell forest, mostly with grassy under storey, and the western fall was mostly open shrubbery with at least one large area of bare rock.

The slow westerly descent toward camp, on a long ridge made up of the more common shales and siltstones of the area, was dominated by fire scarred peppermints and Silvertop Ash, a legacy of many years of hot damaging fires.

Back in the luxuries of camp that night, the group reassessed the walk, aided by the calming effects of various red wines and a copious fire to keep the cold at bay. Under BBBW grading rules, this 5km circuit of 4½ hours is Medium Hard, mainly due to the initial climb and the rockiness of the ridge top.

At the old trig on Mount Palerang, L to R Michael, Lynne, Bronwyn and Lin

On Mount Lowden. Left to right Lin Barnes, Lynne Beby, Bronwyn Dunn and Michael Beby.

Sunday's walk along the Great Dividing Range centered on Mount Lowden. It began with a 4WD car shuffle, which allowed us to start at the nearby radio repeater station. Walking through grassy snow gum forest, we were soon at the Mt Lowden trig cairn of 1,346m.

This part of the Range is dominated by Devonian pink granite with many outcrops. Using aerial photographs and careful navigation, numerous significant outcrops were visited, giving us some special views to the west and southeast. One in particular was in a beautiful forest setting with abundant fern surrounds and red algae and moss growth.

We pressed on from saddle to saddle and lunched within a small grove of Black Oliveberry trees, Elaeocarpus holopetalus. This is an uncommon tree found only in remnant cool temperate Gonwonda rainforests.

The going was often quite bouldery underfoot and progress became quite slow in places, especially where an undergrowth of Pepperberry, *Tasmannia insipida*, and ferns in the saddles was thickened a little with Wait-a-While Vine - a little "ouchy"!

Eventually, a carefully navigated descent from the slopes of Mount Major to the Jinglemoney Fire Trail was rewarded by the welcome sight of our waiting 4WD. After another car shuffle we headed back to camp via yet another "scenic route" and a weary return to the (warmer) coast.

Sunday's 6km, 6 hour traverse of the Great Dividing Range was unanimously assessed under the BBBW grading system as Hard to Very Hard, mainly due to the difficult terrain and patches of dense undergrowth. ♦

Spectator Sport

Keith Maxwell, Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Service

Teamwork - planning is crucial

There are many spectator sports such as cricket in summer and various versions of football in winter. The coming London 2012 Olympics will showcase many sports. There is also another less recognised spectator sport. Bush search and rescue (S & R) is not usually considered a spectator sport but it does arise media interest when it happens.

Now, motor vehicle accidents are more frequent than bush search and rescue plus the affected occupants can carry serious physical and mental scars for years. Bush search and rescue is newsworthy due to its rarity and perhaps a certain level of primal fear to many people. How would a city person cope?? Does this partly explain the fascination with Bear Grills?? Is a bush search and rescue a great day out for news crews and their helicopters??

Some years ago I was asked for a simple list of bush safety hints for a rescue display. Many persons have written at length about safety in the bush. However the simple list below seems to cover most of the incidents where Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS) has been involved.

As onlookers (spectators) and experienced bushwalkers, we can emphasise with hikers in trouble. Also, we can tick off which item of the following list they 'tripped up' on. Really clever people manage to ignore multiple safety points!!

Some years ago in Victoria they developed a simple safety check list headed "Let someone know before you go?"

Does your Club "Let someone know before you go?"

DO give a copy of a list of the names and contact details of each member of a group and complete route details, including the map(s) names of WHERE the walk is to close relatives / friends or Police. Include registration details of all vehicles and where they will be parked.

DO advise them WHEN you are LEAVING and when you plan to RETURN, and whether any member of the group has SPECIAL medical conditions such as diabetes, asthma.

Hitching a lift

Crossing a flooded river is only safe with prior training

Help for the helpers!

Take a break,

DO notify them when you return
DO take the correct and most current MAP(s) of the area and COMPASS and know how to use them.
DO take appropriate clothing / footwear. Always take a windproof / waterproof PARKA and clothing that can keep you WARM WHEN it becomes WET. e.g. wool and definitely NOT jeans.
DO take waterproof MATCHES and SPARE food in case of delays. Always take some cold snack food such as dried fruit, nuts or chocolate for quick energy.

DON'T overestimate your abilities. Always ALLOW TIME for the unexpected, e.g. thick scrub, cliff lines.
DON'T go faster than the slowest member of the group. At regular intervals do a HEAD COUNT.
DON'T split up a walking group (except as set out below) during a trip. There is safety in numbers.
DON'T leave an injured person ALONE in the bush. A walking group of THREE or more will allow one person to look after the injured member while the other goes for help.
DON'T keep moving when LOST. Find a campsite nearby with water that is visible from a helicopter. Wave vigorously at any helicopters; they are probably looking for you!
DON'T forget if you are OVERDUE to PHONE home as soon as you are within mobile telephone range or from the first telephone box.

REMEMBER that you need more than just good **EQUIPMENT** for bush safety. (Good equipment does not necessarily make you an "experienced" bushwalker). Your safety is also dependent on your level of **FITNESS** and bushwalking **EXPERIENCE** plus good overall trip **LEADERSHIP**. Every trip should include at least **ONE** experienced bushwalker to every **THREE** inexperienced walkers.

Now, by following this simple list, you will avoid many of the common pitfalls of less experienced walkers. At the BWRS website www.bwrs.org.au, you will find extensive information on how to join BWRS, use of PLB (distress beacons), GPS receivers, mobile phones, First Aid training and remote area communications plus many other items.

When things get vertical you really do need to know what you're doing

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