

A full-page photograph of a hiker standing in a rocky gorge. The hiker is wearing a blue jacket, dark pants, and a blue hat, and has a backpack. They are standing on a wet, rocky path. In the background, a waterfall cascades over rocks, surrounded by lush green vegetation and trees. The scene is framed by large, dark rock formations.

The Bushwalker

Gates of Mordor,
Main Creek, Wollemi NP

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Wouldn't you like to be here?



Female Honey Possum with babies, Bibbulmun Track, WA, Photo: Nancy Ainsworth, Watagan Wanderers



Alice Terry venturing into Dalpura Canyon, near Bell, Blue Mountains, Photo: Hugh Spiers

From the editor's desk. . .

What to say? Summer on the East Coast is getting less fun every year. The attitude of the NSW Liberal Government towards Conservation becomes more unbelievably bad every month, closely followed by the Federal Liberal Government. Granted, the NSW Labor Government had easily passed its use-by date. Or maybe I am getting 'cabin fever' with this weather?

Anyhow, once again we have a wide range of articles from all over the place and time.

The front cover is a waterfall on Main Creek in Wollemi National Park. A rather forbidding looking thing, and we did not succeed in getting up it directly. Coming down with a rope would be fairly easy, but that's always the case. I gather the early explorers thought it was the 'main' drainage for the whole area, hence the name.

Hugh Spiers responded to my comment about Echo Pt at Lawson, and the lack of echo there.

"I can assure you there is an echo, though I've been there with people who couldn't raise one. One needs a loud voice (former sergeant-majors or opera singers should have no trouble), but there is a distinct echo, and with a longer response time than on expects so it must be reverberating from well down the valley."

Must be that your editor is a quiet fellow ...

Articles for Publication

We are always happy to receive pictures for the Inside Front Cover. If you would like to see yours published, send them in. In particular, little 640x480 photos and, little photos from cheap phones are just not good enough: they simply do not print well enough at 300 dpi. We need the full-size originals, straight from the camera and uncropped and unretouched, so we can set them up for the printing process.

Apart from that, please keep those bushwalking articles rolling in. We need them. If you are describing a walk somewhere, it would really help if you could give the reader (who may be from far away) some idea of where the walk is. We don't need GRs, just a general idea. We need suitable photos for most every article, so please include a few. Once again, note that little, cropped or shrunk photos will rarely be accepted. If you want to include a DOC file or a PDF (in addition to the mandatory plain text file and full-sized photos) to illustrate how the photos fit into the text, please do so as well. That can only help.

However, photos embedded in DOC or PDF files are not accepted by themselves, and neither are scans of standard photographic prints - with the possible exception of historical items where the print is all that exists. Finished DOC and PDF articles are not suitable by themselves either: we often have to rearrange the text to fit on the page with ads or other changes. Plain text plus original photos!

Finally, the opinions expressed by authors may not represent the official opinions of the Confederation or of any Club. The Editor's opinions are his own, are subject to change without explanation, and may be pretty biased anyhow.

Roger Caffin
Editor



Davies Hut, Kosciusko National Park.
Photo: Barry Hanlon

Editor: Roger Caffin
editor@bushwalking.org.au

Graphic Design & Assembly:
Barry Hanlon

Proofreader: Roy Jamieson

Confederation Officers:

President: David Trinder

Administration Officer:

admin@bushwalking.org.au

Website: www.bushwalking.org.au

Address all correspondence to:

PO Box 119, Newtown, NSW 2042

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

Formed in 1932, Bushwalking NSW 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 Bushwalking 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 Australian Bushwalking FAQ.



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Front Cover: Gates of Mordor, Main Creek, Wollemi National Park. Photo: Roger Caffin.

Back Cover: Wrights Creek headwaters, Kosciusko National Park. Photo: Barry Hanlon.



Peter Farley
Photos: David Morrison
Newcastle Ramblers
Bushwalking Club

Lares Valley Trek, Peru

A Newcastle Ramblers trip to Peru in October 2012 included an opportunity for an excursion through the very scenic Lares Valley. This is a relatively short 33 km trek and, while the distance is not great, it is demanding as it is a high altitude trek that wends its way up and down through valleys and ascends to passes that exceed 4600 m. This is more than twice the height of our Mt Kosciuszko and at this altitude many people experience breathing problems due to the thin oxygen levels. We had prepared for this with a few days in and around Cusco (3450 m) to help get used to the altitude.

We were collected at dawn from our Cusco hostel by the trek leader, Santiago, a charming Peruvian man who was to entertain us with the culture and history of the Incas and the natural history of the area. We proceeded by mini bus out of the

cobbled streets of Cusco, through the awakening countryside for about 40 kms to a Lares village. The road finally ended in a clearing where there were a couple of Peruvian porters and four donkeys. Uh oh, looks like the car ride is over. We handed over our duffle bags, shouldered our day packs and followed Santiago's cheery call of 'follow me guys' along a stony track up through a pass to the valley ahead.

After a brief time Santiago took note of our exertions and kindly saw the need for a pause to talk about the virtues of a plant of medicinal importance. This pattern repeated itself: we seasoned Aussie bushwalkers struggled for breath and he found yet more plants or sites to talk about. He was a wise and perceptive man. As we toiled up a long slope we were overtaken by the porters and donkeys, now laden with supplies and camping gear. We entered the river valley at

Huacahuasi (3780 m) and walked on to a village where we sheltered from a sudden hail storm while the cook prepared lunch. Onwards and upwards along narrow tracks, past villages and herdsman with their flocks of llamas, through magnificent valleys, the villages falling away as the altitude steadily increased. The landscape was adorned with low shrubs and grasses that spun different hues of green, while shafts of sunlight and patches of shadow cut across the hillsides. As darkness fell we met a wizened old Peruvian woman who was en route to the village far below; she begged some coca leaves for an energy boost to finish her journey. (Coca leaves are legal in Peru. When chewed they act as a mild stimulant and are said to suppress hunger, thirst, pain, and fatigue.)

We arrived at the campsite at Siquiscondor (4100 m) a little too early and had to refrain from undermining the role of the porters by helping them set up camp. A curious young village girl was an observer to our campsite and a gallery of very cautious llamas observed our every move. The food prepared by Tomas the Cook was just delightful, but it was a pity that the altitude robbed us of the appetite to do justice to his three course meals.

As darkness descended, the temperature dropped rapidly. Dense mountain mist enveloped the campsite creating an eerie atmosphere. It also made late night navigation to and from the toilet quite hazardous. (Must add a navigation beacon to the packing list!)

Day two was clear but overcast and saw us up at first light and ready to go soon after 7 am. Upwards, ever upwards through a succession of passes with Santiago now extolling the virtues of coca leaves as a source of energy and



respiratory assistance. Sceptical but desperate, I took the proffered roll of leaves and wedged it in the side of my mouth, rather like a dental cotton wad. Did it make a difference – who knows – but there was certain numbness ... !

Huffing and puffing we made our way, 25 panting steps and a pause 'to look at the scenery', then on again. At the rugged Pumawanka pass (4600 m) we made some little stone cairns to mark our triumphal passage. But let me clarify a point. Not everyone was affected by the altitude and it was slender Pauline who put in the star performance. She was the trek gazelle and starred as the lead walker for the whole trek.

High in the snow topped mountains at the head of steep gullies were glistening glaciers and far below in the valleys were marshes, streams, tarns, sky-blue lakes and some snow geese. We walked along a contour track to another pass at 4580m and then followed a lengthy descent to a village deep in the valley. The porters and the donkeys had made good progress and we lunched like inconsequential royalty to the amusement of some village school kids. We gave them pencils and school supplies which they seemed to value keenly. After a lengthy afternoon walk around dry grassy hillsides we reached the second campsite in a valley near Markacocha (3400m) in the grounds of a trout farm, beside a coursing river. A vigorous but brief storm roared out of the hills and we all held onto tent poles and guy ropes as the wind buffeted the campsite.

Day three, most of the distance behind us, so an easy one we thought, just down the road to Ollantaytambo. But no, Santiago had a surprise for us! Just a short walk uphill, guys, to an interesting site! Well the 350 m climb to the ruins at Pumamarca was well worth the effort and we spent some time there as Santiago told us the fascinating story of the Inca's retreat from the Spanish to this ancient fortress.

From there we walked along local paths following the contours of the valleys past villages, beside terraced farmlands and along the riverbanks. In the valley far below some workmen installing irrigation pipes gratefully relieved Santiago of the last of his coca leaves. From there it was a delightful knee-stretching, almost level walk beside the river to the cobbled streets of Ollantaytambo (2890 m) and a rendezvous with the rest of our group at a cafe in the town square.

The Lares Valley is a spectacular trek. We were welcomed by local people along the way but saw no other walkers on the route. It is said to be a great alternative to the crowded and more commonly walked Inca trail to Machu Picchu. ♦

Clockwise from top left:

- Approaching Huacahuasi village;
- The track to the second pass;
- Glaciers and mountain lake;
- Terraced fields of valley near Markacocha;
- On trek day 2.





Map of the island, from 'Bushwalks around Port Stephens'

Broughton

Michael Smith
Nimbin Bushwalkers Club.

Broughton Island is 14 km off the NSW coast. From Nimbin you drive 650 km south, then board a boat to this uninhabited paradise. There are no landing facilities, so it is necessary to also carry a tender and row to the beach and jump out. Poverty Beach would be home to 6 of us for the next 4 days. Our pegs were driven into grass, over sand, and would have a job to hold down the tents in the 60 km/h winds predicted. But now it was sunny, so we swam and snorkelled on our private beach. There were no other campers that weekend.

We walked across the island to Rainbow Cave. Here the sea had eroded a cave through the headland, so that waves came in both ends. Now, at low tide, we were able to walk through, admiring the rainbow colours of algae growing on the walls. After more swimming, in crystal-clear water, we moved along a bouldery beach past aboriginal shell middens and grinding grooves, to the gull and tern rookery. Their breeding had finished so the place was empty of the usual territorial, screeching, swooping birds. High tide came and most of us went fishing. I returned with a few snapper which we all ate.

No time for rest, we had an appointment with the Fairy (Little) Penguins on the other side of the Island. After dark they wander ashore and waddle up to their burrows at the back of Providence Beach. The boffins said we had a ten percent chance of seeing them in the month of March. We managed to see some each of the 3 nights we were there. If you come too early or late you miss them. Sitting in pitch dark they could walk over your feet without you seeing them. Shine your torch about and they might bolt back into the water. Shy, and unused to people, we were privileged to meet these 1 kg birds, on Broughton, the northernmost island that they inhabit. Before coming ashore they call out to each other, something between a gronk and a bark.

Getting back to camp in the dark was an adventure too. We scattered ghost crabs on the beach, and walking through the grassy dunes there were dozens of muttonbirds on the track. These almost fully grown chicks litter the tracks at night. They come out of their burrows to socialise, flap their wings and hope one of their parents will turn up with a crop full of warm, oily fish. There were thousands



At the top of the island

Rainbow Cave



of them all over the island. Returning to our campsite we found muttonbirds scattered like cushions amongst our belongings, bemused, likeable. On the edge of the grass sat a number of Green and Golden Bell Frogs, hunting. Classed as vulnerable, we were careful not to step on our little mates.

Next day the wind came. There is no shelter on this treeless, windswept island. We quickly re-pitched our shelters to withstand the wind and rain. Wrapped in plastic and Gore-Tex we climbed Pinkatop Head, 90 m above us. On the way we passed through another Little Penguin colony, and breeding pools where the Green and Golden Bell Frog tadpoles lived. We photographed them. Think of a feisty ball of rainbow jelly.

Broughton was recovering from a man-made trauma. National Parks had finally



Little Penguin, Green and Golden Bell frog and tadpole, Muttonbird

rid the island of rabbits and rats. The undergrowth was now much thicker than in the past. Walking above the high cliffs, we were now on an island edged in foam and spray as the furious sea pounded the hard volcanic rocks. There was to be no rest from the wind for the remainder of the trip. We visited Coal Shaft Bay where there were sea caves, gorges and bizarre rock formations. More swimming, penguins, and a snapper that easily fed the 6 of us. We all had an extra 3 days

food, as it was possible that the boat would not risk coming out.

At the allotted time a bare-foot 30 year old lad in a T-shirt rowed through the surf. He made many return journeys from the beach to 'Full Stik' the fishing charter boat that would see us safely back to Nelson Bay Harbour. It was a spectacular journey against 60 km/h winds and a 3 m swell. We wore life jackets, got wet and marvelled at the whole thrilling, improbable scene. ♦

The wet season is SPECTACULAR!!

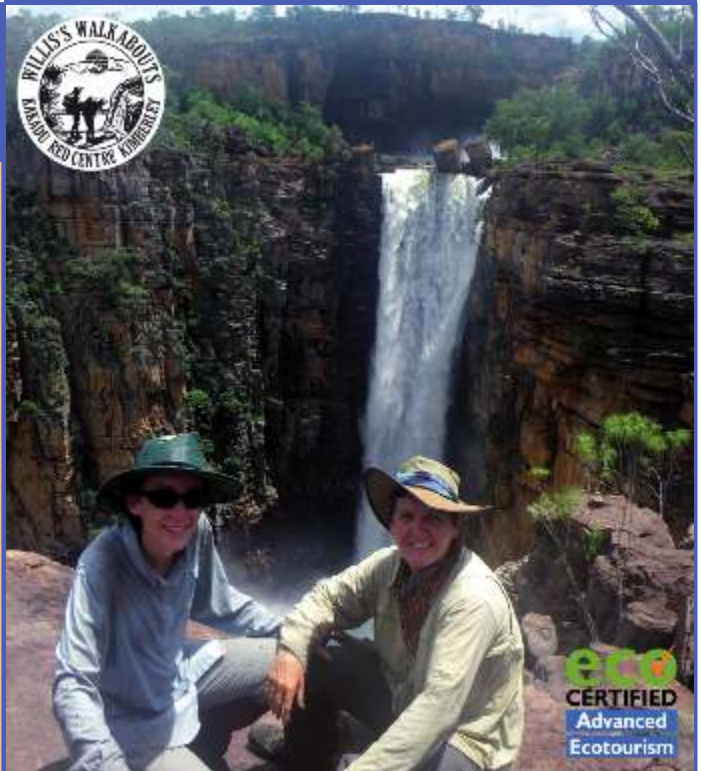
Don't believe what you see on TV weather reports. Weather symbols designed for temperate climates don't work for the tropics.

January, our wettest month, is far from the hottest. Most rain comes in short, sharp bursts. Sydney gets more 35° days than Darwin. We average sunny skies 45% of the time, almost as much as Sydney's 50%.

Don't believe it? The met bureau links on our wet season information page will let you judge for yourself. www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/wet.shtml

Our **What to Expect** page tells you even more. www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/wet2.shtml

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Raiders of the Lost Arch

Ian Smith



I can't even remember who the man was, can't remember where I met him, only remembered that he knew where the arch was; the arch I'd read about in some obscure document in a research library. He'd told me how to get there, gave me some little known details and had related how it was hard to find even if you knew where you were going.

It was like an ache; it wouldn't go away and kept coming back when my mind was on other things. And it wasn't really anything at all, just an arch secreted away in the bush; one of only three apparently in the whole Hunter Valley. Heck, I'd been in America just two months previously and had visited a national park with over 2,000 of them in an area not even as large as the valley. Still, it

gnawed at me.

Ken was keen to go and have a look as well so we made a date and then postponed it but eventually we headed off for the Watagans, for that is where the arch was to be found. At the Gap Creek carpark we checked our gear and rubbed Vaseline around our ankles to keep the leeches at bay that had pestered us last time before moving off.

The trail is easy to follow initially; in fact, we'd started out on it last time but rain came and we called it quits when we were shooting some Bridal Veil Stinkhorn fungi. We had no such problem today and stopped several times to shoot more fungi then pushed on until, as the man had warned me, we came to where a large tree had fallen over the trail and after that

the track was difficult to follow.

We slid over the log and moved on, at times not sure where the trail actually was but making headway in the general direction anyway, though at times the walking was tough as we negotiated steep slopes with few toeholds. In time we found ourselves beside a cliff face, partially laden with mosses and lichen and luckily with a narrow clear path alongside.

We made good progress but then the sandstone wall ended and, despite looking, we hadn't sited the arch. The next obstacle was a crossing over Gap Creek but we decided to get on top of the rock face and have a look. As Ken got to the top it looked like we'd drawn a blank



Bridal Veil Stinkhorn fungus



Phellinus fungus

so I said I'd head off across the creek and, if I couldn't see it, we'd head back.

No sooner had I started out than Ken yelled he'd found it; so I joined him and there it was, in a clear spot on top of the rock face with views across a valley. We could see clouds building up for the predicted afternoon storms but we were too excited about our find and scrambled to get pictures of it before the occasional drop became a downpour.

We gingerly walked across it, the type

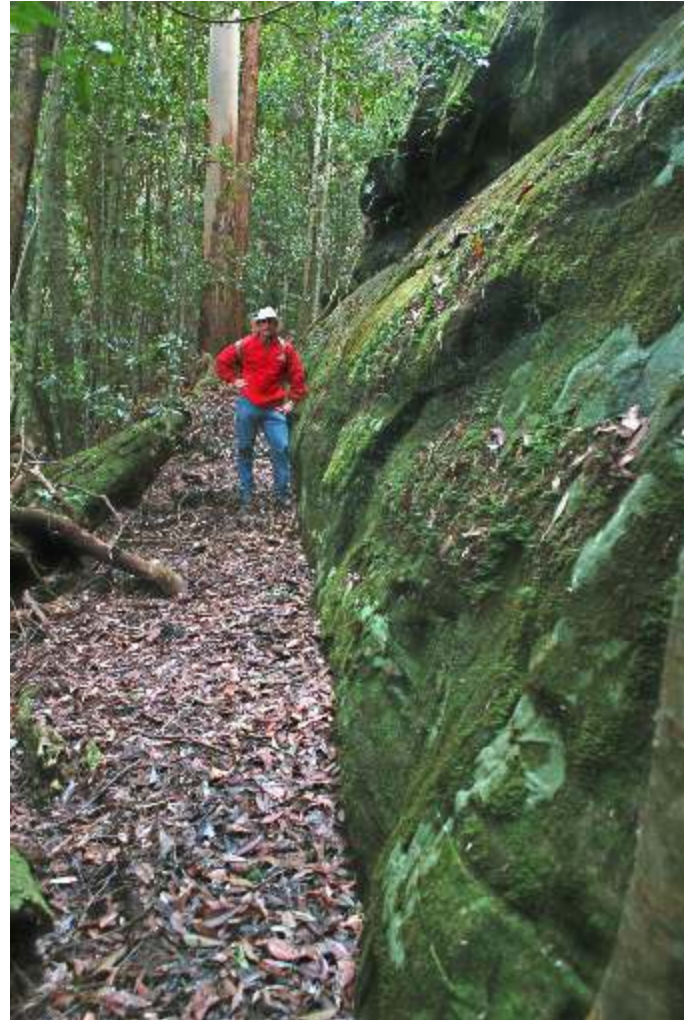
of thing men seemingly have to have to do to prove who-knows-what, and took several pictures of each other doing it as proof of our manhood or stupidity before we were satisfied. That coincided with the rain starting to fall a little more earnestly so we moved back under the canopy. It soon eased, so we went down to the streamlet again to photograph its erratic course through vines and moss laden boulders for the third time that day.

We had a nice session before the

gloom returned to say that our day in the Watagans was rapidly coming to an end. With the coming of heavy raindrops this time so we spurted back down the trail and reached the car without getting too drenched and rocked up to our favourite cafe in Cooranbong (they have pies). The only difference here was that Ken didn't leave blood on the floor and a squirming bloated leech to remind other patrons we'd been there like last time and thus we celebrated our finding of the "lost" arch. ♦



Machismo on the arch



The cliff below the arch



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A CORRECT AND FAITHFUL ACCOUNT OF A JOURNEY TO THE FISH RIVER CAVES

by the the Pickwick Corresponding Club, 1885

At the time called Easter in the year 1885 Mr Nathaniel Winkle and Mr Samuel Weller made a journey to the world-famous 'Binda' or 'Fish River Caves'. They were so impressed with the trip that, on their return, they consulted with Mr Pickwick, as to the desirability of again visiting that famous spot in company with the whole of the Pickwick Corresponding Club. The idea of taking ladies such a journey was rather much for Pickwick's what Weller would call 'propriety', but after several days weighty consideration, the President fell in with Winkle and Weller's recommendation. The day appointed for the start was the 19th of March, 1886.



The above is from the opening page of a book still to be found in the BMCC Library - in several copies. The photos are also from the Library, which holds the copyrights.



Group photo, the man at the left is pulling a string to the camera shutter



Looking for the blazed trees on the Six Foot Track. Man with string at left.

The people involved affected the names from Dickin's book. They are:

Samuel Pickwick Esq	Alfred Allen
Nathaniel Winkle Esq	William Petford Allen
Tracey Tupman Esq	unknown
Samuel Weller	Wallace Fry
Mrs Bardell	Katy Fry
Aunt Rachel	Edith Fry
Arabella Allen	Mary Amelia Allen

In addition, the book records 'Punch The black horse'. One suspects his contribution was under-appreciated.

It would appear that the party took very little food, water or gear with them. This may account for the look on the faces of the ladies in some cases. One cannot blame them! Nonetheless, they did it and survived, even with those long dresses. They were tough.



"I'm tired", or maybe "Why am I here?"



Cartoon at the foot of the first page of the book

Haycock Point



Light to Light - **The South Coast**

Yvonne Lollback

Photos by Robert Sterry

About ten minutes before reaching Eden we took the turnoff to Haycock Point. A short distance along the Haycock Point road a well sign posted side road leads to a short 1 km circular walk and a lookout over The Pinnacles. The Pinnacles are fabulous coloured cliffs above Long Beach. Unfortunately there is no longer any track access from the lookout down to the beach and of course we just had to get down there for a better look!

As luck would have it, when we reached Haycock Point and went exploring the extensive rock platform that extends out into the sea, we met up with a local Aboriginal fisherman who was collecting fresh abalones with a few friends. We got chatting of course and mentioned our desire to find a way down to the beach below The Pinnacles. Take the road behind the tip a couple of kilometres this side of Eden he told us. We were delighted!

We quickly drove into Eden, booked into our accommodation at Eden Tourist Park (between Lake Curralo and Aslings Beach), met up with the others who had also just arrived and piled into cars to set off on an adventure to find the way to The Pinnacles. We were not the least deterred that by then it was 7 pm in the evening!

We had no trouble finding the road to the tip a short distance from town, although we were a bit worried how tough it was going to be. It was clearly only a rough dirt track and there were no signs at all that indicated where it might lead. We passed side roads leading to Lennards Island and Mewstone Rock but we ignored these and kept to the left. After about 3 km we finally arrived at the beach and were rather surprised to find a picnic table and wooden steps leading down. A lovely kilometre walk north along the beach beside fabulous coloured cliffs led us to the base of The Pinnacles. We were amazed at the colours and

shapes of the layers of rock, from pure white to rose red. Wandering back down the beach in the twilight was pure heaven.

The next day our full complement of nine for the 'Light to Light' walk met in Eden and proceeded to the southern section of Ben Boyd where we left three



Pinnacles

cars at Green Cape Light House and then took two back up to Boyd's Tower for the start of the 30 km, two-day walk.

A short side trip to the tower is a must. Boyd built this massive tower out of Pymont sandstone he had especially shipped down from Sydney. He wanted it to be a lighthouse but it was never approved so it became Boyd's Folly and was used as a whale lookout tower for the whaling industry. His name is still visible high up on the north face. Steps lead down to a platform to view a section of the cliff face with wonderful folds and colours.

Then we started the walk proper, with me realizing I'd forgotten to get people to sign the club forms which were back at Green Cape. After instructing

everyone that no embarrassing accidents would be tolerated, we set off along one of the best sections of coastline I've seen. Soon Hilary remembered that she'd left half their lunch in their camper fridge and, worse still, the cheese for happy hour. It's tough when you go on holidays but the brain stays at home or hides somewhere.

After about 4 km we came to a little beach with a huge cave on the opposite side. This had formed under a thick band of rock. You can't reach it from the beach but need to go up the track a short way and then turn left to come out above the cave. A track of sorts leads to the cave roof which you walk across to where you can climb down into it. But the best bit is a section of cliff just to the south and clearly visible from the cave roof. The folds, twists and colours are indescribable. I couldn't tear myself away.

A short distance on, we came to a lovely secluded beach with a very enticing grassy, flat



Rock cliffs below Boyd's Tower



Amazing folds

camping area just above the sand. A creek even provides water. If I ever did this walk again, I'd spend the first night here and then finish the walk at Bittangabee Bay from which you can drive to the Light House. The section from Bittangabee to Green Cape is not very interesting anyway as it never touches the coast but follows the old horse-drawn tramway they built to take goods to the lighthouse keepers. The wildflowers are good though. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Dragging ourselves away from what, I think, is Leatherjacket Bay, we continued to Saltwater Creek for the night. The walk continually alternates between heath and forest sections, little bays, inlets,

great swimming spot if it was a little warmer. There is even a lagoon for canoeing. They say the snorkelling and diving are fantastic all along this coast.

The next day we did another lovely section to Bittangabee Bay, though it did start to rain about mid-morning. Luckily we found a shelter at the bay for lunch as this is another drive-in camp spot. The rain did clear just as we were on the cliff edge where we saw our only whale, thanks to Don's son Matt and his youthful, sharp eyes. We reached Green Cape with plenty of time to walk out to the lighthouse and the Point, pick up the two cars and get to Eden for showers and

beaches and cliff top bits with great rocks as well as views. The camp ground can be reached by road, so it has toilets and a shelter with BBQs and lots of VERY friendly kangaroos, many with young. One of them knew people had yummy food in their tents and backpacks and had to be watched carefully after he'd taken someone's breakfast. A possum also thought we were mobile takeaways. But the site is grassy and shady and would be a

a hotel meal. Here we said goodbye to some of the others.

Next morning we went to the whaling museum which is very well set up and even has a story of a modern-day Jonah-in-the-whale. Here is preserved the complete skeleton of Old Tom, the last of the killer whales who for over a century worked with whalers to capture the much larger Baleen, krill-eating whales. This is an amazing story of wild animals cooperatively hunting with humans. In return for their help, the killer whales got their first pick of the carcass, the whale's tongue and lips!

We drove to Tilba Tilba to climb Mt Dromedary. On the way we visited Foxglove Spires, a luscious woodland garden. At Central Tilba, a gorgeous heritage-listed village nestled on a ridge below the mountain, we bought some local cheeses.

The walk itself starts at Pam's store at Tilba Tilba and proceeds up the road (only open to locals) through a beautiful rural setting. The climb is gradual with a diversion at the saddle where a track behind the toilet leads to magnificent granite boulders and phallic shaped tors. We had entered the mist by now so missed out on most of the best views but it only added to the Druid-like, mysterious atmosphere.

We used the short steep climb to reach the summit and came back via the Rainforest Track where again, the mist added to the scene. This is a really good five hour walk. ♦

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Point Anderson (L) to Point Nicholson (R)

Point Nicholson to Point Anderson

Michael Keats The Bush Club

The genesis of this walk hatched in my mind on a day walk to Point Nicholson from Newnes, earlier in 2013, with a lunchtime comment made by Brian Fox when looking over the cliff edge, 'I think we could get down here', and hence into the Capertee Valley.

This set in motion a series of thoughts in my head. One, we had already successfully climbed from Canobla Gap to Point Anderson to the north on two occasions and been stymied by time constraints and the deep saddle on the cliff edge that connects Point Anderson with Red Rocks. Two, Geoff Jones, a fellow member of the Bush Club had sent me a map that showed a route he had walked negotiating the Red Rocks from Point Nicholson to the saddle gap below Point Anderson. Three, Yuri Bolotin had walked part of the route marked by Geoff on his map. Fourthly, I had good friends, the managers of Goollooinboin Station in the Capertee Valley. There were a few gaps in terrain continuity but otherwise it all looked good.

After a very early start from Sydney, morning coffee at the Capertee General Store, we arrived at Goollooinboin Station office at 0835. After a briefing with our walk details and securing approval to park vehicles, two vehicles were located on the

Weathered Rocks. Photo: Yuri Bolotin



Canobla Gap Trail and two were driven across paddocks to the base of a spur below Point Nicholson, elevation 360 m.

Walking commenced at 0903 after a briefing session and water check. We observed that the Capertee Valley was extremely dry with no surface water in Airly, Crown or Coco Creeks. All the tributaries of Red Rock Creek were also dry. The open forest was desiccated to the point where the leaves of many smaller shrubs such as *Dodonaea viscosa* were hanging limp from their branches.

An old collapsed property fence was crossed at 0920, as we made a steady progress up the steep slope of the ridge. Climbing was the focus of our attention. We stopped at several points for rehydration. At 0956, 713 m it was time to record the views and start getting serious about dealing with near vertical surfaces.

A glorious cave/overhang was found at 789 m. This was chosen for morning tea and also to do a bit of local exploring. To the north a slot/passage way formed by great sandstone blocks had created a wonderful tunnel that we crawled through to view the stunning cliff line north towards Red Rocks.

Resuming, the degree of verticality increased along with significant exposed areas. Nothing too hard and all adrenalin pumping experiences. At 1033 we climbed through an amazing cave with some exposure, then up a convenient dead log before scaling an exposed pagoda. At 816 m, we located an old cairn and then a second one. This was a route up established by bushwalkers or curious landowners many years ago.

There was still some way to go to make it to the top and at 1045 we crossed a deep parallel sided ravine that led to room-like structures similar to those found on the top of Donkey Mountain. After another exposed climb with glorious views, when you had time



Scale Factors. Photo: Yuri Bolotin

to look!, we made it to the very spot, where on 18th November 2013 we had had our lunch and Brian Fox made his comment about the cliff being negotiable.

We were jubilant. We had secured our first objective. We had climbed the Capertee Valley face of Point Nicholson, and in so doing we had crossed a section of the Gardens of Stone National Park and were now in the Wollemi National Park. For the next 3 kilometres of walking we would cross this notional joint national park boundary many times. After an indulgent few minutes we commenced on the next element of our journey, the traverse of Red Rocks.

The north western face of Red Rocks is not negotiable and a skyline traverse is not possible except for extreme rock climbers. What we planned to do was to



South to Pantoney's Crown. Photo: Yuri Bolotin

walk around the eastern side of each of the Red Rocks monoliths and where it was safe to do so, to visit the big gaps that appear between them. The area is so dissected it is almost impossible to catalogue each and every slot, overhang, cave and currently dry waterfalls.

At 1111, we visited a long slot at elevation 890 m - one of many. It was also a special place in so far as we now had views into the deep and narrow confines of Canobla Creek. There were also views through the trees across the Canobla Creek catchment where we had on 18th November 2013, been looking at the impressive sandstone monoliths that we were now walking under. At 1120, a gap was visited, providing an opportunity to look down to the base of the cliffs that collectively become Red Rocks when viewed from the Capertee Valley.

It was at 1147 we explored the slot between monoliths two and three. These slots have a vegetation regime dominated by *Xanthorrhoea* species. They are also locations for strong air movement. Hard up against the base of the cliffs the vegetation was restricted and also quite varied. In drier sections, *Banksia serrata*, twisted and contorted by location dominated. In the moister areas there were flat pans filled with water pounded stones indicating the base of non-perennial waterfalls.

A recognised camping site was visited. It is a 30 m long dry overhang complete with fireplace, seating logs and a supply of firewood, but no water today. An opportunity was taken to climb up a nearby gully in order to maintain contact

with the base of the upper cliff line. A lower cliff line and steep contours needs to be avoided here or otherwise you end up in the deep confines of Canobla Creek.

From 1233 to 1246 we contoured above the headwaters of a Canobla Creek tributary. The cliffs here are dramatic, sculptural and generally not climbable. The described arc of our progress here was from GR 392 277 to GR 394 277. We now walked /scrambled around a 'counter arc', in all swinging around in a crude sort of 'S' configuration to round the last big monolith and then headed west back towards the cliff edge. A ramp up with exposure and rock climbing delivered us onto a great pagoda, a natural viewing platform.

This location is a stunner. There is a view north east along the valley of Canobla Creek right through to the lucerne flats at Glen Davis. Closer, and further east we could look at a tributary of Canobla Creek, a junction where from a base camp in Glen Davis in 2012, we had walked upstream all the way to the plateau crest near spot height 958 and beyond. The really big and commanding view was due north where the twin peaks of Mount Canobla and the flat top of Mount Gundangaroo were on the left hand side of Point Anderson and a section of the Capertee Valley west of Glen Davis, can all be viewed in the one frame. For the photographers with high resolution cameras, the cone of Tayan Pic can be

added as well. We deemed this place to be grudgingly good enough to have lunch.

Ahead, immediately after lunch was a section of the planned walk not done by any of the party, or one for which we had any notes; a cliff edge saddle some 300 m long. We did know from standing on Point Anderson and looking south it seemed formidable. Now, the view from the south looking north was not much more encouraging. At 1336, we stood looking in awe at the very thin, almost hairline ridge of rock that had a 100+ m vertical drop on the Capertee Valley side and a much shorter but incredibly convoluted drop on the Canobla Creek side. We needed to do two things, one to get down to the saddle and two to cross it and find a way up a collection of vertical rock faces that Point Anderson exhibits on its southern flank.

Nature is amazing, not 10 m from contemplating the awesome sight was a slot, a slot full of leaves and debris that, as if by magic took us down some 40 m in all to the start of the saddle. The leaves were so slippery it was easy to be a kid again use the slot as a luge run or controlled toboggan ride.

The start of the saddle was so good we just had to stop for pictures. Red Rocks as a geologic feature has an imperceptible curve along its length and so pictures are wonderful. Add in the growing profile of Mount Canobla and the beauty is overwhelming. Similarly, as we were crossing this treacherous cliff edge, it was impossible not to stop and take pictures. That there was a 100 m drop below was something we just got used to. Approaching the northern end of the saddle a large Lace Monitor was disturbed and scuttled up a tree.

The next half an hour or so was spent seeking and negotiating a way up the heavily dissected, and often challenging south face of Point Anderson. We did find an exposed rock climb that enabled us to breach the final cliff line. Amazingly there was a cairn at the location indicating that

Wedgie below us. Photo: Emanuel Conomos



we were perhaps not too far from the mark in finding a doable route. At 1417, we all sat down on the top of Point Anderson. We had now met the challenges of the walk and knew from previous visits that from this point onwards back to the vehicles the terrain was all negotiable.

We had walked from Point Nicholson to Point Anderson! And in a day! It was time now for a celebratory photograph, and one with a spectacular back drop. As the photography session ended, a pair of Wedgetail Eagles, *Aquila audax*, appeared below us and rode the thermals off the cliff edge. The slightest adjustment of wing tip feathers and the birds rose up, circling majestically above. Some few metres down from the top of Point Anderson, the last spring flowers of the Long Leafed Wax Flower, *Philotheca myropoides*, were observed. Normally this species grows to 2 m. On Point Anderson there are many specimens nearly twice this size.

Heading north off Point Anderson the photography is extra special. There are so many wonderful rock outcrops, so many layers of serried backdrop mountains and such huge drops locally to give an infinite variety of wonder. During the descent there is a tunnel formed by several collapsed rocks. Normally such a feature would rank high on the great experiences of a walk. Not today, it was almost 'just another tunnel'. Spoilt? You bet we were. This is a walk with everything.

Descending a few more metres there is a pair of vertical slots that are very special. It is possible to view through these slots the peak of Mount Canobla and the point of Tayan Pic in perfect alignment. Another great place for memorable photographs.

At 1538 it was decided to accelerate out exit and cut off an extra kilometre of boring trail walking. We set a compass bearing and headed directly for the Gardens of Stone National Park boundary. Coming down this terrain was a lot harder than going up. Maintaining foot stability was a constant issue and we did lots of uncontrolled sliding. By 1615 we were at the vehicles. ♦



North to Point Anderson: Photo: Yuri Bolotin

Book Review . . .

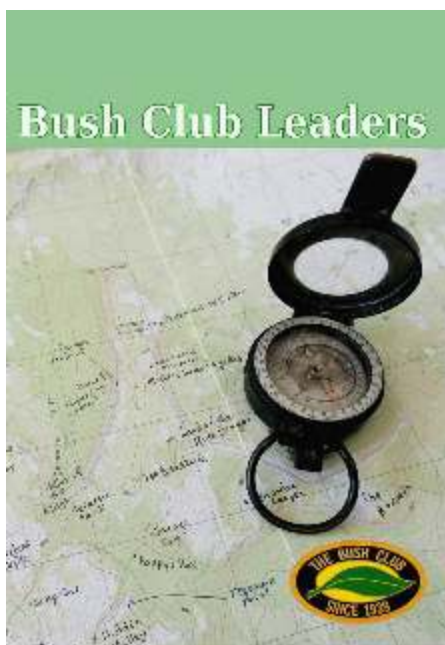


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Bush Club Leaders

Michael Keats
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michael@bushexplorers.com.au
Correction: \$30 + P&P

This is a rather specialist book mainly of interest to Bush Club members, but it is sure to be of some interest to members of other walking clubs and maybe even historians.

As the title suggests, it provides short biographies of some 43 'walks leaders' from the Bush Club, starting with two of the founders: Paddy Pallin and Marie Byles. Each biography is illustrated with a pencil sketch of the person, drawn by Steve Murray from a photo. I have to say they are very good sketches - better in many ways than the source photos.

What is so very interesting in this book is the background: how so many prominent people in one club turn out to be involved in other walking clubs as well. And that turns out to be true all the way back to the start of the club as well. It says something about enthusiastic walkers.

Of course, all the amusing anecdotes told by the featured people don't hurt the book either. There's Wilf Hilder's epic confrontation with Sydney Water Board: that he won was monumental in helping bushwalking all over the Mountains. There was a trip where crossing a simple fence meant ending up in an active nudist colony. And what about the description of 'the Cave Worm': it's usually green and is found in 'camping caves', where it pretends to be dead around 0700.

Roger Caffin



**Wrights Creek headwaters,
Kosciuszko National Park**