



# **The Bushwalker**

Wind-etched sandstone,  
Cunio Point, Berowa, NSW.

**Volume 40**  
**Issue 2**  
**Autumn 2015**



*Wouldn't you like to be here?*



Lunch on rocks above Wisemans Ferry, Joan's 80th birthday walk,  
Greg Powell, Newcastle Ramblers



Camp at Mt Pomony, Northern Wollemi NP,  
Michael Keats, The Bush Club



## **From the editor's desk. . .**

**T**he cave on the front cover - nowhere special, near Cunio Pt near Berowra, north of Sydney. Rather soft and erodable sandstone. Just a rather wild range of colours in the rock, plus some really sculptured effects.

### **Articles for Publication**

We are always happy to receive pictures for the Inside Front Cover - and elsewhere too. If you would like to see yours published, send them in. However, please note that 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, that's fine but we don't use them.

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.

Finally, the opinions expressed by authors may not represent the official opinions of Bushwalking NSW 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*  
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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 Administration

**admin@bushwalkingnsw.org.au**

for a list of Clubs, but a far more useful on-line list is available at the Confederation website

**www.bushwalkingnsw.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:** Wind-etched sandstone, Cunio Point, Berowra. Photo: Roger Caffin.

**Back Cover:** Natural rock art, Richmond Beach, Murrumbidgee National Park, NSW. Photo: Barry Hanlon, The Bush club.



The natural window in the cave at Florabella Pass, Warrimoo, Blue Mountains NP.  
Photo: Barry Hanlon



# The Flying Carpet and Koan Cave, Part 2

Michael Keats  
The Bush Club

*Part 1 of this article was in the Summer issue (40/1). This is part 2, continuing on from spectacular experience of being on The Flying Carpet in The Gardens of Stone NP. Ed.*



Slots, tunnels, chockstones and blind alleys. Photo: Chris Sterling

**H**ow do you follow an experience like the Flying Carpet? Well, next was a tunnel. It was no ordinary tunnel but rather a sequence of three tunnels, all created by collapsed cliff sections. The first two were rather ordinary, one being a long squeeze, the second a walk through a triangular passageway. The third however was spectacular with an internal bend and comprising two levels. In between these tunnels there were two possible slot climbs, but both proved impossible. There was also some dramatic ledge walking. We now had reached the northern end of a ravine and location of the bottom of The Gurgler Pass. This is about 1 km NW of the road intersection of Glowworm Tunnel Road and Old Coach Road.



Looking down at Koan Cave.  
Photo: Chris Sterling

At this point, GR 413 145, we did a review of the time (1211), our rate of progress and options. A decision was made to not try to reach Shunt Pass but to spend time exploring some mid cliff level caves and the area around The Gurgler. Minutes later we had crossed the valley entry to The Gurgler and spied a cave at GR 414 146. It proved to be a significant cave. We paced out its dimensions: 25 m across the mouth, 20 m high and 20 m deep. Fascinatingly, the cave featured an irregular band of creamy white flowering *Epacris crassifolia* up to 50 cm wide around much of the back wall where seepage moisture was adequate for plant growth and survival. A decision was taken to name this cave Koan Cave. Whilst there was sufficient mystery within the cave itself to justify the name it also happened to be the name of Yuri's first grandson, born some 48 hours earlier.

The cave demanded time to explore, and as it was 1225 it was agreed it was great spot for lunch. After lunch our revised plans were to explore a mid-level ledge to the S and try to reach a cave we had seen from the Flying Carpet. The best laid plans can come undone and they did! As we moved S we crossed a tumble of rocks and saw some spectacular pagodas to the E. Then without even trying we suddenly were on a ramp that was the easiest of passes ever. The ramp went all the way to the top of the cliffs, and the beginning of a sequence of stunning views we had not anticipated. The pass was named Koan Pass and for future reference it is an easy access to visit the Flying Carpet. A special rock formation occurs at GR 414 144. It looks mysterious and mythical. It has been called Koan's Chair.



Brian Fox on Koan Chair - 'Put that crowbar down!'. Photo: Yuri Bolotin



Lunch in Koan Cave. Photo: Brian Fox





Cliffs, gaps, passes - maybe...  
Photo: Yuri Bolotin

The cliff-edge walk is spectacular and varied with amazing formations, erosion residuals and slots. Dramatic views of The Flying Carpet made us all wonder just how we had climbed up there. It was a deliberately slow progress as we savoured the views. There were no regrets about changing the course of the walk and as so often happens the walk has revealed even more opportunities to explore. At GR 414 142 there is a pagoda topped with a window that frames a pagoda 20 m further W, and then and beyond there is Adrenalin Head on the western side of Carne Creek.

A stone interpretation of Noah's Ark was seen at GR 415 141. The image was realistic as the rock is perforated along the keel line. So much to see and enjoy. Reluctantly we were forced to turn inland to cross an unnamed creek system. Even this had merit as it is full of pagodas. A deep slot was checked out but it proved to have an internal non negotiable drop. This was at GR 416 140. There are possibilities of exploring much more of this creek system, however given that it was 1411, we decided to make our exit crossing a dry creek bed at GR 416 139 and then ascending a gently rising spur to the SE.

There was still more to come. Our chosen route led to the old buffer at the end of the triangle used to turn around the Shay Locomotives at Deanes Siding. Deanes Siding was at the highest point on the former Wolgan Valley Railway. Two engines were required to haul



Berenice Torstensson sitting on Koan Chair.  
Photo: Yuri Bolotin

loaded trains up from Newnes but only one engine was needed to take the train on to Newnes Junction. The second engine was detached at Deanes and turned around for hooking up for the return journey. The adventure finished at 1500 as we emerged onto the Glowworm Tunnel Road and made our way back to the vehicles. ♦

*The Gurgler is located 1 km north west of the road intersection of Glowworm Tunnel Road and Old Coach Road. Named by Michael Keats on his Bush Club walk 21st September 2007. The Gurgler is a pass through the cliff line to Carne Creek valley.*

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# A Right Royal Affair

Ian Smith

**K**ings Canyon became a reality around lunch time. I'd taken it easy and arrived early enough to do a short walk and strolled along the easy Kings Creek Track as an introductory lesson to this natural wonder. I'd heard so many favourable comments about it and it seemed they might be on the money as the high tops overlooked the red river gums and strange cycads where I meandered, alternating between shade and bright sunlight.

Here the landscape is dominated by the



compacted sand dunes of millennia, hardened by silica rich water seeping through them 400 million years ago and today leaving noticeable layers in the beehive formations. I can see the "wall", featured in a thousand and one shots. For some reason I thought it was at the end of the range but it's actually at the beginning, overseeing the place that made it originally, the ephemeral waterfall.

I scurry back and ascend on the Giles Track entrance, in order to ferret around in the beehives. It's starting to warm up a little but, up on top, breezes weave their way through a hundred furrows and I'm tempted by an average size gully that appears it might have a cave or two. Only a couple of hundred metres in I peer into a cavity and espy some hand paintings, right beside them is a wonderful abstract natural formation that makes the cavern even more attractive.



Now I'm hooked and locate a few more overhangs, one of which has more paintings but these are of very small hands and I wonder if they've allowed children up here in more recent times to carry on the tradition as they did at Blackdown Tablelands.

I weave my way around on ledges and reach the next canyon, this time pushing right up and climbing the water course. It's steep but relatively easy and, as I turn around at the top, a marvellous amphitheatre appears beneath me with a smattering of vegetation to highlight the colours. Moving another 20 metres and a tad higher and a vast array of beehives are on show with a clear path down the middle of them. They're so vast I have to get my extra wide angle lens out just to get a big group of them in.

The wall may be the attractant for the mainstream but the beehives are the plaything of photographers, offering a hundred different aspects and challenging the imagination.

I booked in to the local "resort", happy to have an unlimited shower for a change, and woke up the next morning looking down on three young lads putting a different aspect on breakfast in bed. Side by side in their one man sleeping-only tents, they had their breakfast cereal served to them by their parents and were clearly enjoying life to the full.

**N**ext day I'm part of the early walking crowd, for this apparently is school holidays, as evidenced by the eager and not-so-eager young feet scaling the heights as we negotiate the climb to the northern rim. The way others had spoken of it I imagined it was a Blue Mountains type hike of a thousand steps straight up but this is fairly benign with a couple of pauses here and there.

No matter how long I've spent in the



outback, the sheer tenacity of the plant life never ceases to amaze. How trees can prolong their life up here is a wonder of nature, often with roots hundreds of feet beneath the surface. Bitter and twisted they may be, but they're alive, and that's what matters.



I work my way around to Cotterill Lookout, named after a cattleman and the key figure in the development of Kings Canyon; here is where the wall comes into its own. The size of the sheer drop is frequently accented by people near the edge, their puny presence barely







wall beneath you that makes it so daunting for the acrophobic. All I can remember is that I was so hesitant to get anywhere near the edge, gently sliding my feet across the stony ground centimetre by centimetre just to get somewhere where I could peer marginally into the chasm; it sent a shiver up my spine.

I was glad to move away and continue the walk over to the next chasm where the drop from Kestrel Falls is hardly less daunting but somehow seems just a little safer. Just to prove you should always be wary though, a young English tourist died while posing here just a few months ago.

**E**n route there's a dragon lizard of some sort; had he not moved his camouflage would have kept him unnoticed; extraordinary how they blend in with their background.

Kestrel Falls overlooks the valley of its making, named Red, whose less steeply angled slopes lend a softer tone to the landscape.

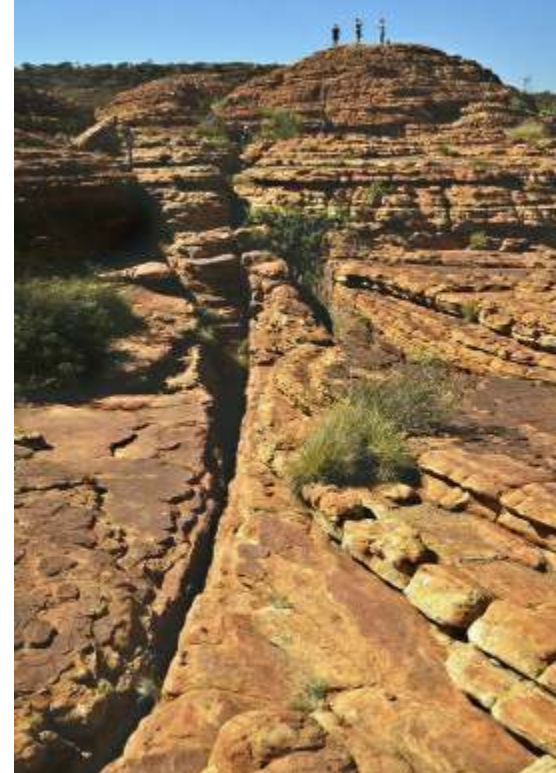
Apparently one day last summer the temperature reached 49 degrees in the shade. That would have meant over 60 up here on the baking rocks, beyond what any normal person would be asked to stand. It was a record, the highest ever recorded here.

I note how it's starting to warm up and am glad I've less than a kilometre to go, descending the Giles Stairs probably for

noticeable unless they move.

To the left is the Garden of Eden, resplendent with its remnant from a bygone era cycads and it's a long way down to the pool from where you're standing. You return to the main trail and soon you're descending a flight of well made wooden stairs that allows access to Kings Creek and the garden. Naturally enough it's not actually flowing though I'd put my swimmers on hoping for a dip as the family of five next to me had done the previous day.

I noted the stagnant pond, I thought of five sweaty bodies splashing around in said pond; I decided to walk on, taking a drink at the top of the steps before moving on to the cliff face. It seems it doesn't matter where you stand, it's scary. Perhaps it's the fact that the incline goes beyond the vertical and you can't see the



the last time in my life but glad to have had the opportunity.

I couldn't help but think on the way to the carpark that a friend of mine, Bryce, who'd been here only a week or so ago, probably wouldn't recognize the place from the photos I'd taken.

I drove off and pulled into Kathleen Spring rest stop, so exhausted I fell asleep immediately after lunch, but that's what you can do in comfort in a motorhome. ♦

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Close to Sassafras



Deep in the forest

# Dandenong Ranges

Donna Quinn

**J**anuary 2015, and I was day-tripping in the Dandenongs as part of a short solo break to Melbourne. It was more than 25 years since I was last there, but I'd been a toddler and too young to really remember it. I was now back to experience the mountain ash forest at an age when I could appreciate it.

From online sources, the Dandenong Ranges Tourist Track looks promising – gently undulating for 17 kilometres between the towns of Sassafras and Emerald via ferny gullies and forests of several eucalypt species, including mountain ash. Following the creek line, most of the track is sandwiched in a narrow green strip between private properties and the road.

The walk can be done in either direction, but most people start at Sassafras as the more downhill way to go about things, and catch the Puffing Billy steam train at the end. However, I wanted to visit Miss Marples Tearoom at Sassafras as a reward, so I hopped off the bus at Emerald clutching a printout about the track from the Parks Victoria website. The website is sketchy on the details, doesn't reveal the exact start point, and the map covers only the last part of the walk with the main picnic grounds. This hadn't fazed me as I'd assumed a track promoted to tourists would be easy to find. I admit this is a cavalier way to plan a bushwalk, but I had the entire day and there was plenty to do in the area if the walk didn't pan out. I later found out the Tourist

Track was so-named as it is thought to follow a route favoured by Melbourne day-trippers in the late 1800s.

In any case, the track mouth wasn't exactly decked out in neon lights. I also couldn't find it on the tourist information board at Emerald (but may have overlooked it in my eagerness to get going), and a few locals hadn't heard of it either. It's entirely possible the track is known locally by more than one name.

While on the bus, my friendly driver John said he often dropped bushwalkers off at the Paradise Valley Hotel at nearby Clematis, so I went there for more information. From Emerald, a dirt path runs alongside the Puffing Billy railway line to the hotel. It's only a couple of kilometres and quite pretty, especially with the morning sunlight striping the farmland. Against her owner's wishes, Rosie the border collie did a top job of rounding me up along the way.

The hotel was closed but a waiting courier's street directory showed a walking track near St Joseph's Catholic Church at Emerald, going all the way to Sassafras. So, back to Emerald! The first section was well marked and beautiful as expected – dark mysterious nooks under the tree ferns, the gurgle of the creek, and dead-straight eucalypts with fantastic bark ribbons draped like ruined curtains. A rufous fantail came close to investigate, and a party of thornbills and scrub-wrens gossiped loudly about who knows what.

**A**bout 7.5 kilometres from Emerald at a secluded picnic ground, there's a detailed map of the entire track. I took a photo of it with my phone and checked it often. Up next was the first of many crossings of the main road – a narrow and winding affair, with no shoulder for pedestrians.

From there on, proximity to human activity has contributed to what can only be called a shocking weed infestation along the track. I've never walked anywhere even remotely as weedy – sticky grasses clung with surprising strength to my pants and regularly obscured the track. I followed a few false leads and had to back-track each time, aware that this trail-blazing was causing more environmental damage than the inevitable amount in simply being there in the first place. (Of course, the road offered a last-ditch alternative route.)

To give some idea of the impact of the weeds on walking speed, earlier in January I'd walked the Coast Track in the



# ies Tourist Track

Royal National Park. This is 10 kilometres longer than the Dandenong Ranges Tourist Track and a more strenuous route, but took me far less time to complete. On a positive note, a track sign described the significant weed control work that was underway. Hopefully, this work will reduce available habitat for the introduced blackbirds which were extremely common.

But blackbirds and weeds couldn't distract from the beauty of the native birdlife. Crimson rosellas crossed the understorey in flashes of red and blue, a rail darted out in front at one point, and the usual suspects were there in force: magpies, currawongs, kookaburras and so on. I heard a couple of lyrebirds doing what they do best, but didn't spot them. As a Sydney-sider whose 'default' parrot is a rainbow lorikeet (an everyday if gorgeous bird), seeing so many rosellas was a novelty.

When planning the walk, I'd checked the Parks Victoria website for national park closures, but hadn't asked the local council if any sections of the track were closed, which was indeed the case due to storm damage. The first closed section was very short so it was easy to hop on the road and rejoin the track soon after. A couple of other closed sections were similarly circumnavigated with little fuss.

About 7 kilometres from the end, I met a council worker using a whipper snipper to clear weeds (I admire his optimism!). He said I'd done by far the hardest part, and the rest was a doddle. Another council worker at the Monbulk picnic ground said much the same. I was hanging out for coffee, so these encouraging words came at the right time.

Everything was fine until I'd passed the '2.8 km to Sassafras' marker – so close I could smell the beans roasting – when another closure notice again had me heading for the nearest road, which didn't have a street sign. The council workers hadn't mentioned the closed section, but I suppose even if they had, there wasn't much else to do but complete the last leg via the road. When you're that near the end, turning back is ridiculous.

While I'm quite fit, there's just something about walking uphill along a road that saps your energy. Maybe it's a combination of the relative monotony and hardness of the terrain, sunlight glaring off the road, and having to be on alert for traffic. Even so, the surrounding eucalypts were majestic as

ever, and I peeked into some lovely little fern-filled gullies that would probably have rewarded more exploration.

Reaching the top of the road, which was signposted, I was a bit ticked off to realise I'd slogged up Perrins Creek Road, not Sassafras Creek Road as required. The map showed I'd walked further than needed, but Sassafras wasn't too far away by the main drag. The thought of another narrow, winding road was less appealing than waiting 15 minutes for the next bus, at the convenient bus stop at the top of the road, and watching storm clouds build up.

A shower at the hotel was now more inviting than Miss Marples Tearoom, and soon after I checked in, the storm broke and Melbourne was battered by severe storms that afternoon. My last few holidays had all involved camping, so with the storm outside I felt very snug in my hotel room!

And the verdict? Call me a princess, but in its present state, the Dandenong Ranges Tourist Track isn't among my favourite bushwalks. Two days later I was still picking grass seeds from random crevices in my shoes, and I didn't feel safe walking along the road. Council workers were the only other people on the track, but when the weeds are controlled, the track's natural beauty will shine again and its popularity should deservedly increase. Still, next time I'll visit the rest of the Dandenongs' numerous attractions. ♦



Beside the Puffing Billy Railway



The first section





James Stuart

Into the canyon: this view of the first deep pool will stay with me forever

## Into the Cathedral

### Lower Bowens Creek North Canyon



The canyon approach was steep and muddy but stunning in its own right

'This is nature's cathedral,' Erin said to me as we passed under a natural rock bridge high above where a sassafras tree had taken root. We were floating downstream on our backs, through a particularly deep and narrow section of the Bowen Creek North Canyon.

It's a cliché to be sure, but looking up at the mossy sandstone walls that rose above us on either side, I had to agree. The sense of enclosure, silence and sanctity was almost holy. That we were here at all, having this quasi-religious experience was due to my climbing partner Garry.

'I want to try canyoning up in the Blue Mountains. You keen?' he asked me at the climbing gym one night. 'Not really,' I replied. Canyoning had never appealed: I'm not a fan of confined spaces or cold water. Nor abseiling for that matter, even though I've done my fair share. But after a few weeks of persistent encouragement, I agreed, on one condition: that he join me on another adventure, a walk-in, climb-out traverse of the Grose Valley. We had a deal (and a story for another day).

On a pleasant February morning, we parked just south of Mt Wilson on the north side of the Grose Valley and followed the fire trail down to the descent gully which leads to the canyon. There were four of us: me, Garry and his mates Erin and Risto. Risto was a novice to both canyoning and abseiling while Erin hadn't been since uni days. At my suggestion, Risto had gone with Garry for a couple of practice abseils.

Our original destination had been the more challenging (and remote) Whungee-Wheengee Canyon, which feeds into the Wollangambe River further north. However, recent heavy rains and the threat of a February thunderstorm had made Bowen Creek the safer (and smarter) choice. We made the final decision to go for Bowen Creek over dinner at our hotel in Blackheath. Less than 12 hours later, we were slipping into our wetsuits at the start of the canyon proper.

The descent to the canyon had been a slippery and tentative affair, despite a well-trodden track. Once we had left the fire trail, the terrain was steep and muddy. Despite taking a decent stack when the mud gave way, I still found the approach to be a worthy walk in its own right. This landscape of temperate rainforest trees, where coach wood (*Ceratopalum apetalum*) and three- to four- metre tree ferns (*Cyathea cooperi*) stood tall, would be completely invisible to day walkers through the dry sclerophyll forest above.

A large group of canyoners joined us at the top of the canyon, comprised of at least three generations of two families. Wanting some solitude, we let them get a head start. As one of the patriarchs –



sporting a faded, red helmet and beaten-up canvas rucksack – prepared for the first abseil into the canyon, I noted his lack of abseil device. Instead, he had rigged up a carabiner cross-loaded with a well-used piton to control his descent – a mountaineering technique from a time when sports climbing and camming devices were still a distant dream.

‘Abseil devices are for sissies, hey?’ I joked. ‘Wouldn’t know,’ he replied with a smile. ‘Never used one.’ ‘I’m guessing you’ve been canyoning before,’ I remarked.

‘You could say that,’ he said, lowering himself over the edge and into his umpteenth canyon. I quietly hoped to emulate him one day, sharing, as he was, these unique experiences of the wild with his children and grandchildren. That said, I was also quite happy with my bombproof and purpose-made abseil device.

As the most experienced abseilers, Garry and I had agreed to top and tail the three abseils for the day, with Erin and Risto going in between. After looping our rope through the fixed anchors (all the abseils had time-saving, fixed anchors) Garry descended, followed, somewhat gingerly by Erin and Risto. At last my turn came.

I landed on a ledge just above a deep pool, enclosed by mossy 20-metres cliff. The others were already in the water below. Any doubts I had to begin with were gone by now: this was going to be an amazing day in a place that was still relatively untouched – there are just not that many people who have the know-how, equipment or motivation to access a cold, winding canyon like this.

I snapped a photo of everyone – a frame that will be forever etched in my mind – before scrambling down some into the cold, dark water. I was keen to spend as little time as possible in the deep water; I had only brought a short-sleeved and short-legged spring suit. The others all wore full-length steamers. While the shock of entering the water was not as severe as feared, I could still feel the icy water’s acute grasp on my exposed



Risto abseiling past one of the three waterfalls



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Erin negotiates the second abseil

Below: The view back up the canyon

limbs. This was a place where hypothermia would be fast and merciless if conditions changed or injury caught you unprepared.

Fortunately, the day's swims were quite short – maybe 20-30 metres. According to the track notes, they could also be avoided with some careful route finding. But it struck me that it was precisely the sensation of the current carrying you downstream beneath these cliffs and distant, sun-speckled trees that gave the canyon its aura, as though some greater force was gently pushing you towards whatever awaited at the end.

In between swims and abseils, we scrambled across large boulders and over rocky, shallow creek sections where we would empty our packs of water. In the

process, I discovered a new use for the sleeping-bag compartment on my pack: drainage. While I unzipped the compartment to let the water run out, others had to contort upside down to empty their packs.

We didn't see the first group again, and enjoyed an immense silence for the most part, though a small commercial tour group caught up with us at the third and final abseil for the day. When I say that the canyon was 'relatively untouched' I mean that those who have visited here would number only in their thousands.

One thing we did learn from the group was that you can abseil down the final waterfall, squeezing through a hole that the water course has eroded over its many millennia. The brave and foolhardy,

including one of the guides, can also jump off the slippery ledge into the deep pool 10 metres below.

Shortly after we emerged into sunlight for the first time and ate lunch, gladly stripping off cold clammy wetsuits. By this stage, Risto's lips had started to turn purple. Thinly built like me, he confided: 'It's the cold. Happens every time.'

'We're doing this again, lads' beamed Garry in his typical Yorkshire accent as we warmed ourselves in the sun.

Soon we were wading down the final section of Bowen Creek North, where it joins with its southern branch. But when we stopped moving I noticed how quickly my core temperature dropped. I was shivering by the time we finally changed on a sandy beach and started the steep ascent back to the fire trail.

Hauling myself up the hillside in dripping wet shoes, I knew two things: first, Garry would keep his promise and traverse and climb the Grose Valley with me later in the year; second, I would be back again to help him with the unfinished business of Whungee Wheengee Canyon. I had found another way to experience and explore Australia's bush. ♦





## Book Review . . .



### The Gardens of Stone National Park and beyond

BOOK 6

Bushwalks on the northern Newnes Plateau, plus regional flora and fauna.

Michael Keats and Brian Fox

### The Gardens of Stone National Park and beyond, Book 6

Michael Keats and Brian Fox  
ISBN 978-0-9870546-5-4

**C**learly, Michael and Brian now have had quite a bit of practice at the publishing thing. It shows. The book is rather fat, on good paper, and the photos are just magnificent. Really, really beautiful.

OK, it is almost coffee table weight, at over 1.25 kg, but with 676 pages, what do you expect? You probably would not take the book out with you, just a photocopy of the walk pages. In addition to the walks descriptions, there is a huge section on flora and fauna - and spiders and snails and fungi and ..., all with good colour photos. The authors seem to have drawn on the photography skills of a wide range of Bush Club members to get all the illustrations. Some specialise in scenery, while others specialise in close flora, and so on.

There are 34 walks described, in the authors' usual style. That is, they give their actual track notes from the walks they did. This is not a conventional 'guide' to the region - but I suspect Michael and Brian would very quickly tell you that would be almost impossible anyhow. This book, like their other books, tells you about their explorations.

I read right the way through in a couple of sittings. The photos just drew me on.

The book is \$50 from [www.bushexplorers.com.au](http://www.bushexplorers.com.au) or by contacting Michael Keats, 33 Livingstone Avenue Pymble NSW 2073, Tel 9144 2096.

*Roger Caffin*



### COMING EVENTS

1 August- 6 hour, Watagan Ranges

10/11 October- 24 hour, Capertee

22 November - 6 hour, Lake Macquarie

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# Kayaking the Kangaroo & Shoalhaven

Maurice Kerkham,  
Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

A party of 3 members of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Bushwalkers recently visited Kangaroo Valley for a 2 Day kayaking experience. Day 1 saw us put in the Kangaroo River at the Bendeela Camping & Picnic Area for a paddle easterly towards the Hampden Bridge and return. The river was serene with magnificent views of the mountains & escarpment of the Valley. Reflections on the water surface were a delight. The route was up & back the same way.

Day 2 was to be our main day with the plan to put in at the Tallowa Dam. We were in the water before 10am & headed upstream towards the Shoalhaven Gorge with our destination being Fossicker's Flat—a popular camping area.

From the dam, the river meanders around and thins out somewhat. Approximately 2 kms. into the trip we came upon the "Ghost Forest". This whole

section of the river was flooded when the dam was built at the confluence of the Shoalhaven & Kangaroo Rivers. It was part of the Snowy Mountains River Scheme, and the dead trees stand on the sides of the river as a silent reminder of the bushland that was; their leaves have long given way leaving bare branches which make a resting place for bird life & lizards.

The Gorge provides spectacular scenery of the steep mountains rising from the river, heavily forested which clears to the tall cliff faces atop these mountains—staring out like huge, golden walls encasing the gorge.

Many wildlife sightings were made including kangaroos, wallabies, wombats, countless cormorants & darters, ducks, water hen, kingfishers, water dragons, a male lyrebird and probably the most exciting being the resident fish eagle who flew ahead of us for quite a while.

We stopped at a cleared area which included a small sandy beach (unidentified) where Tracy took a short swim and where we lunched. Little did we know that this was actually Fossicker's Flat (as we learned on our return as it had been taken up by paddlers who had set up tents for the night).

A decision was made to continue paddling until 1400 hours when we would then head back which would have been with the current & normally a 3 hour paddle. On about turning at that time, the wind sprung up and waves, some up to 25cms. were evident with some breaking over our bows. The going was really hard with regular rest stops required. Resting required us to stop near dead trees protruding and holding on to same to avoid being swept back. The return journey took four and a half hours, finally reaching the boat ramp at 6-30—thank goodness for daylight saving. ♦

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Dead trees in the Shoalhaven



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