

THE BUSH CLUB NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2013

www.bushclub.org.au

Walks Program Autumn 2013

Walks Reports Summer 2012

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Now for those European peaks

Walkers: John and Colette
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Trembath, Vicki Presdee, Hugh
Thoma, Vivienne Cronin and Jill
Green

By Jill Green

The crossing of the Alps in 2011 was such a success John Bannister kindly decided to organize a second assault last year on the European mountains. Ten from the 2011 groups plus one new chum assembled in Bressanone, a delightful town featuring Austrian monastic architecture - although it is in Italy, but only just. There we met our noble ex-banker guide Alun Price-Davies from Ramblers.

The first day was a steady climb through rolling meadows to a cable car that took us up to 2,000m. Instant altitude adjustment required. We immediately got a taste of the spectacular Dolomiten Panoramaweg as we climbed further to the Gabler at 2,576m. The afternoon involved a steady descent to Refugio Schatzer (1984m) where we enjoyed beer and food, basking in sun reflected off the nearby pointed peaks.

The next day established a fairly regular pattern of traverses, ascents and descents of passes with optional side trips to fabulous viewing points. We usually managed to reach a rifugio for lunch where we joined throngs of day trippers enjoying the rarefied atmosphere and glorious sunshine.

A lunchspot the next day at Rifugio Malga Brogles provided typical Germanic fare of frankfurts mit kartofflen with a backdrop of soaring peaks. We could see our afternoon task of a zigzag path up the

mountainside disappearing into an ominous looking pass so we did our best to ingest plenty of energy. The climb was testing but with plenty of wire ropes to hang onto. The other side was a complete contrast of rolling green valleys dotted with animal shelters and ski lifts.

After that the landscape became increasingly stark. The rifugios were on rocky plateaus surrounded by sharp peaks with views into green valleys way below. We reached Rifugio Boé the next day, the highest hut at 2,871m and climbed a prominent peak, Piz Boé (3,162m) where there was a busy restaurant supplied via helicopter drops.



Balcony path

Next day we descended via a chairlift to avoid a 600m scramble down to Passo Pordôl where great coffee and gelato were a welcome change from bread and jam for breakfast with stewed coffee and hot milk. From there, we ascended to a balcony path with views of the Marmolada (3,342m) and its glaciers.

Next was a welcome rest day at the tiny village of Malga Ciapela, whose main claim to fame was cable cars that go up the steep ascent to the summit

of Marmolada, the highest mountain in the Dolomites. Before World War I, the border between Austria and Italy ran over Marmolada, so it formed part of the front line during that conflict. Austrian soldiers were quartered in deep tunnels bored into the northern face's glacier, and Italian soldiers were quartered on the south face's rocky precipices. Conditions in winter were appalling. The museum on the peak displayed the paltry clothing and equipment available at the time. As glaciers retreat, soldiers' remains and belongings are occasionally discovered. *(Information courtesy of Wikipedia).*

Next day was long with 1,520m of ascents and 1,020m of descents. The weather was grey but it rained for only the last hour or so. Rifugio Passo Valles was a welcome sight with its bar and Tyrolean meals. By contrast the next hut, Rifugio Mulaz was on a stark rocky plain. We were squeezed into a room with 10 double bunks with bowed mattresses, no showers or hot water.

Anyone for the easy way?

After that, half the group took the easy way of cable cars and buses while the others climbed a rugged pass with tricky roped sections followed by a narrow exposed contour path. The views made it worthwhile. Rifugio Pedrotti, located on another rocky plateau, was very busy coping with lots of daytrippers.



Next day proved to be the toughest but most spectacular. We followed paths cut into steep mountainsides surrounded by steep cliffs, a haven for rockclimbers and chamois. The afternoon involved a steep scramble down about 1,400m that seemed to take forever. Our elusive destination was visible on the other side of the valley. We arrived late afternoon with trembling knees at Rifugio Treviso (1,631m).

Next day was a formality although another steep descent was involved. We enjoyed a lazy lunch and afternoon in the ski village of Passo Cereda. It rained most of the final day but by then we were tucked up in buses and trains heading for Trento and Verona.

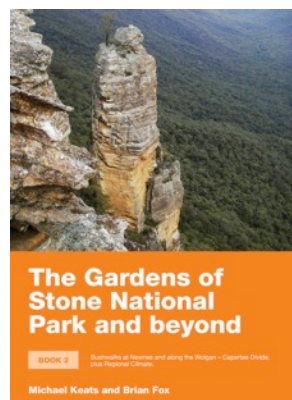


**The Gardens of Stone
National Park and Beyond
Volume 2
By
Michael Keats and Brian
Fox**

Reviewed by Bob Taffel

Well, they've done it again. Michael and Brian have managed in an amazingly short space of time to produce the second volume in their series of eight on the *Gardens of Stone National Park* and surrounding country. They are to be congratulated on the greatly improved production quality of this second volume, most evident in the brightness and sharpness of the colour photos and maps. This contributes hugely to one's enjoyment of the book and appreciation of the subject matter. Text, too, has been refined when compared with volume one but the

presence of many typographical errors is disappointing.



Value for money

To even further improve the already amazing value-for-money equation, you get nearly an extra hundred pages in this volume with its expanded walks section describing 28 walks in the area. Each one is comprehensively described and a map and table of GPS-derived map references is included as are many wonderful photos of each walk. Without reference to the several covering maps of the area and the need for a good amount of time, it remains unknown if the walks are concentrated in a particular section of the area or whether they have been chosen at random. A few words of explanation would be helpful in the introduction to the walks section and possibly useful to those contemplating using the book to plan walks.

The preliminary sections of the book, including a page *About the Bush Club* are the same as, or updated from, the first volume and give a very comprehensive lead-in to the main subject matter, a review of the climatic conditions, tabulations of recent climate history of the area and the previously mentioned section of walks in the area.

One might wonder how much can be said about the climate of a particular area but the extent of the data

provided in this section, including snowfall, fire occurrences and floods in addition to the common parameters of temperature and rainfall, is far more comprehensive than might be expected. The source material quoted is an indication of the thoroughness of the authors' research and further proof of their dedication to the mammoth task they have undertaken.

Tabulations are included covering average monthly temperature, rainfall, 9am and 3pm conditions (temp. R.H. and wind speed) for Mt Boyce, Glen Davis, and Lithgow, though the morning and afternoon data is a little sparse. In these days of concern about climate change, a glance at the chart showing average annual rainfall from 1914 to 2011 quickly illustrates how variable this figure has been over all these years.

...once again the guys have produced a complete and comprehensive guide...

A tabulation of fires between 1946 and 2005, including the cause of the fire, makes for interesting reading. As an illustration of the illusion of average figures, an average figure of nine hours of sunshine daily between November and January is quoted for the Wolgan Valley yet one only has to read the walk descriptions to realise this figure is a long way off guaranteeing that walks during these months will all be on dry days with comfortable temperatures.

Once again, the guys have produced a complete and comprehensive guide to another physical aspect of the *Gardens of Stone NP* and plenty of walks that others may choose to experience thanks to the information

given in their walk descriptions. While some may decry the giving of information leading to additional human impact on the environment in this area, the location, terrain and climate will ensure this area will definitely not be overrun with unthinking walkers lacking in bushcraft skills and unappreciative of the fragility of this extraordinary area.



Pleasure Trove of memories

Have you ever walked through *The Garden of Peace at Stanwell Tops* and had the feeling you've stepped back in time? Here's why...

In the early 1930s it was known as *Stanwell Tops Pleasure Park* with notices on the Princes Highway, formally the Old Illawarra Road, directing travellers from the intersection with Lawrence Hargraves Drive, on the corner at Teapot Inn, down the drive towards Stanwell Tops.



The entrance was marked with a large stone feature (still there today), which once included a flagpole and bollard

...kiosk, dance hall, overnight cabins...mineral swimming pool...

from *HMS Sydney*, and a *Pleasure Park* sign on top. The park contained a kiosk and dance hall, overnight cabins,

playing fields, mineral swimming pool, bushwalking trails and lookouts over Stanwell Park and the ocean. The water in the pool was analysed daily and the mineral content displayed on a notice board for bathers.

Place of meditation

By the 1940s, interest in the Park had waned and in the 1950s the Tops was subdivided leaving the kiosk and pool area as a reduced tourist attraction. When it continued to struggle, an attempt was made to turn it into a caravan park but this was successfully opposed by residents. The site was sold in the late 1970s and developed as *The Garden of Peace*, a place of meditation.



We start the New Year with the sad news of the deaths of three well known and much loved bushwalking friends.

Trude Kallir

President (1982-84), Secretary (1984-86) President again (1998-2000)

As recorded in Michael Keats' excellent feature (newsletter 2009 www.bushclub.org.au) Trude was introduced to bushwalking via a friend named Dr Lemberg, a foundation member of the club. She later joined NPA but found the Bush Club offered a program more to her liking. After the death of her husband in 1988, she grew interested in local issues around Ryde where the family lived. She was one of 13 women who won the *Battle for Kelly's Bush* in Hunters Hill and helped create the emerging Green Movement.

Bill Capon (1939-2012)

Bill joined the club in 2008 but did most of his walking with Sydney

Bushwalkers. According to the recent Sydney Morning Herald obituary: '(He) was renowned not just for the many challenging walks he led, but also the charming eccentricity with which he led them. He was a master navigator... leading difficult walks in the Blue Mountains, Wollemi National Park, Ettrema and the Budawang. Typical was the walk from Hilltop to Kanangra in 1995 when the party was out in the rain for seven days and dry for 24 hours.

Peter Caldwell

Peter was so passionate about conservation that he died wearing an NPA T-shirt. In the 1990s he agitated to eliminate lead as a petrol additive and instigated the survey of Wheeler Creek bush in the Narrabeen Lagoon catchment. He fought for public ownership of Sydney harbour foreshores and was one of the first members of the North Head Sanctuary Foundation.

We say a sad farewell to these like-minded souls.



Heard on the track

'If you find yourself invited on private walks, it means somebody likes you.' Anon.

CAROL HENDERSON

By Michael Keats



'If you'll be in it, it's worth ten bucks and a bottle of coke.'

Who said these words is not important. Where they were said, who they were said to, and under what circumstances is the nub of the story. For the answer reveals a woman who is adventurous, resourceful, determined, and full of fun.

Carol the mud wrestler?

The location is a mud-wrestling event in Finland, where two young women, a bit short of chips and willing to earn enough to stay alive are being addressed by a Jimmy Sharman type promoter to get in the crowds and share in the mud. Carol and a companion took up the offer, donned appropriate gear and went for it. They did such a good job both in the ring and promoting the next show, they were invited to join the troupe. With the bank balance somewhat restored, the offer was declined and the women moved on.

This is one of many adventures that occurred across some sixty countries, including Israel, Africa and Sri Lanka, over a three-year period that Carol embarked on, while based in London. We need to go back a few years:

'I was about 8 years old when my parents used to take us to the Blue Mountains. We would walk many of the tracks. I loved running ahead, and, of course, we stopped and boiled the billy, and the mountain air, a heightened sensitivity to the freshness, wonder of nature, and the exuberance of the outdoors really got into my blood.'

During school holidays, she loved to go to national fitness camps at Point Wollstonecraft, near Wyong and Narrabeen in Sydney. She remembers not being given a *Good Campers Certificate* because she spoke to boys who had wandered into the camp. Things improved and she recalled great times of cross cultural experiences, mixing with kids from different ethnic backgrounds.

...'competition for tidiest huts and best bed making...'

'The camps were run on a militaristic format with lining up and structured activities organised in groups of 24 girls with lots of competition for the tidiest huts and best bed making.

'They were staffed by young teachers or trainees who were much more fun than teachers at school. All kinds of challenges were offered to channel our energies including bushwalking, overnight camping, sport and physical education, writing and staging musicals and plays, loads of fun. At the end of each camp, we had a

campfire with opening and closing rituals and singing.



'There were many who came time and time again. I would seek out companions I had met before, so we could renew acquaintances and continue the fun. Some of those children became life long friends'.

...'if a married woman came to town...as a single person, you were moved to another school...'

She graduated from Sydney Teachers' College with a Diploma of Physical Education and taught Personal Development, Health and Physical Education at seven NSW city and country high schools.

'There was a policy that if a married woman came to town, then automatically, as a single person, you were moved to another school. Due to this I spent two and half years at Bowral and six months at Wagga Wagga before travelling overseas.'

After returning from her three years abroad, she resumed her job as a PD/PE/Health teacher and rose through the ranks to become a department head during which time she was seconded to the Health Studies Team in the Directorate of Studies to work on curriculum development, organisation of the State Schools Dance Festival and the Girls and Physical Activity Working Group put in place to encourage girls to do more physical activity.

About 20 years ago, she recalled struggling as she approached the latter part of her career. She took leave to return to full time study and completed an Honours Degree in Psychology and Post Graduate Diploma in School Counselling. She then returned to work as a psychologist.

Reads the needs

I began to have a small insight into Carol. Given her qualifications, it is little wonder she 'reads the needs' of the club and is so effective as secretary. In reality she is a lot more than this, converting some of our poorly attended events into 'must do, must participate' performances.

Another throw away comment from Carol now fits the jig saw pattern: 'I like taking people on night walks to see houses decorated with Christmas lights in the suburbs. Maybe it's a bit tacky, but its lots of fun and shows a different facet of society, provides an added dimension to walks and gives members the opportunity to combine an activity they love, as in walking, with Christmas.'



As a leader, Carol's cultural walks, which end at a cuisine destination, are a further demonstration of her remarkable skills, the blending of walking, cultural diversity and interaction, culminating in eating something novel.

Hasten slowly best advice

She has served under four presidents, and much of that time as secretary. As a new committee member she believed that one of the most important things was to hasten slowly and understand the culture of the club

before attempting to make changes or be innovative.

She works one day a week as a support psychologist to teachers in three special schools. The rest of her time is spent doing committee work, bushwalking, backpacking, travelling, enjoying cultural pursuits, spending time with friends and family and working for Victims and Witnesses Court Support services as a Court Support Officer and pro bono psychologist.



Take of Two Walks

By Peter Cunningham

'It was the best of walks, it was the worst of walks', As Dickens would say.

The best...

When I heard a friend talking about a walk across the Alps from Germany to Italy I knew this was for me. I contacted the relevant mountain huts and accommodations in the valley towns and lined up eight starters. We had a few glitches on accommodation, interestingly the mountain huts were not a problem but places in popular valley resorts like Oberstdorf, St Anton and Ischgl were more difficult.

The route crossed five mountain ranges: the Allgauer Alps on the German/Austrian border, the Lechtaler, Vervall and Silvretta Alps in Austria and the Main Alps on the Swiss/Italian border. Each range crossing involved a fair climb, usually about 1200m then a similar descent. First day was up a beautiful mountain valley from the resort town of

Oberstdorf in Germany, then a steep climb up a narrow valley full of

avalanche drifts. At the hut I relaxed with a couple of beers – a mistake, the only power was from solar cells and when I went for a shower the hot water was gone.

Our next hut, Leutkirchner, was perched on the edge of a cliff directly above the resort town of St Anton where I'd been a ski bum fifty years ago. A spectacular setting serviced by helicopter. In the next valley we passed hunters with a deer they'd shot. There's a fight on there as developers want to extend the vast interconnected ski fields of the Arlberg to the extensive ski areas of Ischgl to make a mega ski resort like the Italian Dolomites and the French Three Valleys, but conservationists and hunters are opposing it. Unusual bedfellows.

Yes, you have to sing it...

It was a beautiful descent from the Vervall alps with magnificent views, it's such an exhilarating place. Jenny got the girls to dance down the mountain singing *The hills are alive with the sound of music* then at a café



half way down the mountain with magnificent views, we ordered coffee, apple strudel with cream served by a guy in lederhosen and Tyrolean hat. John kept all the kids amused, Doreen patted the dogs, Ingrid translated for us, it was so stunning that it even kept Bob quiet for a while.

Bob quiet for a while.

We had some indifferent weather for our proposed high level pass in the Silvretta Alps from Bielerhohe to Jamtal Hujtte which induced me to cancel that crossing and opt for a walk up the valley instead – but it cleared up and I was left to regret my bad decision. So the following day we were determined to do the next high pass at 3000m between Jamtal and Heidelberger huts even though it was poor weather without good views and down a glacier just below the pass. Next day we had a rest day, not hard to take.

Edwardian spa resort

In Switzerland we stayed at the extraordinary Hotel Finistra, a huge Edwardian era spa resort in a steep mountain valley run by Dutch people. The main Alps crossing starts up the spectacular Val d'Uina with a track cut out of solid rock, at some places out of a vertical cliff 1000m long with a 200m climb but wide enough to take walkers and cyclists both ways. It was cut by two locals around 1910 with a handrail so people with a fear of exposure feel safe. Then over the main Alps to the other side, our last hut in Italy.

As trip organiser I'm much indebted to the team: **Bob Chambers** for taking to the walk with gusto, downloading the route into his phone and producing spreadsheets, the keenest walks aficionado one could ever want; to **Jenny Hardie** for her eternal cheerfulness and optimism no matter how bad things were (and she can walk through blizzards, mud and scrub and come out still looking a million dollars), **John Hardie** for his support and showing us how to swim in frozen lakes; **Ingrid Dengler** for being our invaluable interpreter; **Doreen Anderson** for her determination to overcome her concerns about heat and exposure and get through successfully; **Alan Sauran** for sussing

out the best restaurants in the towns, and **Kevin Yeats** as the fittest of us all and always there to help when needed.

And the worst...

Two days later I was in England for the Coast-to-Coast walk, from St Bees on the Irish Sea to Robin Hood Bay on the North Sea, with a different team. I had several friends who had done the walk and as I had never walked in the UK I decided to go. Well, now that I've done it I would say that if you like:

- walking for the sake of walking, whether there's anything worth seeing or not
- crossing endless sheep paddocks dodging sheep poo then across stiles to more sheep paddocks
- going down country lanes trying to avoid the rows of blackberries and nettles
- crossing endless featureless moors with not a tree in sight
- wading through muddy bogs up to your knees
- walking with guide book in hand trying to figure out which lane to follow (signposting almost non-existent)
- trudging for miles along country roads dodging traffic

Then this walk is for you.

...doesn't live up to the hype and purple prose...

The first five days in the Lakes District, the day crossing the Pennines and the last day into Robin Hood Bay were good, though even there the trip doesn't live up to the hype and purple prose in the guide books. The rest

of the trip, especially the Yorkshire Downs and Moors, was pretty ordinary. Seven good days out of sixteen are pretty bad odds. Of the dozen or so countries I've walked in it was the worst I've had. There were a few compensations: as an anglophile I liked some of the villages and pubs (though the Yorkshire beers are pretty bad), and most of the B&Bs were good (though some weren't), but for me it would have been better to limit the walk to the seven days listed above. Or better: walk those parts and cycle the rest – much of the country is well suited to cycling, though there were very few cyclists, unlike the Alps where mountain biking on pretty extreme tracks is very popular. So at



one stage after two days of walking through sheep paddocks I decided enough was enough and took two days off to be a tourist in Leeds and Harewood House, then rejoin the party at Ingleby Cross. I asked about the two days walking and they said: 'Well, we walked across one sheep paddock dodging sheep poo, through a stile at the end, then across another sheep paddock, through a stile, then.....' and so on.

A compensation for the dull walk was the bright company, a top team of people, the best thing about the walk. **Peter Blackman** and **Col Prentice** did a great job organizing a glitch-free trip, Peter managed to pick out our route across the maze of country lanes, featureless moors and dales when signposting was either non-existent or at a minimum, and Col took over at the end of each day directing us to our various accommodations, often widely separated. The rest of the team contributed, we had plenty of laughs and camaraderie. And we were fortunate with the weather – hardly any

rain. But in summary the Alps walk was a brilliant walk full of highlights, the Coast to Coast had a few highlights but too many lowlights.

Walkers: Peter Blackband, Col Prentice, Alan Brennan, Simon Tellam, Alison Boyle, Helen Kershaw, Natalie Cutler, Jenny Kelso, Rogo, Peter Cunningham.



Warm welcome to the following new members

Colin Isaac, Sue Burgess, Phil Burgess, Joanne Armstrong, Andrew Lumsden, Trevor Edgoose, Lynette Gurr, Russell Walker, Vincent Murtagh, Dorinda Appiah, Keith Hurst, Warren Irish, Anne Irish, Marg McHarg, Colleen Loudon, John Park.



Letter to the Editor

Well done and congratulations on all the hard work in producing the Summer newsletter and walks program. I could not help but smile as I read page 10 (*Reds in the bed? No, but watch out for the caves. Richard and Eleanor Dark had been searching for years for their own private cave, and decided this was it. Eleanor named it Jerrickellimi (retreat of the dark people) and the family spent time there over the years as a retreat from the pressures of life.*)

It was Eleanor herself who, jokingly, when asked what the name Jerrickellimi meant, gave the flippant reply, *retreat*

of the dark people. In actual fact the name, Jerrickellimi is a combination of the family's Christian names. J (John) ERIK (Erik) ELLI (Eleanor) MI (Michael)

Brian Fox

Letter to the Editor

I wish to comment on our anonymous scribe *Leisure Gives Pleasure* about the pace of walks and early finishing times. **(The writer gave name but requested a pseudonym. Editor)** His/her comment 'have never heard of a walk finishing so early in my life' makes me smile as it suggests unfamiliarity with many leaders and their styles. The 1.40pm finish is not unusual. Where has our writer been? The 82 year invited guest who unfortunately became stressed may be a good walker but at that age many people have slowed and need to be cautious about intended activity. Walking alone or with a friend you set your own pace, stop and go where you will but walking with a club you are expected to follow the leader and keep up. Anyone choosing a walk must judge whether they are capable of it, taking into account the published detail and weather. If in doubt, ring the leader.

Our writer complains many club walks are conducted 'at a solid-fast pace' and writes of a perceived attitude being 'if one cannot hack it one should shuffle off to The Ramblers'. Certainly our club is popular for its more challenging activities but I do not believe it is 'unfair to its older and enfeebled members'. For members enfeebled there are monthly luncheons at Bardwell Park often with a stroll beforehand or later in the adjacent reserve. Also for those who enjoy easier walks, the club presents ample opportunity and encouragement to offer walks of our own. Walks of a less demanding variety are welcome in the three-monthly schedule and popular short notice program. The club

conducts leader training courses to encourage new leaders who may be expected to offer easier walks to commence with.

Our writer, however, does raise a valid issue: 'How does one know what to really expect on a walk?' More comprehensive descriptions would help. I have been adding 'unhurried pace' to my own offerings. Some time ago we had TIE (Take it Easy) walks guaranteeing a slowed pace for more senior participants. Both descriptions indicate what to expect and are meant to discourage tiger walkers who only enjoy a fast pace. *Leisure Gives Pleasure* may like to offer his/her own walks. I also invite him/her to attend mine.

Finally, I find the comment 'shuffle off to The Ramblers' somewhat disparaging of what is generally a softer walking club and caring organisation, full of friendships. It offers a range of activities for active and less active members. I can assure our scribe few in The Ramblers actually 'shuffle'. The majority are not enfeebled and friends of the active variety are to be found in both clubs. Furthermore, a reminder that leaders are volunteers and it is impossible to please every participant all the time.

With the *Leisure Gives Pleasure* issue in mind, one challenge a leader can do without is the one dogged individual (and it happens) demanding to know which train they will be getting home and treading on the leader's heels to ensure the whole party get it. Membership is rewarding and (including the above) all good fun is so regarded.

Michael Pratt



**While you've a Lucifer to
light your fag,
Smile boys, that's the
style...**

They say it's the small discoveries in history that make the biggest difference and the humble matchbox is a prime example.

As bushwalkers, we know how vital water is to our adventures, but perhaps we overlook the equally important element of fire. When we do think about it, we tend to think of bushfires and peril – but the importance of getting a fire started for warmth and cooking, as we know, can be critical to survival and dealing with hypothermia.

In the 1830s most cooking fires were lit by striking flint and steel together and letting the sparks fall into a small tinderbox consisting of fragments of cotton and lint. With much puffing and panting, the tinder would glow and a piece of wood was ignited to paper or bark and – hopefully – flames appeared. Scraps of paper were scarce as most households didn't buy newspapers.

Sydney Hospital walls

The striking match, which could be lit by striking against walls and stone buildings, probably appeared in Sydney in the mid-1800s. Some 'strike' marks can still be seen on historic buildings in Sydney including Sydney Hospital, as you walk through the grounds to The Domain. Thin and flat and tipped with a small head of phosphorus, they were called *Lucifer* matches. They were dangerous to the workers who made them because the phosphorous mixture they dipped the matches into often caused 'phossy jaw' which led to the removal of part of the jaw. Those who carried matches in

their pocket soon learned that a few matches rubbing together could suddenly catch alight.

The first version of the match we use today probably appeared in the 1860s, called the **safety Lucifer match**. The phosphorous was



no longer on the match stick but on the side of a box and the match would only ignite when struck against it. This cheap, portable match was one cause that led to the increase in tobacco consumption. Smoking a pipe in the era of the tinderbox had been largely an evening activity, indulged in at the fireside, where a light was readily available. Few smokers could be



bothered going to the trouble of making a flame from flint and steel each time their pipe went out. But the safety match changed all that. By the 1870s the itinerant match seller was a common sight.

But did people laugh?

By the 1900s most matches were imported from Sweden which showed great entrepreneurial skill by printing on one side of the box a map of Australia and kangaroos, koalas etc on the other. In an attempt at a joke one

brand was labelled *The Cricket Match* showing a cricket or grasshopper holding a cricket bat. Hmm...

Edited extract from *Black Kettle and Full Moon*, Geoffrey Blainey.



And then came the humble cuppa...

The explorer Ludwig Leichhardt commented in 1842: '...you have no idea how sweet a cup of tea with brown sugar and damper tastes after a day's journey in the bush...'

Tea was by far the most popular drink in Australia's early days. Most people drank from a quart pot, originally made of pewter and later tin. Even Shakespeare, in *Henry VI* has a character using a metal helmet 'instead of a quart pot to drink in.'

Billycans soon took over and by the 1840s, the mystique was in full swing – the older, more battered the billy, the better the brew. It was never cleaned because a blackened billy made better tea and a stir with a twig of eucalyptus sorted out the true bushman from the new chums. A thirsty bushman might drink more than 60 litres a week partly because it camouflaged the taint of water from a brown dam or creek.



Tea was drunk black and piping hot. The old leaves were left in the bottom of the billy and topped up each time, giving a distinctive stewed taste. Milk was added around 1900 when fresh milk became plentiful though condensed milk was much favoured because of its sticky sweet taste.

It was said that by 1906, the tiny population of Australia drank more than twenty times as much tea as all of France.

Edited extract from *Black Kettle and Full Moon*, Geoffrey Blainey.



Call of the Bush



There was a time when coo-ee was to the ear what the Southern Cross was to the eye. The shrill cry carried long distances and was more penetrating and vibrating than a loud shout. On a still night, the sound could carry as far as three kilometres.

Aboriginal call

There are accounts of Aborigines using it: In 1870 the explorer John Forrest was close to the cliffs of the Great Australian Bight at Eucla when a coo-ee was heard. An Aborigine in his party, Tommy Windich, was the first to hear the cry. After answering with his own coo-ee 'a good many times', wrote Forrest, 'we were surprised to see two natives walking up towards us, unarmed.' They were soon joined by another five 'all entirely naked'.

Bushman's signal

It became a useful signal for bushmen searching for straying horses, a greeting and, of course, a cry for help. It was one of the first things Australian children, especially those living in the bush, were taught. It was also a rough measure of distance. Henry Lawson, writing about a bullock teamster wanting to reach a hotel, wrote:

*And I mind how weary teamsters
struggled while it was light
Just to camp within a cooey of the
shanty for the night.*

And, of course, in 1915, when men from Gilgandra marched to Sydney, gathering hundreds along the way, to enlist in WW1, the trek soon became known as the Coo-ee march. As they entered each town they shouted the familiar cry. Their example was followed by other marches from around New South Wales and Queensland: the Waratahs, Kangaroos, Wallabies, Dungarees, Men from Snowy River, Kurrajongs, Kookaburras, Central West Boomerangs and North Coast Boomerangs.



Nellie Melba in Melbourne

In 1902 when the singer Nellie Melba returned in triumph to Melbourne, she was welcomed at the railway station by crowds calling 'coo-ee' (hopefully, in unison). Australian pastor John Dunmore Lang recorded an anecdote of how a party of Australians, strolling through London were accidentally parted from a friend. One shouted

'coo-ee' which rose above the clatter of traffic and the friend was located.

By the 1930s, the cry was dying out and by the 1960s hardly used. As for today? Well, that's what mobile phones are for. Or are they?

Edited extract from *Black Kettle and Full Moon*, Geoffrey Blainey.

Think about it

Please think about making a contribution to our next Newsletter. The more people who write, send photos or spread interesting news to members, the better. You don't have to be letter perfect and, while it's always good to get articles and photos about walking trips, we also welcome topics on wider issues such as:

- History
- First aid
- Anecdotes
- Book reviews
- Equipment
- Useful advice
- Etc

Articles should ideally be no more than 800 words. Please email your contributions (or if you would like to discuss an idea) to the editor (Judy O'Connor) bushclubeditor@gmail.com

TRAVELLING SECOND

We have a tradition of travelling in the second carriage on trains. So look for people with hats and backpacks in carriage two (unless you have to travel in a particular carriage due to short platforms).

