

THE BUSH CLUB NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2016

www.bushclub.org.au

Walks Reports Summer p. 12

Walks Program Autumn p. 20

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CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

Please send anything you think will
interest our members to

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MY TOUGHEST WALK YET

By Peter Cunningham



Team: Allison "Advisor" Boyle; Angelika "Ever cheerful" Langley; Robyn "Photographer Extraordinaire" Christie; Jill "Never Stop Walking" Paillas; Evelyn "Steady" Dowling; Stephie "Official Translator" Miller; Annabelle "Token Pom" Trent; Peter Cunningham

I thought I'd done some fairly tough trips in my time, in Australia, NZ and many other countries. But this was something else again. I was down to lead a party of 7 girls on a walk in the Pyrenees, without a single guy to help me out! How would I ever manage? Scary! So I enlisted the help of one of the team as Advisor on Women's Affairs. Fortunately she gave me some valuable advice, and I tried to put it all into practice, though we did have a few glitches.

We met in Cauterets in the French Pyrenees: on the first day's walk we soon split up into the A team and the B team, and so it stayed for the week. Unfortunately I was in the B team, too slow for the A team. Previous parties had advised that we may have trouble getting transport to and from the start of the planned walks, so we decided to rent a car, between 8 of us cost wasn't much, and that way we could shuffle our bags around from one town to the next, drive to and from the start/finish of the day walks and not rely on taxis. However with a 5 seater car it did mean we had to do a double car shuffle for each walk.

Second day the weather was poor and the B team decided to stay in Cauterets while the A team braved the elements. Unfortunately without me there to control them the B team went to the local spa and got into all sorts of strife. Broke all the spa rules, put their costumes on inside out, then complained that there was no water when they hadn't waited the regulation time. They then dissolved into hysterical giggles, which was not appreciated by the staid regulars there. We understand that word quickly went around the valley to discourage our team from going to any other spas!

The A team meanwhile had a good day in the cold and rain, and had some very welcome hot soup in the hut at the head of the valley, before the weather improved for the return walk. At the head of the valley was a large glacier, our first real sight of snow, and above it the highest peak in the Pyrenees though due to cloud we couldn't see it.



We relocated to Gedre, where the food was superb, and we walked up to the Cirque d'Estaubé. We were surprised by the large number of lammergeiers in the valley, first we saw a dozen or so flying

Unfortunately without me there to control them the B team went to the local spa and got into all sorts of strife.

around then noticed another large group of them just sitting on the ground. They are huge birds! There were also a number of (elusive) marmots in the valley, we assumed the birds would be fond of them for dinner, they're certainly big enough to polish them off, but it turns out they basically live on bone marrow. They have strong beaks and if they can't crack the bones open with them then they carry them up high and drop them onto rocks to split them. And the marmots (and humans) are quite safe.

Next day we went up the western side of the valley on a track with fine views down below and in the distance the cirque de Gavarnie and its impressive waterfall, and we finished up in Gavarnie at another excellent hotel. We had planned to have 2 nights there but stayed longer due to bad weather. Excellent food and service, one night we had a group of Basque walkers there who with Madame's encouragement sang us some Basque folk songs, in fine style. We responded with a rendition of Waltzing Matilda, not quite in the same league!

In this part of the Pyrenees there are three impressive cirques: Gavarnie, d'Estaubé and Troumouse. The Gavarnie cirque has a large waterfall and the walk up to it is very popular, with a hotel down below it where you can enjoy a drink and a great view after the effort of getting up to the waterfall.

We had planned to cross over the border to Spain and spend two nights there. However the forecast in the Tourist Office was for bad weather, for a "vent violent". We checked on the internet and it didn't sound so bad, so next morning we drove up to as close to the pass as we could. Well, it certainly was a violent wind, nearly blew us over, and with horizontal sleet and poor visibility we decided the crossing wasn't on. A pity, but then in that weather we decided to play safe and go back down the valley for a rest day.

Next day was better so we went to the third cirque, Troumouse, a pleasant walk in the meadows up high above the valley floor with the spectacular cirque rising up sheer above us.

After the walk we did the usual car shuffle, I was getting dozy on the second return so asked one of the team to keep talking to keep me awake. Well, she certainly did that, non-stop, she didn't need any encouragement and was still talking 5 hours after we got back!

Our final day was not on our schedule, a climb up to the Breche de Roland. This is a gap in the cliff line in the cirque de Gavarnie, named after Roland the legendary warrior of Charlemagne who couldn't get through the cliff line so smote it with his mighty sword and cut a huge gash in the cliffs. It must have been some sword, the "breche" is about 10 metres wide and 20 metres high! And it's a pretty solid climb up to it, with many walkers choosing to cross over into Spain on the southern side. On the way back at a hostel we found our first tame marmots, they came around for food scraps, we got some excellent photos of these guys instead of having to race all over the hill sides with maximum zoom on the camera just to get a blurry marmot in the distance. Nice bonus!



So that was it. The A team went on to more walks in the Pyrenees, while I drove the B team to Lourdes where we checked out the shrine. It must have had some effect on the team, they later let it drop that as soon as they got to Toulouse they went to a local porn parade – put the Gay Mardi Gras in the shade, they said. Oh dear, the trouble these girls get in to when I'm not there to look after them. Maybe I'll have to arrange some live entertainment on the next trip with them!

Overall a great trip with a good team. My Adviser did a great job, they all insisted on buying me beers every night. Now that's something the guys never do!

Angelika Langley (1945 - 2016)



Many members of Bush Club who had the privilege of walking and friendship with Angelika Langley were saddened to hear of her recent death.

Angelika made a deep impression on anyone who knew her and the many tributes at her funeral service remembered Angelika for her bright and cheerful company. They recalled how Angelika was always full of love and enthusiasm for her family – telling stories and showing photos – always with such love and pride in her voice and face. Bushwalking friends recalled how she was always a positive force full of encouragement and support for other walkers. Her love of walking and the bush was undeniable and her friendliness to everyone on walks was selfless.

Angelika had many wonderful experiences and good times in many corners of the world, including kayaking in Sydney Harbour, camping and hiking in Kangaroo Valley, trekking and camping in Oman, attending the Horse Derby in Dubai, collecting Porcini mushrooms and hiking in Switzerland, to name just a few.

Angelika shared her activities with her many friends and loving partner Brian McConaghy. Her friends will always treasure the time spent together and the amazing energy and strength she gave to all those around her.

*"There are no goodbyes for us. Wherever you are, you will always be in my heart."
Gandhi*



By Keith Maxwell

ALL Bush Club members who register to do the St John Ambulance "Provide First Aid" course (offered twice annually by BWRS) will now have to have a USI.

There are many training courses where a recognised skill may be taught that has a certificate as acknowledgement. The course will have a name and a unique (there's that word again) number. There may be more than one course to satisfy the requirements of a particular skill such as First Aid. So RAFA (Remote Area First Aid) trainees are recognised as being competent in three separate courses.

This is Competency Based Training (CBT). As an example "Provide First Aid" is taught to a national standard. St John Ambulance is just one provider / supplier of training. The same material can be taught by many other providers with the proviso that they must be registered with an RTO (Registered Training Organisation). The Instructors and course content / lesson plans must be approved by the RTO.

In CBT the training is not based on hours of instruction or grades. The student is either "competent" (to receive their certificate) OR "not yet competent" with more training required.

It is not difficult to get a USI. The link below will get you started –
<https://www.usi.gov.au/>

In the past Bush Club members have received abseiling instruction with the Australian School of Mountaineering. Club members in future would require a USI if this current abseiling training is to a national recognised standard that has a unique course number and name.

Unfortunately a consequence of this national recognised training is TLA (Three Letter Acronyms) such as CBT & RTO.

Wendy's Secret Garden

By Jim Speak

Wendy Whiteley spent two decades transforming a neglected NSW State Railway site in Lavender Bay into an iconic, steeply graded, rainforest garden.

Wendy had been anxious for some time about the future of the garden as the State Government would not commit to keeping the garden as a reserve or park. But at last, in October 2015, the State Government agreed to a 30 year lease for the site with a renewal option for a further 30 years.

Ms Whiteley was quoted as saying that the garden had become much more than therapy for her grief following the deaths of her husband and daughter. Ms Whiteley was not only the inspiration and put much of her own time into the garden, she also paid all of the costs for gardeners, plants and soil.

The Secret Garden has been visited by Bush Club walks in the past and hopefully in the future. Whether you are a first time or frequent visitor you are guaranteed to be amazed as you consider what a person can achieve in their grief.



Michael Keats OAM

Congratulations to Michael Keats who has been honoured with the Medal (OAM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia for services to bushwalking and as an author.

Michael's service includes the following:

- Served as Club Librarian for The Bush Club, has been a Member since 2001 and Life Member since 2011.
- Currently Newsletter Editor for "The Bushwalker", Bushwalking New South Wales
- Has been a guest speaker for National Park Assoc. and other walking clubs "for many years"
- Authored and co-authored a range of books about bushwalking.

Bush Club have been very fortunate to have benefited from Michael's experience over many years. We are very pleased to see that he has been recognised for his contribution to our Club as well as his wider contribution to bushwalking.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Anh Nguyen, Frances Goddard,
Joe Arbuz, Susan Fagoaga,
Phil Summerfield, Jenny Salter,
Mike Ward

FAREWELL from Judy

As you'll see from the list of new committee members and appointments, I have stepped down as Editor of our Newsletter and Colleen Loudon has taken on the role. I hope you'll give her as much support and friendship as I've been fortunate to have had from members. I know the Newsletter is in safe hands and I wish Colleen a happy ride.

Judy O'Connor.

What do you want from your Club?

In the coming year the Committee plans to put together a document outlining our aims for the future of the Club.

It has been a decade since any major changes have been made to the Club culture. The Committee sees a need to re-evaluate and set in motion reforms that will attract new, younger members to sustain our Club going into the future.

Let us know what you want from your Club – we'd love to hear your ideas and suggestions!

Please email to:

bushclubwebmaster@gmail.com

McPhail's Home Damaged by Fire

The storms that have lashed Sydney over the last few weeks have wreaked havoc for club members, Diane and Alan McPhail. Their house was struck by lightning and the roof burnt very quickly once the flames entered the air conditioning ducting. All of their bushwalking and kayaking equipment was lost in the fire.

It's a terrible blow for any family and Diane, our Membership Secretary, has volunteered to share her experiences and provide valuable advice for our members in preparing a Fire Plan. Look for her article in the next newsletter.

Note the NSW Rural Fire Service also provides information on Bush Fire Survival Plans including an App to make your plan.

There's Something about Islands

Part 1

By Frances Hunt

SICILY, MALTA, GOZO, COMINO

The islands of the Mediterranean have held a fascination for me since the 1960's when I developed an interest in prehistory; and walking has always seemed to me a good way of engaging with out-of-the-way places.

In September and October my partner Phil and I spent five weeks in Sicily and Malta. I satisfied my urge to see some of the wonderful ancient places I had read about and both of us very much enjoyed following in the steps of many ancient peoples.

We had booked a week's walk in Sicily through ATG Footloose: "From the Centre to the Sea". We also found two national parks to visit. We were hoping to do our own thing in Malta's smaller island of Gozo which has many marked tracks.

SICILY

It was not until we arrived in Sicily that I came to terms with the fact that it is indeed a very small island. In the centre of Sicily lies Enna from which, on a clear day, it is possible to see the sea in every direction. Here our personable and super-efficient route manager gave us some not very clear maps and a list of detailed instructions.

Each day she transported our heavier gear to the B&B in each of the small hilltop villages where we were to stay. Most of our hosts spoke no English but were welcoming and helpful.

We set off along a network of tracks through ploughed fields. I thought I knew about mud from Tasmania, but

Sicilian agricultural mud on that first day clung to our boots in plate sized lumps.

In one tricky part of our walk we had to look out for a Y shaped tree, in another we had to take the track between two almond trees. We did manage to find the Y shaped tree after we had passed it, but neither of us knew what an almond tree looked like. The day we were told to bypass the holly on the way down a mountain we did so but somehow ended up to our knees in mud.

Other days we walked through wilder mountain country, including Madonie National Park. We were thrilled to see surprisingly small wild pigs and deer. I was glad of Phil's superb navigational skills, especially through the sunless forest where our notes told us to follow the green markers on trees or rocks. Every tree and rock seemed to have green moss and we never managed to find some of the markers but still reached the saddle from which we could see the sea two days walk away.

We hired a car to visit other parts of Sicily, including the small island of Levanzo where there is a small cave with late Palaeolithic and early Neolithic etchings and paintings. We knew about the cave, but did not realise until we got there that the whole island would be a superb place to stay for a week, walking, swimming and snorkelling.



When we arrived on the island we understood why it had been so difficult to book the tour to take us to the cave. We met not a single English speaker. A 4 WD vehicle met us and a couple of other tourists at the wharf and whisked us off along dirt tracks through farming country to the sea on the opposite side of the island. There we walked down a limestone cliff where a piece of wire across the entrance marked the cave.

The driver/guide, who did not speak English, fired up the generator and ushered us into the first part of the cave where he pointed out some etched animals and some painted human figures. He had learned his spiel in English and did it well.

Having read about the cave I had not understood that we would not be able to see the rest of the artistic work further into the cave. Somehow I was so entranced with what we did see that I accepted that as tourists we could not expect to see everything. Lascaux Caves have been closed to the public for years because of the damage caused by too many visitors.



Not far from Levanzo, on the mainland, we visited the first National Park in Sicily, declared in 1980. Zingaro was a delight. The track along the coast was much used by Italian visitors who were enjoying the many small beaches where they sun-baked, paddled and sometimes swam. There were three superb small museums set up in old stone farmhouses.

Zingaro was a delight. The track along the coast was much used by Italian visitors who were enjoying the many small beaches where they sun-baked, paddled and sometimes swam.

When we set off up the hill to another track winding back to the entrance we met no locals, only a small group of Germans. The wild flowers and the views could be admired in isolation: a joyous experience. We did pass some locked building labelled as refugios, so I guess it might be possible to book there and stay a few days.

Our third walk was in the South Eastern corner of Sicily. We stayed in Noto and made a day trip to the ruins of a colony of Syracuse and nearby marshes in a National Park where many migratory birds stop for R and R en route to the southern hemisphere. We walked along the coast and stopped for a swim at a beach with white sand and relatively few visitors.

On our way back to Noto we saw a sign to the Villa Romana, which turned out to be a second century manor with beautifully preserved mosaic floors. Signs were only in Italian and we were the only visitors. Entry was free, according to the custodian who was watching TV in his office.

See next newsletter for part 2

Ed's Note: It sounds like a great trip. If this article has inspired anyone to put it on our Walks Program as a club activity, Frances has collected walks brochures which she is happy to lend to club members.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SUMMARY

The **Bush Club AGM** was held at McMahons Point Community Centre on 3rd December, 2015.

The **Treasurer's Report** was presented by Barbara Mitchell. Total income from Members was consistent with previous years. On recommendation from our Auditor Bob Wood, the committee has discussed and implemented ways to reduce our surplus funds by using them for the benefit of members. Barbara requested members' input and suggestions regarding use of funds.

Colin Reid presented the **Walks Secretary's Report**. Colin's report detailed numbers of walks and participants but noted that the number of walks and members leading walks declined in 2015. The Short Notice program is becoming increasingly important and with the addition of a list of vacant days, has helped to fill gaps in the Quarterly program. Colin also reported on the outcomes of the survey of members to assess what would attract new leaders and encourage existing leaders to continue to lead. The survey will provide valuable input to the review of Club operations by the Committee.

Attracting and Encouraging Leaders Report was presented by John Hungerford. John has had a busy year encouraging members to lead walks, but recognises that although some members don't wish to lead they are happy to assist in other ways.

Diane McPhail reported in her **Membership Secretary's Report** that numbers of members continue to grow at a consistent rate with most new members again this year coming through word of mouth.

The **President's Report** is reproduced in full at the end of this section.



All Committee members thanked the many helpers who have assisted them during the year for their help and support.

Office Bearers 2015-2016

President	Cavan Hogue
Vice President	Helen Kershaw
Vice President	Jan Mathieson
Secretary	Henrike Korner
Assistant Secretary	Katherine Gloor
Treasurer/Public Officer	Barbara Mitchell
Membership Secretary	Diane McPhail
Walks Secretary	Colin Reid
Events Co-ordinator	Shirley Hart
Ordinary Member Responsible for New Leaders	Chris Edwards

Other Office Bearer Positions Determined by the Committee

Webmaster	Jacqui Hickson
Ordinary Member	Walter Baer
Ordinary Member	Anthea Michaelis
Honorary Auditor	Bob Wood

Other appointments to assist the Committee

Membership Registrar	Ron Mead
Newsletter Editor	Colleen Loudon
Newsletter	Bev Barnett Tam Khuat
Electronic Program Coordinator	Jacqui Hickson
Updates Coordinator	Lynn Dabbs
Insurance Officer	Alan Sauran
Librarian/Archivist	Michael Keats
Training Officer	Sandra Bushell
BWRS representative	Keith Maxwell
Confederation Representatives	Dick Weston
Search and Rescue Representatives	Graham Conden Keith Maxwell
Updates Program Approval Sub-committee	Graham Conden John Cooper Lionel Sonntag Bob Taffel
New Members Approval Sub-committee	Graham Conden Ron Mead Diane McPhail
Advisory Panel	Graham Conden John Cooper Bob Taffel Graeme Lawless

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP 2015 AWARDS

KAYE BIRCH



Kaye became a full member of the Bush Club in 2002. Within 12 months she began to lead walks for the club and has for the last 12 years led numerous bushwalks, base camp trips and pack walks for the club. She was Bush Club Walks Secretary from 2005 until 2008.

Kaye has always been a loyal and committed member of the Bush Club. Kaye is one of our most competent navigators and she has always shared her knowledge with those who have wanted to learn. Kaye has organised and implemented navigation training walks for members who have just completed their map reading course.

Kaye's style has always been well organised, determined and full of humour. She is always on the lookout for new places to visit. Some of the walks and trips she has put on the program have not been done before. She has simply researched them and given our club yet another wonderful walk or trip.

Ian became a full member of the club in February 2002 and has worked in various capacities in the club since that time. Ian has organised and led many Bush Club walks throughout Australia.

As a leader, Ian has given great service to the club over many years, initially leading very demanding multi-day walks, as well as many suburban walks.

Ian served on the Bush Club committee from 2007 until 2009 as membership secretary. At this time, before the advent of the club's webpage, the position required a great deal of personal time and there were many "on the track comments" praising his approach which involved a very personal style.

Ian has given great service to the Bush Club and the awarding of life membership acknowledges his contribution to making the club the success it is today.

IAN EDWARDS



BILL MACKS



Bill joined the Bush Club in 2002 and has been a loyal and committed member of the Club. As a leader he was a regular walks contributor on the Central Coast and often attracted over 30 walkers on his Saturday walks as word spread about the quality of the walks and Bill's leadership style.

In addition to leading walks he has adapted and developed walks on the Central Coast for the Club. He has been generous in sharing his knowledge with others and helped apprentices to learn enough to put on walks in the area. He has always done more than just lead a walk and has done a lot of research into interesting things along the route of the walk which contributed to the quality of the walk and enhanced the popularity of the walks.

Bill has retired from walking for health reasons but he has left a legacy of walks and leaders who can continue to put on walks for the Club in that part of the world. He continues to be available for advice and guidance to members wanting to put on walks in the area. He is currently working with a group of members to document the walks to make them available to other leaders. Bill's extensive knowledge of Central Coast walks will make this a valuable document for the Club.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE AGM

We all know that without walks leaders we would have no club but it is only since I came onto the Committee for the first time that I really understood that without the Committee we wouldn't have a Club either. Like all organisations, our Committee should be a mix of experience and new blood. We are about to lose three very experienced and important members of the Committee: Lynne Outhred, Carol Henderson and John Hungerford. Their experience has been a great strength but they have decided to step down and make way for new blood. Thank you and thank you to our enthusiastic newsletter editor, Judy, who is also retiring.

This year your Club has faced some major questions. I will not repeat what is in other people's reports but focus on a few important points.

At the beginning of this century, Graham Conden, Ron Mead and Howard Tooth successfully changed the somewhat creaky culture of the Club and their efforts have stood the test of time up till now. However, it is time to do something similar if our Club is to prosper. The bright young things of yesteryear are a bit dimmer as I know only too well. Your Committee believes that we need to take stock of our Club culture and practices. What kind of club do we want to be? What are our aims and how do we achieve them. Some clubs put on tough walks including pack walks, others focus on the other end of the spectrum and some have a narrow geographical focus. We, however, are a club for all seasons. We have a wide range of walks in a wide range of areas and I don't think we want to change that. You can start with level 5 or 6 walks and sink slowly in the west to level 1 walks with your friends.

Committee members have made some preliminary suggestions about Club culture and we plan to put these to the incoming

Committee for action. We will probably need a small group like the unholy trinity aforementioned to draft a document but we want club members to contribute by emailing their ideas and comments to the incoming president and secretary. I set out below some of the main points you might like to consider. You may well have other ideas and they will be very welcome.

1. We should encourage younger people to join the club and younger members to serve on our committee. Some people feel they can't lead walks. We plan to help them do so but an alternative way of contributing is joining your committee. Of course a problem here is how we define "young". We have tended to focus on people in their early fifties or sixties who have recently retired and who have the time to spend. However, it has been noted that people are working longer and that we cannot rely on this group of fit retirees as in the past. Australia's work culture is changing and we must adapt or perish. So what do we do?
2. We need to cater for all by putting on weekend and weekday walks. We have a well-deserved reputation for putting on more mid-week walks than other clubs and I see no reason to change that. These walks cater not only for retirees but for people who work part time, shift workers or those who work at home. But full time workers need weekend walks and we are particularly weak on Sundays.
3. Our established policy is to emphasise walks which can be reached by public transport because not everyone has cars or wants to drive them. I see no reason to change this policy but we should continue to understand that some walks cannot be reached by public transport in which case the leader will make appropriate arrangements. This ain't broke so don't fix it.

4. We probably need to move with the times and get a presence on facebook and other forms of social media. This is something we need advice on from younger members who actually understand these things and use them.
5. If we are going to put on more pack walks and tough day walks we need to make sure we have the people who can do them and, of course, if we want to attract these people we have to put on the walks they want. We do have a range at the moment but we are short on pack walks. Our overseas walks have been very successful.
6. Why do prospectives drop out? We must expect some to do so but should we do more to keep them and if so what?
7. Should we have more social functions? Now we have the walks leaders' night and the AGM. Would younger members like more social activity? Or older ones?
8. Some things we could do to encourage younger members to take leadership rolls are to provide mentors for potential walks leaders and to put potential committee members as backup for when the office bearer is away. This way they could learn about how to do things without having all the responsibility thrust on them at once. I, for example, am very grateful to Lynne and Carol for leading me through the labyrinth over the last year. In any case, we need backup Committee members.

Another issue which arose early in the year was the question of our policy on members charged with child abuse. This is also relevant to the question of whether the club should be more family friendly in the sense of putting on functions for children which we have done in the past. We found that we would get involved in complex legal requirements if we offered things

specifically for minors and so stuck with our policy which you can find on the website if you missed the relevant newsletter and bulletin.

The auditor was concerned that we might have too large a balance. The Committee agreed with the Treasurer that we should provide more facilities for members rather than lower our already low fees. You will drink the result of this decision this evening and also get free first aid courses if you lead walks.

There has been discussion about walks in the quarterly program versus short notice walks. Some people have been concerned that leaders are not putting on walks in the program because they think they will put on short notice ones which they don't put on. This may be but we need both. The Walks Secretary is now indicating what days are free when the regular program comes out so that short notice leaders can find gaps to fill. This is a welcome initiative. If the short notice program is to work well, leaders must first look for free days and if they must put on a walk when others already exist, their walk cannot clash with a walk of the same level in the same area.

I will stand for a second year as president but will retire after that as I reach the magical age of 80 when I expect senility to become even more obvious. My experience has been that it is a great club with a very pleasant and helpful bunch of people on the Committee. So please step up. Remember that it is your club and can only be as strong as you make it.

Last but certainly not least I would like to thank Shirley and her band of helpers for organising this and the walks leaders function.

