

THE BUSH CLUB NEWSLETTER



Summer 2016

www.bushclub.org.au

Walks Reports Spring p. 13
Walks Program Summer p. 23

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**Web Information and
Notice Board**

www.bushclub.org.au

CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

Please send anything you think will
interest our members to
Colleen Loudon
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Tour de Mont Blanc

4-16 July 2016

By John Hungerford

Team: Tony Hickson (Leader), Malcolm Gregory (Guide), John Hungerford, Robin Owens (Rogo), Jane Millgate, Erika van Lennep, Jacqui Hickson, Rosemary MacDougal, Paul Millgate, John Sharpe, Lionel Sonntag, Ruth East, Fiona Sonntag, Valerie Rice.

Day 1 from Geneva (Switzerland) to Les Houches in France (Hotel du Bois).

We travelled by shuttle buses then settled in to the hotel (some deciding on a swim) before a Group Meeting to meet our Guide before dinner.

Day 2 to Les Contamines (Christiana) – lovely sunny day - 14 kms +700m -1320m.

We walked a short distance before taking a cable car up to Bellevue (1800m), crossing a suspension bridge at the nose of Bionnassay Glacier and stopping at Refuge de Miage for lunch. Our walk down to the village was timely, arriving before some late afternoon rain showers.

Day 3 to Les Chapieux (Auberge de la Nova) – another sunny day – 20 kms +1310m -930m.

We walked to Notre Dame de la Gorge and had a quick look before taking a long well graded climb through alpine meadows crossing some steep snowy slopes in the afternoon. We were rewarded with the sight of our first marmot. At lunchtime some sheep came right up to us wanting our food! We stopped for a break at the Refuge du Col de la Croix du Bonhomme

followed by a very picturesque descent to the auberge. Some très désolé with the showers! Expensive beers before an excellent meal of pig's cheek.



Day 4 to Courmayeur in Italy (Hotel Tavernia) - cool then sunny – 16 kms +785m -900m.

We were driven in two groups about 5kms before beginning the climb. The crossing from France into Italy was marked by a cairn before descending. We could see Refugio Elisabetta above us. At the end most took a bus to the town while Lionel, Fiona, John S and Valerie walked the last 10kms.

Day 5 a Rest Day in Courmayeur – sunny.

Rogo and John H went on several cable cars to Aiguille du Midi (in France) overlooking Mont Blanc – a great day while others found alternate pursuits. That night we had drinks outside the Sonntag's room but could hardly hear ourselves speak from the roaring of the river.

Day 6 to La Fouly in Switzerland (Edelweiss) – sunny – 18 kms +850m -1067m.

The day started with a one hour bus ride to the start of the climb. We were rewarded by great views from the morning tea stop. Today we saw a group of Ibex. Then up to the Grand Col Ferret and across the border into Switzerland attaining the highest point-

2537m of the official TMB. Diverted to Refugio Peule for refreshments.

Day 7 to Champex (Les Glaciers) – sunny. – 16 kms +440 m -550 m.

A gentle day passing through some enchanting villages with some of the group walking around the delightful lake.

Day 8 to Trient (Auberge de Mont Blanc) – sunny – 16 kms +700m -900m.

Today the party split into two groups. Malcolm led the larger party via the Col de Bovine and the Glacier de Trient. Lionel, Fiona and the two Johns went via the shorter but more difficult Fenêtre d'Arpette (15 kms, +1200m -1400m). There were a few dogs walking this route too – one with 'shoes' on the front feet. We all met at Refuge Chalet du Glacier for refreshments before a gentle walk to the village. A noisy meal (some had fondue) in a crowded dining room.



Rogo with his friends

Day 9 to Argentière in France (Hotel Couronne) – rain – 8 kms +220m -380m.

Due to the bad weather we decided not to climb high. We took a bus and then train to Vallorcine then walked to Le Buet from where most of the group took the train to Argentière. Malcolm

led Jane, John H. and Rogo via an Auberge La Boerne at Tré-le-Champ (for hot chocolate) to Argentière.

*Day 10 to Chamonix (Hotel Gustavia) – rain – 14 kms
+1000m, -480m.*

A short bus ride to Montroc then walk through Tré-le-Champ before ascending via many metal ladders to Grand Balcon Sud with misty views across the Mont Blanc massif. We sheltered in Refuge du Lac Blanc for lunch and warm drinks. We descended by cable car from Flégère to Les Praz de Chamonix then a short bus ride to Chamonix.

Day 11 (July 14 Bastille Day – a non-event!) – Rest Day in Chamonix. Weather only fair.

Most of the group took the cog railway up to Montenvers to see the Mer de Glace, then walked down to the Grotte de Glace (Ice Cave). Back up at the top they visited the Crystal Gallery, the Glaciorium and the Temple of Nature. After lunch several took the train to Servoz then walked along the delightful

Gorges de la Diosaz. Back in Chamonix some watched the Rock Climbing Championships at an artificial structure.

*Day 12 to Les Houches – sunny – 20 kms
+450m, -1300m.*

We took the train to Les Praz de Chamonix then a cable car to Flégère before a delightful walk with magnificent views of Mont Blanc.

Day 13 – Depart from Les Houches to Geneva (Switzerland) – sunny.

We all went our separate ways after a most enjoyable experience.

TOTAL 142kms – Mission accomplished!

The trip is highly recommended. The scenery was magnificent. On some days we walked across snow-drifts with some deciding to slide down them! There were many other walkers in both directions.

A big thank you to Tony Hickson for organising the whole trip and to Malcolm Gregory for guiding us safely along the way.



Happy Birthday Bush Club!



Bush Club 77th Birthday Celebrations were held on 10th September 2016. Around 55 people enjoyed a choice of walks around the stunning Govetts Leap area before returning to the Blackheath Heritage Centre for birthday cake.



The venue was excellent and staff at the Heritage Centre were very helpful.



Thanks to Shirley Hart for organising the venue and cake and to our leaders Brian Fox, Michael Keats, Tony Sandrussi, Jill Green and Rob Powell who made the variety of walks possible.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

David Cheah, Peter Norton Small, Stephen Shubitz, Richard Graylin, Tom Dowling, Michael Darcy, Steven Sim, Eleanor Gair, Peter Jordan

Bush Club 2016 Annual General Meeting And End of Year Celebration

The Bush Club AGM will be held on Thursday the 1st December at 6pm following the normal meeting starting at 4.30pm. The venue is:

McMahons Point Community Centre
Blues Point Road, North Sydney

Drinks (soft drink, beer and wine) and finger food will be served immediately after the AGM.

If you intend to stay for the party please indicate by emailing (preferred) or phoning:

Shirley Hart

gs.hart@bigpond.net.au

Phone: 9449 7722

For catering purposes we need your reply by Tuesday 22nd November. Please put this date in your diary.

We look forward to your early reply, and attendance on the 1st December to make it a special night. Remember this is a great opportunity to chat with old friends and make a few new ones in a relaxed atmosphere. Prospectives are most welcome to come along. The community centre is a short distance from North Sydney Station down Blues Point Road on the left and opposite the Commodore Hotel. There is no parking for cars.

Progress Report on Implementation of Bush Club Refresher Group Recommendations

In June 2016 The Bush Club Refresher Group comprising experienced members Graham Conden, Alison Boyle, Robyn Christie, Michael Keats and Sally Reynolds made recommendations to the Committee aimed at ensuring the club remains strong, members involved and new members attracted in the future.

Some of these recommendations are now being implemented.

LEADERS

Our leaders are our greatest asset. Without them there is no club.

It was recommended that we create mentors for new leaders from a pool of our experienced leaders who are willing to help to identify and assist new leaders.

As part of this process we are developing a data base of leader profiles which will allow members to identify club leaders and discover the style of walk, pace and favourite walk areas for each leader, helping new members to choose walks which are suitable for them.

Thanks to our indefatigable webmaster, Jacqui Hickson, these profiles are becoming available and are accessed via a tab at the bottom of the walks program. The information is only available to club prospective members and full members. It is not available to the general public.

We have also established a list of leaders/members willing to do walk reccies with new leaders and also possibly co-lead a walk with a new leader.

All leaders are encouraged to nominate their walks as "leader training walks" so interested participants can lead sections of the walk with maps and assistance from the leader.

We are asking all leaders to ask other leaders present to identify themselves at

the beginning of a walk so that members can talk to them about leading during walks and members can put faces with names.

All leaders have been asked to fill in an online form to provide profile information although this is not obligatory.

THE WALKS PROGRAM

There has been much discussion about the hard copy program and the electronic program.

It is felt that the days of the hard copy program are numbered and it needs to be replaced by a continuously updated electronic program. The hard copy program will continue to be available to those who have requested and paid for it for the next 12 months.

After this time the hard copy will only be available (free of charge) to those members who do not have an email address.

As further Refresher Group recommendations are implemented they will be publicised.

What's on our website?

- Leader profiles and volunteers who will help new leaders. The list is at the end of the online program.
- Information and forms for leaders.
- Guidelines for all members.
- Photo gallery (enormous) – see photos of walks from the last 6 months.
- Tips on all sorts of things related to bushwalking and the website.
- Archives of previous newsletters as well as historical Walks & Talks.

Just browse through the menu at www.bushclub.org.au

Bush Club Committee plus contact details – see contact us on the website.

Bush Club PLB Personal Locator Beacon

The club has a PLB for use by leaders on walks.

Tony Hickson is custodian of the PLB. Contact him at any time to make arrangements to borrow it.

bushclubwebmaster@gmail.com

For more information see the **Information for Leaders** page on our website.

www.bushclub.org.au.

Accidents do Happen

Happily, the Bush Club has an excellent record when it comes to sickness or injuries during our walks. Of course, there are times when our members rely on their walking colleagues for first aid.

You can gain the confidence and skills to assist a colleague when first aid is called for – with support from the Bush Club.

The Club will reimburse members who successfully complete St. John accredited first aid training. Leaders receive a 100% refund and members are subsidised 50% of costs.

The Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS) offers first aid training twice a year – usually in May and November.

This training includes a focus on bushwalkers and provides the extended, three-day Remote Area First Aid (RAFA) course.

The Bush Club supports BWRS courses by advertising them in the Walks Program. Early registration is encouraged, as these courses regularly fill. However, if you successfully complete any St. John 'Provide First Aid' training, the Club will also reimburse you. These courses are available throughout the city and suburbs and can be found at online.

The Bush Club encourages all members to acquire these valuable skills.

BWRS: www.bwrs.org.au

St John Ambulance: stjohn.org.au



NEW CLAIM PROCEDURES FOR THE BUSH CLUB'S PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Our club's personal accident insurance is arranged by Bushwalking Australia via our State organisation, Bushwalking NSW.

The insurance is very cheap - it costs only about \$5 per year per member. Consequently the coverage is far from comprehensive. However, there is no way that individual members could obtain even this limited insurance for themselves for \$5 per year.

Who is the insurance broker?

Insurance brokerage is arranged Australia-wide by a three-yearly tender conducted by Bushwalking Australia.

The tender for the three-year period starting on 1 July 2016 has been completed. The new insurance broker selected by Bushwalking Australia is Jardine Lloyd Thompson who replaces the old broker Marsh Inc.

New claim procedures effective immediately

Jardine Lloyd Thompson has more rigorous claim requirements than Marsh Inc. The main changes are:

- **Claims must be submitted within 120 days of the date of the incident, even if there are still more expenses to come. The old procedure had no time limit.**
- **Claim forms must be signed by an officer of the Club.** Normally this would be the Insurance Officer, but it can be any Committee member. The old procedure had no such requirement.

- **Claim forms must also be signed by a witness to the incident.** The old procedure was that the witness signed an incident report, but not the claim form.

Claim forms also need to be signed by a medical practitioner, but this is not new.

More information on how to claim is at: <http://www.bushwalkingaustralia.org/insurance/claims-and-enquiries>

What can be claimed

Examples of items which are covered include:

- for members aged under 85, a fixed payment of \$50,000 on death or quadriplegia, with lesser fixed amounts for specified lesser permanent disabilities. This is the largest payout. For members aged 85 and over, the benefit is reduced to 20%.
- up to \$3,000 for expenses for which no Medicare benefit is payable, e.g. physiotherapy, nursing, dental, private patient fees. Any private insurance must be used first. 80% of the remainder is covered, with an excess of \$150. Example: Suppose there are physiotherapy fees of \$600 and private insurance pays \$200. The remainder is \$400, reducing to \$250 after the \$150 excess. This insurance pays 80% of \$250 = \$200.
- up to \$2,000 for a complete break of a bone, with higher amounts if open reduction is required
- up to \$700 weekly benefit for loss of work income, excluding the first 7 days off work, due to injury sustained during the activity, or to illness brought on by medical

treatment for the injury, and not covered by workers' compensation or private insurance, plus up to \$5,000 for return to work rehabilitation.

- ambulance fees not covered by private ambulance insurance.

What can NOT be claimed

Examples of items which are not covered include:

- any "Medicare gap" for medical and hospital, i.e. nothing is claimable for an item if Medicare has paid or would have paid anything on that item. Merely failing to claim from Medicare does not mean that the benefit becomes payable.
- any amounts claimable under private health insurance
- any amounts above the Scheduled Fee
- any injuries which occurred on overseas trips
- any injuries which did not occur on a club activity
- injuries incurred during independent travel to or from the activity while not under the control of the leader
- medical conditions which are illnesses rather than accidents.

Activities covered

There is no change in the activities covered, which are:

- bushwalking
- track / hut construction and maintenance
- canyoning / liloing
- alpine walking (summer & winter)
- canoeing / kayaking
- boating/rafting
- swimming

- cycling
- rock scurrying and use of hand held ropes and safety belay equipment as part of a bushwalk
- snow skiing
- abseiling
- caving
- orienteering / rogaining
- leader training
- rescue training
- first aid training

Rock climbing continues to NOT be covered.

More information on personal accident insurance:

<http://www.bushwalkingaustralia.org/insurance/accident-insurance>

Flora and Fauna Watch out for: Diamond Python



Diamond Python – CCO Public Domain – Pixabay

Diamond Pythons range in size from 2-3 metres and are found in coastal areas. They are not currently considered endangered but they are under pressure from habitat destruction. The females coil around their eggs to keep them warm. As for all snakes leave them alone, although not venomous they can give a nasty bite.

Diamond Pythons are nocturnal but you may be lucky enough to spot one basking in a tree.

Ref: australianmuseum.net.au/diamond-python

Vale Heather Roy



Life Member
Heather Roy
passed away
peacefully on
Tuesday 30th
August aged 94. A
farewell service at
relatively short

notice attracted about two dozen people on Friday September 9th; the Bush Club represented by Michael Pratt. A number of National Parks Association members were in attendance. Afterwards family and friends gathered at The Royal Motor Yacht Club, Broken Bay.

Heather was a Bush Walker and Conservationist of note, particularly interested in Kosciuszko. She got things done. Heather joined the Bush Club in 1978 and a decade later was leading locally and also overseas. Heather served a number of years as our President or Vice President. For many years Heather also conducted our annual Bush Club "Summer Week up the Snowy", a popular event which continues today. Heather's efforts during her active years greatly enriched our Club.

Vale Brian Packard

Brian Packard, a member of the Bush Club since 1958 passed away on 16th September. He was 91 years of age. A service was held at the North Ryde Macquarie Park Camellia Chapel, on Wednesday September 21st.

There would be many still in the Bush Club who would remember Brian very

fondly as a strong walker and wonderful company. He was a life member of the Bush Club.

"Rest in Peace"

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**"Farewell" from
Noeline Wallis**

As many of you may be aware, my husband Bob and I will soon be off on our next adventure in our motorhome, affectionately known as the apartment, and we expect to be gone for a couple of years travelling around Australia.

I have been leading walks for about 3 years and I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for all the support, encouragement and friendship I have received from the Committee and the members over that time.

And I must make a special mention of my waggily tail, and Monday friend, Lenore. We had a chance conversation and discovered we both liked to walk and she has since been with me almost every Monday of those last 3 years helping with reccies and pre walks and just plain being great company. Thanks for saving all those Mondays for me.

Hoping you all stay happy, healthy and safe.

Cheers
Noeline Wallis



THE PRESIDENT OF THE BUSH CLUB GAVE THE PRESIDENT OF THE RAMBLERS A BLOODY NOSE!

By Michael Pratt

There are within the common ranks of Ramblers, Past Presidents, Past Vice Presidents and future Presidents; mostly respectable individuals maintaining a low profile. However one such constituent has a curious claim to fame in that, *whilst President of The Bush Club, he gave the President of The Ramblers a bloody nose!*

A genial history of association exists between both organisations. Some Ramblers walk with Bush Club too. Bush Club Presidents have not been found antagonistic; they are usually quite friendly so perhaps I should explain.

“It was on a Blue Mountains walk that this assault took place. Leading the party was Ramblers’ President Donald Brooks followed closely by Bush Club President Michael Pratt and several others. Donald was proceeding gingerly. He was in recovery mode nursing surgical stitches and the “assault” of a hillside was ahead. Unable to stretch too far Don, immediately above Mike, requested a “push up” and Mike responded immediately laying hands on the hips of Don with a vigorous ‘heave-ho’.

Somewhat too vigorous in fact and poor Don was pitched forward impacting his ‘schnozzle’ against the rock ahead. Mike’s profuse apologies did little to restore Don’s

dignity as he was laid head-down feet-up on the ground whilst first aid was applied to stem the bleeding. His plight witnessed by the whole party!”

Don never again asked Mike for a ‘push and shove heave ho!” Mike resolved that he would never again proffer one – not to Don anyway. But following this somewhat embarrassing accident the two have remained ‘good friends’.

VERY PUNNY

- Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.
- A soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
- I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid. He says he can stop any time.
- How does Moses make his tea? Hebrews it.
- I stayed up all night to see where the sun went. Then it dawned on me.
- This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.
- I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I can't put it down.
- I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.
- A dyslexic man walks into a bra.
- Why were the Indians here first? They had reservations.
- I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.
- How do you make holy water? Boil the hell out of it!
- Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?
- When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.

Heard on the (Railway) Track

Agitated gent having words with Train Guard (gent anxiously waiting for partner to emerge from toilet nearby so they can both board train)

Gent on platform flourishing his mobile phone says: "But my App says this train doesn't depart for another 3 minutes!" Train Guard "I don't do Apps. I'm in charge of this train and it's going now!"

Kyrgyzstan – a walking destination?

By Colleen Loudon

Are you looking for somewhere different to walk with beautiful mountain scenery, rivers and lakes? A country with no visa required to enter? How about Kyrgyzstan?



I was lucky enough to travel some of the Silk Road last year. I would recommend the tour to anyone as an amazing experience: the vibrancy of China, the culture, history and architecture of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. But what I hadn't expected was the natural beauty of Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous, landlocked country bordering China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The country became independent when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. However we noticed it still seemed to retain a lot of Soviet influence (the National Museum had a whole floor seemingly devoted to Lenin!)

Kyrgyzstan is a poor country and its economy is mainly agriculture and mining but with all their rivers and lakes is now seeking to develop hydroelectricity as a potential source of export revenue.

On our first night in the capital, Bishkek, I met a couple of Kiwi trampers. The two gentlemen had been volunteering with the Habitat for Humanity organisation and had rounded off their stay in Kyrgyzstan with a 3 day hike in the surrounding mountains. There were no tracks where they went but the experienced hikers took off with their packs, maps and compasses, much to the consternation of locals who were convinced they would get lost!

Tash Rabat

The road border crossing from China into Kyrgyzstan was long and at times tedious – on the Chinese side there were five checkpoints over 200kms and we had to wait at one of them for 3 hours while the Chinese soldiers had lunch! However the scenery in between was stunning, rocky mountains and hills and an array of different colours in the rocks, sands and grasses. Kyrgyz immigration was no problems and we then had about 1.5 hour drive to our yurt stay at Tash Rabat.



Yurt camp came complete with bubbling brook and Kyrgyz woman bottle-feeding a baby yak.

Tash Rabat was a caravanserai which provided respite and shelter for Silk Road travellers who had crossed the dangerous Torugart Pass. Tash Rabat is an amazing structure, the outside doesn't hint at the myriad of rooms and archways contained within. The main room has a huge domed ceiling and there is also a tunnel believed to go to the other side of the hill to escape marauders, although the tunnel has collapsed and authorities haven't been able to find where it emerges.

Tash Rabat is in a beautiful valley and I had an opportunity the next morning before breakfast for a short walk up the surrounding hills. Most of the tour group was still asleep and I wandered up the hill on the other side of Tash Rabat, enjoying the peace and quiet and the view of the valley emerging from the shadows as the sun rose higher.

Ala Archa National Park

We had a pretty full schedule but did manage a half day in the Ala Archa National Park, just outside of Bishkek on our last day in Kyrgyzstan. It was warm in Bishkek but cooled down as we got to the park entrance at around 2200m high. There are a few options from the

car park entrance, a couple of tour members elected to walk along the valley floor but the rest were keen to do the waterfall walk.

The waterfall walk is only around 4kms each way with a 700m ascent. The track is not steep but climbs steadily and warm clothing was soon shed. The track starts through conifer forests but soon opens up to reveal stunning views down the valley of the river and the surrounding snow-capped mountains.

I was so glad to be out of a vehicle and walking, even if it was only for a few hours and I savoured every moment.



There were many climbers and trekkers carrying huge 30-40kg packs with camping and climbing gear heading to the glacier further up the mountain. I had a snack at the waterfall which was as far as I was going and watched enviously as the walkers disappeared up the track. I would have loved to join them, but the next stage of my journey beckoned and I headed quickly back down.

There are a number of tour companies on the internet offering a range of tours from comfortable day walks to more demanding trekking in remote regions. There are also horseback and bicycling options to consider.

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