

# THE BUSH CLUB NEWSLETTER



Winter 2012

[www.bushclub.org.au](http://www.bushclub.org.au)

Walks Program Winter 2012 p.26

Walks Reports Autumn 2012 p.20

## WALKS SUBMISSIONS

### Email

Walk submissions for the newsletter

[walkssecretary@gmail.com](mailto:walkssecretary@gmail.com)

Short notice walks

[bushclubsnw@gmail.com](mailto:bushclubsnw@gmail.com)

### Postal address

Walks Secretary

PO Box 95, Pymble Business Centre,

NSW 2073



### Web Information

[www.bushclub.org.au](http://www.bushclub.org.au)

## CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

Please send anything you think will interest our members to  
Judy O'Connor

[bushclubeditor@gmail.com](mailto:bushclubeditor@gmail.com)

## Across the Alps

By Jill Green

*Walkers: Dennis Trembath, Vicki Presdee, John and Collette Banister, Adrian and Julie Jones, Helena and Ron Smith, Jill Green, Helen Litchfield, Warwick Bridge.*

Last year, we embarked, with some trepidation, on a 15 day walk *Across the Alps*. Our concern was largely because we were told our packs should weigh only 7kg. What were we in for?

The trip was organised by Ramblers Worldwide Holidays who provided a guide and booked accommodation. The first day was spent getting to *Sonthofen* in *southern Germany* where we met our guide, Steve Warr, and sampled the Bavarian food and beer.

### Things get serious

Next morning it was time to experience the packs which most of us found were overweight. Volunteers were sought to carry the rope and bothy (emergency shelter) – this was sounding serious. We were soon walking through a beautiful valley and climbing 860m to the first mountain hut, *Kemptner Hutte*. We appreciated the beers on the terrace.

Next day was a descent, valley walking, a scary bus ride then a climb to *Kaiserjochhaus* (2310m) in the *Lechtal Alps*.

### Now we were in Austria.

Next day we climbed a local peak to check our rock climbing skills then

traversed to *Leutkircher Hut* with spectacular views of distant ranges and into the *St Anton Valley*. We descended into St Anton the next (very hot) day across steep scree (skiing) slopes. After a beer break at a ski hut, we made a long descent to the valley (1,320m). The owners of the Pension Gruber even did our washing.



**Leutkircher Hutte**

### **Frosty swim**

From St Anton we climbed through the *Verwall Mountains* to the Edmund Graf Hutte. The freezing water supply flowed past the front door. No hot showers so several members of the group climbed up to a local lake for a swim. Next day was a rest day so we climbed to the highest local peak, *Hoher Riffler* (3,168m). This involved lots of nerve-wracking unstable scree but the view was worth it.

We then walked through beautiful green valleys with gradual downhill road walking and a final stage in a chairlift down to the ski resort of *Ischgl* and splendid Austrian hospitality.

We continued over the *Kreuzjoch* into Switzerland to the

atmospheric *Heidelberger Hut*, ringed by 3,000m peaks. A lazy morning was spent enjoying the great facilities then, lo and behold, it started snowing heavily. The view was transformed and the afternoon walk turned into a play in the snow.

Next morning was a crunchy climb on the icy track over the *Fimber Pass* at 2608m. At the top we were entertained by mountain bikers trying to ride down the snowy slope. We followed them to the spectacular scenery of the Swiss Engadine to the ancient Swiss village of *Ramosch* where cows were herded through the town at milking time.



**A typical traverse**

### **Hey, that's my grass**

We went on to climb the *Val d'Uina* and through the noted *Uina Gorge* where a spectacular 900m path had been hewn through the rocks. We crossed the *Italian border* to the *Sesvenna Hut* where we spent two nights with a climb up local mountains on the rest day. Outside the hut, a turf war between a cow, donkey and two goats provided plenty of entertainment.

### **Equal to Mt Everest**

From *Sesvenna* we descended to *Mals* in Italy from where we took

the train to *Merano*. Overall, we climbed over five mountain ranges. Adrian reckoned all those who did all the optional climbs ascended the equivalent of **Mt Everest**.

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## Come along to AGM



**Y**ou are warmly invited to the AGM and post-AGM dinner to meet the committee and make any suggestions that may be on your mind.

**Date:** Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> August

**Time:** 6.30pm followed by dinner at 8pm at a restaurant a short stroll away

**Place:** Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre 16 Fitzroy St, Kirribilli (upstairs). Just five minutes walk from Milson's Point station.

Members are also welcome to attend the committee meeting beforehand at 4.30pm.

### **Notice of two Special Resolutions amending the Bush Club Constitution:**

1. That the position of auditor be removed from the list of office bearers in clause 15 (2) (a) of the Bush Club Inc constitution.

2. That a new constitution, identical to that approved by special resolution at the 2011 AGM, with the exception of the amendment pertaining to the position of auditor, just approved by the members attending the 2012 AGM, be approved to allow it to be submitted to NSW Fair Trading in

accordance with the requirements of The Associations Incorporation Act 2009.

**Note to Special Resolution number 1.** It is proposed that the position of auditor be removed from the committee. Approval is being sought from the membership to make this change in order to ensure the complete independence of the position of auditor.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

**Carol Henderson, Secretary**

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## Exploring the Scenic Rim

**By Bev Barnett**

*Walkers: Helen & John Kershaw, Trevor & Fay Brown, Leonie Keighley, Elaine Reynolds, Roger Williams, Julie Kelly, Barbara Mitchell, Anna Hayes, Bev Barnett.*

**W**here in the world....?

The *Scenic Rim* is a *World Heritage* listed area in South Eastern Queensland, about an hour's drive from Brisbane and the Gold Coast. It contains the remnants of three ancient and extinct volcanoes, and a number of National Parks, all with walking tracks; much of the area is rainforest.

**Anna Hayes** and I had travelled and walked through the area in 2010, and thought it was so lovely, we wanted to bring a Club group to further explore this rich area. We planned a flexible trip of about three weeks: members were

welcome to join and depart when convenient, and we planned both tent and campervan accommodation.

### Chains and happy hour

We met at Mt Warning Caravan Park to plan the ascent of Mt Warning which is actually the throat of one of the volcanoes. It has a strikingly powerful silhouette, and part of the ascent includes a chain assisted section. The weather was kind, and everyone reached the top to enjoy the extensive views. On our return, we relaxed over afternoon tea, followed by happy hour and dinner.

Our plan was to visit several national parks so the following day we moved to *Springbrook NP* for two nights, staying at The Settlement Camping area. This park has several short walks and a number of waterfalls.

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...sunset in ten second intervals...

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### Sunset at O'Reilly's

Our next stop was *O'Reilly's* in *Lamington NP*. The camping area is run by National Parks, and contrasts with the luxury of the guesthouse next door – however, we had hot showers, and one evening enjoyed a pleasant happy hour with a glorious sunset which Roger captured in ten second intervals till the sun finally sank below the horizon

Our main walk here was the *Border Crossing Track* which runs

between *Binna Burra* and *O'Reilly's*; crossing and recrossing the border between NSW and Queensland. It's a beautiful rainforest walk featuring a number of waterfalls, the main one crashing many metres to the rocks below. This was a full day, as we needed to catch a bus from *O'Reilly's* to *Binna Burra* before starting the walk back. Again the weather was kind; however, being rain forest, there were some wet and muddy patches, but we were rewarded with shafts of sunlight through the trees, lush ferns, marvellous mosses, fabulous fungi and good company.

### Platypus surprise

After completing a couple of shorter walks around *O'Reilly's*, we moved on to *Binna Burra*, passing through the township of *Canungra* to collect supplies. We had stayed there before heading up to *O'Reilly's*, and while camped there, spotted the resident platypus, much to everyone's delight.

Once settled at *Binna Burra*, we explored the guest house and discovered they had a Tuesday night special – a three course meal for \$20. It proved to be a great dinner with a fabulous view over the valley.

### Lumps and itches

Our walks included *Ships Stern*, the *Dave's Creek*, *Coomera* and *Caves* circuits, and other shorter walks. During our stay at *Binna Burra* a tick problem arose – SE Queensland ticks are ferocious, and seemed to love members of our group. Roger had an excellent tick remover which disposed of the offending insects, however those affected were left with itchy spots

and lumps for a couple of weeks.  
...the joys of bushwalking.

**A**fter Binna Burra, there were more goodbyes, and a smaller group travelled via Beaudesert to *Mt Barney* to stay at the lodge, a lovely grassy caravan park with lots of trees, situated at the base of the mountain.

### Final stretch

Our first walk, to the *Lower Portals* (only 7km with a delightful swimming spot and friendly wallabies) left us all exhausted. We were unprepared for such very hot weather after walking in the shady rainforest. Any thoughts of conquering Mt Barney fled. A chat with our hosts provided us with alternative walks which we all enjoyed.

All too soon it was time for more goodbyes...Anna, Leonie and myself drove to *Cunningham's Gap* in Main Range NP for another couple of nights. Again, it was very hot, and roadworks at the Gap prevented easy access to the tracks we planned to walk. Ticks proved to be a problem, so...we decided to head for home.

### Wilf Hilder, warts and all

Sydney Bushwalkers member, Roger Treagus, is calling for stories and photos of the late **Wilf Hilder**, a colourful and at times controversial man, who had a finger in many pies. He belonged to a number of bushwalking clubs over the years and was not averse to involving himself in various 'causes' that evoked his passion.

As Roger says: 'He belonged to a rare breed, the Australian larrikin, with his instinctive mistrust of

authority. Combined with his legendary bush knowledge these qualities made walking trips with him ones to remember.

Roger is adamant that the collection will be three-dimensional. In other words, he's looking for stories of all shades; if they're not all positive, that's OK, he says. Email [rtreagus@optusnet.com.au](mailto:rtreagus@optusnet.com.au)



**F**or nearly four decades **Ray Mathieson**, who sadly passed away last year, maintained his membership, and an enduring interest in the club.

*He was Treasurer from 1974-77, Vice President 1977-80, and Vice President again, from 1981-84. In 2010 he became a Life Member.*

*Here's an interview Michael Keats did about two years ago:*

*The telephone caller was direct and strident: 'Mike, you need to interview Ray Mathieson, he's done a lot and he's getting on.'*

*The caller hung up. Who was that? And who was Ray?*

*I sent an email to the club keeper of all information about bushwalkers – **Ron Mead**. Sure enough, there was a Ray Mathieson on the books as a current member with an address at Vincentia on the South Coast. The caller, turned out to be the ever succinct, **Dick Weston**. So my wife, Jenny, and I spent a few days visiting Ray and his wife, Heather.*

**Don Clucas**, close walking friend, and Vice President of the club from 1978-80 was on hand to recall bushwalking memories.

**R**ay was a great raconteur. He told us a story that involved himself, the late **Albert Fried** and the late **Pearl Gillot**. During the course of a visit to New Zealand, Albert had met an American who said he was a bit of an adventurer and would like to experience the Australian bush. Albert, Ray and Pearl took him up the Colo River. **Mike Pratt** and his wife were also on the trip.



Ray, Australia

### **Scream for help**

They started on the Bob Turner Track and after a few kilometres, the remoteness, wildness, isolation and sheer harshness, caused the American to panic. He clung to a rock and screamed for help. In Pearl's medical kit, (she was a qualified nurse) tranquilizers were found. Albert and Ray then guided, prodded and cajoled the American 'back to civilization'. (Mike Pratt recalled the event differently – 'this American had a balance problem and had to be assisted by myself, my wife and others up a rock and out of a creek. Halfway out he got cramp...')

**O**ne of Ray's favourite areas was Kanuka Brook where he often camped under a generous concealed overhang that

became known as 'Ray's Cave'. He remembered that, at the start of one walk as members were congregating at Glenbrook station, a girl came up to him on crutches and he was alarmed to see she had only one leg: 'I was more than a bit surprised when she said she was coming on the walk. Staggeringly, she only needed help with rock hopping - she completed the 10kms of the walk. She was most dexterous with the crutches which effectively gave her an extra leg.'

### **Missing clothes**

Ray preferred pack walks and claimed to be the one who took **Don Brooks** on his first walk in the Warrumbungles. 'I also used to walk with **Paddy Pallin**. The Ettrema Gorge was a favourite destination. We would go for four or five days. On one occasion, exploring with Paddy and **Joan Adams**, we climbed the wrong mountain, lost our clothes, and much later found them.'

I never got Ray to say what happened between the 'losing' and the subsequent 'finding'.

On a summer trip to Little Wheeny Gap in the 1980s, Ray was leading a group in from the north side via a narrow cleft when they sighted a group of young guys stripping a car. They did some quiet back-peddalling, and notified the police who later told them the cars had been stolen less than two hours earlier.

Ray recalled a member called **Wally McGrath** who worked as an engineer with the NSW Railways. He was a neat dresser at work, but for bushwalking he always shopped

at Vinnies. His knowledge was encyclopaedic when it came to maps and tracks. He never missed one of Ray's walks until Wally had an encounter he could not handle.

Ray's face broke into a smile: 'His unswerving loyalty changed on a walk in the upper reaches of the Georges River. Without warning we came across a fence in the bush, crossed it the way bushwalkers do and –found ourselves in a very active nudist colony.'

**A**nother character was **Alan Catford** who was athletic and capable of negotiating very narrow ledges above fearsome heights. An hour or so into a walk in the Blue Mountains: 'I stopped the group and said, we're going to walk on a very narrow ridge off the Bells Line of Road'. Meanwhile Alan was larking and jumping about, just millimetres away from 10m+ drop. He was also in the lead with **Bob Hayes** next in line. Bob took one look at the way we were headed and pulled back with a definite: 'I am (meaning we are) not going.' The walk was modified. Such are the joys of leadership.

### **Red faces**

Ray couldn't help himself. He had to tell me yet another story. This one was about fellow leader **Don Brooks**. Don liked his pack walking and he and his companions went to some rather amazing places. Snakes are, of course, part of the bush and black snakes are perhaps the most common. On this Easter camping trip to the Wollondilly River, with mates **Alan Cunningham** and **Bob Hayes**, they pitched tents down by the

river, a great spot that is also home to the red belly black.

During the night, Don got up to relieve himself. On the way back to his tent in the moonlight he thought he saw a shiny black snake, over one metre long with its head under Bob's tent flap. There was also a hissing sound. It had to be checked out. The result, a very embarrassed Bob, who had invested in a length of black plastic tubing so he could 'go' in the night without getting out of his tent.

Records suggest Ray joined the Club in 1972.

*Also remembered - **ROGER XUE** - who recently passed away. Roger joined the club in June 2010 and is fondly remembered. Condolences to the family.*

## **The Gardens of Stone NP and Beyond. By Michael Keats & Brian Fox**

**Reviewed by Bob Taffel**

If you are looking for a quick browse then this book is not for you. From the preface, through the introduction, to sections on the geology and walks in the area and beyond, it is an amazing compendium of information, description and photos and bears witness to the authors' love of the area. As a bonus it contains one of the most comprehensive and easy-to-navigate indexes I have come across, as well as a comprehensive list of abbreviations. *The Bush Club* is recognised by the inclusion of a

brief but full page article covering the history, activities and future of the Club. The authors, intentionally I believe, have used this publication as a call to arms to protect the area from further damage by coal mining. So-called long wall coal extraction has caused undermining in places and led to cracking and subsidence of pagodas and cliff faces in many parts of the park and neighbouring areas.

### Series of eight

The book is the first of eight in the authors' mammoth series and some may argue so many books represent overkill. However, if book one is any indication of what is to follow then all eight will form an indispensable addition to the bookshelf of the adventurous bushwalker and others who's interest is in the natural science of the area.

**W**ith two previous books to their credit, *The Passes of Narrow Neck* and *The Upper Grose Valley – Bushwalkers Business*, this book follows a similar format with the first section containing a wealth of information on the geology including competing theories on the formation of the sandstone pagodas that are the hallmark of the area. This is followed by descriptions of 25 walks aimed at not only providing sufficient information for others to retrace each walk but also at tempting others into exploring this country with tantalising descriptions along the way. Anyone familiar with Michael's style will be in no doubt as to who looked after this section. However, the descriptions are balanced so readers will be in no doubt that walking in this area is strictly for experienced

bushwalkers with the bulk of walks being off-track and in challenging terrain.

### Photos and sketches

The quality is complemented by the standard of photography, with a photo on almost every page, and the first class reproduction of these, adds further delight and acts as an additional inducement to visit the area. Steve Murray, one of the regular participants and often 'leader's secretary', has contributed sketches and paintings. Steve is the envy of many with his ability to seemingly effortlessly produce lifelike sketches of things of interest along the way.

In summary, this book has much to recommend it and the price of \$50 represents excellent value both for its usefulness to walkers and ability to take others, who may not be inclined to subject themselves to the rigours of the park's topography, on virtual walks to unimagined places.

**C**olin Barnes, husband of club member Judy Barnes had a 'eureka' moment after reading the article about **Adrian Cooper** in the last issue of the Newsletter:

'I recognised the name and recalled I had participated in a patrol (small group) of Senior Scouts (now Venturer Scouts) including Adrian when we did an extended walk in the Snowy Mountains over the 1957-58 New Year period.

'I delved into my photo archives and found a picture on which I had

recorded January, 1958 which includes Adrian on the far right end of the line of 'cooks'.

I'd labelled the photo *Cooking tea at Horse Camp* – somewhere in the Snowy Mountains but heaven knows where.

Thanks, Colin, for this great piece of walking history.



Left to right: Ross Thirby, group leader, (unknown), 'Fergie', Nick Heath (Shore school, North Sydney), Adrian Cooper (glasses).

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### ***Congratulations to our following Life Members:***

**R**on Mead joined the Club in 1996 and quickly became an enthusiastic convert, revelling in walks of the more energetic variety. He soon became a regular leader of note. One memorable excursion involved descending via the *National Pass* at Wentworth Falls to *Vera Falls* in torrential rain only to find his return blocked by the now swollen upper creek. An enforced retreat ensued and a very wet ascent via the now gushing *Valley of the Waters* was successfully tackled by his desperate and weary party.

In addition to leadership, Ron developed an interest in the

administration of the Club. He served as Membership Secretary from 2000-04 and prided himself on a fast response to enquirers. He also developed an interest in computers and under the auspices of **Wolfgang Berger** administered and then took over data management of Club. He began this demanding task in 2003 and is still attending to it. His long service, approachability and good humour make him a highly valued member, considered well deserving of an **Honorary Life Membership** award.

**P**am Organ is a quiet achiever and a lady determined to get the most out of every day. She joined the Club in 1989 and quickly endeared herself to members as a popular leader. Her enthusiasm for a yarn around the campfire made her a natural Editor of our long running *Walks and Talks*. This annual publication blossomed under her custody, which she began in 1996, and gave vent to those displaying literary talent. She went on to develop and guide this publication for the last ten years of its life. It was discontinued in 2006 when it was decided to add a newsletter to the more frequent Walks' program. Her long years of service are reflected in her **Honorary Life Membership** award.

**M**arion Woof, the active co-partner of Bill, joined the Club in 1981. She was already an experienced walker of the more energetic kind and quickly began, sometimes with Bill, to lead walks and camping trips. She developed a following and was respected for her stamina, strength and walking capability. And she got

things done. She was an active participant in the Club's mighty 1989 *Half Century Project - The Jubilee Walks* program. Prior to that, her ten years of uninterrupted service on the committee began in 1986 as an ordinary member. She was elected President in 1988 and continued until 1990 when she served as a Vice President until 1994. From 1995-97 she again sat at the table as an ordinary member. The Club has benefitted greatly from her contributions and was pleased to confer upon her, an **Honorary Life Membership** award.

**L**ena Willemse joined the Club in 1981. She became a leader and developed a large following. Her speciality and training ground were the *Blue Mountains* where she led many walks. She is to be admired for her fortitude when she suffered the worst misfortune; at the end of one walk a participant collapsed and died. On another memorable occasion she was blessed with a male visitor from overseas who kept hanging back at the rear. Eventually words were said and it seemed he found it 'unpalatable' to be walking behind a woman. Lena soon fixed that: she had him one pace ahead of her all day. Her contributions as a participant and leader for upwards to 30 years has been outstanding. The committee is pleased she has accepted her **Honorary Life Membership** award.

**A**lan Mewett joined the Club in 1993 and almost immediately volunteered for a key role on committee. His taking over as Treasurer in 1994 brought a fresh approach to the way things

were done and he quickly put his own stamp on the job, much to the benefit of the Club. In 1995-96 he served as both Treasurer and Secretary. Between 1996-98 he settled back in the Secretarial role and then resumed as Treasurer until 2001. He continued to quietly assist **Pam Organ** behind the scenes with *Walks and Talks*. In his early days he enjoyed walks of the harder variety. One year he was led to *Cogra Hill* which is of necessity off-track. On completion of the walk, he found he'd left his wallet behind. Twelve months later the walk was repeated and Alan's wallet found, still lying where he'd left it a year before. His years of office embraced a period of transition for the Club from which it has grown from a somewhat inward-looking entity to the outward-looking successful organisation that we enjoy today. The committee is pleased Alan has accepted his **Honorary Life Membership** award.

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## **Blue Gum Forest**

### **But how? Who?**

*...it must surely be the bushwalkers' Mecca.*

**By Judy O'Connor**

**S**ituated in the *Grose Valley* in the Blue Mountains National Park, this piece of stunning bushland with its stands of towering gums – one of which measures 65 metres and has a trunk of six metres – has got to be the spiritual home of most walkers and conservationists.

Ever since the 1930s when the forest was 'discovered' by a party of bushwalkers, people have been making the steep descent to the Grose River and marvelling at this unparalleled piece of nature. Many of us make regular 'pilgrimages' and never cease to be moved by the experience (although, speaking personally, find the climb up *Perrys Lookdown* harder each year).

### Folklore

The forest is now protected as part of a UNESCO World Heritage area – but, as bushwalking folklore tells us, this was not always the case. The 'saving' of Blue Gum is the stuff of legends and, as such, there are many versions of how it happened and who were the players. I've drawn on Andy Macqueen's self published book *Back from the Brink* (1997) to set out this account:

In 1921 Clarrie Hungerford, a returned WW1 digger, built a house at Mount Tomah and set up a farm. It proved unsuccessful so he moved his family to nearby Berambing on the Bells Line of Road, between Windsor and Lithgow, 10 km west of Bilpin where he planted an orchard and took up bee keeping.

He became mates with Bert Pierce, also a returned digger who had survived Gallipoli and fought in the trenches in France, and who lived nearby.

### Great Depression

When the Great Depression came along in 1929, both families were on the breadline and needed to scout around for ways to make money. According to Macqueen, they made an exploratory trip down to the Grose, probably travelling

down the old *Engineers* track before making a rough sortie up what was later named *Pierces Creek*. They liked the look of the grassy flats along the Grose and decided to build a track down so they could graze cattle.

Hungerford decided to make things legal so he applied for a lease of 40 acres on the *Mt Banks* side of the river. He was granted a 'conditional purchase lease' (it didn't cost him anything at this point) as long as he made minimum improvements to the property.

About a year later, a party of bushwalkers led by **Alan Rigby** visited the forest and, according to one version, came upon Hungerford and Pierce on horseback. There's no record of who was in the walking party but it's believed to have been an all-male group of *Sydney Bush Walkers and Mountain Trails Club*. The walkers were having lunch and asked the two men to join them for a cup of tea.

### Threat or bluff?

According to a later account by **Myles Dunphy**, Alan Rigby, who was a passionate bushwalker and conservationist:

*'...would have plied (the two men) with many questions...and would have been eloquent about the trees and the need for preserving them...Hungerford told them he happened to have a lease of the land, and that he intended to cut down all the trees...the idea being to plant walnut trees. This staggered Alan, as Hungerford hoped it would, no doubt. ...he immediately saw his chance to*

*make some money: if anybody wanted badly enough to save the trees they should be prepared to pay (him) for the privilege.'*

### Ringbarking

Another popular version is that Rigby and his party heard chopping and discovered Hungerford felling and ringbarking trees. But, according to Macqueen, there is no evidence of this. Macqueen doubts that Hungerford ever intended planting walnuts:



*'There would have been enormous time and work involved clearing the gums; the timber was of limited value compared with more accessible forests; walnuts would not have grown well in the valley, and when the first crop eventually appeared, after seven years, their harvesting and transport would have been problematic.'*

**W**hatever the real facts of the meeting, Rigby went away much alarmed and reported the perceived threat to a meeting of the Mountain Trails Club (which had only 27 members). It was decided to get support from Sydney Bush Walkers and lobby the government mainly through the contacts and expertise of **Myles**

**Dunphy** (co-founder of the Mountain Trails Club, 1914).

Their efforts proved fruitless and it became obvious the only way was to buy out Hungerford's lease. A committee was formed with members of Sydney Bush Walkers, Mountain Trails Club and (later) the Wild Life Preservation Society.

A letter was sent to Hungerford asking if he'd sell and, if so, what would be his price?

### Offer to sell

He replied saying he was prepared to sell out 'if I get sufficient to make a fresh start somewhere else and to compensate me for the work I have done there. I have discovered a pass into the valley and formed a track three miles long. I now have 400 young walnuts growing down there and these should be planted out next month....I will sell my rights for 150 pounds.'

Dunphy, protested the price was too high but Hungerford stuck to his guns although saying he'd postpone portion of the payment ('say 50 pounds') for a time 'if that would help'.

**D**unphy pleaded that the clubs would have to raise the money. 'How long do we have?' he asked. Hungerford replied saying he'd hold off, but had to start work on making the road and if the deposit wasn't paid soon, he'd have to increase the price. If, however, the deposit was paid he would spread the remainder over 12 months.

### Meeting in the forest

At this delicate stage of negotiations, the committee set up

a meeting with Hungerford in the forest to settle the matter. It was November 1931.

When the walkers arrived, according to Macqueen, they were greeted by the sight of a freshly felled Blue Gum which they saw as a 'scandalous and unnecessary act of vandalism...meant to shock us and be an object lesson as to what would happen if we did not make a quick deal.'

### The heavens opened

The group sat in a circle clad in waterproof capes, as the rain pelted down and the Blue Gums towered and swayed around them: 'I was sure he was bluffing and that his only interest was a business; to make a profit out of a bunch of enthusiastic conservationists...' Myles Dunphy later commented.

Maybe it was the storm, maybe the softening of his heart – but Hungerford reduced his price from 150 to 130 pounds, with 25 pounds payable immediately and the remainder by the end of the year – just one month away. In current values, this was over \$15,000. In return, Hungerford would forfeit his lease and the Department of Lands would convert the land to a reserve.

### Impossible task

With enthusiasm we can only marvel at today, the bushwalkers went about raising this huge amount of money, at the height of the Great Depression, when many people were unemployed, or too busy worrying about keeping a job. They had only a matter of weeks.

Luck was on their side in one sense: the deposit was donated by the *Wild Life Preservation Society*. But, on the other hand, how were they going to raise the balance in just a few weeks? A guardian angel in the form of **W.J. Cleary**, who called himself an 'amateur tramp' put up an interest-free loan of 80 pounds, which the committee quickly grabbed. As Macqueen points out, this was a pretty valiant act, as the agreement required the members of the committee to be personally liable for the repayment of the loan (about \$10,000 in today's terms).

### The deal was done

That left just 25 pounds to find and, again, passion prevailed and the *Wild Life Preservation Society* gave another interest-free loan of 25 pounds. The big day came – Hungerford got his money, and Blue Gum was proclaimed crown land.

#### Blue Gum Forest committee 1931-32

**Ron Bennett (chairman)** Wild Life Preservation Soc:

**Joe Turner; Wally Roots; Harold Chardon; Dorothy Lawry (later);**

**Noel Griffiths** Sydney Bush Walkers:

**Alan Rigby; Myles Dunphy.**

Mountain Trails Club:

But, in other ways, the battle was just beginning. The committee was now responsible for raising 105 pounds to repay the lenders. Books were published, talks and fund raisers held and calls made far and wide. In the end, it was the bushwalking fraternity itself which saved the day

– Sydney Bush Walkers donated 10 pounds, plus 11 pounds from its annual concert, Mountain Trails Club 8 pounds and, in a spectacular gesture, Sydney Bush Walkers staged a *Blue Gum Forest Ball* with help from other clubs. The dance floor was decorated by **Paddy Pallin** and others and the **Australian Museum** lent stuffed animals and Aboriginal artifacts. The event raised a whopping 27 pounds. These efforts, combined with other donations, raised all the funds needed.

**A**s Macqueen concludes: While there may be doubts about the ‘axe and walnuts’ threats, bushwalkers were not prepared to take the chance.

‘The real campaign was not wresting the lease from Hungerford...but a remarkable reminder of the uniting events of 1931-32 and of the spirit it fostered amongst bushwalkers and conservationists.’



### A father also

**M**yles Dunphy (1891-1985) was more than a bushwalker and conservationist. He was also father to two sons, Milo and Dexter. In this poem, Dexter expresses a very personal memory.

**MJD**

*The leather boots are cracked and dry  
Hobnails rusting out,  
Yet I half expected you to arrive  
and pull them on  
For day dawned crisp, clear,  
autumnal  
The dusty air cleared by rain.*

*In powerful flight swans passed  
overhead  
A pulsing arrowhead cleaving the sky  
Just the kind of day  
You enjoyed striding barelegged  
Through coastal heathland  
Brushing by stunted grass trees  
And hakea, pack on your back  
Blackened billy can swinging in your  
hand  
Your practiced eye picking the  
wallaby trail  
Holding grade on the rise.*

*And we would have stopped in a  
ferny gully  
With a creek of sweet water  
gurgling through rocks  
On its way to the sea.  
'Get me some standing sticks lad,  
you'd say  
And soon the smoke would spiral to  
the sky.  
Smell of burning gumleaves  
Wood crackling and flaring  
Until the billy bubbles and sings.*

*I see you lay out bread, tomatoes,  
cheese  
On the battered plate, open a can.  
'Can't beat Hamper Brand Corned  
Beef,'  
You'd say...'solid meat.'  
Knife, worn to an arc with  
sharpening*

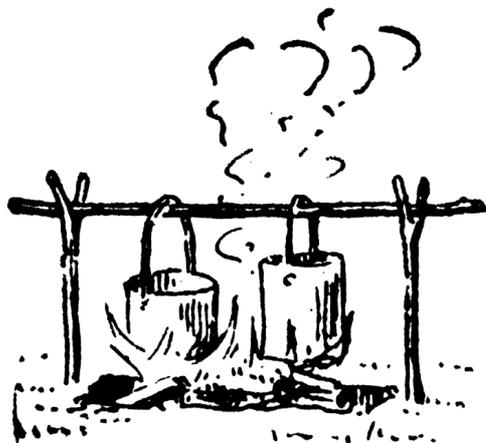
*Carving out slices. 'Help yourself.'*

*And you'd pour tannin-stained tea  
Into the chipped enamel mugs  
'This place puts me in mind of the  
Kowmung trip in '34.'*

*You'd spin us a yarn to take us  
through lunch  
Reeling back the years of your life  
To find that lithe young man  
Swag on back, rifle in hand  
Looking out over endless blue ranges.  
Then, 'time to move on,' you'd say  
And we did, so many times  
Until you moved on - once and for all.*

*Today I want you to pull on those  
boots again  
So I can follow your swinging stride  
Holding back just far enough  
To dodge the whiplash branches  
Sprung by your passing.*

*I have no heart to go by myself  
Into the sunlit spaces  
Robbed of the rhythmic crunch  
Of your boots, your yarns, your  
laughter.*



## **Mt Hotham - the inside story**

**By Jacqui Hickson**

**O**n a recent walk at *Mt Hotham*, we came upon Cultural Heritage Officer and Track Construction supervisor, Andrew Swift, who was working on a new track. He answered lots of questions and told us he wants more tourists and walkers to visit the area.

He is happy to give a short talk and presentation explaining construction techniques, such as path and remote bridge construction, as well as flora, fauna and cultural heritage issues. He likes to give a bit of a history of the area and some of the gold mining history associated with the *Cobungra Ditch* and *Spargos Hut* including a short re-enactment film and the sudden dismissal of over 90 men following their protest march.

Information and track notes:  
[www.mthotham.com.au](http://www.mthotham.com.au)  
[andrewswift@mthotham.com.au](mailto:andrewswift@mthotham.com.au)



**Between Mt Hotham and Dinner Plain**

## New Leaders, our life blood

Eleven new leaders and members interested in leading walks met recently in a *bush classroom* at Lane Cove National Park. **Graham Conden, Carol Henderson** and **Bob Taffel** guided, instructed and entertained them with 'how to' information and stories gleaned from years of experience.



**New Leaders workshop**

Amongst the laughter and camaraderie, many valuable ideas were exchanged. Thanks to our three presenters and the good natured participation of members, it was agreed the workshop had been a great success.

The session finished with a planning exercise. Creative approaches to new walks were shared amongst the group. Look for walks led by these participants in future programs:

**Jan Amour**  
**Alison Briscoe**  
**Andy Briscoe**  
**Natalie Cutler**  
**Cotter Erikson**  
**John Kennett**  
**Ian Mustchin**  
**Colin Reid**

**Graeme Rollings**  
**Maryann Russett**  
**Paul Shea**

The next leadership training session will be in October. If you would like to participate, please contact Sandra Bushell, Training Coordinator,  
[sandraclavelly@yahoo.com.au](mailto:sandraclavelly@yahoo.com.au)

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## Orange Hawkweed Kosciuszko NP By Chris Edwards

**Gay Skarratt, Morrie Donovan, Trisha Molinari, Anna Hayes, Jacqui and Tony Hickson, Suzanne and Alan Sauran, Sandy Larson, Colin Isaac**  
**Chris Edwards.**

### What is it?

Orange Hawkweed is a type of daisy originally from Northern Europe first identified in Kosciuszko NP in 2003. It spreads rapidly and is a threat to native grasslands, alpine and sub-alpine areas and agricultural land. It has also been found in New Zealand, Canada, USA and elsewhere.

It has a rosette of green leaves that have a smooth (not serrated) edge and are covered in small hairs. The stalks grow from 20-400mm high and the petals are soft like a dandelion, usually bright orange. They send out runners called stolons which may be above or under the ground. They are a purplish colour which may be the only means of identification when it is not flowering. More plants are produced from the nodes and from seed, which can be spread by

wind, water and by attaching to passing humans and animals.

### **Volunteers to the rescue**

At the beginning of the year, two groups of members (with other volunteers) set out for one week to work with the Kosciuszko NP in helping to track down the weed.

Our group was taken to Ogilvie's airstrip where the first infestation had been discovered. We were shown how to identify the weed which was difficult because the plants had flowered early and could only be identified by the rosettes and stolons. We were given a GPS which tracked our movements and allowed us to mark the position of plants. When we found and confirmed a sighting, we tied pink tape to surrounding vegetation and searched more than one metre around it. Watercourses and animal tracks were also checked. At the end of the day the GPSs were collected and the data recorded on a map.



**Orange Hawkweed**

Over the week, we worked in various places including *Cool Plain* and *Doubtful Ridge*, all of which were downwind from earlier sites. We often walked line abreast about one metre apart (interesting in woodland) so no area would be missed.

**W**e stayed in two cottages at *Khancoban* with food supplied by the national park (cooked by us). We found the experience rewarding and plan to return next year if funding continues. We went to some fantastic areas in Kosciuszko with views of *Round Mountain* and *Mt Jagungal* and had some very pleasant evenings at the cottage.

Interestingly on a recent club walk in New Zealand, a Club member who was not a volunteer, identified *Orange Hawkweed* from a photograph taken by **Jacqui Hickson** on the NPWS website. This was reported to the authorities in New Zealand.

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## **Would you like to give it a go?**

**By Carol Henderson**

Following the success of the *search for the Orange Hawkweed*, project the committee contacted *National Parks and Wildlife Service* and *Conservation Volunteers* to see if we could be informed of other opportunities for voluntary work. *Conservation Volunteers* immediately sent two requests for volunteers to work on tree planting in the *Capertee Valley* (to encourage *Regent Honey Eaters*) and also to weed in the *Newnes Area*.

**T**hese two activities were published in the *Bush Club Bulletin* which is aimed at giving members access to opportunities that may be long gone by the time the quarterly newsletter is published.

There are three possible ways that we will be able to avail ourselves of the opportunity to volunteer:

- ❖ a member may decide to lead an activity based on the voluntary work
- ❖ a combination trip of voluntary work and walks could be organized, or
- ❖ members can participate by direct contact with the organization needing volunteers.

**M**uch of our walking time is spent in beautiful areas that have been developed for us to enjoy. What better way to show our appreciation than being a volunteer? The feeling of personal satisfaction and the fun of social interaction when a group of people work together to achieve a common goal is a great reward for our efforts.

Have a think about how you may be able to be of use next time you see a call for volunteers advertised in the *Bush Club Bulletin*.

### **One click is all it takes**

***Now, with the click of a mouse you can see the combined program without having to look at your email and compare it to the summer program.***

Members will have noticed the streamlining of our website which has led to an increase in new members. Also, an option to let members know about short notice walks (SNW), and for leaders to use an online form to submit walks.

At the last AGM, **Tony Hickson** suggested integrating the SNWs with the quarterly program and this has now been achieved thanks to **Ron Mead and Jacqui Hickson**.

I would like to thank Tony for providing the impetus for this change, Ron for his work with spreadsheets and finding out about 'clouds' and Jacqui Hickson for ongoing trialling.

**Lynne Outhred, President.**

### **A warm welcome to the following new members:**

*David Yeh, Ewan Cain, Bill Rathborne, Jennie Cross, Richard Cross, Julian Saban, Leeanne Frostick, Jane Kothe, Edward Harvey, Jennifer Kelso, Susan Roberts, Mark Hemmons, Emanuel Conomos, Diane Aylward, David Scrusse, Alexandra Lazar, Sandy Larson.*



So there!



**A**lan Brennan thumbs his nose at the torrential rain that bucketed down all day on his recent *Kogarah to Wollie Creek* walk. A highlight was Alan's 'secret' view of the airport which we can safely say is no doubt recorded forever on security cameras.

Curious? You'll have to do the walk next time to find out the location of this amazing spot.



## So you think you know how to walk?

There's more to it than just putting one foot in front of the other. *Backpacker Magazine* has set up a web page that's sure to put a spring in your step. There's a range of topics including: *Barefoot is better? Stretching. Strength and balance. Stride right. Tilting and ups and downs.* There's also a 'diagnose your problem' section which is worth a peep.

[www.backpacker.com/august-2011-how-to-walk/skills/15843](http://www.backpacker.com/august-2011-how-to-walk/skills/15843)

## Secrets keep coming...

**Carol Henderson** is adept at many things as we all know. On her recent walk from *Wollstonecraft to the Botanic Gardens* she revealed yet another side to her amazing repertoire.

After timely readings of Henry Lawson poems at historic spots, she deftly guided her group into the 'secret' garden of Wendy Whiteley, former wife of the late artist Brett Whiteley.

This beautiful piece of harbour foreshore at Lavendar Bay is worth keeping secret.



**A garden to whisper about**