



ALAN P. RICHY

# THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER



NOVEMBER 2006



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**NOVEMBER 2006**

**Issue No. 864**

**THIS MONTH INCLUDES.....**

**THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER**  
is the monthly bulletin of matters of  
interest to members of:

**The Sydney Bushwalkers Inc**  
PO Box 431 Milsons Point 1565.

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## About Our Club

The Sydney Bush Walkers was formed in 1927 for the purpose of bringing bushwalkers together; enabling them to appreciate the great outdoors; establishing a regard for conservation and promoting social activities. The Club's main activity is bushwalking but includes other activities such as cycling, canoeing and social events.

Our Walks Program (published quarterly) features day walks on most Saturdays and Sundays, some mid week walks and overnight weekend walks. Extended walks are organised in areas such as the Warrumbungles, Snowy Mountains, etc as well as interstate.

Our meetings start at 8pm and are held on Wednesday evenings (see Social Programme) at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli (near Milsons Point Railway Station).

Visitors and prospective members are welcome.

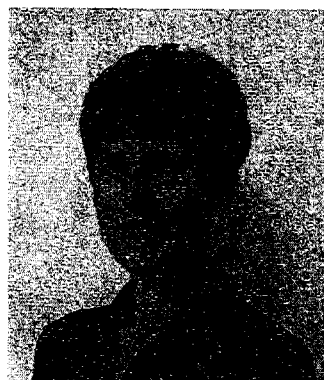
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## President's Report

This is one very hurried column as I madly finish selling my house, pack for travel to Druk Yul (the land of the thunder dragon or Bhutan) and arrange for furniture removal on return to Sydney, a week before

Christmas!

Thinking about Christmas, in addition to the festive season being a great time to catch up with family and friends - the Christmas/New Year break is for many of us an opportunity to escape and take part in an extended walk. For those new to SBW, I urge you to talk to walks leaders early if you plan to participate. This will not only give you and the leader a chance to evaluate your preparedness to complete the walk, but also provide you with time to update or add to your camping equipment if required.

Not surprisingly though, my trip to Bhutan with three close friends in SBW is the big focus at the moment.

So for a bit of a travelogue in advance of our trip.....

Do you know the origin of the name 'Bhutan'?

Some think it may have evolved from the Sanskrit word 'Bhot-Ant' meaning 'the end of 'Tibet', or from 'Bhut-uttan' meaning 'high land'. Either way the people have been known as Bhutanese since the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Bhutan is said to have one foot in the past and one in the future, with Bhutan's leader's recognising the necessity of being part of the modern world, but realizing too that once their forests and culture are destroyed, they can never be recovered. Lessons no doubt learnt from observing the destruction of much of the natural environment in the West. For this reason the government of Bhutan does not go out of its way to encourage tourism and in fact prohibits independent travelers. Happily more than three people constitutes a 'group', so we four travelers qualify for the visa requirements, yet have been able to plan our own itinerary with the tour company in Bhutan.

An indicator of the dominant Buddhist culture of Bhutan credits the king as stating that he measures his country's prosperity on its 'gross national happiness', NOT its gross national product.

As far as the terrain goes, Bhutan is described as a country of rolling hills and towering crags, with only small patches of cultivation and very little deforestation. It is often compared to Switzerland, not

only because they are similar in size, but also because many parts of Bhutan look like the Swiss Alps, with green hills, houses that look like chalets and snow peaks sticking out of nowhere.

This will mostly be a cultural trip for our little group, peppered however with short walks to the many temples and monuments. This will be a very different holiday - that's for sure.

Hoping to walk with you soon.  
Jan Roberts

## Walks Report from the Walk's Secretary

**David Trinder**



As I write this the Summer Walks Program is in the final stages of development, you should have it your hands by now. It has a good combination of Christmas walks, day walks with swim opportunities, and canyon trips. There are also Coolana toilet construction weekends scheduled for alternate weekends plus the regular Coolana training and maintenance weekends. The toilet is an important project for the Club and will improve the value and usefulness of the site and should encourage an increase in use of the property. If you can assist, Patrick and I will appreciate it greatly.

On the first week of December Jeanne Klovdahl is leading an interesting trip to the wild rivers of Tasmania. On the first weekend Ian Wolf is leading a canyon trip and Nigel Weaver a walk in the Royal National Park with optional swims. On the second weekend Terry Moss is leading a Lilo trip and Greta James, our Secretary, a trip in the lower Blue Mountains.

At Christmas there will be Christmas party and a variety of trips on the south coast, in the Wollangambe and the Snowy Mountains and in Mid January I am taking a group to New Zealand.

There is plenty of variety so contact the leaders and take advantage of their experience.

### Have You Changed Your Address?

If you have changed your address or phone number recently, please contact by phone or email:

**Members: Fran Holland**

**Prospectives: Maurice Smith**

This will ensure that our records show your current address and prevent delay in receiving the magazine each month.



## From The Committee Room

### *A report of proceedings at the Committee meeting 1st November 2006*

- In the absence of the President Jan (departing overseas) Margaret Carey chaired the meeting.
- Inwards correspondence included the following: Advice that a water tank had been donated to use with the new toilet; a letter from NPWS advising of a fox shooting & trapping programme in Kangaroo Valley from 20<sup>th</sup> November to 8<sup>th</sup> December; from Warringah Council confirming reservation of a Manly Dam area on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2007 for our 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations; Approval of the development application for the toilet from Shoalhaven Council.
- The Committee Resolved that the secretary write a letter of thanks for the donation of a water tank for Coolana and it was also resolved that the Secretary write to Patrick James thanking him for the work that he has done in managing the approval process for the Coolana toilet.
- The Treasurer's report was adopted and approval given for the following payments; Accounts for Payment: magazine postage \$410; magazine covers \$962; Coolana maintenance \$415; KNC Hall rentals Oct/Nov \$930; magazine material \$396 Manly Dam hire for 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary \$105.
- The Committee reviewed and accepted the Summer Walks Programme and Social Programme.
- The Secretary will confirm that we have booked the KNC back garden & gallery for Club Christmas Party on 20<sup>th</sup> December.
- Resolved that *Linda Tarrant, Marina Chan, Jacqui Rosier and Dennis Rematch* be admitted as full members.
- The New Members Booklet that had been circulated for review. Subject to some deletion and minor changes the Committee resolved to accept the New Members Booklet and congratulate Maurice on his excellent work in putting it together.
- Melanie Freer has written to the Committee with a proposal that the club develop an environmental policy. The Conservation Secretary will write an article for the magazine which will include Melanie's email and his response to it.
- Jim Callaway reported that 1608 whales were sighted off Cape Solander this year and that the North Head penguin rookery is one of the most active in Australia.
- The 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary sub-Committee reported that they are planning a picnic at Manly Dam on 21<sup>st</sup> October.
- The budget for the toilet (\$10,000) at Coolana was accepted subject to approval of the Coolana Subcommittee.
- It was reported that river and creek water levels in the Blue Mountains walking areas are very low.

## COOLANA REPORT - November 2006

*Gretel Woodward*

Unfortunately I was not able to go to Coolana in October, however there was a maintenance weekend on the 21 & 22<sup>nd</sup> and both Don Finch and Bill Holland reported their activities as follows.

Ros, Don and Paul Kerrigan (visitor) worked at Coolana on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> prior to the advertised weekend and did an amazing amount of work between them. Ros had a fun couple of days poisoning the Wild Tobacco and Moth Vine (main weed problem on the eastern flat) plus some Lantana and Privet which Don had chain sawed using 3.5 litres of fuel. This is a very good indicator of the amount of old timber/dead wattles felled and cut up ready for stacking. Paul fixed the water supply - the usual problem, the person who cleaned the filter last put it in back to front, would any member playing with the water supply please follow the instructions when cleaning the filter?. Paul also fixed the shed, serviced the brush cutter, two mowers, the old mower is no longer usable, re aligned the water tank lid with sealant and replaced the gauze filter for the outlet to stop the mosquitoes.

Bill's team arrived for the weekend and consisted of two prospectives Jodie and Tracey plus visitor Carla. Bill reported that the girls did an excellent job of clearing timber ready for the mowing season and cutting away mistletoe infestation from the fig trees while he continued log removal/stacking, also necessary to get ready for the mowing season.

The construction of the composting toilet is getting to the serious stage and over the next few months there may be, from time to time materials required for the construction stored temporarily in the three sided shed. The shed is used by quite a lot of members as alternative accommodation so if you are planning a trip to Coolana over the next couple of months and wish to use the shed for sleeping, take a tent instead or check with Don Finch to make sure there is enough floor space.

### TOILET UPDATE *Patrick James*



In October the Development Application for the waterless composting toilet at Coolana was approved by Shoalhaven City Council. All we have to do now is build it. You will notice in the Walks Program that a number of working weekends at Coolana have been set for December, January and February. The work actually starts in November with the first working bee for the weekend of 11/12. In most cases we will try to get there on the Friday night so that a full, productive weekend will follow.

To help with the work there is a need for people skilled in different trades; contact David Trinder by phone or email. There is also a need for some jackaroo/jillaroo type people, hewers of wood, drawers of water and carriers of materials. Again contact David Trinder.

If possible the toilet will be finished for the Reunion weekend of 10/11 March. The official opening of the toilet will be part of the SBW 80th birthday celebrations. I have yet to find out just how one officially opens a toilet. Should the first event be one with or without paper. Should we raffle the first event? What if the winner does not have the urge at the required time? What if someone else jumps the

queue? Oh the problems we could face. Don Matthews has been busy composing verse and song to celebrate the toilet and no doubt the Reunion fireside concert in March should be good fun.

**For those of you interested in toilet construction and openings try the following:**

Chevallier, Gabriel (1952) *Clochemerle*, Secker and Warburg, London, SLNSW Call No. N843.912/C527.1/1

Sale, Charles (1929) *The Specialist*, Angus and Robinson, Sydney, Mitchell Library Call no. 817.52/S163.1/1

Sale, Charles (193?) *I'll tell you why* (details not known, follow-up book to 'The Specialist').

**Contacts:** David Trinder, 9943 3388 (home), 0417 113 006, [dt28@tpg.com.au](mailto:dt28@tpg.com.au);

Patrick James 9567 9998 (home & work), 040 904 1515, [pjames28@bigpond.net.au](mailto:pjames28@bigpond.net.au)

**COOLANA WISH LIST***David Trinder*

As you can see elsewhere in The Sydney Bushwalker we now have Development Consent for the toilet. The next step is to build it. I need a small number of skilled people to help in one or more of the six stages of construction. I also need some unskilled people to lift and carry. It will not all be hard work. There will be plenty of time to enjoy some of the weekend.

The stages of the construction are below. The skilled workers will know what is required for each stage. I will be there to supervise and instruct if you are uncertain about your skills level.

- Stage 1, Bulk excavation, footing excavation, formwork and reinforcement
- Stage 2, Pouring Concrete
- Stage 3, Blockwork, Stonework
- Stage 4, Floor, wall and roof framing and flooring
- Stage 5, Cladding
- Stage 6, Completion



COOLANA

To do the job a petrol powered concrete mixer and a (1500 or 2000 watt) generator are required. If any member has this equipment to borrow it would be greatly appreciated. This would save us the expense of hiring and help to maintain our budget. And as Christmas is nearly here the last items on the Wish List are the big ones; during the construction there is a continuing need to move tools and materials down the hill at Coolana. Is there a Santa Clause among the 500 SBW member with a spare 4WD vehicle with tow bar and trailer that could be left at Coolana for some weeks?

## Money Money Money Money - Help Build The Coolana Toilet

The site has been cleared - approvals received and construction of the new toilet is about to start.

However, it will cost in the vicinity of \$10,000

We have already received some very generous donations to assist with this cost but need more.

Are you able to help us to fund this very important facility?

Donations of any size would be very welcome.

Please send in your donation, with cheques made out to "The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc" and addressed to:

**The Coolana Toilet Fund"**  
The Sydney Bush Walkers Inc  
PO Box 431 Milsons Point 1565

## Editor's Message



Due to time and space constraints the Editor's Message was omitted from last month's edition, so here is this months. I enjoyed reading about Kenn Clacher's climb of Mount Fuji in Japan which is on pages 12 - 15 as well as the other eventful trips by Richard Darke and Mark Dabbs. In 1992 I assisted members of the Springwood Bushwalking Club who were doing maintenance work on Valentines Hut in the Kosciuszko National Park. They spoke of Ted Winter, a friend of theirs who wrote poetry about the huts and life in the snowy mountains from his travels as a cross country skier. During the maintenance weekend the Springwood bushwalkers recited some of Ted Winter's poetry and I thought he captured the atmosphere of the snowies so well. I hope you enjoy reading his poems in this edition.

**Pam Campbell, Editor**

## TRACKS & ACCESS REPORT - October 2006 - Wilf Hilder

**BLUE MOUNTAINS NP** - Narrowneck Peninsula is an ongoing embarrassment to me - Jim Smith's new book "The Last of the Cox's River Men - Ben Esgate" - corrects my long promoted name Dixons Ladders (recently destroyed). This applied to the steel ladders erected by the Public Works Department mid 1964 on the site of the original Dicksons Ladder erected by legendary miner William Dickson in the 1890's and destroyed in 1924 (see Brian Fox's Blue Mountains Geographical Dictionary). On the other hand Jim Barrett has reminded me that the miner's ladders at Castle Head once existed in spite of my denials and that a cut stone step was found by a Catholic Bushwalkers Club party many years ago on the cliff edge - my sincere apologies Jim. Local legend claimed that Katoomba tradesmen used to take miners food orders out to Castle Head and lower these provisions on ropes to the miners below. The stone chimneys of the camp (men only) can still be seen along the tramway tracks and in the nearby bush at Ruined Castle. The married men's camp was at the foot of the present Scenic Railway.

The information on the internet about the Katoomba - Ruined Castle and Glen Shale mines tramways is seriously flawed. It is a rehashed version of Giff Eardley's writings in "The Shale Railways of NSW". Giff got it wrong too. Quite a few field trips later I think I have finally got it right. The horse tramway never ran around the Mount Solitary end of the Ruined Castle. Graham Holbeach (Sutherland Bushwalking Club) found the tramway on the southern side of Ruined Castle and I found the ruins of the connecting tramway tunnel under the saddle on the Castle Head side of Ruined Castle. Please go and check it out if you don't believe me.

I note that Ninian Melville's 1934 map, a redrawing of Myles Dunphy's 1930 Megalong Valley, Cox River and Narrowneck Peninsula map shows TARRO'S LADDER but does not mark or name DUNPHY PASS under Glenraphael Head (then unnamed) despite Myles's claim of having discovered the pass in January 1914.

**WHAITE'S PASS** on the low Gangerang Range is better known today as Bungalooloo Spur although both names are shown on Dunphy's Gangerang map. This pass is named after Harry Whaite (Warrigal Club) and has no connection with the Whaites family of Katoomba despite their ambitious claims. See Jim Barrett's "Place Names of the Blue Mountains and Burrangorang Valley" (page 56).

**JENOLAN CAVES RESERVES.** The NPWS is proposing to close a number of walking tracks. First it was the camping area, now it is some walking tracks, what's next?

**NATTAI RIVER.** Malcolm Hughes, secretary of the Southern Highland Bushwalkers has advised that the owner of the Mt. Flora property will not allow walkers to pass through his property to reach or leave the Nattai River via Stockyard Creek. The signs pointing to Mt. Flora will be removed. Perhaps someone should tell the landholder we each carry two insurance policies rather than none.

**WOLLEMI NP.** A recent Sydney Morning Herald article written by controversial journalist James Woodford reported further discoveries of an Aboriginal art site and engravings in Wollemi. This sensational article gives no details of the location, but will encourage more people to search for Aboriginal relics and this may lead to despoliation of the sites and make life difficult for future anthropologists.

**SYDNEY HARBOUR** - Glebe Point. Following the transfer of public lands at Glebe to a developer, the historic Walter Burley Griffin incinerator has been restored and a foreshore track built to link Forsyth Street (near Glebe High School) and Cook Street, on Blackwattle Bay. Locals claim that following recent land acquisition by Sydney City Council has enabled Council to build a link track from Blackwattle Park to Glebe Point. This now means you can walk along the foreshores from Glebe Point parklands to Forsyth Street, Blackwattle Bay.

### Membership List for 2007

In order that the Membership List for 2007 is up to date, could you please check the current 2006 list and make sure all your contact details are correct. The new list is prepared for printing next month so please post any changes to Membership Secretary, SBW, PO Box 431, Milsons Point. 1565, or email to:

**fernband@bigpond.com** as soon as possible.

**Fran Holland**



**CONSERVATION NOTES****Bill Holland****CONSERVATION**

Global warming is in the headlines. Even the Prime Minister admits there may be a problem and that action needs to be taken. We can wait for our politicians to agree/disagree about what should be done or we can take individual actions that, whilst small, can have in aggregate a significant effect. Therefore it is pleasing to see that a Club member has written to the Committee asking that we take action to lessen our impact on the environment. This is her letter:

*"Could you please add to the next SBW Committee Meeting the topic of whether or not we should have an Environmental Policy, and if so what that should be.*

*Such a policy could include things such as:*

**Reduction in waste**

*Assumption that all newsletters to be on-line except where requested and a penalty fee paid for the paper version.*

**Public transport**

*Public transport options be included on all bushwalks wherever possible and encouraged by the leader. This is only occasionally done and there is safety in groups. Perhaps we could aim for a percentage of walks per program to be organised around public transport.*

**Car pooling**

*This is generally done already, but doesn't often suit people like myself who live on the outskirts of the city, which is why safe public transport options are important.*

**Campfires**

*Discussion and guidelines on when camp fires are/are not appropriate having regard for their appropriateness. Are we doing a good thing by clearing out dead wood or a bad thing by polluting the environment and encouraging others to do so?*

*My motivation is ensuring that SBW act responsibly by setting an example to all members and other clubs in doing what we can to reduce waste and lessen our impact on the environment, in particular global warming.*

*Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the meeting to present this topic as I travel to/from the city by public transport after work and am concerned about traveling home late at night by train on my own. However, I would be grateful if you could encourage support of this policy and let me know the outcome.*

*Kind regards,  
Melanie Freer"*

My recommendation to the Committee in regards to the request for an Environmental Policy was that our Club's objectives as stated in the Constitution offered sufficient guidance to enable us to clearly see our responsibilities to the environment and we should avoid narrowing our objectives by attempting detailed definitions. This was accepted by the Committee.

The specific actions stated by Melanie are open to debate. An on-line magazine will only lessen waste if members do not download to their printer and print on only one side of the paper. A longstanding club policy has been that the magazine should be issued free to members. Charging a penalty fee for a paper version magazine would contravene this and in any case an overwhelming majority of members have selected the Australia Post mailed copy as their preference. A survey earlier this year showed only 113 members (approx 20%) in favor of an electronic version.

Increased use of public transport and car pooling should certainly be encouraged and campfires should certainly be limited, particularly in current hot conditions. Many national parks have Plans of Management that severely restrict or forbid campfires.

I would like to thank Melanie for taking the time to write of her concern for the environment and urge all of us to think of how we can lessen our footprint on this planet.

## The Mid Week Walkers

After a busy and successful year we now have a break from our extended mid-week activities due to the holiday season and hot summer weather.

Looking back, we have had an active year with good attendances. We went to:

- Berrara beach cottage in February
- Stayed at a lodge in Jindabyne in March
- Rode our bikes around Canberra in April
- With more bike riding at Robyn's farm in May
- Visited Kia-Ora, an organic farm and winery near Coffs Harbour in August
- Stayed in a cabin at Wombeyan caves in September
- Stayed in a NPWS residence and walked in New England National Park in October
- And we will spend an active week at Brian Holden's house at Stanwell Park this month.

All of these events were Monday to Friday (5 days) with comfortable accommodation and optional easy/medium walking/riding.

Next year we would like to add some different events and would welcome your suggestions. I am thinking of a few days camping at Newnes; possibly combining it with a weekend for those who have to work - say, Friday to following Tuesday ie 5 days including the weekend.

Another idea in this direction is five days at Kanangra at Boyd Crossing. Both venues offer good day walks and splendid scenery. It would be great to have new leaders offering their names for these events. There may also be an opportunity to visit the northern NSW national parks over a two week period staying two or three days in each park.

We have received suggestions for other venues for our cottage/cabin stays and will look at scheduling these next year.

However, our day walks continue so here are walks planned for December and the Christmas/New Year season:

**Tuesday 5 December: Harbour Walk (evening)**

Meet at Milsons Point (6pm) for an easy walk past Lunar Park and around the bay for dinner (BYO) on the grass at Waverton Park. Watch the boats go by and the harbour lights.

Grade: (Easy)

**22 December to 2 January: Christmas/New Year at Coolana**

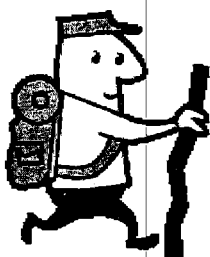
Come to the Club's property at Coolana in the beautiful Kangaroo Valley and join others for relaxing days. Come for any, some or all of the days. Celebrate the New Year in SBW style. Your choice of easy walks, quiet reading, swimming and canoeing. No need to phone.

**Wednesday 10 January: Evening Walk (Before Beach Barbecue)**

This walk starts at 4 pm and is planned to finish at Balmoral Beach at around 6 pm in time to join the others for the beach barbecue. The length of the walk and route depends on the heat of the day. Beach swimming is an option Grade: (Easy)

**Tuesday 16 January: Bondi and beyond (Evening)**

Bondi Beach (6pm) - Clovelly to Coogee with optional return. An easy walk on a summer's evening along the coastal pathway followed by dinner (fish and chips or BYO) in a beachside reserve. Grade: (Easy)



The Mid-Week Walkers are an informal group of SBW members who have time to spare for mid-week activities, some of which are shown on the Walks Programme and some organised at short notice and advised by monthly newsletter. These can include easy to medium walks, perhaps some cycling or even a little bird watching as well.

If you would like to receive our monthly newsletter or join us on an activity please phone me on 9484 6636 or email [billholland@bigpond.com](mailto:billholland@bigpond.com)

## Mid Week Walking in the New England National Park 9 - 13 October

**Leader:** Bill Holland

**Participants:** Fran Holland, Don Brooks, Lorraine Bloomfield, Steve Bradbury, Jeanne Klovdahl, Gerry Leitner, Liz Wills.

It was a cool October day when the group of those who are lucky enough to be able to walk during the week as well as weekends met at Murrurundi for lunch, then set off for our destination at Banksia Point in the New England National Park. As we entered the National Park light rain commenced - now we are in the middle of the worse drought in history, it couldn't rain this week. Our spirits, not dampened as we unpacked in the drizzle, were elevated as we all sipped red grape juice for happy hour.

Our accommodation at the "Residence" was very comfortable indeed and as we climbed into bed that night the thought of tent and thermarest was far away.

Next morning the rain had cleared but the day was cool, over cast and wet underfoot - not the best conditions for walking in rain forest. Our fearless leader suggested that we travel to Dorrigo and spend time in the Dorrigo Rainforest Centre. This of course led us to do an extended rainforest walk featured as part of the Centre but Huey was kind and favoured us with sunshine. The Centre is maintained in pristine condition with no evidence of the thousands of tourists who must pass through each year.

Day three dawned bright and sunny and we set off from our cabin on a circular walk via Tree Fern Valley, Wright's Lookout and Cascades Walk. We were treated to lyrebirds, rock orchids in flower and a variety of spectacular scenery, flora and fauna in a relatively small area.

Day four dawned sunny again with the promise for the temperature to be rising. We drove to Cathedral Rock National Park where we climbed Cathedral Rock before lunch. The track to the summit is well defined with the ascent gradual and not too taxing - some made it right to the very top, others of us woozed out!!

In the afternoon we visited the look out points at Ebor Falls and Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. Sadly time did not allow us to explore both these areas to the extent that we all would have liked. The canyon formed by the Oxley Wild River is one of the most spectacular I have seen and is definitely now on my list of places which are a "must" to re visit.

The next morning all were up early for the long trip back to Sydney. Most of the party detoured to visit our property at Timor, 50 Kms out of Scone, where we

are now living. Don had delicious fresh bread baked for lunch. After lunch and a quick look about the property, we bade everyone farewell as they continued the drive back to Sydney.

This was my first trip with the mid week walkers, having only recently retired. I had a wonderful time. The company was great, we had lots of laughs and gourmet food was washed down well with yet more red grape juice - we each took turns to supply the main meal/desserts.

For those able to spend a week away from work, a mid week walk with Bill is certainly recommended. However, if you have thoughts of loosing weight or cleansing the liver, (these thoughts would be bordering on "impure") you may be disappointed!

Many thanks Bill and Fran for organising a great week.

Liz Wills

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## MYALL LAKES KAYAKING 3-7 October

*by Mark Dabbs (Captain)*

This trip went with 4 participants: Melanie Freer, Ken Collins, Patrick McNaught and Mark Dabbs(Captain). Tuesday was a casual start with a short afternoon trip out from Mungo Brush camp site. All went well without the captain - who was delayed due to work.

Wednesday saw us off at the ungodly hour of 8.00am in beautiful calm, sunny conditions. Other than heavy kayaks we made good progress travelling at about 6km/hr. Very sedate and easy. The black swans were a marvel to see along with their young. There were hundreds. Our final resting place (Sheely Point) was on the main Myall Lake about an hours paddle past Violet hill. Ken displayed a very relaxed look when he paddles. Never seems to puff, pant nor sweat. He kept insisting the rest of us had it easy in our Mirage Kayaks while he was in his sturdy plastic Tasman Express. Yes Ken, your kayak was the heaviest!

After a pleasant night's rest, with full moon, we were off again at 8.30. A short distance out and Patrick decided a slow day was in order so left the rest of us to contend with the increasing wind and white caps. This involved a paddle around a few Islands on Myall Lakes - including Bird Island which was just that. Very small, rocky and covered in birds and their poo.

The trip back to camp saw a few white caps caught and a few white knuckles holding the sides of the kayaks. A great return. Melanie put us all to shame with a swim/wash in the lake. Not to be outdone, and to practise a few re-entry methods in his kayak, the captain got a little wet also. Cold .... no, freezing more like it!! But the sun was out and the water was clear. The area was absolutely fantastic. No matter how hard the captain tried he could not get the crew out for a moonlight paddle. Pikers. Maybe the dingos howling put them off?

Our return trip to Mungo Brush was very different to our outbound voyage. There was some sun at times but the wind was up and working hard to slow us down. Most of the way back was a head wind .... of course!! Patrick showed us all how to ride the kayak on the side yet stay up. Great balance there!! The waves kept rising, the wind increasing (Not quite to the standard of the Sunday to come but that is another trip - not mine).

Much use was made of lee shores to buffer the wind. However our trip across Henry's Point was most interesting. The captain was in the lead and used the force of the wind to drift him across to the other side while keeping the kayak pointing to windward. The

waves certainly cleaned the tops of our kayaks. Melanie seemed to make it all look so easy. With her fast propeller paddle she kept leaving us in her wake. It was a long day and great to be back at Mungo Brush.

Melanie had a party to attend next day (she didn't invite us) so after a hearty dinner of Pizza, at tea Gardens she headed off. Not without an adventurous return - what with an enormous spider trying to feast on her while flying down the expressway, then a semi trailer trying to tear the door off her car. Exciting return trip Melanie.

Our final day saw us on the water again with no wind, sunny sky and perfect temperature. We paddled around the Broadwater for the morning, lunched on the far side then headed back to pack up and leave. But not without washing the kayaks down with fresh water and a bit of spit and polish.

If you plan on tripping around Myall Lake do not forget to take water - there is none available.

Thanks guys for a great trip. Must organise another.

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## Why Wilderness?

Should there still be found an island, upon which man has never trod,  
A mountain or a valley known only to the god,  
'Twould surely rate as wilderness and be of interest to preserve  
But to claim this of the Snowy is rather quite absurd.

Where'er you go, an observant eye should not fail to see,  
More than a hundred years of history recorded carelessly -  
An axe-blazed tree, a sawn log, a cairn, a track, a rut,  
A cast horse-shoe, a fence or two, should I even mention *hut*.

Or perhaps a hillside contoured in an oriental way,  
As pig-tailed past inhabitants separated gold from clay,  
And mullock heaps and shafts and disused machinery,  
An exotic tree that has survived to contrast its greenery.

And let's ignore the ski-resorts, the commercial activity,  
Accept the S.M.A. development, its value we agree.  
So tolerate the aqueducts, the dams and powerlines,  
But let's remove all other things that man has left behind.

*Rip down the huts*, the fences, and any kind of signs  
Remove the cast off horse-shoes and any signs of mines,  
Fill in the shafts, blow up the dam the Chinese did once build,  
Three miles from old Kiandra, and the graves below the hill.

They must surely be consistent,  
And I hope in time they may  
I fear they'll just start with the *huts*,

And then call it a day -  
And having made our touring land, a hazardous *hut free* park  
They'll sell a franchise to some guy, some commercial hungry shark,  
To build touring huts and lodges, perhaps even build towns,  
When money talks - 'Gaw blimey!!' You know the way it goes.

Source: 'Mountain Verse'  
A collection of Snowy  
Mountain poems  
by TED WINTER



## WILLIS'S WALKABOUTS

# Bushwalking in Kakadu

### Have your say!

Many members of the **Sydney Bushwalkers** have done walks in Kakadu. Many more may wish to do so in the future.

Where they will or will not be permitted to walk and what they will or will not be permitted to do will be determined by a major review of bushwalking in the park.

Most of Kakadu is out of bounds. Bushwalkers are restricted to certain approved routes, the number of which has been dropping. New restrictions have been placed on day walks. Carrying a satellite phone might become a requirement on long walks. Penalties may apply to those who ignore these restrictions. What next?

I (Russell Willis) was recently appointed to the Kakadu Tourism Consultative Committee as the first and only representative of the bushwalking community. As a founder, past president and life member of the Darwin Bushwalking Club and as the sole bushwalking tour operator in the park, I want to see better conditions for all bushwalkers. Comments from **Sydney Bushwalkers**, either as a club or as individuals, would help me ensure that things get better rather than worse.

[www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au](http://www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au)

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## **A LEISURELY EVENING STROLL, WITH COMPANY** *Kenn Clacher*

I recently went for a leisurely evening stroll. A few other people came along - a few thousand others.

I had ventured to travel around Japan with my son Steve who was winding up a year there with a trip around parts of the country. When I volunteered to accompany him little did I realise that part of the itinerary was a ramble up Mt Fuji at a most unsociable hour. Mt Fuji (Fuji-san to the Japanese) is the highest mountain in Japan at 3,778m (Mt Kosciuszko is 2,228m). Fuji-san is a striking mountain of classic volcanic shape, towering over and dominating the surrounding region from all points of the compass. An unsurprising feature of Fuji-san is that the weather on and around it can be volatile. Typically it is visible on only around 60 days per year from the surrounding plain. There may (or may not) be better visibility on top where there is a chance of being above the cloud. It last erupted in 1707 but is still classified as active.

It is said that the Japanese feel they must climb Fuji-san at least once in their lifetime. The more conscientious do the climb at night (the fashionable time) so as to see the sun rise from the top - the object of the whole exercise. There is a designated 'climbing season' between 1 July and 31 August. The season is limited to these two months as this is the warmest part of the year and climbers are least likely to encounter snow. During the season commercial mountain huts are open and special buses run from Tokyo and rail stations and towns around Fuji to the mountain.

There are at least four recognised routes to climb Fuji-san. Each route is divided into ten stages, with the bottom and top of each stage marked by a 'Station'. Fortunately there is a road to Station 5 on all of the routes, meaning that one has to climb under one's own steam only around 1,400 - 2,400m depending on the route chosen. The guidebooks all encourage ascending from Station 1 in order to better appreciate the beautiful forest on Fuji-san's lower slopes and to claim to have truly climbed the mountain.

The impressive summit altitude brings altitude sickness into play. So unless one is acclimatised to these altitudes one has to climb relatively slowly (not difficult on a 1,400m - 2,400m climb). But at those altitudes it gets a bit cold, even in the climbing season, so one has to move at a reasonably brisk rate to keep warm. The result is that there is a fine line between going too fast and too slow.

We chose to use the most popular route, the Yoshidaguchi Trail, which is on the northeastern side. As we did not have a lot of time to spare in our packed itinerary we planned to start from Station 5. All the guidebooks suggested it would take around 6 - 8 hours to get to the top. Mindful of the potential for altitude

sickness we allowed a leisurely 6 hours for the 6km. Sunrise was at 4:50 a.m. so we decided to leave Station 5 at 10:30 p.m. on a Sunday night.

We boarded the bus in Tokyo (elevation perhaps 25m) at 5:00 p.m. Next stop Station 5 on the Yoshidaguchi Trail, elevation 2,400m. At Station 5 we were expecting a busy township with things humming, but found the cafés and guesthouses shutting down as we arrived at around 7:45 p.m. We had been expecting to get a good feed and lots of snacks at Station 5 but by the time we sorted out somewhere to leave our gear (we were continuing on to Kyoto the following day) the cafés had closed and the only food available was at a souvenir shop where we bought up the last stock of filling food.

There is no surface water on Fuji-san and the only water available comes in bottles. To counter the altitude problem we had been busy during the day hydrating ourselves with water and filled up our water bottles at Station 5 with 1½ - 2 litres each to avoid having to buy water higher up. While hydrating seemed like a good idea at the time it had some potentially costly consequences, as shall be revealed.

We sat in the souvenir shop at Station 5 while people wandered in and out, all looking fit and capable of successfully completing the climb without problems. There were a few foreigners, mostly European and American. Many of the climbers purchased a walking stick (more like a telegraph pole, long, thick and heavy) at the souvenir shop. I resisted the enticement as I didn't fancy carrying extra weight. Water, warm clothing, waterproof parka, breakfast, snacks and camera were enough for me.

By 10 o'clock the shop was pretty quiet. It seemed that everyone that was going to climb Fuji-san had started. Did they know something that we didn't? Finally, by about 10:10 we wandered off; the shop was closing anyway and there was nowhere else to sit around out of the cold wind.

The first part of the climb is actually a traverse of around a kilometre which has some downhill stretches. Because there was no steep climbing involved we exceeded our self-imposed speed limit on this part of the track, which was wide, firm and well-formed. Part of this traverse was guarded by a concrete wall and roof to protect walkers from rock and mud slides. There was also a recorded message in four languages, including English, issuing the usual warnings about adequate clothing, food, fitness etc. Soon we came to Station 6, where a couple of Rangers handed us a sketch map in Japanese of the route which we found more confusing than informative.

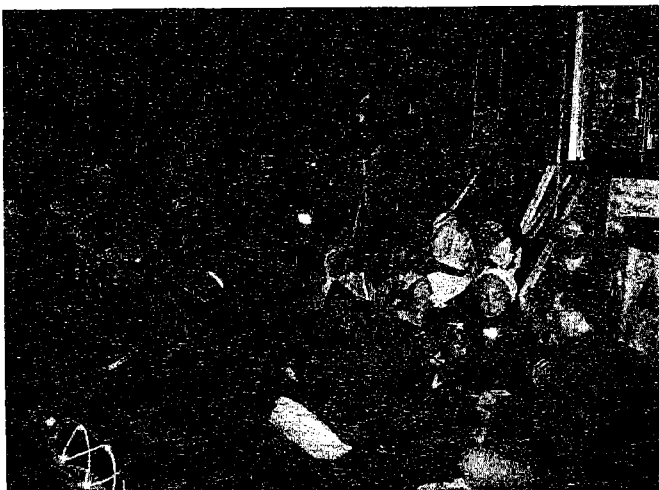
It appeared however that this was the place where the real climb started. From here the slope started at 25°

and gradually increased to 30° at the top. To accommodate this the track zigzags all the way to the top. There is an up track and a down track, with the up track having a more gentle grade, but much more frequent hairpin bends than the down track. The reason for separate tracks would soon become clear.

So far we had not seen many other climbers but as we slowly made our way upward we encountered more, both coming from behind and making their way ahead of us. They were easy to see from the light of their torches. An apparently endless line of lights was snaking its way up the mountain and disappeared into the cloud. The zigzag formation made for easy going. Steve and I had to take it in turns to remind the other not to go too fast on the good track.

An hour or so after Station 6 we came to Station 7 at around 2650m. Now we were getting to the "mountain inns" where one can (at an hourly rate) rest by a warm fire or even sleep on the floor for a few hours (at around A\$60) and buy drinks and food. The inns were usually located at the stations and were so positioned that they were right next to the track and had a handy serving bench to tempt the climbers. The lee side of the inns also provided some shelter from the wind which was getting fresher and colder as we climbed. This shelter was utilised to don items of warm gear to fend off the cold.

The higher we climbed the more people there were, all pressing on uphill. Occasionally the track steepened where it encountered some lava outcrops where hands helped to maintain balance and to gain height. While the track was wide it was composed of volcanic ash. As it zigzagged up, it was cut into the uphill side of the slope. In some places the cut was 2 meters or more high. It didn't take long for the climbers to work out that the ash was more compacted, and so easier going, on the uphill side of the track. Off the compacted part it was soft underfoot and hard going, like trying to walk up a sandhill. So people tended to walk on the compacted part and formed a single file.



*The crowd at Station 6*

There were now enough people to form a long continuous line in several places. We encountered big groups of 20 or more, mostly with a leader holding a conspicuous red "Star Wars" type light. With the long lines, any person stopping for a rest held up everyone else in the line. But the track was wide enough to pass, taking care to still walk slowly enough not to invite altitude sickness.

So far we had been very lucky with the weather. As our bus was approaching Fuji-san on Sunday evening it was hidden by the usual blanket of cloud. Looking up from Station 5 in the evening gloom we could see some way up, but mostly the mountain was hidden by cloud. But by the time we passed Station 7 the cloud cleared, or at least did not extend any higher. As we climbed further we left the cloud behind and below and we could actually see bright stars, not a common sight in Japan in my experience.

Station 8, at around 3200m, was passed. The number of climbers continued to increase and the wind grew steadily colder and stronger. We could see down over the lights of the mountain huts below and the climbers behind us, while ahead the line of lights snaked ever upwards, seemingly without end. We were carrying a LED torch and an incandescent one, with spare batteries for both. Even at the bottom the LED torch was adequate for the two of us. As the numbers around us increased the lights of the crowd lit up the track like a Ginza street and the illumination provided by others' torches was more than adequate.

We plodded on past Station 8.5 and more inns and up to Station 9 at around 3,550m. It was only about 2:30 a.m. and we were well ahead of schedule despite our slow pace. According to the guidebooks it was only about an hour to the top from there so we sheltered there from the wind for about an hour or so before starting the final stage. This would have us arriving at the top at around 4:30, not too early and not too late.

When we resumed our climb our strategy seemed to backfire. Above Station 9 the track was jammed with people. The tightly-packed lights snaked up the mountain but seemed not to be moving. The track was also not as wide as lower down the mountain. It took some ingenuity to maintain our slow but steady progress without stepping over the rope, chains or plastic strips that defined the sides of the track. At our greatly reduced rate of progress there was a distinct possibility that we wouldn't get to the top by sunrise. But we went on, squeezing through a gap here and a gap there as the line seemed happy to stop and wait for the person ahead to move. No doubt the altitude, the big climb and time of night were all taking their toll.

By about 3:00 a.m. we could see a glow in the sky to the east. We speculated that this was the lights of Tokyo, just 100km to the east. As we inched our way up the glow was growing brighter. Either Tokyo was heading our way or the sun was making its approach evident earlier than we had anticipated. This gave us more concern that we wouldn't be able to reach the top before sunrise.

Many of those in the queue seemed to be quite happy to stop. Many were availing themselves of oxygen that was sold at Station 5 (and higher) in cylinders the size of deodorant cans. A side-effect of this was that when they put their telegraph pole-like walking sticks down they formed a virtual hurdle course which had to be negotiated carefully to avoid tripping. And all the while the glow to the east continued getting brighter. By soon after 4 o'clock it was bright enough to turn off the torches.

Eventually we could see the reason for the slow progress. There was a steepish section where hands as well as feet came into play. We were able to get up this part quickly and easily, trampling through and over fellow climbers, and once this was done the line ahead was moving quickly. The last fifty metres or so of elevation was accomplished in quick time as we arrived at the top at around 4:30. From the top a blanket of cloud stretched out well below us and the sky above was brilliantly clear.

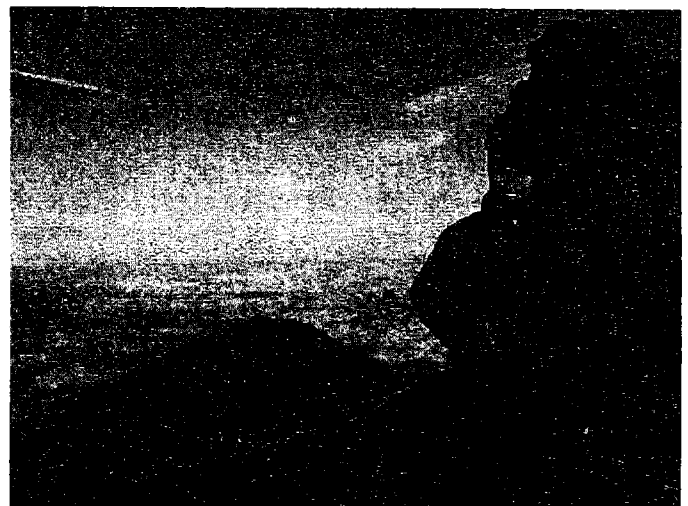
On arriving at the top we had to walk some way around the edge of the crater to get out of the crowd to find a good vantage point. We sat down and got our cameras set up to record the sunrise. Soon the countdown began. You could feel the anticipation amongst the big crowd lining the crater. The horizon glowed ever more brightly and then at around 4:45 a golden pinpoint of light appeared. As the assembled crowd cheered the pinpoint rapidly grew bigger and the sun climbed through and then above the clouds.



*Part of the crowd lining the rim*

The big crowd seemed transfixed as the sun rose higher. The clouds below reflected the golden glow as it rose and lit up the crowd at the top. As it rose further one could feel the warmth. We sat there for some time, enjoying the spectacle of the sun climbing and feeling at one with the crowd.

Around 30 minutes after sunrise we went for a walk around the crater. The main crater is impressive, at least 100m deep and 700m in diameter. There are a few subsidiary craters also. On the western side of the rim the sun was casting a shadow on the clouds below, the classic volcanic shape making an awesome sight. Further on we got to the highest point of Fujisan where there is a weather station. There the obligatory photos were taken as we were briefly Kings of the Japanese castle. Then to complete the circuit we continued on to the rim village, near where we reached the rim on our climb. This is a collection of shrines, mountain huts and shops to cater for the hordes now thronging around.



*Steve and Fuji's shadow*

At this point an uncomfortable reality began imposing itself. As mentioned earlier, we had hydrated well on the previous day. We also set out with over 1½ litres of water each. I hadn't drunk much on the way up, as the combination of a slow pace and cold meant that I hadn't even raised a puff or a sweat. But what goes in must come out. Because of the crowds, there was absolutely no chance to hide behind a bush to relieve one's self. There were no bushes anyway. So it was necessary to use the toilets located at the stations and at the top. Because of the total absence of surface water on the mountain all water has to be carried up from the base. This not only meant that a 500ml bottle of drinking water increased in price from around A\$2 at Station 5 to \$5 at Station 10 (the top), but there was a charge to use the toilets. It cost about A\$0.50 to visit the toilet at Station 5, but a whopping



A\$2.50 to spend a penny at Station 10. There was no choice however. You had to pay your money and take your chance.

By around 6:15 a.m. it was time to start heading down. We joined the throng on the down track (different from the up track). Near the top there were frozen stalactites of water on overhanging rock faces, now melting in the bright warm morning sun. The down track was quite different from the up, with higher grade and longer distances between hairpin bends. It was also comprised entirely of very loose ash and other volcanic material. Each step stirred up a cloud of dust. We could also see in daylight the stations and the mountain inns that we had passed on the way up and seemed impossibly crowded with people. Now they were merely busy and looked isolated on the vast face of the mountain.



*Fuji Warrior*

Occasionally on the way down we saw reminders of the hazards of the enterprise: people being half-carried, people apparently affected by the altitude discreetly vomiting by the side of the track. The track was much wider and the pace much quicker on the way down. All the while we were warmed by the sun. There were regular stops to remove items of warm gear. How lucky we had been with the weather! The

cloud was also not as thick as at dawn. It took only three hours to get back to Station 5. There it was busy with another horde of people arriving to make the climb.

We caught a bus to the nearest town of Kawaguchi where we found an onsen (Japanese bath house). There we settled ourselves in the bath with a couple of fellow climbers and gazed out through the picture window over the imposing spectacle of Fuji towering over the town through the clouds. Apart from the tiredness of not sleeping, we were infused with the warm glow of having completed a really enjoyable walk, with a few companions. For anyone visiting Japan in the climbing season, it is highly recommended for a leisurely evening stroll.

### **Tour or Perish!** (Tourer or Perisher?)

- A for the Alpine country we know
- B for its Bogongs so splendid with snow
- C for Curruthers eroded and bare
- D for the Dargals, have you ever been there?
- E is for Ethridge, up Seaman's way
- F is for Finlay's where few skiers stay
- G for Gungartan's Peaks in a row
- H for those Huts miles away from a tow
- I for the Inkbottle by Toolong's flank
- J for Jagungal, a bogong of rank
- K for the Kerries where no skiers play
- L for the Leatherbarrel, sloping away
- M is for Mawson's, where often we'd go
- N for the New Chums we've led 'cross the snow
- O for the Old Mare, so grey and serene
- P for the Perisher, where stretch pants reign supreme
- Q for their question, 'Abroad have you been'
- R for the Ramshead from chairlifts now seen
- S for the Summit where skiing is late
- T is for Townsend, Twynam and Tate
- U for the Unnamed places still calling
- V for the Valentine, roaring and falling
- W for Whites, now much closer at hand
- X for the eXuberance of our happy band
- Y is for Youngal, oft shrouded in mist
- Z is for Zeal and our Zest for the Test.

**Source: 'Mountain Verse' A collection of Snowy Mountains poems by TED WINTER**

## WALKS NOTES Barry Wallace

Walks notes covering the interval 11 May 2006 to 08 June 2006

The weekend of 13, 14 May 06 saw John Pozniak and a party of 10 out on his "full moon over the Buddawangs" walk, equipped with what appears to have been more than a fair representation of the state of photographic art. Saturday was fine and bright as they set off along the old, and by now seriously overgrown, 4WD track toward Ngatyang Falls. This latter turned out to be down to dribble status but its outlook, including as it does views away toward Pigeon House Mountain, provided the first of many photo opportunities. Indeed the outward journey developed into quite a sedate affair due to the numerous photo stops. The cliff-top campsite provided a memorable sunset followed by the dramatic full moon that rendered the Clyde Valley, Byangee Walls and The Castle as a ghostly vista. One suspects that the mulled wine and plethora of culinary delights of the memorable happy hour may have contributed to the effect. Sunday's return was by way of the Mount Bushwalker track. The marine bi-valve fossil sighted below Gadara Point at a location around 565 metres above present sea level led to some intriguing speculation. There was also a frisson of excitement toward the end of the walk when the party encountered a feisty baby tiger snake that found itself heavily photographed for its trouble. As 'twas mothering Sunday the group conscience; and perhaps inclination; led to the abandoning of the local services club and a precipitate return to home and hearth.

Ian Thorpe led a Saturday walk out from Waratah Ridge into the pagoda country that weekend with a party of 4. Conditions were perfect for walking as they headed East for a bit over a kilometre from the locked gate on Wartatah Ridge before swinging to the South and down a succession of loosely connected pagodas. This yielded frequent impressive views and equally frequent back-tracks to find the way through. An overhang in a gully to the East caught their attention so they diverted from the planned route to investigate, finding a rather nice camp-cave not too far from water. It has been marked for future trips into this area. Creek crossings and minor cliff lines engaged the attention until they finally ascended a spur onto a ridge that finished with views into Bungleboori Creek and South to the Mini Arthurs. This provided the spot for a pleasant lunch while one of the walkers spent the time with a video and still cameras catching the various views. Lunch done they pushed on to Lonely Mountain for more views then North and West to another ridge that offered views to yet another ridge away to the West with interesting looking passes through a low cliff line on its Eastern flanks. Time was fleeting however, so they returned at a brisk pace to Warratah Ridge and the car.

Husband Tony also led injured Gail Crichton's Sunday walk out from Carlons Farm that weekend with a good group of undisclosed size. The day was one of the most perfect, and the Wild Dog Mountains provided a glorious backdrop for the trip. Sunday of that weekend saw Nigel Weaver and a party of 9 out on his part exploratory walk from Cowan to Brooklyn. Departing Cowan at around 0900h under clearing clouds, they first descended to Jerusalem Bay for the pleasant water views and then ridge-hopped Govett Ridge into Campbells Creek, only to climb again to the fire-trail along the ridge above the railway line. At the crown of Porto Ridge they headed out into the trackless void in an Easterly direction and found a great lunch spot with superb views North to the Hawkesbury. They could even see the old railway dam from there as well. Lunch done, they continued along Porto Ridge to the highest point and found a diamond python (or was it a tree-snake) in a sapling. From here they headed North on the ridge to a champagne viewing spot to partake of champagne chocolates, or so they said. The views to either side continued to be a feature as they progressed along the ridge to the saddle above Dead Horse Bay. From there it was a short walk into Brooklyn for some well earned refreshments to conclude a great day's walking.

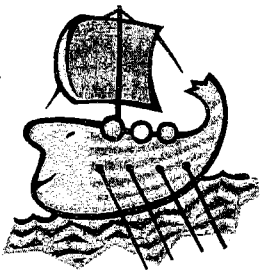
Tony Crichton was also out the following weekend, 20, 21 May 06 with a fast moving party of 5 on his walk out from Kanangra walls into the Kowmung. Conditions remained fine with some cloud on the Saturday and perfect sunny weather for the Sunday climb out. They descended Cambage Spire and reached the Kowmung/Christys Creek junction for lunch, then explored up Christys Creek in the afternoon. The return was accomplished via Colboyd Range with the party reaching the cars at 1430h and dining at Lapstone pub after battling the Sunday traffic. All-in-all a very good trip. Maurice led a Saturday walk that weekend, out to Redledge Pass with a party of 9. It was a good walk, with the initial light drizzle clearing as the day progressed. There was a report for a Sunday walk that weekend as well, with Ron Watters leading 15 strong walkers on his trip out from Goodmans Ford on the Wollondilly. The day was sunny and warm as they headed off to climb around Lannigans Falls and onto Mount Tallygang where the grassy summit provided sweeping views over the surrounding area. They descended after lunch to the starting point along a ridge that afforded nice views of the Wollondilly, arriving at the cars at around 1730h.

**Saturday 27 May** saw Richard Darke circumnavigating Mosman via the coastal fringe over a 7 hour period in weather conditions that ranged from cold rain and hot sunshine. The party of 14 also navigated over two track closures, presumably informal ones, to complete the task. Along the way they inspected the newly opened former military base at St Georges Heights before lunching at Balmoral. An enjoyable spell of low tide rock hopping in warm sunshine took them on to Chinamans Beach on The Spit and then there was the off-track frontal assault on "Mount Morris" (maybe), the rocky lookout south of Spit Bridge. A stretch around Middle Harbour from there took them to the leaders place for refreshments and the end of the walk. A good group and an enjoyable inner-city day out, with some surprisingly well preserved harbour-side bushland.

Ken Smith was out on Saturday 3 June with the party of 4 on his qualifying walk from Brooklyn to Berrowra succumbing to the ever present risk on such walks in Winter of arriving at the finish after dark. At least they were spared the forecast showers.

Numbers were down somewhat for Hill Holland's annual midweek whale watching stroll out from Kurnell Discovery Centre on Thursday 8 June but the party of 3 saw a good number of whales most of which were obliging enough to perform for the them.

That is about it for this report.



## The Norse Gods Walk - with leader Richard Darke

**Route Description:** Victoria Falls Road to Ilkara Head - Valhalla Head - Asgard Swamp - Thor Head - Asgard Mine - Asgard Head - Victoria Falls. Half off track a bit scratchy.

This was truly a tour of the Norse gods, an area of grand lookouts with views across the Grose River, the surrounding Heads being well-named in honour of these mythical, larger than life nordic giants.

Sixteen valiant explorers and dreamers kept a sharp lookout for those legendary blonde Viking Valkyries, who the ancients tell us carried warriors killed in far-off battles to the Norse Heaven, Valhalla. Alas, while we did not encounter any of these reportedly lithe, lissom lasses, we did in our search visit Ilkara Head (for morning tea). According to [www.godchecker.com](http://www.godchecker.com), Ilkara herself was "a beautiful goddess, tall and elegant, with the body of a bird and the head of a woman, and much beloved by many. The gifts that the other gods gave her were grand and wonderful". This was enough to inspire the red-blooded males in our band of adventurers (dream on).

Despite a no-show on the part of Ms. Ilkara, we walked optimistically on. We had the consolation of a pleasant lunch in the sun at Valhalla Head, before proceeding on via Thor Head and the abandoned Asgard coal shale mine, to Asgard Head, aka Norse God HQ, where we enjoyed afternoon tea.

As any idiot knows, mythical Asgard was protected by massive walls built to withstand the onslaught of giants. However, the ramparts beneath Asgard Head did not protect us from a rather large red bellied black snake which has slithered in through the defences.

En route, and not to be outdone by the lads in our intrepid band, the girls kept a lively eye out for the manly Thor himself, while calling in at Thor Head. This landmark provides a really inspiring and awesome lookout with dress circle views up and down the gargantuan Grose gorges - truly we were in the lap of the gods here! Thor, as everyone knows, was the Lord of Thunderstorms. He was married to Sif, but while no one was looking enjoyed the odd fling with the giantess Jornsaxa, with whom he produced a daughter called Thrud (no that was not an insult, as Godchecker.com tells us, that was her name). Actually, he reportedly spent most of his time riding through the storm clouds in a chariot pulled by goats, throwing his hammer all over the place to create lightning (reports suggest Thor was in fact not very bright).

On this day though, Thor produced no thunder, maybe he was asleep. We instead experienced a particularly hot day for October, albeit beautifully sunny, and with a pleasant breeze.

This was a Q walk, a bit scratchy offtrack, but it also provided good navigation practice for those who were following our progress on their maps. We were even able to find our way to the Ivanhoe Pub in Blackheath to revive ourselves after 8 hours in the bush.

Next time in this area, the wearing of Viking helmets as protective headgear against the risk of encountering Thor and his mates will be compulsory.

## SOCIAL NOTES

Hi Everyone,

I apologise that there were no Social Notes in the October magazine, but I was still away when they were due.

I had a wonderful time visiting and hiking in The Great Smokey Mountains of Tennessee for eleven days. The area is varied and extremely beautiful - especially since I managed to enjoy the fall colours. The mountains are more gentle and less 'dramatic' than the Rockies (this took a while to get used to), but I grew to 'love' the area for its variety. I met some wonderful people (the area is known for its friendliness and hospitality - both of which I experienced). I highly recommend this park to you.

The scheduled November social night - Glenbrook or Bust had to be postponed as Roger Treagus who organised this bike trip and who was to be a co-presenter on the evening, is overseas indefinitely. However the presentation will occur in 2007, so watch out for it. Peter Christian kindly gave a presentation on Tasmania to replace the above.

The annual SBW Xmas party will take place on Wednesday 20th December in the downstairs courtyard of the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre (weather permitting - else indoors!), starting at 6:00 pm. Being our largest social event, it is a great opportunity to catch up with your buddies. Please bring a plate of delicious nourishment to share. The club provides your beverage requirements - beer, wine, juice, some soft drinks, tea, coffee and hot? chocolate. It also provides plates, cutlery, napkins and Xmas decorations. All YOU need do is ARRIVE. I look forward to seeing you there.

January also has lots of social events on the agenda - just locate them at the back of the Summer Walks Program.

Enjoy your walking and don't forget to take lots of water and try to go for a swim - it helps to rehydrate you.

Bye for now

Kathy

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## SOCIAL PROGRAM

- 6 Dec Committee Meeting**  
**7pm** Observers Welcome
- 13 Dec New Members Night**  
**8pm** Introduction to SBW for intending prospective members

### 20 Dec SBW Annual Xmas Party

- 6pm** Come and celebrate the end of 2006. Bring a plate of food to share. The club provides all beverages. Venue: outside rear courtyard of the KNC

### 27 Dec Club closed

### 3 Jan Club closed

### 10 Jan Club Beach Picnic

- 6pm** Meet at the southern end of Balmoral Beach. BYO everything. See Walks Program for more details.

### 17 Jan Committee Meeting

- 7pm** Observers welcome

### 17 Jan Tasmania in all seasons

- 8pm** Club member, Alex Popovski, will present a Winter Wonderland - the Overland Track and the rugged beauty of the Western Arthurs which he encountered on his summer trip last year.

### 24 Jan SBW President Jan's Pub Crawl

- 6pm** See Walks Program for details

### 7 Feb Committee Meeting

- 7pm** Observers welcome

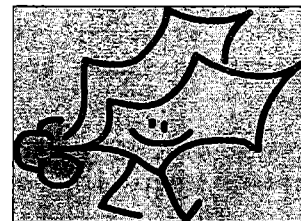
### 14 Feb New Members Night

- 8pm** Introduction to SBW for intending prospective members

- 21 Feb Organic vitamins and supplements** - will they help you up Perry's or even to compete the K to K? Prospective member, Kerry Iozzi has offered the services of 2 friends - a doctor and a nutritionist to inform us on the real health benefits of these products which are organic and contain phytonutrients.

### 28 Feb New Members Training Night at the Clubrooms - NB early start

- 7pm** An opportunity for prospectives to learn the basics of the art and science of cross country navigation using a map and compass. See Walks Program for more details.



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