

Sydney Bush Walkers Newsletter

DECEMBER 2011

Sydney Bushwalkers
PO Box 431 Milsons Point NSW 1565

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Edition →

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President Says

In respect of the Club:

- ✿ The Committee has been exercising its prudential responsibilities i.e. closing off the transactions for our Financial Year, and preparing the Budget for the next Fin Yr (unfortunately the all expenses paid “liaison visit” with Orion Cruises for a 15 day cruise off the Kimberly’s got voted down....)
- ✿ The World Renown **SBW Christmas Party** is to be held at the KNC from 6.30pm on Wednesday 21 Dec - this session routinely breaks the World Record for the most Tall Stories told within the shortest time - please place this in your Dairy and turn up with a Plate of something delicious to eat (the Club will *Shout* the drinks)
- ✿ Our Web Mistresses have added a “History” page at http://www.sbw.org.au/content_common/pg-sbw-history.seo (which has a Bio on Alex Colley, who at 102 is our oldest Member) and an SBW Traditions page at: http://www.sbw.org.au/content_common/pg-sbw-traditions.seo , the latter containing a picture of “*The Bones*” and the words of our unique ceremony for inducting our Presidents (thanks to Paddy Pallin!).....
- ✿ Coolana:
 - Ongoing liaison has occurred with the Shoalhaven Bushcare Officers, Sydney Catchment Authority and the commercial Sprayer
 - Getting an updated valuation of the Property from the Kangaroo Valley Real Estate Agent so that the theoretical “paper” commercial value is to hand (and No, there is no concept of moving to sell the Property!). And a big “**Thank You**” to **Lindy Ross Real Estate** for supplying this (their details are listed in the Newsletter and if you are thinking of buying land down that way, or have friends who are, please consider contacting them on Ph 4465 1404 or M 0412 967 057)
 - Getting an appraisal from the Govt. Dept in respect of potentially moving to a Voluntary Conservation Agreement
- ✿ Prospectives - a large number attended the recent Skills Workshop, unfortunately a number also missed out due to “*Demand exceeding Supply* - so, we have arranged a “*Q Test Night*” at the KNC on Monday 12 December to give people another opportunity. By prior arrangement, Prospectives can also approach the Leaders of programmed Walks to potentially conduct the Q Test whilst on a walk (obviously for a suitable consideration....)
- ✿ Whilst the Summer Activities Program is a pretty full one, it is a bit thin for Q Walks (both day and weekend). Can our Leaders please consider putting on some Q Walks on the Short Notice Trips Program? The Committee has also re-categorized most of the extended trips over the Xmas/New Year break as meeting the Q criteria (also most of the M2 walks),
- ✿ Please note on the Activities Program that there is a **trip to South America** being advertised doe May next year. A slide show of this year’s trip was held at the October Social night and the terrain look absolutely magnificent! (Machu Pichu and the Altiplano). For next year there are options to go for 2, 4 or 6 weeks trekking in Peru. Please ponder as this is a “*Bucket List*” opportunity and have a chat with Lesley.

Finally “Merry Christmas to All”

Ian Wolfe
President SBW

Please Welcome the Following New Members

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| ✿ Andrew Smith | ✿ Kim Fuller |
| ✿ Antoniya Bachvarova | ✿ Geoff Bishop |
| ✿ Linda Willard | ✿ Phil Barnsley |
| ✿ Richard Quinn | ✿ Rolf Marsden |
| ✿ Rosetta Lee | ✿ Phil Hayes |
| ✿ Dimitrios Nanitsos | ✿ Judy Tent |

Editor's Note

Hello everyone,

I **know** the weather is going to clear up just in time for us to enjoy all the wonderful trips that are programmed for the holiday season. Hope to see you out there on some of them.

A special thank you to everybody who has contributed to the magazines and newsletters this year. I'm sure our members appreciate your contributions as much as I do.

Wishing you a safe and happy Christmas.

Melinda Turner editor@sbw.org.au

We Need to Limit the Size of the Magazines (a bit)

Due to rising printing and postage costs for the hard copy Magazine (i.e. once a quarter) the Committee feels that we need to move to control the growing size of the magazines.

We are going to trial the following guidelines for the February edition:

- ✿ Individual articles for magazine to be limited to **two A4 pages** (with photos) i.e. make them short and punchy with the highlights - as this will also make them more readable for the masses
- ✿ Leaders to minimize your contributions for the Walks Report section to 15 lines in the table (If you want to write a longer piece, turn it into an article for the magazine or newsletters)

Articles for the electronic newsletters are not affected by size, so scribe away to your heart's content, but we suggest that a length of 3 pages will aid readability by others.

Let's give this a try and see how it goes!

From the Committee Room

- ✿ Work on appraising a holistic SW option - "One ring to rule them all, and in the darkness Bind them"
- ✿ Other items such as financials, printing costs, VCA etc mentioned elsewhere
- ✿ Examining options for Membership fees for 2012, expense options and formulation of the 2012 Budget
- ✿ Preparation for the Xmas Party
- ✿ Various Correspondence Out and In - including one from the NPWS reminding us that parties in declared Wilderness Areas should be limited to 8 and in other areas to 20 i.e. a sub group may need to be formed on occasions
- ✿ Endorsement of Rachel Grindlay, Jim Close and Sue Bucknell to commence the Canyoning Leaders Pathway

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 18, 2012

Volunteers are needed for the 2012 Committee and support roles

The majority of the current Committee are continuing on for next year, with some rotation of roles. However, some are retiring after many years of contribution (thanks!), so we need some new blood.

Whilst all roles are open to any Member to nominate for, we are particularly looking for:

- ✿ New Members Secretary
 - ✿ Memberships Secretary
 - ✿ Communications Secretary
- Also Associate Secretary Roles (not formally on the Committee):
- ✿ Social Secretary
 - ✿ Editor
 - ✿ Business Manager

If you feel you would potentially like to contribute, and one of these roles appeals to you, please email or ring the President & Secretary at president@sbw.org.au and secretary@sbw.org.au to have an exploratory chat (and Nominations Forms [Word and PDF] can be found on the Resources Page of our web site at: http://www.sbw.org.au/content_common/pg-resources-members.seo - and we can find people to support your nomination as needed!)

To VCA or Not to VCA, this is indeed the Question - Appraising the potential move to enter into a Voluntary Conservation Agreement (VCA) for Coolana?

I imagine that many of the older Club Members might be cringing in their seats as they read this (and let it be emphasized before we go any further that no one is proposing to sell Coolana or to erect a "House", rather the reverse). When this concept was floated 12 years ago it triggered a significant amount of controversy and some robust, rambunctious and passionate debate amongst the Members at that time. So, as things are a bit placid in the Club, we thought that we might "stir the Possum" a bit.....!

Seriously, the Committee has been progressively and deliberately working through the host of issues that relate to Coolana with the objective of getting to an "*optimized situation*". This to be encompass accelerating the conservation work, maximizing its use by Members, reducing the long term physical effort required to maintain the Property, and moving to the most appropriate legal as well as financial structure. The latter item includes seeking to reduce our "*overhead*" costs such as Rates.

The Government has significantly enhanced and refined the VCA process over the last decade. Details, including a very comprehensive Handbook, can be found at:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/cpp/ConservationPartners.htm>

A VCA has the following advantages:

- ✿ For the percentage of a Property placed under a VCA, a complete exemption from Council Rates is achieved. We currently pay just under \$1.9K in Rates and this is expected to go up next year as the Valuer General has just completed a reassessment of the area (which occurs every few years). Thus, if we placed 90% of Coolana under a VCA we could save approximately \$1.7K per year
- ✿ Provides access to Grant funding (and the NSW Govt. has recently announced that a further \$800K would be placed into the fund)
- ✿ Provides access to ongoing focused technical assistance in conservation matters
- ✿ Legally enshrines the conservation values of Property. This would reinforce the changes to our Constitution, that were approved by the Members in Sept this year, gave effect to the original provisions of the North Era Trust (where we previously owned land to the west of the Beach)
- ✿ Would not impeded or restrict our current usage of Coolana for camping, walking and skills enhancement etc

Apparently, the main "*sticking point*" in respect of the VCA 12 years ago was a concern that this could drop the "*theoretical paper commercial value*" of this Club asset. The current VCA process addresses this concern by requiring that any portion of a Property containing buildings not be included in the VCA. Further, that if the Property does not currently have a dwelling (i.e. a House) on it, that a suitable site be reserved for the future, and not included in the VCA.

Coolana consists of 6 parcels of land. Two of these we don't own, but use under a license and a lease, and so these fall outside of the question of a VCA. We formally own the remaining four parcels of land, and in total they comprise just over 40 hectares.

From the perspective of the value of the Club's assets, this is fortunate, as the Shoalhaven City Council regulations require that a bush Property, in our area, be comprised of at least 40 hectares for you to be able to build a house on it. So, even though there is no plan to build a House, the potential for this to be "*possible*" materially increases the "*theoretical commercial paper value*" of Coolana. We recently arranged for the Kangaroo Valley Real Estate Agent to provide us with an updated valuation. This came in as \$550-650K (and the Valuer General's assessment in 2008 was \$776K) for the Property as is, and the same amount if a VCA was in place for 90% of the block and 10% reserved for a future House site.

The potential areas to be "*reserved*" for house sites include:

To VCA or Not to VCA, this is indeed the Question - Appraising the potential move to enter into a Voluntary Conservation Agreement (VCA) for Coolana? ^{cont.}

- a) a rectangle 200m x 150 m, including the current Shelter Shed, Toilet and the site of the original Farmer's House (which is the small flat on the rise 30m downhill from the Shelter Shed, and a concrete step marks the site),
- b) a rectangle 150 x 150 m on the terrace to the east of the Theatre area (as this would minimize access/construction costs, and the need to significantly "harden" the road for any sites further down the hill.

By this approach it is suggested that the previous concerns have been addressed and a "Win/Win" situation is in prospect (?).

The Committee has commenced the process to investigate the feasibility and pros/cons of potentially entering into a VCA. No "Decision" to sign has been made, and due to the previous controversy we wish to advise Members and to seek their views. It is possible that the appraisal of the options may have crystallized by the March 2012 Annual General Meeting (but we are in the hands of a Government Dept). The intent is that the "Way Forward" would be debated by the Members and passed as a formal Motion, either at the AGM or at a subsequent meeting.

So, please consider this matter, read the information on the Govt's Web site, and on the Coolana page on our web site, have a ponder, and then, if you wish, write to the Secretary at secretary@sbw.org.au to ask questions or to express your views. Items can also potentially be published in the Magazine/Newsletter (they need to be kept short in order to contain printing/posting costs) - send them to editor@sbw.org.au

Regards,
The SBW Committee
7 December 2011

Willis's Walkabouts

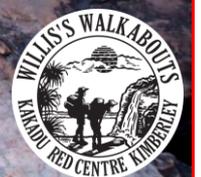
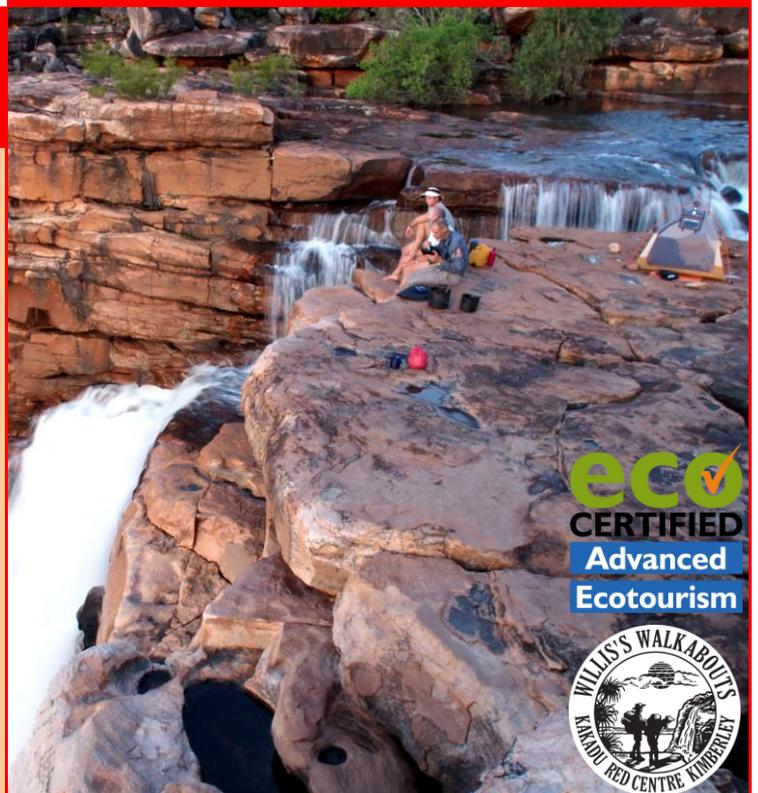
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Leigh McClintock's Japan expedition / September-October

Richard Darke

Attendees: Leigh McClintock (leader), Emmanuelle Convert, Richard Darke, Vivien de Remy de Courcelles, John Kennett, Peter Love, Rosemary McDougal, Lilly Ng, Andy Ojong, Ian Wolfe, & Sheila Zaman

A bushwalking trip to Japan is definitely a holiday with a difference, especially when led by someone like Leigh McClintock, with his intimate local knowledge. We enjoyed beautiful mountains, some steep 1,500m climbs and descents, challenging rock scrambling/climbing, humid heat, frost, snow, flooding rains, and a typhoon! We luxuriated in hot springs, experienced traditional ryokan inns to stay at, and on our rest days enjoyed cultural experiences in small towns and big cities. We ate some really great food, and found the locals to be friendly and welcoming. The Japanese love their mountains, and many seemed astonished to come across a group of *gaijin* walking in their back country!

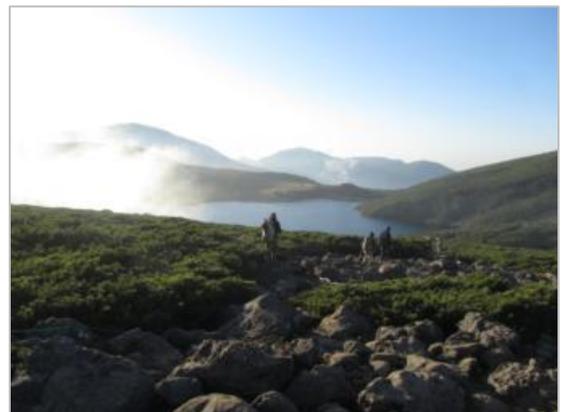
In all, Leigh enabled us to enjoy a wonderful cultural experience combined with some great walks in beautiful surroundings that are not unlike Switzerland.

The Japanese Alps are located on Honshu Island, some 300km west of Tokyo. They contain the biggest peaks in Japan, several of which are higher than 3,000m. While the coastal plains in early autumn still swelter in 30 degree humid heat, the high country can experience frost and snow. Instead of getting straight into the walking, we started with a bit of culture, in the sprawling metropolis of Osaka. We spent a day at one of Japan's major festivals, the Kishawada Daijiri Float festival. These 'floats' are in fact massive 4-tonne, beautifully carved wagons. They are pulled by 200 or more people. They have no steering, and take corners at the run with specialists skidding the rear wooden wheels around by pulling sideways on ropes. Accidents are not uncommon, as they can career into the crowd or to buildings. Apparently more people get killed at this festival than at the Running of the Bulls in Pamplona!

After the festival, it was off to the pretty regional town of Takayama, into a rental car, and off along mountain roads to our first walk. However, even Leigh was not in control of the weather, and while we got our first day's walk in, flooding rains and a typhoon cost us the next 3 days of walking. Despite the torrential rain, it did however give us more time to enjoy our traditional ryokan inn, and to explore the nearby traditional thatch-roofed villages around Shirakawa and then return to historic Takayama, where Leigh looked up some different walks, and we were able to catch up on 2 of the 3 lost days.

After 3 days of warm-up walks with 500m climbs, we set off for the big peaks of the Northern Alps. A cable car took us up to the tree-line at 2,200m and gave us stunning views of the surrounding mountains. We then walked on up another couple of hundred metres to our first 'sanso' or mountain hut.

These huts are quite amazing. They have no mains electricity or water, but they still manage to provide full meals, including packed lunches for the next day's walk. There are no showers, and very limited washing facilities, but importantly, they do sell beer and sake. And boy, do they pack the walkers in! Each bedroom has tatami mats on the floor and futon mattresses. In a room where foreigners would think 8 was a crowd, the Japanese will squeeze in up to 16 people! And the locals start walking at first light, so it was up at 4.30 am for a 5.00 am breakfast, and then off on the track with frost crunching under our feet.



Leigh McClintock's Japan expedition / September-October ^{cont.}

Because we were staying in huts with food and bedding provided (your pillow is a bag full of rice), we only had to carry clothing and personal items, so our packs were less than 10 kilos (at least, for those who know how to pack properly, unlike your scribe). Just as well, because our first full day in the mountains was the most challenging - 10 hours on an exposed knife edge, rising like a twisting dragon's back from the lodge at 2,400m to the summit of Oku Hotaka Dake at 3,190m.



The rock scrambling and climbing was challenging enough, but what made it particularly unnerving were the drops down each side, which as we neared the top provided 1,000m of unprotected exposure! Sometimes there were chains to assist us, but more than often there were not, so progress was slow. It was a great sense of achievement to finally arrive in triumph at what is Japan's third highest peak late in the afternoon, then on to the lodge.

Next day it was down again, 1,400m to the beautiful alpine village of Kamikochi, and then on by bus and train to the regional city of Matsumoto with its beautiful castle, before heading back next day into the mountains around the ski town of Hakuba. Here another cable car took us up to 1,700m, at which point Leigh informed us we had 2 ½ hours to climb up to 2,400m in time for dinner at the next mountain lodge, a walk that the book said takes over 3 hours!



Spurred on by the thought of food, we did the trip in good time. The hut was in a beautiful setting on a mountain lake. Next day was all open ridge walking, with beautiful views. We climbed 1,300m in all, up to another hut just below the dramatic summit of Shiro-uma Dake at 2,932m.

The views from the ridges around here were stunning, down to dreamily misty valleys with peaks cutting through the cloud level, and we could see 250km all the way to 3,770m Mt Fuji in the far distance. The walking here, though steeply up and down, was far more straightforward than the rocky outcrops of Hotaka Dake a few days before. Then it was down, down 1,400m to the hot spring lodge at Renge Onsen. Enjoying the outdoor 50 degree pools after the steep climbs of the previous days was heaven!



A rest day followed, & then the final four day east-west trek across the width of the Northern Alps. By now autumn was coming on, the leaves were turning colour, & the group even had snow overnight & a biting cold wind to contend with. Time to be heading for lower elevations.

All in all, this was a most satisfying walking and cultural experience in an exotic, fascinating environment. Leigh's detailed logistical planning meant we enjoyed a seamless trip, despite two lodges being unexpectedly closed which caused a change of plans. The huge 20m population conurbations on the coastal fringes of the country contrast strikingly with the 80% of Japan that is wild, mountainous country. Efficient, comfortable public transport and the mountain hut system makes the best of walks very accessible, though it would be hard for a foreigner to access without Leigh's invaluable local knowledge and for being on hand to sort out the many 'lost in translation' moments!



It was interesting in our travels to observe Japanese farming practices. There seems to be no large-scale commercial agriculture. We did not see any livestock. Rice is grown in small, picturesque 1 hectare plots by small landholders. But there is one thing I know none of us will miss, for all Leigh's great organisation, and that is the daily breakfast of steamed rice, miso soup, pickles and green tea!

Thank you Leigh for facilitating an unforgettable trip in Japan.

Phipps Crossing to Widden Exploratory Walk / Wollemi NP North-South Traverse / October 1 - 3

Yuri Bolotin

Day 1

The objective of this walk was to investigate the northernmost part of the north-south traverse of the Wollemi National Park. Ian Thorpe, the walk leader, has been planning this daring adventure for some time now. The full traverse would involve a 4-week walk across the entire Wollemi National Park, starting at Phipps Cutting in the north and finishing in Bilpin in the south. It is planned to take place in spring, 2012. However, some of the less known sections of the walk must be researched in advance, to ensure there is little room for error during the traverse, as the logistics of the entire exercise are very complex.

One such section is the northernmost part of the Park. The idea was to start walking from Phipps Cutting in the southerly direction, follow some tight and convoluted ridges, and see how far we would get in 3 days. Ian initially had planned to leave 2 cars in separate locations along the Widden Valley Road, as we were not sure where exactly we would end up at the end of the third day. However, as we ended up with a small party of 3, this wasn't practical, so we left one car at Widden, Ian's most optimistic target, and drove the other one back to Phipps Cutting to start the journey south. The distance from Phipps Cutting to Widden by the road is about 23km, but of course we all know that this is no measure at all of the challenge ahead.

As we were taking the backpacks out of the car, the heavy, threatening clouds that were hanging above us since dawn broke into a persistent drizzle, so we decided to put the rain gear on straight away, to save having to stop and do it shortly after.

At 0830, after taking a picture of the Phipps Cutting Rest Area sign (GR 564 132), we were off. Note that all of our times on the first day are 1 hour ahead of the actual time, as we decided to bring forward the daylight saving switch by a day.

From the car park, we first followed a broad path with steps that within a couple of minutes ended at a lookout over the Goulburn River, the road and the fields below. A bench was installed there, to enable a weary bushwalker to have a rest after such strenuous exercise. I wondered how many benches we would find waiting for us from here on...

It was time to move off track, first in the south-easterly and then in the southerly direction along a narrow ridge. There were no views as we were surrounded by head height, dense heath. The continuing drizzle quickly made all vegetation around us thoroughly wet. We were glad we had our wet weather gear on.

Clusters of spring flowers broke the monotony of the scrub as we were gradually gaining height. Starting from about 160m at Phipps Cutting, we were now at 300m and moving up. There were no rocks in sight. In spite of having to bash through the trees and branches, we were making good progress. After about an hour of walking, the vegetation changed to a more open, low heath dotted with Macrozamia.

From time to time, we were now able to see some distant views. These however disappeared as the ridge widened. By morning tea time, the drizzle turned into showers, so we started to look for a cave or some shelter from the inclement weather. No such luck, the ridge was nice and flat. In the end, we settled for a non-descript spot under a small tree that only afforded minimal protection (GR 572 107). Needless to say, the break didn't last long, 1020-1030.

Soon after resuming the walk, we came across a huge brush turkey mound that must have been over 5m in diameter.

As we continued to climb (now at 400m), the ridge became tight once again and the rocks appeared almost unexpectedly. We were soon climbing onto the first big outcrop, GR 568 084. The view south showed us a taste of things to come, with a fringe of high mountains on the distant skyline, dominated by a huge bulk of Mount Pomany.

We climbed to a large cave (where was it when we needed it for morning tea a couple of hours ago?), then tried to go straight up to the top but were stopped by vertical cliffs.

The way up was quickly found by going around the western side and then climbing the cliffs from the south. We also found a small cave with distant views and some protection from the weather, for our lunch stop. Our next destination, the almost perfect pyramid of the spot height 482 was seen poking through the shifting clouds.

The showers now turned into a steady rain. The three of us were just able to fit under a small overhang of the cave. A bit of food was very nice, in spite of dampness and cold. 1230-1255, GR 568 083.

During lunch, we discussed the fact that we needed to collect water for the night and the following day. The original plan was to do it at the end of the day by coming down the ridge into one of the creeks below; however,

Phipps Crossing to Widden Exploratory Walk ^{cont.}

with so much water coming down from the sky, we decided to try our luck on the cliff top immediately above our lunch spot. A short climb led us to a flat area of rock and soon enough we found a few pools big enough to satisfy the needs of our small party. It was a strange experience collecting water under a pouring rain, however we now had our supply and this would save us time and energy doing it later in the evening.

We came down from the lunch spot hill and continued along the Callitris covered ridge that twisted and turned a few times, eventually leading us to spot height 482, GR 573 071, where we had afternoon tea, 1425-1435.

We could now see the bulk of Mt Wilpen in the distance, which would be our next destination and perhaps the spot to have the camp tonight.

The rain stopped for a few minutes, and the sun tried to get through the thick clouds. It was so pleasant that Ian even burst into a song, however the sun did not prevail on this occasion (maybe it misunderstood Ian's song) and the rain closed in once more soon after.

At 1620, we were standing in front of (and then climbed on) the Mt Wilpen trig, height 556, GR 580 060.

Next to the trig, stood a fine specimen of a double headed Xanthorrhoea, looking like a mystical creature with two ruffled heads of hair, rain water running down its majestic bushy beard.

We continued to the SE edge of the mountain that had substantial cliffs and decided to take off our packs and run a small recce for tomorrow morning. Within half an hour or so, we managed to locate a suitable way down the cliffs. We could now pick up our packs and look for a camp spot. As the top of Mt Wilpen is wide and flat, this was easy enough. The camp was set at 1720, GR 082 059.

Despite being held back by the rain and slippery rock surfaces, we made an excellent progress during the day, having covered about 12km (vs. the planned 8km). This was half of the total distance for 3 days estimated by Ian using the maps (see the actual distance covered at the end of Day 3). We suspected that this pace could not be sustained in the next two days, due to the terrain becoming more and more challenging as we moved south and into the heart of the Wollemi. The experience of the next two days would confirm our thoughts. In fact, without the long distance covered in the first day, we probably would not have been able to reach our goal (the car at Widden) by the end of the third day.

Back at the camp, a few dry twigs collected during the under cliff recce were very handy to start up the fire which was not only extremely welcome but pretty essential after a day in the rain. The skies held up for us for some time whilst we were having dinner, but as soon as we finished eating, the rain began to fall again. There was no shelter on the top of the mountain, and I was the first one to give up and duck under the fly I shared with Ian. There was a huge amount of rain during the night, accompanied by the wind that resulted in some flooding of my ground sheet and mattress, as well as the need to re-adjust and tighten the fly at 2am. Despite of that, I managed to have a pretty good sleep.

Day 2

The rain had stopped by the morning; however everything around us was very wet.

After a quick cold breakfast (no fire), we started walking at 0800 towards the pass in the sheer cliffs we identified yesterday. There were a number of caves in the cliff face, but none of them had big enough flat floor to be recommended as a camping spot for the future.

The steep descent brought us onto a short saddle and was followed by a sharp ascent to a high point from where good views of Baerami Valley could be seen in the east. Even more interesting were views to the south, with high mountains of the Wollemi Wilderness on the horizon and the valley below just visible through the scattered low clouds underneath us.

Our way now was down and along another saddle which went straight south for about 500m, then turned southwest and continued for another 500m or so. It was very narrow, in some spots no more than a couple of metres wide. The steep cliffs on both sides disappearing into the shifting clouds below added to the dramatic effect. Both Ian and I had recently been to Tighrope Saddle in the Bylong Labyrinth part of the Wollemi, and the saddle we were on now very much reminded us both of that unforgettable experience. We looked at each other and said simultaneously, 'This is Tighrope Saddle Mark II'.

The saddle also had some interesting small caves, one with a delightful window opening through into the valley below.

As we continued to walk along the tight saddle, we saw to the south a dramatic spur that appeared to be knife edge, even more exciting than the ridge we were currently on.

As it was morning tea time, we decided to drop our packs and walk out on this spur, to have our rest there. The drop on the other (southern) side of the knife edge was not as dramatic as it appeared from the distance, but it was a nice spot anyway. GR 582 048, 1010-1025.

Phipps Crossing to Widden Exploratory Walk ^{cont.}

We continued along a ridge that turned 90 degrees every few hundred meters, until a high point at GR 571 045, then gradually ascended over a long distance to the spot height 558. The sun was now shining and we were glad to feel its warmth and to have an opportunity to dry out a little after yesterday. The vegetation was a little easier to get through, but there were plenty of fallen trees and debris that required either strong hands to push them aside, or powerful feet to trample them under, or good agility to crawl through them - best if you have a combination of all three.

When we reached the western end of spot height 558, both the good and the bad news awaited us. The good news was that the views from the top were tremendous. We could see south into the Widden Valley and all the way into and beyond Cat's Ears.



The bad news I suppose was the consequence of the good news - the reason we had such good views was that we were standing on top of a 100m cliff that had no obvious points of descent. Ian suggested we had lunch, enjoy the view and worry about the future later. Sue and I gladly agreed. 1230-1300, GR 563 031.

It is amazing what difference a bit of food in your stomach makes. Within 10 minutes of finishing lunch we located a promising slot about 50m to the east of our rest spot. The slot had a choke stone some way down it that was possible to step/jump on, then making your way to the ground. We set up the tape for safety, Ian went first, and before too long we were all underneath the first cliff line.

Soon after, another tape assisted descent was made, then a short saddle located that brought us to another high point, GR 561 026, 1500. From here, we were able to see the point 558 and the descent route we had just taken.

A shower came on, but soon was blown away by the wind, leaving in its aftermath a dramatic vista of the mountain ranges to our east.

At 1520, GR 560 021, a possible camping cave was sighted, however it was far too early for us to stop. We continued in a generally southerly direction on a pretty well defined saddle that had a number of ups and downs. The low scrub and debris slowed our progress. By 1600, we reached a flat spot, GR 558 016, where it would be possible to organise a camp, however the spot was not ideal (no views and lots of bumps on the ground). As we needed to come down to Wilpen Creek for water anyway, we decided to keep our backpacks on and see if we can find a nicer spot to camp down there.

We followed a steep, dry creek down into the main valley. A few hundred meters from Wilpen Creek, small murky pools of water appeared that would have probably sufficed us, but we decided to continue as it would be important for the main expedition to know if Wilpen Creek can be relied on for water. Well, I think it can be. As we approached it, the chorus of frogs bore the good news. There was plenty of flowing water of good quality. The creek was nice, but it was running in a tight gorge with no good camping spots immediately available (GR 563 015, 1630). The flat spot we left above us, even though it wasn't great, appeared a better choice.

Our water bottles filled for today and tomorrow, we decided to climb back on the ridge to the north of us, for a change from the scrubby creek descent we had just made. Initially, the going was easy, but then we came to substantial smooth pagoda cliffs where pack hauling was necessary. We had just clambered to the top of one these and stopped to regain our breath, when our pulses accelerated again, this time because of the beauty of the spot we had just climbed to. We were standing on a broad, almost horizontal conglomerate rock platform, with no vegetation to limit our view. And what a view! A 270 degree panorama of the mountain ranges on three sides above us, at our level and underneath us - huge, smooth tower like pagodas running down into narrow canyon slots. All illuminated and colored by the setting sun.

Even though we would have to sleep on a rock, we agreed that this was the camping spot for us. We started to set up the camp at 1730, GR 562 017. Just as we were doing so (i.e. as always when all our things were out of the packs but we hadn't yet organized the fly), there was another sharp squall of wind and a brief shower that only lasted a few minutes.

Phipps Crossing to Widden Exploratory Walk ^{cont.}

Ian and I stayed on the rock platform, tying the fly to the couple of low bushes nearby and using some rocks for other anchor points, whereas Sue found a bit of soft flat ground for her tent in the gully a few steps away. She also found a large, thick hollowed out piece of a tree trunk that she used to make the fire in. This was easily one of the most beautiful fires I've ever had whilst camping. Happy hour snacks were shared whilst sitting by this amazing fire and watching the sunset as it turned the rocks opposite us to golden, to dark brown and finally dark purple. On Day 2, we covered about 8km, i.e. we were doing the speed Ian had originally planned for each day. We know now, and we knew even then that the challenges were going to get even bigger as we progress south, so we could be looking forward to a big day ahead of us tomorrow. Let's get some sleep in the meantime!

Day 3

We woke up to a clear, cloudless day. Before setting off, decided to check a couple of slots running north and down into the small creek below, for future access into Wilpen Creek, but they all ended up in 20m+ drops.

We set on our last day's adventure at 0755.

We first climbed back to the spot where we had considered camping yesterday. No regrets there! Our next destination was a huge table shaped unnamed mountain to the southwest of us. This mountain is clearly visible whilst driving along Widden Valley Road. It is around 600m high, although the exact height is not given on the map. It is so significant in the landscape that we had been looking at it 'on and off' since the morning of Day 2. At no point were we able to see a clear way up to the top of it. Although the climbing of it doesn't need to be a part of the Wollemi Traverse (we could have sidled around it), Ian really wanted to check it out. With our packs still heavy and a big day in front of us, we could be forgiven for thinking, 'do we really want to do it?' However, we answered 'yes' to that lazy thought, and the experience that followed proved to be one of the highlights of our entire journey.

Even though it didn't look much good from the distance, we decided to investigate the northern side first. Along the way, we saw and noted a camping cave at GR 556 013, 0840. However we found the northern cliff line impregnable. At one point, I spotted a narrow ledge that could lead us to the top; the trouble was that the ledge had an overhang that came within 20cm of it - enough space for a big snake to crawl through, but not for even a small person. We were defeated on this occasion, but didn't give up. Next, we sidled to the NE edge of the mountain hoping to find a way up on the spur leading up from there, only to be confronted with an amazing axe sharp rock edge. No much luck there either!

We agreed that the next attempt would be our last, as we had a lot to do and very little time that day. With our backpacks left under a rock, we went south, along the eastern edge of the cliffs looking for an opening. There were a few interesting overhangs, but no way up. The time was ticking...Do we turn back now? How about we check what's around that last cliff corner visible in the distance? Finally, a success! The gully at GR 557 011 led all the way to the top, with only a few minor scrambles.

The flat broad top of the mountain was covered by tall scrub. Pushing through it after such an effort of getting here, I was thinking, 'Was it a good idea? Will we get any good views?' Well, as we came out to a flat rock platform on the southern edge of the mountaintop, our eyes sparkled, our blood flowed faster and our mouths opened wide. What a view! In front of us was an incredible panorama of not one, not two, but three spectacular valleys radiating out into the distance from a spot underneath us - they were the Widden, the Emu and the Myrtle Creek Valleys. Northern Wollemi is not short of spectacular views, but this one in my opinion has got to be rated amongst the very best.

Whilst enjoying the morning tea on top of the world, 1015-1035, GR 554 009, we realized that in the last short while we have finished the traverse of almost the entire Kerrabee map and were now on the Widden map. Later on, whilst driving back along the Widden Valley Road, we saw that another approach to this mountain may be possible, from the W-S-W. It would be good to do a day walk sometime in the future, from a camp in Widden Valley, to come up one way and down another.



For the time being, we needed to focus on our next target - Presto Peak. We could clearly see its characteristic conical shape in front of us.

Back down at the foot of the cliffs, we picked up our bags and continued southwards on the ridge that separates the unnamed mountain from Presto Peak.

Phipps Crossing to Widden Exploratory Walk ^{cont.}

The Peak looked easy to get up on, and it was indeed. At 1145 we were on top admiring another panorama (GR 551 002), although it was not as good as from the previous mountain. The best view was looking north, towards our morning tea spot.

On the way back from the top, we were hoping not to have to come down all the way but sidle around, maintaining our altitude. This however proved very difficult due to the presence of large cliffs some way up, but not at the top of Presto Peak. The going became very slow, so Ian suggested we rename this mountain to Presto-Lento Peak. In the end, we had to come down more and then do a very steep sidle, eventually aiming for a clearly visible gap between the main body of the Peak and a large rock on its SE edge.



It was around midday when we eventually picked up the next ridge we needed to be going south on. We were quite tired by the experience, so a lunch break was in order, 1245-1315, GR 553 999. Whilst having our food, we were also pondering the significance of the fact that the Kerrabee map we had been using for the last 2 days has 10m contours, whilst the Widden map we were on now on has 20m contours, yet the contour density on both maps looks similar. May this explain the fact that we only managed to do about 3km before lunch today? If we wanted to go home tonight (and we did!), we had some catching up to do!

The next 2 km or so after lunch we walked along a fairly wide rising ridge, running south. The vegetation has changed dramatically, especially compared to the start of the walk. There was less scrub, and it was much drier, with many loose leaves on the ground. Unfortunately, we also started to come across some Prickly Pear. Along the way, we saw an amazing Balancing Rock of Widden that looked like it needed only a small push to come tumbling down. We decided not to test this hypothesis.

The dense vegetation returned towards the last part of the ridge, so we were again going pretty slow, having to pick our way through debris and brush. We have now climbed high enough to see good views back towards Presto Peak through the breaks in the trees.

In a little while, we turned W and skirted near the high point 640 (at GR 550 979) which signified the end of this section of the N-S Traverse. This means that for the actual Traverse the route will continue south, but we had to return to our car which was now only 2km and a bit due W from us. It was 1455. Easy from here? Back at the car in half an hour? If you know the area, you will shake your head and say, 'I don't think so.' The topo map showed that we now needed to find our way down into an unnamed creek, some 300m below, then climb out of that creek about 200m, and finally come down another 300m to the road, constantly heading W. The topo map didn't show any cliffs along our entire way.

Well, less than 5 minutes later, we stood at the edge of 30m+ vertiginous cliffs that seemed to go in all directions without any break, wondering what we are going to do next. After some investigation, a small ramp was found that enabled us to come down through the first cliff line (GR 547 9795), however we knew that there would be more cliffs ahead, as we needed to lose a lot more elevation. In the meantime, we were able to descend more comfortably down the slope, soon coming across the Stonehenge of Widden

Then, another cliff line, as tall as the first one. A fairly exposed ledge was found, leading us down, until a final metre or so jump had us safely at the base of the cliffs. But what was it, back in the rock face? A cave! An amazing cave! Backpacks off to investigate! The cave occupies a huge area of about 50m by 10m, has several entrances, interlinking storeys and overhangs. The forces of erosion over many thousands of years have created sculpture shapes of incredible fluidity and beauty. The rock in the cave comes in a multitude of colours - from pristine white, to sombre grey, to all hues of brown - light to russet. This cave had reminded me of the fairy tale creations of Antoni Gaudi in Barcelona, Spain. I called it the Gaudi Cave. GR 545 980.

As the time was not on our side, we only spent 10 minutes in the cave, but this for me was one of the big highlights of the trip.

There were no more cliffs, just steep slopes to negotiate, so by 1545 we were in the dry creek bed at GR 540 981. Walking downstream a little, we found a pool of water under a large rock, but this creek would not provide a

Phipps Crossing to Widden Exploratory Walk ^{cont.}

reliable water supply.

Time to once again move uphill, towards the top of the last ridge before the car. The slope was rising gradually at first, but then another line of tall cliffs presented. Ian went for a quick recce and declared that the impending scramble was going to be worth it, i.e. that it would actually lead us to the top. Straight after the scramble we came upon another remarkable feature, the Rider of Widden, straight from JRR Tolkien books, GR 538 981, 1615.

The top of the hill was reached at 1650, GR 534 982. We had in front of us an incredible panorama of the Widden Valley far below us, the cliffs glowing orange, the green pasture colours deepened by the setting sun. Wow!!!

The observant reader may pick in the above paragraph a few things that may give a cause for worry. Like, 'the setting sun' indicated the time of the day being less than 2 hours from complete darkness, or that the valley was 'far below us', and of course the mention of 'them', the cliffs.

Indeed, worry I did as well, because from where we stood on a tip of a narrow ridge there was no visible way down. Remember, the topo map thinks none of these cliffs exist so we may be forgiven for not planning for their occurrence. We were about 1km from the car as the bird flies, in fact we could clearly see the road below in the valley, but being also 300m higher than the road, how do we get to it, not being able to fly like birds? We were so close and so far! I must admit that at this moment I had the ridiculous image of us spending the night with a view of our car down below racing through my head. I quickly dismissed it.

Wisely, Ian called for a short afternoon tea break. During it, we consulted the map and looked at our options. The best way seemed to be on the right (northern) side of the hill. Determined and reinvigorated, we moved on. Ian went to investigate a deep slot and after what seemed to us like a long absence came back with a negative result. Whilst he was doing it, Sue and I had a look at a couple of spots further around to the north that appeared promising. We pushed along a narrow ledge, then down a ramp bordered by a high rock wall on the left hand side. It went! But not all the way - it stopped at a vertical drop. We retraced our steps but only some of the way back, then sidled more around and to the north to find another ramp, this time delivering us to the bottom of the cliffs. Phew! We were saved! No more cliffs on our way, it was now a matter of coming down a broad ridge covered with grass and trees, and enjoying the views along the way.

We were at the car (GR 524 984) at 1730, having covered 2,774m of elevation and 33.7km of distance in 3 glorious days. As we made our way south, we experienced the gentle scrub covered hills around Phipps Cutting gradually rising with every step we took, to become dramatic, steep, dissected cliffs of the Widden Valley. Because of this, our journey became more difficult and challenging with every new day, our progress slower. Probably also because of this, most of the highlights occurred in the last day - the incredible lookouts from our morning and afternoon tea spots, the Balancing Rock, the Stonehenge, the Rider, and of course the Gaudi Cave.

Table of Times, Locations and Grid References

Time	Location	Grid Reference
Day 1		
0830	Phipps Cutting	GR 564 132
1020-1030	Morning tea under tree	GR 572 107
1230-1255	Lunch in small cave	GR 568 083
1425-1435	Spot height 482 and pm tea	GR 573 071
1620	Mt Wilpen trig	GR 580 060
1720	Camp on top of Mt Wilpen	GR 082 059
Day 2		
0800	Start walking	GR 082 059
1010-1025	Morning tea on knife edge ridge	GR 582 048
1230-1300	Lunch on the edge of spot height 558	GR 563 031
1500	High point on the ridge	GR 561 026
1520	Camping cave	GR 560 021
1600	Saddle and a possible camping spot	GR 558 016
1630	In Wilpen Creek	GR 563 015
1730	High camp on the conglomerate rock	GR 562 017
Day 3		
0755	Start walking	GR 562 017
0815	Back in a possible camping spot	GR 558 016
0840	Camping cave	GR 556 013
0940	Gully that lead on top	GR 557 011
1015-1035	AM tea and the incredible view	GR 554 009
1145	Presto Peak	GR 551 002
1245-1315	Lunch in a saddle	GR 553 999
1440	Going west	GR 550 979
1500	Pass through the cliff line	GR 547 9795
1520-1530	Gaudi Cave	GR 545 980
1545	In dry creek	GR 540 981
1615	The Rider	GR 538 981
1650	Top of the last hill	GR 534 982
1730	Car	GR 524 984

Participants were: Ian Thorpe (leader), Sue Bucknell, Yuri Bolotin

Mt Kaputar National Park / Oct 8 - 15

Christine McColl

I bet you never knew of the existence of the Narrabri Alpine club in the late nineteenth century....

I learned of this club on a recent visit to Mt Kaputar National Park, a stunning gem set on the edge of the NSW north west slopes, in the Nandewar range. It was the Narrabri Alpine Club which started the politics of turning some of the Nandewar Range into varieties of protected land, which in 1964 finally became a national park.

Most of us know of the Warrumbungles, less than 200 k away, but its twin volcanic based NP, Mt Kaputar is far less well known. As with the Warrumbungles, the park is a dramatic series of peaks which rise from the surrounding plains; however at Mt Kaputar you camp up high and go lower to walk. The campgrounds are close to the summit (1510 metres), which means that even in summer it's cool at the top - in fact many Narrabri families go up to the top for their Christmas lunch!

The main part of the park offers two extremely beautiful camping grounds set near the summit.

Each has spacious camping bays amidst huge trees, free gas barbeques, ample shelters and amenities blocks with hot showers and toilets (\$5 per night per adult). The upper ground (Dawson Springs) has space for 25 campers, the lower one (Bark Hut) for 15. Near the upper camping ground are 3 cabins which can be rented from the National Park office for \$78 per night. Two sleep 6, and one sleeps two (though more could be slept on mattresses on the floor). They are all fully self contained, and there is free wood for the wood burning stoves. We were there just after the October school holidays this year, and the campgrounds were pretty quiet. You need to take your own wood for the campgrounds - this can easily be collected on the way into the park, or bought from the Visitors Centre in Narrabri (note this is closed Sunday and Saturday afternoon).

Mt Kaputar has enough walking to keep you occupied for a week. There are several very enjoyable short-ish walks (up to 8 k), each featuring just beautiful bush and generally great views over the Liverpool plains and the Pilliga scrub, and sometimes wonderful rocks and ridges to scramble round. From the summit itself there are knockout views of sunset over the westerly plains.

There are several possibilities for longer walks. The best overnight trip would be to Scutt's Hut. It's several k down a firetrail, then a few more k to this 1938 stockman's hut, set in pastures by a still fruiting citrus tree. The hut is by a good creek. One could camp there, then spend the next day exploring the creek down to Kurrawonga Falls, and the gorge below the falls, then return the following day. The hut and the falls themselves can be done as a long day trip, all on track.

Two spectacular off track walks can be done from the Mt Coryah circuit - one to The Camel, a rocky protuberance at the end of a ridge, and the other to explore the great plateau north of The Camel. These could be combined if you are prepared to carry water, as the only creek we saw had no drinkable water in it. Though both are off track, the navigation is pretty straightforward, and there is no significant bush bashing. For the first, keep south on the plateau and ridge leading to The Camel. Note that the NP estimate that the trip to The Camel is just an extra 3 hours from the Coryah Circuit is totally misleading - it's a good 6 hour return trip from the Circuit, and longer if you want to enjoy the views for hours.

We didn't explore the northern part of the park, which is accessed by a different road from that leading to the summit. I suggest doing that before going to the summit, as once you are up near the top it's a long hike back to Narrabri and then to the northern part. There seem to be good possibilities for off track walking there, out from Waa Gorge.

All who went on this trip agreed that Mt Kaputar is a stunning little known National Park, well worth the day's drive from Sydney to get there...and easy to combine with the Warrumbungles.

Move over Peru and the Himalayas - you have a major rival in our own state!



The Great River Walk – Re-enacting the final stage / October 23 (Brooklyn to Barrenjoey)

Roger Treagus

In April of 2004 walkers completed a 475km journey from the source of the Wollondilly to the mouth of the Hawkesbury. This walk was done in 21 stages over 4 years. When we started back in 2000 my son had not been born. When we finished this walk my son led us the final 200m to Barrenjoey Lighthouse.

That final stage therefore had many special qualities attached to it worthy of a re-enactment. So a big group of 22 walkers assemble at Brooklyn on Sunday 23 October, some coming by train to get there and some coming by water taxi from Palm Beach, a great way to start the walk. Amongst the group were 4 “originals” who had been on the original walk from start to finish (and wearing the tee shirts to prove it). The weather was warm and dry.

Our start was a ferry ride across to Little Wobby, a small river settlement on the left bank of the river opposite Brooklyn. From there we walked along the trails of the Broken Bay Sport and Recreation centre for which we obtained special permission to use. The Defile Track took us to the top of the ridge and onto the Highway Ridge Trail for spectacular views up river and a great morning tea spot. In walking the river the concept of a long distance trail called the Great River Walk was to stick to the river as much as possible. No better example of how that is possible to do can be found than this track.

Heading south on excellent tracks took us to the wonderfully deserted and beautiful Little Patonga Beach, one of the gems of Broken Bay affording our first glimpse of our destination, Barrenjoey Headland. From the beach the Pacific Trail took us around Pacific Head to a very steep access down to a small beach on the west side of Patonga Creek. No sooner had we reached the beach that our pre-arranged punt arrived operated by one of the colourful locals to take us across the creek, too deep to wade across.

A nice vintage of Cabernet Sauvignon was donated to the punt man in gratitude for his offer and then we were off to inspect “retro” Patonga and its wonderful old colonial style pub.

Then came another ferry ride, this time right across Broken Bay to Palm Beach where we then walked to Barrenjoey Headland, up the smugglers track to the lighthouse, where the caretaker had stayed back and especially opened the light up to our group. From the very top of the light we looked out to sea and could see whales. Not the only animals on the walk, though, as both a lyre bird and an echidna had put on displays for us along the tracks.

With the end of the walk yet another boat trip awaited for Central Coast people as the ferry for Ettalong waited. With the sun setting over the Lambert Peninsula I recalled vividly the party we put on for the walkers at the end of the original walk. The complete story of that walk is currently being written and currently runs to over 200 pages. I look forward to publication in a year’s time. It was a great day and a great group

Participants were:

Jan (M)	Ron(M)	Jean (M)
James (M)	Edward(V)	Rosemary (M)
Gillian (M)	Roz (V)	John (M)
Nestor(P)	Pamela (M)	Sonja(V)
Jack(V)	Stephen(V)	Anita (M)
Raph (M)	Amanda (V)	Sharon (V)
Roger (M)	Jeanne (M)	John (V)
Pat (V)		



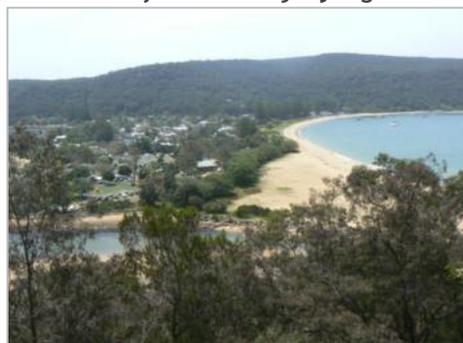
Dangar Island



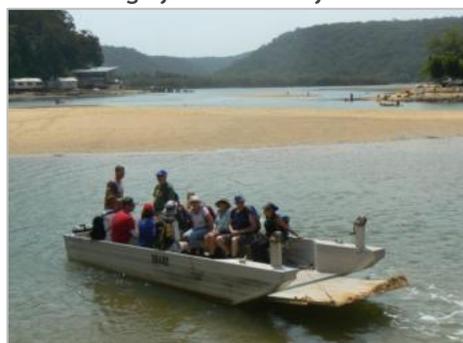
Morning tea on the Highway Ridge Trail



Palm Beach from Barrenjoey Lighthouse



Patonga from the Pacific Trail



Punt ferrying us across Patonga Creek

A walk planned at the last minute / October 23

Vivien de Remy de Courcelles / Photos by Caro Ryan

We met a few SBW members at this very popular campsite amongst club members. Picture this: a nice grassy flat, by the river, with a tap and compost toilet, all this only 10 minutes walk from the car.

Previous visits had seen us looking on the Eastern side of this lovely area so we were keen on exploring toward the West. Everyone went their own way in groups of two on Sunday morning. Emmanuelle and I started with a gentle stroll along a brand new track cut by the catchment authority in order to facilitate the spraying of thickets of lantana. We quickly reached a beautiful creek that we followed upstream to GR68305200 where we found a couple of nice swimming pools. We then braved the scrub that was easy going at first but became rather uncooperative when we crossed a field covered with Cycads and the odd *Cannabis sativa* plantation. We found a pass through cliffs and followed the edge of the rock shelf to GR68255251. We had glimpses of the valley and the river through the canopy. The way was then through open forest until we found a firetrail and followed it via GR68105280 and further to the river bank (68005341). We saw a couple of kayaks unaware that we could observe them through the shrubs. Back toward the now disappearing firetrail we travelled amongst wattles that were growing on a nice grassy flat. We found a creek and went to its junction with the main river (67325338). The day was starting to heat up and there seems to be a dead (and smelly) animal around so we did not hang around too long. It was a fair way up to our next objective (67505289) but the understorey was once again open and the trees provided some shade. We had to scramble via a couple of passes to the top of the cliffs in order to reach a terrific lookout. We then meandered across a plateau until we found a fence and its accompanying track that led us to 67245220: this one was a bit hidden. Further along the track, we bifurcated into an indistinct gully that joined a bigger creek. The inevitable cliff line had to be managed but was rather straightforward and the reward was another beautiful shady creek bed lined with rock slabs (67635162). As the heat of the day began taking a toll on our legs, we walked along the road to go to the next gem of a spot: the junction of 2 creeks shining in the sun that was let through the canopy (68275155). We decided to call it a day and went back to the campsite for a swim in the river where we were joined by the others, everyone having gone on their own personal bushwalk.

They were tales of snake encounters, relaxing with feet dipped in pools, lovely scenery and much improved navigation. The great thing is that every member in the club can do this exact walk or any other in this area; some of you will have guessed that this took place along the rogaining course that was recently set around Coolana and the neighboring land. The above grid references are for checkpoints number 20, 6, 10, 9, 8, 7, 5, 4 and 3. We did this loop in less than 4.5 hours. Everyone can pick up a laminated map in the shelter shed at Coolana and go explore the surroundings. It also provides a terrific playground for any leader who wants to try their hands at leading a walk on and off-track.

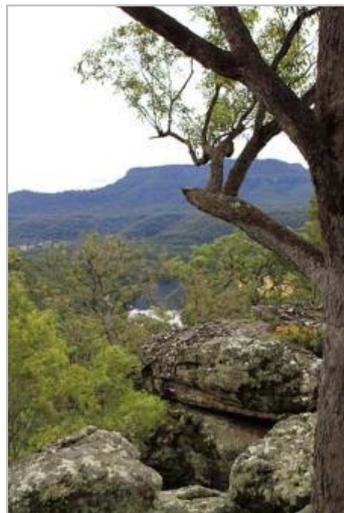
Go and enjoy your property, Sydney Bush Walkers!



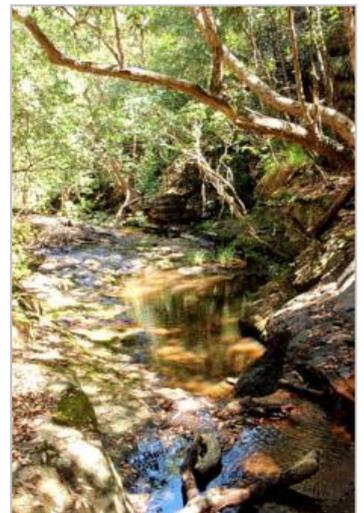
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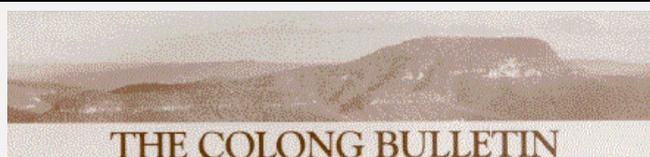
Creek



Lookout



Sun dappled creek



Have you seen the latest Colong Foundation Bulletin?
If not, you can download it from the Colong Foundation website at:
<http://www.colongwilderness.org.au/>

GNW Hornsby to Berowra – The Wildlife Walk / Oct 29

Lisa Sheldon

Meeting at Hornsby train station 5 adventurous walkers decided to brave the 'chance of thunderstorms in the afternoon' weather prediction to enjoy a beautiful warm sunny day on the Great North Walk.

Departing Hornsby we quickly overtook a larger group from the 'Up and Downers' club heading to Thornleigh. We walked down the uneven Heritage Steps which are currently undergoing council upgrade and paused at Rosemead Bushland Park to read the signs of where we were going and the Aboriginal history.

Wandering past Fishponds we noted the no swimming signs and yucky water that did not appear inviting to passersby. Karen was able to recount the story of the fatality years ago that led to the current signage. Despite hearing sporadic gunfire from the rifle range (whose website said they were closed on Sat) the group decided to proceed directly through the range to the historic Steele Bridge. This bridge is one of only 4 in this style still used in NSW. Bridges of this type were used during the WWII South West Pacific campaigns. Throughout the morning numerous skinks and small lizards were seen near the trail.



After firing up the fire trail to a brief rest area with a thermometer reading just under 30 deg, the group proceeded to Galston Gorge and enjoyed their second morning tea. Throughout the morning numerous skinks and small lizards were seen near the trail. After Galston Gorge we were spoilt with a black wallaby bounding across the trail, pausing for the leader to say 'wow' then bouncing away before the camera was ready. We proceeded on the trail up the ridge then down closer to Berowra creek with happy conversations of recent holidays including the grizzly bears in Yellow Stone NP (USA).

The birds were providing a beautiful serenade while on the path so we stopped early for lunch

to enjoy the setting near the creek. A suspected eagle or black cockatoo flew by and a lizard or frog like thing (if two people on the walk agree it becomes the official name!) plopped into the creek for a swim while we were munching. After removing a tick and watching out for leeches we set off again to follow the creek to Crosslands nature reserve. The clouds rolled in and gave up some light showers then rolled out again to leave us steamy and humid. Some of the creeks and rainforest areas gave us 'air-conditioner' like relief. We continued to see numerous lizards and keen eyes from Karen spotted some green water dragons (who were polite enough to be photographed).

Then the call: snake! As we passed a small rock ledge and Karen spotted a small grey / black snake next to the trail. We continued, spotting more lizards and green water dragons and bushes that rustled as we passed. We were in a world of our own with no other walkers on the trail or coming out from Crosslands to disturb the serenity.

Less than 5 minutes from the main Crosslands nature reserve the cry came again: snake! Back, back, BACK! The leader had stepped on a snake curled unseen on the path behind some rocks. The snake was as startled as we were and came after us to escape the rocks and got trod on again by the leader. The leader and the rest of the party rapidly backed up to give the snake room to escape left down the creek bank, identifying it as an adult red bellied black on the way past. As we took stock and checked ourselves for injuries we identified that Jan had been pushed part way down the creek and sustained grazes on both shins and an elbow and was developing a bruise on one leg. We proceeded to Crosslands for time out where clean running water was plentiful and first aid was applied.

After our break there was a plea for no more wildlife - hey look at the willy wagtail! We proceeded as the clouds cleared and gave us a hot and clear afternoon. A few more skinks, small lizards and a pair of lyrebirds were seen along the trail as we crossed Berowra creek at the bridge (two at a time per the sign) and onto Sam's creek. The call of crocodile was made but was unconfirmed by the party.

We tackled the climb to the Berowra fire trail with a few breaks as the afternoon temperature rose back to ~28 deg and cleared to give us a spectacular view at the Naa Badu Lookout. We enjoyed a few more snacks (do we eat too much?) and commented on the low water level in Berowra creek.

A few more upward "undulations" remained and we proceeded with only the thought of icecreams keeping us going. A little bit of road bash while avoiding the metal creatures better known as cars brought us to our destination. As one train pulled out, we used the gap in the timetable to enjoy the promised icecreams.

An eventful day enjoyed by a great group of walkers.

Participants were: Lisa Sheldon (Leader), Karen Brading, Kathryn Reid (P), Jan Dormor, Julian Martin

Mt D'arcy Range / Oct 30

Brendon Anderson



A party of seven set off from Mountain Lagoon on The Long Ridge Trail, at approx 3km we left the trail and to pick up a scrubby ridge line, at this point the views began to open up one of which was of our target Mount D'arcy to the north, as we continued the ridge line narrowed and dropped becoming more and more rocky requiring the first of many scrambles, and as previously discovered ending with a cliff that would prevent access to Tootie Creek so as planned we drop down off the right side and through a pass into Cabbage Tree ck only 200m from its junction with Tootie Creek, once in Cabbage Tree ck the going was good with minimal obstacles, at Tootie we crossed and immediately headed up Middle Creek on an exploratory section of the walk, and was soon reminded of the unpredictability of this area and its terrain that had seen me pushed back many times before, Middle Creek was nothing like the adjacent Cabbage Tree involving more rock hooping and progressively becoming more of a scramble over under and around massive boulders slowing the group greatly, our target was an exit creek 2km away that would take us almost to the top of Mount D'arcy with relative ease but was now out of reach considering our speed, our alternative was a steeper exit much earlier which was navigated with a little help from a hand line, once clear of the creek we picked up a spur that would lead us to the summit, but not before a rest and some lunch on a rocky ledge with glimpses of the views to come.

After lunch and an assessment of the group it appeared some members were beginning to tire although so close to the summit and potential views the scrub and scrambling had taken its toll and the decision was made to return and leave the summit for another day.

All members returned safe and well and for me satisfaction was found not at the summit but in discoveries made in a push to penetrate this wild place that has shown it can push back.

Participants were: Brendon Anderson
 Kat Duda
 Michael Cook
 M Ng
 Tom Brennan
 Aman Singh

Maurice's wedding



Maurice Smith and Conny Nash were married on Saturday 27th August on a boat on the Georges River. SBW representatives were Rosemary Mc Dougal, Melinda Turner and David Trinder.

We wish you the best of love and happiness. We hope to see you both soon!

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2-15 October 2012

Number of participants

6-16 people in a group

Booking deadline

All trips required to book at least 120 days in advance

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Walks & Other Activities / November 1 – 30

Stephen Brading

Leaders:

After an activity please email the completed Walks Attendance Form and Activity Report Form to:
walksreporting@sbw.org.au

Please send this within 48 hours and keep your copies as these are legal documents

Date, Walk Location & Route			Activity Participants																																																						
<p>WED 2 NOV - Mid week Walk - S222E Up to 19km Traversing Pantoneys Crown starting from the northeast end : <i>From 'Ngamperi' property at the end of Crown Station Road and under the guidance of owner Dom Della Libera we walk the short distance before climbing the Crown from the NE corner. Dom, who regularly climbs the Crown, will co- led the party. On top we will complete the traverse and return either the way we came.</i> Walk Report: Detailed walk notes are available from Michael</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Time</th> <th>Location</th> <th>Grid Reference</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0800</td> <td>Ngamperi</td> <td>GR 311 328</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0810</td> <td>Gardens of Stone National Park boundary</td> <td>GR 306 276</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0847</td> <td>Drink stop on Grevillea Ridge</td> <td>GR 299 262</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0905</td> <td>Trolls Bridge</td> <td>GR 298 257</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0935</td> <td>Stop on talus slope</td> <td>GR 292 250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0947</td> <td>Cave and morning tea + land snail (20 mins)</td> <td>GR 292 248</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1032</td> <td>Base of 3rd pitch climb</td> <td>GR 291 247</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1040</td> <td>Top of cliff edge NE corner of Pantoneys Crown</td> <td>GR 291 247</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1100</td> <td>Cairn, visitors books and highest point 1013m</td> <td>GR 289 244</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1205</td> <td>At SW end, exploring + lunch (23 mins)</td> <td>GR 284 237</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1300</td> <td>Water sample</td> <td>GR 287 240</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1310</td> <td>Cairn, visitors books and highest point 1013m</td> <td>GR 289 244</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1320</td> <td>Slot and cave descent</td> <td>GR 291 247</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1400</td> <td>Cave and afternoon tea</td> <td>GR 292 248</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1442</td> <td>Trolls Bridge</td> <td>GR 298 257</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1505</td> <td>Goanna sighting</td> <td>GR 304 327</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1555</td> <td>Ngamperi</td> <td>GR 311 328</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Time	Location	Grid Reference	0800	Ngamperi	GR 311 328	0810	Gardens of Stone National Park boundary	GR 306 276	0847	Drink stop on Grevillea Ridge	GR 299 262	0905	Trolls Bridge	GR 298 257	0935	Stop on talus slope	GR 292 250	0947	Cave and morning tea + land snail (20 mins)	GR 292 248	1032	Base of 3 rd pitch climb	GR 291 247	1040	Top of cliff edge NE corner of Pantoneys Crown	GR 291 247	1100	Cairn, visitors books and highest point 1013m	GR 289 244	1205	At SW end, exploring + lunch (23 mins)	GR 284 237	1300	Water sample	GR 287 240	1310	Cairn, visitors books and highest point 1013m	GR 289 244	1320	Slot and cave descent	GR 291 247	1400	Cave and afternoon tea	GR 292 248	1442	Trolls Bridge	GR 298 257	1505	Goanna sighting	GR 304 327	1555	Ngamperi	GR 311 328	<p>Michael Keats Marion Davies Yuri Bolton</p>
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<p>SUN 6 NOV - Day Walk - M221E 25km Blue Mountains NP: Carlons Farm to Katoomba : <i>From the Megalong Valley up onto Narrow Neck via Medlow Gap and Taros Ladder.</i> Walk Report: We started walking at about 10 o'clock, having left two of our four cars in Katoomba. The walking was straightforward, greatly helped by the clouds that came over in the afternoon, cooling us as we walked back north along Narrow Neck. There is a lot of fire-trail bashing, but the views really are superb - south to Lake Burragorang, east to Mt Solitary and Kings Plateau, and west down into the Megalong Valley. The trip was advertised as 21 km, but that was only as far as the Narrow Neck locked gate. Adding in the distance from there to Katoomba Station, it was more like 25 km. It was a long trip back to retrieve the cars from Carlons Farm, but fortunately it only required three of us, freeing everybody else to drive or train back to Sydney.</p>			<p>Leigh McClintock Paul Nothold (P) Tim Yewdall Margaret Rozea Harumi Hayakawa (P) Christoph Boddem(P) Brigitte Clark (P) Carl Panvino (P) Sandra See</p>																																																						
<p>SUN 6 NOV - Day Walk - L221 Q 26km Royal NP : Bundeena to Otford <i>Classic Coast Track walk.</i> Walk Report: The walk started in warm conditions and it was an enjoyable crossing of Port Hacking from Cronulla to the start of the walk itself at Bundeena. We made a good pace in the morning with a photo stop at Camembert Rock and morning tea at Little Marley Beach (and a swim for some). After passing through Wattamolla we stopped for lunch at the waterfall and swimming hole at Curracurrang where we had another swim (with a resident eel to keep us company). Another quick stop was made at Curracarrang to view Eagle Rock. After a stop to enjoy the magnificent view down the coast from the headland above Garie Beach we then stopped for drinks and ice creams at the kiosk (and swim number 3 for some). By now the cloud and humidity had built up but apart from a few drops it stayed dry. Not long after leaving Garie Beach three of the party decided to make a dash for the 5.15 train from Otford. The rest continued at a more leisurely pace with a second afternoon tea at Burning Palms. From there it was the climb up to Otford and the 7.15 train back to Sydney. We found out later that only one of the fast trios made the 5.15. The others got a lift to Waterfall and then a city-bound train. The Coast Track in Royal NP has to be one of the best scenic walks one can do and for both first timers and those who have done it before, it always delivers. And so close to a large city.</p>			<p>David Bell Pamela Irving Agnes Piasecki (P) Carina Dennis Christine McColl Helen Lalas Kat Duda Lynette Preston Nikolay Georgievskiy (P) Robert Bettis Cvet Jankulovska (P)</p>																																																						

Walks & Other Activities / November 1 – 30 ^{cont.}

Date, Walk Location & Route	Activity Participants
<p>WEEKEND 5-6 NOV - Weekend Walk - M222 Q 26km Morton NP : <i>Sassafras - Newhaven Gap - Quiltys Mountain - Hidden Valley and return.</i> Walk Report: Budawangs weather behaved beautifully. Blue skies complimented the stunning scenery. Great view of Pigeon House from the Bora ground on Quiltys Mountain. Found the pass on and off Mt Sturgess in Hidden Valley. Next time I think I will take mountain bikes out along the firetrail! Thank you to all participants that contributed in making this a very enjoyable weekend.</p> 	Melinda Turner David Trinder Frank Hardigan Ted Nixon John Robb Sky O'Donnell Rosetta Lee (P) Phil Barnsley (P) Rolf Marsden (P) Inma Suarez (P)
<p>WEEKEND 5-6 NOV - Weekend Walk - M232 Wollemi NP: Island Mountain traverse: <i>Newnes camping area - Wolgan River Trail - up a scramble valley at GR 488 263.- campsite will be on a tributary of Firefly Canyon Creek at approx GR 462 248 - Zobels Gully and exit out to the Wolgan Road at approx GR 433 235</i> Walk Report: See separate magazine article</p>	Michael Keats Yuri Bolotin Marion Davies Sue Bucknell Craig Austin Christine Austin Stephen Brading Yvonne Brading
<p>WEEKEND 5-6 NOV - Weekend Bushcare Activity - Coolana Bush Care Weekend: Activity Report: Don Finch was unable to go. Barry Wallace was there working on his own to mow access tracks on the Eastern Flat. Blades loose on new mower do not use until fixed, note attached, check board for clearance to use. Contract sprayer is being used to spray weeds as we are not able to spray ourselves.</p>	Barry Wallace
<p>SAT 12 NOV - Day Walk - M232 Q 19km Blue Mountains NP: <i>Carlons Farm - Carlons Creek - Blackhorse Ridge - Blackhorse Gap - Mt Mouin - Medlow Gap - Megalong fire trail - Carlons' Farm.</i> Walk Report: It was a fine warm day as we left Carlons Farm, taking the narrow foot track along the nettles-infested Carlons Creek, crossing Breakfast Creek, and then steeply ascending the steep spur to the top of Blackhorse Ridge, from where there are great views over the twisted valley of Breakfast Creek far below. We then made our way up onto the western ridge of Mt Mouin for a lunch stop, from where we had great views of Megalong Valley, the sheer cliffs of Narrow Neck, Cox's River Valley, Mt Cloudmaker, and Kanangra Walls. After lunch we proceeded to the top of Mt Mouin on some rough and rocky tracks. Up there we had more great views, this time including the blue waters of Lake Burragorang, which are shored up behind Warragamba Dam. We descended the steep slopes from Mt Mouin down to Medlow Gap, and made our way via Megalong firetrail around to Carlons Farm, finishing the day with a pleasant meal at Gardner's Inn at Blackheath.</p>	Nigel Weaver Sarah Wang (P) David Angell Antra Kalnins (P) Misako Sugiyama Sid Majumdar (P) Christine McColl Kirsten Black (P) Stanley Wong Grahame Byrne Jan Spencer Nikolay Georgievsky (P) Anastasia Korobova (P) Tim Sutherland Tomas Lhotsky (P) Jo Rhoden Adrian Buzo Greg Bray Jennifer Edwards Daniella Toha (P)
<p>SAT 19 NOV - Day Activity - Medium/hard, 60km, 1150m ↑/1850 ↓ MTB on Andersons Firetrail: Activity Report: We did the classic Anderson firetrail via Kings tableland that 2 of us explored to the end. The weather was rather hot making the long and steep uphill to Woodford a hard slog. Due to the extra work on Kings tableland and the hot weather, everyone caught a train at Woodford and left the Oaks for another time... probably in winter!</p>	Vivien de Rémy de Courcelles Sue Bucknell Andrew Vilder Emmanuelle Convert Ryan Clement (V)

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Just tell the shop attendant before they ring up the sale please!

Walks & Other Activities / November 1 – 30 ^{cont.}

Date, Walk Location & Route	Activity Participants
<p>SAT 19 NOV - Day Walk - M111 16km</p> <p>Balls Head to Balmoral: <i>Coal Loader, Balls Head Make our way via the shoreline (more or less) to the Harbour Bridge, Thence via Cremorne Point, Sirius Cove, Taronga Zoo, Bradley's Head and the stunning Chowder Bay track . to Balmoral Beach</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Walk Report:</p> <p>A superbly sunny day with just enough breeze, spectacular Sydney views, and some harbour fog to add a touch of excitement. Well rewarded by coffee and a refreshing swim in the harbour when we reached our destination.</p>	<p>Susi Prescott Gail Hansen Tim Yewdall Karen Carver Kelvin Chung (P) Paul Notholt (P) Sheena Chew (P) Yasmin Davidson (P) Mike Kerns (P) Jen Kerns (P) Pamela Young Jenny Xia (P) Virginia Waller (P) Olate Cabmona (V)</p>
<p>SUN 20 NOV - Day Walk - M212 8km</p> <p>Blue Mountains NP: Glenbrook : <i>Pisgah Rock - Monkey Ropes Creek - Lincoln Creek - Erskine Creek - Dadder Cave - Blands Pool - return.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Walk Report:</p> <p>Despite the forecast we had excellent weather for this walk including a cool climb up the Pisgah Rock track. A breeze during the day with could cover kept the temperature in check. Most of the recent visitors to Dadder Cave have been members of SBW according to the log book. Blands Pool provided excellent swimming and the rock platforms along Erskine Creek made the out and back walk pleasant. We also had a snake free day. In summary a enjoyable day was had by all in good company.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">    </div>	<p>Stephen Brading Yvonne Brading Lynette Preston Richard Brading Misako Sugyama Marlene Hinson (V) Antoniya Bachvarova (P) Peter McDonald (P) Renee Buchanan (V) Alistair Buchanan (V)</p>
<p>WEEKEND 19-20 NOV - Weekend Walk - M332 Q 25km</p> <p>Kanangra-Boyd NP : <i>Kanangra Plateau - Coal Seam Cave - Gingra Range - Roots Ridge - Kowmung River - camp at Orange Bluff.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Walk Report:</p> <p>The walk went with 8 members including 2 Prospective Members in fine weather. The first stop was Cottage Rock for morning tea from which you can see 360 deg all around. We walked part of the Gingra Range and turned right onto Roots Ridge. The descent of Roots Ridge was not hard but the heat of the day made it difficult and we glad to stop at the Kowmung River for lunch. After lunch a couple of hours walking up the river we came to the Orange Bluff camp site. The site is very large, beside the river and has the large cliff face over the river that has an irregular pattern of rock strata, some of it being orange in colour. The group loved the camp site; it is an old favourite of the Club. On Sunday we started early to avoid the heat of the day on the hill and arrived back at the cars at mid-afternoon. Rain started immediately on arrival at the shelter shed. All performed well, the wilderness was as usual very special and conversation was lively all weekend and consequently the walk was socially, environmentally and exercise wise very successful.</p>	<p>David Trinder Melinda Turner Jouni Leppanen Joost Steenvoorden P Ted Nixon Stanley Wong Michelle Smart (P) Skye O'Donnell</p>
<p>21-25 NOV - Extended Activity - Dunns Swamp: <i>Camping with bushwalking swimming and paddling opportunities</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Activity Report:</p> <p>Very wet week with only Tuesday suitable for walking - see Mid Week Walkers article. We packed up one day early with very wet gear to dry out at home.</p>	<p>Bill Holland Don Cornell Jenny Cornell Fran Holland Kay Chan Kate Murdoch Barry Murdoch Patrick James Rick Angel Kim Walker Marian Plaude</p>



Walks & Other Activities / November 1 – 30 ^{cont.}

Date, Walk Location & Route	Activity Participants
<p>WED 23 NOV - Mid week Walking - S222 6-9km</p> <p>Newnes State Forest: Upper Wolgan River : <i>Park 1 vehicle at GR 360 065 and another at GR 349 090 (near the Spanish Steps). Return to GR 360 065 and proceed down the Wolgan River.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Walk Report:</p> <p>As the rain was pelting down the briefing session for the walk was held under cover at the Clarence Railway Station. The rain had turned the Blackfellows Hand Trail into a series of shallow pools separated by short stretches of greasy road. This made the journey and the car shuffle a bit longer than normal so we started walking late at 0937 in the rain. The forest looked beautiful in the rain. At GR 351 075 and at 1100m a bike track was intersected. It was headed the way we wished to go so it was followed for about 150m before we entered the upper reaches of an unnamed creek. Once it no longer served our purpose we headed downstream, for a few hundred metres before climbing a low ridge on the western side. It was now 1025 and we sought a cave or other dry spot to have a refreshment break. As if by magic an isolated pagoda appeared on the edge of the ridge. We headed for it hoping that somewhere around the base we would find a spot out of the rain. We were in luck. We found an overhang at the base of the pagoda on its eastern flank, GR 353 080. Whilst it was not perfect, it was dry and there was room for us to remove our packs and relax for a time. We did note with concern that this pagoda like so many where underground mining is taking place has a significant recent crack from top to bottom. I also noted that an opportunistic heath plant species had recently established in a narrow section of the crack. The rain did not let up. The wetness also was starting to permeate our so called wet weather gear. Time to get moving. The next section of the walk was pure wonder. As we headed downhill into the catchment several large pagodas loomed out of the forest and then provided sentinels for entry into an enchanted world. It started simply enough, an overhang with a dry creek bed floor. Around a bend it evolved into a very large cavernous overhang and then into a huge twin cave complex possibly 20m high with a sloping ramp that led up to a secondary level where stunning views across a tree fern filled creek fill the field of vision. Later, looking back at the aperture of this cave from the eastern bank it appears as a vast black hole in the base of a massive sandstone pagoda. What a spot. Next it was my desire to descend to the Wolgan River via a tortuous section of canyon below this cave complex. I went deep into the fern filled upper section and disappeared from view. I managed to go down about 10m before it would have been necessary to fix a hand line. We would have become totally wet. The creek was also flowing well so there was no support for the idea. I returned to the top. After photographing the canyon slot we continued down the graded ridge to the Wolgan River. The river at this point and on this day was remarkable. Within a broad flat bed, varying from 50 to 100m in width the actual waterway meanders like the lower reaches of a mature river. Never more than 1.5m wide the river is convoluted beyond imagination travelling more than twice the distance via successive loops and convolutions. Even more surprising is that the river banks are almost devoid of vegetation so it is possible to overview the entire phenomenon. Lots of images were recorded here, and also a water sample for the water data bank, GR 356 083. Still, the rain did not let up. We were all in varying degrees of wetness. The temperature had not risen, staying at 10 degrees. We pushed along the Wolgan River downstream to the bend at GR 352 086. It was now 1226. Here we had a number of choices to make decisions about. To the east was another very tight, and very explore-able canyon that appeared to stretch for over 500m through an 'S' bend; 300m downstream yet another side creek and canyon offered opportunities. We opted to cease further exploration and exit via the ridge which forms the obstruction that forces the Wolgan River to change course shifting 200m west before continuing its long journey north. For a brief moment the rain stopped and we had doubts about our decision. The break lasted perhaps two minutes and then the rain was back. Our exit route was plotted to roughly coincide with the 1080m contour line. Certainly it was a longer route but it correctly brought us back onto Fire Trail No.5 about 200m SW of the placed vehicle. By 1320 we were regrouped at the walk starting point. There was unanimous support for a change of gear, a snack in the cars to be followed by a hot pie at Pie in the Sky at Bilpin</p>	<p>Michael Keats Marion Davies Yuri Bolton</p>

**Bureau of Meteorology - Snowy Mountains District
 Forecasting Service**

A 7 day forecasting service for The Snowy Mountains District has been created as a separate forecasting area out of the previous Southern Tablelands District.

Forecasts include the probability of snow above certain elevations and town weather reports for specific locations. Link:

<http://www.bom.gov.au/nsw/forecasts/snowy.shtml>

Walks & Other Activities / November 1 – 30 ^{cont.}

Date, Walk Location & Route		Activity Participants	
<p>SAT 26 NOV - Day Activity - Ku-ring-gai NP: - Bobbin Head - Basic Skills for New Members <i>Basic navigation, first aid and bushcraft enabling prospective members to fulfil their membership requirements.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Activity Report:</p> <p>A sodden morning proved a challenging start to the day. Congratulations to all the Prospectives who braved the teeming rain and muddy conditions to firstly attend and secondly complete the basic skills day.</p>		<p>Lucy Moore Philip Worledge David Trinder Charmian Siel (P) Lorraine Mathot (P) Inma Suarez (P) Paul Notholt (P) Phil Barnsley (P) David Power (P) Geoff Budd (P) Peter Townsend (P) Lucy Keating (P) Rosetta Lee (P) Phil Hayes (P) Amanda Cooton (P) Prue Sampson (P) Christine McDonald (P) Jane Gray (P)</p>	
<p>SAT 26 NOV - Day Walk - M111</p> <p>Central coast: <i>Lisarow station - Katandra Reserve - Erina Trig - Rumbalara Reserve - Gosford station.</i></p>	<p>12km</p>	<p>Walk Report:</p> <p>We had pouring rain most of the way in the train to Lisarow, preceded by pouring rain on the previous night. Nevertheless, five intrepid souls got off the train at Lisarow to find that the rain eased off almost immediately to a light sprinkle, and then ended altogether. If ever there was luck for us bushwalkers, this was it! We departed from Lisarow under a cloudy sky, and made our way up to St John's Lookout at Katandra, high on the ridge tops. The views across the valleys to the ocean and Kincumba Mountain were quite attractive. We continued along the ridge tops via a mix of foot tracks and fire trails (pleasant ones by normal standards) until we reached Rumbalara. There were good views of Brisbane Water along the way, especially as the sun had now come out. We left Rumbalara via the southern spur of the ridge, enjoyed fabulous views of Brisbane Water, and made our way into Gosford to finish the walk.</p>	<p>Nigel Weaver Andrew Knock Anthea Michaelis Terrence Biggs Patricia Sherry</p>
<p>SUN 27 NOV - Day Activity - Q Royal NP: - Practical Navigation Workshop For Prospective Members <i>A navigation instruction day. We will start with some theory refresher information and then do some practical exercises to test your skills.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Activity Report:</p> <p>Weather man finally got prediction right, fine and sunny with cool south-westerly winds, which suited us perfectly. Initially there was a lot of interest in this navigation day but eventually ended up with only 4 takers which made it very easy for me and more interesting for those that attended because everyone had a few goes at navigating through the sometimes very thick undergrowth. Leaches were plentiful due to the recent rain which had everyone on the lookout every time we stopped for a new bearing or bearing check. All up we all had a good time and hopefully 4 more members for SBW.</p>		<p>Tony Manes Linda Willard (P) John Robb (P) Richard Quinn (P) Siddhartha Majumdar (P)</p>	
<p>SUN 27 NOV - Day Walk - M223</p> <p>Blue Mountains NP: - Blackheath <i>Neates Glen car park - Grand Canyon walk - Rodrigus Pass track - off track to Hilary Falls - Junction Rock - Govetts Leap - Neates Glen car park.</i></p>	<p>Q</p> <p>17km</p>	<p>Walk Report:</p> <p><i>Stephen's Comment:</i> Having scored the best weather for a week 23 walkers set off down the Neates Glenn and Grand canyon track. Impressive stone stair work for tourists, a gully/canyon which is not dead from drought and possibly the removal of the Grand Canyon abseil entry point were changes I noted. Toni joined the party near Blackwall Glen having walked from Blackheath station as she arrived on a later train bringing our number to 24. During the day the waterfalls were at their best having the benefit of a week of rain, a number of the party took dips in Govetts creek and the group climbed the track to Govetts Leap carpark like it was winter. Thank you Shahram for organizing such an enjoyable day.</p>	<p>Shahram Landarani & 23 Others</p> 
<p>WEEKEND 26-27 NOV - Weekend Activity - Canyon Grade 4 Bushwalk Grade S333E Kanangra Boyd NP: Carra Beanga Brook <i>An early start and a small efficient party is required to get through the 15 abseils and final jungle creek-bash to a nice camp site on Kanangra Creek.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Activity Report:</p> <p>Following 4 days of rain we optimistically made the 6 hour drive to Kanangra on Friday night, yes, 6 hours, the M4 was closed. We awoke to more rain at 6am so changed our plans due to the presumed lack of fun rather than safety, but as it turned out, it was the correct choice for safety. Instead, we took a trip down Dione Dell on Saturday in high water, has anyone seen it that high? We tentatively recce'd Kalang for the next day but too much water and very slippery. We camped at Kanangra on Saturday night, then stopped at Katoomba on the way home for a quick trip down Malaita Point. Carra Beanga still awaits its first SBW trip... You can see a 5 minute movie of our Dione Dell trip here: http://youtu.be/hWofiBQojTc</p>		<p>Richard Pattison Andrew Smith Rachel Grindlay Tom Brennan</p>	

The Midweek Walkers

Bill Holland

The Mid Week Walkers are an informal gathering of people in SBW who find the time to enjoy walking, cycling and kayaking during the quiet times of the week.

The range of activities caters for all abilities with emphasis on a more relaxed style of walking. Some even prefer to spend at least part of the time back at base reading, bird watching or just relaxing in the outdoors. In most cases you can join us for all or any part of the Monday to Friday events, but we need to know you are coming.

If you would like to be added to our Midweek Walkers mailing list please let me know by contacting Bill Holland 4296 3084 or by email to billholland@bigpond.com

Well, it was a memorable experience at Dunns Swamp last week! We arrived just after lunchtime on Monday in cloudy but fine weather. Don and Jenny were there in their van and others arrived during the afternoon and following day. The rest of Monday was spent settling in, erecting our large tent and tarpaulin. Tuesday remained warm and cloudy during our morning walk to the high point overlooking magnificent pagoda rocks. A lunchtime swim was followed by a walk to the other side of the lake and upstream as a gentle rain started and continued until evening. Happy hour was under the tarpaulin, followed by a campfire and barbecue until rain drove us back under the tarpaulin and for some an early bedtime. The rain continued through Wednesday and was accompanied by strong winds during the night and on Thursday. By unanimous vote we decided enough was enough and headed to home a day earlier than planned. Dunns Swamp in the wet was not a very pleasant experience!

Now the end of the year is upon us! Looking back on the year our activities have been well attended and most enjoyable. In February we went to Myall Lakes, Myola in March. Bielany in April, Yarrangobilly Caves in May, a Farewell to Robyn's Farm in June, Woolgoolga in September, Cutlers Cottage at Myall lakes in October and the wet, wet Dunns Swamp in November.



Looking ahead to next year, Leigh McClintock has investigated the Yuragir Coastal Walk and it is now scheduled for 27th - 30th March. The visit to Canberra earlier planned for this month will now be moved to 9th - 13th April to take advantage of the Autumn colours.

So at this stage the activities for the first half of 2012 are:

January:	Nothing scheduled.
February:	Myola
March:	Yuragir Coastal Walk
April:	Canberra
April:	Woorabinda Lodge - Jindabyne
May:	Moonan Brook Forestry Cottage
June:	Either Ben Ricketts & Barren Grounds, Pittwater YHA or possibly a return to Newnes Cabins.

Here are more details. Please let me have your indications of interest or otherwise so I can make some firm bookings.

February: Villa Paradiso Myola 20th - 24th February

Myola is nice and quiet, one-street village on the beautiful Jervis Bay. The house is modern and comfortable and is surrounded by beautiful bush. The garden of the house goes down to river (handy for kayakers) A nice stroll through the bush brings you to the kilometres long beaches of the bay. Good stretches for cycling as well. The booking has been me know if you would like to attend and please forward \$50 deposit.

March: Yuragir Coastal Walk 27th - 30th March

The Yuragir Coastal Walk is a 65 km along the coast from Angourie in the north to Red Rock in the south. It will be four days either pack carrying or day walks from a central base camp - see separate magazine article by Leigh McClintock

April: Canberra 11th - 13th April (three days)

See all the autumn colours. We will stay at caravan park and cycle the bicycle pathways, visit galleries etc over three days. This is an activity great for the energetic and not so energetic cyclists or those who simply want to visit the well-known features of Canberra. Please let me know if you would like to join us and I will make a cabin or tent site booking. This is in the school holiday period so early advice would be appreciated.



The Midweek Walkers ^{cont.}

April: Woorabinda Lodge at Jindabyne Mon 23rd - Fri 27th April

This has always proved to be very popular. We will stay in a modern lodge with all facilities in Jindabyne. The cost will be about \$25 per night per room. Maurie and Barbara Bloom will lead us on walks in the Alpine areas each day but there will be time for easy sightseeing as well. Please contact me if you would like to attend please forward \$50 deposit.

May: Return to Moonan Brook Forestry Cottage 14th - 18th May

We were there several years ago. The cottage is described as a wilderness hideaway, adjoining a babbling brook - Moonan Brook - which has a source high in the Barrington Tops. It is secluded and peaceful. The cottage can sleep 8 and the adjoining bunkhouse a maximum of 16. This is a historical site of a school operating early last century. Moonan Brook Cottage has been kept as a symbol of the past and has not changed to be in line with today's living. Please contact me if you would like to attend.

The Gardens of Stone National Park and beyond

Book 1 release announcement

Bushwalkers and authors Michael Keats and Brian Fox are proud to announce the release of Book 1 of the series of 8 Books on The Gardens of Stone National Park and beyond.

Book 1, 400 pages in full colour. This book includes information about **geology** and the **significant geomorphology** that has shaped the **dramatic landscapes** which characterise this very special national park in NSW.

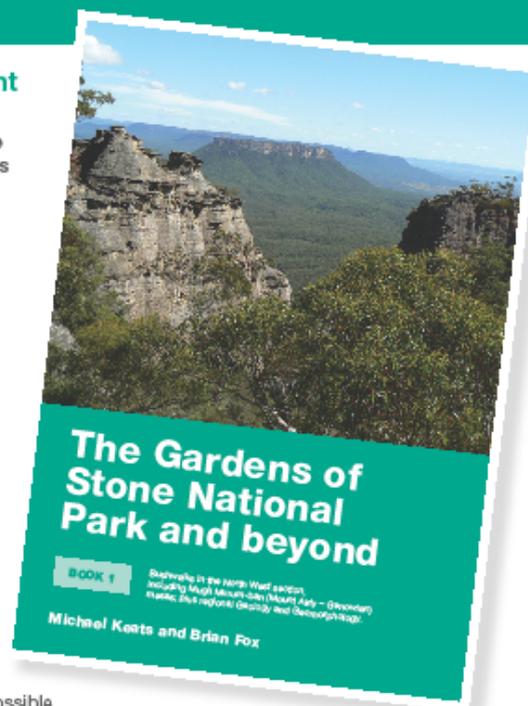
Twenty five walks take the reader/walker to places that most only dream of. Documenting a **rich tapestry of experiences** encapsulated in a very personal text that takes you along with these adventurous explorers all the way. The **hundreds of colour photographs**, many by invited professionals, round out a total experience.

Cutting edge design has been employed by Natasha Foley to create a text that is **difficult to put down** and impossible to resist owning.

The **next 7 books** in this same series are now in production, and include **hundreds of walks** together with information about the **climate, Aboriginal history, historical exploration and maps, the rivers and pollution, local history and place names**, a comprehensive discussion and listing of the **flora and fauna**, the impact of **European settlement, threatened species and environments**.

This work as a whole sets a new **benchmark** for appreciating and understanding our **heritage**, how precious it is and what **natural wonders** there are in this most special of our **NSW National Parks**.

Copies are available now for **\$50.00** each plus postage, from the authors or from your specialist book retailer.



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“Your First Tent”

Christine McColl



Ho ho ho....Santa is going to give you a tent for Xmas!!

But wait...you have to tell her what kind of tent you want...and there is a choice from hundreds!!

Lucky you - this article is going to make it SUPER SIMPLE.

To buy a tent, there are four and four only questions you need to ask yourself:

Am I a super human being who enjoys lugging up hills in the heat with a lot of weight on my back, or am I just a regular walker who tries within reason to carry as little weight as possible?

Most likely you are a regular walker, and therefore want the lightest tent possible. Remember, most of what you do in your tent is sleep i.e. lie there unconscious, hardly able to appreciate the vast dimensions of a spacious but heavy tent.

So stay light. This means for one person, weights of from **900g to 1.5 max.**

For two, up to 2.2k

These weights are easily attained by good quality backpacking tents.

Now, for the lightest weight possible, there are going to be sacrifices. You won't be able to stand in your tent. You may not even be able to sit up comfortably, depending on how tall you are. You will not be able to do yoga in your tent. But... you will be dry, away from bugs, and comfortable enough to sleep and wriggle in and out of your clothing, and stash a few bits of your gear somewhere around you.

All tents are not created equal i.e. two tents of identical weight might give you two different amounts of living space and therefore comfort.

How do you know how much space there is going to be in your tent?

The simplest thing is obviously to go into a shop (yes an actual place made of a physical substance!!!) and check it out. But if you are buying your tent online, that's hard.

A manufacturer will generally provide 3 specifications to help you figure out how livable your tent will be:

- ✿ floor dimensions
- ✿ floor area (square metres)
- ✿ peak height: a sneaky concept as an area of space akin to what you would have in a room with e.g. a 3 metre ceiling. Instead, this concept refers to only a single spot in the tent... (Well you only have one head of course!). Peak height in backpacking tents ranges from approximately 94cm to 1.2 metres.

Typically this information will be accompanied with diagrams of the tent from the side and above. You should study these carefully, as they will give you more important information i.e. how the walls are angled and how the floor is shaped.

Some tents are wedge shaped, with minimal space at the foot end, but enough space to sit up at the other end. Some are rounded and dome like, with more overall headroom, and some have almost vertical walls, which offer a lot of headroom.

All floors are not rectangular. Most are slightly and some significantly tapered - remember we are widest at our shoulders and hips, narrowest at our feet...so tapering makes sense. Some 3 or 4 pole four season tents are wider at the hip areas.

So, variations in floor shape, wall angling and peak height will affect your living experience in the tent. Without eyeballing the tent, you just have to try to figure it out from the diagrams and dimensions provided (or you could make little plasticine tents and people if creative...)

“Your First Tent”^{cont.}

If you are claustrophobic, very tall, prone to sleep walking or thrashing in your sleep, you need to take these factors into account when buying a tent, even if you end up with a slightly larger tent. While paring down is important, buying a tent in which you are extremely uncomfortable will only put you off backpacking. Only you can draw the line between the weight you are happy to carry, and the comfort you are prepared to forego.

Am I going to want to camp in the snow and places, here and overseas, with a serious risk of blizzards and extreme winds, or is most of my walking going to be round Sydney, and sometimes further afield but generally in temperate climates?

You may not be sure how far you want to go with backpacking, so it's best to think of yourself as the second type of walker, and start with a **3 season tent**. This will typically be lightweight, feature many mesh panels to boost air flow, and be capable of holding off downpours but not a blizzard.

It will be described as **double walled**. This does not mean it's an off cut from the Great Wall of China -it means that there is a main tent body with a waterproof floor and a breathable canopy, often made up mostly of insect proof mesh, plus a rain fly.

A **four season tent** is made to hold up to howling gales and heavy snow..the kind of weather you may encounter in mountains south of Canberra at any time, though far less likely in summer in the Snowy than in winter. You may also encounter weather like this in extreme conditions overseas. Typically they use more poles and heavier fabrics than 3 season tents, and therefore weigh more. The fly will extend right down to the ground, so they can feel stuffy in warm conditions. **Single wall** tents are mainly used in snow, and are designed to shed snow more than rain. Their walls are made of waterproof/breathable fabrics, so they don't need a fly. They seal tightly in cold snowy weather, and use vapour pressure to force out condensation. They can be lighter than double walled tents, but they can also be a lot stuffier in mild conditions.

It's silly to try to have only one tent for both sorts of conditions. Start with a 3 season tent, and acquire another one if you need. Most serious walkers have enough tents to equip a small troop division!

Tip: you will pitch your tent into the wind, for stability. It helps if the door is at the side of the tent not the front, as if it is windy and rainy the elements will find it harder to get in, as you are getting in and out.

Should it take a PhD in engineering to set up your tent, or are you happy to be able to set it up with a few clicks of a pole and the ability to drape a hook over said pole?

Generally when we get to camp, we are tired and want our little home created ASAP and, should we put it in the wrong place we want to be able to move it easily and if it's raining when we get in, we'd like to be able to set up the tent without getting it so sodden that it drips all over us all night..

So... we want a **free standing tent**. This means it can stand without metal stakes being banged into often rock hard ground. Of course we can bang the stakes in, and should if it's windy or easy etc etc...but a freestanding tent, which just hangs off its poles which brace themselves into the ground from their spring loading is ideal. Free standing tents are also good for camping platforms, a feature of e.g. the Overland Track and the Western Arthurs. And...when you pack up and want to empty out the dirt...just pick it up and shake it! (Tent vacuum cleaners not yet invented...)

Free standing tents enable you to put the fly up first, crawl under it (assuming a downpour), then put up the tent body. This will keep your tent and gear much drier than if you have to put up the tent first, then the fly.

Do you want a home away from home, or are you satisfied with the basics?

Like anything, tents can be customized to the nth degree. You can have multiple doors, vestibules (an extension of the rain fly that creates a covered storage area for messy wet gloop you don't want in the tent), inner pockets, cutesy windows for viewing the sky, internal clothes lines....not up to veggie gardens yet but maybe that will be next year's model!

Every extra bit adds weight; every extra bit of stitching adds the potential for leaks and malfunction; every extra zipper adds both (out damned zipper!!).

So...a **vestibule** is incredibly convenient for storing boots, your pack, cooking if you have gas in the rain, providing a bit of a barrier between the tent itself and the outside world. But one is plenty...

Doors...two doors seem classy but are dispensable given the above. Think, how much time do you spend going in and out of a door? If you're sharing a tent with a non partner, it's a pretty squished up experience anyway, and having an extra door won't alter this fundamental fact. If you are sleeping vertical to the door, having 2 won't make any difference anyway.

“Your First Tent”^{cont.}

Windows...forget it..more seams...heavy plastic means it's not like a real glass window (there was a reason glass was invented!!)...what difference does it make at night and in the day you won't be in the tent..

Other gizmos...a couple of internal pockets are very convenient and light. Similarly a clothes line along the inner roof of the tent.

Yep, keep it simple and you'll be more comfortable, with fewer things to go wrong or lug..

I'll finish off with some basic tent facts....and a clue to bits of tent jargon..

Nylon and polyester are standard tent fabrics.. Nylon is a little lighter, tougher and more resistant to wear and tear - hence tent bodies are typically nylon (it's come a long way since stockings!). Polyester is intrinsically more resistant to water, and is supposed to resist UV degradation from sunlight, hence it's used for rain flies (still, where possible don't pitch your tent in the sun for extended camps, though of course if you pitch under a tree you'll angst about falling branches..). Note that silicon coated nylon resists water absorption as well as PU coated polyester.

Nylon can be Hercules tough, or aikido light. The weight of tent fabrics is expressed in denier (D) (you don't need the fine print)- take home point is that higher numbered Ds indicate a coarser but tougher fabric, and lower the opposite. Tent floors are often around 70 D, and canopies 40 to 70D. Ultra light tents might have canopies as low as 20D and floors as low as 30. This is great, but of course they are more fragile...

Poles - just go with what your tent provides. A range of materials has been used, all based around aluminum and different alloys, and engineered to provide maximum flexibility and lightness. Unless you are a serious tech head, this info is pretty boring and irrelevant.

The manufacturers of good quality tents typically will include a repair sleeve with the tent's pole set. It's a short tube, with a slightly larger diameter than the poles. It acts as a splint on a bent or broken pole section. Wrap duct tape around it while it's not in use, then you can unravel it to secure the sleeve in place in the unfortunate situation where you have to use it.

Minimum weight: total weight of the tent body, fly and poles only. Like figures on petrol consumption, this may vary slightly from manufacturer specs, but shouldn't be too far out.

Packed weight: total weight of everything you most likely will carry i.e. tent body, rain fly, poles, stakes, stuff sacks, pole sack, instructions...again a figure supplied by the manufacturer.

Packed size: the amount of space a rolled tent plus the above will occupy in your pack.

Footprint: no not rare sightings of traces of the Tasmanian Tiger or a snow leopard. A footprint is a custom fitted ground cloth that goes under your tent, usually with grommets which match the tent's pole placements. This protects the floor of your precious tent from all those nasty things on the ground which might attack it e.g. sticks, rocks, half covered beer bottle lids, WMD... not to mention another layer of protection in case of heavy rain.

Sure you can get a regular groundsheet, but it most likely will be heavier than a footprint, and won't fit so neatly under your tent (= more work at campsite folding it up to fit). Warning: a groundsheet which protrudes from underneath your tent will wick water straight into the tent should it rain, and you will wake with your precious down bag a sodden mess.

Armed with this information you can head off to the North Pole and fill Santa in in detail... before you go do some research on particular brands on the websites of outdoor shops, here and online so Santa has some clues as to your final brand choice. Typically the website describing a tent will have a list of specifications which cover the above points, and often reviews too.

A great place to look for reviews of a particular tent is

<http://www.backpackgearthest.org/>

<http://www.backpacker.com/>

Good luck, and great camping!



The Winter edition of the Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs magazine is now available.

It can be downloaded at:

<http://www.bushwalking.org.au/bushwalking/BWWinter11.pdf>

Orange Hawkweed, Kosciuszko National Park



The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is seeking the assistance of bushwalkers and visitors to Kosciuszko National Park to stamp out a new and serious threat to the park - Orange Hawkweed.

Hawkweed is an iridescent orange mountain daisy from Europe which was first found in Victoria at Falls Creek where it is believed to have escaped from a domestic garden. The weed has continued to spread despite a huge effort to track and destroy it in NSW and Victoria.

It was first discovered in Kosciuszko National Park in 2003. Since then it has been found at 135 locations with the largest population covering an area measuring almost 300 metres by 100 metres.

Volunteers and staff are continuing to comb the park while the plant is flowering.

NPWS Southern Ranges Regional Manager, Dave Darlington, said that at the moment in NSW it is confined to an area in the middle of the park.

“The populations we know of are being sprayed and constantly monitored during the year to ensure they are killed and not spreading further,” he said.

“We are also running spraying trials and keeping a careful watch on how the plant responds to spraying.

“This plant has a real potential to change the whole appearance of the Australian Alps, smothering native vegetation and impacting on wildlife reliant on a native understorey.

“It loves mountain landscapes and is spread easily by the wind, water, animals and people.

“Finding this plant while the numbers are still small is critical. In New Zealand where the plant ran completely amok it has spread to an area covering six million hectares.

“We currently have teams of NPWS staff and volunteers scouring an area of 58 square kilometres on foot to see if they can find more plants. We are aware of almost 50 sites in the Round Mountain and 15 Mile Ridge area.

“It will continue to flower for the next few weeks and we are urging bushwalkers to notify us if they find it.

“We are encouraging visitors with an interest to help to call into one of the three visitors centres at Jindabyne, Tumut or Khancoban to pick up information about and talk to our staff about what to look for.

“They should under no circumstances pick this flower because this may enhance its growth. They should photograph it, take careful note of the location and if at all possible flag the site with something that can be easily spotted from a distance. Toilet paper would do the trick. They should then immediately contact the NPWS,” Mr Darlington said.

Can't think of a walk to lead?

There are well over 1000 overnight and extended trips outlined in the Historical Walks Database.

This can be found by logging in to the Members Area on our website:

<http://www.sbw.org.au/>

Then follow the link “Historical Walks Record”.

Here you will find a list of all the overnight or extended walks run by the club from its inception to the present day. Look at the region you are interested in and see what walks have been done there in the past! Use this wonderful resource to help plan your next walk!

Paddling down the River

The Bureau of Meteorology (i.e. the BOM) have an ongoing program of supplying more data with a better web based User interfaces.

A recent addition has been in respect of River Height graphics. The height of the river at the popular "Put In" at Hampden Bridge on the Kangaroo River is accessible at:

<http://www.bom.gov.au/fwo/IDN60234/IDN60234.068181.plt.shtml>

By clicking on the "Previous" and "Next" Menu Items, the river height at Tallowa Dam and a number of locations down the Shoalhaven River can also be viewed. Also all the other River measuring stations around NSW

Social Program

Kathy Gero

SBW Christmas Party



Come and celebrate the end of 2011 at the fabulous SBW Xmas Party. Please bring a plate of something delicious to share. The Club provides all beverages, eating utensils and Xmas decorations

December 21
6.30pm

Annual and Famous Balmoral Picnic

Come for both or either. See WALKS PROGRAM for full details. Bill Holland is your contact.

January 4
4pm → Walk
6pm → Picnic

New Members Night

Introduction to SBW for intending prospective members

January 11
8pm

Committee Meeting

Observers welcome

January 18
7pm

Exploring Mauritius and La Reunion

Club member, Ondrej Ivanic spent 2 weeks exploring these islands in the Indian Ocean (but it was not enough!). Come and discover the great adventures that abound amidst their volcanoes, canyons, high peaks and fancy colored terrain.

February 15
7.30pm

**ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD AT THE KIRRIBILLI NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE
AT 8pm UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED.**

COME AND SUPPORT OUR GUEST SPEAKERS!

*Why not come along and meet for dinner at Kirribilli before one of the social evenings?
Or if you would like to organise a social event for club members contact Kathy and share your ideas with her!*

Her email address is kathymg73@gmail.com

Communication problems with the club???

Would you like to change your mailing address or have you lost your website password??? Don't know who to contact???

Please use the contacts below to resolve any problems you may have!

Website - Members' area access problems, change password???

→ Contact Karl at communications@sbw.org.au

Website - contributions, suggestions, errors???

→ Contact Caro or Lily at webmaster@sbw.org.au

Address and email changes???

→ Contact Yeok Ken Williams at databasemanager@sbw.org.au

Mailing list - join, not receiving, problems???

→ Contact Karl at communications@sbw.org.au



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