

BANKSTOWN BUSHWALKING CLUB INC.

THE OUTDOORS CLUB THAT DOES IT ALL!

BUSH TELEGRAPH

No. 4
SUMMER
2016-2017



Beginner's Backpack Ruined Castle 17-18 September 2016. By Yvonne Lim and Robert Crough

This beginner's backpack was to be lead by Chris Ward joined by his family, but unfortunately he and his family had been struck down with gastro a few days prior.

Neil Beer's family had also planned to come along so we and they decided to still go ahead with the backpack.

With brilliant spring weather, a party of four adults and three children, we set off on our walk to Ruined Castle camp site on the Saturday. Accompanied by the melody of bell birds we headed down the Golden Staircase taking the crisp fresh air deeply into our lungs. The sunlight filtering through the beautiful lush green forest canopy promised us a journey filled with wonder and excitement.

After a short stroll the kids were delighted to find a lookout point showcasing the magnificent views of the valley. And as any youth, or those young at heart, would, our daughter discovered the joy of her voice echoing across the iconic cliffs of the Blue Mountains at the lookout. Wetting her lips, drawing in a deep breath, our daughter, with high anticipation, let out "we bought a Jeep!". Receiving a few cackles from

the adults, she was satisfied, and with that we headed off again down the time-worn stairs.

The path was littered with beautiful Hardenbergia vine flowers and native peas. We were moving at a steady pace - down, much like our son's enthusiasm and excitement. Shortly after devouring our morning tea we reached a T-junction for Ruined Castle. With little hesitation our wide-eyed group decided to tackle the side trip, after setting up camp.

Through giant trees that touched the clouds and ferns that carpeted the ground, we strolled into our temporary residence equipped with a modest shelter. As we lifted our packs off our backs and absorbed our surroundings, our children found themselves in their element.

(Cont'd Page 2)

Golden Stairs sign and John



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All opinions and recommendations contained in this magazine are the individual authors' alone, and do not constitute official endorsement by the executive or members of the Bankstown Bushwalking Club Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S PIECE

BY THAÏS TURNER

As we approach the Summer season and all our fun outdoor activities, please take care out in the bush. I'm seeing too many reports in the local Blue Mountains (where I live) Newspaper about accidents, rescues and lost walkers. Keep safe, carry a PLB if you have one, and check the club website for tips on being a minimal impact bush walker, a good leader, and a happy walk participant. Also please note the emails from Wai Lin relating to the Bushwalking NSW Risk Management Guidelines.

The Summer Program has a great variety of activities, including many canyons. Those who have participated in abseil practice days and learnt many skills (thanks to the

Abseil Committee for keeping us on track with this) will be able to take full advantage. However any other walkers and campers can also come to the base camp sites and have an enjoyable time in some of our favourite places.

We mourn the passing of our friend and fellow walker Gail Crichton who passed away recently after a courageous battle with cancer.

I am looking forward to catching up with many of you at the Club's Christmas Party on Monday 12 December.

RUINED CASTLE BACKPACK

(CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

Through giant trees that touched the clouds and ferns that carpeted the ground, we strolled into our temporary residence equipped with a modest shelter. As we lifted our packs off our backs and absorbed our surroundings, our children found themselves in their element.

With the camp site set up and tummies filled with lunch, we headed off to see the Ruined Castle. The path took us straight up, the tall tree backdrop quickly fell below us. And in its glory, the ruins appeared before us, awaiting our exploration. As we scrambled up the ruins we understood it demanded respect and we were in awe of the great rock formation.

The views from atop were like no other. The blue hue of the mountain air was a thing of beauty. The cliffs of Mount Solitary were a wonder.

Memory etched in our minds, we headed back to camp content.



Walking down stairs



April & John under overhang



Happy John at Ruined Castle



Ruined Castle and Rob, John and April

Arnhem Land Walk - Jatbula Trail August 2016 by Vicki Bell

In August I headed with 10 friends to Arnhem Land to do the 62km trek from Katherine Gorge to Leliyn (or Edith) Falls, in the Nitmiluk National Park.

The hike follows the western edge of the Arnhem Land escarpment over sandstone plateau and through woodlands, open forest, monsoon forest and riverine landscapes.

The trek is restricted to 15 people per day, must be walked in the one direction, and no camp fires are allowed. We carried all our food, cooking gear etc for the trip. To reduce on weight we took mosquito domes and this proved to be a great idea as lying in bed looking at the brilliant star displays nightly was fabulous.

Day 1 we drove from Darwin to Katherine Gorge so didn't start walking till 1:30pm by the time we got the boat across the gorge. It was around 36 degrees and whilst we only had to walk 8kms today to our campsite at Biddlecombe Cascades it was hard going climbing to the top of the escarpment in the heat. Along the way we explored with caution Northern Rockhole, as the ranger had alerted us to the fact a salt water croc was residing there, and still hadn't been caught. But once we got to our campsite we had great fun swimming in the cascades and climbing up the falls before cooking tea and then retiring for the night. The waters here are part of 17 Mile Creek and we would enjoy this until we crossed the Edith River.

As with all days Day 2 began early to avoid the heat. We were generally on the trail by 7:30am as that gave us plenty of time to swim in the pools along the way and make camp early for more swimming. The track today took us past a number of Jawoyn aboriginal rock art sites which were impressive and made us think about the stories behind them. We also encountered numerous termite mounds of all shapes and sizes and many beautiful coloured birds, mainly budgies.

Our camp site tonight at Crystal Falls was fantastic with a great boulder to jump off and swim till we were tired of it. The water was very clear and there were masses of lovely water lillies along the edge of the water and we were treated to a lovely sunset. The walk today was around 11kms.

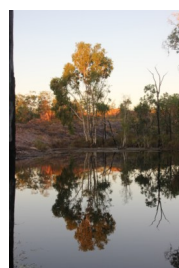
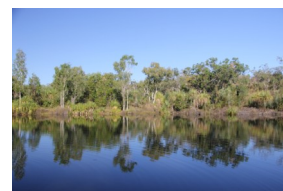
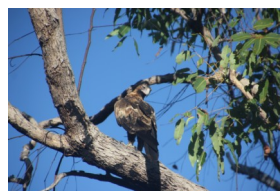
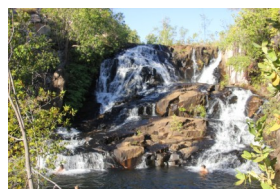
Another early start on Day 3 had us crossing the river in bare feet or sandals before walking up to the Crystal Falls lookout where we could look down the gorge in one direction and at the impressive falls in the other.

Passing numerous gum and grevillea trees we continued on to the amphitheatre where we ditched our packs and descended into the cool monsoon forest to explore some fantastic rock art. Having been out in the heat, it was a welcome relief to enjoy the cooler temperature for a while. Once we came back up to the track it was pretty hot so we walked directly on to our camp site at 17 Mile Falls. The entire day we were blessed with a large variety of brightly coloured budgies and parrots and it made for great walking.

Our camp site was beautiful as it was right alongside the waterfalls so the first thing we all did was jump into the falls to cool down. After a late lunch, with 2 of the others I decided to go exploring so clambered over the boulders until we came to the most magnificent swimming hole one could want. Around 100 metres long and 25 wide it was fantastic so we swam to the end then clambered up to see where it led to – more small pools and waterfalls. On the return swim we uncounted a large water monitor lizard so sat and watched it for some time, all the while noting it had a keen eye on us.

We had dinner tonight on a rock ledge looking down the gorge and enjoying a stunning sunset. The walk today was around 10kms.

(Cont'd Page 4)



JATBULA TRAIL

(CONT'D FROM PAGE 3)

After a very mild night we were off early on Day 4 and hadn't gone far before we were treated to a magnificent display by a large wedge-tailed eagle.

Today we left 17 Mile Creek and crossed the Edith River on our 17km walk to camp. Today's walking was the easiest of the trip with so many groves of grevilleas filled with birds and a most welcome cooling breeze. Our plan today was to leave early and get to camp by 1pm so we could enjoy what was the most beautiful of our campsites at Sandy Creek. Soft sand and a magnificent large swimming hole made this my favourite and swimming was great fun. There were also spa like pools we could sit in and massage away any aches or pains.

The ranger had told us there is a fresh water croc that lives on the other side of the swimming hole and whilst we looked for it we didn't see it.....thankfully.

Sunset tonight was stunning – the reflections on the water as the sun set was something to behold. Additionally we were blessed, as after dinner while we were sitting by the bank shining our torches in the water, we attracted some long-necked turtles.

As we lay in our domes waiting for sleep to overtake us we had the RAAF flyover taking place - the noise was incredible and the result of Darwin having its international war games at this time. This was the best day in my mind as everything had been perfect from sun up to sunset.

After another early start on Day 5 we all were sorry to leave Sandy Camp but had another 17kms ahead

of us. Today's walk took us through some long grass, across a couple of creeks and through a bog all in time to have lunch at Sweetwater Pool.

We swam here in yet another huge and beautiful pool before setting out on the final 5km walk to Edith Falls but this was the toughest of the trip.

A few kms walking/clambering over boulders made for tough going as the radiated heat was around 45-50 degrees. We all struggled with the heat and must have looked pretty weary to the day trippers who were walking in the 5kms from Edith Falls to Sweetwater Pool – the only place on the Jatbula trail where anyone is allowed to walk in on a day trip.

It was odd to suddenly be among maybe 200 people either at the falls or the car park where our ride to Darwin was waiting, having been away from it all for 5 days.

The average temperature overnight on the trek was 17 degrees, and during the day around 36 degrees.

All campsites have very new drop box toilets set away from camp and are well maintained.

We saw loads of buffalo and wild boar dung throughout the trek but didn't see the animals themselves, and most importantly, from my point of view, we saw no snakes.

If you are looking for a wonderful walk to do in Australia where there are not many people and with wonderful opportunities to swim and relax, I highly recommend the Jatbula.

Bushrangers Cave / Rienits Pass & Pulpit Rock Bushwalk - 24th September 2016. By Rex Ellacott

After what appeared to be a gloomy week, the Saturday of our walk turned out sunny as we had hoped, making the trip a bit more exciting. For anyone who doesn't know, the walk we did is in Mt Victoria, at the top of the Blue Mountains Pass into Hartley.

While the total distance of the walk may only be 4.5km, a grade 2 it is not! Our descent to the Zig Zag Track took us to the infamous Bushrangers Cave. It was a bit of an excursion to get there, but it's larger than a lot of other caves around, with a great history, if you care to dig it up.

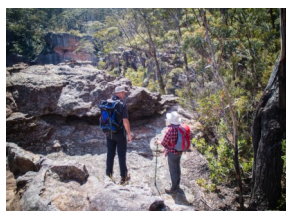
Another walk down to the valley floor; then we broke for morning tea before the interesting and upwards climb through a forest variation, and along the cliff face of Rienits Pass. A few of the new members took it in their stride to take off and go in the wrong direction, creating their own

bit of bush bashing along the way.

All finishing clearly on the top of Pulpit Rock with fabulous views, we headed down to Mt Victoria village for an afternoon coffee and a catch up. This proved invaluable, as half the time we never get to socialise much while on an adventure, and it's always a nice way of capping it off.

Until the next time :)

(Cont'd Page 5)



World's Longest Walls & Fences by Wai-Lin McCaull

Through the early ages, walls & fences have been built to serve a purpose.

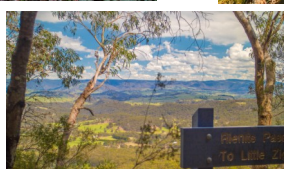
The **Great Wall of China** was fortified originally to protect the people and territories south of the wall from the continued threat of invasion by the Mongols but later, during the Ming Dynasty, other purposes included border controls, allowing the imposition of duties on goods transported along the Silk Road, regulation or encouragement of trade and the control of immigration and emigration. It stretched across 21,196km from east to west. **Hadrian's Wall** was a Roman frontier built by the Roman army, to consolidate its borders and whose aim was "to separate the Romans from the Barbarians (the Scots)" - the Romans had England and Wales under their control but the north (Scotland) remained a problem. Parts of these famous fortifications remain as tourist attractions and some of you will have walked along parts of these.

The longest fence in the world is right here in Australia. Stretching across 5,530km (equivalent distance of London to NY) from South Australia to Southern Queensland, the **Dingo Fence** (or **Dog Fence**) was erected in the 1880's to protect cropland from rabbits and later modified to protect livestock, particularly sheep, from dingoes. One station alone in S. Australia lost over 11,000 sheep in a year due to dingo attacks before the completion of the fence. We also have the 3,253km **Rabbit-proof Fence** in W.A. (also called the **State Vermin Fence** or **Emu Fence**) built in the 1900's which is more well-known than the Dingo Fence (refer to 'Rabbit-Proof Fence' movie made in 2002).

But the **Great Hedge of India** remained a mystery – a gigantic 3,700km long barrier hedge erected by the British in the 19th century, from the Punjab in the west to Orissa in the east. It was a layered mass of thorn-bearing trees - Indian plum, prickly pear and acacia - sometimes reaching 5 metres in height and from 1.2 to 4.3m in width. For what purpose?

Instead of building it to ward off enemies, the British wanted to control the thriving trade in **salt** and to prevent smuggling, to ensure all proper taxes were paid on it – this was the infamous Salt Tax (which led to the non-violent protest that kick-started Gandhi's career as an activist). The hedge is one of those monumental undertakings that has been largely ignored in history books – the cruelty and the folly of the British Empire! (Cont'd Page 6)

BUSHRANGERS CAVE / RIENITS PASS (CONT'D FROM PAGE 4)



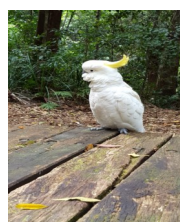
Wattamolla August 2016 By Shannon

The following photos are from our walk from Wattamolla to Wedding Cake Rock on 20 August 2016. The only mar to our almost perfect day was the moronic behaviour of certain individuals (not from our group) who showed their bravado by climbing over the fence at Wedding Cake Rock, almost giving us heart attacks. Other than that, the Royal National Park was at its usual splendour – great views, fresh air and blue sky.

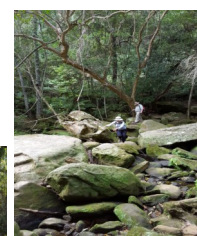
(Editor's Note: This behaviour is due to crazy people who believe they need to get an Instagram pic no matter the consequences. Deaths do occur. No Instagram pic is worth going past the safety barriers. Park Managers are having to erect ever larger barricades some distance from the natural features, to protect the crazy people from themselves.)



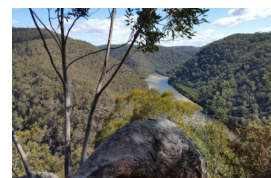
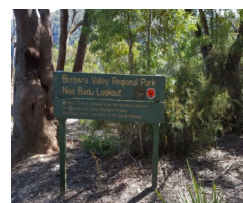
Pics from Shannon's other walks



Our surprise lunch guest. Lady Carrington Drive walk Sunday 9th October 2016.



Mount Kuring-gai to Berowra - 1st October 2016. Congratulations to Frances and Lien on completing their first Grade 3 walk.



CLUB MEETINGS EVERY MONTH

USUALLY HELD ON 2ND MONDAY OF MONTH—
EXCEPT JANUARY

Georges Hall Community Centre
188 Birdwood Road
Georges Hall NSW 2198

Club email address:
bankstownbush@gmail.com

Contributions to this newsletter are always
welcome & can be emailed to Thaïs anytime.

Deadline for Autumn issue is: Fri 3rd Feb 2017

Meetings coming up in 2016-2017:

December Christmas Party

January No Meeting

February 13th

We're on the Web!

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

NEW MEMBERS

Please make these new members welcome when you see
them next.

Lisa Matuzelis

Yvonne Lim, April & John Crough

Cheryl Treganna

Sonia Swan

Ella Hulme & Edward Brown

MALTESER SLICE Recipe

Because we all loved this delicious slice, at the last club meeting, (note to all: here's another reason to come to club meetings!) Louise Glynn has sent us the recipe.

1 Pkt Chocolate Biscuits (Choc Ripple or Choc Tiny Teddies)

2 x 140gm pkts Maltesers

100gm Butter

2 Tablespoons Golden Syrup

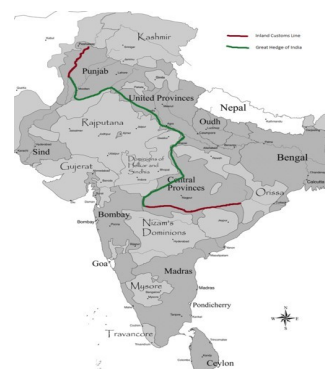
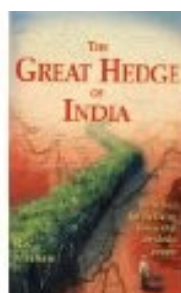
1 pkt Milk Chocolate Melts

Grease and line slice pan. Crush biscuits and 1 pkt of Maltesers. 2nd pkt Maltesers - keep 30 aside for decoration and cut off the ends. Melt butter and Golden Syrup in pan over stove. Add biscuit mix and stir until combined. Allow to cool slightly. Cut remaining Maltesers in half and stir remainder through mixture. Press mixture down well in slice pan. Melt chocolate melts, spread over slice, top with remaining Maltesers, refrigerate. Cut slice into 30 pieces.

**WORLD'S LONGEST WALLS & FENCES.
(CONT'D FROM PAGE 5)**

I will now lead you to Roy Moxham, the British author and historian, who stumbled across a single reference to it in the memoirs of a British officer ("Rambles & Recollections of an Indian Official") who had lived in India, and was completely taken aback on what he discovered and has since written a book about it, after making arduous journeys to India over a 3-year period to seek this infamous hedge, titled '**The Great Hedge of India: The Search for the Living Barrier That Divided a Nation.**' This book reveals in shocking details the methods adopted by the British East India Company to monopolise salt manufacturing and the effects it had on the local population which was deprived of their salt intake due to the high tax imposed on this essential mineral. The salt tax would finally be abolished by the Interim Government of India, led by Jawaharlal Nehru, in October 1946. The government of Indira Gandhi overlaid much of the old route with roads. A small raised embankment in the Etawah district in Uttar Pradesh which may be all that remains of the Great Hedge of India that Moxham managed to locate in 1998. <http://www.roymoxham.com/the-great-hedge-of-india>

In his words, I quote, "*The Great Hedge of India is a book of history and travel. It tells of my chance discovery, in 1995, of a reference to a gigantic 1500-mile long hedge that the British had grown across nineteenth-century India. It describes my efforts to find its remains. There are no previous books about this hedge. More than a search for a piece of forgotten history though, the book describes a personal quest. Chapters on the history of the customs hedge, and tales of the men who built it, are interspersed with chapters on my hunt for its remnants. The book tells of my searches - at the beginning, merely on a whim; later as an obsession. It tells of how I looked for the elusive hedge, first in libraries and archives, and then on the ground in India. I took lessons in Hindi, and taught myself land navigation. As my researches progressed, I found that the hedge I had thought merely a piece of eccentricity was actually an instrument of oppression. It was used to collect a tax on salt set so high that many Indians suffered from salt starvation.*"



SNIPPETS

Compiled by Thaïs Turner

Vale Gail Crichton

Club member Gail Crichton passed away on Thursday 3rd November 2016 after a long battle with cancer. Gail joined the club in the early 1990s and was a very active walker. Many of us enjoyed her company on over-night walks in the Snowies, Kanangra and Budawang. After meeting her (now) husband Tony, Gail did most of her walks with him and Sydney Bush Walkers. However we continued to enjoy her company on canyons until her cancer was diagnosed around 2008. Our thoughts are with Tony her husband, who remains a club member.

From Wai-Lin:

- Thank you to all member who volunteered to provide supper at the club meetings throughout the year and we hope to have a few more show of hands for 2017.
- Club Information Sheet – updated with replacement contact details for insurance claims (with link to PDF claim form). This was emailed out to all Club Members after the 10th Oct meeting.

From Jon Gray:

- 15th Nov 2016 will be the next Bushwalking NSW meeting. Keynote speech topics will be 'Bushwalking 101' & 'Naturally Accessible'. Jon will be happy to raise any issues our club may have. Meetings next year: 21st Feb 2017 – topic is by a SCAT Paramedic on 'How bushwalkers can prepare for rescue operations' & 16th May topic is by NPA on 'Latest in Minimal Impact Bushwalking & Biosecurity'. Jon will be happy to raise any issues our club may have. Anyone is welcome to attend, not just delegates.

From Mike:

- Advising us that mapping is to be privatised by the NSW Gov't – outsourced to India, including all the functions of the CMA/LPI which is now called Spatial Services.
- Crown Land Fire Sale. Check out this link: <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/warnings-of-crown-land-fire-sale-by-baird-government-20161023-gs8j3t.html>

From Thaïs:

- A Perth Camino (65km) has been developed Fremantle-Perth-Guildford. See www.wittenoomway.com.au
- A Blue Mountains Camino (100km 7 day pilgrimage) has been developed Emu Plains-Bell to be held 2nd to 8th Jan in 2017. See www.epiphanypilgrimage.org
- A Remote Area First Aid (RAFA) course will again be run through BWRS in November, which includes 'Apply First Aid' a 1 day course (new name for Senior First Aid) and then a weekend for the rest of the modules and assessments. Check website for details. Next one is in May 2017. Get in early as it fills fast.
- NavShield Rogaine is to be run by BWRS on the last weekend of June rather than first weekend of July from 2017 and beyond.
- More than 180 hectares of important fauna habitat were recently added to Yellowmundie Regional Park.
- A new climbing gym has opened up at Katoomba – called Camp Street Climbing.
- A 10-year \$million project has begun to protect threatened species like the giant dragonfly, Blue Mountains water skink and Mountains swamp lands.
- Blue Mountains Best Bushwalks – 3rd Edition of this popular guidebook is now available. Wentworth Falls author.
- Many rescues and accidents occurring in the Blue Mountains bushland lately – please be safety conscious when walking, and carry a PLB if you have one.
- 3 Environment groups are calling for Gardens of Stone region status to be moved from State Forest, to be managed by NPWS and made a State Conservation Area.
- In the lead up to the bushfire season, a fire-fighting plane (Thor) is being housed at Richmond Airbase. More than 100 aircraft including helicopters and aircrews are also available to help fight bushfires and fast moving grass fires.
- Springvale Coal Mine is again seeking to expand despite the impact it is having on the endangered swamps and the polluting effects of wastewater releases into the WHA Blue Mountains National Park. Environment groups are advocating for strict limits to be imposed.
- Lennox Bridge (Glenbrook) is constantly attacked by graffiti vandals. Blue Mountains Council frequently does graffiti removal operations to keep up the iconic status of the oldest stone arch bridge on the Australian mainland. We often visit this landmark on walks in Glenbrook with Thaïs.
- The Wollemi Pine is facing a new threat. One of the 4 stands has developed a fungal disease *Phytophthora*, most likely from unauthorised hikers bringing the mould into the remote location.

Next year the Ultra Trail 4 day running festival will be held in and around Katoomba from May 18th to May 21st. It is expected to attract 12000 athletes and spectators. Keep this in mind when planning walks.



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