



THE NEWS

OF THE
MELBOURNE BUSHWALKERS INCORPORATED

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SLIDE / TALK NIGHTS

Weds 15 July 1992 Antarctic Images

In 1979 I spent a year at Macquarie Island as an Upper-Atmosphere Physicist. It is said that it is difficult to take a picture on the island *without* a bird or animal in it. Come and see the wild (in some cases, furious) life, penguins, albatrosses, seals, great scenery.

Mark Durré

*** ** ** ** **

Weds 12 August 1992 Central Highland Park

Anne Casey, of the Victorian National Parks Association, will give a slide-illustrated talk on the Central Highland Park (see Liz Telford's item on page 3). The presentation will be in the Clubrooms at 8.00 p.m. It should be a most interesting and informative night - see you there.

Graeme Thornton

THE VAN

It was a sad occasion when Dennis and I handed over the Club van to Bill Slattery of Truck and Bus Sales, Cambellfield, and he handed us a cheque for \$9000. As I drove Dennis back to his son's house in Noble Park we had plenty of time to reminisce. He told me about the occasion when the brakes failed near Powelltown and the times when it was a case of "everybody out" and a push up the hill. I remembered my many happy trips and those first walks as a new leader when, at the end of the day, the sight of the van through the trees was such a relief.

Bill said some time ago he had bought the other Baxter van (sister to ours which we used for weekend walks sometimes) and it is now a mobile workshop. He agreed to let us know where ours finds a home. The dog-eared logbook, dating from when we purchased the van from Jack Baxter in 1984, is in our archives.

So now we look forward to the next chapter in the Bushies' story. We'll have to make sure our day walks are challenging so everyone doesn't become too soft. With the comradeship, talent and dedication we have in our Club, I know we're turning this page with a strong hand.

Jean Giese, President

Correspondence should be directed to: The Secretary
Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc.
PO Box 1751Q
MELBOURNE 3001

Meetings are held in the clubrooms, Mackenzie St Melbourne (rear of the Horticultural Society building) every Wednesday night 7.00-9.00 p.m. Visitors are always welcome.

Please note that articles for "The News" may be faxed to the News Convenor on

Closing date for the August edition is Wednesday 29 July 1992.

Committee Vacancies

With **Alan Clarke** taking up the duties of **Treasurer**, the office of **Vice President** became vacant.

The committee invited **Merilyn Whimpey** to act in this capacity until the half-yearly general meeting. She is happy to accept, thus rejoining the committee which she left at the end of 1988 after 5 years as "News" editor. Welcome Merilyn. We will benefit from your experience and enthusiasm.

The position of **Social Secretary** is still vacant. We are grateful to **Sylvia Wilson** and others who have organised social functions, and **Janet Norman** who arranged the refreshments at our general meetings.

Club Rooms

The Dept. of Conservation and Environment (Historic Buildings section) has resumed control of the Horticulture buildings, so we have new landlords. Making arrangements with them is proving to be much more satisfactory than in the past. The buildings and land are now classified as "Public Reserve" and there is a plan for gradual repair and restoration.

On Thursday 11th June I met with C&E and some of the other users of the "Cottage", as our spot is called. There will not be an increase in our rent for 1992 and the landlord is very happy with our storage arrangements and occupation of all the wall space! I pointed out to those present that our member, **Margaret Borden**, keeps the Cottage sparkling clean and stocked, as a labour of love. Thanks, Margaret.

Our Spies Report....

Old Faces

Well, not really old faces, but rather seldom-seen faces, were spotted in the Club rooms during June - Darrell Sullivan, Club contacts Sue and Graham Errey and deserters to NSW, the Filsons and Sparkesmans. We hear there was a happy get-together at Bob Steel's place at the same time as 33 other members were dining cheaply and well at the mid-year dinner in Richmond.

Farewell

A letter from weekend walker Raf Byron tells us he's been transferred to Sydney.

He says: "With much regret I must tender my resignation having been relocated for work reasons to Sydney. This does give me the opportunity however to express my thanks to the Club for the facilities provided and the helpfulness shown to me. Please accept my best wishes for the future."

Club Romances



There are some budding and blossoming! Can you spot them? Our Club has a good reputation in this regard.

Jean Giese, President

****** CONSERVATION MATTERS ********WILDERNESS UPDATE****21 Wilderness Areas Given Protection**

Late May legislation was passed in State Parliament giving wilderness protection to 21 areas in Victoria. This included the following areas: Sunset, Minook, Galpunga, North Wyperfield, South Wyperfield, Mt Darling-Snowy Bluff, Razor-Viking, Wabba and Buchan Headwaters, Snowy River, Bowen, Genoa, Cape Howe, Mt Cowra and Chinamans Flat. Indi, Cobberas (including Cowombat Flats), Tingaringy will join NSW wilderness parks.

These wilderness areas will be protected for all times. State politicians received hundred of letters supporting wilderness, particularly from bush-walkers and conservationists, indicating wide community support for wilderness protection.

Wongungurra Wilderness not Included

Unfortunately, the Wongungurra wilderness was not included for wilderness protection. The Labor party did support its inclusion but the Liberals voted against its addition to wilderness. The Wongungurra River is home to one of three known populations of the endangered Spotted Tree Frog. Probably the fact that the forest on Mt Murray near Wongungurra is considered an essential resource for logging was the real reason that this area was not included even though it has many 'remote and natural attributes' of wilderness.

It would seem that ongoing grazing in Alpine wilderness areas will still be permitted. Also, part of the Avon River area has reverted back to State Forest to accommodate 4WD needs. So while there has been victory in protecting 21 areas for all times, there has been significant costs.

I would like to thank all the Melbourne Bushies who supported the Club efforts in trying to protect wilderness. At least we kept the politicians busy opening our letters and sending replies!

CENTRAL HIGHLAND PARK

Currently, the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) has a submission before the Land Conservation Council promoting the adoption of a National Park in Victoria's central highlands. The proposed park size is approximately 290,000 hectares. It includes Lake Mountain, Steavenson Falls, Mt Baw Baw, Mt Disappointment, Mt Torbreck, Kinglake State Park, Toolangi State Forest, Maroondah Catchment, Mt Donna Buang, Cathedral Range State Park, Fraser National Park, Eildon State Park, Powelltown and Noojee forests, Upper Yarra River Catchment and Thompson River Catchment.

Our Club visits many of these areas on Sunday walks. It makes good sense to link these areas under a common umbrella of a National Park. The main aim of the VNPA's submission is to better protect Melbourne's water catchment areas, rainforests, remaining old forest growth, endangered species and sub-alpine environments.

For more information, ring VNPA or read Park Watch, March 1992 edition.

WOODLAND CONFERENCE

The VNPA is hosting a conference on the inland forest and grassy woodlands of northern NSW and western Victoria on 24-25 August. The conference will focus on the existing fragmented and threatened ecosystem of this area.

For more information, ring VNPA.

Liz Telford

DAY WALKS - AUGUST 1992**SAT 25 JUL 92 DANDENONGS EXPLORER: SHERBROOKE - SASSAFRAS EASY**

LEADER : MICHAEL HUMPHREY
 TRANSPORT : PRIVATE OR TRAIN
 EXPECTED RETURN : 4.00 P.M.
 MAP REFERENCE : MELWAYS MAPS 75 & 66
 APPROX DISTANCE : 12 KM

Meet at 11.15 a.m. (sharp) at the car park at Grants Picnic Ground, Monbulk Road, Sherbrooke (Melways Map 75 K4).

If you are coming by public transport, the train departs Flinders Street at 9.29 a.m. (platform 4) and arrives at Belgrave Station at 10.43 a.m. Please ring me at home on (after 7.00 p.m.) to arrange to be picked up.

At the time of writing this article the walk has not been previewed - however a very pleasant walk is assured. After the walk you are invited to indulge in a devonshire tea with me.

Remember to bring warm, waterproof clothing and appropriate footwear as the weather could be cold and/or wet at this time of year. See you there.

SUN 2 AUG 92 COLIBAN FALLS - GRANITE CREEK FALLS EASY & EASY/MED

LEADERS : ADRIAN COLE & PAULINE WILLIAMS
 TRANSPORT : BUS FROM SOUTH BANK BLVD. AT 9.00 A.M.
 EXPECTED RETURN : 7.30 P.M.
 MAP REFERENCE : METCALFE 1:25,000
 APPROX DISTANCE : 13 & 16 KM

This walk is in sheep farm country about twenty minutes from Kyneton and follows Granite Creek and the Coliban River. The gently sloping land is green and open with the occasional outcrops of granite. Red gum and box are to be found and the birdlife includes screeching cockatoos and parrots. If we are lucky we may see kangaroos.

An extra charge of \$2 each is necessary to cover the cost of going through private property. Instead though, for an extra \$2 (total \$4), Devonshire tea will be served at Coliban Park Farm at the end of the walk. Please be prepared to pay for either option at the Clubrooms, along with the usual walk fee.

SAT 8 AUG 92 HISTORICAL WALK - CAMBERWELL EASY

LEADER : ATHOL SCHAFER
 TRANSPORT : TRAIN MEET UNDER THE CLOCKS BY 1.30 P.M.
 MAP REFERENCE : MELWAYS MAPS 45, 59

An exploration of some of the municipality's heritage that Camberwellians have been jealously guarding even at great cost and controversy. The tour starts and finishes at Camberwell railway station. It being winter, afternoon tea will be at one of the local coffee lounges.

SUN 9 AUG 92 TEA TREE CREEK - DUNNS HILL - MT BULLAMALITE EASY

LEADERS : BILL PENROSE & PETER HAVLICEK
 TRANSPORT : BUS FROM SOUTH BANK BLVD. AT 9.00 A.M.
 EXPECTED RETURN : 7.00 P.M.
 MAP REFERENCE : MT CAROLINE 1:25,000
 APPROX DISTANCE : 10-12 KM

This walk is in an area southwest of Yea. It is a ridge walk in generally open farming country with spectacular views on both sides. There will be a gentle and pleasant climb at the start and a similar descent at the end.

Our present plan is to divide the party and commence a walk from each end. If one is prepared to overlook the possibility of navigational error our paths should cross at some point.

SUN 16 AUG 92 BUNGAL STATE FOREST - MOORABOOL RIVER E/MED & MEDIUM

LEADERS : GEOFF MATTINGLEY & TONY STAPLEY
 TRANSPORT : BUS FROM SOUTH BANK BLVD. AT 9.00 A.M.
 EXPECTED RETURN : 7.00 P.M.
 MAP REFERENCE : LAL LAL and YALOAK 1:25,000
 APPROX DISTANCE : 14 KM

The Bungal State Forest is a compact area on the east branch of the Moorabool River, north of the Brisbane Ranges. It has a population of wallabies, and plenty of birdlife. Both walks are about the same distance, and both involve steep slippery slopes so make sure your footwear has a good tread. Neither walk is suitable for beginners.

WED 19 AUG 92 MT DISAPPOINTMENT FOREST EASY/MEDIUM

LEADER : SPENCER GEORGE
 TRANSPORT : PRIVATE
 MEETING PLACE : 8.30 A.M. CNR LLOYD AVE & JOHNSON ST KEON PARK, MELWAY 8 J12
 EXPECTED RETURN : 6.00 P.M.
 MAP REFERENCE : REEDY CREEK 1:25,000
 APPROX DISTANCE : 10 KM

This is a walk through the open forests on the Great Dividing Range north of Melbourne. About 1870 goldmines established towns in the area. Then from 1880 to 1939 timber mills and associated tramlines harvested the forests. Bring your compasses while we look for lyrebirds, check points and wattle blossom.

SUN 23 AUG 92 MT IDA - MT MCIVOR EASY & MEDIUM

LEADERS : GEOFF HARRISON & ANGELA HO
 TRANSPORT : BUS FROM SOUTH BANK BLVD. AT 9.00 A.M.
 EXPECTED RETURN : 7.00 P.M.
 MAP REFERENCE : HEATHCOTE 1:25,000 & LADYS PASS 1:25,000
 APPROX DISTANCE : 13 & 17 KM

These are two fairly easy ridge walks through open eucalypt forests. The easy walk starts with a climb of Mt Ida then a walk through the Mt Ida State Forest. The medium walk starts further south and walks through the McIvor State Forest before crossing private land (2 fences!) then climbing Mt Ida from the south, and following the same route as the easy walk. No creek crossings, no leeches, no water - so bring your own.

There are several new fences, including a kangaroo and human-proof fence, so we are chopping out the unattractive northern end of this walk. We saw plenty of kangaroos, parrots and potteros on the preview. The wildflowers should be good. This is the only place where you are likely to see the beautiful yellow bells of the *styphelia pinifolia* (pine heath), though it can be rarely found in a few other places.

SAT 29 AUG 92 COLDSTREAM - WARRAMATE HILLS - GRUYERE EASY

LEADERS : JAN LLEWELYN & DOUG POCOCK
 TRANSPORT : PRIVATE
 EXPECTED RETURN : EARLY
 MAP REFERENCE : TARRAWARRA 1:25,000
 APPROX DISTANCE : 10 KM

We will meet at the locked entrance to "Yarraloch" on Killara Rd (named Sunnyside Rd from Warburton Highway) at 10.00 a.m. map ref 669209.

The walk will be circular taking in the two highest points of the range. This is an important conservation area of remnant bushland in the Yarra Valley.

SUN 30 AUG 92 N.E. LERDERBERG STATE PARK EASY/MED & MEDIUM

LEADERS : JOHN ROSEMAN & SALLY BOUVIER
 TRANSPORT : BUS FROM SOUTH BANK BLVD. AT 9.00 A.M.

Details of this walk will appear in the August edition of "NEWS".

WEEKEND WALKS - AUGUST 1992**7-9 AUG 92 DINNER PLAIN YUPPIE SKIING EASY/MEDIUM**

LEADER : SYLVIA WILSON
 TRANSPORT : PRIVATE
 EXPECTED RETURN : SUNDAY NIGHT
 MAP REFERENCE : HOTHAM MAP
 APPROX DISTANCE : VARIOUS

Rotten snow, lousy company, rat-infested lodge... Don't come.

\$65 lodge fees. Bookings open Wednesday July 29th in Clubrooms. Full fees up front. Maximum 12.

14-16 AUG 92 RAWSON SKI WEEKEND MEDIUM

LEADERS : GINA HOPKINS & PEARSON CRESSWELL *** DATE CHANGE ***
 TRANSPORT : PRIVATE
 EXPECTED RETURN : SUNDAY EVENING
 MAP REFERENCE : BAW BAW 1:25,000
 APPROX DISTANCE : VARIED

Please note that the date of this weekend has changed from that shown on the programme. This is to avoid a crowded weekend at Rawson as there is a race on the weekend of the 22nd August.

This weekend is an opportunity to explore the 'back country' of the Baw Baw plateau. It is not suitable for beginners or for anyone who does not like off-track skiing. It is well suited to the adventurous and fun-loving skier.

There is a limit of 20 places, and accommodation will be twin share. The cost is \$58 per person for 2 nights, including breakfast. Dinners are available at extra cost.

Bookings may be made at any time, with a deposit of \$25 to reserve your place. Phone:

21-23 AUG 92 MT KOOYOORA (EAST OF INGLEWOOD) EASY/MEDIUM

LEADER : SPENCER GEORGE
 TRANSPORT : PRIVATE
 EXPECTED RETURN : SUNDAY NIGHT
 MAP REFERENCE :
 APPROX DISTANCE : 20 KM

*** DATE CHANGE ***

Please note that the date of this weekend has changed from that shown on the programme.

In 1869 the "Welcome Stranger" nugget, weighing 71 kg, was found at Moliagul. Come with me for a walk in the open park-like forest around Mt Kooyoora, just north of Moliagul. There are lots of interesting granite boulders and we may find gold.

21-24 AUG 92 THE TWINS - MT MURRAY SKIING MEDIUM/HARD

LEADER : GRAEME THORNTON
 TRANSPORT : PRIVATE
 EXPECTED RETURN : LATE MONDAY NIGHT (24/8)
 MAP REFERENCE : DARGO PLAINS - COBUNGRA 1:50,000 & HOWITT-SELWYN 1:50,000
 APPROX DISTANCE : 30-40 KM

*** DATE CHANGE ***

Please note that the date of this weekend has changed from that shown on the programme.

Those who saw Bill Metzenthens's slide-show in June will have some idea of the spectacular landscapes along this trip. However, we will leave out the wading down the Wongungarra River and the climbing up the Blue Rag Range bits. As you will read in our 50th year history, The Twins are a Club historic site. It was there that Chris Thompson performed his upside-down ropeless abseil over ice whilst on skis trick. We might even have Mr Thompson along to explain the finer points of the how and where of this exciting sport (mightn't we Helen?).

The start is at the intersection of the Dargo and Harrietville-Hotham roads. We ski around The Twins with packs and camp for 2 nights an hour or two along the Alpine Walking Track. Over the 3 days we'll explore The Twins, Mt Murray and along the Barry Range. We will be on ridges most of the time and although I expect that there should be surface water available, bring along extra fuel for melting snow in case there isn't water and we can't start a fire.

28-30 AUG 92 KAMAROOKA STATE PARK EASY/MEDIUM

LEADER : JEAN GIESE
 TRANSPORT : PRIVATE
 EXPECTED RETURN : 6.00 P.M. SUNDAY EVENING
 MAP REFERENCE : MAYREEF 1:25,000, SUMMERFIELD 1:25,000
 APPROX DISTANCE : 26 KM + 5 KM WITHOUT PACKS

Kamarooka State Park is 24 km north-east of Bendigo so it is not far away making travelling up on Saturday morning for a 9.00 a.m. start quite appealing. It is one of the southernmost areas where Mallee is found and there are old River Red Gums along the creeks. I have a sense of it being very peaceful here with lots of birds, kangas and wallabies. It is fairly flat walking on tracks or through the open bush but there are some little hills from which the surrounding countryside can be viewed.

The Wirrakee wattle, which grows only around this area, blooms in late August and when we were there three years ago the bush was ablaze with it and Pycnantha. We will find the remains of old eucalyptus distilleries and, if desired, visit one which is still operating, before returning home.

Suitable for beginner packcarriers.

28-30 AUG 92 MT STIRLING SKI-IN BASE CAMP**MEDIUM**

LEADER : LES SOUTHWELL
 TRANSPORT : PRIVATE

Details of this trip will appear in the August edition of "NEWS".

SPRING WALKS PROGRAMME

We are working on the spring programme now and there is still time to put in ideas.

The weekend and extended walks planned for **September** are:

5-7	Youngs Spur Skiing (3 days)	Ken MacMahon & Graeme Thornton
11-13	Eildon State Park	Jean Giese
11-13	Razorback - Mt Feathertop Skiing	Stephen Down
18-27	Gammon Ranges, South Australia	Phil Larkin
19-4 Oct	Carnarvon Gorge - Fraser Island	David Vincent (see preview below)
23-27	Fainters Skiing (2 or 4 day)	Leader required
23-27	Northern Grampians Base Camp + Pack Carry	Michael Mann, Bob Steel, Mark Durre

Sunday walks for September:

Brisbane Ranges, Upper Yarra Goldfields, Daylesford Springs and Lerderberg Gorge - on the tracks that we cleared! Offers to help lead or preview walks are welcome - don't be shy, speak to Alan Miller or Max Casley.

Max Casley, Walks Secretary

19 SEP-4 OCT 92 WARRUMBUNGLES - CARNARVON GORGE - FRASER ISLD E/MED

LEADER : DAVE VINCENT
 TRANSPORT : HIRE AIRCRAFT
 EXPECTED RETURN : 5.00 P.M. SUNDAY 4 OCT

This 16 day extended walk is planned over the school holidays. Access to the walk areas will be by light aircraft departing from Moorabbin on Saturday morning, 19 September. For a group of six, including myself, the estimated cost of the aircraft hire will be \$450 each for the 16 days. A brief description of the walking areas are as follows:

Warrumbungles The mountains of the Warrumbungles are a collection of spectacular volcanic spires and sandstone ridges near the NSW town of Coonabarabran. The area of main interest is centred on the Grand High Tops, which is surrounded by the most spectacular peaks including The Breadknife, Beloungery Spire, Crater Bluff and Bluff Mountain. Walking distances are relatively short from a base camp and much can be seen during moderate day walks.

Fraser Island Fraser Island is the world's largest sand island, located 70 km NE of Maryborough in Queensland. It has tall rainforests and fresh water perched lakes - rain traps with cemented beds - high among the inland dunes. Most of the walking will be around the lakes and in the rainforest valleys.

Carnarvon Gorge Carnarvon Gorge is an oasis in the midst of an otherwise quite dry central Queensland landscape. It is located about 200 km NW of Roma in Queensland. The gorge cuts a 30 km through white sandstone and the steep sides are up to 200m high. Tributaries feed in from narrow side chasms, dark and choked with ferns and mosses. The waterway has never been known to be dry and many parts are suitable for swimming. There are fine examples of Aboriginal rock pointing and stencilling.

Most of the walking will be day walks from base camps. For further details and to book a place on this walk, contact Dave Vincent at home on phone:

MARYSVILLE WEEKEND 19-21 JUNE 1992

After a day's skiing at Lake Mountain, I arrived at Mountain Lodge, Marysville, had a shower, then collapsed into a chair in front of the wood fire with a book. I read only a few pages as most of the evening was spent chatting to various walkers as they arrived. Soon Suzette and Hubert were wheeling in supper and after testing many of the tasty morsels I went to bed.

Next morning two young waitresses served me with tomato juice, half a grapefruit, a bowl of porridge, savoury mince on toast garnished with slices of bacon, toast and marmalade and three cups of tea. Then it was time to find parka and umbrella and get ready for the morning's walk. Michael led us across the river, then steeply uphill to the Water Race Track where we walked through treeferns, tall stately eucalyptus and mud to Steavenson Falls. Then we walked beside the river back to town and lunch.

After entree, main course, sweets and coffee, I felt in no condition for walking, but there was Michael waiting on the verandah. We visited a wishing well, an old trestle bridge, an island, crossed two rivers a number of times and followed an old timber tram line to the site of Vic Oak Mill. Without warning we were climbing steeply uphill but when we paused near the top and looked behind us there was a magnificent view of Cathedral

Range, with Sugarloaf Peak, the Jawbones and the Cathedral easily distinguished.

Another shower, a five course dinner and again I collapsed in front of the fire to read my book, but Michael was leading a moonlight expedition to feed the possums and see the falls by floodlights. Supper and bed completed a very full day.

After another small breakfast, Michael led us straight into the forest and soon we s.l.o...w....e....d as the truth of the words **STEEP CLIMB** were acknowledged by the muscles of our legs. At Oxley Lookout, Marysville with the water fountain in the park lay below us; mountain peaks protruded from a blanket of sparkling white cloud in the valley. The sun was shining. We meditated. Then Michael led us to Keppel Lookout before we descended from Paradise to Christmas Dinner.

Grape juice, veal casserole, roast turkey, steamed plum pudding with custard, cream and icecream, then relaxing in the lounge with black coffee.

Thank you, Michael Humphrey, for organising this weekend and leading all the walks, and thank you Suzette and Hubert Nassl for again being our charming hosts at Mountain Lodge Guest House.

Spencer George

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1/4 page	1 issue	\$20
	3 issues	\$50
1/2 page	1 issue	\$30
	3 issues	\$75
full page	1 issue	\$50
	3 issues	\$125

Payment must accompany the copy.

Please note there is no charge to members advertising personal items for sale.

LABERTOUCHE CAVES 14 JUNE 1992

To all of you that conquered the cave, my heart goes out to you along with my bruised and battered body. To all of you that decided not to go into the caves, **WISE DECISION**. To all of our leaders, **THANK GOD YOU WERE THERE!!**

The action started well before the descent into the cave. On the way down to the entrance the going was quite slippery as one of the adventurers soon found out and ended up flat on her backside and covered in mud. Yes, it was a good laugh until the person doing the laughing lost their footing and shot past the crowd and nearly ended up in the gully, but luckily a quick grab of the hand by another adventurer saved her from such a fate, even though she nearly took him too.

The descent was the easiest part of the whole day. I was pretty confident with our leader (Gareth) until the first rock when he said "I've been here twice before... Oh! this is not the way. I'll just look down here, yeh, I think this is it." Fine I thought, as far as I was told nobody has found any skeletons yet. A few of us I'm sure were quietly screaming in panic on the inside, but to save face pretended to act cool. I was not one of them and I'm sure those words I cried will echo in their minds for days to come. I know Gareth, bless his soul, won't forget in a hurry. Nor will he forget the vice-like grip I had on his leg. There were times I thought - oh my god, I'll never fit through there, and I was right; Jenny Craig has a new customer.

It's funny the things you do and say when you are stricken with fear, like one unnamed poor soul who

got her head stuck. "Hello, where are you? Gareth, come back, I need you,. Hello, hello!. Oh my god, I'm stuck, help!! G...A...R...E...T...H, **WHERE ARE YOU?** Oh there you are, please help me, my head is stuck." Personally, I was terrified, but I still could not help a chuckle. Half way through our little exploration we were pounced upon by the third group; that tells you how good we were. I mean every second rock someone got stuck, and me, well I was just plain scared out of my wits. The biggest relief came when one of the group spotted Doug and Peter with a piece of string that led us out. How I loved that little piece of string - it was my ticket to freedom. That was until I saw the rocks I had to climb to get there. All I can say is thank you to the men who pushed, shoved, dragged, pulled and twisted my body into positions I never knew existed. But once I saw the light at the end of the tunnel I suddenly grew wings, and so did a few others.

On behalf of all of us that did the impossible, we would like to thank our leaders for their display of bravery in the face of screaming, terrified, almost hysterical, inexperienced cave dwellers. Your medals are in the mail. But above all, a great day was had by all I'm sure, the fire was wonderful and so was the company. I met a lot of nice people and I hope to see them again. It was an experience I won't forget in a hurry, but enjoyed every minute.

To Gareth from Group 2, you're our HERO!

Joanne Rogers

WEDNESDAY WALKING

Recently I took over responsibility for co-ordinating the mid-week walks. I would like to let you know that this section of the Club programme is still as active as ever and continuing Jean's policy of a "real" bushwalk, not just a ramble for the retired in their declining years.

We Wednesday Walkers know the delights of walking when most of Melbourne has its collective nose to the grindstone while we have the bush to ourselves. For example, in May we scrambled around the bluffs of Werribee Gorge without so much as a picnicker to be seen.

The June walk at the edge of the O'Shannassy Catchment near Warburton included a couple of steep hills and for contrast an attractive narrow path along a resurrected aquaduct, with the odd

forest giant above, ferns all around and a variety of multi-coloured fungus at our feet. We climbed from the Yarra to the ridge above to see relics from 19th century gold mining, including diversion tunnels, open cut mines, hydraulic sluicing areas, shafts and an underground tunnel, some 15 km in all. Incidentally, the latter walk will be on the Sunday programme on September 13th.

You may not be able to walk every month, but perhaps you have a flexi day or an odd third Wednesday available. We would love to have your company if you could join us either as a participant or as a leader.

Rosemary Thomson
Wednesday Walks Co-ordinator

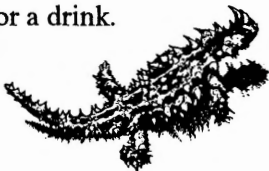
Bushwalking in the Arid Lands

Australia's arid lands contain some of the most dramatic and inspiring landscapes in the world. Every year hundreds of thousands of people come to see places like Ayers Rock and the Olgas. Tens of thousands spend a few days touring those parts of the mountain ranges which are easily accessible by vehicle. They spend an hour here and an hour there, never knowing the wonders they have missed. Not one in a thousand takes the time to really experience this magnificent wilderness in the only way it can be fully appreciated - on foot.

An ever changing land

The Red Centre is not the Dead Centre. It is the living heart of the world's oldest continent. Rain is infrequent but when it does arrive the land springs to life. A few days after a good rain, new growth turns the red sands green. A few more days and a blanket of wild flowers turns the landscape into one of the most colourful in the world. Put a few good seasons together and the animals multiply in their thousands. The sight of thousands of budgerigars swooping and turning in unison is one of the most inspiring in the world.

As well as being infrequent, the rains which bring new life to the land are irregular. In some years it may not rain at all. Even at such times, an astounding variety of plants and animals is waiting to be found by those willing to wander slowly through the land, from oasis to oasis, stopping to observe and enjoy the small things the masses miss as they rush through - a grasshopper so perfectly camouflaged that it is invisible until it moves, a small lizard scuttling by in search of its dinner, a bird as it comes down for a drink.



Wet year or dry, the eternal landscape provides a peaceful and inspiring environment for those who take the time to experience it. White ghost gums stand in stark contrast to the red rock and blue sky. The soft pastel lilacs and mauves of dawn give way to the bright yellows of the early morning. These slowly fade with the increasing sun then deepen into the magnificent reds

"Those who wish to experience the best that the arid lands have to offer have a special responsibility to care for these lands"

which precede the sunset. At night the cool, dry air brings every star into focus allowing you to appreciate the heavens in a way which is impossible in any city or town.

Respect and responsibility

But for all of its timeless grandeur, the land is a harsh mistress and quickly punishes those who dare to go out with inadequate water, clothing or knowledge. Those who take the time to get off the beaten track and out into the wilderness need to treat the land with respect, respect both for what it can do to them and for the damage they can do to it. The slow pace of natural change in the arid lands makes them surprisingly fragile. Those who wish to experience the best that the arid lands have to offer have a special responsibility to care for these lands, to ensure that they keep

each waterhole as pure as it was before they arrived, to avoid careless acts which might damage the natural surrounds, to take nothing but photographs and leave nothing but footprints.

Bushwalking holidays

If you are reasonably fit and would like to enjoy a wilderness bushwalking experience with a small group of like minded people in an arid land environment, Willis's Walkabouts may be able to offer exactly what you want. All those who take part are provided with a comprehensive information booklet which enables them to prepare for the conditions they will encounter. Every trip is accompanied by one or more experienced guides who will navigate through a land where there are few trails or tracks. The guide will explain the things you see and will cook you a three course meal every night. You will be free to relax and enjoy this unique wilderness experience.

For full details on all our bushwalking holidays, contact



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