

BRINDABELLA BUSHWALKING CLUB NEWSLETTER



This 'n' That

President's Pontifications

Concerns sometimes arise among members of clubs over privacy issues and, in this regard, we are no exception. Although clubs are not covered by the Privacy Act, it is, of course, desirable that we follow good privacy practice. Guidance on good practice for organisations that are not bound by the Act is provided at the Privacy Commissioner's website.

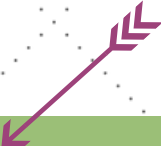
In saying this, I am not arguing that the club should have a privacy policy but just for sensitivity to legitimate concerns that some members may have to privacy issues. In this connection, it is generally accepted that we should protect personal information such as our members' contact details and only use such information for the purposes for which it was collected (i.e. to contact them).

Photographs may also give rise to concern in some circumstances and, for this reason, the Walks Report Form will soon include the following sentence in the acknowledgement signed by participants:

'I understand that if I do not wish my image to be published I must inform the Walk leader/photographers.'

A modest extension of this privacy sensitivity would be to use the 'bcc' button wherever appropriate in emailing other members. This may also reduce the risk of facilitating the spread of spam emails. Of course, it's not appropriate to use the 'bcc' button in all cases. For example, in organising a club trip away, it would be pointless to use the 'bcc' button to communicate among those participating.

Peter Ford



This newsletter is early because we wanted to publish Janet's version of her severe allergic reaction to ant bites while it was still topical

Potluck Dinner Final Call

Next Walks Program

Four Ants versus Janet

Contributing Articles

Travel to Petra

Potluck Dinner Reminder Friday 27 April



Coordinator: (Elaine Atkinson 62883557).

If you are planning on attending the **Potluck Dinner**, don't forget to contact Elaine (elainem.atkinson@gmail.com) or telephone her (62883557) by no later than **Mon 23 Apr** to book a place and discuss a contribution.

Please don't all leave it until the last moment.

It's BYO drinks as usual, but there will also be red and white cask wine and orange juice provided

It's always a great night, but this time there'll be the added bonus of a presentation by club members who recently completed the epic journey along the entire length of the Australian Alpine Walking Track. You'll hear about the benefits of doing it quickly from one, and leisurely from the other.

Walks Program July - December 2018

The Walks Committee will meet on Thursday 17 May to develop the Walks and Activities Program for July to December 2018. *The more walk proposals we get from you, the better the program will be.*

If you would like to lead a walk or two, please send the description and your preferred date(s) to one of the Walks Committee members (whose contact details appear below) by Monday 14 May.

-  Easy Weekend Walks - Jillian Bellamy geoffb@apex.net.au
-  Med Weekend Walks - Robyn Gallagher gallagher.robyn@gmail.com
-  Easy Wed Walks - Robyn Kelly rkelly13@tpg.com.au
-  Easy/Med Wed Walks - Kathy Handel khandel@bigpond.net.au
-  Med/Hard Wed Walks - Peter Wellman wellmanp@iinet.net.au
-  Social activities - Elaine Atkinson elainem.atkinson@gmail.com
-  All other activities - Peter Dalton daltons2@tpg.com.au

There may not be descriptions in the program for some Weekend walks in December, just the leader's contact details. This will allow the leader to decide on the walk about three days beforehand, based on the weather forecast. The walk details will then be emailed to all members.

BBC Facebook Page

The facebook page is attracting plenty of interest and Terrylea is keeping it up to date with photos, walk reports and much more. Visit it at: <https://www.facebook.com/BrindabellaBushwalkingClub/> You can set your facebook page to receive notifications every time there is a new post.

How Four Ant Bites Nearly Toppled Janet [A Report from Janet]

I am pleased and thank BBC for their note in the last newsletter about this incident, so as to alert others. I had no idea I was allergic to some species of ants.

The following is how I remember it.

On Wed 7th March I decided along with 9 others to do Peter Wellman's Wednesday walk up near the old Arboretum where only two huge trees had escaped the 2003 fires.

It was very scenic and after pushing our way through lots of exhausting scrub we sat down by the small river to have lunch. We still had a climb of about 250 metres through some scrub and about 5 kms back to the car to complete this walk.

I somehow put my hand near ants and then moved to sit in a slightly different spot. Almost immediately my hand became very red so I put Soov (anti-itching gel) on it, but it didn't do anything to assuage the pain. Oh well, I thought, it will get better. I also started thinking that maybe the nettles near the creek had caused the itchiness.



It was very likely a Jack Jumper ant like this that did the damage



I began my lunch. However, within about 2 minutes I was itching all over and rather frantically pouring my drinking water over my hair and arms to try to stop the itching and now pain. I was also aware that I was extremely restless and couldn't sit still. The itchiness became extreme, a faint feeling of nausea came over me and somehow, I just 'flopped over'.

Most of the group initially thought just that – I had flopped over and would get up. I know I was conscious but couldn't move or say anything.

I remember one person saying "I will stretch your legs out as they are all bunched up". As time went by I was aware that they were getting very concerned about my state. After all, I don't usually flop over. One person said to take her pulse. Another person like an angel laid his or her hand on my shoulder - that helped so much, I really felt if I could get up it would all be OK. However, I just couldn't move.

So as time passed, I was aware that the group were considering using the PLB or perhaps trying to get an ambulance. After maybe only 5 minutes I felt I simply had to get out, as it dawned on me that I must be allergic to ants or to some vegetation, as we had pushed our way through thick scrub. I slowly raised my head and asked if anyone had any anti-histamines, but no one did.

Somehow, I sat up and insisted that I wanted to get out. It was to the credit of the whole party that with two people pulling me up, others clearing the way and another carrying my pack we gradually made our way up. I tried to drink water and slowly we made progress. However, I just kept collapsing all the time.

It must have been frustrating to the others to make such slow progress. I lost my sense of balance so another walker obligingly put out his hand anytime there was a log to get over.

[Janet's Report - continued]

One walker went to the top of a hill to see if there was phone reception, and then asked me if I wanted an ambulance. I declined as I felt I was recovering. I suppose almost 30 minutes had passed after my first 'flop' and with walking, and drinking water, I was beginning to feel better, and more aware of what was happening around me.

We continued slowly up the hill and over time I recovered somewhat, so by the time we reached the cars I was pretty well OK, although worn out and a bit disoriented. On returning to Coleman Crt again it was to the credit of the whole group that some offered to drive me home, two offered to stay the night and all over I felt a great deal of care and no panic. Another walker's wife immediately looked up ants, allergies etc and emailed that information to me.

At home I could only count 4 ant bites on the outside top of my left leg, not on my hand. I slept, feeling recovered but a bit weak the next day. I drove to Woden and discussed what happened with a chemist. Her advice is worth noting I feel.

She said that the almost instant unreasonable itching on skin and in hair, the unsettledness, plus a feeling of nausea is the beginning of an allergic shock. If it persists it can be anaphylaxis and I could have stopped breathing. (Eeks, the group may have had a body to deal with).

She agrees that by my walking and drinking water it helped to spread the 'poison' and therefore it was a good thing. A snake bite is different - you don't want to spread the poison, so you remain as still as possible.

For the future, she suggested buying a tube of DermAid cream (contains hydrocortisone at 1 % w/w) and putting it on the affected bites/rash ASAP – it relieves the redness, swelling, itching and discomfort of many skin problems. (Costs ~ \$9). She also suggested I should carry and take antihistamines ASAP and, if necessary, double the dose to help the body inside simply cope with the poison. Even if the tablets are old they would be better than nothing and do not lose their potency for quite some time.

She said not to take Panadol or Nurofen, etc – it's simply unnecessary and just adds another chemical the body needs to cope with.

She didn't feel an EpiPen was necessary as within an hour or so I was feeling better, and usually with a really severe reaction you simply don't have time.

So, what have I learnt?

Well, I now carry the cream and antihistamines; I also carry a small old film container to put ants, spider or whatever in so they can be identified and naturally I try to avoid ants.

I recognise that in any emergency there are often discussions afterwards of how the treatment to the patient could be different or better. In this case I feel the whole group (Peter W, Robin C, David W, Prue D, Mike S, Eric D, John E, Mike M and Mark P) acted in such a caring and calm manner, giving me confidence that eventually I would be OK, and they didn't crowd me. I also appreciated that they let me decide what to do which is one thing that First Aid advises.

So the score is pretty equal - Ants 0, Janet 0

Janet

Note: Editorial Postscript on the next page

Editorial Notes Regarding Janet's Report

- Janet is to be sincerely thanked for providing this frank and complete account from the patient's viewpoint.
- In Australia, approximately three people die each year from a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) caused by a stinging insect allergy. Older people and those with breathing problems are at greatest risk and should be seen by a medical specialist (allergist). If you have had a severe allergic reaction to a stinging insect, **you are more likely to have one again if stung**.
- The Club has urged Janet to see a doctor and be tested for her allergy to determine if she needs to carry an EpiPen – there is no alternative treatment for anaphylaxis.
- There seems to be no clear first aid protocol for anaphylaxis, other than using the EpiPen as soon as possible and being prepared to use CPR until help arrives.
- Modern fast-acting antihistamines don't make you drowsy and only cost around \$10 for a small pack with two or more years until expiry. These help with mild reactions to bites but are not effective against severe reactions.
- Hydrocortisone creams are also less than \$10 and will ease the itchiness from mild reactions.
- The 'Action Plans' at this Australian web site seem to be the authoritative reference:
https://allergy.org.au/images/stories/anaphylaxis/2017/ASCIA_Allergic_Reactions_Action_Plan_2017_WEB.pdf
and some of the advice there conflicts with what Janet's chemist recommended.
- If there is any more to report on this subject after Janet has been tested for her allergy we will, with her permission, let you know.



Contributing Articles

Suitable articles are always welcomed and photos make them better. It may not be possible to use all the photos. We will include the photographer's name in the newsletter, unless they ask us not to bother. If it is not your photo, you must have the photographer's permission to use it. Send your articles to walks@brindabellabushwalking.org.au

An article may be edited to correct spelling errors and to suit the newsletter's style by restructuring, cutting to fit, and even re-writing sections if the editor believes that will better appeal to readers.

The newsletters will also be placed on the Club's website.

Visit Petra – Jordan



There were no trip reports for this newsletter, so here's an idea for your next big holiday.

First, a warning: Amman, the capital of Jordan, is the most expensive city in the Arab world – ahead of Dubai and Abu Dhabi. However, as with all countries and cities, you can still have a good time without paying top dollar. At least taxi fares are much lower than Canberra's! You can pick up a visa on arrival at the airport for 40 Jordanian dollars (JD) - about \$80 Australian.

Petra's history predates Roman occupation, but its main influences seem to have come from them. Archaeologists say that 85% of Petra remains uncovered.

Petra is about a 3 hour drive south of Amman and you can get there by private car or taxi for around JD100 (\$200 AUD) or can catch a bus (there's only one each way each day) for JD22 return. The bus is very popular, so book online at least 1-2 days in advance (<http://jett.com.jo/>). You'll need a phone to follow up the online booking, which seems a little odd. You don't pay online, but at the ticket office on the day. The bus leaves at 6.30 am, and returns from Petra at 4.00 pm. Alternatively, rent a car. Don't go in summer – there is no shade and you only get to enjoy the breeze at the turn-around point.

Foreign tourists are charged JD50 for a one-day entry pass to the Petra historical site – locals pay JD1. It is only an extra JD5 if you want to make a two-day visit.



There are plenty of hotels in the adjoining township of Wadi Musa if do you want to spend more than one day, although a bushwalker can easily see everything and be back in time to catch the bus, even without the help of four-footed friends. It is perhaps a 10km round trip.

There are about 300 donkeys, 150 horses and 30 camels, all with their owners trying to offer you a ride. They are very persistent, but it's all done with a smile. They will suggest the ride is free, but then demand payment later.

You enter the historical site after passing stores selling all sorts of food and trinkets; this is a good place to buy a hat if you've lost yours. From there you head slightly downhill to the Siq, a narrow canyon that soon opens out in front of the 'Treasury' building. This is probably the most photographed place because it is spectacular and because many tourists probably don't get much further.

There seem to be no restrictions on where you can go and no safety warnings – how refreshing!

You then meander down an old Roman road that has an amphitheatre and coliseum on the left and all sorts of rooms cut into the cliffs on the right. There are tombs and the ruins of churches there as well. At the end of this road which, by the way, is about 50 mm deep in bulldust in places, is a café shaded by Eucalypt trees!



It's worthwhile pottering around to the left and up behind the café for a while, before turning right and climbing the (supposedly) 800 steps up to the next most amazing sculptured building, called the 'monastery'. Once again you will be offered a donkey ride up here and it is awful to see the size of some of the people on the backs of the little animals. There is another café here. Climbing to the high ground behind the café to look down into the surprisingly deep gorges beyond is worth the effort.

The return trip is the reverse of the above, although some guided tours go 'off-track' along an unmarked shortcut. You can trail along behind one of these at a respectable distance if you are game.

This usually crowded place is relatively quiet at the moment, because of the war in neighbouring Syria. The Chinese tourists, particularly, are staying away. If you are thinking about going there, now is the time to do it. You could combine the visit with a trip to Egypt or Israel, which border Jordan. Note that women can dress to western standards throughout Jordan without fear of upsetting anybody.

Here is a great promotional video for Petra – it runs for around 16 minutes and provides a good overview, even though the colours are a bit weird at times. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCRD1W1J-wE>