

Brindabella Bushwalking Club



December 2023



From the President

This time last year I commented on the volatile weather patterns and thought with the drier weather ahead things could be different. Well, I was naïve in thinking this as we currently have volatility repeating itself, just with a different emphasis. So, continue to be vigilant and aware of what is happening especially in regard to thunderstorms and possible flooding in areas where you are walking.

What a good year it has been, in addition to the many local walks that we routinely put on, there have been numerous away walks, both interstate and internationally. A huge thank you to the leaders who arrange these events as the effort in researching, confirming the walk suitability and arranging the logistics for everyone is substantial and time consuming.

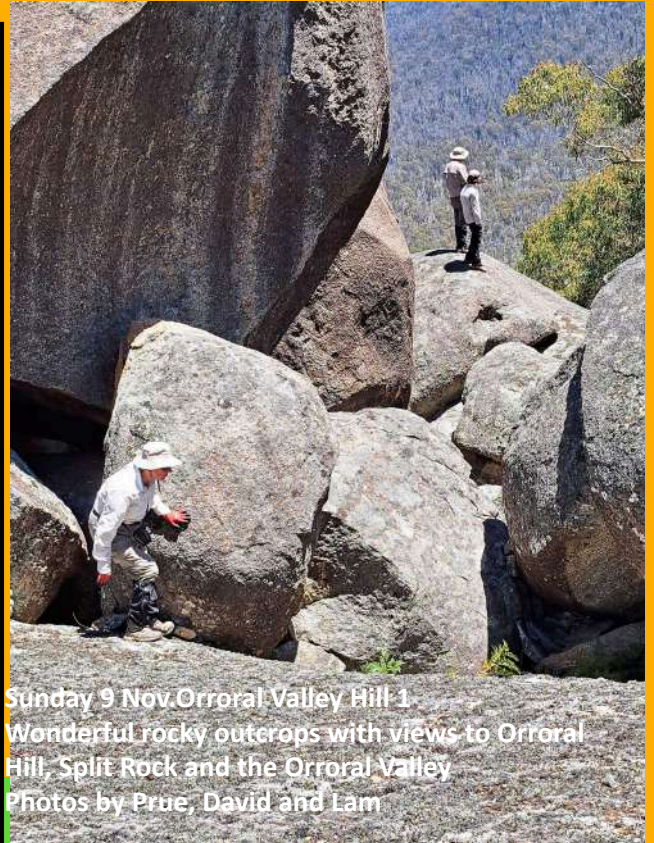
With the holiday season approaching, I hope that you and your family and/or friends are able to enjoy the outdoor opportunities that are available. Have a safe and happy time.

That's it from me, so I hope to see you on a walk soon, until then take care.... Bill



Merry Christmas!

Christmas Party tonight, 1 December from 5.30 pm at St Margaret's Uniting Hall, Phillip Ave. and Antill St. Hackett



INSIDE

Bungonia Car Camp -	Deborah Gibson	2
Cotter Hut Camp Walk	Leigh Hermann	5
Current issues		6
Cape to Cape WA	Sonja Weinberg	7
Walking in Victoria	Nancie Lim	9
Notice		10



Bungonia National Park Car Camp – 3rd to 5th November 2023

Deborah Gibson

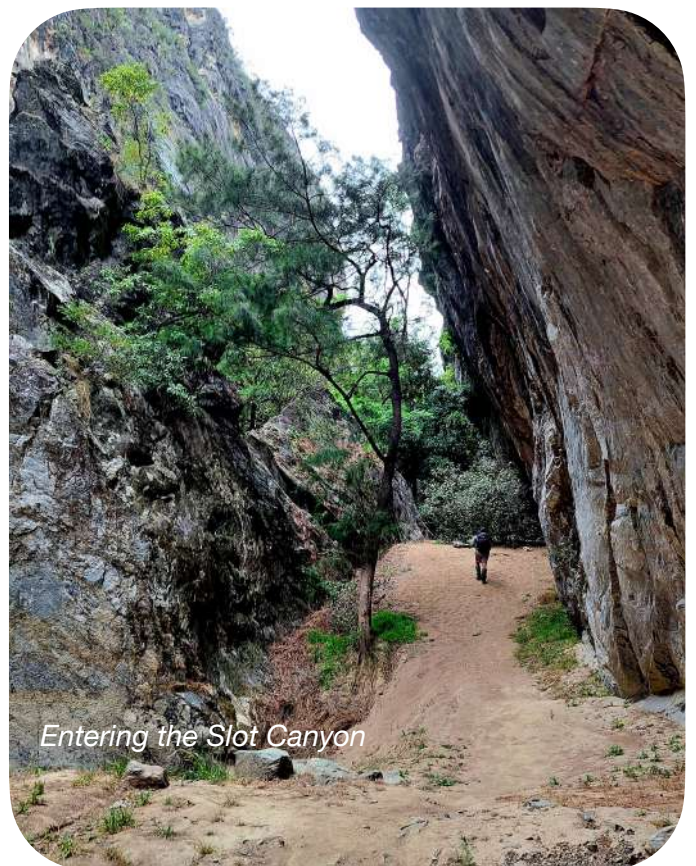
Eleven of us, including our incapacitated walk leader who was camp-bound for the duration due to a foot issue, spent a rather adventurous 3-day weekend in Bungonia National Park, about 35km east of Goulburn. We started with an easy but scenic walk on the Friday afternoon up to the Jerrara Lookout which provided an expansive view of Bungonia Creek and Bungonia Gorge before returning to camp for the obligatory drinks and nibbles.

we entered Bungonia Gorge, a short but very narrow gorge, billed as the deepest in Australia. The track initially starts in the creek bed, but we chose the more challenging option along the edge until we reached a point unpassable without ropes. Returning to the sandy bed of the gorge we walked only a hundred yards before reaching the giant limestone boulders of the Slot Canyon. Navigating through the boulders is a matter of trial and (a lot of) error, and seriously challenged our flexibility and teamwork as we climbed over, crawled under and shimmied or slid down through a sea of huge boulders, many of the order of 5m x 5m. Luckily we had the likes of Andrew Cupit and Phillip Hope to scout the best way through, and provide 'controlled descent support' for the several vertical slides we had to undertake. Eventually after 2 hours we got through the 500m boulder section for a very welcome late lunch. Then it was a relatively easy track along the edge till we reached the start of the steep 620m climb back out.



Bungonia Gorge from the lookout

On Saturday we took on the challenge of the Red Track. The Parks advertise this as a Grade 5 walk, only suitable for the "very experienced hiker" and "meant to challenge (their) navigation skills". It certainly lived up to this description. After a very steep and slippery 580m descent

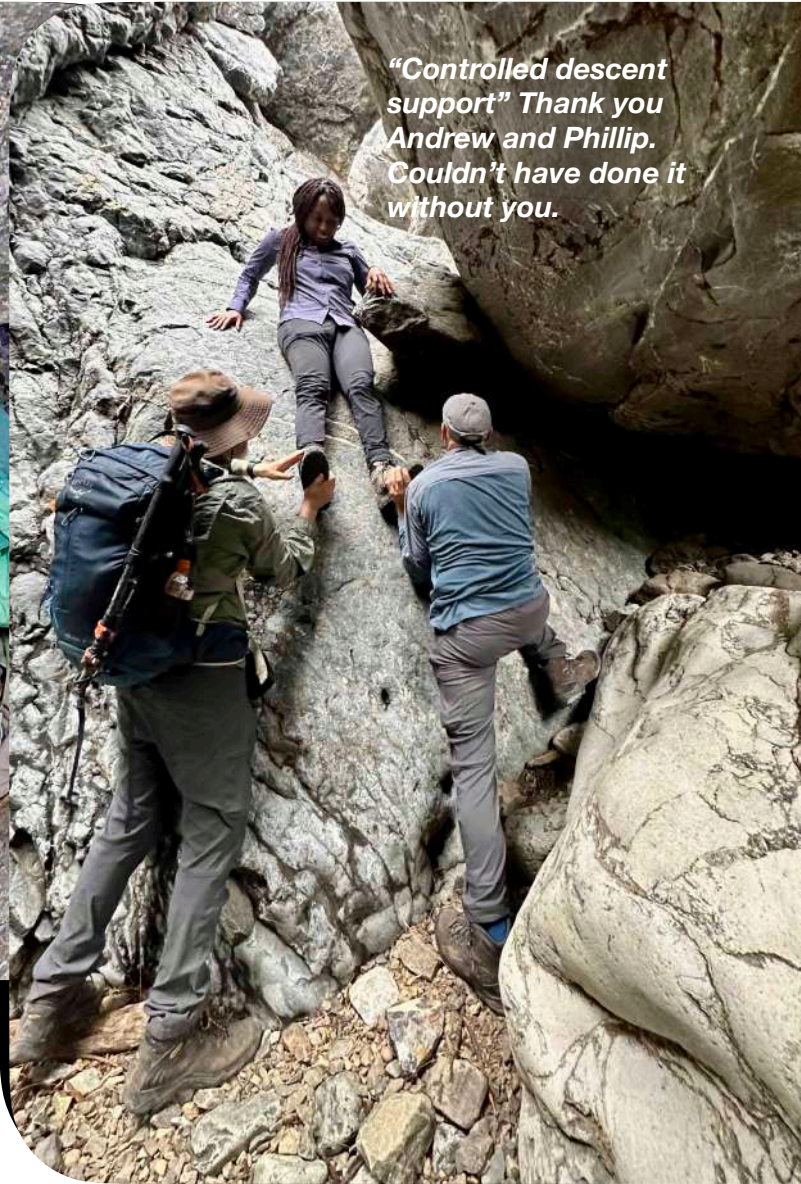


Entering the Slot Canyon

Negotiating the boulders of the Slot Canyon



“Controlled descent support” Thank you Andrew and Phillip. Couldn’t have done it without you.



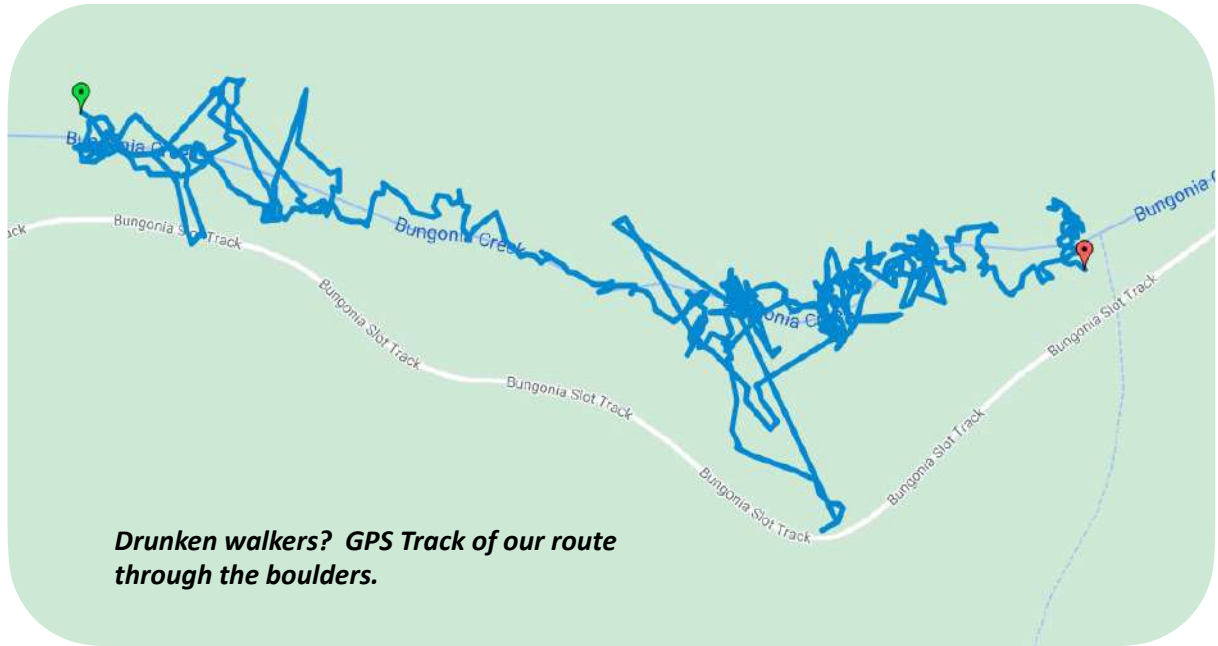
On Sunday, all just a little weary from our prior day’s adventure, we undertook the relatively easy Green Track, a 10km walk that passes three of Bungonia’s network of nearly 200 wild caves. While one of these was closed because of bat breeding, we clambered down into the accessible areas of the other two. The descent into Grill’s cave involves a couple of ladders taking you fairly deep below the surface. Warned by the ranger, we took matches to test for CO2 levels on the descent! Inside we encountered a couple of bats, and of course undertook the obligatory “torches off” so as to experience absolute blackness.

Returning to the camp ground in time for lunch, we all agreed that it had certainly been an “adventure weekend”, and one we had all enjoyed immensely.



Exploring Grill’s Cave





Bungonia National Park Group

COTTER HUT PACK WALK 15-16 NOVEMBER

Leigh Hermann

As an inexperienced pack walker I was keen to test myself on John Ellis's programmed 3-day walk to Cotter Hut. The walk in was a 15km walk with a 500 m climb, more difficult than the two walks I'd done previously, but I was comforted by John assuring us it wouldn't be fast.

With rain forecast the trip was delayed a week, this meant the original 7 participants reduced to 4. Camping in the Bimberi Wilderness (the Cotter water catchment) requires a permit and groups are limited to eight people. John had organised this.



The first day went reasonably well. The first 5km was along Cotter Hut Road in Orroral Valley, from there a very pleasant footpad took us, steeply in parts, to Cotter Gap where we viewed nearby Split Rock (exploring these rocks was left to another trip). The temperature was pleasant, though humid, and wildflowers abounded, with lots of donkey orchids, Pimelia and others. From Cotter Gap it was a gradual downhill to Cotter Flats and



the Cotter River, and the site of Cotter Hut. The route follows the Australian Alps Walking Track. From Cotter Hut it heads over Murrays Gap into NSW.

Cotter Hut was built as accommodation for Cotter Catchment rangers in the 1960s. More a house than a hut, it is locked and not available for use by walkers. There is no toilet or water-tank and camping is not allowed nearby. So we chose a campsite a few hundred



metres away, on the flats by the river with easy access to water and out of sight of the hut. There were wallabies and roos aplenty, and the burbling river was delightful.

That evening it was apparent that one of us had been seriously struggling. Leg pain meant he could no longer carry his pack. The next morning we considered our options for getting us all out. In the end we decided two of us would walk out via Cotter Gap and then contact Parks for ranger assistance. As four is the minimum number for an official BBC walk, this is the usual procedure. One person stays with the person unable to walk, and two to go for help.

However, one of us happened to have a Garmin InReach device. These devices enable short messages to be sent via satellite technology; he uses it when camping out overnight to reassure his wife all is well. So a message was sent to his wife, asking for Parks' assistance. So while 2 of us were walking over the Gap and back to Orroral Valley, a ranger arrived and cheerfully escorted the other two back to the cars where

they were waiting for us. That night we were all home for dinner after only one night away.

So while all ended very well, I gained several learnings from this experience. Personally I found the walking with a 14kg pack at the limit of my ability: on the upside my new tent worked well, but my borrowed pack could have been better adjusted. The original plan of an easier middle day exploring the area would have been beneficial and have avoided 2 hard back-to-back days of walking. But yet, I had managed and I was pleased!

More broadly, though, the minimum requirement of 4 on a walk proved itself. And without doubt the Garmin InReach was extremely useful, without it ranger retrieval would have been a day later. Such devices may become more commonly used by bushwalkers. For more information see [Garmin inReach® Mini 2 | Satellite Communicator | Messenger](#).



NAMADGI MANAGEMENT PLAN

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service has begun work on a new management plan for Namadgi National Park and is embarked on wide consultation.

The [current plan](#) dates from 2010 and proposals for its review are set out [here](#). The BBC has been invited to participate in this consultation. Some of the issues have been traversed in an article by David Wardle published in the August 2022 newsletter entitled [Namadgi Walking Trail Study](#). This can be accessed from the 'Resources for members' page on our website.

LEADERSHIP COURSE

Bushwalking NSW is promoting a leadership course for members of affiliated clubs including BBC. Plans for the course have been developed following research carried out last year into the difficulties faced by some clubs in recruiting and retaining leaders. The research found that, while there are gaps in technical knowledge such as navigation, the real issues lie in matters such as managing difficult situations and people.

The course is about managing people rather than technical matters. It would be free for any members of the BBC who wish to improve their leadership skills. An explanatory video can be accessed [here](#).

Cape to Cape WA

Sonja Weinberg

Ian and I took the opportunity of a trip to Perth for my Mum's 90th to walk the 125 kilometre Cape2Cape coastal trail in WA, from Cape Naturaliste Lighthouse at the northern tip of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge all the way down to the Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse on the southern tip. There are many options to tackle this memorable trail, ranging from self-guided overnight camping, day walks and guided tours tackling the whole track over 5-9 days.

We decided to do it independently over a leisurely seven and a half days (with a half-day/rest afternoon mid-way). On average, we covered 15-17 kilometres a day.

In-between we experienced a gloriously rugged coastline packed with wildflowers, orchids, loads of whales, quite a few snakes and other reptiles, a waterfall, stunning forest, pristine beaches and lots of friendly and interesting people to chat to, all the while never straying too far from the sound of waves of the Indian Ocean lapping on the beach.

The Cape to Cape is considered a moderate trail. Doing it with a full pack is very manageable for anyone who regularly does the medium/hard Wednesday walks. Whilst the distance is long, with some long stretches on soft beach sand and a few



Flight of galahs

rocky sections where we needed to do a bit of rock scrambling, elevation is only 2500 over the entire track.

In terms of logistics, we bussed to Margaret River, where we stayed a couple of nights in a delightful Airbnb. The host assisted us in doing a food drop at Prevally Caravan Park (our mid-way point) so we only needed to carry three days worth of food at anytime. We then bussed back to Perth from Augusta (you could, however, bus to Dunsborough and use one of the various local transport services to transport you to the lighthouse and do the food drop).

In terms of timing, you can do the trail any time of the year. However, I'd recommend spring, which is when we did it, as the trail is blooming with native wildflowers and we saw soooo many whales splashing in the distance. Autumn and winter are also suitable times as there are fewer people on the trail (but for a good reason - it can rain quite heavily in the area). It is not recommended that you walk the track in the peak of summer as there isn't a lot of shade on a lot of the track and, if you are camping on the trail, water at the designated Cape to Cape campsites isn't guaranteed.



Potaroo at Moses Rock

Prior to the trip I downloaded the Cape to Cape App (at a cost of about \$25), which is an extremely useful resource for both planning the trip and navigating once on the trail. Paper maps and guidebooks can also be purchased from the Busselton, Dunsborough and Margaret River Visitor Centres, but who wants to carry the extra weight!!!! There is also a terrific Facebook page (Cape to Cape Track (Western Australia)) full of useful information and great photos!



ITINERARY

Day	Section	Distance	Stay
1	Cape Naturaliste - Yallingup	14 km.	Yallingup Caves Caravan Park
2	Yallingup - Moses	20 km.	Moses Rock C2C Campsite (free)
3	Moses Rock -	19 km.	Ellensbrook C2C Campsite (free)
4	Ellensbrook - Prevelly	13 km.	Prevelly Caravan Park
5	Gnarabup - Contos	16 km.	Contos Campground
6	Contos - Deepdene	30 km.	Deepdene C2C Campsite
7	Deepdene - Cape	17 km.	Either in Augusta or elsewhere

Walking in Victoria

11-25 November 2023

Nancie Lim

From 11 to 25 November, John Clune led 2 groups of walkers through Victoria.

The first week of hikes started in Falls Creek in the alpine region. Wildflowers 🌻 were everywhere. The participants raved about the beauty of the area and of their superb accommodation in Mt Beauty Caravan Park beside the Kiewa River.



Photos: Virginia DL (above) and Nancie Lim (others)



Our second week of hikes was in the Dandenong Ranges. We enjoyed several days of hiking through the towering treescape and gorgeous ferntree gullies as well as through created landscapes such as the Australian Chelsea Garden and the George Tindale Memorial Garden.



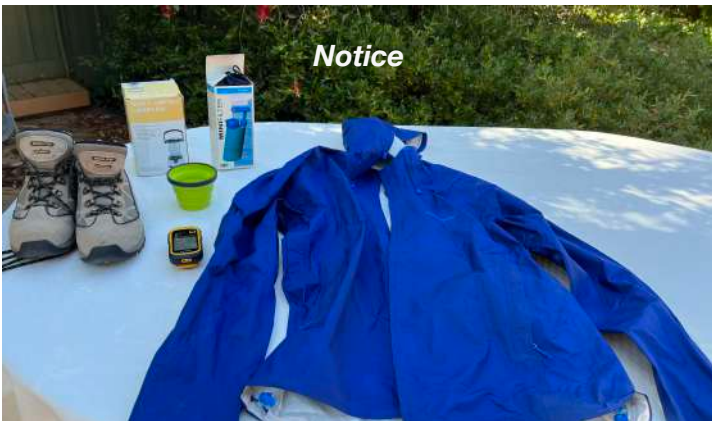


Thank you John C. for organising and leading walks into areas some of us can only wonder about but never venture into on our own. And thank you too to Bob C. for his unwavering support and encouragement. It was an enriching experience.



And there were times when we were reminded that this was not just "a walk in the park"

4000 years later and we're back to the same language



These items available for pickup after 6 December. Rain jacket (men's L). Boots (US8 UK7, hardly worn). Garmin Etrex 10, folding mug, small camping lantern, water filter. For more valuable items a bottle of quaffing red would be appreciated. Phone me any time 0452 415583.

Mary Hoffmann

Facebook: Our Facebook Manager regularly posts photos, walk reports and information about upcoming activities.

Please visit [here](#) and see what our members are planning or have recently been up to.

No, you don't need to be on Facebook yourself. Please send your photos etc. to Heather at facebook@brindabellabushwalking.org.au