

Brindabella Bushwalking Club

March 2024



As reported later in the newsletter, the membership base of the club is in a good position. We see the vast majority of members renewing their membership with the club each year and although there are a small number of non-renewals it is great to see that new members joining the club more than offset this drop in numbers.

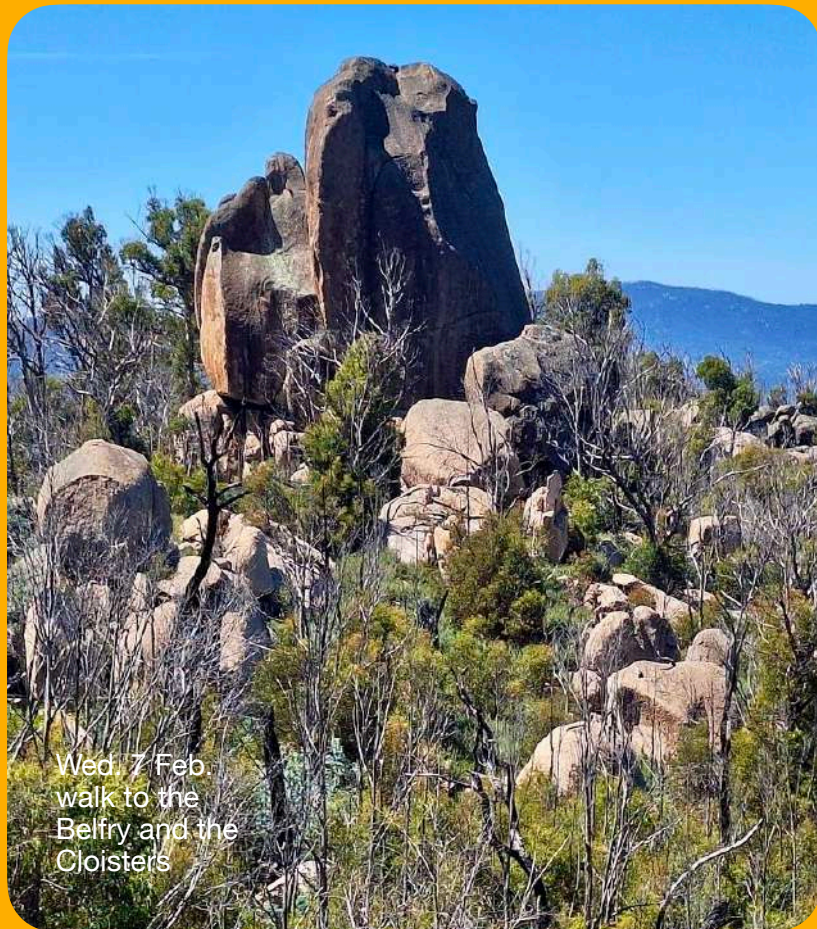
I thought that it would be timely to keep members across the extent of our walks program.

For the period July 2023 to February 2024 the club delivered 158 walks with 1872 people participating. The Wednesday walks average about 15 participants and the weekend walks average about 8 participants on each of the Saturday and Sunday.

I consider this to be very pleasing and a positive acceptance from our members of the walk profiles that we program throughout the year. Our social events are also consistently very well attended.

As a number of our executive committee members will not be re-applying for positions at our next AGM, I will summarise over the next few months what the committee roles entail. Hopefully, in so doing, it will help any new committee member nominees understand what is involved in being one of the committee executive.

I do hope to see you on a walk soon, until then do take care.....Bill



Wed. 7 Feb
walk to the
Belfry and the
Cloisters

Clarification

The walk that was featured on this page in the February newsletter was **not** the same as that referred to by the President on the same page. In editing the newsletter I had not noticed the similarity in descriptions of numbers participating, which led to some readers erroneously assuming they were the same walk.



20 Feb. Easy Wed. Walk

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Editor Peter Ford

CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME [here](#)

COMMITTEE NEWS

The Committee held its first meeting for 2024 on 20 February and discussed a range of issues.



Even Blue Tongues have committees

Archiving of Club Records

Our Secretary, Julie Pettit, has had discussions with the [ACT Heritage Library](#) about the archiving of our records and has done a lot of work on clarifying how we might best cooperate with the library while also maintaining or reviewing our own club policies on document disposal or retention and the archiving of BBC files. Legislation requires that publications be lodged with the library and issues of this newsletter will be lodged electronically.

Led by Julie, further work will be carried out on these issues, and proposals finalised for further discussion at the next committee meeting which is expected to be held in July. The aim is to meet the library's objectives while continuing to protect members' privacy.

The library's [website](#) explains that: *'the ACT Heritage Library collects material which documents the social, cultural, economic and political history of Canberra and the Australian Capital Territory. This includes books, journals, newspapers, archives, manuscripts, oral histories, photographs, ephemera, maps, plans and reports. We collect publications and original materials.*

ACT based publishers, publishers of ACT based authors and self-publishing local authors are encouraged to lodge a copy of their publications with the ACT Heritage Library for ongoing preservation and access. Hardcopy can be forwarded to the library. Electronic publications can be deposited through the [National edeposit](#) (NED) service.'

The library's description of its own role is:

'The ACT Heritage Library helps tell the stories of Canberra and its people. We collect, preserve, promote and provide access to the documents that record the lives of Canberrans at home and in the wider community.'

Walks Program

Although our Walks Officer, Leigh Hermann, was unable to attend the meeting, her report stimulated much discussion about how well the program is going and the opportunities it offers to members for discussing common problems, identifying potential future leaders and generally enhancing leadership skills.

Membership

Our Membership Secretary, Davinia Wells, reported that membership stands at 403, comprising 389 adults and 14 children. Since July last year, 47 new members have joined.

Bushwalking NSW

Members are advised that they need to individually subscribe to Bushwalking NSW if they wish to ensure that they are aware of developments covered by that publication. There is much useful information included in it and the committee urges members to ensure they have subscribed.

Editor position

This is my third year as editor and, while I enjoy the work, I'm looking to find someone a bit younger (I'm turning 79 this month) who would be interested in assisting and perhaps in due course taking it on themselves. It's a fun thing to do and, while it's necessary to familiarise yourself with a few common editorial techniques, they are easy to learn and plenty of assistance is available.

Ed.



The Snowies Walk

Margitta Acker: Photos by Tim Acker



Stage 3 of the [Snowies Alpine Walk](#), starting at Charlotte Pass Village and ending at Perisher, is now open. The walk is 13 km long and traverses some beautiful mountain country. We, three adults and three children aged between eight and eleven, did the walk in January on a very windy day, the sky a perfect blue, but the wind blowing hard, even at our accommodation, the Kosciuszko Tourist Resort (formerly Sawpit Creek). Normally we would have postponed the walk, but this was our last day in the mountains. We were determined to do it.

The walk starts down in the valley at the entry to Charlotte Pass Village. Parking at the track head is rather limited, but there may be more parking in the village itself. The wind came racing down from Charlotte Pass into the valley with gusts up to 90 km/hr according to the BOM. Luckily for us, at least initially it was blowing us along. Later the gusts would come on sideways and sometimes threaten to blow us off track, especially when walking on the raised walkways across open grassland. At times, I had to hang on to my son.

Apart from the wind, it was a most enjoyable walk. The open valley is soon left behind as the track gradually climbs into

the snow gums, many of them still reminders of the 2020 bushfires. The track is very well graded. If there are steep sections, they are short. Occasionally there are steps. Much of the track consists of either rock paving or gravel with sections of steel mesh walkways.

Initially the views are towards the Main Range, but before long the views turn eastwards into the Thredbo Valley and far beyond. The most spectacular section of all is the ridge before you reach the Porcupine with its maze of massive boulders all around and with views to the far horizon. The track is wonderfully laid out, winding in and out – and between – the boulders and at times on the edge of the dizzying fall to the Crackenback River. Unfortunately, I do not have a single photo of this special area,

maybe by then, with only about 3 km to go, we were too keen to finish and had no more time for stops, not even a photo stop.

It took us more than five hours to do the walk; but according to my mobile, the actual walking time was only 3 hours and 22 minutes. We had plenty of breaks, although it wasn't easy to find a spot out of the wind. After all, the food and drink we carried had to be consumed. And there was always something to catch the children's attention along the way.





The track from the Porcupine back to Perisher, an old favourite, was a delight; it was all downhill and we were more sheltered from the wind. This track has been fully upgraded, and the very last stretch has also been realigned.

We had left a car for the shuffle back to the start.

Here now, at Parisher, stage 4 of the Snowies Alpine Walk is under construction and expected to finish this coming spring. It leads from Perisher down to Bullocks Flat, some 11 km in all, completing a circuit that takes in the Guthega to Charlotte Pass walk and the Main Range. Another wonderful mountain walk to look forward to.



DOWNTON TABBY

SOCIAL NEWS

Friday 2 February: Sunset Walk Mt Ainslie

Did you know this annual walk and social event started in 1989 to welcome the start of the walking year (there were no walks in January then). It is unknown if the event continued annually: in some years the event has been cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. Whatever the history, this popular event is a great club tradition!!!



This year's event was outstanding. Walkers weren't deterred by the heat (many drove to the top instead of walking), but there were 58 attendees. Lovely and shady with a pleasant breeze at the top. In the past, this event has been cancelled due to rain/storms. Other nights have been chilly or windy. Was great to be outdoors and enjoy this wonderful event on a great weather evening.



Members young and old enjoyed the finger food, cold drinks and in particular chatting with fellow members. For the members who no longer walk, it's a great opportunity to keep in touch with friends and reminisce over past adventures. It's also a great opportunity to welcome new members to our fabulous club.

Thank you to the members of the Social Sub-committee for helping shop, chop, set up and clean up – a great team effort.

See emails for upcoming events

*Elaine Atkinson
Social Convenor*



Partial Closures of Kosciuszko NP

The following areas of Kosciuszko NP will be closed in 2024 for aerial control of feral animals (details can be found [here](#)):

- [Southern Kosci, including the AAWT, during March](#)
- [Northern Kosci, including the AAWT and all of Long Plain and Currango, April to October](#)

The closures are regarded as necessary to reduce feral horse numbers. For further details see [here](#).



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.

Please send your photos etc. to Heather at facebook@brindabellabushwalking.org.au

Letter to the Editor

Re Henry Gardner's article. I hope Henry notices the picture on the front page of the February Newsletter of Annette steaming up the steep rocky hill with two poles, no sweat, no trouble with two behind her, no poles, and struggling for balance. As I said in my article....four legs are better than two!

Eric Pickering

(Eric's article was referenced in the February newsletter and can be accessed [here](#).)

BUSHWALKING NSW INITIATIVES

[Bushwalking NSW](#), with which we are affiliated, has recently written to the President and Secretary of our club setting out its recent initiatives. Some of these set out particular offers for the club to consider; others set out matters that may be of interest to individual members.

After acknowledging our existing membership and setting out its benefits, the letters set out various recent initiatives. For club committees, links are provided to information and initiatives on:

- [Insurance](#);
 - [The bushwalking manual](#);
 - [Team spirit](#);
 - [Leadership training contact](#);
 - [Bushwalkers' code of conduct](#); and
- an offer to promote our club.

Individual members may access information on a range of topics from the Bushwalking NSW [website](#) including access to '[The Bushwalker](#)' newsletter. This can be a valuable resource for members with an interest in learning more about particular subjects; for example:

- on 20 February, a webinar on National Park Closures was offered;
- from time to time detailed information on particular NSW national parks and multi-day walks (e.g. Wollemi NP and Great North Walk) is provided;
- access is provided to 'Naturescapes', a NSW publication covering developments and promotional material on featured walks and accommodation;
- occasional webinars on broader national environmental issues are promoted; and
- the website includes a search function.



COTTER

More on Garrett Cotter

This historical novel by Richard Begbie was first published in 2016 but I've only just read it. I count myself among general readers and this is not so much a review as an appreciation of a story that I'd too long neglected.

(From a review of Richard Begbie's book by Robert Wilson published in the Sydney Morning Herald on 9 September 2016)

My first reaction was one of gratitude for the detail provided about place names and characters with which I had some familiarity - first, of course, Cotter himself but also Shanahan and place names for our local environment - Namadgi, Naas, Lake George etc. Next was Cotter's story itself - a cracking read.

The author has followed the trail of Garrett Cotter from Ireland to the Monaro but has to resort to a fictional approach when factual details have faded out. I found his imagined description of what the convict experience was like to be very convincing. Cotter was a hard worker and was given an excellent reference for his work with John Warby at Campbelltown and then Francis Kenny who settled on the shore of Lake George.

The book covers the social conditions of the time in Ireland before Cotter's conviction and trial, his transportation to a rough and harsh colony; his rapid rise through hard and skilful work; and an ability to get on with those who treated him with a degree of fairness. Tensions between indigenous and non-indigenous, between the Irish and English or Scots and tensions within each of those groups are sharply sketched.

The other remarkable aspect of Cotter's life was his friendship with an aboriginal leader named Onyong, spelt in various ways. This is an absorbing tale of mateship and mutual respect across the racial barrier. In a prolonged drought Onyong led Cotter to fresh pasture across the Murrumbidgee. Later, after an altercation with one Donald McKay, Cotter was banished "beyond the limits of location" for 4 years. But, as sometimes happened in the stories of the convicts, what seemed like a drastic punishment turned out to be a new opportunity. His later years were spent at Michelago where he lived with his wife and children. He died in 1886.

Cotter's wary but developing friendship with an aboriginal leader by the name of Onyong is at the centre of the book and, as the story unfolds, it draws the reader into a world of misunderstanding, greed, yearning and betrayal. In the inability of settler policies to respect aboriginal knowledge of the country and, as represented by Onyong, their relationship to it, there is a sense of a loss of opportunity. How differently might things have developed with less arrogance and more goodwill?

The author has painstakingly pieced together a factual outline of the events of Cotter's life and then has woven an intriguing story around that outline. It has all the informality of a campfire yarn, written by someone who knows the "Cotter country" well. As I read the story I reflected that when Cotter died the absorbing details of his life died with him. There was no Oral History unit then but this fine novel helps us to relive a priceless part of our heritage.

The resonance of these themes with current issues of today is only too apparent. While Onyong is a warrior who understands and deplores what is happening to his

people, he has no answer to it and, with his demise, Cotter senses that the old ways of seeing the country have gone forever.

Today Cotter's name on the map and his one known photograph, together with the metal breastplate given to Onyong, (spelt Hong Gong), are evocative survivals of a story which also lives on in the memories of their families. At the book launch of Cotter at the National Library descendants of both Garrett Cotter and Onyong were present, so that the acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land was no mere formality.

For more see this [review](#).

