

Brindabella Bushwalking Club

April 2021 Newsletter



Naas bridge washed away on Tuesday 23 March, removing access to all areas south for a while

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Coronavirus Update

- * The latest ACT updates can be found here: [Updates](#)
- * Keeping your distance and maintaining hand (and respiratory) hygiene are essential.
- * Car Sharing is approved - see the article in this newsletter

BBC Website

www.brindabellabushwalking.org.au [All newsletters are on the website]

If you need the password to access the members' Area, please send a request by email to

webmaster@brindabellabushwalking.org.au



Mt Tennent— it can't be much longer before we can revisit and enjoy the upgraded track

From the President

Namadgi. I really hoped I was going to be able to say we can now return to Mt Tennent, the Honeysuckle campground area, Booroomba Rocks, Legoland and so on. However, it seems that the recent heavy rain might have added yet another delay. At least the Naas bridge over the Gudgenby River, which was washed away (see photo on the first page), has been replaced with a temporary solution and so we can still go south of there again.

Late Return From Walks. There can be many simple reasons for a walk finishing later than expected and, if the group is beyond mobile phone coverage, they cannot tell anybody the reason. Please explain this to whoever it is that may be worried when you haven't returned by the expected time (also let them know where you are going) and show them the guidance information that is given on our [website](#); it's about the third item down from the top of the opening page.

First Aid Course. The online portion of this year's first aid course has been completed and the face to face session will take place on 13 April. As is usual, the course was offered free to leaders. Well done, Bob!

Book Review. Ann Villiers has provided a review for this newsletter of *The Ways of the Bushwalker: On foot in Australia*, by Melissa Harper. It is interesting reading — thanks for doing this, Ann.

Walk Description Resource. Here's another informative website with walk descriptions that might give you some inspiration: [Trail Hiking Australia](#).

Peter Dalton

Facebook

Our Facebook Manager regularly posts photos, walk reports and information about upcoming activities. Please pay a visit and see what our members are planning or have recently have been up to.

<https://www.facebook.com/BrindabellaBushwalkingClub/>

Please send your walk reports and photos to Heather at facebook@brindabellabushwalking.org.au

Car Pooling

The following question was posed to the ACT Government as a follow-up to verbal assurances we had received:

"Bushwalking clubs (and probably others) often have car sharing/pooling arrangements.

Everyone drives their car to a meeting point; e.g. Kambah shops. Then they "car pool" for the journey to the starting point of the walk, which may be Tidbinbilla, Hoskinstown or Monga near Clyde Mtn. This means that each car would have 3 or 4 people (sometimes, but rarely, 5) in each car for this second part of the journey. The occupants of each car are not members of the same family and would come from different suburbs of Canberra and may not know each other.

Is this a satisfactory arrangement within ACT Covid-19 regulations?"

Access Canberra responded as follows:



Access
Canberra.

Subject

COVID

Please see below response in relation to your feedback submitted to the ACT Government.

Response By Email (Subject Matter Expert) (21/12/2020 01.11 PM)

Thank you for your enquiry. Car pooling is fine on the whole. If anyone has been in the current hotspots or feeling at all unwell, they should not be taking part.

At the same time if anyone is anxious about being in such a group, they could wear a mask.

I hope that information is helpful.

Kind regards

Office of the Chief Health Officer

So, in summary. Car pooling is an allowed activity at the moment, but is never compulsory.



Prue, Lam and Leigh enjoying morning Tea in the mist

Vale
Jeffrey David Colwell
3 July 1927 - 2 March 2021



BBC Life member, Jeff Colwell and his late wife Meg were, with others, founding members of the Family Bushwalking Club, then part of the YMCA, in 1969. This was the predecessor of the Brindabella Bushwalking Club.

Jeff was an important and influential member of the club for many years, contributing significantly to its early success and later expansion as a family - oriented bushwalking club. He led many walks, at all levels, as well as car camps and back packs. Families and children were encouraged to participate in these activities. It was Jeff who introduced and led exploratory walks, memories of some of which still linger in the minds of some of the hapless participants.

Jeff could be brusque until you got to know him and quite prudish, strenuously opposing skinny dipping on any of his walks, but he was always enthusiastic about the club and its activities, welcoming and encouraging new members and new leaders. He also had a dry sense of humour. One member recalls an early camp at the Murderer's Cave near Blue Waterholes. When there was speculation about the identity of the victim Jeff remarked that it must have been a bushwalking leader who died saying "Honest to God, the cars are just around the corner."

Jeff was a humble man, never speaking about his work at CSIRO where he had an Australia-wide reputation as a soil scientist. He was one of the first people in Canberra to become involved in computer science and technology and remained interested in all aspects of computing until his death.

Jeff died peacefully in hospital only a week after leaving his home in O'Connor where he had lived with Meg for more than 60 years.

Vale Jeff. And thank you.

Peter Vidler; Rosemary Halstead; Mary Lindsay; Eric and Pat Pickering

Some Memories of the Jeff Colwell Era

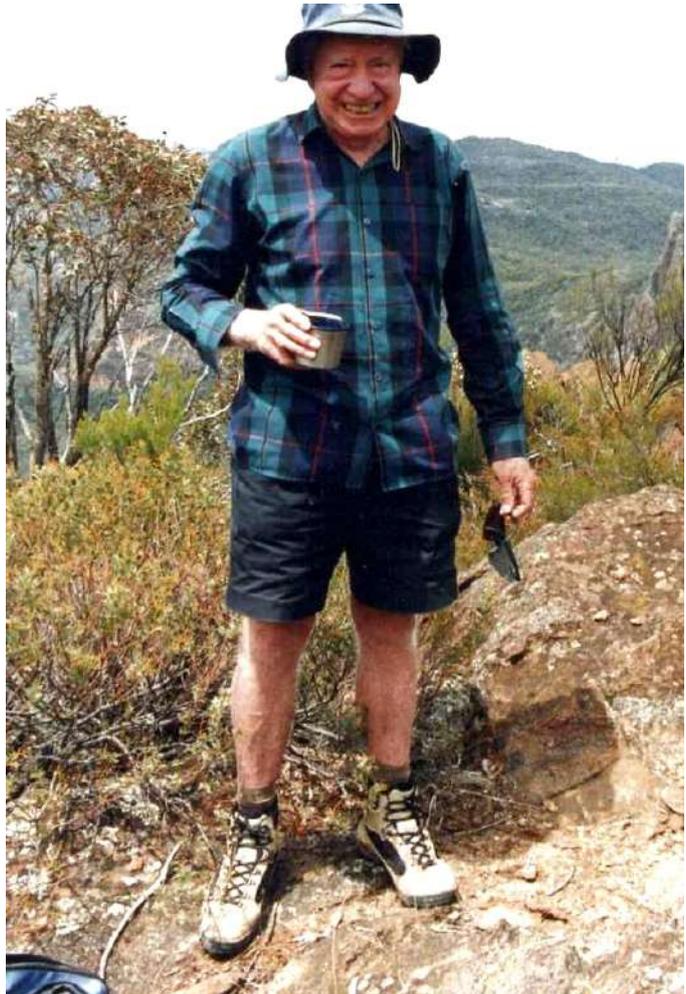
Eric & Pat Pickering

Jeff was founder and President of the Family Bushwalking Club in its halcyon days. There was an emphasis on family walks. In fact the whole Club was a unique social structure where the name “family” in its title was a singularly appropriate way of describing what it was like to be a member! We were a bushwalking family! Pat and I joined in 1982/83. Here are some of the walks we remember in that era, the 1980s and early 1990s, the “Colwell” days.

We took our granddaughter, aged 4 at the time on quite a long Club walk in the Naas Valley.....She is now 40 and taking her own children bushwalking. Other children were on the walk and some were encouraged along by having turns as “leader”.

We remember the family car camp that Jeff led to Newhaven Gap, near Sassafras in the Budawangs. There was a variety of walks, one to Hidden Valley. A few participants, including our son Stephen and his companion Stephen Haberecht (and perhaps his father, Noel), walked to the magnificent Folly Point for superb views of the Budawang icons - the Castle, Byangee Walls and Pigeon House.

Another time there was the packwalk into the Budawangs. There were 20 people on the walk, or so we thought. From memory, Margaret Cole’s and Paul Nicol’s children were there and entertained us around the campfire by singing extracts from “Jesus Christ, Superstar” which they were rehearsing for their school shindig. Others, enchanted by the girls singing, also burst into song. I remember it well, as a final count revealed we had 21 people on the walk. Someone had not signed on, and at each of several checks during the walk, we counted only 20 people! It is difficult to count a group of this size in the bush, with people of different heights and all wearing cumbersome back-packs!



Then there was the Budawang epic! Circa 1984. Jeff led another Budawang packwalk into Hollands Gorge from Sassafras. He only had three participants, our son Stephen (!5 or 16), Pat and myself. From Folly Point, we descended 600 metres through several cliff lines into Hollands Gorge to camp along the creek. Then the rains came, unceasing rain! We were heading towards Crooked Falls, but the whole escarpment became a waterfall – our very own Niagara! We learned later that 8 inches of rain fell, flooding the tableland and every drainage place. Our creek quickly flooded. We thought of crossing the torrent to retrace our steps. We tried, but Jeff decided it was far too dangerous an option. Jeff decided we should camp up the steep slope above the raging torrent. I pitched our tent at the base of a large tree on a possibly 15 degree slope with the idea that our feet against the tree would prevent us sliding down to the creek. We made ourselves as comfortable as possible and the four of us shared food as we were now a day overdue. Next day we waited for the water to subside. The ground was sodden with rivulets still draining into the creek. We made our crossing safely with the aid of a rope, with the water still above waist high at the deepest place. Our eldest son at home had alerted the Club’s Safety Officer when we had not returned and he had contacted Shoalhaven Police. Because of the heavy rain, the police were not attempting any searches until the rain stopped and the creeks drained. Jeff led us safely back to Sassafras the next day and the police were informed of our safe arrival in Canberra.

Those were the days!

The Ways of the Bushwalker: On foot in Australia

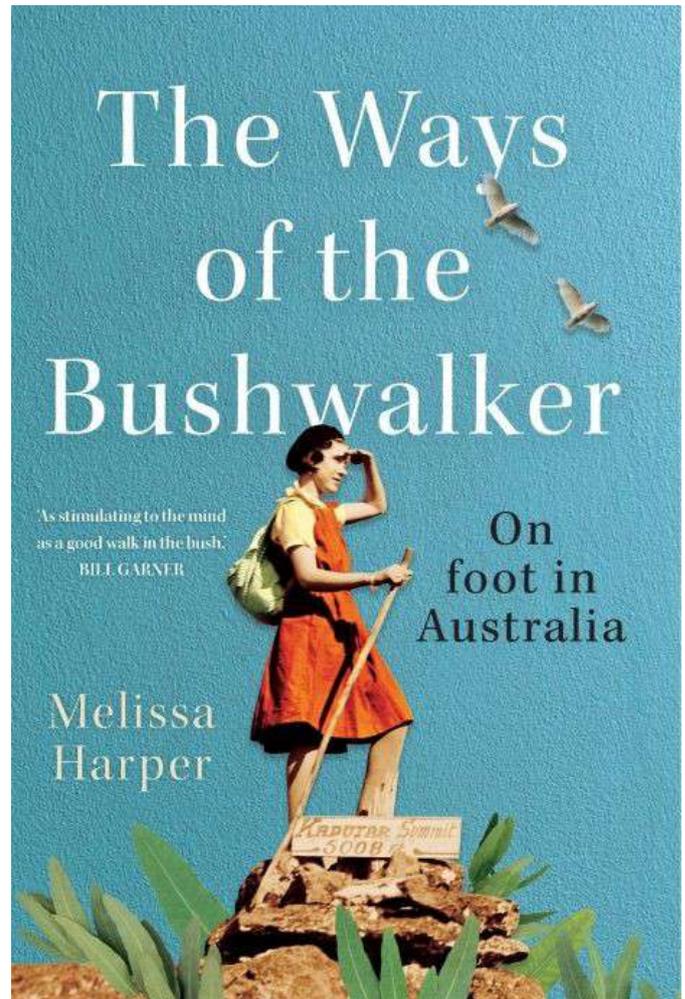
Melissa Harper

Book Review by Ann Villiers

The Ways of the Bushwalker explains how the idea of a 'real' bushwalker came about, and how a particular understanding of bushwalking came to be privileged over others. The book throws light on "how bushwalkers have seen themselves, how they have been seen by others, and how the ways they have walked in and understood the bush have shaped Australian ideas about the land ..."

This book is about settler Australians and their walking in the bush, starting from 1788. Dr Harper acknowledges that "bushwalking draws on a fundamentally different understanding of the land than that of Australia's Indigenous people", one that "displaces or denies Indigenous connections to country".

This book appeals to me for three reasons. Firstly, it brings together diverse types of walking to help understand today's bushwalking. In recounting the walking of explorers, intellectual walkers, nudist hikers, tourist walkers and adventure walkers, Harper makes clear that: "the lines between exploration, travel and tourism are blurry." What we today understand as bushwalking emerged in the late nineteenth century and the word itself was only invented in the 1920s.



Secondly, the wider historical context makes for informed reading. For example, Harper explores the impact of social ideas, the development of cities, and the role of artists and writers on how bushwalking and the bush were conceived.

We read about individuals who made significant contributions to bushwalking, such as Alice Manfield, born in 1878, who made a name for herself as a mountain guide, amateur naturalist, hotel keeper and photographer. And there are stories about familiar places, such as the Blue Mountains, Bright, Mansfield, and Mount Buffalo.

The Ways of the Bushwalker: On foot in Australia

(continued)

By throwing light on where ideas come from, this history makes understandable enduring undercurrents of class and gender. Perceptions of walking suffered from the legacy of the English gentleman rambler and the stigma of poverty from the economic depression of the early 1890s.

Only in the 1920s was a bushwalking movement identifiable, with a body of clubs committed to walking and united in protecting their interests. Initially these clubs had an all-male membership, “shaped by the dominant understanding of the bush as a masculine environment, a place for men to get together and be ‘real’ men.”

Women worked to subvert this position. The Melbourne Women’s Walking Club formed in 1922 “because the sisters, girlfriends and wives of the members of the Melbourne Walking Club ... were no longer satisfied with the token ‘ladies day’ offered by the club that positioned female walkers as less capable than the men.”

Recreational walking took off in the interwar years. In the 1930s, organised hikes in bushland reached by train, attracted crowds in the hundreds and thousands. Radio stations formed hiking clubs and radio announcers, personalities of the day, sometimes led the hikes. In Sydney, 2UW broadcast a hiking show three times a week.

Clubs continued to play a role in protecting their turf through the regulation and surveillance of their members. As ‘real bushwalkers’ were long-distance walkers in remote places and self-sufficient campers, clubs had entry tests and probation periods.

We read about the role of bushwalkers in mapmaking and naming spaces, and actively campaigning for conservation, including the creation of national parks and the shaping of understandings of wilderness. Yet this is not straightforward. Harper points out that: “The fight to declare land as wilderness could amount to a continuation of the dispossession of Aboriginal people. The original inhabitants had not given permission for the declaration of national parks. The very concept of wilderness offended many Aboriginal people and their connections to country.”

And thirdly, this book invites reflection on one’s own response to issues raised. Dr Harper explores why governments across Australia have taken a keen interest in investing in bushwalking tracks. As she points out, the attention to the bushwalker is encouraging, but new track-making is also raising questions about who the bush is, or should be, for. Further questions are raised about monetising nature with the potential for upmarket bushwalking.

The book also invites considering how I conceive of my bushwalking: is it temporary ‘uncivilising’ from the city, is it a social experience, a rugged adventure testing the limits of endurance, a time to explore the inner self and the external world, a source of physical renewal or intellectual stimulation?

This is a readable, wide-ranging and thought-provoking book, and a valuable contribution to Australian history.



Ann scaling a rocky pass on a recent walk

Social Events

MARCH 2021

Getting together for a variety of social events has proven popular for us to keep connected with our walking club friends, especially in this covid environment. There are many great outdoor venues in Canberra, so let's enjoy. These social outings will continue while there is great interest and your positive feedback is appreciated.



The Foxes arriving

Sunday 7 March – 23 happy members (and Bella Fox, the dog, who was the star of the group) attended drinks / nibbles / picnic in Lennox Gardens from 4 pm – a perfect setting under beautiful trees by the lake in Canberra's glorious autumn weather. Some of us enjoyed a sunset walk in Nara Park before heading home. One 91-year-old member was very content relaxing in his chair enjoying his wine and coffee and in no hurry to go home (last to leave) – makes these events worthwhile.



A happy group enjoying chatting, eating and drinking on a beautiful autumn day

Thursday 18 March – This was a heritage walk around Hall with a visit to historic Allwood Cottage (a repeat of last November’s outing due to popular demand). Everyone enjoyed this wonderful insight into the past which showed us what a hard life the early pioneer families in the district led, and what their day to day lives must have been like.

Here’s Julie’s report on the visit:

18 BBC members enjoyed a very interesting and informative occasion commencing with a coffee and chat at the Daughters of Hall café mid-morning, followed by a tour of the main historic buildings in the village of Hall.

Our guide Judy Roberts is a longstanding resident of the Hall district, and an active member of the community with a strong interest in, and knowledge of, the history of the area. She has been a leading light in establishing and maintaining the Hall Museum.

Judy took us around the central area of Hall (a bee friendly village) pointing out some of the old buildings, some dating from the late nineteenth century and telling us about their history and who has lived in them in the past.

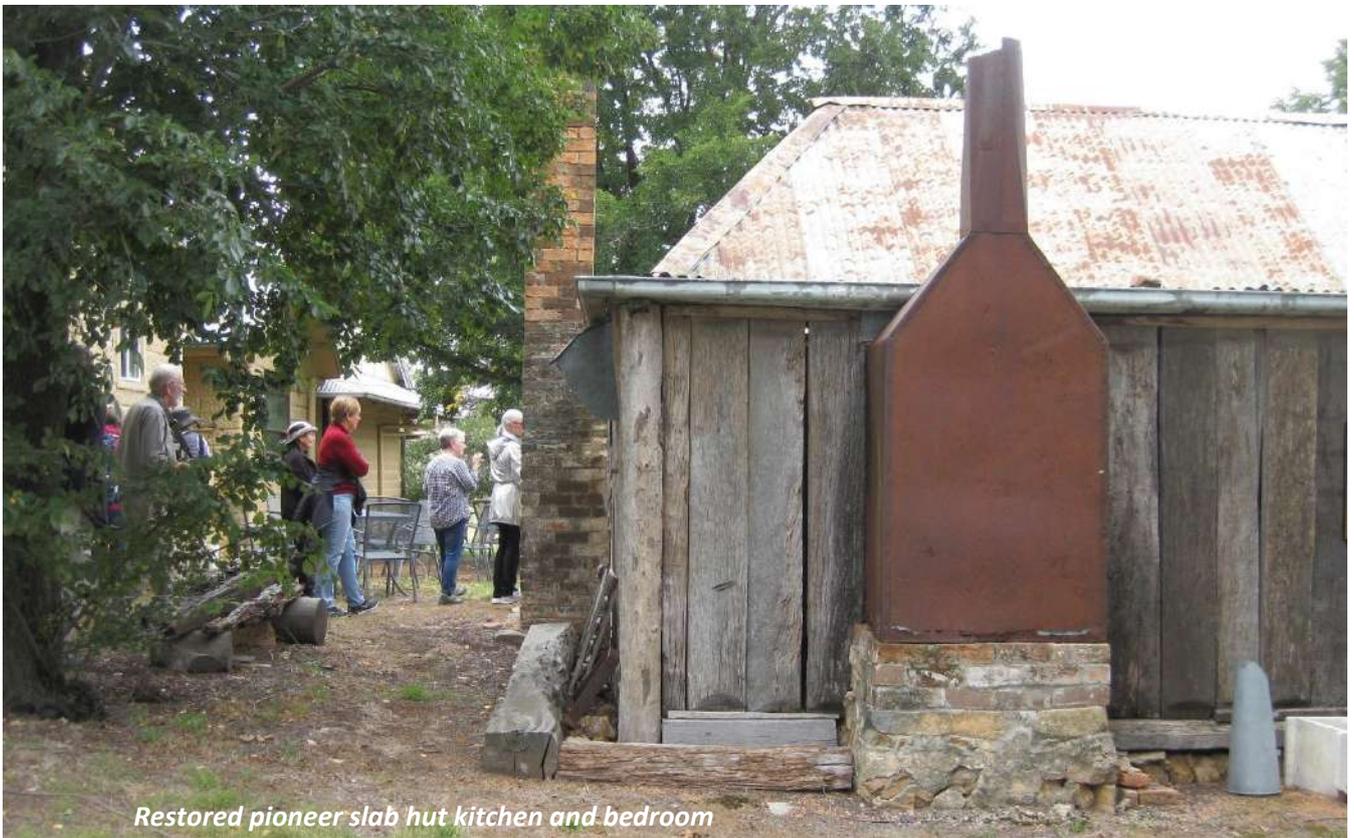


Rod and Judy describing the renovations that have taken place

We then adjourned to Judy and Rod Robert’s farm “Allwood” where they have lived for many years, during which time they restored an old, deteriorating slab dwelling on their property.

It took many years of hard work and dedication to restore the two adjoining slab huts as they were in a very bad state. However, their hard work has paid off as it is one of the few remaining dwellings of this type in the district and has now been recognised by the National Trust.

Their dedication to restoring the slab huts in an authentic way and to collecting all kinds of interesting artefacts and background information is to be commended as they have preserved a very important part of our past.



Restored pioneer slab hut kitchen and bedroom

We all enjoyed this wonderful insight into the past which showed us what a hard life the early pioneer families in the district led, and what their day to day lives must have been like. Thanks to Judy and Rod for this most interesting visit.

Julie Pettit



Additional bedrooms

Coming up in April: possible Easter Monday walk/BBQ/picnic (email will be sent) and the very popular Octogenarian event on the 17th (check the Walks Program).

When the carillon recitals return, there will be a drinks and nibbles night.

No pot luck dinners are planned for the time being. Your ideas for social activities are always welcome.

Elaine and the Social Sub-Committee

Trekker's Friend

If you're planning on a multi day walk or even heading to Europe to complete one of the big caminos once international travel resumes, you might consider an option to take the load off your back for a while. There are scores of these available around the world, but most are heavy-weight, and none fold up like this one when needed. The really good bit about this device is that it is made right here in Canberra.

Check the photos and videos at the website for more information.

<https://trekkersfriend.com/>



Pee on it, they said...

It'll be fun, they said!

