

Brindabella Bushwalking Club Newsletter

December 2015
Volume 1, Issue 2



Mt Gudgenby

From The President

You will have received the BBC Walks Program by now and will no doubt be appreciative of all the members who have offered to lead walks for us. There is a great variety of activities with a couple of repeats, which were included by popular request.

You can see that John Clune is concentrating his efforts on Australian-based walks this time with four trips away from Canberra. Well done John! There is a report in this newsletter on the Sicily/Malta trip he organised this year.

There are two activities celebrating the octogenarians in the Club; I hope that we can all be as active as these people as we continue with the pleasures of bushwalking! Please come along to help celebrate their achievement

You might also have noticed that there are no pack walks on the program. All pack walks on the last program were cancelled due to lack of interest, as were most on the previous two programs. If you'd like to do some pack walking, please speak up and we'll see what we can organise.

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Walk Suggestions

We asked for suggestions from you for walks you would like to see on the program - either for the first time or as repeats of walks you have particularly enjoyed. The response was very pleasing and most of the suggestions have been taken up by leaders in the Jan-Jun program, or will result in Wednesday walks over all three grades. Thanks for that, and keep the ideas coming.

Deposits for Accommodation for Trips Away

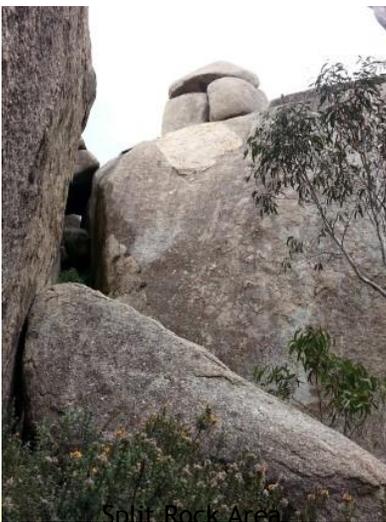
Deposits may be required for accommodation or camping spots on a number of the trips away. If you subsequently withdraw from the trip your deposit will only be refunded if someone else is on the waiting list and can take your place. Where a group booking is based on a minimum number the final cost often can't be decided until all of the bookings are in and confirmed.

Leaders will be able to let members know the conditions of booking before the deposits are paid and these will vary according to the requirements of the accommodation facility. Many trips have a waiting list so don't be disappointed if you don't get your booking confirmed first time around.

The Website

Please check the website from time to time: www.brindabellabushwalking.org.au The latest versions of all the Club's forms are there and there are a couple of interesting new items.

Photos: We are developing a system to enable members to make their walk photos available to other members. Watch the website for further details.



The Rules for Walkers, the Walks Grading System and the email addresses of the Walks Committee are all in the current Walks and Social Program

First Aid Courses

The First Aid courses available through St John and Red Cross are workplace oriented and don't properly address the needs of bushwalkers who possibly won't have mobile phone coverage and who will, in any case, have a lengthy wait before ambulance support arrives. The committee is seeking a provider to conduct a relevant course for the Club at a reasonable price.

Rules for Walkers

The Rules for Walkers, which always appear in each new program, are tweaked slightly whenever the committee sees the need. Please take the time to peruse these when you get the new program.

Guidelines for Leaders

We no longer have 'Rules' for leaders - we now have 'Guidelines'. The committee wholeheartedly agreed with feedback from leaders that the word 'Rules' was inappropriate.

The Guidelines will soon be available on the website.

The Abbreviation for Reconnaissance

Some of our leaders indicate on the program or in correspondence to the Walks Committee that they need to reconnoitre all or part of a walk. In fact, it is sometimes an element of the walk. You wouldn't believe how many different ways the word can be abbreviated. Here are some we've seen: recce, reccie, reccy, recky and reckie. We haven't seen wreckie yet, but you never know.

Which is correct - who cares?

Personal Locator Beacons (PLB)

BBC has two PLBs and they are available for leaders on Club walks. One is held by John Clune (north side) and the other by Prue Deacon (south side). Their contact details are in the Walks and Activities Program

Social Activities for your 2016 Diary

There are quite a few social activities and dinners on the program - here are two that are always popular, but please check the program for the others.

Fri 29 Jan: Mt Ainslie Sunset Walk - a great way to start the walking year and meet other members of the club!

Fri 1 Apr: Potluck Dinner and some dancing with the Paverty Bush Band.

Drinking Creek or River Water

Unfortunately some of the rivers and creeks in south-eastern Australia are no longer free from bugs (**E. coli** and **Giardia Lamblia**). If in doubt about its quality, water should either be boiled (one minute rolling boil) or treated with an iodine-based purifier, e.g. 8 drops of Betadine per litre (shake and then allow the water to sit for 20 minutes before consuming). Not all filters cope with “everything”, so do read the details carefully if you are using a filter.

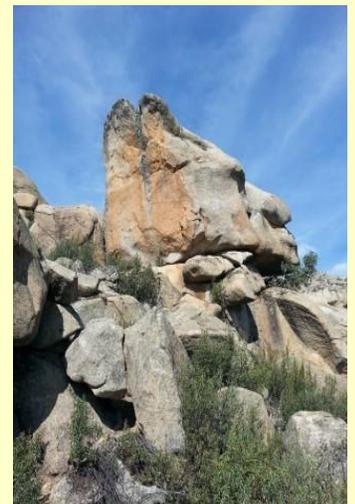
If a walker has no water left, it is preferable for them to drink untreated water than risk dehydration and collapse. It takes 7 - 14 days for giardiasis to develop and it can be treated with antibiotics if symptoms later occur.

Snakes

Walkers are saying that they've never seen so many snakes as they are seeing this summer. The best course of action when a snake is spotted is to alert the rest of the walkers and give it a wide berth to one side - not like what happened on a recent Wednesday walk, when the walkers walked either side of the snake and virtually surrounded it. The snake panicked and, in an instant, had sprinted the 3 metres of open space and struck at a boot. All ended well, but it might not have.

Courtesy in the Bush

When you are walking behind someone through the bush, it is up to you to ensure you leave enough space to avoid getting smacked in the face by branches pushed aside by the person ahead - there is no point getting cranky at them. However, we can always be considerate by pushing branches to the side rather than straight forward, thus avoiding the inevitable spring back. This common-sense item has only been included in this newsletter because there was an ugly argument over this point on a walk a couple of months ago.



Dog Rock

Glenburn & Burbong Historic Precinct

A couple of our Wednesday walks to the Glenburn/Burbong Historic Precinct have ‘run into’ Col McAlister and been given an insight into its history and the efforts being made to restore/maintain the area and create a ‘Heritage Trail’. A brief history (you’ll need to zoom in to enlarge it) and some photographs are available at this link: <https://goo.gl/photos/qbGDp4KkrtR7EBvR9>

If you would like to become involved as a volunteer to assist the Parks Service in protecting and conserving this area, please contact Col at cvmac@grapevine.com.au. Work parties are held on the first Tuesday of February, May, August and November and they meet at the railway station at Kingston at 9am (or the locked gate at the intersection of Charcoal Kiln Road and the Kings Highway) at about 9.20am.

When is it Too Hot to Walk?

The committee was asked to agree on a temperature above which it is too hot to walk safely, but we chose not to do so. The leader will cancel the walk if they think the conditions on the day are unsuitable for the walk or may alter the route of the walk if possible to provide a cooler option. On the other hand the leader will realise that it must be too hot/cold/wet, etc, when no one turns up at the meeting point!

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance becomes costly or even unattainable as we get older. The NSW Seniors Directory is advertising a company (www.insureandgo.com.au) that promises to provide cover up to the age of 100 and “all pre-existing medical conditions considered”. If you insert the Promo code ‘seniors15’ you get a 15% discount. This is not an endorsement of the insurance, but just advice of another possible source if you are having trouble getting affordable cover.

Weed Control in Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) on 6-7 Feb

Would you like to join Greening Australia (GA) and Canberra Bushwalking Club on a weekend of alpine weed spotting and control in KNP? GA, NSW Parks and Landcare have partnered in this project to train volunteers to recognise, report and take action to help control the spread of noxious weeds that threaten the unique alpine plant life found in KNP.

During the weekend of 6-7 February, a group of CBC volunteers will carry out some weed removal, mulching, planting, and weed spotting in KNP (specific sites to be decided). Greening Australia will be providing lodge accommodation and transport. Participants will bring their own breakfasts, lunches and snacks - and contribute to a shared meal on Saturday night. BBC members are invited to participate in this weekend activity.

For further information about this activity, or to express interest, please contact Cynthia Burton at: conservation@canberrabushwalkingclub.org or 0488 071 203.

Sicily and Malta - 13 Oct to 7 Nov 2015

By Julie Pettit

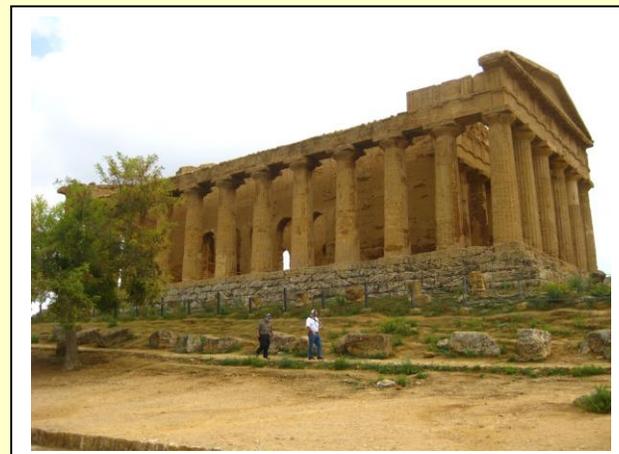
12 of us met up in Trapani on the west coast of Sicily for our adventure, which was expertly planned and organised by John Clune. Our stay there lasted for 5 nights/4 days and was full of interesting places to see and things to do.

The old city was charming with many ornate facades to the buildings; however, the outskirts of the city sported many run down and rather ugly apartment blocks reputedly financed by “funny” money.

We explored the old walled city of Erice, perched high on the range overlooking Trapani, with its many narrow, cobbled alleyways and small shops displaying wonderful arrays of painted wall plates. It is renowned for its famous pastry shop, where of course we indulged ourselves. In our wanderings we unexpectedly found ourselves in the midst of a film production for a “B” grade Italian war movie complete with old World War II tanks and armoured vehicles. There were locals dressed as 1930’s peasants, priests and townspeople, and extras dressed as Italian and American troops.

On day 2 we hired a bus to take us to Agrigento, about 2 ½ hours travel SE of Trapani and famous as a World Heritage archaeological site displaying ruins from the many civilizations to have occupied Sicily. Agrigento was a main centre for temple worship in both Greek and Roman times and we were able to see many examples of magnificent and very well preserved ruins - especially the Greek temple of Concordia, one of the best preserved Doric temples in the world. It was constructed in the early 5th century and is used as the UNESCO logo. The trip there and back passed through some very scenic countryside, marked by dry stone wall-enclosed fields growing mainly olive trees and grapes, with very angular square stone farmhouses dotted here and there.

The next day took us to Levanzo, one of the Egardi Islands which is a short distance by hydrofoil from Trapani, where we spent a delightful day walking around the island and indulging in a refreshing swim in the clear blue sea.



On our last day we hired a guide to take us to Zingaro National Park, to the north, where we enjoyed some great coastal views and walks, as well as swimming.

The houses in Sicily are uniformly square stone structures with flat roofs and a distinctly Arabic look about them, as no doubt the climate dictates a style that keeps the occupants cool inside in the very hot summers and offers a roof space to relax in the cooler evenings.

A mini-bus took us and our luggage to the port of Milazzo on the NW coast for our next stop on the Aeolian Island of Lipari where we spent 5 nights. Our stay here was one of the highlights - a very comfortable hotel and many interesting sights.

We enjoyed some great walks around Lipari and then went by ferry for a day on Stromboli, where we explored the lower reaches of the still active volcano. In the evening, after dining on the island, we boarded our ferry and anchored offshore to witness Stromboli's pyrotechnical display. It was quite an experience to see the volcanic explosions at night - fortunately only little ones. We also had an opportunity to explore the closer volcanic island of Vulcano on the next day where we were able to climb right to the top and peer into the crater which only has smoking sulphuric vents around the rim.

Our next stop at Taormina on the East coast of Sicily was quite different; this is a bustling up-market tourist town perched high on a hill with wonderful coastal views and Mt Etna in the distance. There was still a surprising number of tourists promenading down the main street, which is lined with very expensive shops.

We did some coastal walks in the region, explored the town and spent a day walking the lower slopes of Mt Etna, which is an enormous volcano with vast lava fields being evidence of its many eruptions - the last one occurring as recently as 2007. Walking here was quite hazardous as pathways were littered with jagged lava rocks entailing a close watch on where one stepped. Only experienced walkers, accompanied by a guide, are allowed to go to the top on a full day trek, so that was not possible for us.

C Newsletter

A day trip to Syracuse, founded by Greeks in 734 BC and which, at its height was a most important commercial centre and the largest city in the ancient world, proved most interesting. There is plenty of evidence of the many cultures to have invaded and settled there - Greek, Carthaginian, Roman and Saracen.

Our mini-bus delivered us to Catania airport in the evening for our short flight to Valetta (capital of Malta), arriving quite late at our hotel which, to our horror, was down a narrow stepped alleyway - great fun with all our heavy luggage!! We all loved Malta and found the Maltese people so friendly, obliging and helpful. Also, English is widely spoken and there is an excellent public transport system which makes getting around very easy.



Valetta is a fascinating city with so much history, as a result of having been invaded by just about everyone. The fortifications are truly amazing with great stone forts overlooking all the strategic entry points to the Grand Harbour. There is so much to see in the city and we all enjoyed exploring the many historic sites, the museums detailing the long and bloody history of the Knights of St John, and the magnificent St Johns Co-Cathedral. This central church for the Knights is where most of the Grand Masters are interred. It has the most jaw-dropping interior, decorated extensively with gold and frescoes, statues and marble floor slabs of all different colours and patterns. Each Grand Master tried to outdo his predecessor by embellishing the cathedral a bit more and leaving his mark.

We had a lovely walk from Qrendi, on the South coast, through dry stone walled fields to a Neolithic temple site of Hagar Qim. This dates from around 3000 BC and is built from huge blocks of stone - we also saw the famous Blue Grotto. The landscape in Malta is uniformly stone with the towns built on the ridges and extensive cultivation of the sparse available arable land in the valleys. Water is a major issue with a lot of the supply sourced through desalination plants.

We also visited Mdina, an old walled city, which was once the capital, with its narrow winding alleyways and beautiful honey coloured stone buildings. Our last city, Mellieha, at the Northern end of Malta, was a lovely spot to finish up in with a very comfortable hotel. There were some great walks here, including on Gozo Island, around the spectacular coastline (where we found several good swimming beaches), as well as walks to visit more Neolithic archaeological sites which were so fascinating.

Thanks to John Clune for organising such a wonderful trip.

This link has a great selection of photos taken during our trip:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1FPWZw5rPry_Fd2EEH4aX8Fx9DznelfczeWvcHrYuuaA/edit?usp=sharing



Conclusion

Don't forget to open the link in Julie's report (above) to view her photos.

We hope you've enjoyed this newsletter and welcome your contributions for the next edition, which can be emailed to walks@brindabellabushwalking.org.au

We're on the Web!
www.brindabellabushwalking.org.au