

Brindabella Bushwalking Club Newsletter

March 2016



Pools near Booroomba Rocks

From The President

You may be interested to know that the Presidents of the Brindabella Bushwalking Club, the Canberra Bushwalking Club and the National Parks Association of the ACT meet together on an ad hoc basis. While each club has a strong and proud history and culture, we find benefits in talking together as our clubs do have so many similar objectives that we wish to be supportive of each other and not to appear in conflict over significant issues. I know many of you are members of more than one club so if you would like to find out more please contact one of your Presidents.

Regular correspondent, Julie Pettit, has produced a report on the latest John Clune-led trip to Myer House. The story appears below and is accompanied by some great photos. John has another trip planned for 4-11 June and is seeking expressions of interest now; see the program for details.

If you have bushwalking items you'd like to sell, you can advertise them through this newsletter. It is a relatively small market, but at least the readers are all bushwalkers. The first for sale notice appears later in this newsletter.

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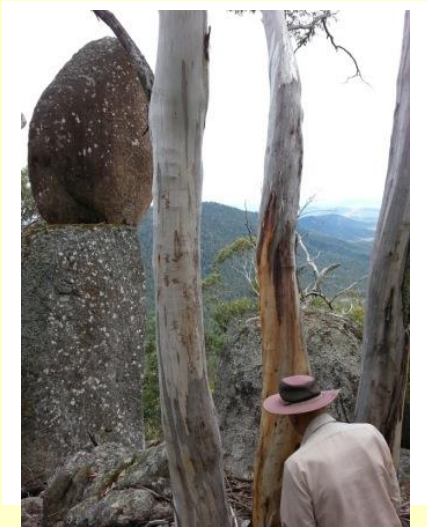
Your Club

We are now half way through the BBC year - that is one AGM six months behind us and six months to the next one. I am pleased that we have great stability within your committee; however as President I need to be thinking about the future of the Club as there will be some elements of renewal at the next AGM.

This will be discussed at our forthcoming committee meeting; however I would like all members to consider ways in which they could help with the ongoing progress of the Club. So much of the work that keeps the Club operational happens through our walks and social sub committees and of course the many people who offer themselves as leaders. The group that keeps this all afloat is the Committee elected at the AGM. When someone is elected at the AGM they tend to be thrown in at the deep end, so to speak.

If you would like to express an interest in any committee positions it may be that you would like to attend a committee meeting in the near future to see how we operate and talk to current officers to see that what we do is not as onerous as you may expect.

Please contact me at president@brindabellabushwalking.org.au if you would like any further information about the way that we operate and ways in which you could help.



White Horse Rocks

Social Activities Coming Up

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

Cycling in Kosciuszko National Park

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW) has just released a draft cycling strategy for Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) for public comment (submissions close on 15 March 2016).

The strategy focuses primarily on the (largely commercial) development of existing and new tracks in certain areas of the park to create more opportunities for cyclists (mountain bikers, road racers, families, etc) and to attract more of these visitors to the park. The strategy also discusses the preservation of natural and cultural values of KNP. You can view it via the link below.

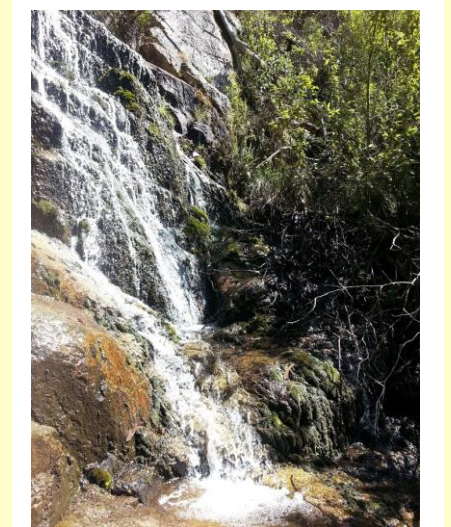
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/parks/kosciuszko-cycling.htm>

Walks Program Meeting - 12 May

The next Walks Program meeting will be held on Thursday 12 May, beginning at 2.00 pm. The venue will be different to that shown in the program as the Daltons are moving house. Please RSVP on 0414 363255 or daltons2@tpg.com.au if you wish to attend to discuss the Jul - Dec program and to find out where the meeting will be held.

First Aid Courses

Our Training Officer, Bob Chittenden, recently emailed all leaders with details of a first aid course that is relevant to bushwalking. The club pays the cost for this training because all our members potentially benefit from it. Leaders are encouraged to try to attend this training if they haven't completed a refresher course recently. Contact Bob for details.



Punch Bowl Creek Falls

Photos

If you have some photos you'd like to share with other club members, please either create a link to them (as Julie has in her story below) and send it with a story about the activity to walks@brindabellabushwalking.org.au or, alternatively, save the photos to a USB stick and pass that to the walks officer.

Please rename the photos, so we can add a caption to them if necessary.

Google Photos and Flickr are both good programs for assembling photos and creating links and there are several other programs available. Google Photos also has unlimited Cloud storage for your photos, which provides a back-up should your computer's hard drive ever die. If you'd like instructions on how to do this, please email the walks officer or just 'Google' it, where you'll find plenty of YouTube clips explaining the process.

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

Walking Poles - The Case Against

About half of our members use walking poles and love them. Some other members have an entirely different opinion, though. The following article was written a few years ago by Brett Davis, a past president of Shoalhaven Bushwalkers Club. It is witty and meant to be tongue-in-cheek, so please don't be offended. In fact, equal space will be set aside in the next newsletter for people to express the alternative side of the debate if they feel so inclined.

Do We Need Walking Poles – Brett Davis

Marketing people love totally useless inventions. Remember pet rocks? How about non-stick Sellotape, inflatable dartboards, Pedal-powered wheelchairs, or ejector seats for helicopters?

One of their more recent useless inventions is walking poles - and the whole world thinks they are the greatest thing since sliced bread (yet another marketing ploy). Much has been written about walking poles. An article listed the following benefits:

- they help with balance, prevent falls and give stability in wet and slippery conditions;
- they strengthen upper body and arms, and help with good breathing;
- they prevent swelling of the hands and fingers;
- they improve posture;
- they take 20% of your weight off your knees and hips; and
- they prevent wear and tear to these joints.

If your balance is so poor that you fall over a lot, should you be out walking at all? If a lack of coordination causes your falls, how are you going to control four supports when you can't control two? Should we be trying to strengthen our upper body and arms when walking? Isn't walking hard enough without extra effort? If we want a weights session, why not carry hand weights? And what about the claim poles 'help with good breathing'? Isn't breathing always good? How do poles help?

Ever had a problem with swollen fingers while bushwalking? If so, how do walking poles prevent it? And if walking poles give you 'better posture', then normal walking must give you bad posture, right? The only way a pole could give you better posture is if someone jabs the pointy end right up your fundamental orifice!

When poles are used correctly (which is rarely the case) one pole is lifted and placed for each step taken. The normal stride length is about two feet (pun intended) or 60cm, but let's assume it is 66.67cm, just to make calculations easier. For every km we walk, we lift each of our fandangle poles 750 times. How much weight is this? Leki, a leading manufacturer, state that a single pole of their lightest model weighs a tad under 200 grams. If we lift two of these 750 times per km, it means we lift $2 \times 750 \times 200$ grams, which is 300kg every kilometre!

On a typical 12km Wednesday walk, people with poles lift 3.6 tonnes with their arms! Why do this? Our legs are supposed to support weight. All of us tried supporting our weight on our knees and hands for the first year of our lives - and found it wanting.

A 2001 study at Massachusetts University found that hikers using poles expend more energy than normal hikers. Using more energy makes us more tired. Tired walkers are less coordinated, more prone to errors of judgement and navigation, and more prone to accidents resulting in injury or death. The large muscles of the leg are much more efficient than those of the arms and shoulders. The Cooper Institute in Dallas found that walking with poles increases energy expenditure and oxygen consumption by 20% compared to regular walking at the same pace.

Walking poles are essentially just sticks, so why buy something you can pick up in the bush for nothing? And why buy something you don't need in the first place? Any price you pay is too much.

The hard tips of walking poles dig holes in tracks, increasing wear and tear, and causing erosion. On some walks such as the Inca Trail, soft rubber tips must be fitted to poles. In the bush we should leave only footprints, not a trail of holes and crumbling surfaces. Poles have carbide tips. Carbide, used on the cutting edges of saw blades and drills, has a hardness of 8 to 9 on the MOHS hardness scale; only diamonds are harder. By contrast, the human eyeball registers 0.2 on the scale, similar to marshmallow and Aeroplane jelly. Accidental impact involving the tip of a pole and the human eyeball is catastrophic - a real eye-opener! Impaled ear-drums, throats and stomachs are also likely, to say nothing of the damage that could be done to our nether regions. Luckily, most club members are post-procreative.

Like all mechanical things, poles will eventually fail, probably when you need them most. They will slip when you are crossing that crevasse on that log; they will collapse when they are supporting your weight on that cliff edge, and they will break (and probably impale you) when they get jammed between those slippery rocks. Inevitably, you will put them down when you take a break, and forget to pick them up. This will happen often, repeatedly, until finally, if extremely lucky, you will lose them.

In summary, poles are expensive, dangerous, exhausting, destructive and potentially lethal to both yourself and those around you. The best thing to do with walking poles is to give them away to a non-club member that you hate ...

The Heatwave

Let's hope that the recent heatwave isn't a sign of things to come. In spite of the temperatures, we were lucky enough to get some walks completed in January and a few in February. Leaders have shown their initiative on the Wednesday walks and have had early starts, with walks completed by lunchtime. Nevertheless, some leaders have wisely chosen to cancel walks, rather than expose walkers to the risk of heat exhaustion or worse.

Some walks have had low attendances and this is actually a good sign - people are determining that the conditions are unsuitable for them and are not waiting to see if the leader is going to cancel.

On the other side of the coin, when mild weather was forecast on a couple of days in December and January, some of our leaders jumped in and produced extra walks at short notice. These were appreciated and well-attended. There'll be more in the next newsletter about the procedure to be followed by leaders who want to add walks at short notice.

Travel Insurance Trap

John Clune has provided the following information for us.

If you use your Commonwealth Bank Gold Credit Card for travel insurance you may be unaware that the Bank changed insurers on 1 July 2015. The new insurers have significantly changed the way cardholders get their insurance cover. They have a Base Cover and an Activated Policy.

The Base Cover automatically applies if you travel, but it only covers your medical and hospital expenses, and personal liability.

If you want the cover you used to get, you must activate a policy by filling in a form. If you don't activate the policy you will have no cover for losses and damage etc.

If you were observant, and I wasn't, you would have seen a few lines on the back page of your May-June statement telling you that some changes were to be introduced from 1.7.2015.

If you want the detail of the new policy there is an 88 page document that you can download.

Myer House - 30 Jan to 6 Feb 2016

By Julie Pettit

We gathered at Myer House around 4:00 pm on the Saturday having travelled separately via Cooma and Brown Mountain to Bega and then up the coast past Tathra to the bush track turn-off at Tanja. The house is nestled in a little valley overlooking Bithry Inlet and within the Mimosa Rocks National Park. It used to belong to the Myer family and was designed by renowned architect Sir Roy Grounds who also designed his family house nearby. The latter was much more rustic, and had a very unusual hexagonal shape with a floor made of rounds of cut wood beaten into the earth. Unlike the Myer House it has yet to be restored by the National Parks. Both houses were jointly donated to the NPWS in 1976 with Myer House having been fully restored to its original grandeur (or better) providing boutique accommodation for 12 people with all mod cons (except a microwave as it would draw too much power from the solar provided source).



Myer House



Towards Middle Beach

After settling in and finding our rooms and enough cupboard and fridge space to accommodate what promised to be a week of feasting, the skies began to darken and a spectacular thunderstorm ensued. Mark and Terrylea had decided to take an evening stroll and arrived back looking rather wet and bedraggled (there's a photo in the link below). The pyrotechnics lasted most of the night and at times resembled being in a disco with a strobe light constantly playing over the house as the lightning and thunder were almost continuous.

After first exploring the Ground's house, our first day's walk took us south along the cliffs and headlands towards Middle Beach. The coastal views were lovely and the day was bright and sunny with the temperature in the mid 20s but with relatively high humidity for Canberrans so we were glad of the return trip through shaded forest. All the surrounding forest was really beautiful to walk through comprising tall eucalypts of many species with the forest floor carpeted in cycads.

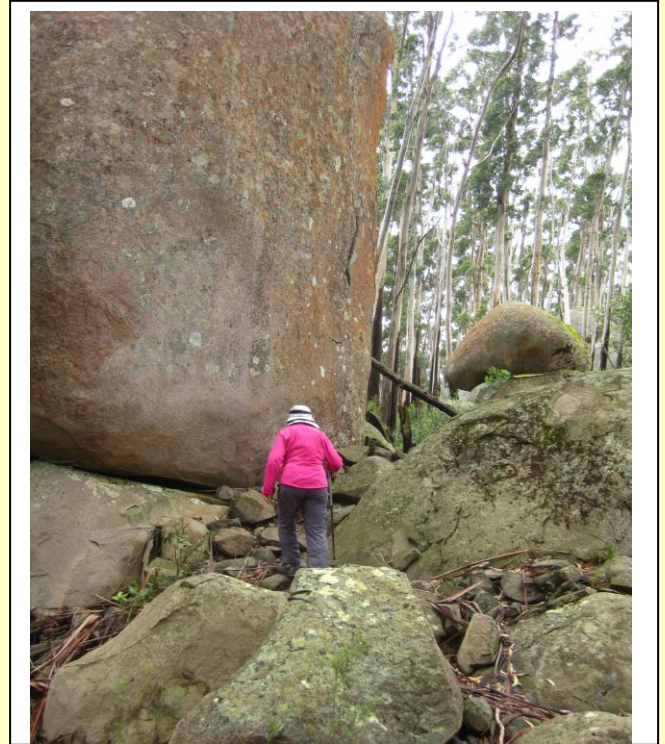
On the second day our walk took us to Picnic Point from where we followed a track leading towards the Manning Clarke house [still in the family] located on the opposite side of Bithry Inlet to Myer House. On the way we encountered a relative, a grandson who had his own little beach house some distance from the main house. Descending to the beach we branched off along a lagoon track where some indulged in a dip. Proceeding on we found our way blocked by a fallen tree and on heading up the slope to get around it we were surprised to stumble into a well established and occupied camping site well hidden by the forest. We discovered that we were on the Manning Clarke farm property, and that one of the occupants of the camping site was a son of the famous man. It appears the various family members each like their solitude and privacy. We headed up through open farmland towards the forest and our return track where three of us had an unpleasant encounter with some stinging nettles hidden in the bracken. A refreshing swim in the Bithry Inlet on return was most welcome and most of us took advantage of our proximity to the sea for a swim nearly every day after our walks.

We enjoyed further explorations of the coast to both the north and south in the following days. On many of our walks we encountered lagoons where some of us took the plunge, and at times we had to be on constant alert for leeches as there had been recent rain and the boggy ground proved to be leech heaven.

After one of our walks we took the opportunity to visit the site of the Mimosa rock where a ship named "Mimosa" came to grief giving its name to the National Park.

On our last walking day [Friday 5th February] we travelled further north to tackle the climb up Gulaga (Mount Dromedary), a 6 hour walk. It was a wonderful walk - a constant climb but not too steep through beautiful thick rainforest. Fortunately the day was not too hot and we managed to reach the summit and have our lunch just before the rain started. On the way up we took a slight detour to an Aboriginal spiritual site which some had been told was a birthing site for women, but other information suggested it was an initiation site. It was such an interesting place with imposing tors some of which were quite phallic in appearance and we all felt the spiritual power of these rocks.

The way down was much easier and cooler in the light, sporadic rain, but we were glad to reach the cars and felt after all this effort that we deserved a treat - the speciality being a gelato ice cream at Bermagui.



Tors on Mt Dromedary



For our last night we had a potluck dinner and used up all our delicious leftovers, having been treated to a wonderful variety of meals during the week with each couple catering for one night.

It was a great week of walking and exploring new areas and enjoying the beautiful coast and forests of that region of the South Coast as well as the wildlife with late afternoon visits from the resident kangaroos and wallabies. Many thanks once again to John Clune for organising such a memorable and enjoyable trip.

Julie Pettit

P.S. John has programmed another week at Myer House, from 4-11 June. Contact him ASAP at j.clune@bigpond.com if you are interested.

The link below has a great selection of photos taken by Julie during the trip. Just click to open it. Once it is open, you can click on the triangular symbol at the bottom left of the screen to see a 'slide show', or you can click on the right arrow (or anywhere on the screen) and advance the photos at your leisure.

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1_2x3kW-mN2CrKsTxviENs-ZLf570KWK9ffAOVGAP0o0/edit?usp=sharing

Take a Break

BBC strongly advises that walkers have a break between the end of the walk and the drive back to town. This is a good opportunity to have a drink, share some cake or biscuits and have a chat. Most importantly, it gives the drivers a chance to recover before the return drive and this is in everybody's interests. We encourage Wednesday walkers to do the same thing and convince our fellow clubs of its merit.

For Sale

1. Tent -- OZ Trail Breezeway (3-person)	153.00
2. Gas cylinder- 2 kg 3/8 cylinder	33.00
3. Fuel for cylinder - 2 kg	10.00
4. Lantern - Nova Max LED	90.00
5. Power cell for lantern	4.00
6. Sleeping Mat - Insulated full length	89.00
7. Pot holder	9.00
8. Pot s/ Billy - Zebra 3-litre	45.00
9. Small dish pan and wooden spoons	20.00

Original receipts available.

This is 'brand new' equipment. Purchased in January 2012. Never used due to lifestyle changes. Stored in safe conditions, so it has been well maintained.

Contact the seller, Dr Sherene Suchy
6251 9939 Email: s_suchy@iprimus.com.au

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

I spent 30 minutes talking to them to learn more about their culture until the barman told me they were umbrellas..



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