

# BRINDABELLA BUSHWALKING CLUB

## FEBRUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER



The mini tornado that hit Belconnen on 3 January tore down hundreds of trees in the Pinnacle Nature Reserve and thousands more in the suburbs of west Belconnen. Sadly the sentinel tree right at the top of the pinnacle was also torn off at ground level and fell on the posts marking the trig. The attached photo shows its resting place.

### From the President

*Photo by Peter Dalton*

Given the recent tragic event at Kambah Pool, I couldn't help but reflect on the real and constant risks that bushwalkers are exposed to when out in the bush. Whether it is terrain, weather, animals, water hazards, navigation errors or fellow walkers (☹️), they can impact us all. When we participate in a walk and sign the leaders walk sheet there is an acknowledgement and acceptance of these realities, but I think that it is too easy to dismiss these as issues to be overly concerned about. As well as the walk leader being responsible for the well-being of the group, everyone who participates in the walk can contribute by watching out for others and ensuring that we walk as a group. This is especially important where a walk attracts a large number of participants, it is so easy for the group to spread out and as a result not everyone can see everyone else. In this situation it is not just the leader who manages this but also the 'tail-end-Charlie' to ensure that slower walkers (or photographers!) get separated from the group and even possibly take a wrong track.

So please be mindful of this and follow the walk leaders instructions...That's it from me.

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

### INSIDE:

- Walking Poles - Eric Pickering p.2*
- Social Events - Elaine Atkinson p.4*
- Times Past Photo - p.5*
- Slime Moulds - p.6*
- Cairns and Rock Stacks - p.7*
- Miscellaneous - p.8*
- Some reminders - p.9*

### Contributions welcome

Articles and photos

Send to

[editor@brindabellabushwalking.org.au](mailto:editor@brindabellabushwalking.org.au)

### COVID UPDATE

[CHECK HERE](#)  
FOR ADVICE  
AND  
RESTRICTIONS

# WALKING POLES

Eric Pickering



Anthropologists tell us that man decided to stand on his hind legs about 4 million years ago. The reason was to save calories; less energy is needed to get around on two legs rather than four. Hence *Homo Erectus*. There were other advantages too. Brain development was one. Hence *Homo Sapiens*. The front legs had become arms with hands that could do complicated and useful things such as holding a knife and fork, using an i- phone, or even using a couple of sticks in situations where four legs were desirable.

Some older people of course need the aid of a walking stick or wheelie to overcome balance problems, a much better solution than reverting to walking on all fours. Knees are no substitute for hooves. Evolution appears to move in only one direction and like life itself there is no going back!

I have noted that amongst walkers in Australia particularly, there is an association between age and walking sticks i.e., walking sticks are only for the elderly not the young, so there is some resistance, even disdain surrounding their use for younger people. This is not so in the rest of the world where walking poles are regarded as standard gear. Pat and I have noted their use in Europe, USA, UK, South America and parts of Asia. One walk we did was in Seoraksan NP in South Korea, a delightful area of steep limestone mountains. All the locals were dressed in the most fashionable walking gear with poles essential accoutrements!

Our first encounter with them was many years ago in New Zealand over several days on the Travers Sabine walk involving some very steep scree slopes and tricky creek crossings. You need to carry all gear, food, stove, fuel, tent, warm sleeping bag, and full rain gear. At one creek crossing we came upon a young European couple. I had to admire the way he, in particular, used his walking poles with great skill to negotiate slippery rocks with this enormous, possibly 20kg pack. We realized then, the value, even necessity, of walking poles for serious bushwalking. Walking pole resistance is slowly breaking down in Australia.

I like to use walking poles, too, on local walks, for exercise. I sometimes despair when I see others walking without poles, with their arms hanging uselessly at their sides, exercising only their legs when they could be exercising their upper bodies, arms, shoulders chest and back muscles as well. With a pole in each hand, you build up a rhythm, left leg and right arm in unison, right leg and left arm also in unison, and as each stick hits the ground the arms provide forward propulsion. This has developed into the separate art form of

Nordic walking with poles and shoes that enhance the speed, exercise and health benefits of the sport.

**A few tips.** As a guide the length of the walking pole should be about the distance between your elbow and the ground. Most poles are adjustable length with quick lock or telescopic systems, so you can choose and experiment with the length of your pole. It is useful sometimes to lengthen poles for long downhill stints and to shorten for long uphill stints. Poles usually have wrist straps (which I do not use because of the danger of a broken wrist in a fall) and the lightest to suit your needs (Weight variations can be significant). For summer overnight walking trips, we use inverted walking poles as tent poles for our fly. Some people walk with a single pole but this does not provide anywhere near the same balance and drive as two poles.

Most poles have rubber tips for use on pavement and other hard surfaces. Rubber tips have a very limited life and can be removed for softer surfaces. In thick bush, poles can become a liability, so on occasions, one pole or no poles may be the way to go. I have to admit that for some, the single walking pole is the modern equivalent of the 1930s bowler hat and stylish walking stick (Charlie Chaplin).....in other words, merely a fashion item with limited utility. (O hand me down my walking cane, I'm gonna leave on the midnight train)

A note of warning: a friend of the Club was fond on walks, while chatting to whoever, of stopping to point out some object in the distance, a mountain, a bird or perhaps a tree. He would extend his arm using his walking pole as a pointer. You would not

want to overtake at such a time as some did and run the risk of a jab (non-covid) in the ribs, or worse. Using a pole as a pointer is not recommended.



Walking pole technology has not advanced much since *Homo Erectus* and *Homo Sapiens* first used sticks to help them along the way (with no pavements or other easy walking surfaces). I find it surprising that many still do not seem to realize the benefits of walking poles to enhance their enjoyment of walking and their significant exercise value.

*(There was a contrary argument in the March 2016 issue Ed.)*



# SOCIAL EVENTS JANUARY 2022

## New Year's Day evening picnic 2022

What a huge success – 26 club members (and guest Piper, the corgi) and perfect weather!!!

Bowen Park is a lovely venue. Despite being a hot day, it was very pleasant sitting on the green grass with a gentle breeze with sparkling water as a backdrop. This will now be an annual event (subject to weather).



## Breakfast, Lake Ginninderra 26 January 2022

Another fabulous outing enjoyed by 30 attendees. Something for everyone. Riding bikes to lake, riding around lake, walk around the lake or walk to Stella's for morning coffee (yum). Welcome to a new member and potential member. Another great location. Happy group, chatting and catching up with old friends. Lots of positive feedback which sums up why we have these social outings.

Elaine Atkinson

Social Convenor



Lost  
Property





Times past but where and when (answer on p.8)

Worker suffers leg pain  
after crane drops 800-  
pound ball on his head

CHARLESTON (AP) — The state Division of Highways granted contracts to a  
He said he has trouble walking and suffers leg pain.

Meeting  
on open  
meetings  
is closed

**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](mailto:facebook@brindabellabushwalking.org.au)

# SLIME MOULDS

## WHAT ARE THEY?

*This report is based on articles published in the Scientific American on 7 November 2012 and in Australian Geographic on 25 February 2021. For the articles click each of these journal titles and for some great photos just google 'Australian slime moulds'. You can also listen to an ABC Science Show podcast here. For a detailed study of the distribution of slime moulds throughout Australia, and their characteristics, see Peter Wellman's 2019 CSIRO study [here](#).*

They are not an animal, plant or fungus. They have been categorised as 'protists', a taxonomic group reserved for 'everything we don't really understand' says Chris Read of the University of Sydney.

They are single-celled amoebae that, reportedly, can remember, make decisions and anticipate change. They come in various colours and gelatinous shapes and bushwalkers may encounter one as it makes its way through leaf litter and oozes along logs searching for the bacteria, fungal spores and other microbes that it envelops and digests.

They have no brain or nervous system but are smarter than they look. The Australian Geographic reports that 'in 2012 an international research group, which included Australian scientists, placed a slime mould into a petri dish with a U-shaped trap containing food and witnessed something truly extraordinary. They observed the slime mould avoiding places it had already explored by detecting and avoiding the extracellular slime it had left behind. It was the first time that spatial memory had been demonstrated by a unicellular organism.'

It also reported that 'in 2010, scientists from Japan and the UK, who were trying to optimise Japan's complicated rail system, placed oat flakes onto a map of

cities surrounding Tokyo. They watched as a slime mould created its own networks

between each of the locations to get at the oats, which are a favoured food. Rather than moving as a whole, the slime mould created tunnel-like veins to the flakes, choosing the most efficient routes for feeding. The scientists were shocked when the resulting pattern was almost identical to Japan's rail system.'

There is even evidence that, offered a range of food in different piles, they will use it in the proportions of [a balanced diet](#). Now that's more than most of us have been able to do!



**Some Australian Slime Mould Images**

# CAIRNS AND ROCK STACKS

**Some years ago, an experienced bushwalker who had climbed The Labyrinth in Tasmania, had difficulty in finding the descent. He was saved from embarrassment, or worse, by sighting a cairn. In fading light and deteriorating weather, he found his way back to the Pine Valley Hut.**

Cairns have been erected since prehistoric times for a variety of purposes including for navigation, hunting, defence and also to mark burial sites. As navigational aids, they can be found throughout the world on uplands, moorlands, near waterways on mountains and near sea cliffs as well as in deserts and tundras.

It is easy to understand why cairns have been so important to navigational safety. If erected in the wrong place, however, they can be extremely dangerous - equivalent to a sign pointing in the wrong direction.

The word 'cairn' is thought to derive from Scots Gaelic originally referring to various types of hills and stone piles. In Scotland, it is traditional to carry a stone up from the bottom of a hill to place on a cairn at its top. In Highland folklore it is recounted that before a battle each man would place a stone

in a pile. Those who survived the battle would return and remove a stone from the pile. The stones that remained were used to build a cairn to honour the dead.

In contrast, rock stacks, such as that opposite, seem to be designed merely to amuse the next passer-by and perhaps to issue a challenge to 'go higher'.

Rock stacks appear to have derived from the building of cairns but with purely aesthetic objectives on the part of the builder. As artistic works, they may have originated with the Inuit and other peoples of northern regions in Canada, Alaska, Greenland and Scandinavia.

They are now becoming more common in Australia, particularly on rocky areas abutting beaches. Problems arise, however, when rock stacks are built in national parks and wilderness areas because they can cause confusion or even lead walkers astray. While opinions among experienced bushwalkers are not uniform, they are often removed for this reason.



Cairn on Mt Domain



Rock Stacks

What is a Vibram sole? And what's so special about them?



Identified by the yellow octagon  
Developed and patented in Italy in the 1950's for use in mountaineering, these rubber soles are now used by over 1,000 shoemakers worldwide. Variations in treatment of the rubber and design of the tread have led to claims that those designed for bushwalking offer advantages in traction, comfort, waterproofing and durability.



**The answer to the question on p.5 is the Yarrangobilly trip in November 2018  
For more great photos see the website collection**

## BBC Website

[www.brindabellabushwalking.org.au](http://www.brindabellabushwalking.org.au)

*[All newsletters are on the website]*

## A Discount offer from Woodslane

*While we generally don't publish advertisements, this edited letter offers discounts to members.*

We have recently, finally, set up a dedicated website which has enabled us to set up a 'mates rates' discount code. If you order any book off this site – including all the walking guides - and enter the code MATES15 at the checkout you will receive 15% off the RRP. We hope this might be a useful and attractive service for your walking group. I'd also like to bring you up to date with new books and new editions we have in the pipeline:

- Earlier this year we published a new edition of our first and still very popular Sydney's Best Harbour & Coastal Walks – completely re-photographed and now with over 40 walks, including a full route for Manly to Bondi.
- A new edition of Best Walks of the Central Coast has just hit our warehouse – we're delighted to see this as the previous edition sold out three years ago and we have been searching for the right team to update it. A new edition of Blue Mountains Best Bushwalks should be coming around next July, and new editions of Six Foot Track and Great North Walk later in the year. Also later in 2022 we will see a brand-new NSW Title: Best Walks of the Mid-north NSW Coast
- Further afield we will release Great Ocean Walk before the new year, and have authors working on the following for 2022: Best Walks West of Melbourne, Tasmania's Best Walks and the Grampians Peaks Trail.

Finally, we welcome feedback on our exiting Titles, on suggestions for new titles and we love to hear from anyone who is keen (and feels capable!) of contributing to the series. We are currently on the lookout for anyone who might have an interest in researching and writing books on the NSW South Coast and the Newcastle/Hunter/Barrington Tops region. Many thanks for taking the time to read this and for sharing with your group.

Andrew Swaffer [www.woodslanepress.com.au](http://www.woodslanepress.com.au)

## Some Reminders to Start the Year off

**Information for Members.** Mid-way down the Home page of the club's website ([www.brindabellabushwalking.org.au](http://www.brindabellabushwalking.org.au)), you'll find information about meeting times and places. If you are unsure about these, please have a look there.

**Grading System.** If you're confused about the grading given to a walk, the table headed 'Walk Gradings' (also on the Home page) explains it all.

**Rules for Walkers and Advice for Walkers.** These two separate items are in green on the Home page and open or close with a single click. It is recommended that everybody has another read of these.

**Ambulance Cover.** If you need to be transported by ambulance it can be very costly. You really need to ensure you have ambulance cover, unless you have one of the following:

- Healthcare card issued by Centrelink;
- DVA Gold Card;
- Private health insurance; or
- Ambulance cover (only) from a private health insurance company; e.g. BUPA, AHM, Medibank, HBF, etc.

**Personal Locator Beacon.** If you have a PLB, and haven't done so for a while, it might be time to very carefully follow the test procedure to confirm it is still serviceable – be cautious not to activate the beacon!

## Emergency Plus Phone App



*The updated icon for the updated App that you should have on your phone*

*(It replaces one with a big red cross)*

If you have a **Smart phone**, then you really should install the free **Emergency Plus** application that can save lives. It has been developed by Australia's emergency services and their Government and industry partners, is available for both Android and Apple phones and has been updated in recent years. If you need help in

an emergency, then you select the App and it will give you your coordinates (or a street address if you are not in the bush) and the choice of three buttons to press – one will dial 000, the second will call the Police, and the third the SES. It includes your location using a system that divides the world into 57 trillion 3 metre squares!

In order to make an emergency phone call it does, of course, rely on your phone being in an area of coverage at the time.

Simple GPS receivers in smartphones are not precise instruments and two phones side by side might provide a different set of three words, but the position will still be accurate enough for emergency services to find you.