

BRINDABELLA BUSHWALKING CLUB

APRIL 2022 NEWSLETTER



BBC

From the President

As mentioned in last month's 'From the President', we are keen to ensure that our members understand the profile of any walk that they would like to do and, as such, are better prepared to participate in, and enjoy, the walk. In this month's newsletter there is excellent advice from one of our very experienced leaders on what to think about when deciding to join a walk. Also of course, don't hesitate to ask the leader or other club members about the walk.

Canberra's three main bushwalking clubs – National Parks Association of the ACT (NPA), Canberra Bushwalking Club (CBC) and ourselves (BBC) work together on a variety of bushwalking matters. The Wednesday walks are a collective effort of the clubs with leaders from each of the clubs organising the walks. Periodically, the Presidents get together to discuss what the clubs are planning and to cover any local bushwalking issues/matters. The status of repairs to Rocky Crossing in Namadgi NP, which suffered damage from fires and floods in the past few years and has resulted in its closure since January 2020 was one such matter. Led by NPA, the three club presidents wrote to the ACT government seeking clarification/update on progress towards the crossing being repaired and Orroral Road being reopened. Recent feedback from the Minister is that the crossing should be repaired and open for traffic later this year. Let's hope that this will occur to plan, as there are many great walks to be taken in and around the Orroral Valley and that area of Namadgi NP.

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



Above: photo by Peter Dalton from a walk to Guises Creek in Gigerline Nature Reserve

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Contributions welcome
Articles and photos
Send to
editor@brindabellabushwalking.org.au



**COVID
UPDATE**
[CHECK HERE](#)
FOR ADVICE
AND
RESTRICTIONS

THE BBC WALKS GRADING SYSTEM

Some notes for new members

Prue Deacon

BBC has a grading system which works well to indicate the difficulty of a walk with a single number.

The number is calculated by considering 3 aspects of a walk (the length, the total climb and the terrain) to give a total score. Terrain ranges from the easier paths (eg roads, footpaths, fire trails, footpads) to the harder off-track “rough going” (eg rocks, fallen trees, thick scrub). The system is shown in the introductory pages of the BBC Walks and Social Program and also on the website [here](#).

If you are a new member, use the total score to help select your first walks with the club. Most of our walks are in the Easy (4-7) or Medium (8-11) range. The grade and score are shown at the end of the title in a walk description – eg Medium (8). It is also important to read the walk description carefully, particularly to look at the total climb and the type of terrain.

Choose walks that you think you can do easily for your first walks with the club. Then you can assess your fitness against the grade score and select the sort of walks that you enjoy. As you do more walks, don't try to move up the grade scores too quickly. A Medium (11) walk is much, much harder than a Medium (8) walk – with a faster pace, a harder climb and/or thick scrub to push through.

If you are not sure about your ability to do a particular walk, contact the leader. Don't be too disappointed if the leader says no. The leader will be familiar with the walk and know where there may be difficulties for some walkers. For example, if the walk is mostly off-track, the leader may suggest that you first do a walk which is only partly off-track to see how you go.

Photos opposite top to bottom:

Easy terrain - a Firetrail; Fairly easy terrain - a footpad; Fairly rough terrain - rough underfoot; Rough going - thick scrub.



Exploring Queanbeyan - a heritage walk on 14 March



What a fabulous day in Queanbeyan with 43 members and 2 visitors meeting at Ray Moreton Park for morning coffee and informative talk on the history of Queanbeyan by John McGlynn from the historical society.

I was amazed by the response but all went very well. We split into 3 groups for the heritage walk (almost 2 hours). Some members then left, others had a picnic in the beautiful park and others bought lunch at the Riverbank Café.

After lunch, 23 members visited the Queanbeyan museum (old police residence built in 1876 from handmade bricks). The museum is well worth a visit. The mural of old Queanbeyan by Canberra Artist Margaret Hadfield (Artists Shed) is just one of the highlights. The museum is currently opened by appointment. Contact: John McGlynn - 6297 2730.

Perfect weather and we now know there's more to Queanbeyan than meets the eye.

Next social gathering is the autumn and octogenarian picnic at Uriarra Crossing Saturday 9 April - see the Walks Program. The club now has 2 nonagenarians and a third joining the ranks in August.



Elaine Atkinson
Social Convenor

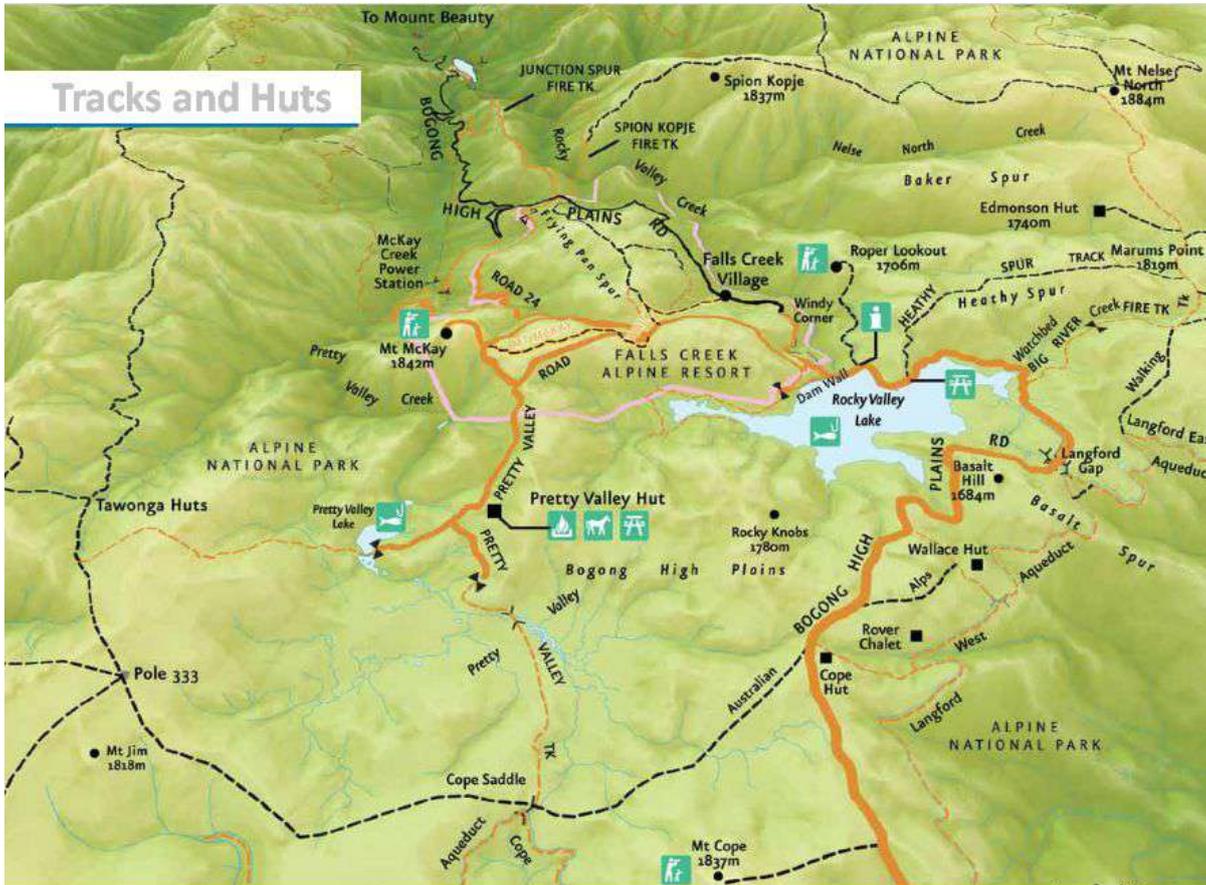


**Queanbeyan
Region Heritage
Festival 2022
Program**

You can find the program for this year's festival [here](#).

Bogong High Plains in summer (Vic)

What and Where?



Like all Australia's skiing areas, the Bogong High Plains offers excellent walking/hiking/biking in summer. This is a vast section of the Victorian Alps which, in spite of the name 'Plains', does also have some serious mountains. If you go there after school holidays finish, you'll pretty-much have the area to yourself. The easiest access is from Falls Creek village, 30 km from Mt Beauty on a sealed road.

Most of the area is heathland, grassland or wetland, with less than 20% being snow gums. There are tens of cattlemen's huts scattered about and a couple of similar-looking ones that were built as lodges or accommodation for workers. The scouting association also has an excellent hut complex.

Other than on the 'Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing' (a 37 km through walk that utilises huts that must be booked) hardy souls can 'free camp' anywhere, but nights are always cold and evening storms are not uncommon. There are many lodges at Falls Creek that are open to the public and also a range of apartments. Mt Beauty has cheaper accommodation and a good choice of shops, but it is nearly an hour's drive each way along the slow winding road.

Facilities

Most of the cafes at Falls Creek close during summer unless there is an event being held; i.e., suicidal mountain bike riders or crazy runners. However, the Foodworks mini supermarket is open every day and has an extensive range of goods at just a slight mark-up on the prices at Mt Beauty.

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The Walks

Many of the walks follow aqueducts, which are part of the Kiewa Hydroelectric Scheme. As you'd imagine, these don't involve many undulations except where they occasionally veer away from the watercourse. The majority of the huts aren't far from an aqueduct, so you can combine the two aspects on most walks.



The Australian Alpine Walking Track (AAWT) winds its way through the area and you occasionally find yourself on sections of it or see the distinctive signs at intersections.

The routes are too numerous to describe in any detail here, but a simple Google search gave us more than enough to fill a week. Here is a link to a Parks Victoria brochure that lists about ten and includes a map: <https://www.victoriashighcountry.com.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/65/Alpine-NP-walks-Bogong-High-Plains-and-Mountain-Creek.pdf>

Mountain Biking

If you have a sturdy mountain bike with good suspension, you can obviously cover a lot more ground and get to visit several huts on the one outing. However, expect to get well-shaken on some of the rocky descents.

Weather

We arrived on 31 January – the temperature was 31 at Mt Beauty and 18 at Falls Creek. The nights were cool and maximum temperatures on the following days ranged from 18 down to 7. There were storms and short bursts of heavy rain on two nights, but the tracks coped with this very well.

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Recommended viewing: *Scenic coastal walks with Kate Humble*
[SBS OnDemand](#)

Revisit, plan to visit, or visit vicariously, six of Britain's beautiful coastal walks in Yorkshire, Suffolk, Dorset and Exmoor. The scenery is spectacular, as is the photography, and viewers learn much about local history, towns and people along the way, plants, animals and the environment. Kate Humble is an English television presenter and narrator, specialising in wildlife and scenic programs. Be quick, as access expires in 1 month.

Ann Villiers

More Reading: Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing FAQ: <https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/-/media/a9e0c2fa4cb84f3bbcb07fc9e5dcfc63.pdf>

Summary

This is great area to escape the summer heat and enjoy relatively easy walking or mountain biking (not the sort that involves near-vertical drops down the mountainside). Accommodation at Falls Creek is convenient, but not cheap. If you've never been, I recommend you give it some thought.

Peter Dalton

National Arboretum Canberra

The National Arboretum Canberra (aka NAC) is the phoenix that arose from the ashes of the devastating bushfires of 2003. Remember the roar of machinery trying to push the burnt pines into rows to burn along the Tuggeranong Parkway? Remember for weeks the smell of smouldering fires and smoke?

The ACT Government, under Jon Stanhope's leadership and foresight, planned and aimed to present to the suffering Canberra population something good to be remembered from that horrific January 18th 2003 day. He returned to Walter Burley Griffin's original plan of the national Capital in which a small arboreta had been envisagedand so a world-wide competition was held. An Australian company, which had previously planned the Cranbourne Garden in Victoria, won with their completely new idea of an Arboretum. The ACT Government decided to make the Arboretum their central celebration for the centennial celebration of the capital, 1913 to 2013. The opening was scheduled to be exactly 10 years and one month after 18th January.

The Arboretum would be a repository of many rare, endangered, and iconic or symbolic trees within a landscape of 100 Forests positioned along the Tuggeranong Highway, alongside the Himalayan Cedars and from the west side of Dairy Farmers Hill. In some cases, as in the Clanwilliam cypress, the Toromiro trees from Easter Island, the Franklin Tree from mid-south USA, or a species of Magnolia, there are simply none living in the wild. The Wollemi Forest, comprising the world's rarest trees, is the largest forest of the Wollemi in the world.

And then there are icons such as the beautiful light pink blossoms of the Japanese Yoshino Cherry tree, the stunning flowers of the Catalpa trees or the Persian Silk Tree (Albizia) or the autumn show of yellows, oranges and reds in the leaves of the Maples, Birches and Persian Walnut (*Juglans regia*). In some Forests are planted rare species which are being sheltered by a similar tree, an example being the *Pinus Radiata* forest sheltering Wollemi Pines. Within the Spanish Birches, the rarest Birch trees are growing from only 15 seeds.

Leading walks in the Arboretum is relatively easy. Just take a map and walk, sometimes using the tracks or cross country from one forest to another, or plan to circumnavigate the whole Arboretum, or just walk in the relatively unknown forests at the rear. You may be surprised at how many hills you climb, and the stunning views of different parts of Canberra you will see. There are major art pieces to climb over, such as the 'Wide Brown Land' (the last three words in Dorothea McKellar's iconic poem '*I love Australia*'). You can see how the roof line of the Visitors Centre reflects the geography of the hills leading to the highest in the Arboretum, Dairy Farmers Hill.

There is so much to see and learn walking in the Arboretum. Today 23rd February, I led a Wednesday walk with 32 walkers. I think many of them were surprised and pleased to walk among this wonder of Canberra, being now the second most visited site in the ACT.

Please join me when I plan the next walk, as I plan them over a year so you are able to see all of the forests.

Janet Duncan



Janet's walk on 22 February- inspecting the Wollemi Pines

This 'n' That

What makes a good leader? (In a bushwalking context)

Over the years, a lot of ink has been spilt in discussing the broad question of leadership. Most recently, Bushwalking NSW has bought into the issue ('bought in' literally through a research grant). In the result, it has published a very interesting report available to members of affiliated clubs. The report is entitled '**Voices**' and you can read it [here](#).

There is no doubt that this is an important topic for all bushwalking clubs and we will keep it under review. Your comments are welcome.

Recommended reading: *Gum, The story of eucalypts & their champions*
Ashley Hay, 2021

Reviewer: Ann Villiers

Ashley Hay is an award-winning writer whose work has been praised for its "incandescent intelligence and a rare sensibility". This certainly describes *Gum*, a rich read, both for its style and content. For example, Hay informs us: "Over 800 species make up the genus and, with a dozen exceptions, this is the only place where they grow naturally – from shaggy-barked blackbutts on the east coast's dunes, to the bright bark of snow gums up at the alpine treeline, to silky-white ghost gums in the centre ... Site-specific, they carve the country into distinct ribbons and patches: one species grows up a hill and stops where another suddenly starts and grows down the other side." (p.2)



The Great Escarpment Trail

Bushwalking Qld and Bushwalking NSW have initiated consultations on the creation of a trail through the World Heritage Gondwana Rainforests of Australia to eventually provide a multi-day walk linking Sydney and Brisbane. For further information see [here](#).



Red Hill Gum Trees

As Hay documents throughout the book, Australia's First Nations have long knowledge of the characters and abilities of eucalypts. Yet following Cook's arrival, neither he nor most of the botanists and other 'eucalyptographers' – explorers, poets, painters, foresters, scientists – noted or recorded Indigenous gum tree names or knowledge. "Knowledge of the trees' Indigenous names or uses was rarely sought, rarely thought of or, if gathered, then often ignored ..." (p. 34)

Hay documents a fascinating history of the gum tree since colonial times, providing a wealth of stories about champions of the eucalypts: changes in botanical method, how gums spread around the

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world as packets of seeds were sent to various countries (an action that later proved invaluable to unravelling how well different eucalypts will grow both in Australia and overseas given changing climatic conditions), and efforts to find profitable uses for eucalypts.

In the later decades of the 18th century, natural historians were taken up with one pursuit above all others – the mission to classify and name the whole world, a quest that sprang from the work of Swedish taxonomist Carl von Linné. Eucalypts were not named and classified by Joseph Banks but by a Frenchman, Charles Louis L’Héritier de Brutelle, “an amateur botanist, magistrate by profession, and an aristocratic supporter of the theory of revolution”. (p.22)

In the early 19th century, definitions of what was beautiful affected how landscapes, and specifically trees, were viewed. Hay documents how travellers, explorers and artists saw trees, and how perceptions gradually changed, with artists daring to paint gum trees as they actually were. Reading *Gum* may change how you look at popular works of art next time you visit a gallery. The work of May Gibbs and her gumnut babies is covered in some detail. A trip to [‘Nutcote’](#), Gibbs’ Sydney harborside home, may now be worth taking

World War 11 changed the profession of forestry and what foresters thought of eucalypts. Hay devotes a chapter to the work of the Australian Forestry School in Canberra, under the leadership of Max Jacobs. Issues explored include reforestation, land management, questions about how forests were used and planned, and the pulp and paper industry.

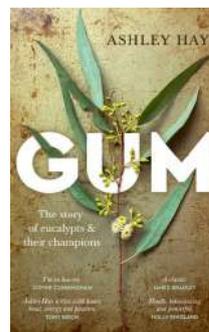
A delightful section describes a 1952 Eucalyptus Study Tour to Australia. A party of 34 came, from 25 countries, and in just under two months, travelled 5000 miles by air, and a similar amount by road. This was followed by the First World Eucalyptus Conference, held in Rome in 1956. This was a time when money poured into forests creating jobs and increasing export earnings. Hay also documents the shift in how trees were valued and the divisions between foresters and conservationists, with

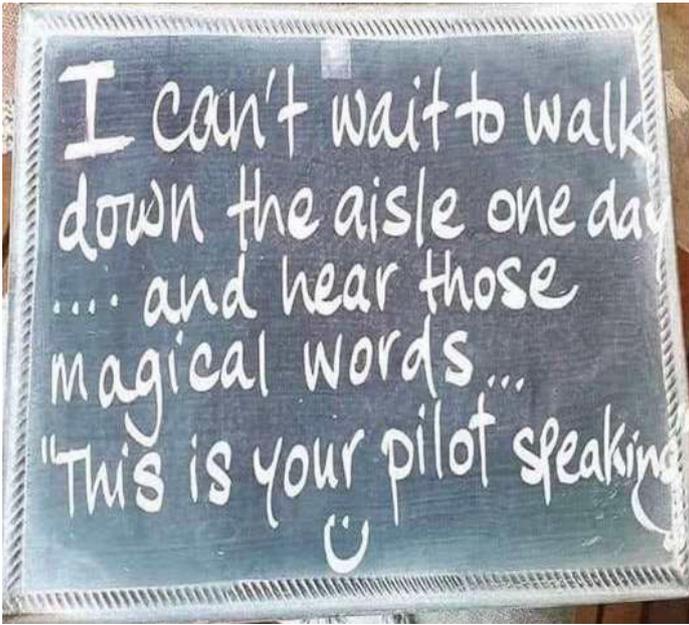
campaigns to save specific trees as well as forests, particularly in Tasmania.

Hay touches on the value of planting trees, quoting a study that found that “having 10 more trees in a city block, on average, improves health perceptions in ways comparable to an increase in annual personal income of \$10,000 and moving to a neighbourhood with \$10,000 higher median income or being seven years younger.” (p. 255)

In the final chapters, Hay returns to the matter of how we tend to make sense of the world and to neglect Indigenous perspectives that include understanding trees as community members. Ours is a compare-and-contrast approach, seeing anything new in terms of what we already know. “It’s a restricted approach to cleave to, to insist on, when the place, the object being compared or contrasted is unlike anything familiar... If this is the way we come into places, looking for things we will recognise, things we find familiar, what then is missed, unseen, elided - these are the kindest words to use – through this habit, this default?” (p. 260-1)

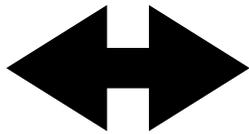
Reading *Gum* may well give you a new reverence and gratitude for trees. One of Hay’s final suggestions is worth taking next time you’re bushwalking: “Whenever you can now, wherever you are, step outside and find a eucalypt to stand with. Tilt your head to take in its shape and its colour, its reach and its girth. Place your hand on its bark: feel its warmth. Feel it breathing. Feel its age and its life and its being.” (p. 262-3)





How to Navigate

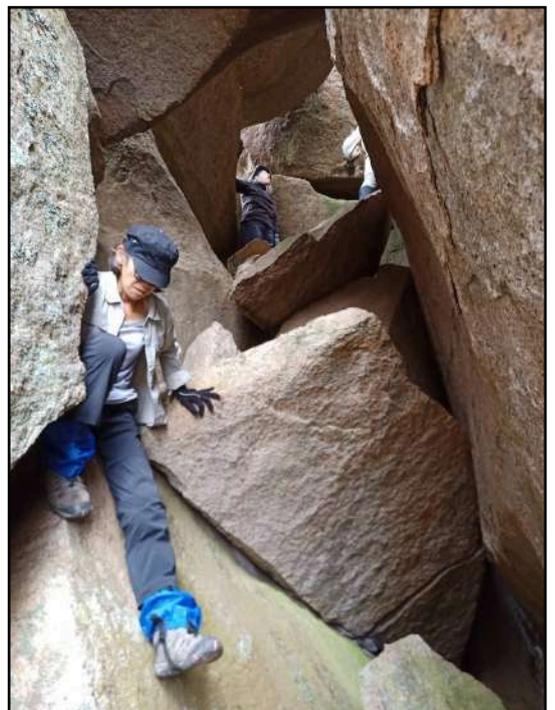
Whether you're a novice or a gnarled veteran, there is always more to learn. The committee occasionally receives material about navigation. Plenty of good material is available but we don't endorse any particular books. However, you might like to check out this [online guide](#) from Geoscience Australia.



Velcro Boot Guards

On a recent bushwalk some walkers asked me about my oil-skin Velcro boot-guards. They are very easy to put on and take off and the opening can be wherever one finds it comfortable, side or back. The Velcro has so far been strong enough to sustain off-track walking. They are seedproof and rainproof, an advantage for those who like me can't wear high-cut hiking boots. I purchased them online [here](#).

France Meyer



A recent walk (above and right)

Apollo Rock (medium hard) 16 March

