

Brindabella Bushwalking Club

February 2025 Newsletter



BBC

Issue 91



The new bridge across Bogong Creek, near Yankee Hat

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**REMEMBER WHEN YOU COULD REFER
TO YOUR KNEES AS RIGHT AND LEFT?**



**INSTEAD OF GOOD AND BAD.
AH GOOD TIMES, EH!**

BBC Website

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

From the President – A Reminder on Bushwalking Safety

As we enter the holiday season, I've been reflecting on past columns and recent news, and I've noticed an unfortunate trend: serious incidents involving bushwalkers are all too common at this time of year. Sadly, this season has been no exception, with several reports of injuries and even fatalities on the trails.



While some of this may sound familiar, the fundamentals of bushwalking safety bear repeating. Self-awareness, an honest assessment of one's capability, and proper preparation remain vital for all of us, no matter our experience or the walk's difficulty.

Bushwalking inherently involves risks—be it from terrain, weather, wildlife, water crossings, or navigation challenges. While we often acknowledge these risks in theory, it's easy to become complacent, especially on familiar trails. Complacency dulls our awareness, making us less alert to hazards.

How often have we heard someone say, "I've done that walk many times, but I wasn't really focussed," only to find that lack of attention led to a stumble, a fall, or worse? This highlights the need for constant vigilance, even on well-trodden paths.

To stay safe:

- Ensure your fitness, experience, and equipment match the demands of the walk.
- Dress appropriately for the conditions.
- Stay attuned to your surroundings and hazards.
- Keep a clear mind and a sharp focus on the trail.

As Elvis famously sang, "A little less conversation, a little more action..."—or in our case, a little more focus on safety! ☑

I hope to see you on a walk soon, until then, take careBill

Changes to the current BBC Program

Please note the following two changes to phone numbers :

John Ellis - Emergency Officer (page 1): the number is now **0414 372 919**.

Philip Gatenby - Wednesday walks on 22 Jan, 26 Mar and 28 May: the correct number is **0401 415 446**.

An updated version of the program is now on the club's website .

The newsletters are only as good as the content you offer, so please submit anything you think might be of

Facebook

Our Facebook Manager regularly posts photos, walk reports and information about upcoming activities. 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

Upgrades to Gibraltar Falls and Woods Reserve

Construction and opening

Gibraltar Falls is a 50-metre waterfall, which visitors were previously allowed to admire via a walking platform and many would climb through the rocks and swim in the pool.

Tender documents released by the ACT government reveal major plans for Gibraltar Falls and the Woods Reserve Campground. If all goes to plan, the upgrades should be finished by the end of the year.

Deaths leading to closure

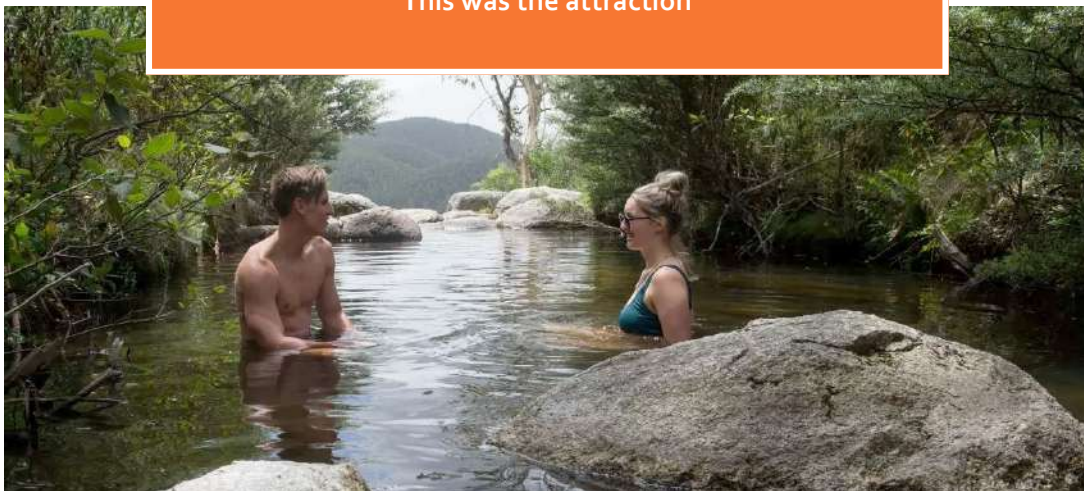
Two men slipped, fell and died at Gibraltar Falls within a week in early 2023. After the deaths, visitors ignored warning signs and the taped off areas to continue swimming in pools and climbing the rocks, rangers said. This led to the entire area being closed in February 2023.



A notice on the Parks ACT website warns:

"Gibraltar Falls is not a swimming location. Please do not enter the water. The waterfall and surrounding rock pools are dangerous and people have died at this site. Use of the area as a swimming location may result in death or serious injury."

This was the attraction



The viewing platform and walking track will remain closed until further notice, an ACT government spokesperson said.

"The Gibraltar Falls viewing platform and walking track remain closed whilst the ACT government completes signage and public safety infrastructure improvements at the site," they said.



Upgrades

The document said that “during warmer months the visitor facilities at the site do not cope with the levels of visitation the site receives”. “The site has basic infrastructure consisting of drop toilets, shelters, a formal lookout, fencing and two trails leading away from the car park”.

Proposed upgrades are:

- New and upgraded car parking, camp sites, day use amenities, amenities blocks, visitor precincts, walking tracks, lookout and accessible access requirements.
- Demolition of problematic and aged toilet block facilities.
- Install a new centralised toilet facility for day users with disabled access and hot showers for campers.
- Rectify all reoccurring drainage issues across the site.
- Design, fabricate and install new fences and signs across the site.
- Construct a new parking facility that will be the only parking available for day-use visitors to Gibraltar Falls.
- Undertake all landscaping and restoration works (e.g. surfacing, revegetation).
- Convert the western portion of the site into day-use facility.
- Upgrade the eastern end of the site to camping only (firepits confined to this area, with further upgrades to camping facilities)
- Install recreational picnic shelters and BBQ facilities.
- Establish a trailhead area.
- Create designated spaces for camper trailers and vehicle camping.
- Interpretive and directional signs to be upgraded.
- Access to the river off the day-use area.

“A friend of mine went bald years ago but still carries around an old comb. He just can't part with it.”



“Please hold while we bring you the complete works of Johann Sebastian Bach”

Four walks in Kosciuszko National Park

Leader: Wayne Holgate

Four days of walking in Kosciuszko NP, staying at the Snowbird Lodge in Charlotte Pass, enjoying the wonderful summer wildflowers in this alpine area. Walks include walking to Kosciuszko Mtn; Blue Lake, Mt Twynam then down to Illawong Lodge and back to Charlotte Pass; Mt Stilwell and the site of the old Mt Stilwell Chairlift site and Restaurant (12km); and Porcupine Rocks. We had 16 in attendance but only 14 walkers.



Day 1: The first walk of the trip was to walk from Charlottes Pass to Mt Kosciuszko and return. As usual you need to monitor everyone's ability at the start to gauge if they can do the walks in the following days. This is an 18km walk up and back to Mt Kosciuszko. It is relatively steady but gentle climb along an existing road all the way to the top. We had a short break at Seamans Hut for morning tea and a few rest stops when needed. Everyone managed

As this was the middle of the week it wasn't particularly busy. One of the reasons to go in January was to see the summer wildflowers and we were not disappointed. Everyone made it to the top and everyone enjoyed the view.

The walk back was quite quick and so we finished around 2pm. One of the items I noticed just below Seamans Hut was an old milepost. The mileage numbers were all but invisible but this one should have read 2 miles to Mt Kosci.



Luckily, we did finish early that day because within the hour there was a massive thunderstorm. Speaking to some young walkers the following day they described how they tried to wait it out, seek shelter and then finally putting up their tents in the storm. They were very wet walkers overnight.

Day 2: Today's walk was to explore the old Chairlift site that was built in the early 60's but was only used for two years due to strong winds.

We headed uphill behind the village, first seeing the dam for water supply then finding the track up to the saddle. The vegetation was very wet from the previous day's rain so as leader I ended up very wet. Looking back as we climbed, you could see the main range through the beautiful snow gums.

Soon we reached the saddle between Mt Stillwell and Little Stillwell and morning tea. Very windy so everyone sought shelter from it.

We then headed across the valley, noticing all the ruins of the chairlift stanchions along the way. You could see earthworks to try and repair the damage of the chairlift. The way was easy to get to the old chairlift restaurant site. It was a substantial building but was blown up by the army in the eighties.



It was interesting exploring this ruin and the history of it, especially the very bad weather that was experienced because the builders were not aware of the prevailing winds that caused its closure.

We wandered down the valley to a lovely spot for lunch. It is certainly easier going downhill as the vegetation is sloping downhill due to snow coverage in winter.

After lunch we navigated down through the snowgums to the Charlottes Pass to Perisher track (part of the Snowy Alpine walking track) and headed back to the lodge.

Later that night we had a wonderful meal prepared by the lodge. This was arranged to celebrate a birthday.



Day 3: Due to the heavy downpour of rain the walk was today was to Perisher Valley via the Porcupine. This is a relatively newly rebuilt section of track for the Snowy Alpine Walk. It is certainly a lovely track to walk upon. It meanders around hillsides, across saddles, gently climbing and descending where necessary. Glimpses of the main range were always visible, as seen in the photos on the next page.



Lunch was had at Porcupine Rocks with everyone searching for a sheltered place from the wind. Bullocks Flat was very visible from here. The last section of the Snowy Aline Walk from Perisher to Bullocks Flat was only open two weeks early but we had no time to complete that section.

Day 4: Today's walk was to be walking from Charlottes Pass to Mt Twynam, down to the swing bridge at Illawong Lodge, then back along the Guthega to Charlottes Pass track.

We started early at 8am and even though it was low cloud and a strong wind, we headed off to down across the Snowy River and up to the Blue Lake lookout. Normally the cloud cleared by 9am but the low cloud showed no signs of lifting, and the wind seemed to have picked up.



Heading further up the track we reached the crest of the main range. Here we felt the full force of the winds (up to 40 knots) and visibility was even less. After discussion with the group, I decided to head back down.

We actually found a sheltered spot for morning tea and so we decided to walk along the Guthega to Charlottes pass track. Margaret and I drove around to Guthega and walked back up the track to meet them at the swing bridge at Illawong lodge for lunch.

We met two different groups of CBC walkers today. They were there at the same time as us but staying at Perisher Valley.

Once back in Guthega we enjoyed a coffee there. It was here we noticed the cloud finally lifted on Mt Twynam at about 2.30pm.

Everyone enjoyed the various walks. It is such a lovely place to walk.

Four of the ladies (Lam, Galia, Helen and Alana) enjoyed a private trip on the alpine circuit with brilliant weather. Lucky them.

The Lost Hiker

Peter Dalton

We are all aware of the hiker who survived after being lost in Kosciuszko National Park for 13 days.

Where he went, how he survived and how the search was conducted will be examined and reported on by the authorities in due course and I don't intend to comment or speculate on those issues here.

However, there is an important message for all of us – ***don't get separated from the group.***

Our **Rules for Walkers**, which are on page 5 of the Walks Program and also accessible from the front page of the website, provide the rules (they're not just guidelines) to follow to ensure you or others don't get separated on a walk. Here is the relevant extract:

- Keep together. Use the same route as the leader and do not get ahead of or behind the party. Keep the walker in front and behind in sight - call the leader to stop if necessary. If the party is large, a tail person is usually appointed to monitor slower walkers. The most common causes of separation are getting ahead of the leader, stopping to take photos or making a toilet stop without telling anyone. Do not assume you can drop behind and then easily catch up.
- If you do become separated, stop and call out. Do not keep walking. Wait in a visible place even if you have to wait some time. The leader will return for you. Call out at intervals.
- If you want to leave the walk for any reason, you must consult the leader first – and abide by the leader's ruling. Do not assume you will get approval.

The point about toilet breaks is important. Often, when the walk resumes after a morning tea or lunch break, some people only then decide to head off into the bushes, even though they could have done so in the previous 20-30 minutes. This practice, at best, results in a delay for the group but, at worst, if no one notices, could lead to the walker being left behind. Don't be that person.



*I want to die peacefully in my sleep like my grandfather did.
Not screaming in terror like the passengers in his car.*

Proposal to change the Names of our Bushwalking Clubs

The Vice President of Bushwalking NSW (BNSW) has proposed that we all need to change the names of our clubs. Brindabella Bushwalking Club has formally opposed the suggestion. This is a very brief summary of his proposal and our objections.

Why change? He believes all bushwalking clubs need a change in name and a rebrand to remain strong and relevant into the future. He says that the crux of our problem lies in the “regrettably less-than-exciting image of bushwalking clubs”. “Our clubs are not widely perceived as exciting and cool, but regrettably as rather staid and boring, and increasingly, full of retirees”. He is convinced a rebrand will help inspire and attract a younger cohort into our clubs, to re-energise our whole movement.

He is advocating for the addition of a new term such as ‘**Outdoor Adventure**’ or merely just ‘**Adventure**’ into our names. Thus, for example, our club might change to Brindabella Bushwalking Adventure Club. At a broader level, he is also campaigning for a change from ‘Bushwalking NSW’ to ‘Bushwalking and Outdoor Adventure NSW/ACT’.

Your committee disagrees!

Consideration. Do young people really want to walk and mix with people who are as old as their grandparents and whose interests in almost all things differ so much; e.g. music, entertainment and socialising? If they are seduced into joining a club because its name includes the word ‘adventure’, are they likely to stay once they discover the demographic and the truth that we are not providing any adventure other than bushwalking?

Many younger people won’t join clubs because they fear rules and restrictions. They prefer to download walks from the internet, organise some friends and head off.

The Drawbacks of the proposal include changing:

- the club’s constitution (special AGM needed) which, in turn, will require some administrative work and the payment of a fee to the ACT Government;
- the club’s website name – cost and effort involved;
- the club’s and committee’s email addresses; and
- the titles on all our various forms.

Additionally

- We already have around 400 members and don’t need to try to attract a new category of members; and most importantly
- Once the word ‘adventure’ has been added to the club’s name, we will be bound to provide adventurous activities every few weeks or else be seen to be duping the new members so attracted. Who will lead these adventures?

Finally. We are a bushwalking club, so why pretend we’re something else?



Social News



New Year's Day 2025

SOCIAL NEWS FEBRUARY 2025

Wednesday 1 January: New Year's Day picnic from 4pm

What a wonderful way to spend new year's day 2025!!! 38 fabulous members enjoyed our 4th annual new year's day picnic in Bowen Park, Barton. Though a hot day, we were in a lovely shaded spot with a light breeze. It was a very relaxed picnic and a good time was had by all. Our club banner was proudly on display. Definitely on the calendar 1 January 2026.

Elaine Atkinson
Social Convenor



Coming Up This Month

(See the program on the website for more details; Wednesday Walks have been omitted)

Date	Walk Title	km	Rating	Leader
Sat 1 Feb	Black Mountain Morning Circuit	10	Easy (6)	Ian Tucker
Sun 2 Feb	Wanniassa Hills Nature Reserve	8	Easy (6)	Leigh Hermann
Sat 8 Feb	Trees of Gigerline Nature Reserve	7.5	Easy (7)	Peter Dalton
Sun 9 Feb	Griffin Weston Forest Trail - Part One (book by 6 Feb)	15	Medium (8)	David Wardle
Sat 15 Feb	Red Hill Ramble	10	Easy (7)	Bill Gibson
Sun 16 Feb	Griffin Weston Forest Trail - Part Two (book by 13 Feb)	15	Medium (8)	David Wardle
Sat 22 Feb	West Belconnen to Civic	17	Medium (8)	Ian Tucker
Sun 23 Feb	Shanahans Mountain and Mount Boboyan	7	Easy (6)	Andrew Cupit

Walks Statistics for last month - January 2025

Not so many walks this month with no Easy Wednesday walks. In spite of a some 35C days no walks were cancelled, noting though, that several were morning only. As well, fourteen members enjoyed 4 days in Kosciuszko NP walking from Charlotte Pass.

Weekend Walks

Date	Walk Title	No
04-Jan-25	Lake Burley Griffin Eastern Basins	9
05-Jan-25	Pine Is to Point Hut and return	7
11-Jan-25	Bradleys Creek from Googong Dam	3
12-Jan-25	Pinnacle and Kama Nature Reserves	14
18-Jan-25	Smokers Loop and Square Rock	6
19-Jan-25	Pine Island to Kambah Pool and return	8
25-Jan-25	Orroral Heritage Trail & Homestead	11
26-Jan-25	Cuumbeun Nature Reserve	12

BBC- led Wednesday Easy/Medium and Medium/Hard walks

Date	Walk Title	No
15-Jan-25	East Jerrabomberra Nature Reserve	21
15-Jan-25	Pabral Road	5



I was horrified when my wife told me that my six-year-old son wasn't actually mine. Apparently, I need to pay more attention during school pick-up.

New Members In December and January

Ann Lehmann
Peter/ Janette Hatch
Brian Minty
Lisa Castanelli
Richard Barratt
Tom Nankivell

Jon Lawrence
Sue Genner
Tanya Wordsworth
Ian Millar
Gale Funston
Bronwyn Welch

Welcome and enjoy the great outdoors!



*“Is it ignorance or apathy that's destroying the world today?
I don't know, and I don't care.”*