



all nations
BUSHWALKERS INC



Autumn Newsletter
March 2009

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www.bushwalking.org.au/~allnations



NEWSLETTER OF ALL NATIONS BUSHWALKERS INC • FORMERLY ANIC BUSHWALKERS INC & ALL NATIONS CLUB WALKABOUT GROUP • FOUNDED 1962 • INCORPORATED 1992

A few short walks in Central America Oct 2008 - Jan 2009

Elizabeth Saadeh

Our 2½ month trip started in Cuba. While we did a lot of city walking in Havana, we were looking forward to a walk to the waterfall in the mountains behind Trinidad, (in central Cuba). But hurricane Paloma had other ideas. The morning of our proposed walk dawned rainy and Paloma was approaching as a category 4 (later downgraded). Word was it would miss a direct hit on Trinidad, but the weather would still be abysmal for days. So we caught the afternoon bus back to Havana.

We did have better luck in Costa Rica, where we shared a rented car with friends from the US. We had a nice day in Manuel Antonio National Park along the Pacific coast. The forest is filled with howler monkeys, and I do mean howler. They sound like lions roaring, very scary if you don't know what that sound is. We also saw a 3 toed sloth, white faced monkeys, and iguanas. The track was treacherous with slippery mud but we took our time and after ascending through the lush jungle to a lookout, made our way

down to a quiet and lovely little beach, with just a few other people and several iguanas who didn't mind posing for photos (the iguanas that is). We then walked a steep track around the headland (again muddy from recent rains) before relaxing on the main park beach.



One of many waterfalls, Costa Rica

A few days later we moved on to Montezuma, on the Gulf of Nicoya. One of the highlights there was a day at the Playa Blanco Nature Reserve, started decades ago by a Swedish couple who bought the land for that purpose, and then bequeathed it to the Costa Rican government. The walk there was more challenging. Though only about 4km each way, the heat and extreme humidity made it more difficult. There were steep sections and some water crossings with small waterfalls. Our friends turned back but we persevered, and were rewarded by a lovely beach, reachable only by foot or boat. Unfortunately we saw no animals until starting back from the beach when some cheeky white-faced monkeys came through the trees to peer at us.

In Antigua, Guatemala, we had an adventure climbing the live volcano Pacaya. The first hour was a mainly uphill bushwalk. Then the "fun" started when we laboured up shifting gravel from prior lava flows. Other people enroute up or down would dislodge rocks which you dodged to the best of your ability. We could see the molten lava flare up at the top. From time to time the volcano tossed out large boulders which rolled down the neighbouring ravine, too close for my comfort! One I saw was the size of a large TV and its centre was still red hot molten lava!



President 's Report

I hope you all enjoyed the holidays and were able to find someplace "cool" in the bush!

I spent the New Year with fellow club members down in the Snowy Mountains and had a great time in an area burnt out by bushfires 3 years ago. Many dead trees and a very unusual Australian landscape.

We have had a great variety of programs over the last few months and I hope that you all have found something that interests you.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask you to consider taking up the position of President, as I will be standing down this year. It would be great if we had a female president for a change. Please give me or any of the other committee members a call if you are interested. Remember it's your club and you only get out of it what you put in!!

Liam Heery

Continued next page



View from plateau before starting climb up volcanic gravel - Pacaya

Continued from page 1

We had hoped to do some walking between villages around beautiful Lake Atitlan in the highlands of Guatemala, but the guidebook, the web, and several unfortunate people who'd had the experience told of frequent robberies of tourists at machete-point along the paths, so we abandoned that idea. We did manage some exercise walking several kilometers while exploring the Tikal ruins in northern Guatemala, and Labna, Xlpak, Sayil, Kabah, Uxmal, and Chichen Itza ruins in Mexico's Yucatan.



Tikal ruins, Guatemala

Another highlight of the whole trip (though admittedly not related to walking) was swimming in some *cenotes* (sinkholes which form sunlit underground caves filled with pure clear blue cool water) in Yucatan. After taking a public bus 1¼ hours from the city of Merida, you then engage a bicycle taxi to where little horse carts run along a track in the scrub jungle for a 3 hour trip to 3 *cenotes* to swim. Magnificent.



Labna

If anyone is interested in trip photos, see a selection of them at

<http://picasaweb.google.com/lizard2travel>

Annual Christmas picnic BBQ

Bray's Bay Reserve, Rhodes

Saturday 22 November 2008
Jan Steven

In sharp contrast to last year's glorious sunny weather, the day dawned with grey skies, and rain accompanied by cold weather was forecast. Luckily we had been able to book the undercover BBQ area. A record 29 All Nations members turned up to enjoy a day of socialising - excellent BBQ food supplied this year by the club, games, and an optional short walk.

Liam and Jacqui arrived laden with nibblies, drinks and a great selection of meats. We soon had the BBQ sizzling away under the care of Liam as master cook with a couple of assistants.

As usual the Boule (bowls) and Jenga were two favourite games along with Frisbees and ball games. Some of us even managed to stroll The Kokoda Memorial Walkway with our umbrellas up.

Despite the increasingly cold bleak weather (some of the inadequately dressed were huddled under car rugs) the stayers left at 4 pm. Thanks to Liam and Jacqui for the food shopping and barbequing, those who helped with tea making and the clean up, and for all those who came along to make such a successful day.



New member Clynton



Everyone enjoying lunch



Sharyn, Ken and Carol



A tense moment for Suseela

Photos - Marcela Whitehead



Another tense moment for Liam, Suseela and Mark



Catharina and Farida making the hot drinks

FEATURE

Maria Island Explorer Tasmania

4 - 8 January 2009

Peter Bonner

For some months, a few ANB members had been thinking about doing a luxury walking trip on Maria Island. Beth had already done this trip and enjoyed it so much she wanted to return to the island for a third time. More talks followed, then the luxury walking trip went out of our reach with a \$600 price increase. After investigating other options for 'real bushwalkers', Beth found that World Expeditions had a 'Maria Island Explorer' trip, moderate level, 5 days walking, 4 nights camping, all food and gear supplied for \$1500. Five of us then decided to give it a go.

Day 1: 8.30am pick up along with 5 other keen walkers at Launceston, kitting out, then minibus transport to Triabunna to the ferry which transported us to Darlington Bay on the west coast of Maria Island. Originally an early convict settlement, later attempts at farming and industrial development coupled with tourism failed, and now Maria Island is a National Park Reserve with no permanent residents.



Most of our group with Bishop and Clerk peak in background

On arrival we had a short full pack walk to the campsite which we were to share with numerous Cape Barren Geese, pademelons, Bennett's wallabies and woolly wombats that look and behave like small bears, very curious and actively scampering about the grassy areas which are extremely dry. There were other campers there as well.

Tents up we then had time to walk to the Painted Cliffs to see some amazing sunlit rock formations and marvel at the abundance of wildlife. We soon gave up counting the wombats. An evening walk to the jetty area failed to find any Fairy penguins that we hoped would come ashore at this time - maybe we scared them off. It was a good chance to walk off our evening 'hearty meal' cooked by our guides Vic & Nick (said to be Wal-laby Spag Bol) which I ate for no other reason than that I was hungry! Later meals were greatly improved and we were served fresh salads every day for lunch.

Day 2: Long walk via the Fossil Cliffs containing marine life dated 290 million years old, then on to Bishop and Clerk peak,

a 620 metre rock pile with great views including an awesome sharp angular rock scree, a challenging slope towards the end of the climb. Late afternoon, a leisurely walk to see the old brick pit ruins and the dam that supplies water to Darlington, while Beth, Bruce and guide Nick climbed 711 metre Mt Maria.

Days 3 and 4: Up early, strike camp for a long full pack walk to French's Farm taking the centre undulating track through eucalypt forests, passing on our left Mt Maria turnoff, Monah Hill, Ned Ryan's Hill and thankfully at last dropping down to French's Farm campsite. Later, a very enjoyable cool swim at Shoal Bay.



Lunch on the track to French's Farm

Next day, walks to Encampment Bay to view old convict ruins on the point, which once made up Long Point Probation Station, and McRaes Isthmus for a surf swim in Riedle Bay with a pleasant return walk along Shoal Bay back to camp. The keener members of our party did the 18km return walk to Haunted Bay near the bottom of the island.

Day 5: Up early at 5:30am for the long full pack walk on the very scenic coastal track, past several swimming beaches and the Painted cliffs to Darlington Bay to catch the 10:30am ferry back to Triabunna and the minibus ride to Launceston and our luxury accommodation at Fiona's B&B.

To sum up, Maria Island is a very interesting place for walking and camping, observing the wild life and immersing one's self in the history of the convicts and see the early settler's attempts to make a go of life there.

Also to see the remnants of the various commercial ventures that all failed.

We should go again, and next time plan do it all ourselves. Thanks to Beth, Julie, Sharyn and congratulations to Jan on her first full pack walk.

Yes, I was the only man in our party, the other group were 4 men and 1 lady.



Some of Maria Island's wildlife

WALK REPORT

Kulpers Ridge via Collingridge Point Marramarra NP

Sunday 14 December 2008 Leader: Liam Heery

This was going to be a repeat of a similar walk that I did about 3 years ago and it was going to be interesting to see what changes had occurred to the landscape and if we could retrace our way across the unmarked section.

We took the usual route to Collingridge Point where we had a late and leisurely morning tea overlooking Berowra Creek. As usual the views from the lookout are magnificent. Nick got a shock though when he encountered a "local" climbing down the cliff of the lookout. It seems the local had been to an overhang perched half way up the cliff!

After morning tea we headed back up the fire trail to find the point to take on our cross country section to Kulpers Ridge. After a bit of trial and error we found the indistinct path through the bush which has now grown substantially since we last visited. The going was a bit tougher than expected and we had numerous breaks before a late lunch overlooking Coba Creek.

It was then time to drop into the creek and find a suitable crossing. Luckily the tide was not very high and with the dry weather there was not much water upstream. However instead of one creek crossing we found that we had to cross 5 separate tributaries. This meant for lots of



Nick crossing the creek

photo opportunities with eager photographers waiting for that "action shot" of someone stumbling into the water. No such luck though as all of my fellow walkers were very nimble of foot and extremely resourceful in creating their own natural bridges on occasion.

After the successful "dry" creek crossing we headed up the steep climb to Kulpers Ridge, where we found some Aboriginal carvings.

A longish walk out got us back to our cars and thence Hornsby where we all departed. Thanks to Nick, Faye, Linda, Helen, Outi, Alison, Brian and visitor Justin for joining me for another great day in the bush.

Club travel night Woodstock Community Centre Burwood

Friday 13 February 2009

Jan Steven

Since I was unable to attend the first travel evening we held last year I was keen to get along to this one to see what it was all about. I was not disappointed. With a group of 12 members I enjoyed a great night sharing travel experiences and gathering ideas for future trips.

Modern technology has come some way from those boring old slide evenings we have all endured at some time.

We followed journeys on Fraser Island, the Camino de Santiago Pilgrim Trail, the Everest Base Camp, the Milford Track, walking on Vanuatu and even two recent club walks.

It's also great to see your own photos on the big screen.

Afterwards a group enjoyed a meal together at one of the many restaurants in Burwood.

Start getting a show together of one of your recent adventures now and come along to the next club evening on the Autumn programme.

Picture Quiz

Can you guess who's in the water?



See the Winter issue for the answer

Notice board



From your Committee

**The AGM will be held ...
Sunday 12th July 2009,
10.30am - 12.30pm**

**Woodstock
Community
Centre
Church Street, Burwood**

Starting time 10.30am.

**An optional activity will be
organised after the meeting**

More details in next issue

Membership Renewals

New rates for 2 and 3 year

The club is keen to encourage long term membership and therefore the committee has decided to introduce special discount membership rates for members renewing for two or three years prior to expiry date.

The new rates are:

Standard Annual Membership \$35.00

(Unchanged)

Special Rates for Memberships Renewal Prior to Membership Expiry Date

Renewal for 1 Year \$32.00 *(Unchanged)*

Renewal for 2 Years \$55.00 *(New Rate -
Equivalent to \$27.50 per year)*

Renewal for 3 Years \$75.00 *(New Rate -
Equivalent to \$25.00 per year)*

Additional family memberships *(in the same household) remain at \$15 per year*

Also, when renewing for 2 or 3 years, members will still receive a "Visitor for Free" voucher, entitling the holder to bring a visitor to one event at no charge.

Letter to the Editor . . .

I joined this club last year and I have enjoyed the various walks which have been full day activities.

I would like to suggest more social evenings if possible.

I know this is a bushwalking club but at times it is difficult to free a full day for a walk. Perhaps more theatre/cultural/movie nights, or even gallery visits occasionally.

I would be interested if any other members felt the same.

*Regards
Tina*

Changes to CAR POOLING PETROL COSTS

The car pool cost for all cars is **25c per kilometre** (if the petrol price is less than **\$1.20 per litre**) or **33c per kilometre** (if the petrol price is more than **\$1.20 per litre**). Any other reasonable costs (eg. National Park entrance fees) are added. The total is shared equally between everybody.

If there is any confusion as to the cost of petrol on the day, **the walk leaders decision will be final.**

OUR NEXT ANB MEETING IS TUESDAY 14 APRIL 2009

**All members are welcome ... Come along and have your say
SEE DETAILS IN YOUR CURRENT PROGRAMME**

WALK REPORT

Grand Canyon - Rodriguez Pass

Sunday 11 Jan 2009

Leader: Wayne Lee

Story and photos: Andrew McRae

On a sunny and warm (but not as warm as it could have been) Sunday in January, four of us with Wayne (our fearless leader) rendezvoused at Evans Lookout in the Blue Mountains for a walk through the Grand Canyon.



Fiona, Mark, Wayne, Lloyd, Bob, and Andrew

After some initial (slight) confusion about which canyon we should be heading down, we found the track through to Neates Glen and started wending our way down via a steep track. The forest gave way to a rainforest covered creek before opening up into a wide canyon (Neates Glen) surrounded by rock pagodas.

At the end of the canyon, we scrambled down a steep trail to the head of the Grand Canyon, where there is a large cave overhang. After a short break, we headed down the track, along an access tunnel, through a large rock and into the Grand Canyon proper.

At the head of the canyon is a delightful waterfall, small in volume but high, trickling over moss covered rocks. As we were walking through the aptly named Grand Canyon, I realised that it had been nearly 30 years since I had done a trip down through this area. The Grand Canyon is a deep and narrow canyon, and the trail follows one side of the canyon at times 30 or 40 metres above the creek, making for some great views down into the base of the canyon (at least, for those who enjoy the heights). After a while, the track rises above the canyon, and then down into a wider junction area, where it follows the creek. The canyon becomes much wider, with tall trees, ferns and mossy rocks giving it a rainforest feel. The trail then branched, with the Blue Gum Forest trail going one way, and the track to Evans Lookout the other. Even though the Blue Gum trail was officially closed, we headed down a short distance to check out the landslide that had caused the closure.

Heading back to the junction, we then continued down the canyon until we started uphill towards Evans Lookout. We climbed out through the rainforest, and came into an open eucalypt forest. At this stage we were realising that all



Heading into Grand Canyon proper



Photographic Competition

to be held at the next AGM

Sunday 12th July 2009

Prizes as well as a certificate will be your reward.

The winning photos will be published in the Spring issue of Keeping Track.

There's still 3 months left to snap that special photo at one of the Club activities.

Photos must have been taken since the previous AGM.

Categories are:

- PEOPLE**
- WATER SCENES**
- FLORA**
- FAUNA**
- NATURE'S WONDERS**
- CAMPING**

We need 4 entries per category to run a viable competition, so encourage your fellow members to enter with you.

(Sorry, only one entry per category)

How to Enter

Each photograph should be displayed on a sheet of A4 size paper.

If you don't have a (decent) colour printer, email the photos to Charles Bowden at - itinerant@myrealbox.com who will arrange printing for you at no cost.

On the reverse side put your name, category, the date and place where your picture was taken.

On arrival at the AGM, hand your entry to **the organiser Len Sharp.**

The organiser's decision is final as to eligibility in accordance with the rules.



Open eucalypt forest

the altitude we had lost on the way down was going to come back and haunt us (not for the last time that day). All was forgotten when reached the top of Evans Lookout, where the amazing vista of the Grose Valley was laid out



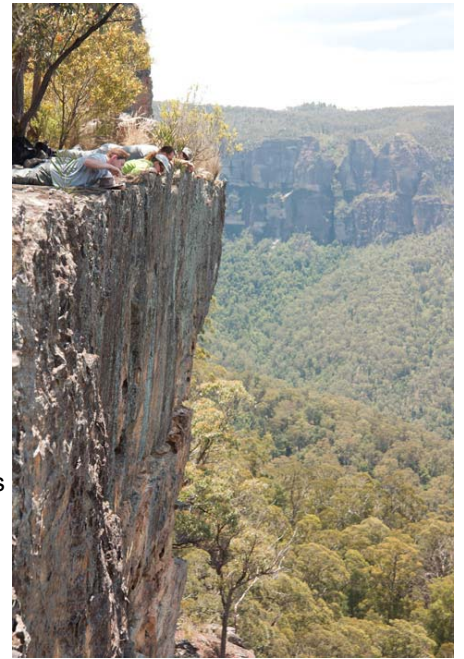
Grose Valley panorama

before us. After a few minutes break (used wisely by the obsessed photographer scrambling over rocks to take panorama photographs from precarious positions), we started looking for a 'horse trail' down into the valley that Wayne was keen to discover. Finding a likely location, we took a short detour up to a rock outcrop, and found ourselves on the edge of the escarpment, with a sheer cliff of hundreds of feet. A perfect place for lunch! Great views, cool shade.

So, after a leisurely lunch enjoying the scenery, it was time to explore the 'horse trail'. This was in the saddle next to the rock outcrop we had lunch on, and the track descended steeply down a short valley before opening up through the bracken covered forest. The trail was faint but clear, and we had no trouble getting down. At this stage, after the uphill of Evans Lookout, and the steep descent, we were starting to look forward to the much-promised Junction Pools swimming hole. The trail broke up somewhat as we neared the main trail at the base of Grose Valley, and eventually we came across the main trail, quite close to Junction Pool. Time for a swim! A fabulous spot. Lovely cool, clear water, and time to wash off the sweat of the trail. Junction Pool is a series of waterholes, and even has a couple of small waterfalls. Just perfect for a bush

spa.

Leaving the water hole, we started up the valley towards Govetts Leap. At this stage, it was starting to get late in the day, and legs were getting tired as we hit the steep track up to the base of the waterfall. Our spirits were restored by a break once we reached Govetts Leap waterfall, and some even had the energy to climb some boulders. From the base of the water-



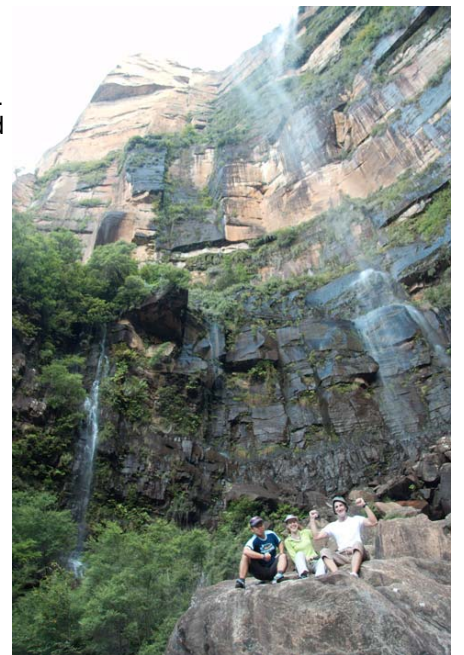
A perfect place for lunch

fall, the top seems

a long way away, but the views as we head up the cliff distract us from the toil, and it doesn't seem long before we are ascending the final stairs, and getting strange looks from the tourists as we happily enjoy what we accomplished. The hard climb being over, we then had the 3km cliff walk back to Evans Lookout, and the added bonus of a thunderstorm sweeping in with lots of thunder and lightning. Luckily, most of the rain held off until we were able to huddle under the shelter at Evans Lookout (with thanks to Wayne who went the extra mile and

brought the car to us so that we wouldn't get soaked in the rain). By this stage, it had felt a lot longer than the 12kms expected, having started around 10AM and now finishing around 7PM. Thank goodness for daylight saving!

In any case, there was only one thing left to do, and that was to enjoy an excellent dinner (along with the requisite beverages) at the Lapstone Hotel, and reflect back on



Govetts Leap Waterfall

FEATURE

Up the creek without a paddle in Vanuatu

September 2008

Charles Bowden

Vanuatu is usually depicted in travel brochures and advertisements as a warm and sunny country of white sandy beaches spilling into turquoise seas teeming with Nemo's relatives and friends. Coconut palms wave their fronds at tourists disembarking in front of immaculate resorts staffed by smiling ni-Vanuatu (local Melanesians) and... well, you get the picture. As this was my first visit to Vanuatu, I was looking forward to seeing for myself the truth behind the advertising. I also wanted to see some of the inland which seldom receives a mention.

The truth, as it turned out (somewhat to my surprise), is that most of the promotional images are indeed accurate although in some respects selective. But then, black sand beaches, overcast skies and dilapidated buildings don't look as enticing even though they are also part of the experience. Port Vila, the capital, is a little run-down in appearance but does have an understated charm. It is a town best explored on foot and, early in my stay, I spent the best part of a day doing just that. The views out to sea from various vantage points are delightful but I also enjoyed looking out at the densely clad hills behind the city, lush with vibrant glimpses of colour.

To realise my goal, I contacted a local company called Ecotours which offered a range of outdoor 'experiences' including cycling, canoeing and walking activities. After discussing the options with Pascal, the French proprietor, chief guide and enthusiastic advocate for all things outdoor in Vanuatu, he convinced me to go on a half-day jungle walk in the hills behind Port Vila. The walk started at the base of a waterfall, a series of cascades over large boulders. After climbing up the slippery rocks above the cascades, we then followed the narrow creek upstream. Pascal had equipped us (myself and 2 others) with reef shoes so that we could wade and scramble in relative comfort and security along the stream bed and outlying rocks.



Walking up the creek

The creek meandered through a narrow gorge filled with vines and dark green foliage, occasionally dappled with sunlight bursting through gaps in the overhead canopy. The weather was warm and humid and we were soon splashing more forcefully the creek than absolutely necessary. At one spot, the water gushed through a crevice into a pool creating a delightful shower for cooling off. Further upstream the water became more placid as the gorge flattened out. A clearing revealed the ruins of an old watermill which had once powered a local flour mill. Here we left the creek to follow a narrow track winding its way up the hillside through more open forest.

We soon emerged onto the top of a ridge and a dirt road that we were told was a farm track. No views could be seen owing to the jungle that hemmed us in and, after a few hundred metres, we left the road to follow another narrow track. This time we headed downhill, alongside a narrow gully which eventually emerged above a large pool at the base of a familiar looking waterfall: we had reached our starting point but from the opposite side.

Large vines that draped the nearby trees allowed middle-aged men to make fools of themselves doing Tarzan impressions as they swung out, over and into the deep pool for a final refreshing swim. But wait, what's this? Like the man touting the steak knives, there's more!



Charles doing Tarzan impressions

Our guide beckoned us out of the water and this time led us underneath the waterfall and alongside the boulders to a small entrance in the rock, partly concealed by shrubbery. We found ourselves staring bemusedly into a limestone cave leading into the hillside. Inside, narrow galleries revealed glistening white stalactites and stalagmites. Water dripped steadily from the 'tites and the heat was stifling. On the ceiling of the largest cavern a dozen bats rustled their wings nervously at the intruders. In another smaller grotto, freshly made swallows' nests, vividly green from the vegetation materials used by their builders, adorned the roof.

We eventually emerged blinking into the sunlight and wended our way back along the boulders to the pool for a final plunge before the trip home. Well, actually, while others went home, I stayed behind for another half-day walk taking in some of the coast, local villages & food gardens, and a trip across a lagoon in a dugout canoe - but I was still without a paddle: my guide was not going to relinquish our only means of propulsion!



FEATURE

A short walk up a chip off the old block

November 2008

Charles Bowden

New Caledonia is not a coral island, at least not the mainland, called Grande Terre, plus a few of the nearest islets. Unlike most of the Pacific, the New Caledonia mainland is in fact a sliver which broke away from the Gondwanaland super continent that spawned Australia & New Zealand as well as Africa, South America and India. Much of Grande Terre is red, the same mineral-rich red that is found in so much of Australia. The red soil contains large quantities of iron ore and nickel, the latter responsible for most of the island's wealth. This distinctive and familiar shade of red is what first strikes you when sighting the southern tip of the mainland after sailing across (as you do) from Vanuatu.



Orchid (and ant)

If you decide to step ashore (as we did) onto the southern tip, the resemblance is even more eerie. The soil has the same powdery feel and many of the plants share a common genus with Australian species: araucaria, melaleuca, grevillea and nothofagus. Due to the high

mineral content in the soil, most plants do not grow too high and maintain that sere, shrubby appearance of plants in the Australian outback. Some of the birds are also familiar looking - honeyeaters, lorikeets, white-eyes and even a nightjar. There are also four species of fruit bats (flying foxes).

At one point we found ourselves moored in a bay near a village called Prony which turned out to be the start (or finish depending on your point of view) of a major 125km walking track (GR1) being developed across the southern part of the mainland. The track will comprise 8 stages, each of a day's duration. Begun in 2004, there are still two stages to complete. Fortunately, the first stage begins at Prony and I was able to convince my fellow crewmates to undertake



Prison ruin

a 14 km walk along this initial section to a waterfall and back. The walk begins at a car park next to the bay where there is a hut for overnight hikers and a toilet. The track which is very well signposted then meanders along the foreshore, punctuated by ruins from the days when the area served as a penal settlement and the prisoners were used as labour for a logging operation. After leaving the village of Prony, it then rises inland, following old logging and mining roads, badly eroded, that scar the landscape with deep red slashes.



Blue River crossing

These are left behind once we reach the top of the plateau and the way forward becomes a red path through a relatively verdant landscape with flowers and even orchids emerging at unexpected intervals. At times the track disappears into small ravines, carved by creeks, only to re-emerge on the far side. We eventually descend the plateau down to the Blue River which presents a challenging barrier to cross as the water level is fairly high and the river crossing is quite wide. So it's off with shoes and socks and then a careful wade across the slippery stony bottom to the far side. The track then follows the contour of a spur of the plateau, passing more ruins, before reaching a second smaller river, Carénage River, with



Cascade du Carénage

views out over the lagoon into which it flows. This time we don't descend but follow the track around the spur until we arrive at the higher reaches of the river and the waterfall, sparkling in the sunlight. It proves to be the ideal lunch spot before we retrace our steps back to the start followed by a well-earned beer back on board the boat (as one does).

WEEKEND CAMP

Six Foot Track Blue Mountains

24 - 26 January 2009 Leader: Liam Heery

The long weekend and the thought of high temperatures kept people away from this "iconic" three day walk. So it was that only Alison and Bob braved the weather to join me!

As there was only 3 of us, this became a private rather than a club walk, but was none the worse for that. Luckily we were able to get a lift from Jacqui to our start at Jenolan Caves and also lucky with our arrival time which was just before the road "closed to traffic going the other way". A reminder to anyone to check road opening times when you go to Jenolan Caves.



Liam, Alison and Bob at Jenolan Caves

We decided to have lunch before departing and were very disappointed in what was on offer at the "caves". Besides the bad service, average food and exorbitant prices there was a wall of flies! It seemed as if all of the flies in the Blue Mountains were having lunch with us.

It didn't take long for us to get ready and on the track, heading off up the steep climb out of the caves. In 36 degree heat it was great every time we turned a corner and got a whiff of wind. Notwithstanding the heat it was a pleasant enough walk to our first campsite at Blacks Ridge.

It is a huge campsite and very pleasant with toilets and water. There were only two other campers there as it seems most people elect to do the walk in the other direction, starting at Katoomba.

Next morning we took our time and left camp at 10am, just as 50 walkers arrived with only day packs as they had 4WD support vehicles to carry their food, tents and gear! Today was to be a long walk mainly along roads shared with dirt bikes and 4WDs who all have access to the Cox's River campsite.

On arrival at the campsite we thought we had entered "tent city" with cars, bikes, music, generators and millions of people!! It didn't take us long to decide to leave the main camp site and head for a quieter location up river. Luckily we found a nice spot on our own. We were even able to take a cool

bath in the river, until first me and then Alison were attacked by some form of slimy sucker under water! That had us out of the water as quick as if we were in a jet ejection seat!



Bob & Liam on the 6 foot road

After dinner we headed to bed early, tired from the walk and the heat. It wasn't long before the louts in the camp site started their karaoke on loud hailers and let off what sounded like gun shots!! Needless to say this did not leave a good impression of the campsite on us!

Next day we headed for The Explorers Tree at Katoomba, again in searing heat, which made for tough going. It also meant that we used up our water very quickly and ran out before we got to Nellie's Glen, where it took some time before we found a creek to quench our thirst and refill our water bottles. The walk out, though steep and lots of steps, was a pleasant relief from the hard slog of road / fire trail walking.

We dumped our gear at the Explorers Tree, having finished the six foot track successfully and headed into Katoomba for a well earned cool drink!

Thanks to Alison and Bob for joining me on what I thought was one of Australia's best walks, only to find that it's not really as good as it's made out to be and from a personal point of view would never do again!



Filtering water from a creek



Bob cooling off in the Cox's River

Welcome to New Members

Marc Scalabrino

Nadia Djordjevic

June Moverley

Mei Zhou

Helen Hindin



See you in the bush

Change of Details

**Don't forget to notify
Treasurer Tom Whitehead
of any change in address,
email address or phone
numbers.**

Phone: 9587 4420

or email us at -

anbcomm@hotmail.com

**DEADLINE
FOR NEXT ISSUE**

4 May 2009

**SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS
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jesteven@unwired.com.au

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SOCIAL

The Rocks Historic Hotels Walk

Saturday 17th January

Leader: Jacqui Joseph

We all met at the Lord Nelson Hotel for lunch and welcomed Charles Bowden back from his Pacific sailing adventure/sojourn.

The rule at any of the pubs is to consume at least 1 beverage, preferably alcoholic!



The Australian Hotel

In summary the following pubs were patronized but not all were successful or visited in the order as listed below!

1. The Lord Nelson 19 Kent St
Great lunch spot, one of the oldest pubs in Sydney with a brewery!
2. Palisade 35 Bettington St - Closed for renovations.
3. The Australian 100 Cumberland St
Superb pizzas & Scharer's lager from Picton! It was so good that we visited twice!
4. Glenmore Hotel 96 Cumberland St
Couldn't find on our 1st attempt, but eventually located it after a visit to The Rocks market & The Mercantile Hotel for Irish tourist spotting...
5. Harts Pub 176 Cumberland St - We skipped this hotel as it did not appear to be open.
6. Hero of Waterloo 81 Lower Fort St
One of the favourites, great live music - perfect for a weekend afternoon, cool Church pews!
7. The Argyle 12-18 Argyle St
Too pretentious...'shorts not allowed' so this was skipped.
8. The Mercantile 25 George St
Great Irish pub... mostly Irish patrons with great Irish music! Liam was at home!
9. The Observer 69 George St
Pleasant outdoor area, Charles & Andrew indulged in the cheese plate.
10. The Orient 89 George St
Another good beer garden ... all now a bit tipsy!!
11. Phillips Foote 101 George St
Charles devoured a berry cheesecake, very cosy indoor area on 1st level.
12. Fortune of War (Oldest Sydney Pub) 137 George St
Very small bathrooms, now 6 members remaining looking very seedy....

Thanks to: Liam, Charles, Alison, Clinton, Adele, Bob, Liz, Marc, 2 x Richards, Suseela, Jane, Carol, Fiona and Andrew!

A big 'Thank you' to all who contributed to this newsletter - Editor