



**all nations**  
BUSHWALKERS INC



**Autumn Newsletter**  
**March 2011**

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Sydney NSW 1230  
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**Keeping Track**

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

## A Journey through the back roads of Laos

Story: Suseela Durvasula  
December 2010/January 2011

Photos: Yuko Imai

The small land-locked South East Asian country of Laos had been on my list of travel destinations for some time. Everyone I knew who had been to Laos had raved about it – so unspoilt, such pretty countryside, not very touristy, such calm and friendly people. I had to investigate for myself to see if it was true. The Christmas/New Year break last January seemed an ideal time to do so. I enticed fellow ANB member Yuko to join me and together we embarked on our tour through the back roads of Laos.

Our first stop was Luang Prabang, the former royal capital and now a UNESCO World Heritage listed town. Luang Prabang is situated at the confluence of the Khan and Mekong Rivers and is a charming town with many beautiful temples, or 'wats'. Walking or cycling are the main modes of transport and there are very few cars, making it far less polluted and crowded than other parts of Asia.



*Monks receiving alms*

One of the highlights was seeing the monks collecting early morning alms from locals.

Locals give the monks handfuls

of sticky rice, biscuits or fruit, which is their only food for the day. You got the sense that this was a ritual that had been going on for centuries and not just one put on for tourists. Monks are everywhere in Luang Prabang – we even saw them in internet cafes surfing the net.



*Yuko and Suseela at the Kuang Si waterfalls*

The countryside near Luang Prabang is very picturesque. We did a couple of short walks to the Kuang Si waterfalls and the Tad Se cascades. The water was a lovely turquoise colour and was surrounded by thick jungle vegetation. We had a bit of an adventure doing the walk to the Tad Se Cascades. We almost got lost in the jungle (a story too long to recount here), but managed to make it back okay without getting eaten alive by mosquitoes. Note to self - there are no signs or arrows when doing bushwalks in Laos!

Another highlight was doing a Lao cooking class. Lao food is similar to Thai food but not as spicy. I learnt how to make spicy dips, steamed fish in banana leaves and lemon grass baskets stuffed with potato and fried. Probably not something I could repeat at home - have you ever tried to make baskets out of lemon grass? Due to the influence of the French, the added bonus in Laos is that you can get wonderful baguettes, good coffee and lovely French pastries for a fraction of the price you would pay in Paris.

After the relative civilisation of Luang Prabang, we travelled deep into the countryside – a seven hour bus journey on a windy mountain road to Phonsavan and the Plain of Jars in the north east of Laos. It was here you realised how poor Laos is, and the subsistence lifestyle that most people lead. We saw village after village on the side of the dusty road, where the only industry was collecting and drying grasses used to make simple brooms.



## President 's Report

*I trust you all had a restful and enjoyable break over the holiday period. Now that the weather is beginning to cool down, we can get back into some serious walking and other activities. If you have thought about leading a walk - now is your chance. To get ideas and assistance you simply need to contact one of our experienced walk leaders. Their contact details are on the most recent programs. Many of the leaders have a range of bushwalking books for loan, which are a good way to get started. It doesn't matter how hard or easy your proposed walk is, one of our leaders will be more than willing to give you mentoring or other assistance.*

*The members of All Nations are a well travelled group. We take interesting and varied holidays within Australia and overseas. Some of these are cultural trips, others to visit family and friends and others are adventurous walking holidays to remote destinations. The newsletter and the Club nights are great forums for sharing information and photos about holidays and walking trips. If you have been somewhere interesting recently, don't hesitate to boast about your exploits either in a short newsletter article or by sharing your photos at a Club night. In the next edition of the newsletter we will be trialling an online version. This will not only save postage and paper, but it will give you a chance to view the photos in colour. Of course, if you would prefer a printed copy of the newsletter you can still get one by contacting our newsletter editor. See you in the bush in 2011.*

**Suseela Durvasula  
President**



*Baguette stall in Luang Prabang*



*The Plain of Jars*

Phonsavan was our base for seeing the mysterious Jars sites. These are large stone pots scattered over several fields. The jars are thought to be over 2 000 years old but their origins remain a mystery. The theories on their origins range from the more plausible - large funerary urns or storage jars for rice wine, to the more wacky - jars used by giants, built by aliens, etc.

Phonsavan is unfortunately also famous for being the most heavily bombed town of any place in the world, per capita. During the Indochina War, more bombs were dropped on Laos than the total number dropped in World War II. Many unexploded ordnance (UXO) still contaminate the ground, harming and killing villagers to this day.

From the sombre to the ridiculous, our next stop was Vang Vieng, a riverside town in south central Laos. This was the only place I felt had been spoilt by tourism. At least they've managed to confine it to one spot. As a backpacker you spend your time in bars, lying on sofas, watching endless repeats of *The Simpsons* or *Friends*. You could also try 'tubing' - floating in a rubber tire down the river from bar to bar. We preferred to go kayaking to enjoy the wonderful scenery and observe the locals. Most of them seemed to be busy collecting a river moss which they then dry, salt and eat as a snack.



*Cute Lao kids ▶*

Our final stop was the capital Vientiane - the most laid back capital city in all of Asia. As well as seeing the main sights, we spent our short time here shopping, eating at nice restaurants and getting incredibly cheap massages (for the princely sum of \$5 an hour). We celebrated Yuko's birthday by dining at a traditional Lao restaurant where the previous guests had been the former Australian prime minister Paul Keating and the former Japanese prime minister Junichiro Koizumi.

So did Laos live up to my expectations? Most certainly. For a country with such a turbulent history, Laos felt peaceful and unspoilt by mass tourism. It has a great combination of natural beauty, wonderful people and a fascinating Buddhist culture.



# WALK

## Sodden Grounds

24 October 2010

Leader: Charles Bowden

Grade 3

On Saturday morning I had 16 walkers signed up for the walk into Barren Grounds Nature Reserve but by Sunday morning, half had become fair weather friends, not without justification.



*Misty wet track.*

Barren Grounds was awash. The normally dry sandy tracks had become rivers and lakes and the small rivulets which unobtrusively criss-cross the tabletop were now gurgling creeks of rushing water. The cloud was thick and low as well, reducing visibility.



*Yuko beside track pool*

(carnivorous plants) of which we saw three. The distinctive

However the wildflowers were out in profusion as I had hoped when planning for this walk. Drumstick and boronia bushes were budding or just begin to flower while a profusion of white, yellow, pink and blue flowers bordered the tracks.

Barren Grounds also has at least 5 species of sundews

red rosettes of the Common Sundew (*Drosera spatulata*) were plentiful and easily spotted alongside the sandy tracks. The Forked Sundew (*Drosera binata*), although initially less obvious as its stalks tend to blend in with young grass blades and fern leaves, was also readily found once we knew what to look for. The third species we saw was (I think) the Pale Sundew (*Drosera peltata*), tiny leaves with their eyelash tentacles on a single thin stalk.



*Green Grocer Cicada*

I decided to head first to Cook's Nose lookout as this would probably offer the best chance of a view of some sort, given its exposure to wind and its location at the junction of two valleys. On arrival we found everything completely obscured by an ocean of cloud, with only the occasional tree top emerging like broccoli smothered in white sauce. But it was worth the trip as, on the Cook's Nose boulder, was a magnificent spray of creamy rock lily orchid blooms (*Dendrobium speciosum*). In addition, we found a large Green Grocer Cicada (*Cyclochila australasiae*) partially hidden in the leaf litter and lucky not to have been stepped on. Although purportedly one of the loudest insects in the world, this one was remarkably silent under scrutiny.



*Stone bridge and Lamonds Creek*

After making our way back to the Griffiths Trail, three of the group decided to head back to the cars and shelter as they were not feeling the best while the rest of us headed towards the Stone Bridge, a well-known rock formation across Lamonds Creek. We soon reached the bridge only to find that normally placid, babbling Lamonds Creek had become a coffee-coloured torrent cascading over the bridge and rocks and pounding itself into a frothy mass, so that the pool below looked like a giant cappuccino.

It was obvious that we would not be able to cross and that the day's excursion would have to be curtailed. I don't think anyone was too disappointed at the prospect of an early finish. A hot drink back at Sutherland proved a suitable restorative before heading home to even hotter showers.

Thank you to Jasmin, Enid, Hilda, Suseela, Sandy, Sarah, Yuko and new member Michelle for sloshing along regardless. Special thanks to Jasmin for sharing the driving, to Sarah for providing a lift between Sutherland and Ryde at short notice and to Catharina for photos and of course gaffer tape (!) for emergency repairs to a torn poncho.

*Photos by Catharina Muller*



# WALK

## Mount Townsend traverse

7 November 2010

Grade 5+

Leader: Liam Heery

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I think it's going to be a case of third time lucky!! Having attempted this walk a few months ago, I thought with the extra summer time light that we would knock this walk over with ease.

Having tried once and been beaten by fading light, I felt that all we needed was an extra hour or two and we would be fine. Not so: the completely off-track nature of this walk was too much even with an early start, actually walking by 8:30am, we still only returned to the cars at 6:30pm.



*Grevillea buxifolia* - grey spider flower



*Juvenile brown snake*

The walk itself was reasonably uneventful, except for the small brown snake who proceeded to entertain at lunchtime with feats of athleticism that would only be believable in a fairy tale. Had he been fully grown and capable of the same dexterity you wouldn't need to be any closer than about 12 feet or he would certainly be within striking range!!

Our lunch spot was also our turning point and was just above the last descent to the Colo river. We estimated it was another 2 to 3 hours return to this spot, which by my calculation



*Lunch break* - photos Charles Bowden

was going to put us back at the cars at 9pm....too late for any sensible leader.

The lesson learnt was that even 12 kilometres can be too far for a day walk. The only way we can now contemplate finishing this walk is to make it into a 2-day overnigher. For those of you interested, keep your eye on the program for the "final instalment" coming sometime soon!

Thanks to Jacqui, Len, Bob, Charles, Chyanne and Alison for persevering with me once again, hope to see you on the next one.

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## Club Night

### Woodstock Centre, Burwood

26 November 2010

Liam Heery

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What a turnout. We had 17 people turn up for our Club show and tell night, obviously attracted by our guest speaker Oscar who came along at the behest of Yuko to inform and expand our knowledge on how to take better pictures.

Thanks, Yuko, for taking the trouble to organise a great night and a special thanks to Oscar for his entertaining presentation.

The photographers (at least that's what they think they are!) amongst the group were suitably impressed.

Following Oscar's presentation we had a fabulous photo video presentation by Anton of his beloved Hajar Mountains in Oman. What spectacular scenery and great walks. There was not one person in the room who now doesn't want to go there!

We also had a presentation from returned member David Cunningham of his trips to Cyprus and Morocco and the wild mountains of Donegal.

Zak also entertained us with his and Farida's trip around Tasmania, while Liam and Jacqui showed off their recent trip to Europe, including Norway where they visited a previous club member, Amy.

Last but not least, Charles gave an interesting showing and commentary of his recent walk on the Great Wall of China.

This night was so successful that I welcome anyone's suggestion on providing a speaker to present any topic that you think might be of value or entertainment to other club members.

Thanks to all for attending, and hope to see even more of you next time.

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# SOCIALGAIN

28 November 2010

Grade 2-4

Co-ordinator: Charles Bowden

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This year the Socialgaine was quite metropolitan, being held in Padstow and surrounds including Georges River National Park. The start/finish was located close to Padstow Station which made it very handy for those not wanting to drive, especially given the overcast and rainy conditions which persisted throughout the day.

ANB entered three teams in three categories. The Double Shots (Mixed Veteran) were the experienced and competitive team who set off at a trot, not to be sighted again until the finish. The Latte Lizards (the unique entrant in the Women Veteran Novice category) and the Mocha Magpies (Mixed Open) joined forces as all were new to rogaining (except yours truly) and opted for a more leisurely approach, beginning with coffee & cake at Padstow before searching for their first control! Lunch was held in a hamburger joint in West Peakhurst to shelter from the rain and we were even able to find Sherilyn's former home in Peakhurst which was coincidentally located along a road we were following.

The only challenging moment occurred along the edge of Salt Pan Creek. A girl in a team ahead of us slipped and fell heavily, grazing her limbs and face. After stopping to offer help and make sure she was all right (mild case of shock), we continued along an increasingly tangled route before managing to escape up the hillside – and find the control we had been searching for: a great effort.

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We steadily accumulated points and bonus stickers before finishing with a couple of minutes to spare: excellent timing. For the record, the Double Shots came in 49<sup>th</sup> overall (out of 96 teams) and 8<sup>th</sup> (out of 19) in the Mixed Veterans category.



*Our three teams*

The Latte Lizards came 84<sup>th</sup> overall and 1<sup>st</sup> (of course) in the Women Veteran Novice category and 10<sup>th</sup> out of 15 novice teams. The Mocha Magpies came 88<sup>th</sup> overall and 59<sup>th</sup> in the Open Mixed category.

Thank you to Len and Suseela for leading teams and to Andrew, Jacqui, Sherilyn, Suzanne, Fenella and Kobe for getting out of your comfort zone and persisting to the end.

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# SNORKELLING

## Gordon's Bay

27 November 2010

Grade 2

Organiser: Charles Bowden

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As a result of cancellations due to inclement weather we were probably lucky to get any snorkelling in before Xmas. This turned out to be the only time that a warm sunny day coincided with the activity so it was a little surprising that only four members turned up.

The water was still quite chilly (18-19C) which may have acted as a deterrent to those that didn't have wetsuits but the clarity was very good except close to the beach at the apex of the bay.

John and I seemed to have the most luck at spotting interesting marine life although Jacqui exhibited much interest in the tattooed aquatics diving from the rocks. Some eastern blue groupers were seen as well as two species of toadfish. Rock cale were quite common as were luderick on the sandy floor. The best sighting was of a numbfish, a type of ray but without the barbed tail. When it settled on the sand, it only needed a couple of flicks of its mantle to bury itself completely and become invisible.

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After a couple of outings, we adjourned to the Clovelly SLSC café for some warm drinks. Thank you to Stan, John and Jacqui for sharing an enjoyable day.



*Numbfish*





# Notices Notices Notices



**all nations  
BUSHWALKERS INC**

## From your Committee

**The AGM will be held ...  
Sunday 17th July 2011,  
10.00am - 12.30pm**

**Woodstock  
Community  
Centre**

**Church Street, Burwood**

**Morning Tea at 10.00am.**

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

*More details in the next issue*

## **Important Notice to all members**

The Winter issue of Keeping Track will be published electronically to members who have supplied an email address.

For those who require a printed copy of the newsletter it will be mailed out to you as soon as possible in June.

Please contact Jan Steven by phone: 9560 1299 or email: [jcsteven@unwired.com.au](mailto:jcsteven@unwired.com.au) as soon as possible.

Your 3 monthly programme will still be mailed to you before the end of May.

Your newsletter is also posted on the ANB Club website and Yahoo Groups.

## **NEW WALK LEADERS**

Dear Fellow Members

There have been a number of members who have recently stepped up and volunteered to lead bushwalks. Julie Armstrong, Helen Hinden, Hugh Redmond, Peter West, Alex Cuestas and Linda Kelen are some of our newer walk leaders.

Our club only exists due to the selfless efforts of our walk-leaders, social co-ordinators and committee members. If you have been in the club for a while I urge you to get involved and give something back. If you are interested in contributing then please give me a ring on 0425-234-385 or talk our program co-ordinator, Catharina Muller, or any of the experienced walk leaders.

More social functions would be a bonus for the club too. As well, volunteers are always needed to organise our regular "club nights" at Burwood.

If anyone wishes to increase their bush skills in areas like map reading, compass use, GPS use, using Google-Earth, etc. please contact me. We have a wealth of experienced walk leaders ready to assist you.

See you in the bush,  
Terry Redmond

## **ATTENTION WALK LEADERS**

### Insurance

Did you know you can be covered by insurance when surveying walks?

In order to be covered you need to give prior written notice to the club listing your name, the date and details of the survey trip and there must be 2 people in the survey party. Emailing qualifies so simply email the club address ([anbcomm@hotmail.com](mailto:anbcomm@hotmail.com)) beforehand and you will be covered.

Safe walking,  
Terry Redmond

Over 30 people attended the Christmas picnic BBQ at Rhodes Park last year for a very pleasant day of eating, drinking, socialising and even some mild to energetic exercise. The venue provided us with good shelter and excellent facilities.

Thank you to all who came, those who helped in the setting/cleaning up and those who provided sporting activities. The hula hoop was a real hit!

It all helped to make a great day.



\*We've booked the site again for the next one.

# Canoeing, Kayaking, & Heron Dinghy Sailing on Narrabeen Lakes

29 January 2011

Leader: Peter Bonner

Grade 2



## Photographic Competition

to be held at the next AGM

Sunday 17th July 2011

Photos must have been taken since the previous AGM on a club activity.

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. Participants must be present at the meeting to be eligible to win a prize. More details in our next issue.

(Sorry, only one entry per category)

**Organiser Len Sharp.**

*Almost 4 months still to capture that perfect picture.*

No one, it seemed, wanted to go to Narrabeen Lakes. I had arrived home from Flinders Island in the wee small hours of Thursday, to be exact 12:05am!

About 9:30am the phone started to ring - two visitors, could they come? Next Fernando, then Sue Yap so I had to ask Dave Cambourne for assistance and canoes. We met at my house where everyone helped to load and tie down the kayaks on my 4WD Nissan, plus tie a red scarf on the roof rack so the visitors waiting for us at Middle Creek could identify us. Then the Heron dinghy trailer was hitched on. A minor problem with the ball & socket joint was solved by Dave using my biggest pipe wrench! All of this took longer than expected so we finally arrived at Middle Creek Reserve at 11:00am to the relief of our two visitors Serene & Eric. Half an hour later we were all on the water. A kayak capsized was quickly sorted out as it was in shallow water.

Lunch at 12:30pm was taken at the launch beach in the shade of a large tree. Back on the water again with the 'Heron' planing along on a medium breeze,

then a capsized! Trevor and I had a ducking. I managed to right the Heron and get on aboard again and, although almost full to the water-line, I was able to sail on the jib sail and, with Dave towing in his kayak plus Trevor swimming alongside, to get back to the shore. After a lot of bailing out with two cut-down 3-litre plastic milk bottles and a borrowed bucket from a fisherman, we managed to dewater the dinghy and haul it on to the trailer. Something had snapped on the mast rigging and had to be fixed so, as it was about 3:00pm, I called it a day. The tedious business of reloading our little flotilla began. Eventually we arrived at my house to begin the whole business in reverse, unloading, washing down the kayaks and putting them on the racks in my garage. Finally about 5:30pm I could relax with a cuppa and a chat with Dave.



*Bailing out the dinghy -  
Dave Cambourne with son Trevor*

The whole day was dogged by numerous but small-time consuming problems, such as crossed wires and ropes at the mast head, why wouldn't the bloody gaff pole go to the top of the mast? What the hell was it jamming on? Blind Freddy could have seen what was jamming the rudder on the double kayak, but it took the efforts of three people to locate the problem and fix it.

But, despite the glitches, we had a good day of sailing and kayaking for beginners, excellent weather with the lake almost to ourselves.

Thanks to all - Dave, Trevor, Fernando, Sue, Serene & Eric. Oh, by the way, I was so tired I forgot to collect the \$5 canoeing fee so expect a phone call from me soon!

**Next ANB committee meeting  
Tuesday 12 April 2011 at 6:30pm**

***All members are welcome ... Come along and have your say***

**SEE DETAILS IN YOUR CURRENT PROGRAMME**

**DEADLINE FOR**

**NEXT ISSUE**

**1 May 2011**

**SEND YOUR  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
jcsteven@unwired.com.au**

**Pictures submitted :  
300DPI resolution preferred  
to achieve good reproduction  
quality and photos should  
be separate files from  
the story text.**

**Photo prints are also acceptable  
and will be returned to members.**

## 2 FULL PACK WALKS

### Light to Light Ben Boyd National Park

31 Dec 2010 to 2 Jan 2011

Grade 2

Leader: Liam Heery

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I had tried to do this walk last year but because of bad weather had to put it off. So with a good weather forecast and also a promise of reliable water, it was great to have seven other people, including John and Jacqui Hickson from the Bush Club join me for what was to prove the best tonic to see in the New Year.

Our first night was spent in the Fountain caravan park in Eden, which was very well set up and only a short walk to the ocean. Dinner and a get-together meeting was held at the pub in Eden, where we discussed the plan for the next three days.

Next morning we set off at 8:30am for a short car shuffle before reaching Green Cape Lighthouse where we commenced the walk.

The first day was one of the longest, but at only 12.5kms not too strenuous. Walking was very pleasant as we followed the coastline and crossed numerous beaches, including Bittangabee Bay where there is a drive-in campsite. It was also where we could pick up good fresh water before continuing on to Hegartys Bay.

At Hegartys Bay we stopped for our first night at a very pretty and well laid out bush camp. As it was New Years Eve, we also celebrated bringing in the new year. John and Jacqui got their pick of the camp sites with their tent door opening onto ocean views above the Bay.

Next morning we had a leisurely breakfast in the knowledge that we only had to cover 8kms to our next campsite. On the way we passed through another car access camp site at Saltwater Creek. Here we met some of the campers, one of

whom had been coming to the same spot for 15 years!! We passed up on the campsite beach for a more private one a little further on, where we spent the next hour or so resting, eating lunch and swimming.

From here it was only a short walk to our final campsite at



*The Old and New Green Cape  
Lighthouses - photo Fiona Bachmann*

Mowarry Point. The campsite is beside a creek (with water) but has only a rocky shore-line, so swimming was out of the question. We attempted to walk to the actual point at Mowarry but got fed up bush bashing and retreated to the campsite where we set up a fire for the night on the shore-line, the mozzies having driven us out of the campsite!

Our final day we set out a little earlier as some of us were driving back to Sydney that night and we also had a car shuffle to complete. The last day's walk was 10km, passing Leather Jacket Bay about half way which has another very pretty camp site, but may also be home to swarms of sand flies!

We finally reached Ben Boyd Tower and the end of the walk. The drivers headed off and it wasn't long before we were all off in separate directions. We stayed on for a few extra days and climbed Pigeon House Mountain on the way home.

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### Mountain Lagoon to Colo Wollemi National Park

8 to 9 January 2011

Grade 3 - 5+

Leader: Liam Heery

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This walk was one I had contemplated after doing a few walks in the area. I wanted to join up the T3 track with the Mailes Ridge track and camp overnight in the beautiful Meroo camping ground.

The walk in from Mountain Lagoon was relatively easy and we made good time, although the humidity was beginning to build by the second.

By the time we reached the Colo where we stopped for lunch we were all so saturated that it may as well have been raining! The Colo was also at the highest level I had ever seen and the rapids were raging torrents.

As we made our way along the bank, heading for Meroo, we quickly realized that there were no longer any tracks and we

were forced to bush bash up the bank. The river itself was too strong and high to walk in. It wasn't long before we realized that our progress was too slow, and that we may have to camp at the Mt Townsend spur, rather than making it all of the way to Meroo.

By 3pm we had only covered about 2km since lunch time, only half way to the Spur, and the going was getting harder with each step.

An executive decision had to be made and I chose to return to the end of the T3 to camp overnight, and to leave the intended walk for another day when the Colo would be more manageable.

We got back to the T3 by about 5pm and set up camp on the sandy shore, which made for very pleasant camping, but for the dreams of flash flooding sweeping us away during the night.

Next morning we took our time and retraced our steps along the T3 to Mountain Lagoon. On the way we passed a posse of Sydney Bush Walkers (17 of them) on their way down the T3 and doing a return via Tootie Creek...what an idea for another walk!!

Thanks to Jacqui, Bob and Alison for persevering and giving it a go.

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# FULL PACK WALK

## Govetts Leap to Blue Gum Forest

### Blue Mountains National Park

15 - 16 January 2011

Grade 3

Leader: Liam Heery

Despite the weather I had 5 other takers for this walk, which turned out to be fine and dry and also one of the most visually spectacular walks I have done in the Blue Mountains.

We had a late start and assembled at Govetts Leap Lookout, where we met a couple returning from where we were heading, who were drenched head to toe and told us they had to wade across 3 creeks.

With trepidation we headed to Evans Lookout and then the rock face just above the horse track where we had lunch.

After lunch it was then down the horse track which is rather overgrown but manageable. It is reasonably steep but a great way to access the valley without any other "tourists" around.

Not long after we reached Junction Rock and the "raging" Govetts Brook. Without any difficulty we crossed the creek and wondered at how the people we met earlier had gotten so wet...there was nothing to wade!

It wasn't long before we reached Acacia Flat and picked out a suitable campsite. On the way through Bob and Rosetta kindly picked up two large containers of water for communal use at a nearby clean creek.

After tents were set it was then time to cool off in the fast flowing creek not far from the campsite. A welcome swim/splash/wade was had by all of us.

We then took out the Scrabble and commenced a game, but it wasn't long before hungry tummies demanded to be fed and the Scrabble was set aside while dinner was made.

Anton and Hester showed their experience with an easily prepared, compact and light dinner and, as usual in these circumstances, information was shared on the best way to lighten one's pack.

Next day we psyched ourselves up for the climb out via Perrys Lookdown. The day cleared and we had brilliant sunshine. Rosetta was doing very well on her first full pack walk and received an added boost of energy for the climb when she came upon a brown snake close to the track.

We all reached the top and headed over to Anvil Rock for lunch, where we enjoyed spectacular views of the Grose Valley and over to Perrys Lookdown. Far down in the valley floor we could see and hear the Grose River in full flight.

After lunch we had a few kilometres of fire trail over to Pulpit Rock and then the cliff top walk back to Govetts Leap where we had started from.

Thanks to Bob, Alison, Hester, Anton and Rosetta for another great weekend in the bush.



*In the Blue Gum Forest - Liam, Rosetta, Alison, Hester, Bob  
photo taken by Anton McLachlan*



*Great campsite - photo Bob Seibrigh*



*Mealtime - photo Rosetta Lai*

**Check out this issue on our club's Yahoo Groups site - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/anbwalkers>**

**to view the colour edition of Keeping Track plus extra pages of great photos**

**Just click on FILES → CLUB NOTICES**



# WALK

## Five bushwalkers, four creek crossings, three food stops, two cave shelters, one swimming break

16 January 2011

Grade 5

Leader: Charles Bowden

At 9:15am, a small group set off on this arduous but scenic walk, beginning with Jack Evans Track down to Erskine Creek, then upstream from there. It was a hot and humid day and water levels were 0.5-1 metre higher than normal. The usual crossing point where Jack Evans Track meets the creek was underwater with a deep and fast current so I opted to stay on the eastern bank and try our luck a bit further on.

Nothing too promising came up during the first kilometre although we did spot a group camping on the other side who indicated that they had crossed at some unspecified point now behind us. Before the first bend, however, we found a spot that looked negotiable. I ventured across the first couple of boulders to check it out: kaploosh (big splash)! I was now checking it out from the waist down: at least the water was a lovely temperature.

Leaving my four companions to make a more considered and less spectacular crossing, I waded to the other shore and promptly announced it was time for morning tea. We all took the opportunity to squeeze water out of various items of clothing before continuing.

The next couple of kilometres were quite strenuous. The water level meant we had to take a more inland route at times with a lot of scrub bashing and rock hopping to occupy us. We made it to the confluence with Monkey Ropes Creek just after midday: it had taken us about 2.5 hours to cover the first three kilometres along the creek.



*Junction of Erskine & Monkey Ropes Creeks - photo Charles Bowden*

We had another 2 kilometres to go before reaching Dadders Cave where I had planned to stop for lunch and a swim. After some discussion, we decided to proceed with this plan even though it would mean a late lunch. The next kilometre consisted of the

most rugged terrain so far and it was frustrating to look across at the other side where long bare flat rock ledges offered much easier walking. We eventually found a suitable crossing point, the only dry one for the day and then made much faster progress, reaching Dadders Cave just after 1:30pm.

The cave is set well back from the shore and up a steep slope. It was also deep in shade and refreshingly cool so we decided to eat and rest in order to recover instead of going swimming at Blands Pool, a further 500 metres upstream. The cave had the usual signs of regular occupation: tinned food on a ledge, stone circle fireplace, cooking implements and a stack of firewood. There was no sign of the visitor's book that I remembered from a previous visit which was disappointing.

After recuperating, we set off back downstream, taking a more inland

route, and had barely got underway when we stumbled across another smaller cave, also containing food, fireplace, utensils and wood – and the Dadders Cave visitor's book!



*Dadder Cave group - photo Charles Bowden*

So now I'm confused as to which is the real Dadders Cave. Both are overhanging shelters although the one we had lunch in was far larger with better cover, set deep into the cliff with a ramp at one end. As they are very close, within 100 metres of each other, it could well be that the book has been transferred between them.



*Dadders Cave - photo Shane Barrie*

I expressed my confusion in the visitor's book before setting off along the broad rock ledges that had beguiled us on the way up. Within sight of the Monkey Ropes Creek junction we encountered another water obstacle, this time to the base of the cliff.



*Crossing Erskine Creek - photo Alex Cuestas*

While I was debating a route over the cliff, Alex sensibly found a better alternative and waded across Erskine Creek to prove it. We all dutifully followed, Alex and Shane hauling their 100kg walk leader (pack included) up the ledge on the far side.

Arriving at the junction, we stopped for afternoon tea and a wonderfully relaxing and refreshing swim (at last) before tackling the steep climb to Pisgah Rock. The track was quite overgrown at the start, another indication of the increased rainfall in the area. Most signs on the rock faces had also faded considerably making it difficult at times to locate the correct route. However we made it to the top without mishap, scrambling adroitly up the tricky exposed ledges to reach the Pisgah Rock summit at about 5:00pm.

After admiring the view across Erskine Creek, we headed along the broad firetrail back to our cars before exiting the park 30 minutes before closing time and then a welcome recovery at the Lapstone pub.

Many thanks to Shane, Alex, Rajiv and Kobe for expending a lot of energy but retaining good spirits right to the end of a memorable day. There is now one less on my list of "unfinished business" walks.



# SNORKELLING

## Jibbon Beach

29 January 2011

Grade 2

Organiser: Charles Bowden

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This is a new snorkelling location that we had not visited before although I have walked around Jibbon Head (Port Hacking Point) on several occasions. Six snorkellers turned up at the ferry wharf at Cronulla for the short scenic crossing to Bundeena. Lots of free unlimited parking spaces in the street behind Cronulla railway station minimised the distance and strain of carrying beach gear to the ferry.

The day started with quite overcast conditions but the forecast had promised that this would dissipate in the afternoon and we were pleased to see patches of blue sky emerging as the 10:30am ferry set off.

After landing at Bundeena, we walked through the town's backstreets to Jibbon Beach, a broad sandy crescent. Plenty of weekend boaties had anchored in the centre of the shallow but sheltered bay but our chosen location at the far end of the beach, next to Jibbon Head, was uncrowded and offered some shady spots.

Donning our gear we all hit the water which was a lovely 22-23°C, an ideal temperature. Thanks to the sheltering bulk of Jibbon Head, the beach is protected from ocean swells and



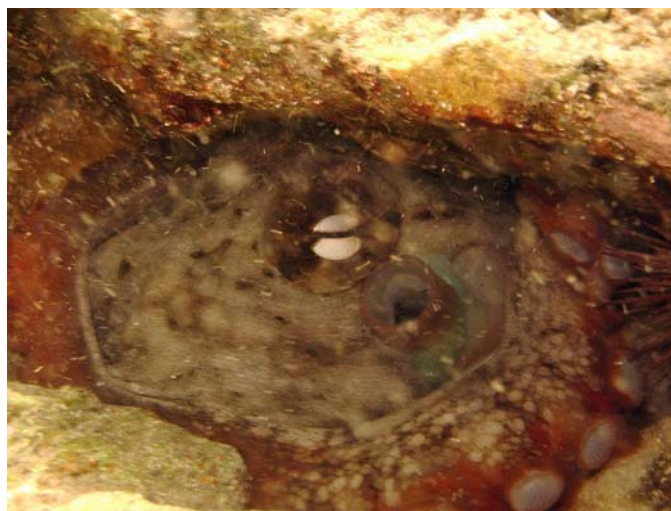
Donning our gear - photo Jan Steven

wind so that the water was also beautifully calm and clear.

My first significant find of the day was a small orange-hued wobbegong shark, sheltering under a ledge. Unfortunately the mad scramble to view the creature and the resulting turbulence prompted it to disappear totally out of sight.

After cautioning everyone to take more care and practise a less energetic technique, the next find was a large octopus. It too was sheltering under a ledge but its distinctive cowrie-like eye gave it away. Its tentacles started to writhe when we (!) got too close but otherwise it remained where it was.

We so enjoyed the conditions that almost without realising it we had swum halfway around the flat sandstone ledges extending out from Jibbon Head and found ourselves being gently buffeted by the southern swells entering Port Hacking.

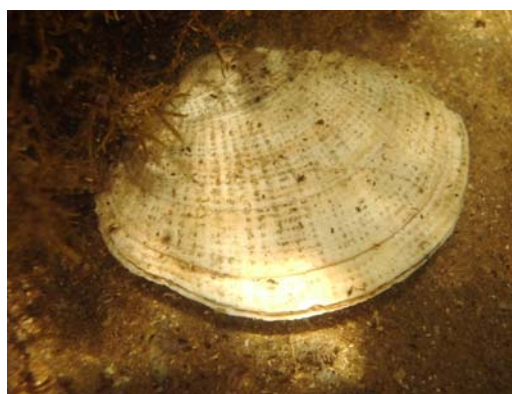


Octopus eye

Reversing direction, I found another smaller octopus, sheltering in one end of a long narrow piece of water pipe, the other end being effectively stoppered by a sea urchin. This octopus was much shyer and disappeared into the darkness of the pipe whenever we tried to get a better look.

Everyone excitedly chattered during the lunch break about what each had seen. The ledges teemed with a range of fish life as well as the shallow sandy patches, with goatfish, bream, luderick, morwong and other typical species all in evidence. Annette described what seemed to be a nudibranch, one of my favourite marine denizens, so after lunch I slipped back in the water to check out the area where it was seen.

I soon found not one but several examples of the Rose Petal Bubble nudibranch (*Hydatina physis*), a species I had never before seen with a distinctive striated cream bubble shell and a pink & blue mantle. They are unusual in that they retain a vestigial shell on top of their mantle, a sign of their original snail origins perhaps. Sarah soon found another species, a colourful orange Dorid, two of which were mating and then I found a third species, the relatively common brown and white *Aphelodoris Varia*, close by. Distinctive white ribbonlike egg sacs were scattered around a broad sandy mound, no deeper than one metre, where all these nudibranchs were congregating. It was evidently a preferred breeding venue.



White bivalve.

We had decided to leave on the 4:00pm ferry so reluctantly we left the beach, still excited about all the marine life we had seen. Although a speculative foray initially,

Jibbon Beach will now be added to my list of preferred snorkelling destinations.

Thank you to Jan, Karin, Sarah, Annette and Louise for venturing out and exploring this new location with me.

## Welcome to 14 New Members

**Megan Thorpe**  
**Fofi Kanarakis**  
**Douglas Barthram**  
**Inka Barthram**  
**Allan Ng**  
**Rajiv Karnik**  
**Janet King**  
**Adrian King**  
**Andrew Allen**  
**Yusuf Hussain**  
**Rose Manousiridis**  
**Julian Radom**  
**Rosa Carpio**  
**Ann Goeth**



**See you  
in the bush**



**Change of Details**  
**Don't forget to notify  
Treasurer Helen Hindin  
of any of the following -**

- change in address,
- email address,
- phone numbers.

**Phone: 02 9331 1921 or  
email us at -  
anbcomm@hotmail.com**

## Justice and Police Museum and Botanic Gardens walk

5 February 2011

Grade 1

Leader: Julie Armstrong

The Justice and Police Museum proved popular with club members on our visit. Especially popular was the air conditioning. My walk was on the hottest day of the year - a sweltering 43 degrees in the CBD, hotter than the 41 degrees of the far western City of Penrith! There was the usual exhibit plus two other exhibits. One was 'Sin City' featuring crime in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: think of Abe Saffron, Lennie Macpherson, (Sir) Robert Askin et al.

The other exhibit was superb black and white photographs by crime photographer Walter Tuchin. All were well worth the \$8 admission. Karin enjoyed the Museum so much she caught us up later at the Botanic Gardens.

Unfortunately we couldn't stay in the airconditioning all day so we set off up the hill in the heat to the Botanic Gardens and managed to find a shady spot overlooking the Rose Garden to eat our lunch.

Then it was on to the Kiosk for cool drinks or ice cream. We passed the Lotus Garden



Pond and tried searching for eels in the central pond. Sharyn and Peter spotted a really ugly brute and there were plenty of fish there as well.

Trying to get out of the heat we gathered in the shade of a flowering frangipani where we took group photos and applied sun

cream. We moved on to the Bottle Tree which has now been fenced off to discourage children climbing on the lower branches. Scott admitted to being one of those children in his younger days.

We came across a fantastic photographic exhibition being held in the Palm House. The photos were taken over a two-year period at Lake Eyre, empty and full. The photographer was generous and gave all of us a cup of iced water.

With directions from another visitor to the Gardens I managed to find the Sand Paper Tree from which the aboriginal women used the leaves to remove hair from their legs and the early settlers used as sand paper.

Sharyn spotted an Ibis nest up in the trees where an Ibis was busy feeding her chicks. In the next tree taking shelter from the sun, a Kookaburra was perched on a branch, mouth wide open and wings out trying to catch a breeze which was non-existent. We all agreed then that we had had enough of the heat and went our separate ways.



*photos Jan Steven*

Thanks for the good company despite the heat! Peter, Sharyn, Jan, Paul, Karin, Scott, Kobe and William.

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



# PHOTO ALBUM

## Mount Townsend Traverse

7 November 2010 photos - Charles Bowden



*Corymbia gummifera* - red bloodwood



*Colo River and Tootie Creek*



*Mt Townsend Ridge and track*



*Colo River and Mailes Ridge*



*Enjoying the view at lunch*



*Leptospermum polygalifolium* - tea-tree



**The ANB Christmas BBQ/picnic  
Rhodes Park**      18 December 2010



*Yuko and Fiona having a chat*

*Some of the  
Hula hoop  
Champs*



*Games for the more energetic*

**Ben Boyd National Park**

31 Dec 2010 to 2 Jan 2011

*Photo - Fiona Bachmann*





# Erskine Lookout to Pisgah Rock

16 January 2011



*Pisgah Ridge photo - Charles Bowden*



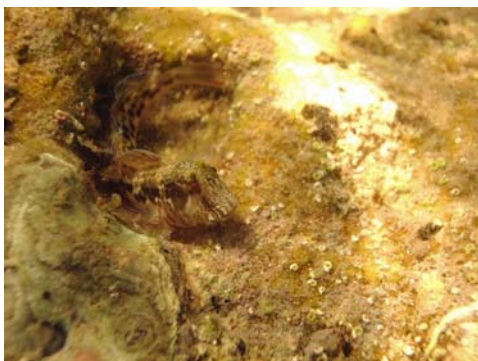
*Erskine Creek photo - Shane Barrie*

## Jibbon Beach

29 January 2011



*Silver bream*



*Horned Blenny*

photos - Charles Bowden



*Sarah donning wet-suit*



*Jibbon Beach photos - Jan Steven*



# Justice and Police Museum and Botanic Gardens walk

5 February 2011 - 43 degrees



*Sun cream application at 'The Monument'*

photos - Jan Steven



*Frangipani*



*City skyline view*