



YHA Bushwalking "Adopts" Cope Hut

The YHA Bushwalking club has been appointed caretaker of Cope Hut (pictured) on the Bogong High Plains. Built in 1929 and classified by the National Trust, Cope Hut is attractively situated a short distance from the Bogong High Plains road. In winter it is only accessible as a 10km ski from Falls Creek, however from October to May 2WD vehicles can be driven to within a few hundred metres. At present it is structurally sound and pleasant to stay in but could do with a little smartening up.

Under the overall control of Parks Victoria and the Victorian High Country Huts Association, responsibility for most of the huts not privately owned is assigned to a club or community group. The caretaker is responsible for regularly inspecting the condition of the hut and undertaking any maintenance work deemed necessary (and subject to approval by the Huts Assoc) for its upkeep.

Our intention is to organise one or two work parties annually, aiming to have the hut looking almost perfect within the next few years. An inspection will be carried out as part of the Falls Creek Easter weekend, followed by the first working party May 15-16th and another next summer. Volunteers are welcome – no bushwalking experience is necessary, basic trade or handyman skills (eg carpentry) are of more value. If you are interested, please contact Neil (8790 3519) or Simon (9867 6902).



Easter at Falls Creek

This Easter (April 9-12), come and explore the Bogong High Plains. It's been a while since this area was on the YHA programme, however most areas have now been reopened following a year of recovery from 2003's bushfires. Most of the high plains are now covered in a lush green carpet thanks to the absence of cattle, although some (not many) areas where the fire was very intense will need several years before they are fully revegetated.

Accommodation will be at one of the Falls Creek ski lodges, with a variety of day walk options taking in the historic huts (including Cope Hut) and scenic viewpoints of the area. Cost is \$99/person (self-catered), with a \$10 discount for those paying in full before the end of March.

Medium-grade overnight walks will also be available. Depending on demand, an introductory one-night camping option will be offered; stay in the lodge for three nights, but undertake a fairly easy overnight walk on whichever of the days is forecast to have the best weather.

An information night will be held at Clubnight March 22nd, where full details of the planned walks will be available, otherwise for more information, contact David 9380 8126.

New Zealand Walk 2003-2004

Seven intrepid walkers met in Queenstown New Zealand on Boxing day ready to take on the four day Kepler track walk followed by perhaps the most remote of all New Zealand treks, the rugged and challenging Dusky Track. After a pizza and celebratory drinks at a lakefront Irish Bar, next morning we got up early for our bus to Te Anau and the start of the Kepler Track. The weather looked reasonable but there were dark clouds on the horizon.

The first part of the walk was through a picturesque fern forest (leech-free!) on a very well cut and benched track. The track followed the lakeshore before we encountered the climb. We had to climb about 900m and unfortunately at this stage it started raining. On the way up we encountered a number of walkers who had given up and were going back. They weren't prepared, wearing T-shirts under thin plastic ponchos! (cont'd page 3)

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Club chairman Simon Walliss wades part of the Dusky Track, NZ (see main story)

YHA BUSHWALKING COMMITTEE 2003/04

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Secretary Jean Braakhuis
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Walks Sec. David Sisson
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CONTRIBUTIONS TO YETI

Contributions to YETI are welcome subject to editorial approval. You may send news, articles, gossip, letters etc relating to bushwalking to YETI, GPO Box 25 Melbourne 3001, or via e-mail to yhabush@bigpond.com (Stephen Smith). If you do not have the time to write, please contact Stephen with details of your contribution.

YETI ONLINE

"Yeti" has its own website www.vicnet.net.au/~yhayeti containing an online version of the latest issue as well as archived articles from past editions. The web versions are well worth visiting, as they often include additional photographs not able to be included in the print version for reasons of space, as well as superior reproduction.

TRIP LEADERS

If you wish to have a brief description of your upcoming trip printed here in YETI please contact the editor with the details.

YHA ACTIVITIES CLUBNIGHT

Is held on Monday nights at the YWCA building, 489 Elizabeth Street in the city, from 8pm to approx. 9:30pm. Special events start at 8.15pm sharp, everybody welcome.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

If you recognise an article in this newsletter it is probably because it has been plagiarised from another source. This is the only way we can bring you this newsletter. YETI makes no apology for any offence caused.

Chairman's Report

It has been nine months since the last Yeti and the club has been going strong. Thank you Stephen for taking on the YETI editor role and getting this issue out.

Christmas functions were well attended and two extended trips were run over Christmas. Neil Warden led a successful walk in the Victorian High Country and I and six others enjoyed the spectacular scenery of New Zealand, walking the Kepler Track and the more remote and challenging Dusky Track.

In the New Year day walks have proved to as popular as ever, although weekend walks tend to attract between 6 and 12 people. Day walkers why don't you give weekend pack carrying a go? The challenge of walking further away from civilization is definitely worthwhile!

The club has now purchased a satellite phone for use on walks to remote areas where mobiles do not work. It allows us to communicate anywhere in the world. It will be an invaluable piece of safety equipment if any groups or walkers are injured or have other troubles. For example if someone has broken their leg, we can ring up and arrange an evacuation. Compare this to the use of an EPIRB which once set off will bring a search response initially and then an evacuation only after the original search team has found the group and reported back. The time saved could be crucial in saving someone's life depending on the situation. All leaders can take the phone on walks they are leading. Priority will be given to longer walks in the more remote areas when walks coincide.

The committee is thinking about producing a book on the history of the YHA Bushwalking Club. The aim would be to cover all aspects of the history of the club with perhaps chapters covering each decade of the club's existence. Other chapters would cover different aspects including the removal van, Tasmanian and NZ expedition trips, Search and Rescue and others. If you are interested in helping or have information that could be useful please contact me on 9867 6902 or simon@travelrite.com.au.

I look forward to a good Autumn of walking!

Regards,

Simon Walliss
Chairman

Annual General Meeting

The Bushwalking AGM will be held at Clubnight Monday April 5th, all walkers are encouraged to attend. This is your opportunity to have a say in how the club is run. As usual, we are looking for new committee members to replace some of the long-serving ones who are stepping down. We are particularly after more representation from the day walkers. Tasks involve staffing our clubnight desk approx once every six weeks and attending committee meetings, also every six weeks on a Tuesday night, to discuss and plan activities. If you are interested in helping, please contact Jean (9598 8619) or one of the other current committee members.

New Zealand walk (cont'd from page 1)

Paul Gottliebse was always powering ahead in the lead, Lyn and Cynthia took it at a more leisurely pace! Part of the track was lost in a landslide and we had to walk through the wreckage of wooden walkways. We made it to the exposed tops and a strong wind before the relief of eventually making it to Luxmore hut with its views of the lakes and fjords. The next day we were walking on ridgelines on the most spectacular part of the walk. We ended up crossing Luxmore pass in a blizzard! Fiordland, New Zealand - it really can snow at the height of summer! We sheltered in the huts for breaks and eventually the weather cleared, giving us views of Lake Manopouri and the spectacular mountains! At Iris Burn Hut that night, Cynthia was smitten with the charms of Ranger Mark, putting her admiration on record in the hut's log book.

The next day was just perfect with not a cloud in the sky! We had an easy day walking along the valley to Lake Manopouri Hut and then a final 12km next morning to the end of the walk back at Lake Te Anau.

For a break between walks we travelled the spectacular route to Milford Sound for some exhilarating sea kayaking in perfect conditions. One of the highlights of the trip!

New Years Eve was celebrated at The Moose Head at Te Anau and a rollicking time was had by all before an early start next day, heading off to the deep and dark Dusky Track! We met Val McKay at Tuatapere for a ride in his expedition vehicle to the remote Lake Hauroko and transfer to his speedboat. Once in we sped across this little-visited, yet dramatic lake with its mountains soaring on either side. After a forty minute ride we arrived at the start of the Dusky track, everyone excited to be in such a remote and beautiful place. Fewer than 500 people do the Dusky Track in a year compared to the thousands that do the other walks so we knew it must be a bit special! We had a long and hard walk ahead of us and made use of the late southern light numerous times on the walk. The track was a lot rougher than the Kepler, with plenty of roots, logs and other obstacles to slow us down. There are over 20 three-wire bridges on the walk, crossing roaring torrents as well as gentler streams. There were plenty of mud bogs; Stephen Smith got stuck up to his waist at one stage so you can understand how deep they were! We had to wade the Seaforth River several times up to our waists, lucky that we did this before the rivers rose next day after heavy rains. There are two ranges to cross on the Dusky Track, both with steep sections that were almost rock climbs! Roots and chains offered something to hold on to. Mt Memphis proved to be highlight for those who made it there with its glacier-like lakes and icesheets.

The whole walk was a great challenge and I am now glad to be one of the few people who have completed the legendary Dusky track! Thank you to Stephen Smith, Cynthia Bell, Lyn Crane, John Sloan, Paul Gottliebse and David Errey who participated on this never to be forgotten epic with me.

Simon Walliss

Alpine Walk "YHA Goes to Buggery"

The Christmas-New Year walk for 2003-04 revisited an old favourite – the spectacular area of the High country starting at the King river (northeast of Mansfield), climbing up to Mt Cobbler, then on to Mt Speculation, the Crosscut Saw and over to Macalister Springs - lead by the ever patient and understanding Neil Warden. Entitled "YHA Goes to Buggery" on the program - I personally found this to be a pretty apt description - it was a very testing walk/pack-carry but with great rewards. Fortunately the weather held fair for the entire six days of the trip - getting into the high thirties by the end. Fair weather, of course, afforded us excellent views across many spectacular vistas of the main range.

One recommendation for future summer walkers to this area – think seriously about some sort of flynetting - www.noflies.com.au - I have heard - is a website that tells of a flynet which is a pretty effective device. The beastly things were there in absolute plague proportions. The only incident on the trip was a sprained ankle sustained by yours truly on the fifth day.... but I managed to hobble out the sixteen kilometres of the last day at a somewhat slower rate. Many thanks to the patience of the rest of the crew.

It was with much celebration and joy that we finally immersed our unwashed (but curiously unsmelly - how could that be?) bodies in the Delatite River - eight disshevelled unshaved and uncouth YHA-ers before journeying on to Yea for a much earned pub meal.

Greg Shepherd

Farewell Wilkinson Lodge

After surviving last summer's alpine bushfires unscathed, Wilkinson Lodge in the Bogong High Plains burnt down on January 17th 2004 following a mishap with a gas stove - ironically in the presence of its caretakers. Under current Parks Victoria policy the hut is unlikely to be rebuilt, as there are several other huts nearby offering adequate refuge value.

59 Victorian huts were destroyed by last summer's bushfires. Only a few of these are likely to be given permission to be rebuilt. Two significant ones which will be allowed are Federation Hut (Mt Feathertop) and Michell Hut (Eskdale spur, Mt Bogong), as both have proven refuge value. The new versions will be smaller and more spartan than their predecessors however, with no bunks or tables and some doubt as to whether a water tank will be installed. Interestingly the \$200,000 superloo next to Federation Hut did manage to survive the inferno.

One of the controversial huts not being rebuilt is Ropers Hut on the exposed northern section of the Bogong High Plains, a key staging point en-route to Mt Bogong.

Equipment News

Daypack Survey: The Jan/Feb 2004 issue of Choice has surveyed daypacks, using both laboratory tests and a bushwalking trial. The four recommended buys were:

Deuter Aircomfort Futura 32	rrp \$175 ; best all round score but expensive
Berghaus Dart 33	rrp \$110 ; bushwalkers' favourite, but not particularly waterproof
Berghaus Freeflow II 35	rrp \$120 ;
Great Outdoors Daintree	rrp \$60 ; good value for money, let down by its waterproofing

The golden rule of try it on before you buy particularly applies for packs; what one person finds comfortable can be totally unsuitable to someone else with a different build, no matter how much strap adjustments are made. Try to load the pack up in the shop with the sort of heavy items you'd typically take bushwalking.

Detailed results can be found in the March 2004 Choice or online at www.aca.com.au

No more Sore Feet: Walking boots fitted with tiny internal combustion engine are set for production in Russia. Last year, inventor Viktor Gordejev from Ufa in the Ural Mountains announced that the boots cut the energy of walking by about 70%. When the wearer steps forward with one foot, the engines propel the other one forward. Viktor said inspiration came 30 years ago, when he was serving in the Soviet army. "I always wished my boots had engines as we had to walk miles every day. That's how I came up with the idea."

The boots will retail for about \$1500 a pair when they go on sale in Russia, with hopes they will go global. No word in if they've hit the market yet, if they have "Yeti" is interested in a review from anyone fortunate enough to have road tested a pair.

No more Sore Backs: How to walk with a heavy backpack but not have to carry it. Introducing the *Carrix*, a trolley-harness designed "specifically for bushwalking". According to its advertising blurb, the Carrix "goes everywhere you want to go without weighing you down. With less strain on your back and legs, you save energy and enjoy your walk more. When in motion the light body-harness does all the work as the hands just steady the load. On your mountain walk, uphill and downhill, the sturdy *Carrix* can efficiently carry your heavy bag, negotiate bumps and endure the most punishing treatment on rough terrain. If things get really steep, simply leave the *Carrix* strapped to your pack, remove the handles and put the pack on your back." (it's only an extra 3kg).

Made in Switzerland, more information can be found at www.carrix.ch Once again if anyone has tried one of these out, we'd be interested to hear from you; particularly keen to know how it performs in dense scrub or the bogs typical of SW Tasmania.



Stand by Your Man: Finally, as if spring-heeled boots and backpack trolleys weren't enough, this final product will truly liberate female walkers. "OnTheGo" is a revolutionary woman's stand-up urinary accessory invented by women for women. Made of polypropylene, OnTheGo is hygienic, environmentally sensitive and most importantly comes in pastel green. "OnTheGo" is small enough to tuck into a pocket and scientifically measured to completely cover the

urethra to avoid spillage. So if fear of peeing in the bush has kept you indoors, relief is now at hand. According to its advertising claims it allows women to "work on distance, accuracy and other creative urinary competitions, such as knocking leaves off trees, drawing in the snow, dousing campfires, etc.", although so as you don't get carried away, it concludes with a sobering legal disclaimer "One important fact: men and women beware and be advised: urinating in public places is illegal". If you need to know more visit www.womenstandtogo.com



The Ramblings of Steven Gough

Upholding a long and noble tradition of English eccentricity, in June 2003 Steven Gough set out to be the first man to trek the length of Britain in the buff. Finally on January 22nd 2004, in the depths of a Scottish winter, he completed his journey at John O'Groats, having experienced numerous interruptions along the way. This Yeti exclusive features extracts from his yet to be published diary.

16th June Day One!. Didn't need much time to pack, so arrived at Lands End car park bright and early for the start of my 900 mile national tour. Passing by a village near you, Steven Gough with his one-man show of the Full Monty.

17th June Bemused looks from some of the locals I met on the path. "Not be from round 'ere are you?" one asked. "No, how did you guess?" I replied. "No Cornishman would wear such a daft 'at". We all had a jolly good laugh, not too hard mind you, can't be in stitches for a while yet.

23rd June Have just about recovered from yesterday's unfortunate stumble into a nettle patch. Talk about red and swollen – arse like a baboon. Still that didn't sting half as much as the remark from some women I encountered going the other way, that they thought I was inadequately equipped.

25-30th June First of the rest days. Didn't feel tired and muscles weren't too sore, but the judge insisted I take a break.

19th July Got lost in the fog again – could be something to do with not even wearing a compass. When the mist lifted I had no idea where I was other than it seemed to be in the middle of a church garden party. When lost, the best advice is not to panic, but try and retrace your steps back to a last known reference point. The vicar was very helpful in this respect; a couple of phone calls and I was soon guided back to Wrexham gaol.

21st September Walk is proving more costly than I thought. What I've saved on laundry bills has been more than offset by legal expenses. Will need to try and get a sponsor to help out. How's this for a slogan? "If you only wear one thing on a trek, make it a Scarpa". I'm sure they'll go for that. Advertising campaign of the year – my arse!

6th November Walk taking longer than I thought as well; have only managed to cover 30 miles over the past two weeks. Corollary to Naismith's Rule: Distances take three times as long to walk in the nude. The heatwave was great while it lasted, but now it's November a freezing north wind is howling through every crack and crevasse. Must be bonkers to go starkers; why couldn't I've just been the first to do this walk dressed in a gorilla suit... or a pink satin bridal gown... or on roller blades.... Still the chances of causing offence have shrunk considerably.

24th November Another enforced rest day. Used the time to go through some of my mail – have received letters from all over the world. One from Robert in Melbourne wanted my autograph and a few hints; I think he intends becoming my antipodean counterpart – could be a franchise starting here. In return he enclosed a book of his favourite garlic recipes; may as well give some of them a try, not much else to do at the moment.

28th December Loose on the moors again, marching ever northward – the garlic chocolates seem to have given me a real energy boost. I feel as if I have an inner force, that nothing can stop me from my purpose. Even the local lads in blue seem to sense something. I thought another rest day was going to be declared, but instead they just stood back in awe as I strode past.



From Lands End to Journey's End - at last!

19th January Only a few days to go before I get to put on a pair of pants again. Not sure how I will celebrate. Have had cravings for an oversize pair of green bell-bottomed flares coupled with a brown cardigan, but having trouble deciding between a cashmere sweater or a tweed jacket to top it off. Medical advice is to take it easy however, as my dress sense has deteriorated and the body may find it difficult to cope with an onslaught of fabric after all these months of deprivation – start off with a G-string and singlet then slowly build up additional layers.

22nd January Finally made it to John O'Groats, the Orkney ferry terminal never looked so sweet. Lots of double-entendre news items referring to the frozen tip of Scotland, but who cares, it's over, time to thaw out. Big question now is what to do, where to go next. I hear some new tracks are opening soon in Victoria, Australia. If I can't be the first to walk them in Polartec & Columbia Convertables, guess it'll have to be back to bare essentials...

