



Brilliance of the Budawangs



Kings of The Castle: (l-r) David Sisson, John Sloan & Simon Walliss survey the view from a Budawangs highlight

Few Victorian bushwalkers have made it to the Budawangs, between Canberra and the NSW coast, and some of the descriptions we'd heard about them - "very dry", "difficult to get into", "lots of scrub-bashing" - from those who had been there (or heard about them from someone else) weren't exactly enticing. And yet there must have been some allure to make four of us travel over 800km to get there.

This year's Melbourne Cup day trip was the first YHA expedition to the Budawangs for several years, none of us having been there before. Given the effort required to get there, we were hoping it would be worth it and that the weekend wouldn't be ruined by bad weather or worse still, turn out to be an anticlimax that would have made a Sunday walk through the Brisbane ranges seem more exciting. It turned out to be tough at times, yet very rewarding and unanimously agreed as the highlight of the year's walking.

The start of the walk at Wog Wog carpark, half an hour from Braidwood on the NSW southern tablelands was inauspicious; flat, dry gravelly soil, sparse vegetation. To the north were some low hills, but they seemed a long way away. Within a couple of hours the landscape had changed noticeably, passing through thickening forest, with the occasional large granite outcrop of the sort bushrangers used to favour as a hideout. It was hillier, but still not interesting enough to have come all this way.

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Chairman's Report

As we move towards the end of the year I would to thank everyone for their involvement during 2004. This has been a very successful year with a very full program. The club has recruited a number of enthusiastic new walkers who have been regularly walking on Saturdays and Sundays. Special thanks to new leaders who have done their first walk in Spring: Paul Gottliebsen, Chris Marney and Ivan Zuvela.

Looking forward to 2005 we have an exciting program worked out thanks to walks secretary David Sisson. There will be an interesting list of speakers and presentations and speakers at clubnight, so try and come along to some of these. Also think about some of the social events. Thinking to the future, the AGM is still a while away in April but please consider helping out the club by joining the committee. If you are interested in discussing being on the committee, please do not hesitate in contacting me on email sawalliss@yahoo.com.au or tel 9867 6902.

I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Regards
Simon Walliss,
Chairman

YHA BUSHWALKING COMMITTEE 2004/05

Chairman	Simon Walliss
Secretary	Greg Shepherd
Treasurer	Robert Yuen
Walks Sec.	David Sisson
Social Sec.	Cynthia Bell
S & R	Ken Sussex
Webmaster	Andrew Brown
Newsletter	Stephen Smith
General	Ron Bell
	Stuart Hanham
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CONTRIBUTIONS TO YETI

These articles don't write themselves y' know, nor are they all plagiarised from the internet (well some of them aren't anyway). If you've enjoyed yourself on one or two YHA trips or have some thoughts about bushwalking which you'd like to share, then here's your opportunity to do so. Find a spare moment, jot them down then email them to yhabush@bigpond.com. Deadline for the next issue is February 20th 2005.

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.

YETI THANKS

The following contributors to this issue:

Kim Atkinson
Richard Miller
Dzung Nguyen
Greg Shepherd
David Sisson
Simon Walliss

CSI: Grampians

Investigations are continuing into a daring daylight robbery near the summit of Mt Difficult. A party of campers returned after admiring the views from this popular Grampians summit to find a scene of total devastation. Their food had been raided from their packs and strewn across the campsite; all that remained of five muesli bars were torn wrappers, whilst two bread rolls had gone missing and a satchel of tuna ripped open. A carton of milk was almost intact, with just a peckful missing, indicating the culprit had either been disturbed in the act or didn't like long-life milk. Later on, while the original crime scene was still being examined, a block of cheese was stolen from a bag suspended from a branch in another part of the campsite. Notably ignored, although also strewn on the ground were a Snickers bar, banana, apple and a packet of macaroni cheese.



Fortunately no-one went hungry (in the history of civilisation, no-one has ever gone hungry on a weekend bushwalk), however one of the victims was forced to eat a tin of spam for dinner instead.

A photofit (left) has been issued of a key suspect seen lurking around the campsite by a number of witnesses. In the meantime, general advice for all future campers is to secure all food inside a zipped and fastened pack if you aren't in attendance.

Tips for Better Bushwalking

#28 Make Sure Your Pack Fits Your Back

Quality backpacks contain two internal staves, made out of a flexible yet reasonably rigid material such as aluminium. It is important that these be of the correct length and contoured so as to exactly match the shape of your back. If you are experiencing discomfort after carrying a moderate load in your pack, the chances are it is either an incorrect frame-size or the shaping of the staves that is the cause of the problem; adjusting chest, shoulder and hip straps will have little effect unless the fundamental fitting is correct to begin with. Correctly fitted, 80% of the pack's weight should be transferred to your lower pack.

The best time to contour the staves is at the time of purchase; any good outdoor shop should have the experience and willingness to do this. Otherwise get a friend to help; remove the staves from the pack, place the bottom against the base of the spine, bend to an S-shape which fits exactly against your back when standing upright.

Second Alpine Christmas Walk

Greg Shepherd will be leading a three-day walk to the Victorian High Country over the Christmas - New Year break as a shorter alternative to the Kiandra to Canberra walk (described in Yeti #18). The walk takes in some lovely parts of the Victorian Alps, with five high peaks to climb - Mt Clear, the King Billys (No's 1 & 2), Mt Lovick, Mt Eadley Stoney and the Bluff together with a bit of off track rambling.

The trip is an excellent introduction to a more extended overnight pack carry for those who have been contemplating moving up a notch in their bushwalking experience. It is graded "Medium" - with two fairly tough days followed by a slightly easier third day. Total walking distance is 41 kms, from a starting point approx 75 kms past Mansfield.

Day 1 (December 27th) starts with a fairly solid grunt uphill, gaining approx 850 metres in overall elevation to the campsite. The afternoon is spent bagging the Mt Clear peak as a side-trip without packs.

The Alpine walking track is joined on the second day, enroute to the King Billy peaks - an 8 km morning walk, promising great views if the weather is clear. The afternoon trek passes the aptly named Picture Point, then joins a 4WD track to Lovick's hut, Mt Lovick and onto a campsite in the vicinity of Bluff Hut.

From Bluff Hut on the final day, the route heads over the open moors of Mt Eadley Stoney, climbing gradually along the crest of the escarpment to the peak of the Bluff (1725 metres), with plenty more good views along the way. The final section is a descent from the Bluff via Jamieson Spur to the Jamieson River.

Bookings for the trip can either be made at Clubnight (last one for the year is Dec 13th) or contact Greg directly on 0411 961 338 / email: greg@appleseed.com.au

New Walkie Talkies

YHA Bushwalking has purchased a new pair of UHF radios for use on day walks. The new model (Uniden UH041P) is a lot smaller (and lighter) than the house-bricks purchased five years ago, with longer (~36 hours) battery life, making them much more convenient to use.

They are available for use on any club walk, preference being given to Sunday walks where they can be invaluable in mustering 30-40 walkers. Leaders wishing to collect them for their trip should either attend the Clubnight immediately beforehand or contact Ron Bell to arrange an alternate pickup.



Weed Alert: Orange Hawkweed

Anyone visiting the High Country, particularly the Bogong High Plains area, is asked to be on the lookout for Orange Hawkweed. Declared a noxious weed, it is a threat to the sensitive alpine ecosystem, particularly during the critical regeneration following the 2003 bushfires, displacing native plants between the tussock grasses then eventually the tussocks themselves.

Growing up to 400mm high and flowering between November and March, distinguishing features are:

- ❖ Bright orange daisy-type flowers, 10-20mm in diameter, with square-ended petals and growing in clusters of 5-30 flower heads.
- ❖ Stems, 100-150mm long, containing milky sap and covered in short, stiff hairs.
- ❖ Leaves, dark-green on the upper surface and light-green underneath, forming rosettes close to the ground.



Already a major problem in New Zealand and Tasmania, introduction to mainland Australia has been relatively recent, however several populations have been discovered around Falls Creek, Mt Hotham and Mt Buller, as well as more numerous colonies in lower-altitude woodland.

Any suspected sightings (in Victoria) should be reported to the Department of Sustainability and Environment (13 6186). Don't simply uproot the plant and leave it at that, as they can easily regrow from fragments of roots or runners. Seeds can also be readily dispersed through sticking to clothing or boots (another reason to clean them thoroughly after a walk).

High Country Almost Fully Reopened

Since last summer, full access is available to almost all of the high country tracks affected by the 2003 bushfires have now been reopened (notable exceptions are Ropers Lookout, and camping at Mt MacLeod on the Buffalo plateau). One campsite that's finally reopened is Dibbins Hut, situated on a grassy meadow by the Cobungra River between Mt Hotham and the Bogong High plains. A weekend walk is planned there in January, see the summer programme for dates.

In Profile - Kim Atkinson...

How long have you been walking with YHA? 12 years

What first attracted you to the club? The hunt for adventure of any sort – on a budget

Your favourite walk? Kiandra to Kosciuskzo; really good weather, fantastic scenery, the highlight being camping on the summit of Mt Townsend. In second place would be Neil Warden's walk last Christmas, Mts Howitt to Cobbler – very relaxed, the easiest extended walk I've done, in camp most days by 2-3 pm leaving plenty of time to relax.



Kim doing what she likes best – relaxing after a hard walk

Most memorable walk? Snowy River (Easter 1995), or as I think of it the “Snake and Giant Vegetables” walk.

This character Ivan lived off nothing but vegetables for the duration of the walk. Each day he'd pull out a giant vegetable from his back – a cucumber, eggplant, sweet potato and turnip are the ones I can remember – which he'd then eat raw for his meal. The exception was the sweet potato which he dunked in a Trangia of boiling water for a few minutes then fed to a girl who'd been struggling a bit, as it was her first walk. A few minutes later she puked it all up; as far as I know that was her last walk as well.

The other incident also involved Ivan burning off surplus energy by climbing a cliff at the river's edge. Suddenly a cry of “oh shit!”, at the same time his hand recoiled from a ledge, was followed by a black snake flying through the air, over his head down into the river where others in the group were swimming. Which reminds me of the other indelible image from that trip of Colin Cody togged up in his speedos, goggles and shower cap having a dip in the Snowy.

And a trip from hell? Johnny's Top (Alpine Walking Tk Deadhorse Gap- Benambra). I'd sat down, realised I was right on top of an ants nest – they'd started biting – but was so tired I couldn't summon the energy to move until someone had handed me some food (or a new pair of feet).

Most embarrassing moment? Five of us in a police car after rescuing David Ford (who'd dislocated his shoulder on the Howitt-Baw Baw walk, Christmas 2001). There was a sudden awareness that none of us had had a bath for several days, and an attempted joke about someone's

Gatorade powder being cocaine didn't endear us to the escorting officers either. To cap it off was having to admit that just about every person we passed along the road – Stephen Lake jumping up and down and waving his arms like a madman then Neil Warden with his broken-down car a few kilometres later – was, yes, also part of our group.

An honorable mention for most embarrassing (certainly a winner for most bizarre) would have to be the time on a Christmas trip when I went to sit on a log, rushed up to it before realising that it was in fact a dead horse with its legs cut off.

What unfulfilled destination would you most like to get get to? The Razor-Viking; This trip is jinxed, with many people in the club having several attempts and still not getting there. I've only been on one failed expedition so far, last year when heavy snowfalls forced the original walk to be abandoned – in November!

Advice for new walkers? Do as much as you can and expect anything.

... and Dzung Nguyen

How long have you been walking with YHA? Long enough! I still remember my first walk though, a day trip to Cape Schanck.

What first attracted you to the club? My ex-boyfriend introduced me to it, then left me here.

Favourite walk?

Difficult to pick just one, but in general the Alpine walks

And a trip from hell?

Lake Tali Karng, on the way out via the “17 crossings” route the river level was unusually high and I almost floated away.



Embarrassing moment? Howitt-Baw Baw, Christmas 2001, where myself and two others struggled to keep pace and were forced to leave half-way through.

Strangest thing you've seen? Two snakes mating on a tree at a campsite on one of Mark Beyer's extended Christmas - New Year Alpine track trips.

Most unusual thing eaten on a walk? Vietnamese asparagus soup, which I also cooked for others on the Larapinta Trail trip (June 2000). That trip also introduced me to Baileys, which I've taken a bit on other walks since!!

Destination you'd most like to get get to? In Australia, the Eastern Arthurs (Tasmania). Worldwide, the Rocky Mountains.

Brilliance of the Budawangs (from p1)

Another hour later, as the very distinctive Pigeonhouse mountain came into view, along with the first glimpses of where we would end up over the next couple of days we knew straight away it was all worth it.

Simon's flight had been delayed getting into Canberra that morning, consequently it wasn't until after lunch that we actually began walking. There was only 11km to walk that day however, and the late start proved a bonus as it meant the cliffs, peaks and buttresses that appeared before us were illuminated by golden late afternoon light. We spent so much time taking photographs that it was very close to sunset by the time we reached the campsite.

The Budawangs can be hot and dry, but during our trip in mid-spring nearly all the creeks were running. Recent rains meant there were still waterfalls off the cliff faces and, to cap it all, a glorious display of wildflowers rivalling that of the Grampians.

The plan for the second day was to walk about 13km to the next campsite and then climb "The Castle", however our pace ended up much slower than estimated, taking nearly 8 hours to reach the campsite, too late for an afternoon ascent. The first day's walk had been fairly easygoing, but the scrub then began getting thicker and the tracks narrower. Not as narrow as SW Tasmania, but they got to the stage where a Budawang kilometre took as long as twice the distance on the more open tracks encountered in Victorian national parks. The terrain grew rockier, with time lost following false trails or working out how to get around some of the rocks. Shortly after lunch we entered Monolith Valley, arguably the heart of the Budawangs, a protected region from which all camping is banned. Peaks named Shrouded Gods or Seven Gods mountain were evocative enough, however even without these it was easy to imagine we were in Indiana Jones territory. Descending dark narrow chasms, fern laden rock slabs on either side we eventually reached an old wooden bridge with a signpost to indicate we weren't lost.

Day three was an early start to conquer the Castle. This was the Lost World in miniature, a plateau rising a few hundred metres about the surrounding forest, about 1km in length with sheer cliffs on all sides. It wasn't climbed until 1948, later than Federation Peak, a testament to the difficulty in reaching the area without the benefit of even narrow tracks and the challenge of finding the only route to the summit. The climb took about an hour, occasionally missing a marker arrow or cairn and heading up the wrong chute. Eventually we all made it, rock-scrambling several moderately tricky sections and benefiting from a rope anchored to a tree above a negatively inclined chimney. Once on top, it was a walk to the southern end of the plateau for breathtaking views as far as the NSW coast. This was the crowning achievement of the year's bushwalking.



After lunch the plan was to head back about to an attractive campsite we'd passed previously, but going via Mt Owen. Total distance about 7km with nearly seven hours to sunset – we only just made it! The route to the plateau summit of Mt Owen followed a number of gullies. Navigation was difficult; although there were marker cairns, there were a number of places where possible tracks headed away in different directions from a cairn. By splitting up and each surveying a different track until one of us located the next cairn, Simon and I were able to save some time in navigation. Once on top we realised there wasn't time to go all the way to the official summit. Still, getting down couldn't be any worse than getting up – it was. It took a while to find the route down, mistaking a scattered group of rocks for a cairn didn't help. Even when we did find the proper cairn, the only way down into the gully appeared to involve a 2m drop off the edge of a large slab of rock, not easy with a full pack. Scouting around revealed a tree branch fortunately positioned against the rock, enabling us to clamber down the last section without risking jarring the knees or ankle from having to jump. A short distance down the gully we had to go through the same sort of thing again. Simon, the most confident rock-climber amongst us managed to slide down before acknowledging it was "tricky". Walking further along the rock slab eventually led to an easier but still time-consuming route. It was with some relief when we rejoined the original track we'd followed the previous day. There was an hour until sunset, and it was starting to rain, but we knew this section was fairly easy. Timing was pretty much spot on, at least for Simon and me. As soon as we'd pitched our tents, the rain turned from spitting to a heavier downpour which doused any chances of social interaction round a campfire that evening.

The final day retraced our steps from day one; there was still room for a final discovery, Corang Arch which we'd failed to spot on the way in. Eventually three of us made it back to the car just in time to avoid a torrential downpour; unfortunately David was several minutes behind – oh well at least someone had a good wash before boarding a plane that evening!

Thanks to Simon for organising the trip; if an opportunity to visit the Budawangs arises again, I can't recommend highly enough to make the extra effort to visit them.

Stephen Smith

Marvellous Maps

by Greg Shepherd

If you've been bushwalking for a while, and have a fair depth of experience, it's worth seriously considering leading a trip, especially if there's a place you like going to or would like to explore.

But, before leading a walk, it is essential to have some idea where you are going (this may seem self-evident, but it's worth pointing out nonetheless). And, invariably, I have found over the years, that a certain variety of published documentation to be amazingly useful in giving purpose and direction (not only to bushwalks, but to life in general) – I refer, of course, to the MAP.

Some general knowledge of the range and variety of maps is worth knowing. There are in fact three commercial mapshops in Melbourne. The oldest (est. 1870) is Mapland - www.mapland.com.au - at 372 Little Bourke Street in the city amongst all the outdoors/bushwalking shops in the Hardware Lane precinct. Another is Mapworks - <http://www.mapworks.com.au/contact.html> - in the Essendon area. And the third is the Melbourne Map centre - www.melbmap.com.au - just around the corner and up the road from the Chadstone road Shopping Complex.

Of special interest is the Information Victoria shop at 356 Collins St which gives a complete range of all official maps: 1:25,000 or 1:50,000 for most areas of Victoria, and, of course, the 1:100,000 series. This latter small scale range is the basic "Melways" of mapping. All of Australia has been covered in this standard, though it is of limited value in nutting out the specifics of a walking route.

A full listing of all the other map shops in Melbourne is located under "Maps & Mapping" in the Yellow Pages - it's worth reviewing.

There are two major sources of information on the web.

The standard state government site - www.land.vic.gov.au - from which you can actually download (for a fee) 1:30,000 scale maps - the slightly odd scale is to take advantage of standard A4 sized paper printing. This is a fascinating site to explore for all the other aspects of land information it provides as well - including aerial photography, land values, block subdivisions in suburbs and so on.

The second major site to be aware of is that of Geoscience Australia - www.ga.gov.au. This - as the name implies - gives a complete overview of all the maps and data available for purchase as a customised product (e.g. physical map) or for download. It is the central site for reference to all 1:100,000 maps, and bears a bit of time investigating as well.

A useful piece of information from the Mapland website:

"A topographic map is a pictorial representation of natural and man made features as they appear on the earth's surface. In paper or even digital form, these cover such things as creeks, rivers, roads, towns, contours, buildings, lakes and many other assorted features. Symbols are used on a map and explained in the legend what each of them mean. Maps come in different scales, popular ones being 1:25,000, 1:50,000, 1:100,000 and 1:250,000. A scale of 1:25,000 is a good walking map and a 1:100,000 map is ideal for driving or viewing a larger area."

In bushwalking we really need to think in terms of 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 maps. The latter is truly delightful to use in planning and executing a trip - but here's the rub - not all of the fair state of Victoria has been mapped in such level of detail. Fortunately most areas of interest to bushwalkers have, the only exception being the desert parks in the Wimmera/Mallee regions; as these areas don't have much in the way of contours, the national 1:100,000 maps are sufficient.

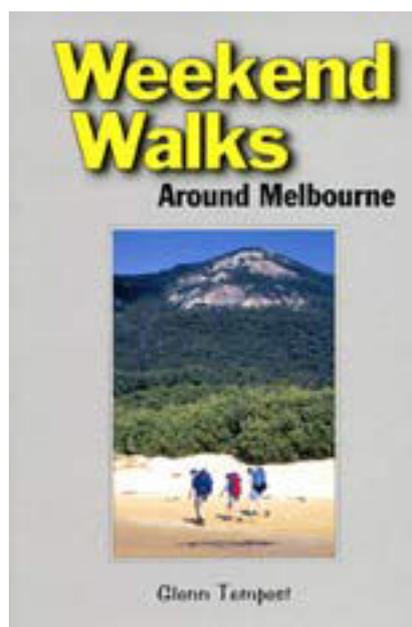
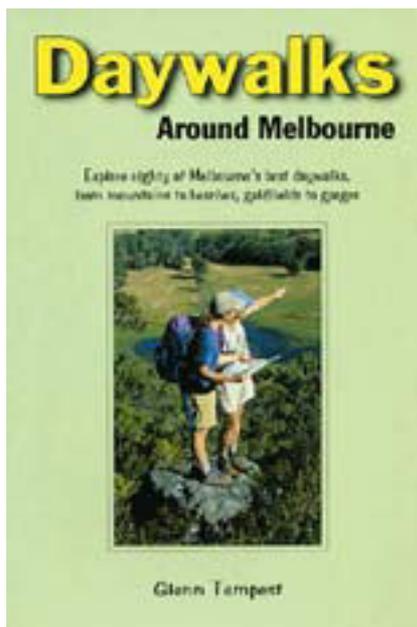
Sometimes the area you are intending to walk through may be small but nevertheless encompass three or four adjacent standard 1:25,000 maps. At \$8 each, surveying a simple walk could end up relatively expensive. If the area is a popular one, chances are there will be a special series of topographic maps covering exactly the region you are walking in. The "Outdoor Leisure" series have done especially detailed maps of The Bogong High Plains, Mt Buller, The Cathedral, Lake Mountain/ Marysville, Kinglake and the Grampians. Another series, "Meridian" includes areas such as the Otways, Wombat State Forest, Victorian deserts, Werribee and Lerderderg Gorges, the Hattah-Kulkyne area and the Mornington Peninsula.

Guidebooks often contain good reproductions of topographic maps; however these only show the section specific to the walk described. It is recommended you carry a full map covering the main region you are walking in, so as to have the "bigger picture" in terms of alternate access routes, and major features of the area. Where guidebooks are invaluable however is with detailed tracknotes and the inclusion of more up to date features on their maps. Many topographic maps may be based on surveys 20-30 years ago. While mountains, rivers etc tend to stay where they are over this passage of time, man-made features can change considerably; tracks overgrown or rerouted, buildings missing, huts burnt down etc during the same period.

A final tip; once you have your MAP, look after it. Like Gremlins they don't react well to getting wet. Have it opened ready for action, but sealed inside a mapcase before it starts raining and don't take it out until the weather clears. Laminating is highly recommended; for a dollar or so extra, the lifetime of a frequently used map will be considerably extended.

So there you have it. Happy navigating!

Book Reviews



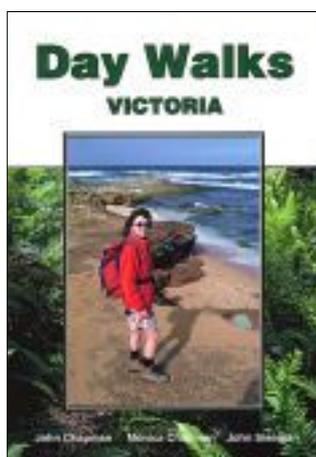
Glenn Tempest. *Day walks around Melbourne*. Open Spaces Publishing, 2000. 176 pages. \$31.95.

Glenn Tempest. *Weekend walks around Melbourne*. Open Spaces Publishing, 2003. 160 pages. \$31.95.

Glenn Tempest is relatively new to writing walking guidebooks, although in the past he has been a regular contributor of walking notes to outdoor magazines and has written a number of rock climbing guides.

These two guidebooks are among the best published covering Victoria. They are well designed in full colour, the maps are informative and fairly clear and the routes are well chosen and clearly described, although the coverage of some is a little brief. The day walks volume covers 80 walks in reasonable detail, all within 2 hours drive of Melbourne. *Weekend walks* has detailed descriptions of 17 walks, lasting from two to four days. It ranges a little further afield, with the coverage extending to places like the Prom, Cape Otway and Castlemaine.

David Sisson



John and Monica Chapman, John Siseman. *Day walks: Victoria*. John Chapman, 2001. 192 pages. \$32.95.

Along with Glenn Tempest's books, this guide has raised the standard of walking guidebooks immeasurably. The Chapman's have been writing walking guides to western Tasmania for many years and also wrote a weekly newspaper column covering Victorian day walks. John Siseman has written a number of guides to the Victorian high country and has also collaborated with John Chapman on Tasmanian guides.

This full colour book is produced to a very high standard. It has an excellent selection of 50 walks in many parts of Victoria and they are covered in a little more detail than those in Glenn Tempest's *Day walks around Melbourne*. The walk descriptions are clear and comprehensive, the maps are detailed but uncluttered and for those apprehensive about hills, there are even gradient profiles. John Chapman's website www.john.chapman.name provides details of changed conditions on a few of the walks. Overall this is an excellent guidebook. The authors plan to release a revised version in the new year concentrating on walks near Melbourne and possibly dropping coverage of the more distant walks.

David Sisson



Dear Dr Telemark

Advice on any personal difficulties you may be having with life in the great outdoors, all handled with Dr T's trademark delicacy and sensitivity.

Dear Dr T,

One of the things I love about bushwalking is the magnificent scenery, however my enjoyment of a recent walk was spoilt by something considerably less photogenic. The guy in front of me was a bit overweight and this combined with some loose-fitting shorts meant I was confronted with an eyeful of bum-crack that would have made a plumber proud. I couldn't get past him, as it was a narrow track, and even when I did he always seemed to end up in front again. Averting my gaze from this yawning chasm was difficult, as I needed to watch where I was walking in order not to trip over, and besides it was so vast that even when I looked into the distance, this gaping abyss was always in the corner of my eye. Even during the bad weather, while others saw the rain-dirty valleys, I saw the whole of the moon. My endurance was stretched beyond the walk, as sitting down in a café afterwards this guy still didn't bother to dress himself and I had to suffer yet again (along with the poor waitress).

I was hoping you could give me some advice as to what to do in this situation. Should I say something to the person concerned or maybe a subtle hint such as leaving a belt in his backpack?

Yours Sincerely,

*Moon Maiden,
Ascot Vale*

Dear MM,

The low-slung look is very much in vogue at the moment. It is important therefore to understand that this person is not a slob but, worse, a dedicated follower of fashion.

On no account should bushwalking and fashion be allowed to mix – a style-conscious person on a walk makes the rest of us feel uncomfortable. Several years ago I admonished a girl for wearing shoulder pads on the Razor-Viking circuit, this bloke also needs to be taught a lesson that it's uncool to be trendy on a walk.

Suitable punishment would be either a super-wedgie or a dacking; you choose, let me know how you go.

Love,
Dr T.

Dr T,

I'm after some relationship advice, as I haven't had much success lately. A few weekends ago I met an attractive girl on a bushwalk, and although she didn't know (or seem to care) who William Shatner was, she otherwise seemed quite intelligent. We seemed to be getting on very well; I talked to her for a few hours about "Dr Who" and even complimented that her legs were almost as good as Leela's, however she wasn't on the following week's walk and has never rematerialised since. Do you think I may have gone a little too far in inviting her home to fondle my sonic screwdriver?

A similar thing happened a couple of weeks later; I thought my Klingon impersonation was spot-on but she wasn't impressed. I thought women would find a sense of humour attractive, particularly a goonish one such as mine, but it doesn't seem to work around here – or is it just that I've joined the wrong club? Would my appeal be enhanced if I was actually to lead a few treks of my own? Any advice would be appreciated.

Yours Enterprisingly,

*Trek Commander,
Burwood*

Dear TC,

Although the ladies you meet don't appear to be fans of the travelling Time-Lord, they seem to recognise a classic example of the inverse ratio between the size of the mouth and the size of the brain.

Women actually do enjoy fantasy TV shows as well, it's just that they tend to go for different programmes like "Sex and the City", "Friends", "Ally McBeal" where they (eventually) meet up with Mr Right who dates them in Paris then they live happily ever after. Of course Carrie and Co. had to endure many false starts along the way (pee-loving politicians anyone?), however none involved going on a hike and meeting "real" people like yourself. So if you want to engage a woman, start a conversation about these shows or other topics that they are interested in instead.

Otherwise try Maroondah Bushwalking Club, I hear they have theme walks where they dress up in starship uniforms and boldly bush-bash where no man has bush-bashed before.

May the farce be with you,
Dr T.