



Winter Highlights

Spend a weekend at Phillip Island Aug 13-14th, with walks around Cape Woolamai (Saturday) and the coastal wetlands area and koala reserve near Rhyll (Sunday). Limited overnight accommodation on the island is available (approx \$25 + booking fee), with dinner at a restaurant in Cowes and an option to visit the world-famous penguin parade. Those with limited time can join either walk as a day-option – more details, Catherine 0423 162 924.

Keppel Hut Introductory Snow Camp July 30-31st

In addition to the traditional snow-walk to Keppels Hut near Lake Mountain (Sat July 30th), for the first time a snow-camping option is also included. For those who've had some basic experience camping with an overnight pack, but haven't yet tried it in the snow, this is the ideal place to start. The terrain is less steep and more sheltered than other snow-camping mainstays such as Mt Feathertop or Mt Bogong and the distance isn't very great. Visit Clubnight July 11th for basic information about snow-camping.

Treasure Hunt Sunday July 10th have some fun and test your navigation skills in the search for prizes hidden throughout the bush. A bit like rogaining, the hunt will be conducted in teams of 3-4; basic map-reading and compass skills are useful, however the navigation is planned to be fairly easy, with most markers less than 200m from a track. For those wanting a few navigation hints beforehand, visit Clubnight July 4th.

New Committee Members

Welcome to three new committee members, Sarah Anthony, Vicki Caravias and Catherine Koh.

Vicki has only recently began walking with YHA, but has kindly offered to use her professional skills to take over management of the club website.

Catherine, a regular walker for two years (and one of 2005's new leaders) and Sarah, with YHA since early 2004, join as a general committee members.

Special thanks to former webmaster Andrew Brown for his work in establishing and maintaining the website since its inception in 1997. Andrew still retains a keen interest in walking and skiing, but these days has other priorities to occupy him (see opposite).

Also thanks to outgoing treasurer Robert Yuen; Andres Vidovic has taken on the position for 2005-06.



Extreme Drilling? Sharon and Mayumi ready for action at this autumn's Cope Hut working bee. Full report page 5

Also in this Issue

- ❖ **Autumn Walks** notes and photos from recent trips including Grey Hills-Mt Bogong, Dinner Plain, Coopracambra and the Cobbler Plateau. (p3-4)
- ❖ **Cope Hut patch-up** improvements from the latest working bee (p5)
- ❖ **The death of the Man from Snowy River?** An alternative view on alpine grazing (p5)
- ❖ **Book Reviews** Day Walks: Melbourne and "Take a Walk" comes to Victoria (p6)
- ❖ **In Profile:** Peter Burrige & Joseph Bulla (p7)
- ❖ **Worst Vehicle Journey?** Harrowing trips before or after a walk (p8)

Congratulations to...

Andrew and Rebekah Brown on the birth of their second child (but first daughter) Eleanor

...and chairman Simon Walliss and Tess Kirby on their recent engagement.

YHA BUSHWALKING COMMITTEE
2005/06

Chairman	Simon Walliss
Secretary	Greg Shepherd
Treasurer	Andres Vidovic
Walks Sec.	David Sisson
Social Sec.	Cynthia Bell
S & R	Ken Sussex
Website	Vicki Caravias
Newsletter	Stephen Smith
General	Sarah Anthony
	Ron Bell
	Stuart Hanham
	Catherine Koh

YHA Bushwalking emergency mobile phone
 (For emergency contact on walks) 0428 313 880

General Enquiries: 0500 500 272

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 August 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:

Joseph Bulla
 Peter Burridge
Stuart Hanham
 Catherine Koh
Chris Marney
David Sisson
Simon Walliss

Chairman's Report

Recent YHA Bushwalking activities have been popular. The Easter trips were successful and the bushdance was full. Thanks to the leaders David Sisson and Stephen Smith for organising the Easter walks and Ron Bell for organising the bushdance.

We have an interesting winter program with five snow walks that range from easier day walks to harder walks where ice-climbing equipment is needed. A number of other day and accommodated walks are being offered as well. Come into clubnight and see Mark Beyer's slides of the 2003 fires (June 20th) and award winning photographer and author David Oldfield's presentation on 'Havens of the High Country' (July 18th), spectacular photos of the high country and its historic huts. Join in our inaugural Treasure Hunt run by Stephen Smith, with tips at club night. We are looking for people to run social events (any member) so if you are interested contact Cynthia Bell or David Sisson.

Look forward to seeing you walking!

Simon Walliss

Tips for Better Bushwalking

#13 Be Properly Insured

Unfortunately accidents do happen from time to time in the bush, which in some cases can render the victim immobile, ankle injuries being the most common. If the location is remote or not readily accessible by vehicle, air evacuation is likely, a cost of several thousand dollars if you aren't insured. Even a road ambulance will set your savings back a few hundred dollars.

YHA Bushwalking has public liability insurance, however this does not cover anyone other than the leader for expenses arising from personal injuries. Medicare will cover emergency hospital treatment, however it does not include ambulance costs. This requires a separate ambulance subscription, currently \$55 per year (singles). Some private health policies include this, however it isn't a standard feature so check carefully. Many people intend to get insurance but keep putting it off – don't wait for something to happen, if you are regularly undertaking outdoor activities such as bushwalking, ambulance cover is as essential as sturdy boots and a decent raincoat.



Be properly insured or this journey's fare could be \$5000

Autumn Bushwalking Round-up

The unusually warm and dry autumn attracted large numbers to the long-weekend trips, an encouraging sign being the number of new pack-carriers this year.

Mt Bogong (Mar 12-14th)

Not the stock-standard access via Staircase or Eskdale Spur, but a series of less-travelled yet definitely worthwhile sections of the Bogong High Plains.

Howmans Gap – Spion Kopje: Nothing is going to lessen its steepness, but the route from Howmans Gap to the Spion Kopje, having finally been restored after the 2003 bushfires, is much easier to follow than it was during a descent last year.

Grey Hills: Definitely a must-do track, for its views of the High Plains from a less familiar perspective, including the spectacular gully forming the headwaters of the Mitta Mitta river. The track has been restored, although it is very rough in places. Some parts were badly fire-affected and will take years for the vegetation to grow back, whilst adjacent regions were untouched; the summit of Mt Arthur is one such place, a tempting campsite for those prepared to carry water.

Granny Spur: The part of the walk which didn't go according to plan.. Although Granny Spur is untracked, a barrier of yellow-tape and prominent signage prevented us from reaching it as the access track to Cairn Creek Hut from Bogong Creek Saddle is still closed. Fortunately the original plan to camp on Mt Bogong had been changed, so it wasn't too inconvenient to do a day-trip up and back via Quartz Ridge instead.



A tricky section of the Tramway walk – don't worry the blackberries will break any falls.

Tramway – Bogong Village: Another rarely visited but recommended feature of the region. One section of the tramway is closed, although this was only indicated at one end, not the one we started from. The reason is a subsidence of a bridge, necessitating a walk along the pipeline – fortunately the weekend was a warm dry one. Winding around the base of the mountains until reaching the Fall Creek road, the route is ideal for a scenic railway.

Cobbler Plateau (April 23-25th)

A classic high-country circuit, starting with a climb/rock-scramble up Koonika Spur to Mt Speculation, easing off over the next two days with an exploration of Cobbler Plateau and descent via Muesli Spur. Highlights were the calm, clear but frostless night camped near the summit of Mt Speculation and another clear view from Mt Cobbler.

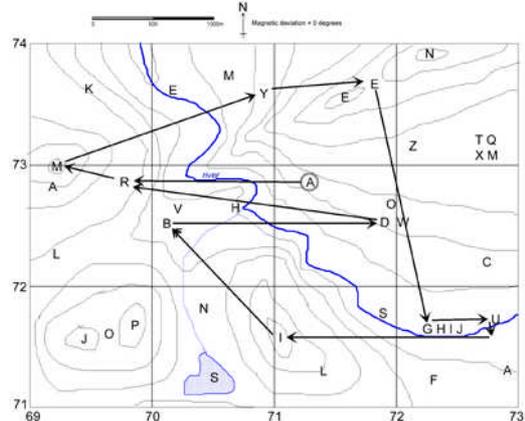


After spending the best part of a day climbing Mt Koonika from King River, leader Ken Sussex demonstrates his technique for getting back down again.



You mean something like this? (Head could be angled slightly more upwards, but not bad for a beginner)

Autumn 2005 Treasure Hunt solution



**Letters: A-R-M-Y-E-G-U-I-B-D-RR
rearranged forms MURRAY BRIDGE**

Easter – Dinner Plain

Last century, Easter used to mean at least a day of rain (serious rain, the sort that seeped through through goretex outer layers and penetrated deep inside packs to the sleeping bags and spare clothing of those who failed to adequately waterproof their gear). Since 2000 however Easter has come to mean four days of near-perfect weather, this year's Dinner Plain trip was no exception.



Lunch at Dibbins Hut photo: Chris Marney

The Easter 2004 Falls Creek lodge trip was a big hit, but the verdict on Dinner Plain is that it was even more successful. Attracting nearly 50 people (requiring three lodges), and featuring walks to all the highlights of the region (Mt Feathertop, Dibbins Hut, Mt Tabletop), a good time was had by all thanks to David Sisson's effort organising the event. The only hitch was that the spa in the main lodge wasn't working, depriving David's bevy of female admirers the chance to form a "Hot Tub Club" and show their appreciation!

Easter – Genoa River Gorge

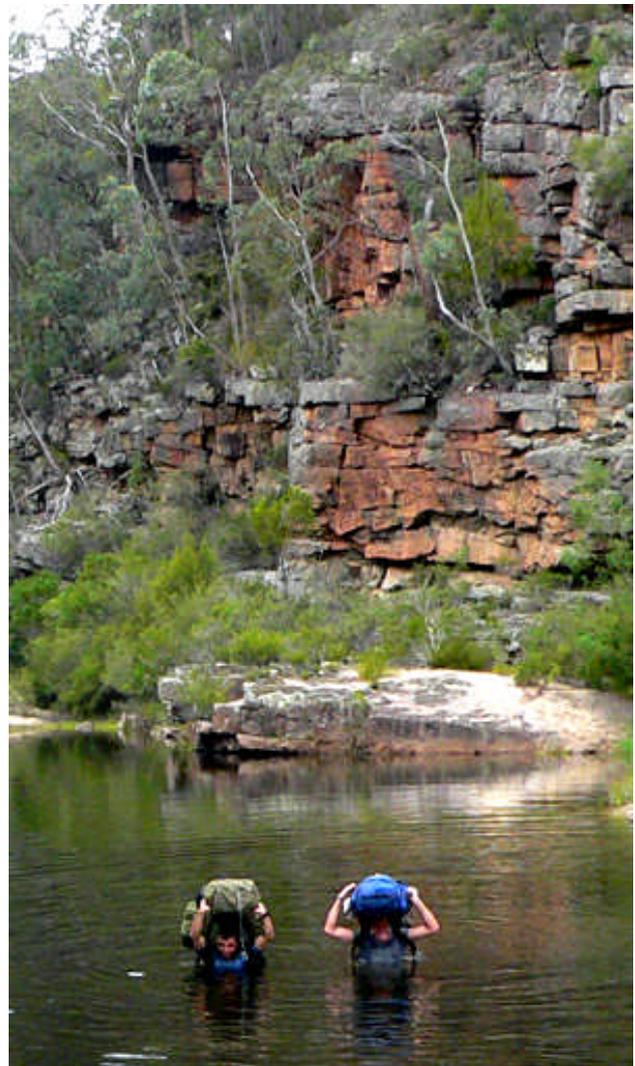
Coopracambra national park is located north of Cann River in East Gippsland. Access is fairly straightforward provided you turn off the Princes Highway at the town's only intersection and don't drive halfway to Mallacoota before looking at the map and realising you've missed the turnoff! Not the best way to start a walk, although once everyone regrouped, no more hitches were experienced during the weekend.

Officially the road into Coopracambra is listed as 4WD after Beehive Falls, however the only hill which could present a problem has been surfaced with bluemetal; the initial 2WD section is actually rockier and rougher than that beyond it. This allowed all the vehicles to get to the Yambulla track junction, saving what would otherwise have been a 3-4 hour walk along the road.

The Genoa River gorge is the highlight of the park, winding its way through 29km of wilderness, only accessible by any form of track at each end. The majority of the group set up a base-camp on the river near the upper entrance to the gorge whilst an intrepid band of three aimed to walk upstream through the entire gorge and join up with the rest to toast marshmallows on Sunday night.

Those base-camping did a day trip down 6km of the river, encountering some of the most attractive beaches, generally on a bend of the river opposite vast red sandstone cliffs. The gorge is untracked – progress is combination of rock-hopping, scrub-bashing, beach-walking or wading. Two of the group managed to do the 12 km return trip without getting their feet wet, however on many occasions it was quicker, easier (and more enjoyable) to wade; usually no more than knee deep, although one section got up to the waist.

The river level was low, and judging by the vegetation which had established itself on the low-lying beaches, it has been a while since any flooding. Nevertheless, it wasn't low enough to prevent the through-walking group having to pack-float up to their necks on a couple of occasions. The reward for this was the most spectacular section of the gorge where sheer cliffs tower on both sides at once.



Seeking the shallowest route photo: Simon Walliss

Allow about 1.5km/hr (ie 19 hours walking time) to complete the gorge; a challenging two days or a more leisurely three-four day expedition. Simon's group reached the base-camp on Sunday night but only just, at 7.20pm as the last glimmer of dusk faded, spurred on by the campfire smoke wafting downriver.

Cope Hut Patch-up

In the year since the last Cope Hut working bee, a few urgent repairs were needed to prepare for winter. A small team led by John Belfio managed to get quite a few tasks done, while at the same time enjoying warm sunny days (especially for May) with a circuit walk to Mt Cope and panoramic views of the high plains.

By the end of the weekend:

- ❖ A collapsed bunk was shored up and boards fixed on all the single bunks to provide a more even surface and lessen the creaking from the original timber underneath.
- ❖ Roofing tin was replaced on the entrance steps
- ❖ Suspect leaks in the roof were sealed (although with no rain around, it may be a while before this can be tested)
- ❖ Ladders were securely bolted to the bunks and floor
- ❖ The tap was reattached to the pipe and a filter cloth placed over the well inlet.
- ❖ Firewood was restocked.



Enjoying damper fresh from Cope Hut's wood stove



John fixing up the roof and trimming back overhanging snowgums

There will be another working bee later this year after the snow season – check the spring programme for details.

Cope Hut is a fair drive from Melbourne (380km), but a petrol subsidy of \$50 per vehicle is provided along with a waiving of the normal weekend booking fee (and of course free accommodation). All materials are provided, so all you need to give is time and a bit of elbow grease to make the hut a better place for everyone to enjoy.

The death of the Man from Snowy River?

In the Autumn 2005 issue of 'Yeti' the bizarre opinion was expressed that herds of cattle trampling and shitting all over the Alpine National Park isn't terribly good for this unique environment. This view isn't shared by all of our members, and the recent news that the State Government has decided to move grazing leases away from the Alpine National Park was as warmly received by some as that of the Spice Girls' reunion, so in the interests of open debate the cattlemen's case is put forward by David Sisson

The mountain cattlemen have lived and worked in the high country for 170 years. Some families have worked on the same land for six generations. Elsewhere in Victoria, this tradition of small farmers droving their livestock to seasonal pastures ended long ago, and many drovers routes have found a new life as walking tracks. However in the high country this lifestyle has continued until today. The state government has announced that the cattlemen would be forced off their leases, despite earlier promises that they could remain, putting an end to this iconic tradition of living history.

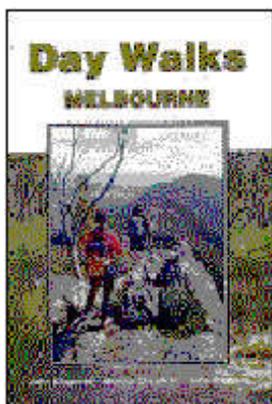
Nobody disputes the intrinsic value of these farmers continuing this nineteenth century tradition. What is being debated is the effect on the environment. In effect the debate is how textbook and urban based theory differs from knowledge gained by many years of on the ground experience. It should be remembered that almost all the areas that were considered worthy of being declared national parks had been grazed for over a century. The sheer diversity of flora and fauna is evidence of the sustainability of grazing in the high country. Almost all cattlemen have managed their leases with an eye to preserving the worth of the land. This is shown by the very low average stock level of one animal per 110 acres before the fires and last summer's average of one per 1140 acres.

Grazing was withdrawn from the more environmentally sensitive areas decades ago, which is why there are no cattle on the higher peaks, exposed feldmark and places like Lake Tali Karng. The only leases remaining are on areas that cannot be seriously impaired by grazing. It is also worth noting that the intensity of the 2003 fires was considerably less in areas where cattle had kept fuel under control than in places where there was no grazing. This can still be seen today. The grazed areas that had a less intense burn are recovering fairly well, while the ungrazed areas tended to suffer a hotter burn that killed most plants and their seeds.

Cattlemen have an unparalleled understanding of the land, built over many generations. They have usually been the only ones to tackle weed infestations, rabbit plagues and packs of wild dogs. For well over a century, governments have acknowledged these problems but have done little to tackle them. Realistically, we can't ever expect governments to employ enough people (*cont'd p6*)

Book Reviews

John & Monica Chapman, John Siseman. *Day walks: Melbourne*. John Chapman, 2005. 192 pages. \$35

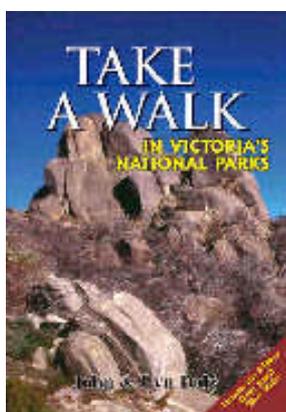


This attractively designed book describes 41 walks in detail with clear walking notes, comprehensive maps, gradient profiles and interesting photos. It complements *Day walks: Victoria* by the same authors, published in 2001.

As with the previous book, the selection of walks is hard to fault. In addition to familiar locations such as the You Yangs, Kinglake and the Cathedral Range, there are six walks through bushland in the suburbs and a few walks not described recently such as the Lal Lal Forest near Ballan and Archer's Hill (west of Dom Dom Saddle). A few obvious locations such as Werribee Gorge, Cape Schank and Mt Worth are not included because they are covered in the earlier book *Day walks: Victoria*.

Although there are a few challenging walks, it would be fair to say that the majority of routes described are not terribly intrepid and that this book is best suited to those who enjoy walks graded medium or easier. Highly recommended for those who prefer this type of walk.

John & Lyn Daly. *Take a walk: in Victoria's national parks*. Take a Walk Publications, 2005 367 pages \$30



The book covers a phenomenal 205 day walks and 17 overnight walks. The authors have written a number of successful walking guides to Queensland and northern N.S.W., so I had hoped for a book that was comprehensive, well written and offered a fresh perspective compared to the work of Victorian authors.

Sadly, being from interstate, the authors simply don't know enough about Victoria to write a really good walking guide. For a start they restrict themselves to 'national' parks. This means that walks on almost all other Crown land, including most state parks and state forests are omitted. While this may be a reasonable approach in Queensland, in Victoria it makes no sense and excludes half of the best walks in the state. Thus there is no mention of the Cathedral Range, Mt Cole - Mt Buangor, Werribee Gorge, the whole area between Daylesford and Macedon, much of the High Country and most of the Otways. Conversely, relatively dull locations like Churchill National Park are included. The result is a book covering an arbitrarily designated selection of places to walk in Victoria.

However the book does include some walks in the Mallee, Little Desert and Northern Country, areas that have been neglected in recent guidebooks. There is also a useful selection of walks in East Gippsland (national parks only of course), so those intending to walk in these parts of the state should consider it.

Despite its very limited coverage, I tried hard to like this book. However the inclusion of a lot of rather average walks, brief and occasionally ambiguous walk notes, very poor maps and a cramped book design that could best be described as 'typed', make it hard to be keen on. Put simply, the book has too many flaws for it to be recommended to a Melbourne day walker.

Summarising, in *Day walks: Melbourne*, John Chapman has opted for quality rather than quantity and along with his earlier *Day walks: Victoria* and Glenn Tempest's *Day walks around Melbourne*, this book offers a very good selection of walks with informative text, clear maps and attractive design. It was fairly brave for the Daly's to enter the Victorian market, but *Take a walk...* is sadly lacking in comparison to its competitors and has relatively little to recommend it.

David Sisson

("The Death of the Man from Snowy River?" - cont'd from page 5) to equal the amount of work put in to the environment by the cattlemen. Certainly Parks Victoria has not had the resources in recent decades.

Bushwalking and skiing have been popular in the high country for about 80 years and the cattlemen's knowledge of the land has saved dozens of skiers' and bushwalkers' lives, including at least two in recent years. Likewise their intimate understanding of the terrain meant that they were the first to be consulted by the Country Fire Authority during the 2003 bushfires. Maps and bureaucrats could only help so much, but people who knew every fold of the land and variation in the vegetation were invaluable.

So what will happen to the cattlemen if they are forced off their leases? Without highland grazing, most of the farms in the valleys are too small to sustain a family, so many will leave the mountains. This loss of population will affect the small towns that still have a shop, a pub and a school. The first to go in situations like this is the school. The loss of the school forces more families out, making the shop and the pub unviable, leading to the collapse of the town. This pattern has occurred regularly in towns in the mountains and in the Mallee and some towns have lost 70% of their population within five years. If grazing is withdrawn, towns near ski resorts will survive, but say goodbye to places like Benambra, Bonang, Dargo, Mitta Mitta and Whitfield.

The mountain cattlemen not only represent 170 years of living history, but their stewardship has benefited the environment of the high country. The cattlemen should be allowed to remain on their ancestral lands.

To find out more visit www.mcav.com.au

In Profile

Two veterans, one mostly a weekend walker, the other a day-tripper, share some of their memories

Joseph Bulla

How long have you been walking with YHA? 22 years.

What attracted you to the club? Newly arrived from Poland, I wanted to see what the country looked like. I tried some of the other YHA activities at the time such as Kayaking, Horseriding and Field Studies (similar to bushwalking except they'd stop every five minutes to look under a rock or at a flower) before settling on Bushwalking.

Can you remember your first walk? No idea, I've done so many...



Joseph – where haven't I been yet?

Favourite walk? The High Country (eg Mt Bogong) in autumn.

Most memorable walks? The Viking we ran out of water and had to filter stagnant pond-water through a bandage.

#2 – Camped on Mt Buggery in an army disposal tent with a thunderstorm raging. Had to bail water all night to avoid drowning.

A trip from Hell? Walhalla, piggy-backing someone who'd twisted his ankle. Eventually made a stretcher when we reached the valley and carried on in this way until a 4WD turned up. Came away with a sore back and not a word of thanks.

Unfulfilled destination you'd most like to visit? The Kimberleys (Western Australia)

Advice for new walkers Keep away, or learn the hard way...

Peter Burridge

How long have you been walking with YHA? 20 years.

What attracted you to the club? I began with the YHA Sailing activity became friends with a number of people there who were into bushwalking and eventually introduced me to it.

Favourite walk? The Razorback, done as a day walk at Easter. Second favourite is the Mt Buffalo "Big Walk" starting at the entrance gate and gradually climbing up to the Chalet.



Peter – an amigo always willing to lend a hand

Most memorable walk? Roaming through scrub at Bright searching for gold mines with Ron Bell.

A trip from Hell? Another route up Mt Buffalo, this time walking up a river to try and reach the summit. Had to walk over huge boulders, many of them moving as I stepped on them, as a result I fell between them. That and narrowly avoiding several snakes make this one I wouldn't want to repeat.

Unfulfilled destination you'd most like to visit? Australia, Cunningham Gorge (about 100km from Brisbane), overseas Bolivia.

Favourite movie Finding Nemo.

Advice for new walkers Don't be scared of rainy days.

Worst Vehicle Journeys

What's the worst journey you've experienced going to or from a YHA bushwalk? Unreliable vehicles, unwell passengers and unhinged drivers make up these recollections from some of our members.

Shared a car with another passenger who, just before we picked him up, consumed a fair proportion of his own body-weight in garlic. A few hours later the devil's clove had well and truly gone to work, with evil vapours silently permeating the vehicle. On a winding road late at night I felt very sick - if the driver had been a priest I would have asked him to pull over and give me the last rites.

Around midnight the car crashed, hitting a tree. A nice beautiful night, no-one was hurt.

Numerous breakdowns, all involving the same Datsun Stanza which is still in one piece somewhere in Victoria, although no longer used for bushwalks:

#1 - Driving down freeway, heard a "pop" sound, the interior light had come out of its socket, it and the vinyl were flapping around like a bouncing castle.

#2 - Fan went through radiator

#3 - Exploding tyre

#4 - Exhaust pipe fell off - jammed an old water pipe in place instead

#5 - Leads got damp up on the Bogong High plains, had to dry them out before we could move off.

Several years ago, the club hired a large luxury coach to take us to the Cobberas. At 2.00am, we reached the drop-off point, with an extra YHA car following behind, but the bus driver refused to let us off until he could turn the bus around on the narrow dirt road. After driving for another 1/2 hour, he managed to turn, so we got to the campsite at 3.00am. Meanwhile the other car had followed us faithfully - its driver was quite angry to eventually learn that he could have stopped at the camp an hour earlier!

Over the weekend, there was a fair amount of rain, so that when the bus returned to collect us, the roads had turned to mud. After a couple of kms, the bus started to slip and slide and spin its wheels. We couldn't go forwards and we couldn't turn around, so the driver had to reverse up and down hills and around slippery corners, back to his starting point. A short distance later it began "fishtailing" on a hill. The driver, worried about sliding off the edge, asked everyone to disembark, while he tried to continue up the road. We marched a fair way to the top of the hill and waited and waited.

Eventually we heard the noise of a straining engine. A Nissan Patrol appeared, with a tow rope to another Patrol, with a tow rope to our coach, thankfully saving us from many more wet hours in the bush!



I reckon I can get it going if you give me a push!

Vehicle span from side-to-side on a gravel road going to Powelltown. Thought I was a gonner, that we would roll over or hit a tree, but the driver was experienced and regained control.

(This incident was nominated by four people, including the driver!)

Misjudged a bend on the Mt Howitt road, skidded, right-side tyres went off the edge of the gravel and the car rolled 360 degrees into a gully. No-one was hurt so we got a lift with other members of the group and went ahead with the bushwalk. The car was a write-off however.

After a 12-hour walk I fainted due to dehydration, low blood-sugar or something. On the way home I felt sick, couldn't get the window open in time and threw-up all over the upholstery in a poor girl's brand new car. A little while later, after some fresh air and cleaning up the first mess, I was sick all over again.

Being forced to sit in the back with the windows wound down all the way to Portland because the driver wanted to "get rid of the man-smell" from her car. It was so cold and she wouldn't even let us stop for a pee.

Next Issue: What's the worst thing you've ever eaten on a bushwalk? (visits to McDonalds on the way up or back don't count). Email your tales of culinary disasters to yhabush@bigpond.com