



The Curse of The Viking?

Named for the twin-horned appearance of its peak, The Viking is one of the most challenging locations to reach in the Victorian high country. The original Vikings were marauders, but these horns have proved effective in repelling many invasions by bushwalkers over the years.

This Melbourne Cup weekend, Ken Sussex will be leading a Razor-Viking circuit trip, hoping to scale these peaks for the first time - over 25 years after his first attempt.

Remembering as if it were yesterday, Ken's first trip was led by Marilyn Wimpey and Bill Jessup in the late 1970's. Starting at Guys Hut and heading down to the Wonnangatta River via Conglomerate Creek, things went well until they reached campsite just south of the Viking. That night a raging storm developed; the following morning everything was covered in snow. With some of the group only equipped with runners, they were forced to turn back via Zeka Spur.

The second attempt followed the same route in early December, this time the opposite weather extreme occurred, with temperatures in the mid-thirties causing heatstroke to some of the party, forcing an early evacuation.

Over the years other attempts have occurred without Ken - a day walk from base-camp at Mt Speculation in the early 90's didn't cover the ground quickly enough, and an attempt to survey an access route from the south of Mt Buffalo resulted in a very late and very thirsty return to the cars without having reached the Viking. There have been some successes - Simon Walliss' Australia Day walk 1999 and Mark Beyer's Alpine Walking Track expeditions, however Ken wasn't part of these. His most recent failed attempt was Cup weekend 2003, when unseasonal snow produced a wintry landscape too difficult to walk in the time available.

Could 2005 finally be Ken's Razor-Viking year? The walk is challenging, definitely for experienced pack-carriers only, and relies heavily on favourable conditions, but success or not, will definitely be another memorable walk.



Razor-Viking sunset from Macalister Springs



Martin, Jodie, Andrew and Hooi show off their prizes after winning this year's Treasure Hunt in the Wombat State Forest near Daylesford

Also in this Issue

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Christmas - New Year Extended Walks

For this Christmas' pack-carry trips, we offer a choice of two of the best walks in Australia.

Simon Walliss will be leading a trip to the Eastern Arthurs and Federation Peak in SW Tasmania. The trip is hard, but for those with the fitness and experience to undertake it, the achievement of reaching the summit will be one of the highlights of your life.

The other walk is the Alpine Walking Track between Kiandra and Thredbo. Taking in the country's highest peaks (Mt Jagungal, Townsend and of course Kosciuskzo), the opinion of those who've walked the full AWT is that this section is the crowning glory.

These trips may be over three months away, but now is the time to start planning and training for them. You must have had recent pack-walking experience to participate (there are plenty of training opportunities on the Spring programme) and bookings for both close Dec 12th due to the need to organise transport (even earlier booking is advised for Tasmania in order to get a good flight deal)

YHA BUSHWALKING COMMITTEE 2005/06

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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 November 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:

Catherine Koh
Bruce Meincke
Richard Miller
Ken Sussex
Simon Walliss
Darren Yan

and Jeff Martin for being such a good sport.

Tips for Better Bushwalking

#1 A Juicy Walker is a Good Walker

The commonest mistake we all make when walking is becoming dehydrated through either not carrying adequate water or not drinking enough of what is available.

Dehydration can of course have very serious consequences, however it is just the milder but more common effects that will be looked at here.

First and foremost, the loss of less than a litre of water will make you noticeably more tired, making the walk seem that much harder. Also, the more dehydrated you are, the longer your body takes to replace lost fluids.

Start off on the right foot by making sure you are juicy to begin with; consume a litre during the hour or two preceding a walk, and a cup or two several minutes before you start. Many people, particularly women, don't want to drink too much so as to avoid the inconvenience of having to go to the toilet in the bush. Get over it – once you learn that "every tree's a lavva-tree" and worry more about keeping your urine as clear and frequent as possible, you'll be more comfortable overall.

Having started walking, drink little and often, particularly if it is warm, rather than going for a large gulp every hour or so. Don't wait until you feel thirsty before having a drink – this is too late. Your body can only reabsorb about a litre per hour, this is best done by having a cup every 15-20 mins. Soft-drinks and fruit juice take longer to absorb. Sports drinks such as Gatorade with 4-8% carbohydrate concentration maximise the rehydration rate. If conditions are such that you need to drink more than 1-2l/day, it is definitely recommended to drink something which will also aid in salt replacement, however for lighter walks this is unnecessary.

In very hot conditions, the rate of fluid loss will exceed that at which it can be replaced. In such situations, the course of action is to consider whether the walk can be made less strenuous, eg by shortening or skipping unnecessary climbs.



Good walkers stay well hydrated

If the walk is unavoidable, longer rest stops (where you sweat less) will need to be longer in order to allow time for recovery.

Finally, another drink of water (half litre or so) immediately after completion of the walk will assist redressing your fluid balance. If you feel very dehydrated after a walk, avoid caffeine drinks (coffee, Coke, Red Bull) or alcohol.

Winter Wanderings

Phillip Island (August 13-14)



A weekend of fine-dining, frequent bakery visits and walks to many of Phillip Island's points of interest organised by Catherine Koh combined at Rhyll with several carloads of Sunday walkers led from Melbourne by Chris Marney to form the cheerful if windswept group at left.

Sadly the only penguin witnessed was a dead one washed up on the beach, but there was plenty of other interesting "wildlife" to spot – the shaggy Highland Cattle on Churchill Island, the koala clutching to a branch precariously swinging in the high wind or the birdlife hovering above the mangrove swamps.

Castlemaine - Bendigo (June 12-14)

The Queens Birthday long weekend saw YHA's first trip along the Leanganook track linking Castlemaine and Bendigo.

Broken up into three 20km sections, highlights included Mt Alexander and gold-mining era relics such as the Coliban aqueduct water races and ruins of an old water wheel near Castlemaine.

The only slightly monotonous section was 10km along a water channel on the final day. Despite heavy rain on the drive up and back, the weather was kind during the walk, only beginning to rain during the final few hundred metres into Bendigo.

Worth noting for future reference is the centrally located and good standard cabin accommodation at Castlemaine, providing easy access to a good choice of facilities in the town itself. With plenty of walking close to Castlemaine, this would make an excellent base for normal weekend trips in winter-spring.



The view north from Mt Alexander, Bendigo still 35km away.



Mt Buller snow walk (August 27)

Mild, sunny weather for a day-walk led by Paul Gottlieb to the summit of Mt Buller via the West Ridge then all the way back down to the entrance gate. The snow line had well and truly retreated since the large dumps two weeks previously, however it was still deep and firm enough on the steep final approach (left) to require ice-axes and crampons.

Nine went on the walk – there is a group of regular snow-walkers developing within the club. A few missed out, as a pre-requisite to the harder Mt Buller or Mt Bogong walks is to have undertaken Mt Feathertop first.

Worst Food in the Bush

Some of our members share their unfortunate experiences of eating the dishes described below just so that you don't have to repeat their mistake.

Take careful note of these bush recipes to avoid.

Maggi Chicken Supreme I'd carried it for four years as an emergency ration. When I finally got around to using it, I took one mouthful and threw the rest in the fire

Curried rice, from a Family Size packet. Cooked up way too much, forced myself to eat it all then threw up later. I've never eaten rice on a walk since.

Continental chicken curry – tasted absolutely shit!

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Our own misguided recipe, dried French Onion soup, dried mushroom, diced capsicum, noodles and a flavour sachet. Despite it being the seventh day of an eight day trip, when appetites run high and ordinary things taste mouthwatering, this was ruled inedible after one spoonful. We ended up burying it and having Pringles for dinner instead.

We all took turns to cook for the group on one particular walk. Came the turn of one bloke, his mission was spaghetti bolognese with meatballs, the problem being he'd never made it before and was too embarrassed to ask for advice. He made it using HP sauce, a whole bottle of the stuff. Next morning revealed everyone's dinner discarded at the edge of the campsite, the only thing eaten being the noodles fortunate enough to be untouched by the sauce.

Slimy cheese singles slice after four days in the bush.

Bought what I thought to be dried sweet corn for making up a curry, but it turned out to be popping corn. Extremely tough on the teeth.

Used plain flour instead of self-raising to make a damper. When it didn't rise, I just thought it needed more cooking time. It ended up rock-hard and black.

Made of the mistake of taking raw chicken drumsticks. Despite freezing and wrapping them, a mid-thirty degree day soon thawed them out and by dinner time they'd acquired a bit of a smell which stir frying with a few spices couldn't disguise.

Didn't pay attention early enough to the trip notes which said there would be no water at the campsite (Hattah Lakes). The leader reminded us just before we arrived, so I headed into a store and bought six litres of coke for the weekend.



Continental Rice – judged truly disgusting

And lastly, a near miss that tasted better than it sounds
Took some raw chicken sealed in a couple of plastic bags, although this didn't stop some of the juices seeping out. Left them in the tent for a couple of hours late afternoon while the group went off on a side-trip. Upon returning, the bag was covered in maggots. They didn't get through to the surface of the meat, so after shaking/washing them all off, the chicken was still OK for cooking. Actually tasted quite good.

[A late entry to last issue's recollections of horror road trips.](#)

Nightmare on Maroondah Hwy

The winter trip to Mt Buller had got off to a bad start; the driver was late arriving and it was late at night. Somewhere past Bonnie Doon one passenger became aware that the car was swerving from side to side and accelerating and decelerating erratically. The driver started to slap himself on both sides of his face, and then proceeded to drive along the white line in the middle of the road. The approach of an oncoming car did nothing to alter the driver's behaviour. We were half on the wrong side of the road, it was pitch dark and the glare of the oncoming car blinded one passenger but who knows about the driver because he seemed to be asleep. As the oncoming car's horn receded into the distance and the terror had receded it seemed like a good time to ask the driver if he felt like a rest. Fortunately he did and the only passenger who was awake took over to complete the drive to Mt Buller. The other two passengers in the car were totally unaware of what had happened.

The moral of this story is of course that the front seat passenger should always stay awake to check on the driver.

In Profile

Catherine Koh

How long have you been walking with YHA? Nearly two and a half years.

What attracted you to the club? I was studying at the time and needed something to break the monotony and meet people. Of the clubs I looked at, YHA was the most flexible; didn't have to sign up months ahead or need a car.

First walk? Pyramid Rocks, Phillip Island, getting stranded with Jean Buchanan by a rapidly incoming tide.

Favourite walk? Koonika – Mt Speculation - Cobbler (Anzac Day w/e 2005). My first taste of the high country and one I definitely want to repeat. My other favourite areas are Phillip Island and around Warburton.



Catherine, heading for the top

Most challenging walk? Murchison Falls (Mt Disappointment area) – realised I had a big fear of heights and had difficulty descending the very steep slopes in the area. With experience I've partially overcome my fear, but developed a special technique to tackle any particularly difficult descents – I slide down on my butt!.

Have you had any interesting injuries yet? Yes, at Falls Creek I planted my right foot into a pot-hole while admiring two black colts and the beautiful view, so much so that I missed my footing. This made me launch forward, twisting my ankle then landing on my back. The ankle was in pain and swollen for about two weeks until one evening as I was examining it in anguish, I gave it a tug and twist and after a few seconds of extreme pain, I realised my ankle no longer hurt.

And it got okay after that (I figured it must have been dislocated, and I'd put it back into place).

Unfulfilled destination you'd most like to visit? More of the Victorian high country such as the Cross-Cut Saw. Overseas - New Zealand, Tongarairo Crossing in the North Island.

Advice for new walkers: If you want to tone your butt, climb lots of hills!!

Darren Yan

How long have you been walking with YHA? 2 years.

What attracted you to the club? The convenience of not needing to pre-book (for the Sunday walks), I could just turn up for a walk when I felt like it without responsibility or commitment.

First walk? Spring Creek (Brisbane Ranges). It was a good walk. I was unfit and was sore for days afterwards.

Any particularly memorable walks? Wilsons Prom (the first one I led), nice weather, good company, everyone was very fit (I was the slowest). Also, Mt Hotham, Dinner Plain this year. Good company, fun nightlife, great weather, spectacular views and challenging walks.



Darren – always on the lookout for the perfect shot.

How many photos do you typically take per day? 75

Is there anything you won't photograph? No, everything can be photographed and presented to tell an interesting story or evoke an emotional response.

What's the most unusual thing you've seen on a walk? Just too many things... A fresh road kill with minimal decomposition exposing the internal body cavity, a heavily decomposed carcass (smelt real bad too, or was that the bushwalker next to me?), a sofa chair, a washing machine and a tube of intestines, like a translucent sausage skin.

Advice for new walkers: Don't be afraid of the rain or me taking your picture. Learn to like it! And above all things, remember to bring your camera.

Dr T's Walks from the Vault

1 – "ADVENTURE A PLENTY"

The vast majority of walks are sedate affairs involving not too strenuous activity and a walking track, but this one had to be different. We met at a suburban railway station, the original walk having been cancelled as no-one wanted to go. This should have rang warning bells but having had a very early start, my brain hadn't yet got into first gear.

Leaving the station at a fast pace, we soon reach the first of the urban parks to be visited that day. The intention is to link up as many parks as possible to make a loop back to the station. Not all parks are *parks*- one turns out to be a golf course; crossing the fairway we duck as the balls fly past.

More parks and roads pass under our feet until we reach a dead end. A chain mesh fence blocks our way, signs indicate that we are not welcome here, however we force the wire and squeeze under the fence. The occupants of nearby houses pull back their curtains to get a better look.

Moving as quickly as we can into the shelter of the bush, we follow the creek steeply down to the Plenty River. It's too wide to jump and too deep to wade, with no easy way across. The water is a milky grey colour and I think of what I could catch from it. Luckily we find a groin which reduces the distance needed to cross. Off with the boots and trousers and in we plunge. It's up to our crotches, cold and filthy but we make it to the other side, only to face a blackberry-infested, near-vertical slope. Grabbing a stick, I beat the blackberries down. I also feel like beating the leader, but he has the map, I don't know the way home, it's getting late and we still have along way to go. Finally, sporting a few cuts and bruises, we reach the top.

Draining our boots and wringing out our socks, I sneak a look at the map. It clearly states 'Access by Appointment only'. Quizzing the leader elicits no response - his head is down in characteristic style and doesn't hear me. It's getting dark so we pick up the pace. It's less than 20km from the CBD but kangaroos graze the grass in the evening light. The leader has a reputation for ending his walks in the dark and this one is no exception. Eventually we are back in civilisation, being dazzled by zooming car headlights after the murk of the bush. Reaching a railway line we decide we've had enough for the day and catch the train back to our cars, ending a long and eventful day.

I have a feeling that this will be the last of the big walks - I'm worried about being caught trespassing and the embarrassment of explaining what we were doing entering private property without authorisation. It's getting harder to plan long day walks due to urban spread; land has been sliced up and houses are popping up everywhere. I recall ending one walk in someone's back garden and another walk where the map showed clear land, but suddenly new houses appeared through a swirling thick fog. I dream about a system of public rights of way such as exists in England but that will never happen. Maybe it's time to do more extended overnight walks but even they will not be able to reproduce the thrill of the Big Day Walk.

Tall Tales

One day three men (not from YHA) were out bushwalking when they came upon a raging, violent river. They needed to get to the other side, but had no idea of how to do it.

The first man prayed saying, "Please God, give me the strength to cross this river." Shazzam! God gave him big arms and strong legs and he was able to swim across the river in about two hours.

Seeing this, the second man also prayed saying, "Please God, give me the ability to cross this river." Shazzam! God gave him a rowboat and he was able to row across the river in about an hour.

The third man had seen how this worked out for the other two, so he also said a prayer "Please God, give me the intelligence to cross this river." Shazzam! God turned him into a woman. She pulled out a map, studied it, walked 500m along the bank then crossed over on a bridge.



...but sometimes intelligence isn't enough

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A hard-core bushwalker (who may have been from YHA) was out scrub-bashing his way through a rainforest one day when a frog called out to him, saying "If you kiss me, I'll turn into a beautiful princess." He bent over, picked up the frog and put it in his pocket.

The frog spoke up again and said, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a beautiful Princess, I will stay with you for one week." The bushwalker took the frog out, smiled at it and returned it to the pocket. The frog then cried out, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a Princess, I'll stay with you and do anything you want." Again the bushwalker took the frog out, smiled at it and put it back into his pocket.

Finally the frog asked, "What is it? I've told you I'm a beautiful Princess, that I'll stay with you for a week and do anything you want. Why won't you kiss me?" The hiker said, "Look, I'm a hard-core bushwalker and when I'm not bushwalking, I'm out rock-climbing or back-country skiing, so I don't have time for girlfriends, but a talking frog is really cool!"



Equipment News

Consumable Gear

Two components make up the weight carried in your pack. First is the standard equipment (eg sleeping bag, tent, mat), a fixed weight that you have to carry in and out of a walk. Then there are the consumables, food and fuel, which vary according to the length of a walk but decrease to nothing (if you plan carefully) by the finish point

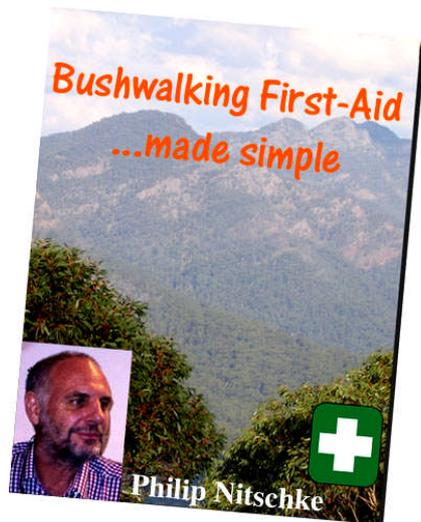
What if you could combine the two, so that once you've used the gear for its main purpose it gets eaten? Eastern Active Technologies (EAT) have done just that – visit their website www.ediblegear.com for a list of tempting yet functional treats.



Enjoying a nibble on a SnackPack

Why not try the SnackSack, a sleeping bag, made from a Gummiskin shell and Veggieloft fill and coming in a variety of flavours such as mango, strawberry, passionfruit or vanilla? After a good night's sleep (just don't sweat too much), wake up to find your breakfast warmly wrapped around you

Or the tough yet toothsome SnackPack, in two sizes depending on your appetite. Just be careful not to nibble away too much too early or you will end up with the problem of how to carry the rest of your uneaten gear.



New Approach to First-Aid

A First-aid kit can represent a bit of weight, with numerous types of bandages, creams and dressings, not to mention the complexity in knowing how and when to apply them. Stand by then for a new product set to revolutionise first-aid in the bush. Developed by an Australian physician for Australian conditions, the Philip Nitschke First-Aid kit replaces all of the existing paraphernalia with just a single syringe and 100ml dose of a really cool-coloured green pentobarbitone solution. Treatment is simplified as this can be generally applied to manage all symptoms. Whether it be a bone fracture, dislocation or just a very bad blister, if the patient is in pain and having difficulty keeping walking then it's time to apply the fast-acting long-lasting treatment. Along with its accompanying booklet "Bushwalking First Aid ...made simple", the Philip Nitschke First-Aid kit retails in all good outdoor shops for \$24.95.

Leech-Proof Clothing: New Season's Collection

With warmer, wetter conditions approaching, now is the time to refresh your bushwalking wardrobe with the latest collection of garments designed to offer protection from bloodsucking hangers-on while you stroll through moist ferny glades.

Available in a variety of colours and styles for both men and women, these seamless close-fitting clothes leave no gaps available for anything to crawl inside, allowing you to enjoy the great outdoors in full comfort and security.



A style for everyone, including all-over protection for the super-sensitive



Are You Fit to Walk?

Take Dr T's latest quiz to see if you have what it takes to be in the bush.

- 1. The walk is not going well and you have difficulty keeping up with the group, do you:**
 - a) Yell at the leader and blame them for your fitness problem
 - b) In confidence speak to the leader and discuss your problem
 - c) Say nothing and push on as if there is no problem
 - d) Moan to the other members of the group and blame someone else for your problem
- 2. You are leading a group into thick bush, it becomes clear that the majority do not want to go through it, do you:**
 - a) Forge on ahead anyway
 - b) Reassure the group and put the scrub bashers at the front to beat a track through
 - c) Reassess the situation and find a way around
 - d) Yell at the group and tell them they are a group of woosies
- 3. There has been an accident on a trip, do you:**
 - a) Butt in and interfere even though the leader is doing a good job of organising things
 - b) Leave the group without telling anyone in order to be the lone hero getting help
 - c) Assist the leader to assess the situation rationally and then work out a plan of action
 - d) Bring out your new Philip Nitschke first-aid kit and offer to help relieve the patient's suffering.
- 4. The scrub is getting thicker and you hate thick scrub, do you:**
 - a) Throw a wobbly and refuse to walk any further
 - b) Head to the back and follow the rest of the group
 - c) Get out the machete
 - d) Accept the situation and recall that the leader told you about the scrub when you booked on the walk
- 5. You have booked on a walk but decide that you want to walk a different route, do you:**
 - a) Call the leader and cancel your booking
 - b) Bring your own map and take over the walk
 - c) Go along anyway and be part of the group
 - d) Turn up to the start of the walk and then sit it out in your car
- 6. You are an avid supporter of the Mountain Cattlemen, do you:**
 - a) Go on a walk and severely bag anyone who thinks otherwise.
 - b) Let the politics go this weekend and just enjoy your time in the bush
 - c) Bring your horse along to carry your pack
 - d) Place 'No Greens' Stickers on all the cars
- 7. When you book on a walk, do you:**
 - a) Always overestimate your ability
 - b) Listen to the leader and take their advice
 - c) Book on anyway and worry about the consequences on the walk
 - d) Take offence if the leader quizzes you in an attempt to assess your fitness level
- 8. After a big walk, do you:**
 - a) Jump in the car and drive straight home
 - b) Join the rest of the group for a cake and coffee
 - c) Fail to thank the leader for his/her efforts and go home
 - d) Criticise the leader for every little thing that went wrong
- 9. The walk you were on went wrong, you are stranded at the bottom of a cliff and the tide is rising, do you:**
 - a) Panic
 - b) Assess the options and work with the rest of the group to find a solution to the problem
 - c) Inflammate the situation by calling the leader an idiot
 - d) Start swimming
- 10. After being rescued from the bottom of the cliff the media want to ask you some questions, do you:**
 - a) Immediately bag the leader and the club and let it be known that they are incompetent
 - b) Be diplomatic and talk like a politician.
 - c) Try to sell your story to the highest bidder
 - d) Get on the phone to Harry M Miller and organise a good deal

Answers: Of the forty possible answers, almost all have been observed on one walk or another, however only ten are correct. Test yourself by emailing your selections to yhabush@bigpond.com - if they are all correct we'll issue you with a permit to continue walking with us.

NEXT ISSUE's 10 QUESTION QUIZ: Are you a gear freak?