



2005's Keenest Walkers



Congratulations to John Belfio (left), reclaiming the Golden Boot award for the most days spent in the bush with YHA this year, 44 so far and on track to exceed 50 by the end of December.

At least four others have spent the equivalent of more than a month (30 days) walking, however the runner-up Silver Boot goes to Carlos Ramsay (right). Carlos would have been a major challenger for the Golden Boot if it wasn't for having to spend Saturday nights earning a living.



Finally, the Shiny Boot award for the most walks by someone in their debut year with YHA goes to Kenton Johanson for 20 days on trips, including two as a leader.



Ken Sussex, flanked by Tom and Paul reflects on finally reaching the summit of the Viking. Maybe another time he'll get a view (full story p3)

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Silly Billy Nominations

The other "achiever" for the year is the recipient of the "Silly Billy" award for personal suffering incurred on a walk purely as a result of their own avoidable actions. After a disappointingly sensible 2004, it is pleasing to report two frontrunners exhibiting some impressive silliness.

The first is the evangelist for lightweight bushwalking equipment who came off second-best following a pounding three-day encounter with some middleweight rain.

But surely the hot favourite has got to be the experienced walker who decided to use his MSR stove to start a campfire by lighting and placing it under a pile of wood. This was successful, the only problem was that it wasn't removed soon enough once the wood was ablaze. The campfire returned the favour and incinerated the stove.



New Website for 2006



Keep an eye out for our new-look website, due to launch shortly after the New Year.

Created by Swinburne Website Design student Nellie Goldfram, the overall layout is similar, but aims for a more relaxed, less formal style, reflecting the nature of club we like to think we are.

One of the features will be an updated photo gallery – if you've got some particularly good pictures from recent walks available for inclusion, email them (or a url if they are stored on the internet) to yhabush@bigpond.com Preferred resolution is 800 x 600 pixels, filesize ~200-300kB, we'll reduce the size as necessary later on.

**YHA BUSHWALKING COMMITTEE
2005/06**

President	Simon Walliss
Secretary	Greg Shepherd
Treasurer	Andres Vidovic
Walks Sec.	David Sisson
Social Sec.	Cynthia Bell
S & R	Ken Sussex
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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 2006.

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:

Tim Brooks
Richard Miller
David Sisson
John Sloan
Simon Walliss
Vanna Walsh

and Rob, Tom and Mike for "modelling" the fancy collars

Five things you can do to help the Leader

Most people naturally make it first priority to make sure their own needs are met, regardless of their fellow traveller's situation.

Bushwalking is a team sport, and so that everyone enjoys it, (including the leader!) we should be thinking less about ourselves and more about everyone else and the group. Some suggestions to this end:

1. A large group of people can be hard to manage, and a bit slow to react, so be responsive to the leader's requests or instructions. Rather than leaping into in-depth conversations while gathering to start the walk, leave them to a later point in the day when things are running smoothly.
2. Similarly, car shuffles can be complicated to organise. If you're a driver, volunteer yourself to the leader & be at the ready, without being annoyingly over-helpful.
3. Most people seem to want to walk in the middle of the group & follow along like sheep. Don't be shy to chat to those at the front or back, or make a newcomer feel welcome.
4. It's good etiquette & essential to keep the group together to ensure following walkers are not left wondering which direction to proceed in at track junctions. Either wait or leave an easy-to-see arrow on the ground.
5. The leader will appreciate your thanks (at least a goodbye) at the end of the walk. Remember, they're not paid to do this!

Tim Brooks

Tim was one of over a dozen leaders who led their first walk for YHA this year and has volunteered to continue in 2006. These are his impressions after the experience of his first walk.

A big thanks to everyone who has led a trip for us this year, one which featured over 80 events on the calendar.



Show our leaders your appreciation of their efforts

Tips for Better Bushwalking

#83 Leave your Pack on the Track

If you are walking in a group, particularly a large one, and need to duck aside for a moment, leave your pack by the side of the track or with the group if they have stopped. A lone pack is more noticeable than an absent walker, and will lessen the chance of you being left behind.

Conquest of the Viking

Melbourne Cup weekend, as Ken Sussex prepared to lead the nine of us out of the Howitt car park, there was a feeling that this attempt on the Viking circuit was going to succeed, ending Ken's frustrations at failing to get there several times over the past 25 years (see Yeti #22).

Although overcast, the clouds were high enough to allow views from Macalister Springs of the grand sweep of peaks from Mt Howitt around to the Viking. Despite many of us having visited Mt Howitt under much better conditions, all but one in the group felt they had to make the 20 minute side-trip and bag the summit one more time. Once at the top, it was so windy, that few stayed for more than a minute before dashing back to the relatively sheltered track. Following lunch on the Cross-Cut Saw we headed on to the summit of Mt Buggery for afternoon tea. Ken hadn't visited this area for a while – "last time I was here..." (this turning out to be the late 1970s) "there was a pair of knickers on that tree trunk". Comments from some of the other veterans in the group established that the knickers had still been there in the last 1990s, but now all there was to see was an unadorned snowgum. Someone had bugged off with them. Doesn't anything stay the same? It's anyone's guess why a person would leave their knickers around a tree in the first place, or what sort of desperate bushwalker would take possession of the weatherbeaten remnants years later.

The next regrouping was the summit of Mt Speculation. On a good day this is one of the best camp spots in Victoria, however today wasn't one of them. With it starting to drizzle, we headed downhill to choose a campsite, eschewing views for shelter. Drizzle turned to light rain as we put up our tents. Poor Mike (below) discovered he'd only brought along two out of three poles behind and struggled to make-do with a semi-erect tent. Unfortunately the water tended to drain into the tent rather than off to the side.



Just as it looked like we'd be witnessing the grand opening of the Mt Speculation Aquatic Centre, Mike shifted it to a better position under a tree and used a rope tied to the branches to give the tent some extra lift. The group's weather sages commented that rain rarely lasts for more than twelve hours so the next day should be pretty good.

At 7am next morning it was still raining. A few people learnt some useful lessons about tent-site selection that night. Any obvious depression had become a lake, and large puddles indicated the less-obvious depressions.

The rain eased by the time we started walking, however a constant 16 hours of it meant the 4WD track down to Catherine Saddle was more like a creek-bed. Just as the climb started up Mt Despair, there, hanging on a branch, was what we'd missed the day before – a pair of light blue knickers. They looked to be in fairly good condition, so I suspect carbon-dating would prove they couldn't have been the ones from Mt Buggery, so that means another pants-less bushwalker out roaming the high-country.

Someone who should have known better chose a wind-tunnel for a lunch spot. Twenty minutes later the group was begging to move on, entering a section of track where the route became less obvious. The Viking region of the Alpine Walking Track is a declared wilderness area, meaning all signs and markers have been removed. Fortunately a few AWT arrows had been left in place on the tricky section, allowing us to reach the Razor turnoff without too many wrong turns. No discussion was needed about whether to attempt the Razor or save it for another trip. Finding the path to its summit is a challenge in good visibility, we couldn't see it at all from the turnoff.

Signs had warned of damage in the region from severe storms in September however the scale of it was still a shock, becoming apparent during the descent to Viking Saddle. Massive trees had been either uprooted or broken like matchsticks across the track. Being a wilderness zone it is unlikely that anyone will clear the track with a chainsaw, so over time and more storms, the forested sections of the AWT could become very time-consuming to negotiate.

A couple of tents were already present when we arrived at Viking Saddle, a very pleasant open grassy area. Fortunately it is also quite a large spot, as parties of walkers arrived from the opposite direction, forming a tent-city at the mid-point of the circuit. The rain returned for a while as we set up camp, but finally stopped for good at 6pm. After a day of rain, all the wood was sodden, but Pete Eames, in a masterful display of bushcraft, was able to get a fire going within a natural shelter formed by a couple of boulders using just bark stripped from some Woollybutt trees and a slurp of metho. (*cont'd page 9*).



Transport: A guide for smoother journeys

YHA Bushwalking relies on private cars as transport for the vast majority of our walks. Trip fees cover booking and accommodation costs (where applicable), and while the leader will arrange car-pooling, transport costs are left up to the occupants of each vehicle to sort out privately. Occasionally this practice of putting 3-4 possible strangers together in the same vehicle results in problems and misunderstandings; the following is intended to provide a better understanding of the clubs' transport policy.

Why Cars? The alternative is a chartered coach. Once upon a time YHA Bushwalking used a renovated furniture van for most of its day and weekend walks. It was slow, drafty, the suspension could have been better but it made the walks very sociable, and the trip fee was all-inclusive. The furniture van is no longer on the road, so nowadays we only use a coach for long trips, however some clubs use a bus for most of their walks. If a coach is used, you have to book in advance in order to guarantee yourself a seat and, from the club's perspective, ensure there are sufficient numbers to make the trip financially viable. The conclusion is that using cars provides much greater flexibility both for walk organisers and participants.

Explain the Petrol Policy? The club's policy allows drivers to charge up to an amount equal to twice the petrol cost divided by the total number of people in the vehicle (including the driver). For example, with three passengers and \$20 of fuel used, the maximum amount chargeable is $2 \times 20 / 4 = \$10$ per passenger. This is not a premium intended as a profit or reward to the driver for taking people on the walk, but to account for the hidden costs of driving. The cost of travelling from A to B is more than just the fuel consumption. There is also "wear and tear" on other items which require either regular replacement or servicing. Eg, if tyres need replacing every 40,000km at \$600/set, then for a 400km journey there is \$6 of tyre wear alone (and that excludes any puncture repairs). Similarly accounting for oil, brakes, shock-absorbers etc, the true cost soon mounts up. In practice most drivers tend to apply the formula then round down to the nearest \$5 or \$10 depending on the length of the trip.

Sharing Driving On longer drives (mainly weekend trips), drivers are encouraged to either take regular breaks every 1-2 hours or share driving if their vehicle isn't "difficult" to drive. Suitably licenced passengers should help out where possible unless they have concerns about their ability to manage the vehicle (eg if they aren't used to a manual gearbox). There can be some insurance consequences to be aware of. Some policies only allow specific persons to drive a vehicle other than the owner (often the case with company cars). From a passenger's perspective, you need to be aware that your own policy will not cover you when driving another vehicle. For example if you have comprehensive insurance for your own car but drive someone else's which doesn't, then in the event of an accident you may be liable for any property damage.

Swapping Vehicles Sometimes passengers return with a different driver to the one they arrived with. If this was agreed to by all involved before the trip, then the passenger pays each driver for half the journey. Where it wasn't pre-arranged, and the first driver doesn't have a replacement passenger for the return journey, they are to be paid as if the entire trip was completed with them. In this case, the passenger is not obliged to pay the second driver anything.

As a Driver:

- You have a responsibility to return the passengers to the same point you picked them up from. If you are unwilling to do so, any alternative arrangement should be agreed with the passengers before the start of the trip.
- Try to estimate the fuel cost well before the end of the journey so that you can advise the passengers if asked; you should certainly have a fair idea by the halfway point.

As a Passenger:

- If you are worried about how much the fuel cost will be, ask the driver for an estimate at the start of the trip (it may help if you have an ideal of the total distance)
- Make sure you have the money in a form that doesn't require more than \$5 change. If you need to visit an ATM, don't wait until you arrive at your front gate before telling the driver.
- If you would like to get dropped off at a different place to where you were picked up, make sure the driver is aware of this (and agrees to it) at the start of the trip.

Complaints? If you experience any problems arising from car-pooling (eg being overcharged, not being paid, dangerous driving behaviour)

- Make the other person aware that you have a disagreement with them.
- Report the details to a member of the Bushwalking committee (preferably someone who was on the walk)

Unfortunately there have been a few people who repeatedly abuse the system; if any pattern of misbehaviour is detected, the individuals concerned will be warned by the club and may be barred from future participation (or told to make their own way to a walk).



Keep walk costs down by sharing with lots of passengers!!

In Profile - John Sloan

How long have you been walking with YHA?

Five years, since 2000.

What attracted you to the club? I wanted to get into bushwalking, had heard of YHA and decided to try it out.

First walk? An easy, relaxing Sunday walk to the Brisbane Ranges.

Favourite walk? New Zealand, Kepler and Dusky Tracks (Dec 2003). A variety of landscapes and experiences, such as walking in a blizzard and being submerged up to my waist in a muddy swamp. A tough walk, one of the hardest I've done, but very rewarding.

Another favourite is Major Mitchell Plateau, the Grampians being a favourite area of mine in Victoria.

Memorable Moment? A weekend at Bluff Hut - it rained all day Saturday going up to the hut, we weren't looking forward to pitching our tents in the rain. As we arrived a band of bikies passed us - we thought they were going to take over the place, instead they departed, leaving an open fire and room for fifteen of us to sleep.

A less fond memory? Easter (2002) in the Mt Jagungal region. The leader decided to climb out of the valley so as not to be too cold at night. This involved two exhausting hours bashing through knee-high scrub. Fortunately I at least had gaiters. Turned out the leader (Bruce Meincke) was right though, it paid off to camp at the new spot.

Steamiest thing you've seen on a walk? At Vaughan Springs base-camp several years ago, at the end of the day's walking, the leader asked if anyone wanted to give her a massage. After some hesitation, one of the younger guys in the group, about two decades her junior, eventually stepped forward and began giving her a neck and shoulder massage. A few knowing glances were exchanged between some of the others watching... After several minutes he asked if she had any oil; she produced a bottle from her pack, removed her top and lay on her stomach with anticipation.

Rubbing the oil into her bare skin, he began caressing her slowly. His hands explored every lubricated contour of her body while his fingers probed for the keys that would unlock her most deep-rooted desires, little realising they weren't shackled to begin with. This went on for an hour; long before then everyone watching felt uncomfortably voyeuristic and found other things to do, but there was no escaping the moans of pleasure which echoed throughout the evening sky all the way to Castlemaine.

For the rest of the trip they couldn't keep their hands of each other - it was clear that it would be a matter of a very short time before the oil and lube progressed to a full servicing!



Funny Moment? At Walhalla, a dozen of us had just about walked past a bloke sunbaking nude by the river before he awoke surprised and realised we were there.

Favourite Bush Recipe? Pasta with kebana, mushrooms and garlic

Destination you'd most like to visit? In Australia, the Kimberleys, elsewhere Antarctica and walking in Yellowstone National Park (USA) or the Canadian Rockies.

Favourite Movies? *King Kong* (1933 version) and *Shane*.

Advice for new walkers? Always talk to the leader beforehand if you're unsure about the area being walked or the grade.

Boots For Sale

Brand-new (never worn) Salomon walking boots

Size: UK 9½ (US11), women's medium width, lightweight

Colour: Sand \$70 (were \$209)

Contact: Joanne Cochrane 9826 9420

Next Issue:

Peter Eames tells all about his favourite walks, most embarrassing moment, the best thing about a weekend in the bush and "speed-dating" sheep.



Dr T's Walks from the Vault

2 – “A BIG DAY ON MT BULLFIGHT”

On a wet misty September day, five walkers set out for what would be a very eventful big day walk - the destination Mt Bullfight, near Lake Mountain. A circuit walk was planned that would take in the summit and ridge line and then descend through Mountain Ash forest, eventually returning to the cars via an old logging road. Three of the group were experienced club-walkers but two were first timers; they never walked with YHA again.

The walk started well and the summit was reached easily. Patches of snow remained on the ground from falls earlier in the week. Lunch was cut short by the cold wind and by now intermittent rain. Keeping a brisk pace, we followed the ridge south to the end of the relatively flat upper ridge. After some consultation with the map we descended an ill defined spur which we hoped would take us to a logging track approximately 1.5km away.

At times the spur was easy to follow but then it flattened out and all we could do was follow the compass and keep descending in the knowledge that as long as we continued down we would eventually reach the road. We felt that we were progressing well and time was on our side until coming upon a set of cliffs and a gully system that wasn't on the map. This caused some consternation as we couldn't quite pick our actual position. We eventually decided that the map had been drawn from aerial photographs and that the features that we were looking at could not have been visible due to the heavy tree cover at the time the area was surveyed.

The scrub turned to thick logging regrowth and fallen timber, progress slowed as we bashed our way through it. It was getting late in the afternoon and we felt that given the time we'd been walking we should have reached the road by now - maybe we had gone past its position? Conversation stopped, the map was consulted. The thought crossed our minds that maybe the map was wrong, the road didn't exist and we'd end up deep in the valley. Some members of the group started to think that they should have listened to the leader and carried warmer clothes and a bivvy bag just in case.... We debated what to do. Tension was rising

One navigator felt that we should change our bearing 90° and walk in a 'safer direction' - as no-one else had any better ideas, that is what we did. With dusk looming, we pushed on for several hundred metres which took 30-40 minutes due to the thickening scrub. Hearing thunder rolling in from the distance, we consulted the map and changed back to our original bearing. Then, in the looming darkness, running across our path we saw a very ill-defined snig track. It must lead somewhere so we followed it, before long the snig track dropped abruptly onto a road, just as the clouds opened with a deafening roar of thunder and heavy rain. All were relieved that we wouldn't have to spend the night out, especially those who were ill equipped for the circumstances. We had walked 13km in 7 hours at an average speed of 1.8km per hour, a testimony to the thickness of the bush. On reflection, we realised that if we had continued in our original direction for a few more minutes we would have walked on to the road an hour earlier.

The lesson of course is that it is easy to overestimate distance when travelling through thick bush. Walking back to the cars in the dark we thought about previous memorable walks and looked forward to the next Big Day Walk.

Let's have some Respect.

I've been bush-walking for many years and have known many leaders, some excellent but all with a sense of responsibility. Leading a group of walkers used to be also a moral sort of endeavor. Walkers were reminded of the do's and don'ts of walking in the bush at the start of the walk. During the walk, if someone was tired and thought they couldn't make it, the leader was always encouraging, spurring on and reminding the straggler and the other walkers that this activity was also to temper your moral fibre: you were expected to try and do your best under any circumstances. Regretfully in the past few years, there have been some very poor examples of leadership.

The main purpose of walking used to be enjoying the bush, its plants, flowers and animals. The leaders always rammed into the walkers to respect the bush: do not touch anything and leave it as you found it, no picking up wild-flowers, no disturbing of animals, not stressing them with too much attention and if an animal was found injured or in strife try to help (if not able to do so the, ranger was made aware of the problem).

Now walkers can do just about anything: if you are a pretty girl and act coquettish you can pick up wild flowers by the bunch; testosterone-loaded males can throw stones at wild animals and no-one will say a single word and object to such behavior. This is unacceptable. Walkers now are completely unaware of their surroundings: they don't see, they don't hear, they don't think about the bush at all.

There have to be rules and these rules have to be respected. The leader can only remind the group about the rules and regulations but all the walkers have an obligation to stop and prevent bad behavior: everybody should be responsible for everybody else. In such situations the leaders have to state loud and clearly that such behavior is not accepted and if the individuals responsible do not stop they should simply be asked to never return.

Vanna Walsh



Respect the wildlife and it will reward you

In Brief

Grampians – New Overnight Camping Rules

The registration system required for overnight walks to the Major Mitchell plateau has been extended to the two other popular remote camping locations in the Grampians, The Fortress and Mt Difficult.

A maximum group size of 12 is allowed, camping is restricted to specific sites, all of which are now fuel-stove only. Registration is free – leaders need to provide details of their group and planned route to the Brambuk visitor centre at Halls Gap (ph 5356 4381).



Mt Difficult – not as easy to camp near anymore

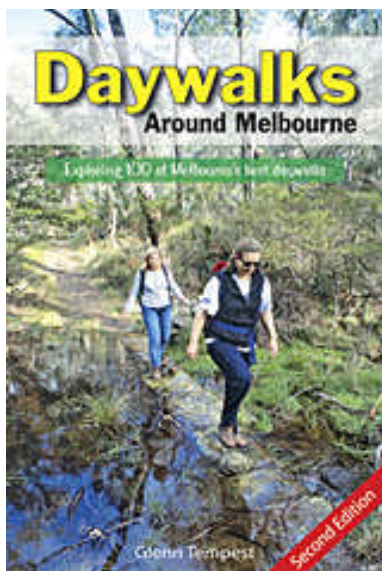
Ropers Hut to be Rebuilt

After initially refusing permission for Ropers Hut to be replaced following its destruction in the 2003 alpine bushfire, the DSE has had a change of heart and approved it to be rebuilt. The hut provided the only refuge in the exposed part of the Bogong High Plains north of Mt Nelse. Construction is likely to be done by volunteers during 2006/07 – it is uncertain whether the budget will permit a similar type of reconstruction to that of the new Federation or Michell huts or a similar style to the rudimentary original.

New Werribee Regional Park

Plans for a new park along the Werribee River have been tabled for public comment. A strip of 230 hectares between the Maltby bypass and Port Phillip Bay have been transferred from Melbourne Water to Parks Victoria, with 8km of new walking/cycling trails through wetlands planned to link with the existing bayside trails. Submissions are sought regarding the facilities and activities to be provided in the park, as well as place-name suggestions for the trails, picnic grounds and other sites of interest. The closing date for public submissions is Dec 23rd 2005 – for more details go to <http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/1ministry.cfm?story=145>

Book Review



Glenn Tempest. *Daywalks around Melbourne: exploring 100 of Melbourne's best daywalks*. Second edition. Open Spaces Publishing, 2005. 240 pages. \$35.00.

The second edition of Glenn Tempest's *Daywalks* improves on the impressive standard of the first edition by making contours a little clearer on the maps and adding 20 new walks. The great majority of walks are well thought out circuits and the book includes a number of routes that have not been described in recent guides.

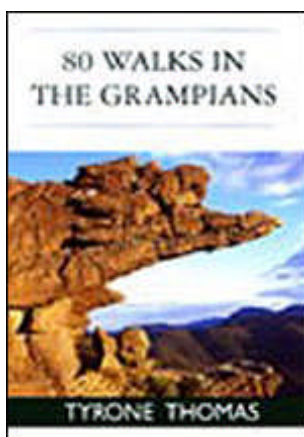
Together with John Chapman's recent Victorian guidebooks, Tempest's publications offer an excellent selection of walks, accurately described and in an attractive colour format. Perhaps the main difference between the two authors is that Tempest covers more walks, but in slightly less detail and with less photos. While there are a few longer, more challenging, walks, those in Tempest's book tend to be shorter and more 'family' oriented than in Chapman's books. Most walks in this book are

timed at three hours or less. In this respect *Daywalks around Melbourne* is a successor to Tyrone Thomas' *120 walks in Victoria*, although with infinitely better book design and highly legible maps.

Highly recommended for those who prefer shorter walks. **David Sisson**.

If there is a demand for you to stock walking guidebooks, this should be your first choice. Glenn Tempest's website is www.osp.com.au He also distributes John Chapman's books (which I also like a great deal). His phone is 9372 0665.

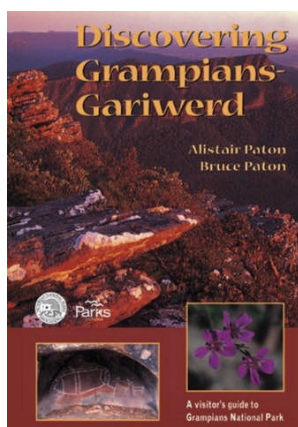
Book Reviews - Grampians Guides



Tyrone Thomas. *80 walks in the Grampians*. New [6th] edition. Michelle Anderson Publishing, 2003. 257 pages. \$20.00.

In his latest Grampians guidebook, Tyrone T. Thomas has expanded the number of walks covered from 50 to 80. Many of these new walks fall into the 'family walk' category, often quite short strolls from a car park. Over six editions Thomas has refined his notes and they are clear, concise and describe a comprehensive selection of routes. However Thomas's favourite walk on Hollow Mountain has been omitted as it followed a route that the authorities took exception to. This resulted them refusing to sell the 5th edition in park shops.

The problem with Thomas's books has always been the maps. If you are prepared to concentrate there is a wealth of information in them, but they tended to be cluttered and difficult to read. Perhaps I'm just getting used to them, but there appears to be a slight improvement in this book, particularly on those covering shorter walks.



Alistair and Bruce Paton. *Discovering Grampians-Gariwerd*. Victorian National Parks Association, 2004. 112 pages. \$20.00.

The selection of 45 day walks includes most of the old favourites and they are covered in adequate but not comprehensive detail. The book has only three overnight walks: The Major Mitchell Plateau, Mt Difficult - Briggs Bluff and a walk to The Fortress on the Victoria Range returning the same way. Like the day walks they are covered in adequate detail, but there is nothing new here.

The maps are rather the opposite of those in the Tyrone Thomas book, there is too little information rather than too much. Only creeks, roads and tracks are included and without any contours, shading or even cliff lines shown, it is very difficult to get a feeling for the lie of the land from them. The book is also handicapped by the lack of an index.

The thing to remember when reading any book produced by the V.N.P.A. is that the publisher is a lobby group. Previous V.N.P.A. books such as the Prom guide have been burdened by political point scoring, but apart from a brief but rather revisionist history section, this book isn't too bad. The only significant point is that the traditional name for a feature is almost always prefixed by an Aboriginal name, which is a little cumbersome. However in a few cases the traditional name for a well known location is omitted altogether. This renders descriptions of a few walks nearly incomprehensible to those familiar with the area and it may have been better to include the more familiar names in brackets.

Garry Van Dijk. *The Grampians walks: a selection of walks throughout the Grampians*. [3rd edition] Garry Van Dijk, 2003. 68 pages.

This interesting self published book is well worth having a look at, but it is rather hard to find in shops. However the first edition, published in 2000, can be downloaded from <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~dybc/grampians.htm> It covers 31 day walks, concentrated on the area around Halls Gap but extending north to Mt Zero, south to Mt Sturgeon and west to Mt Difficult. There are no descriptions of locations in the far west such as the Victoria Range and Asses Ears.

The notes are clear and fairly detailed with few ambiguities. All the popular areas are covered plus a few of the author's favourites. Walk times vary between one hour and ten hours and some of the longer 'day' walks such as the Mount Difficult Range and the Major Mitchell Plateau might be better classified as overnight walks. The maps are clear, easy to understand and show vital features such as landmarks, creeks and cliff lines. They are about as informative as is possible without showing contour lines or using colour printing. Summed up, a very impressive effort, especially for a self published book.

Summary: While Garry Van Dijk's book is quite good, it has only limited coverage and is very hard to obtain. Essentially the Paton's book doesn't offer anything that Thomas's book lacks and as the Paton's book has much less information I would tend to favour the Thomas book. Whichever one you use, be sure to take some decent maps with you. *David Sisson.*

Equipment News - Government gadgets to help keep walkers on track

Are you one of those people who love going bushwalking, but navigation isn't your strong point? Those wavy lines on a map are just sooo confusing? If this has prevented you from doing much more than tagging along on a Sunday walk, two new federal government initiatives may give you the confidence to venture further afield.

Firstly, from Environment Minister Ian Campbell comes the Safety-Collar. Simply programme in where you would like to go, then if you happen to wander astray, a gentle electric shock alerts you to study the map a bit more closely and maybe change direction. Originating from surplus stock as a result of a collapsed deal between the federal government,

the MCAV and the Victorian government, the collars have been remodelled and released under the minister's "Heritage" label. Three styles are currently available (right), the "Bless Me Father", "Mock Tudor" and "Down Boy!", with more promised to follow soon.

The downside is that they only work in the Victorian High Country and cost \$10,000 each (you don't expect the tax-payer to subsidise you do you?)



Heritage Collars – A gentle electric shock alerts walkers when they wander off-course.



A second, much cheaper option, is courtesy of Attorney General Philip Ruddock (left). Philip doesn't look as though he manages to get outdoors much himself, but that hasn't stopped him coming up with a nifty gadget for walkers that is free and has nationwide coverage, the only catch being there are strict eligibility criteria. To apply, visit any government office chanting "Allah is great, down with all infidels" and you should be granted an extensive interview. This can take several days, or even weeks, so make sure you can spare the time, however if successful you will given a free bracelet and

subscription to the government's satellite monitoring service for up to twelve months. During this time you can roam throughout the bush, knowing that if you find yourself geographically embarrassed and unable to report your position, a squad of Philip's top men will locate and whisk you back to civilisation in no time.

(Conquest of the Viking – cont'd from p3) We were the sole group able to get a fire going, so a few of the other campers came to join us and find out what club the firemaking maestros belonged to. "YHA Bushwalking", said a Melbourne Bushwalker when told – "I went on one of their trips a few years ago, somewhere in this area." More details emerged as memories drifted to the surface – "there was someone on the trip who smoked a lot and read a lot – I lent him my copy of (Jack Kerouac's) 'On the Road' and he never returned it despite a few phone calls". This was a bit of a worry for our reputation – there's plenty of people in the club who take years to return borrowed books but the possibility we have a closet Beatnik in our midst? – that needs investigating!

The moon was in the wrong phase to be seen that weekend, but with the rain stopped, there were numerous glimpses upwards during the evening to see if any stars had appeared. Not to worry said the weather sages in the group, it's rare to stay cloudy for more than two days. At 7am next morning we still couldn't see more than a few hundred metres from the campsite.

Oct 31st 2005 was finally it, the culmination of many year's of disappointment for some, as we worked our way up past more fallen trees towards the summit of the Viking. Some tricky rock-scrambling and pack-hauling suggested we were getting close, even though we still couldn't see anything through what was close to a white-out. And then we hit a ridge. To the left led to the summit, right led to South Viking and the track down to the Wonnangatta River. Surprisingly, half the group chose to wait here while the rest, led by Ken headed off until finally we arrived at a cairn containing a ubiquitous Timbertop school lunch-box whose label confirmed that were indeed on top of the Viking. This being real life and not a fairy tale, we couldn't see a thing, however we weren't gazing into nothingness from just anywhere, this was nothingness from the top of the Viking, nothingness that took a lot of effort to gaze out upon, and that felt special.



Trout supper – Paul's catch from the Wonnangatta at the final night's campsite



Are You A Gear Freak?

Take Dr T's latest quiz to see if you are seriously equipped outdoors.

1. How many tents do you own?

- None, I only do day walks
- Seven; a four-season tent, a 2-man 3-season tent, a 3-man 2-season tent, a 1-man 1-season tent, and 3 others
- Three; a one-person coffin tent, a winter snow tent and a two-person lightweight tent.
- One, I got it at Aussie Disposals, it's single skin, made of nylon, leaks when raining, but is a really cool shade of blue.

2. What is the main attraction in Little Bourke St, Melbourne?

- The Law Courts
- Camera shops
- Paddy Pallin, Mountain Designs, Snowgum, Bogong, ...paradise
- Chinatown

3. When around a campfire what topics of conversation do you most enjoy?

- Other people's bushwalking gear.
- Gossip about other club members not on the walk.
- Mortgage rates and investment income.
- Your own latest bushwalking gear and its attributes and uses.

4. Do you wear special underwear on a multi-day walk?

- Of course, I have the latest microfabric moisture wicking undies from Macpac, one pair for each day of the walk.
- No.
- No, I don't wear any. It stops any chafing and helps keep the tackle cool, especially when combined with baggy shorts.
- No, I am a lightweight walker; one normal pair worn inside-out & back to front is more than enough for the whole walk.

5. What type of stove do you own?

- A modified primus blowtorch.
- A baked-bean tin with Trangia burner inside.
- MSR multi fuel, Trangia, Coleman
- None, I live off pre-cooked pasta and salad, so I don't need one

6. What item of equipment would you never go without on a walk?

- A tent
- Two pairs of jeans and a hair dryer.
- An altimeter, a GPS, a two way radio/scanner, a 12MP digital camera and a portable DVD player.
- My titanium tent pegs.

7. Is your wet weather gear made of a special fabric?

- Yes, the guy in the shop said it was the best, but it was the colour that convinced me to buy it.
- Yes, it has a blue rubber like coating on the inside.
- No, I just bought it at the \$2 shop
- Yes, it has the latest 3 layer Stormtech Goretex membrane

8. Where do you normally purchase your bushwalking gear?

- The Little Bourke St - Hardware Lane precinct
- I order it on the internet from a specialist hi-tech, ultra-lightweight equipment company in the US
- K-Mart
- The "Australian Geographic" shop

9. Do you wait for a sale before purchasing new outdoor gear?

- No way, if it's on sale it means it's been in-store for more than two weeks.
- No, I never buy any special gear, I just use old work clothes.
- Always, I never pay full price for anything.
- No, I just buy mine second hand at the STAV show.

10. What type of trousers do you wear when walking?

- Jeans
- A pair of lightweight microfabric cordura walking trousers with multiple pockets.
- The khaki woollen ex-army trousers I got at Aussie Disposals 30 years ago.
- Pink-striped thermal longs

Answers: 1) a=1 b=4 c=3 d=2 2) a=1 b=3 c=4 d=2 3) a=3 b=2 c=1 d=4 4) a=4 b=1 c=3 d=2 5) a=2 b=3 c=4 d=1
6) a=2 b=1 c=4 d=3 7) a=3 b=2 c=1 d=4 8) a=3 b=4 c=2 d=1 9) a=4 b=1 c=3 d=2 10) a=1 b=4 c=2 d=3

Score: 31 – 40: You are a real gear freak, email me, I'm looking for someone like you, I want to start a gear discussion group.

21 – 30: Only trying, you need to spend more time looking at new gear in outdoor shops.

11 – 20: You're getting there, let some moths out of your wallet and spend some money on gear rather than shares.

1 – 10: A pathetic score, do you actually do any walking (or shopping)?