



Summer Selection

Once again the latest Walks Programme caters for a broad range of tastes. Here's a selection of a scenic Easter overnight walk, a relaxing Sunday walk and a challenging pack-carry to tempt you.

Rumble in Jagungal Mar 21-24th

Mt Jagungal is a 2000m+ peak isolated to the north of the Mt Kosciuszko main range. The area is a favourite with walkers, offering lots of trails, easy off-track walking and huts to base an evening camp around. The planned route this Easter will start at Round Mountain, visiting Doubtful River waterfalls, Cesjacks hut and of course the summit of Mt Jagungal itself. Medium+ and Easy-medium pack-carry options will be offered; you will need good wet weather clothing as it is an alpine area, but is much less exposed than the Main Range and a good way for novice pack carriers to spend Easter.

Enquiries: Ken Sussex 9495 1350

Surf Coast walk Sunday Feb 17th

Last October, the club did a Sunday walk covering a part of the Surf Coast Walk from Bells Beach to Point Addis. This proved very popular, with 41 walkers, so on 17th February, the club will do another section of this walk from Anglesea to Point Addis.

The walk starts with a 5km loop walk around Anglesea passing the golf course where we should see kangaroos. Then, after an extended lunch break in Anglesea, we'll continue a further 7km to Point Addis along the cliff tops. The walk is rated easy - medium as there are hills, but if you want a really easy option you can choose not to continue onto Point Addis, and have a restful afternoon in Anglesea. *(continued page 3)*

Gear Swap Meet - March 3rd

For every newcomer wanting to get started with some basic bushwalking gear that won't cost a small fortune, there is always a more experienced walker looking to sell their current equipment so they will have an excuse to treat themselves to the latest releases. Clubnight March 3rd is when these two groups shall meet and help each other out. It's better than eBay - there's no commission, no postage, and what you see is what you get. If you have anything to sell, bring it along on the night or send the details to yhabush@bigpond.com by Feb 27th and we'll publish or email a list beforehand.



The view of the Jamison Valley from the National Pass circuit was one of the highlights of the Melbourne Cup weekend trip to the Blue Mountains. More details and pictures page 4 (photo: Jodie Hill)

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2007 Boot Winners

Congratulations to Paul Gottliebshen (left) for the 2007 Golden Boot (most overall walks) and David Sale for the Silver Boot (most day walks) in his first full calendar year with YHA. David shares his impressions of his first year with the club on page 7.

For details of the more dubious "Silly Billy" award nominees, turn to page 3.

**YHA BUSHWALKING COMMITTEE
2007/08**

President	David Sisson
Secretary/Website	Hooi-Soon Khoo
Treasurer	Cynthia Bell
Walks Sec. (Weekends)	Paul Gottliebson
Walks Sec (Sundays)	Martin Cousins
Clubnight Coordinator	Jane Bateson
Social Secretary	Andrew Stevenson
Search & Rescue Rep	Simon Walliss
General committee	Ron Bell
	Ken Sussex
	Sing Wong

Yeti Editor (non-committee) Stephen Smith

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 May 1st 2008.

YETI ONLINE

"Yeti" has its own website www.yhabush.org.au/Yeti 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

Take advantage of the opportunity to promote your upcoming trips in YETI with a more detailed description than space in the programme allows. Please contact the editor with the details.

YHA ACTIVITIES CLUBNIGHT

Is held on Monday nights at the Jasper Hotel (formerly YWCA) building, 1st floor 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:

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Sunday Sensations

By Rafal Rutkowski

I'm walking in a windy valley
The air so fresh, my eyes rejoice
A feast of nature's magic power
I close my eyes to hear her voice

My senses dance a pleasant tune
Its melody spreads through my soul
In delightful harmony of the moment
I maintain my focus on our goal

The walking pace is intermediate
With conversations all around
Through mutual feelings of belonging
We seem to glide along the ground

Among the chorus of empty stomachs
And weary bodies everywhere
To quench the growing appetite
We start to eat what we've prepared

This summer day, so clear and blue
A sense of freedom dwells inside
The sun is dancing in the sky
Its rays so bright, one cannot hide

And so it passed, a Sunday walk
The experience was worthwhile
Our memories will last forever
They'll always make us smile ☺

Coming Next Issue

- The tale of how six people and a slug traversed the Western Arthurs
- Trip reports from the Easter walks
- Profile of new committee members

Yeti #31 will be published in May. Anyone wishing to publicise an event they are organising between May and August is invited to submit a short article (with photos if possible) by May 1st 2008.

Summer Selection (cont'd from p1)

There will be a few luxuries not normally encountered on Sunday walks, as walkers will get the option of buying lunch at Anglesea, where there are plenty of food choices. There's also a bakery at the walk start, toilets at the start, middle, and end of the walk and maybe the chance to go swimming (so bring your cossies - unlike October's walk we will not be taking in the nudist beach!)

Those wanting to go directly to the walk start, rather than meeting at Flagstaff at 9am, can meet at 10.30am at the Tourist Information Centre, 15 Cameron Rd Anglesea. Enquiries: Chris Marney 9620 2363 or 0419 562 625.

Dargo River Mar 8-10th

Finally comes a medium-hard pack carry in the historic Dargo river gold mining country south of Mt Hotham. The walk starts from Dinner Plain, heading to the summit of scenic Mt Tabletop before descending SW to the Dargo river. The river is followed upstream for a few kilometres to the remnants of Louisville gold mining settlement, before heading up a spur back towards the Dinner Plain road at Paw Paw plain. This is recommended for experienced walkers only, as it contains off-track sections, some of which may be affected by fire regrowth, but if you don't mind getting your feet wet, it will be challenging but rewarding. Enquiries: Ken Sussex 9495 1350

Long weekends in Tasmania's Huon Valley

Tasmania's Huon Valley region south of Hobart is the source of many of the fruit and berries we are currently enjoying, but the farming country borders the fringe of the SW wilderness region, with some relatively easily accessed Alpine peaks and lakes above 1000m, as well as the southern coastline.

A small trip is offered over the Labour Day weekend for those also able to take the Friday off work as well (Mar 7-10th inclusive). Accommodation will be a base-camp on the property of Richard Miller & Jan Findlay, two YHA Bushwalkers now living in Tasmania; hot showers will be available but you will need either need a tent to camp on the lawn or at least a sleeping mat and sleeping bag for a berth on the floor of a shed. Transport will be via an 8 seater mini-van, with eating out at local cafés or perhaps a BBQ. Subject to good weather conditions, medium-grade day walks are planned to Hartz Peak, Lake Skinner and Mt Wellington, with some easier options being either a coastal walk with views across to Bruny Island, Tahune forest or half-day walks to Duckhole Lake and Adamsons Falls.

Other than airfares, the only cost will be petrol-sharing (approximately \$50 depending on numbers). Enquiries: Stephen 9387 6481

For those preferring more luxurious accommodation, an Easter trip is also being planned staying at a lodge in or around Geeveston. Similar walk options will be offered, although some may extend further south, including the start of the South Coast track to South Cape bay and a view of Australia's southernmost point.

Silly Billy Winner

There had been concerns that there weren't any incidents in 2007 worthy of a Silly Billy nomination, however a call for suggestions amongst the sixty or so present at the Christmas dinner produced some worthy nominations.

Firstly there was ?? for the creative way she managed to fall into the Werribee river chasing after her sunglasses. Then came Brad for his effort in preparing a gourmet meal, then just as it was ready to eat, knocking his billy off the stove and spilling the contents over the floor of Federation hut. To prove this was no fluke, he then cooked up a "standby" meal and did exactly the same thing again.

The Mt Field Easter trip was a fertile ground for Silly Billy candidates, with three nominations. Deciding to use "nature's fridge" instead of the crowded generator-driven one in the lodge, Louise placed her food outside on the verandah, forgetting that there is more to Tasmania's nature than frosty nights. Consequently there were only a few scraps left over by next morning. Also experiencing food problems were Martin, Jodie and David who, deciding to eat out, went on a 90 minute round trip to the nearest town at the base of the mountain only to find the hotel was closed and all they were able to come back with was a frozen pizza.

The winner however was David Sisson, for going for a "private" wash before dark in a lake at exactly the same time dozens of others were positioned around the lake shore platypus-watching with binoculars and telephoto lenses. No platypuses turned up that evening, as they along with everyone else were distracted by a lone figure bathing in the freezing water. This was David's third Silly Billy overall, an outright record after sharing two each with Mark Beyer, something must qualify for some sort of lifetime achievement award,. Two of the wins were achieved by making a dick of himself in a Tasmanian lake, so there's obviously a winning formula here for any aspirants with an eye on future trophies!

Clubnight Feb 18th - Camping in Iceland

In July last year, Chris Marney went to Iceland for 10 days, hired a car and travelled around Road 1 which circles the island, camping along the way. Come along to clubnight March 3rd to see his photos and videos of the spectacular



Icelandic scenery, which featured plenty of walks to glaciers, volcanic sites and waterfalls. Chris will also try to answer some of your common questions on going to Iceland such as:

Is it cold ?

Does it get dark ?

Does beer really cost \$16 a pot ?

Blue Mountains - Nov '07

The Cup Weekend trip to the Blue Mountains turned out to be quite successful, with many of the dozen or so who participated keen to do some more walking in the region.

We did three walks – the Grand Canyon from Blackheath, Jamison Valley from Wentworth Falls and the Katoomba clifftops, but there are a number of other equally good walks in the region that could also be done using public transport, although most tracks in the Grose Valley area are still closed as a result of a bushfire in late 2006 – it isn't worth doing another trip until this area is reopened. It is also worth noting that the Jamison valley tracks from Wentworth Falls are closed periodically due to major track maintenance; the National Pass track had only recently been reopened during our visit, with another trail expected to be closed soon.



The walks are unlike anything in Victoria, particularly the Grand Canyon walk, where a marked track and guardrail (it would be extremely dangerous without one) winding around the inside of a narrow chasm (see photo above) is probably unique in Australia.

Also getting the thumbs up was Katoomba YHA Hostel, definitely worthy of its four-star backpacker rating. The rooms were comfortable, with a spacious lounge and dining area and the staff were very helpful.

Track Closures - Victoria

It is a difficult time to plan walks at the moment. Many popular tracks in Victoria's high country are still closed due to either last summer's fires or the winter floods, whilst sections of the Grampians are still closed two years on from their fires. Leaders are advised to check with Parks Victoria about the status of track closures in an area they are planning any walks to – their website will show what is currently open, whilst a phone call will provide a more up to date indication of when a closed route is likely to reopen. On no account should any official club trip use tracks which are marked as closed.

The worst hit areas are those only for which the only practical 2WD access is via Licola such as Lake Tali Karng, The Crinoline, Mt Reynard, Bryces Gorge and Wonnangatta Station. The actual walking tracks for these locations are listed as reopened, but the Tamboritha access

Katoomba has numerous cafés and restaurants of a generally high standard, providing plenty of variety for eating out, although most are fairly cosy and would have trouble fitting in large groups.



Ducking under a Grand Canyon waterfall (photo: Jodie Hill)

A trip to the Blue Mountains wouldn't be complete without the notorious mist that fills every valley, obscuring the iconic views. The mist put in an appearance at times during our visit, but it wasn't enough to spoil any of the three main walks – it actually adds to the atmosphere when walking through canyons or the forested valley floor. Visits to this area have been very infrequent recently, but as it has so much to offer, this is an interstate trip that is definitely recommended to be on the programme more often.

road and bridge were unfortunately washed away twice in 2007, with repairs unlikely to be completed until well into 2008. The Walhalla region is the other main one with numerous closures.

The Crosscut Saw and Razor-Viking tracks are reopened, however although the road to Cobbler Lake is open, Mt Cobber itself and the Cobbler Plateau are still closed (this may mean that Cobbler trip listed in this summer's programme won't be able to go ahead).

Notable closures in the Grampians are the Major Mitchell plateau and Mt Rosea, most of the Wonderland Range trails, Tower Hill and the Asses Ears. No committed reopening date has been given for these areas.

Some good news is that all the major Mt Buffalo tracks, including Mt McLeod and North Buffalo are now reopened (a base-camp there is long overdue), and there are no restrictions in the Bogong/Falls Ck/Hotham areas.

A Chilling Adventure

On 8th August 2007 it began raining in Tasmania. Not any ordinary rain but a one in twenty year deluge of 200mm within a 24 hour period. For the YHA Bushwalking party nearing the end of the Overland Track at Pine Valley hut, this sustained downpour caused major problems, not least for Tom Lun in this extract from his diary entry of 9th August.

“The River has Broken its Banks!”

I don't think I've witnessed that much continuous heavy rain like last night. The heavy rain disturbed what would have been perfect quietness in the Tasmanian wilderness.

After breakfast, we packed and walked out in the cold rainy day. I was still looking at the gloomy sky above, contemplating whether the blue sky would magically appear when Bruce told me, “Paul came back and advised us that the river has broken its banks”. The statement meant very little to me until I witnessed the first submerged boardwalk out of Pine Valley Hut. A rushing stream knee high in depth now submerged what was an easily traversable boardwalk up until yesterday. The Cephissus Creek had really broken its banks! I just could not believe the amount of water in front of my eyes!

It was hard not to spend time staring at the scene in front of me but after a while I knew I had to get moving. Nothing was going to keep me dry today. The floodwater easily found its way through and up the gaiters and into my boots. My socks, boots and the lower half of my pants were saturated instantly. It was absolutely freezing! From this point on, I was moving my legs slowly across the flooded boardwalk, careful to walk right in the middle to get the extra traction from the chicken wire mesh along the center of the boards.

The Wire Bridge

I crossed numerous fully submerged boardwalks getting every piece of clothing from the waist down saturated again and again. It was awkward at times but reasonably easy going until I reached the wire bridge.

It was pretty scary watching the crossing. The bridge was made up of a fallen tree spanning the creek with a steel wire going almost all the way across one side. It was now submerged with the fastest flowing stream I had encountered that morning. I wasn't sure why I didn't wait for the others to arrive at this latest obstacle as I took the first step towards the now dangerously flooded crossing. The water level turned out to be not much deeper than the other boardwalks I crossed that morning but the narrow and tricky pathway made it much more dangerous than the others. Adding to that was the fact that the water was flowing much faster with a few fallen branches in the middle. Halfway across the submerged log, with my left fist wrapping tightly around the wire, my right foot suddenly slipped off and I came crashing down on the log on my backside. While sitting and slipping on the log, I was soaked with the freezing water up to my chin in no time. I desperately tried to regain my footing in the rushing stream to avoid getting washed completely over. I pulled as hard as I could with my left arm to regain the footing with my legs. Quickly glancing backwards towards the bank, I realised that the others had yet to arrive so any hope of immediate assistance was out of reach. For the first few anxious seconds, I thought it wasn't going to be possible working against the ferocious stream as I kicked and pulled futilely. Miraculously with one final effort, my left foot and then my

right finally found the log and I stood myself up. I didn't have time to worry about anything else but cautiously completed the rest of the crossing in my saturated clothing.

Somehow the near miss failed to alert me to stop and wait for the others. Perhaps it was due to the fact that the weather had been terrible for the last few days and I just wanted to get to Narcissus Hut in the shortest possible time and have an early lunch. Approximately another half an hour later, I reached the floodplain that I will remember forever.

The Flood Plain

If the amount and the speed of water at the wire bridge were scary, the amount of water and the manner it appeared in front of my eyes at the flood plain were absolutely terrifying. The floodplain, which was near dry yesterday, was now replaced by a rushing torrent at least 100m across. This time the boardwalk was barely visible from the banks and I knew instantly that the water level would be by far the deepest along the escape route to Narcissus Hut.

Again illogically, without even thinking about waiting for the others to arrive, I started slowly to enter the freezing water from where I thought was the start of the boardwalk. Using my broken walking stick, I probed carefully for the boardwalk and walked slowly across. The water level (and the cold) was rising quickly from my feet to my knees, past my thighs, hips, chest... Suddenly, my feet found emptiness and I plunged awkwardly into the water. I was fully under but I managed to reach the bottom of something and stood back up. Panic took over and I scrambled my way back to the safety of the riverbank. It was extremely frustrating thinking that I must have lost concentration and missed the boardwalk under the water.

Furious with myself, I re-adjusted my pack and tried walking through again. This time it was even worse. I managed to get five metres further along the boardwalk but the powerful stream caused me to lose my footing and I fell over. Again, I was fully submerged but stood myself up after a longer struggle. I still managed to wade through the high water back to the riverbank, saturated with the icy water from my beanie to my socks. I unwisely decided to spend the next ten minutes wading around the freezing water along the banks to find a shallower crossing, ignorant of the fact this very insane action was to have dire consequences later...

After a while I finally got my senses together and decided to wait for the more experienced friends to arrive and hopefully guide me through this treacherous section. I waited impatiently in saturated clothes while shivering in the endless rain and the wind. It was getting colder and colder; I started strolling and jumping aimlessly in order to warm up. It felt as if hours passed under the horrendous weather conditions. I finally heard their approaching footsteps twenty minutes later. Bruce believed that I probably started on the boardwalk but lost it soon after and got submerged; the boardwalk didn't run straight but had a few bends and curves across the plains. *(continued overleaf)*

(cont'd from previous page) It was decided that this time Bruce would lead the charge. I agreed with the plan and soon I was following him into the dreaded floodwaters one more time. A few steps got Bruce onto the boardwalk but soon Gill was floating right behind and pleading for help, "Bruce! Bruce!" By that time, I was over chest deep in the water again for the fourth time that day. I still managed to grab hold of Gill's arm and with Bruce's help we pulled Gill to shallower water and then got out together.

Signs of Trouble

As soon as I got back, I felt maybe I was in a little bit of trouble. I was shivering badly again and Cliff suggested that I could be suffering from mild hypothermia. They stood close to me, blocking out the torturous wind and allowing Bruce time to rethink the situation. He made a mark on a tree next to the beginning of the crossing to determine whether the floodwaters were dropping or rising. Rain was continuing to pour down and it was finally decided to set up a tent whereby I could get shelter and warmth as we waited.

I got help from Neil and Cliff to set up my tent on a makeshift campsite. It was difficult doing simple tasks like threading the poles through the tent sleeves when my hands were numb. As soon as I got into the tent, I removed my saturated clothing, put on some dry ones from the pack and slipped quickly into my sleeping bag. I took out 100g of chocolate and gulped it down in no time. It was hard to warm up as the ground was near frozen and I did not have the energy or the will to pull out a sleeping mat. When Neil came into the tent for a break twenty minutes later, he was shocked to see that I wasn't warming up and the floor was freezing cold. He quickly inflated his mat and slipped it under me. Meanwhile Bruce was busy trying to light a fire in very difficult situation as the rain kept coming down and the wind stayed strong.

Time passed and the hope that the flood level would drop faded. It had not risen but unfortunately neither did it drop. I was fairly tired and feeling cold and useless. Bruce knew our best option was to return to Pine Valley and hoped that the wire bridge wouldn't be any worse than it was this morning. There would be shelter, a fire, a toilet and a helicopter pad if things really became desperate. I told him I could walk and he said we should get ready quickly to make it back before dark. It was nearly three in the afternoon, the sun will disappear in two hours.

Return to Pine Valley

It took about a quarter of an hour to repack and get dressed. I was shivering next to the fire in the rain for a while as it did very little to warm me up. I was standing there, barely able to take the first step, when behind me I heard Cliff say, "Tom. Let's go."

It was more than an hour of very focused and concentrated walking before we got back to the wire bridge. Before that we crossed several flooded sections but they were fairly easy compared to the formidable floodwaters flowing over the wire bridge. From what I could remember the water level and speed of the stream were identical to that morning. However, I was now exhausted, weak and worst of all, at least mildly hypothermic. If I made another mistake, it would be nearly all over. The strong and fearless Bruce went across back and forth a few times to retrieve Gill's and

my backpack. The inevitable finally came. I had to confront the flooded wire bridge one more time with a severely weakened body and horrible recollections in my head.

I followed Bruce and Gill carefully - Bruce was repeating, "focus focus focus" and Cliff was saying, "You're doing well, Tom". The chill came straight back with a vengeance as soon as I made it halfway, where the water reached its maximum depth and velocity. It was an extremely uncomfortable experience to live through again and again that day. I sensed a sigh of relief from everyone after I successfully made it across. They made sure I was all right before we proceeded carefully towards Pine Valley Hut.

Hypothermia!

It was possibly another half hour until we reached the final submerged boardwalk before the hut. By this time I felt very tired and cold. I summoned the final remnants of energy and waded through the freezing creek one last time. The horrible feeling of instant chill came back but this time it stayed as I struggled with the final steps. I finally stumbled through the door into the relative safety of Pine Valley Hut.

I stood motionless for a while, leaning against one of the bunk beds and gasping for air. The others noticed and helped me to sit down on the bench in front of the coal fireplace place. The fire was out more than twelve hours ago and it would take a while to get it started. I tried taking off my boots by untying the shoelaces and pulling off the gaiters. My hands were numb and unable to coordinate such delicate tasks as I pulled several times without managing to do anything. The cold came back with a vengeance and I just felt the last bit of warmth had departed me. As soon as Gill realized this, she rushed to my assistance and helped to take off the saturated boots. She noticed that I was about to collapse and asked the others to support my frame, shouting "He's going to fall! He's going to fall!". I vaguely remember Neil and Cliff caught me, dragged me to one of the bunks and hurriedly helped me get a fresh change of dry clothes. All this time, Bruce was also hard at work trying to start the coal fire. Gill was given the responsibility of preparing warm Gatorade as quickly as possible.

The shivering was uncontrollable even after I got into dry thermals and into my down sleeping bag. Neil and Cliff threw their down jackets on top of the sleeping bag for extra warmth. Neil constantly tried to keep me conscious by asking repeatedly, "Tom. Are you with me?" To which I replied with a tired voice, "Yer..." It was very hard not to fall asleep but somehow they managed to keep me there until the Gatorade was ready. I was helped to sit up and fed two hot cups of Gatorade. It instantly helped warm me up, but I was still shivering and feeling terrible. They carefully set me down again and Gill was by my side from then on talking to me and monitoring whether the shivering was going to stop. The others helped Bruce start and then later maintain the coal fire. Loads of coal was retrieved from the bin outside the hut in pouring rain.

I reckon the shivering finally stopped after half an hour to the delight of everyone. I slept for two hours in the warmth of the sleeping bag. Woke up at around 6:30 and cracked the first joke, "It will be a very interesting diary entry today".

Tom Lun

Leader in Crisis: A Loss at Werribee Gorge

It was a warm and sunny spring day, a big turn out for a Sunday walk, not the usual size. Sign in, collect money, organise drivers, give directions - all went smoothly.

Prior to the walk, the leader made sure walkers had adequate water and sunscreen. Managing a large group for the first time was challenging, but he seemed confident and was fully equipped with a first-aid kit and a map.



Negotiating Werribee Gorge

He decided not to split the group; no injuries were reported as we crossed rivers, bashed scrub and climbed slippery rocks. He had familiarised himself with the track well, organised a lunch spot and breaks with beach views. Frequently he'd check that the whip remained on duty and no one was lost.

After 10kms, the walk had finished early. It was time to mingle and enjoy the coffees at the Bacchus Marsh bakery. As we thought the day ended well, the nightmare begun. As we left the bakery back to the car, I asked the leader where the club's money was.

He became puzzled and with a panic attack he quickly gazed inside his car. His stomach was somersaulting while he frantically scuffled through where he thought the money would be. Wrapping his arms around himself in rage trying to comprehend how \$196 worth of coins collected had disappeared. He was now out of pocket, enough to make him want to drown his sorrows.

Distraught with reality kicking in, he had to find the money; he quickly spun the car around heading for the freeway, back to Werribee Gorge in search of the lost cash. The next hours became the longest day of his life.

He sped down the freeway with tears running down his face praying the money was at the car park-on the ground. This was the first walk he had organised and he had lost a large sum of money - he felt incompetent and an irresponsible leader. Exhausted and broke he would have to repay the club and forging a cheque came to his mind. The effort of leading a walk was nothing but a nightmare.

We arrived again at Quarry Picnic car park, quickly he flagged down two bushwalkers and asked them about the money, but they claimed not to have seen it; he refused to believe them and demanded to check their bag packs, but they resisted.

After looking around, the search was fruitless and heading back to the walking track was impossible as it was getting dark. His heart rate started to increase; there was no sign of the money and accepting it was stolen and repaying the club was inevitable. The prospect of leading another walk had also diminished; he was already a failure.

After searching in vain, he sat slumped on a bench in disbelief, holding his head with his hands and sobbing loudly. Trying to make the best of a bad situation, I began the grim search in the back seat of his car turning everything upside down and inside out. With little remaining, I opened a backpack, looked inside - in it was a bag full of coins.

I opened the car door, threw the money bag to the ground. He jumped off the bench; his eyes wide open as his saviour appeared.

The crisis ended with a cuddle, bursts of laughter and embarrassment. The bag of coins had been sitting where he had kept it all along.

Looking back, we can see the funny side and put it down as leadership experience.

Sharon Saing

Impressions from a Yearling Walker

A long, long time ago (10+ years) in a galaxy far, far away (Hawthorn), I remember talking to a friend who was describing a bushwalking club that she had joined. She enjoyed it, and recommended it. Fast forward 10 years and with the gradual demise of rebound volleyball and desiring a change from tennis, I decided to give the walking club a try.

One's first appearance at any event is always apprehensive. My primary concern was my level of fitness, speed, and the type of people on the walk. Fortunately, the first walk was along a track near Sorrento back beach in which I had some familiarity, and wasn't considered strenuous (unless one decides to run). It was also relatively close, and as a worse case scenario, at least I would get some exercise. Therefore, I gave it a go and it was a good decision. And fitness wasn't an issue.

Although the club is primarily about bush walking, there are a number of variations on the theme - there are the pack carries, base camping, accommodated weekends, snow walks, and skiing weekends (via the ski club). A slight variation of the pack carry/base camp is the formal dinner (a gourmet dinner in formal attire as part of a park carry or base camp) - an intriguing idea that provides an interesting twist. There are also various non-physical social activities: the Christmas party, club nights, various dinners and movie nights. *(continued overleaf)*

Impressions from a Yearling Walker *(continued from p7)*

Over the ensuing months, I went on a number of Sunday walks. I eventually tried some of the Saturday walks (once again with initial misgivings about fitness), and got hooked on the accommodated weekends away. These are very enjoyable, and give an opportunity to get to know people better. They are somewhat more comfortable than tenting during inclement weather (OK - I admit I am getting soft.)

This year there was actually snow. This presented the opportunity for a snow walk - it was a great day and something new. Also tried the cross-country ski weekend via the ski club - also highly recommended.

One observation about the club is the people. In general, everyone is quite friendly, open and down-to-earth. Also, there is a positive attitude and a can-do approach. In particular, I am often surprised that when presented with a steep hill (almost vertical), everyone gives it go (I think some people surprise themselves). The same applies to river crossings, and scrambling through scrub or over rocks.

When there is an obstacle, it is common for the guys to offer assistance to the girls (male chivalry is still alive!), but these offers are typically refused. As one girl explained it, "we (girls) appreciate the offer, but we want to try to do it ourselves". And there is nothing wrong with that.

One of the benefits of walking is the exercise, and I desperately need the exercise in order to get fit and lose weight (people who know me might recognize some sarcasm). So I particularly enjoy walks that have hills, and challenging/daring/racing others up the hills. There are many forms of entertainment on a walk!

This Melbourne Cup long weekend (Nov 2-6th) YHA I have become quite enthusiastic about the walks and weekends away. And I pester...I mean encourage my friends to come along. This has led to my friends developing new skills, such as how to quickly think of a reason why they can't make it. This has led to a few creative excuses. Examples include:

"I have to go to Bairnsdale (to feed the emus)" (for the 4th weekend in a row)

"I am going to be invited to a Sunday brunch"

"My parents are going to invite themselves down to see Phantom of the Opera"

"I am going for a bike on ...Saturday? ...Sunday?....the same day as the walk"

"I am flying to Noosa for the weekend to do some volunteer work to clean up storm damage from multiple cyclones that ripped through the area" (there was a photo but undated)

"I have to work. What day is the walk?"

"My brother Chris is organizing his own surprise birthday"

"My niece is having her 18th 2 y.o. birthday".

The day walks are run by leaders who are 'volunteered', and I was eventually 'volunteered'. The selected walk was Cape Woolamai (Phillip Island) and it was quite memorable as anyone who was on it will say. The plan had been to follow the beach for most of the way to the park reserve, but a detour was required due to high tide. There were strong winds in some areas that resulted in sandblasting. (Sandblasting should be used to remove rust from steel - not on people.) The rain came in sideways during the afternoon while traversing an exposed section of the track; one girl injured her ankle; and I had to resort to splitting the group in two - just to keep people moving (and warm), and to collect the cars. Nothing like a challenge! All of that was quite manageable - the main problem was two wild women. Some people are affected by the full moon - these two were affected by the wild weather. Very, very scary!



From Cape Woolamai.....before the rain (courtesy AP)

Despite that, most people had a reasonable time despite the poor conditions. It is unfortunate as it is very scenic in sunny conditions (such as during the reconnaissance two weeks earlier) - I will have to run it again in better conditions (but will anyone else turn up?). It is ironic that during a drought and for a walk planned 6 weeks previously, there would be 5mm of rain, and the sun would come out just as we finished. But that is just like life - you can't control everything, unexpected things do occur, but things do get better. As someone (in)famous says "What doesn't kill you, makes you stronger" (LVDV).

Just as the day walks led by volunteers, so are the weekends. These can be quite demanding to organise as it requires arranging accommodation as well as 2-4 consecutive days of walks. So I would like to say a special thanks to the Reynolds, Bells, Sissons, Smiths, Stevensons (these are for the weekends I have been on) plus the other leaders (the ones I haven't been on or have missed) for the effort you put into these activities. And there are also the Cousins and Gottliebsons who do much of the behind-the-scenes organization. And no - I don't get paid for this!

Gambatte kudasai (Japanese for an encouraging "go for it")

David Sale

Tips for Better Bushwalking

#32 Trekking Poles

Trekking poles have been extremely popular overseas for many years now, however they haven't become anywhere near as widely used in Australia. Opinions vary as to their usefulness – there are certainly some situations where they are very beneficial, but at times they can also be a major impediment. The following tips on how to select and use a pole are extracted from the August 2007 edition of "Choice" – full details are available (at a price) from the ACA website choice.com.au



Why use poles?

- ◆ Additional balance and stability, particularly if carrying a heavy pack and in slippery terrain such as creek crossings, loose rock or mud.
- ◆ Reduces stress on the hips, ankles, knees and spine, particularly if going downhill.
- ◆ Use of the arms and shoulders boosts climbing power on uphill stretches.
- ◆ They also come in handy for miscellaneous uses such as a probe, splint, rod, or warding off aggressive snakes.

Disadvantages

- ◆ A hindrance when walking off-track or on narrow trails hemmed in by thick bush.
- ◆ A very big hindrance when rock-scrambling or in a situation where you are using something else (eg a branch) for stability. By keeping one or both hands tied up, your ability to respond effectively if you do lose your balance is compromised.
- ◆ On popular tracks, the chipping and marking created by poles on the edge of the trail can be a significant environmental impact (poles with optional rubber tips can help get around this problem).
- ◆ Clumsy or careless usage of poles presents a hazard to those walking behind you!

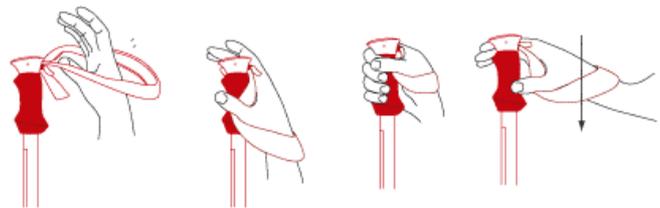
One Pole or Two? For the conditions experienced on Australian bushwalks, one pole is the optimum, offering most of the advantages whilst, in leaving one hand free, mitigating a major problem. Two poles are only recommended if you have existing ankle or knee problems where poles provide aid even on flat stable surfaces.

Retractability For bushwalking you should use a pole with three-section telescopic adjustment. This will allow you to stow your pole away during periods when it would otherwise be a hindrance. The adjustment locks can fail and become a point of weakness over time, however they are still regarded as a worthwhile feature; not fully extending a section will lessen the chance of a breakage.

Length Your elbow should form a right angle when the tips are on the ground and hands on the grips. For normal usage both poles should be adjusted to the same length, although when traversing a steep slope, the uphill pole can be shortened. For steep uphill, shorten the poles 5-10cm to increase leverage, correspondingly lengthening them to provide support on downhill sections.

Comfort There isn't much value in taking stress off your knees and ankles if it comes at the price of sore hands and wrists. Choose handles made from cork or cork/rubber compounds, as these have some give and will mould to your hands with use – avoid stiff plastic handles. Forward-angled grips are more comfortable, although the trade-off is pole collapsibility, as it can't retract into the handle. Some poles have an anti-shock system to absorb jarring impacts; this also has a trade-off of reduced power, so the ideal is one which allows anti-shock to be turned off when climbing.

Wrist straps should be padded to avoid chafing. The correct way to use a wrist strap is to put your hand through it from underneath (not from above), grasp the handle with the strap under your palm, wrapping it over the wrist (see diagram below). Pull the strap snug but not too tight.



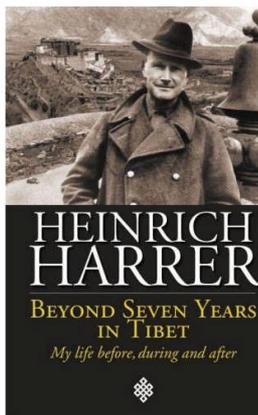
Used correctly, wrist straps reduce hand fatigue by providing support so there isn't a need to grip the handle tightly.

The Choice survey tested five brands of poles using a combination of laboratory testing to measure their strength and field testing in the Blue Mountains by a group of experienced bushwalkers to assess comfort, stability and balance. All poles met basic criteria such as aluminium shaft and retractability to a 65-75cm length. The Black Diamond and Leki poles were rated equal highest. Many other models are available – use the criteria described in this article to assess their suitability.

Brand / model	Score: Strength/ Comfort	Price (\$)
Black Diamond Switchback	75 / 80%	119/pair
Leki Makalu Tour AS	75 / 80%	190/pair 105/pole
Expedition Equipment Trekker	70 / 60%	139/pair
Komperdell Light AS	60 / 60%	100/pole
Fizan Alpin AS	50 / 60%	80/pole

Nordic walking, a rapidly growing exercise craze uses Nordic Poles. These are not the same as trekking poles - they are designed primarily for exercising the upper body and providing forward propulsion – and aren't suitable for bushwalking. For a bit of fun however, why not try them out as part of a YHA Social event on Feb 2nd – see p12 for details.

Book Review



Heinrich Harrer. *Beyond Seven Years in Tibet – My life before, during and after.* 1st English language edition. Labyrinth Press, 2007. 511 pages. \$65 rrp.

This book absorbed me from beginning to end. It is a well-written, well-translated tale of the life of a man who was able to live his life to the full, physically and mentally.

Heinrich Harrer was a physical education teacher, a geography graduate, a mountaineer, an ethnographer, an explorer, a traveller, a writer, the friend and colleague of many important people, a philosopher and a spiritual person. He travelled extensively to remote parts of the world: Tibet, The Andes, Alaska, Africa, New Guinea, Nepal, French Guyana, Greenland, Borneo, India, Andaman Islands, Sikkim, Bhutan, Brazil, Surinam, and explored them with a willingness to learn. He wrote books about his experiences and made programs on his expeditions for the golden age of educational TV.

Harrer had two great gifts: he was in possession of a formidable amount of knowledge and, as a truly great writer, was endowed with the ability of communicating and sharing his experiences, thoughts and feelings with the readers.

Harrer says that his early mountaineering experiences fostered his love for Nature and the desire to discover new things about Nature and the world. His tales of mountaineering are full of technical terms, explanations of technical actions, geographical and weather descriptions but are also atmospheric and poetic so we feel, as he does, the wonder and beauty of the natural phenomena. The great amount of technical words made me wish the book had a glossary because I spent a huge amount of time looking words up in dictionaries, but, unfortunately, later on, I became lazy and passed them over.

For the readers who have a particular interest in Tibet there is a mine of information about it. As is well known, Harrer lived in Tibet for seven years, loved it and considered it his “second home”. He had an extensive insider’s knowledge of Tibetan culture and respect and admiration for it. He loved the reverence for earth and the environment, the ecologically responsible way of living (e.g. kill only for food) of the Tibetans. On their part, the Tibetans admired his capacity to overcome hardship and accepted him because he adopted their way of living.

After meeting the Dalai Lama, Harrer became his tutor and they shared a father/son relationship. In 1950, Maoist troops prepared to invade Tibet and the Dalai Lama and Harrer had to leave the country. Harrer describes sad scenes of leaving and of separation from people he loved. When he flees Tibet, his religious paintings and very elaborate state robes are very badly damaged and he experiences an acute sense of loss and parallels the losses and damages done to his own private property to those of Tibet. This passage from the general - the country’s distress - to the particular - his own personal distress - makes the readers understand what the Tibetans must have felt like to lose their country with their possessions and customs. This literary device of zooming from the general to the particular works very well and Harrer uses it often throughout the book.

Harrer pioneered travelling in some countries. He first visited Nepal in 1951 when there were no visas to visit available and the travelling was rough and mainly done on foot or horseback. He made sure to know all there was to know about the places he was visiting and, throughout the book, shares his formidable knowledge and sense of wonder at the different cultures, customs, and ways of life. Often he explains a natural phenomenon from its origins to the rites it generates in a particular culture and is able to transmit it on paper and to the readers by beautiful descriptions. He also scatters little details about people and places that make the book incredibly rich and interesting. I particularly liked The Indians of the Xingu River Chapter: it’s packed with information and never lets readers’ interest slacken.

As travellers and bushwalkers, we can learn a lot from Harrer. He stresses the value of acquiring up to date information for any kind of expedition, and explains why being well prepared and making oneself comfortable in a harsh environment is extremely important. He acknowledges that with leadership comes responsibility and that involves even the basic duty to make sure members of expeditions carry the right stuff, do the right thing and follow the rules set out before the start of the expedition. A leader doesn’t seek popularity, he expects discipline and obedience because a team relies on the leader’s experience and are helped by his knowledge and confidence. To contrast these very important tenets he describes expeditions gone wrong, and dissects the reasons why.

Harrer does not hide the negative sides of travelling and exploring and enumerates the chances travellers may have to seize on the road; the horrible side of local customs (the slaughtering of animals as sacrifice); the ethnographic need to kill animals for study (that he considers a shameful waste of life) and the dilemma of leaving ‘virgin places’ untouched.

He also marvels at “the miracle of memory failure”: some people forget about the hardships too easily and want to go on with the exploration while others remember only the bad experiences and forget the wonders of exploring and travelling. As is human and natural, the last chapter is a winding down. Harrer cannot travel any longer and wraps up his life by writing his memories, enumerating all the changes that have occurred in the places he has visited all over the world and the deaths of the people closest to him. It is not a sad chapter but an exploration, through memories, of the meaning a life can have.

Vanna Walsh

Beyond Seven Years in Tibet is available from www.amazon.co.uk or at a discounted price from [Simon Walliss](http://SimonWalliss.com) (9867 6902)

Equipment News - Drug Enhanced Bushwalking

Bushwalking is great. It's one of the few activities that doesn't involve drug testing any of its participants, so if you're not just a fitness junkie, you are basically free to load yourself up with whatever chemical cocktail you think will make for an even greater day outdoors. In this article, **DJ Scrub Basha** shares advice on how his favourite little helpers from the street can deal with some common problems in the bush.

1. A drug to get you up hills Simple nicotine can be sufficient to smoke your way up a hill, although if there is any scary rock scrambling you may go through half a packet which can be somewhat time-consuming. The other main problem is that unless you are on your own, others will be offended by the fumes. Hence you may choose to use **ether** instead. At first your mind reels in terror as it finds it is no longer in control of your motor functions, but as you relax into the ride it feels as someone else is doing all the hard walking for you!

Side effects: Be sure you know your required dose, if it wears off before you reach the top you will be in a world of hurt. Your brain will be shocked out of its reverie by a cacophony of complaint from your overworked legs, only too happy to make your brain feel as bad as they do now they know it is finally listening again!

2. A drug to get you back down again This would be easy if coming down were at the end of the walk, no doubt **Valium** would be your best choice! Though in the context of descent one would only consider **Ketamine**. The "**K-Hole**" as it is referred to by those in the know, has an effect of blocking out superfluous distractions and stomach-clenching drop offs to the side by focusing attention to the task at hand. Quite literally reducing focus to a metre or two directly in front of your feet, no more tripping over troublesome tree roots and stringy bark snags!

Side effects: Beware of the dose, take too much and you will be wondering why your bed feels like sphagnum moss and your room is looking surprisingly like the Bogong High Plains in a Klimt painting...

3. A drug for enjoying walking in the rain Some walkers have the right natural chemical balance to enjoy this anyway, but if you are one of those who don't, a simple **spliff** is usually enough to render you insouciant to anything but a torrential downpour, however as with nicotine, other walkers may object to the fumes. Less offensive to the rest of the group is to discreetly pop an **Ecky** or **MDMA** cap before a walk if the weather is looking a bit dodgy.

Side effects: You may actually enjoy more things than you bargained for. I once lay blissed out amidst the wildflowers on the summit of Mt Bogong enjoying the sun on my face and a cool summer breeze but all I could think of was how utterly sensual Brendan Nelson was and how wonderful it would be if he became Prime Minister.

4. A drug that makes you love leeches. **Mescaline** is best for this. You will see your body in its true perspective as just a small part of Mother Earth's grand Gaia. You will realise what a selfish attitude it is to regard your cells as something for your exclusive use and enjoyment, and offer your body as a massive open-house party for any living organism to share in.

Side effects: Overuse in swampy areas can lead to an iron deficiency and subsequent lack of energy.

5. A drug to make your pack feel lighter A dose of **Amphetamines** before a big walk will help in two ways. Firstly it will give you strength so that your pack will feel lighter. Secondly, by suppressing your appetite, you won't need to carry any food so your pack will in fact be a few kilograms lighter than everybody else's.

Side effects: Your body will begin to consume itself as a vital source of energy, finding yourself taking on the svelte form of Iggy Pop. To the more portly among us this may seem like an easy way to circumvent a more disciplined lifestyle, though don't be fooled! The effects of not being able to sleep for several days will lead to inevitable paranoia, to such a degree that by the end of the walk you will be convinced that even the kookaburras are out to get you!

6. A drug to make you irresistible to the opposite sex. **Titania Drops** will help you get lucky and work best if you don't actually take them yourself. They look and taste fairly similar to jelly beans, so mix a handful with your scroggin then offer it around during a rest break. As you attempt to seduce the object of your desire with small-talk about the latest Liberal party policies and how stupendously well your share portfolio is performing, every utterance you make will seem like nectar falling from your tongue. Well that's the end result, the way you actually get there is to first make her drowsy with your chat as this psychoactive drug takes root in the subconscious before kicking in upon waking. Be there for the moment when the dreams merge into the real world and she will be instantly smitten. The effect wears off after about a week.

Side effects: Has an equal effect on both sexes, so be careful who you hand out your trail mix to.



Summer Social Activities

Once again Andrew Stevenson has provided a varied range of social activities for this season, if only there were as many eager volunteers to run a few walks as well! Sadly, after two years in the role as Social Secretary, Andrew will be stepping down from the role at the AGM in April. Anyone interested in joining committee with a view to continuing the good work in this or other positions also in need of new office-bearers (eg Day Walks secretary, President) should contact someone they know on the current committee to discuss (see page 2 for names and details).



Feeling hungry? Friday January 18th Emma Williams is taking us to the ever popular Stokehouse Restaurant in St Kilda.

Enjoy great food and company with the vibrancy of the St Kilda foreshore in summer!

Book By: Jan 11th

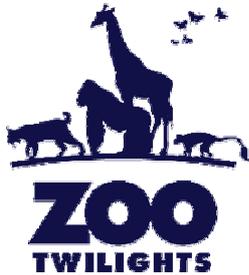
Contact: Emma Williams **Phone:** 0406 758 935 **E-mail:** emma.williams2@aig.com



Come and try 'Viking Hiking' on Saturday 2nd of February in Fawkner Park & experience Nordic Walking. All the rage in Europe, this sport is great for those who want a cross training exercise that is perfect for cross country skiing training, improving general fitness or maybe you just want to lose those extra Christmas kilos! We will have an introductory session with Nordic Walking Australia. To find out more about Nordic Walking check out

<http://www.nordicwalkingaustralia.com.au/> **Book By: Jan 27th**

Contact: Louise Reynolds **Phone:** 9527 3514 **E-mail:** lourey@dodo.com.au



Get those purple lycra pants out of the cupboard & stack on the hair gel.

On Saturday 24th of February it's an Eighties Extravaganza with Absolutely 80s at the Melbourne Zoo Twilights with Scott Carne, Brian Mannix, Sean Kelly & Paul Norton.

Tickets for this event will sell out so book early to avoid disappointment!

Book By: Feb 15th

Please Note: Tickets must be pre-purchased from Ticketmaster!

Contact: Lynn Goh **Phone:** 0414 780 828 **E-mail:** lynn.goh@basell.com



Groove to Traditional Ghanaian Rhythms and Dance on Saturday 1st of March with the African Royal Drummers as we head off to Werribee Open Range Zoo for their ever popular Rhythm of Africa

Bring a hamper of gourmet goodies & a bottle of wine for this one! Cost \$17

Book By: Feb 22nd

Contact: Vanna Walsh **Phone:** 9795 1012 **E-mail:** vanna@alphalink.com.au



On Friday 7th of March come out with Sarah Kim for a Strike Bowling & Pizza Night along one of Melbourne's popular social hubs, Chapel St. Prahran.

Book early as these nights are always popular! **Book By: Feb 29th**

Contact: Sarah Kim **Phone:** 0434 234 201 **E-mail:** sarah.kim@ubs.com

Please note that due to the popularity of social events make sure that you book by the required date to avoid disappointment!