



### Sunday Walk Spring Carnival

Here's a selection showcasing six of the more interesting Sunday walks between now and the end of the year. There are some slightly more challenging ones, a few primarily social ones and one that takes indulgence to a new level.

#### Long Forest Reserve (Sept 21<sup>st</sup>)

On 21st September, Rafal will lead a new Sunday walk to the Long Forest Nature Conservation Reserve. It will be an enjoyable easy-medium level walk with a walking distance of just over 12km. The reserve is situated north of the Western Freeway between Melton and Bacchus Marsh.

Noted for its scientific value and unusual landscape, the Long Forest Reserve is a small and isolated remnant of Mallee vegetation only 50 kilometres from Melbourne and was established in 1981 to protect the unique bushland. About 200 bird species have been recorded in the Reserve, including the Wedge-tailed Eagle and Peregrine Falcon.  
*Enquiries: Rafal 0413 464 731*

#### Ingliston Granites (Sept 28<sup>th</sup>)

It's Grand Final weekend, so after celebrating Geelong's back-to back win, make it your goal to join Les Gamel on this slightly more challenging than average Sunday walk. The Ingliston Granites are on the Werribee river just to the north of Werribee Gorge. There is a small amount of scrub bashing and some rock scrambling, hence it's graded as medium, but with good weather it should be a great day out, with some parts not done on a Sunday walk before. The walk features areas of geological interest (on one side of the river the rocks are granite, the other basalt) and great views from Falcon Lookout across the gorge itself.

*Enquiries: Les Gamel 9326 0360*

#### Daylesford teahouse walk (Oct 5<sup>th</sup>)



The walk will start at the teahouse at Lake Daylesford, since we have met there before and people hopefully know it. → *cont'd page 5*



Enjoying the view from Briggs Bluff, at the Queens Birthday weekend base-camp in the northern Grampians.

Trip report page 3 (photo: Sharon Saing)

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### Beginner Overnight Walks

There are two overnight walks on the spring programme especially designated as suitable for beginner pack-carriers. On November 29-30<sup>th</sup> Ken Sussex is running a trip on the Bogong High Plains, whilst on Dec 5-6<sup>th</sup> Les Gamel will lead a return walk to Sealers Cove at Wilsons Promontory. Both walks are very scenic and only involve a maximum of 10km/day pack-carrying over relatively flat terrain. Wilsons Promontory is more forgiving if you don't have gear suitable for cold nights or rain, however both walks are highly recommended. Ken and Les will be setting an easy pace and will gladly provide advice and assistance with equipment, food etc. At Clubnight November 10<sup>th</sup>, Ken will give a talk on "Introduction to Pack-Carries".

Anyone who hasn't done an overnight walk with YHA is strongly urged to start with a beginner walk. Leaders of harder grade trips have the right (and are advised) to refuse participation to anyone who hasn't demonstrated their capability on a recent → *cont'd p2*

**YHA BUSHWALKING COMMITTEE  
2008/09**

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Search & Rescue Rep	Simon Walliss
General committee	Tom Lun
	Bruce Meincke
	Rafal Rutkowski
	Andrew Stevenson
	Ken Sussex

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](mailto:yhabush@bigpond.com)

Deadline for the next issue is Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 2009.

**YETI ONLINE**

"Yeti" has its own website [www.yhabush.org.au/Yeti](http://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 a Monday night once a month at the Redback Hotel, 75 Flemington Rd, North Melbourne, from 8pm to approx. 9:30pm., or meet at 7pm for dinner beforehand. 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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Ken Sussex  
Vanna Walsh

**Beginner Overnight Walks (cont'd from p1)**

easier grade walk. This year there have been problems with people who have either undertaken walks beyond their level of fitness or taken offence at being excluded from an overnight walk due to their lack of previous experience with the club. The beginner pack-carries are late in the season, but if the last two years are anything to go by, they should give participants confidence to undertake a wider choice of walks during summer and autumn.

For those who have already earnt their stripes, read on....

**Harder Overnight Walks**

**Mt McDonald and the Nobs (Oct 4-5<sup>th</sup>)**

**Distance:** 18km **Grading:** medium-hard

Mt McDonald and The Nobs, accessed from the Howqua Track just past Mansfield, are rewarding destinations for walkers looking for remote and rugged terrain away from the hordes that frequent other mountains in the region. Both peaks offer 'blow your socks off' views around the compass to points including Mt Reynard, Mt Tamboritha, Eagles Peaks, Mt Buller, the Bluff, and much more.

The most difficult part of the walk is the ascent up the north side of Mt McDonald. There is a fair bit of 'off-track' work, with some scrambling required over small bluffs. The climb from the Jamieson River to the summit of Mt McDonald is a solid 900m. The last bit of the climb is dramatic, 550m in approx 1500m, but the views are fantastic! From the summit, the route follows the ridge down to the proposed campsite in a saddle between Mt McDonald and The Nobs. Sunday is a much easier day, following a jeep track to a point just north of the Nobs, then down to Clear Creek Rd and an easy stroll back to the cars.

*Contact: Ken Sussex 9495 1350*

**Mt Feathertop via Bon Accord Spur (Oct 18-19<sup>th</sup>)**

**Distance:** 25km **Grading:** medium-hard

By overwhelming popular demand (from \*3\* people who probably have nothing else to do), the Bon Accord-Razorback-Feathertop walk is back this year! If you are like hills, hills and more hills, this walk is for you! On 18-19 October, Tom Lun will be leading keen hill climbers up the steep and never ending Bon Accord Spur to Mt Feathertop via the Razorback. Expect your 5 hour climb along the Bon Accord to be rewarded with great views of Mt Feathertop once you reach the ridge. However, the day isn't over yet until your tired legs spend another 3 hours getting you and your heavy backpack to Federation Hut. If you're still feeling good (1 person out of 8 did last year and it wasn't the leader), climb for another half an hour to watch the magnificent sunset on the summit.

Day two will be an easy 3 hour walk down the well graded Bungalow Spur back to the cars and cooked lunch awaits you at the pub!

*Contact: Tom Lun 0437 099 598*

**The Crinoline (Nov 1-2<sup>nd</sup>)**

Located between the MacAlister and Wellington river valleys past Licola, the Crinoline is an intermediate-level pack carry. As the walk begins at Tamboritha Saddle and finishes at Breakfast Creek, there isn't much climbing involved, however there are some steep descents that can be awkward if you aren't used to a heavy pack.

The highlight of the walk are the superb views from the campsite and Crinoline itself across the surrounding valleys. It should be noted however that this area is still recovering from bushfires and floods in 2007. *Contact: Ken Sussex 9495 1350*

## Trip Report - Northern Grampians base-camp

**Sharon Saing** reports on her Queens Birthday weekend base-camp.

The weather was ideal up in the Northern Grampians. It was warm for the middle of winter and we escaped the heavy rain that was expected in Melbourne. We had 15 enthusiastic walkers on the trip, all very fit. Most arrived at the campground late Friday night while a few arrived early Saturday morning just in time for the first walk.

Everyone had a decent sleep and a good breakfast before the leader gathered everyone around to begin the walk at 10.30am. We took off from the campsite and walked through birds of all colours, passing a group of kangaroos and endless rows of eucalyptus trees. It was a beautiful sunny day with a clear sky that gave us a spectacular view of the Grampians. We followed the marked arrows to Mt Stapylton, enjoying the magnificent view as we stopped for a 40 minute lunch on the summit.

After lunch we descended to the Bird Rock. A few of us climbed onto the rock for photo shots. We spotted two crazy rock climbers on the Taipan Wall dangling at least 100 metres off the cliff face. If they fell, it would be deadly.

During the last short break, John Cobb entertained us with his yoga abilities by lying down on his back with two legs wrapped around his head. That amused us for the rest of the afternoon.

Closer to the campground, we collected firewood for the evening campfire. It was a team effort; we all helped to carry large logs of wood on our shoulders as we walked back to our camp. Arriving at the camp early, we had some spare time for a short walk to the Aboriginal Shelter. There were some hand paintings on the rock that had been there for thousands of years.

Later that evening, the sunset appeared revealing magnificent colours, and it took forever to disappear. It turned a large distant rock formation into a dark red colour, and for the moment it was like being in the outback at Ayers Rock.

Our camping spot had the best view of the sunset. The tents were pitched closely together under the trees with birds, kangaroos with pouches and hungry wallabies hanging around, often coming very close. When it got dark, Peter the campfire guru got the fire going in a few minutes. We set up our chairs around the fire and laughed at the many exchanged stories over some food and wine.

That night I witnessed John Cobb struggle to start his fuel lantern that he bought especially for this trip. It failed to light up after numerous attempts, his fingers were burnt and as the frustration got over him, he eventually smashed it to the ground. It rolled many miles away and broke into pieces as the fuel flared the campsite in a mini explosion.



*Admiring the view from Mt Stapylton (photo Sharon Saing)*

His new air mattress that he'd only bought recently also failed. It took an hour to inflate then, in the middle of the night, it let him down badly. John's endless attempts to pump it up again were not successful. In the morning he discovered it had a hole in it. For three nights he had to sleep on the hard ground while intimately discovering the true nature of the land.

On Sunday morning we departed the campground at 9.30am and drove to Roses Gap to start the walk to Briggs Bluff. The track was clearly marked and had many steep sections to climb up. Everyone was full of enthusiasm and we managed to get to Briggs Bluff by lunch time. Some beautiful wildflowers were seen on the track and we were rewarded with excellent views all day. The track along here was very open with many amazing rock formations.

After the walk a few people departed the camp, making their way back home. On the way back to the campground, we passed an olive plantation, which was a good opportunity for Peter, Catherine, Rafal and me to drop in and buy some fresh olives and olive oil. That night we toasted the bread on the campfire and dipped it in the olive oil, a fresh and very tasty treat.

For three nights in a row we couldn't help ourselves but spy on Robert and his female companion having very intimate dinners in front of their tent. They had a beautiful wine glass setting with decorated table and chairs with a very bright lantern lit up among them. They looked to be happy and enjoying each other's company. They cooked a very sumptuous meal with music playing in the background. Their romantic dinners in the bush under the stars made us all very envious. They seemed totally oblivious that we were there. There appeared to be only one tent there and they had both disappeared after their dinners. We joked among ourselves that to us they seemed more than just friends.

Many interesting topics were discussed over the campfires. We played some games and took turns in adding firewood to keep them going and to keep us warm. Each night it was very late when everyone went to their tents and slept like babies.

As it started to rain on early Monday morning, we didn't do any walk; we all drove back to Melbourne.

Everyone enjoyed themselves and thanked the leader for organising a great weekend.

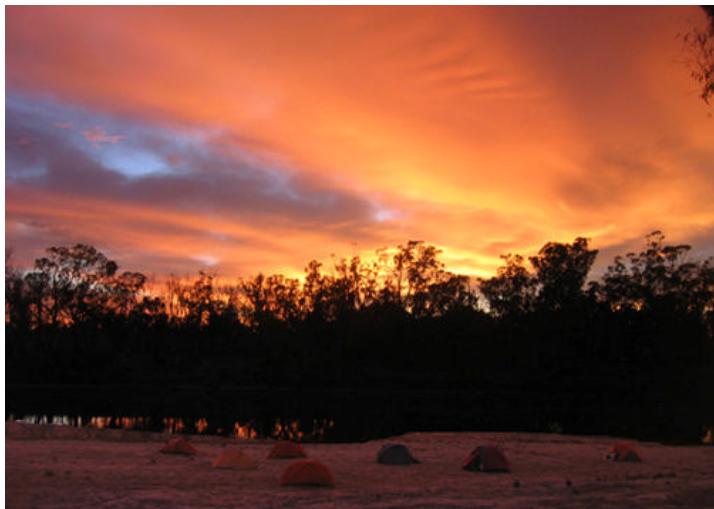
## Trip Reports - Hattah Lakes

Further northwest of the Grampians, a group of eight led by Ken Sussex spent Queens Birthday weekend at Hattah Lakes for the first time in several years.

The two main lakes (Mournpall and Hattah) still contain water (just) but everywhere is in the park is dry, very dry. Back in the 1980s and early 90s, Chalka Creek (the waterway from the Murray River to the lakes) presented a challenge to cross. Getting wet feet was unavoidable, but how much of the rest of you got immersed depended on how well chosen the crossing point was. Nowadays Chalka Creek is just another dry gully, with numerous saplings sprouting from the former creek bed. The highlight of this trip was the Murray River; camping on its beach, spending half a day meandering along its Victorian bank, with a sunset and sunrise thrown in for good measure.

Ken, as those who have done similar walks with him will know, preferred to walk cross-country on a compass bearing rather than take the less interesting tracks. On one of the few occasions we were near a track, a convoy of 4WDs suddenly appeared. At a place with no obvious point of interest they all parked and started roaming around the scrub peering under bushes. Eventually someone yelled triumphantly and held aloft a small canister. The group was hunting for a geocache, one of numerous containers hidden in remote locations throughout the country. Coordinates and clues to find them are listed on the internet. Aided by 4WDs and GPS, their long-weekend activity was to locate as many as possible. The canister contained a number of trinkets, etiquette being to swap one of them for a contribution of your own. Once they'd recorded their find in the log book and replaced the canister in its hiding place, the convoy quickly dispersed in search of their next target.

Our campsite that night was on the shore of Lake Mournpall. In a less drought-affected period, where we camped would have been in Lake Mournpall. That night we experienced a rare phenomenon, Mallee rain, and could have sworn next morning that the lake was a few metres closer to our tents.



Dawn on our Murray River beach campsite (photo: Stephen Smith)



It was good to revisit this area; should it ever receive the soaking it desperately needs, it will dramatically revitalise, and another trip to Hattah Lakes should be arranged without hesitation.



This year's Overland Track winter trip experienced the best view of Cradle Mountain out of the three expeditions so far. Unfortunately the clear weather didn't last, with damp cloudy conditions for much of the walk. (Photo: Tom Lun)

## Sunday walk spring carnival (cont'd from page 1)

### Daylesford teahouse walk (cont'd)

Then we will proceed upstream to Lake Jubilee, circle this and then walk along the rail reserve to the Wombat Botanic Gardens. I haven't scoped this part for a few years so if it has become inaccessible we will have to take an alternative route such as a minor road. We will go the long way round the gardens, then through Daylesford back to the starting point at the lake. Anyone stopping for a coffee during this part WITHOUT telling the leader will be banned for life. The walk will be 10-12km long E-M, so fitness fanatics take a chill pill, plenty of time for smelling the roses (and gums) whilst basking in the warm spring sun shine.

Enquiries: Carlos Ramsay 9497 5448

### Mt Hickey, near Broadford (Nov 16<sup>th</sup>)

Distance: 12km

Starting from a small farm property, we will walk the length of the farm to the neighbour's farm which has Clydesdale horses grazing on it. We then walk down Davies Road to another property where we follow a creek for a short distance. We then tackle a steep climb up a ridge for 1km. The ground is rocky on this part so you need sturdy shoes otherwise your feet will suffer.

We then come out at a clearing where we have a lovely view and where there is a beautiful home owned by writer James McCaughey. James has kindly given his permission for us to pass through his property. The rest of the climb is pretty gentle and is the well vegetated bluegum forest. The last part is on a 4WD track. From the summit there are views to the north, and there is a fire tower. Here we have lunch before descending back to the start point. If time permits we can do a little tour of the farm and have a cuppa at the straw bale house.

A map and directions on how to get to the start point are available from the online version of this article.

Enquiries: Rob Adams 9376 2694

### Churchill Park break-up walk (Dec 14<sup>th</sup>)

You are invited to come to my walk (easy) on the 14th of December (last Sunday walk of the year) at Churchill Park and /or Police Paddocks or vice versa and afterwards to my place to share a Xmas break-up afternoon tea. You will have to pay for the walk and add to that \$8 for the afternoon tea. Please bring a blanket/foldable chair, etc- whatever you prefer - so you can enjoy tea in the garden or inside. Everything will be provided for but – this year – you will make your own sandwiches (all the ingredients will be on the table). Relax, take your time, and catch up with friends and acquaintances: there is no hurry. If people want to linger on we can order pizzas or whatever (you will have to pay for that) for dinner but it would be appreciated if you left around 9 or 10pm 'cause I'll be working next day – just like most of you, I guess.

Enquiries: Vanna Walsh 9795 1012 or  
[vanna6@bigpond.com](mailto:vanna6@bigpond.com)

### Enjoy a "Cakewalk" (October 26<sup>th</sup>)

You like walking - or else why are you reading this ?

You like cake? - that gut didn't grow itself you know.

Now it's time to combine these two interests on the inaugural YHA cakewalk.

This is a Sunday walk with a difference - everyone will be expected to bring a cake to be shared and enjoyed by the group on the walk. The club will supply plates, forks, napkins and your appetite - you just have to bring yourself and your cake. Gateaux, cheese, chocolate, fairy, sponge, carrot, wedding, home-made, shop bought - we don't care what you bring as long as it's cake!

The walk is a new walk through the Lederberg State Forest (not Black Forest? – ed) and will involve a car shuffle. It's about 15km, rated "easy-medium" and there are great views from Mt Sugarloaf which is the highest point on the walk.



There will be plenty of time to enjoy scenic cakebreaks, and remember we guarantee that all cake calories will be burned off by the end of the day. (those indulging in four or more slices will be encouraged to run up the last hill).

For those wanting to go directly there rather than meeting at Flagstaff, we'll be meeting at the Jolly Miller bakery cafe at Bacchus Marsh at 10.15am, which will also give everyone a last minute chance to stock up on cake.

Q. Do I need to bring lunch?

A. Probably a good idea. Make sure you leave room for cake.

Q I can't eat flour!

A Flourless chocolate cake.

Q I don't like cake!

A A limited supply of Cheese and bacon balls will be provided.

Q This is all a joke?

A No, we never joke about cake (or cheese and bacon balls). So get baking! Get Caking! As Marie Antoinette said

"Let them go bushwalking"!

For enquiries contact Chris on 03 9620 2363 / 0419 562 625  
[christopher.marney@ericsson.com](mailto:christopher.marney@ericsson.com)

## Know your committee - Rafal Rutkowski

*Another of this year's new committee members shares a few of his thoughts about the club and experiences since joining.*

**How long have you been with YHA bushwalking?** A year and a half, since February 2007. It has been extremely fun for me. I've met a lot of people and have done a lot of adventurous things. I came out of my comfort zone.

**Whereabouts was your first walk?** At Blackwood, led by Ron Bell on 4 February 2007. It was a 12km circuit on a 37 degree day. I was totally unprepared for such scorching temperature.

**What attracted you to us in the first place?** I was attracted by the opportunity to meet new people and re-start my love of bushwalking following a lot of bushwalking during my teenage years. I also liked the flexibility, the carpool system and the fact that it's a very cost effective setup. You meet people from different walks of life, age groups and unusual characters.

**Favourite walk so far?** My favourite walks have been to the Northern Grampians. I love the open country there with eucalyptus scents and many amazing rock formations. I have been there two years in a row now and both years we had magnificent sunny weather in the middle of winter. I am sure I will go there again in the near future. The area around Bird Rock and the Taipan wall were my favourite spots as was the top of Mt. Stapylton.

**Experience you'd least like to repeat?** To be honest, I can't think of one, except maybe going on a very long Saturday walk where my knees start to hurt after 15km out of 20km.

**Funniest moment?** I have knocked my head on an overhanging tree branch numerous times. It scraped my skull and I was slightly bleeding. As a result, I have learnt to always wear my hat; it protects me from head collisions more than sunburn!

**Strangest thing you've seen?** Definitely some idiots smoking while bushwalking as well as some inexperienced bushwalkers running out of water or even wearing jeans on a very hot day!

**Favourite bush tucker?** I like to eat healthily on any walk, so carrot sticks and a bit of fresh fruit are ideal foods to pack. Other favourites include a sandwich with tomato tuna. On a tough walk, I like to indulge myself with some chocolates and energy drinks.

**Have you made any mistakes on a walk that you aren't too embarrassed to admit?** Yes, I've made endless mistakes, especially the time I led my first walk to Werribee Gorge. I was maybe a little overwhelmed with the amount of people that turned up. Being a leader for the first time, I was not all that confident and I had forgotten about many rules. One mistake was that I did not stop at any junctions. Luckily I appointed a reliable whip who quickly stepped in and acted on my behalf, a few times running ahead to direct people before returning to the back of the group. The whole day would have been a total chaos had it not been for the quick thinking actions of the whip. I have to admit that the whip did a lot of the logistical work. But of course I still took the credit of leading the walk. That was one mighty 'whipping' experience!



Rafal at his favourite location, the Grampians

**What places haven't you been to that you'd most like to visit?** I would love to hike Mt Cook in New Zealand and also Switzerland. I've seen pictures and heard that the scenery there is spectacular.

**If you were on the "Einstein Factor", what would your special subject be?** I would choose Geography. And I've also read a lot of about aliens and UFOs, so if I got a chance, then those subjects, along with Star Trek, could also be candidates.

**Favourite movie or song?** Probably Star Wars and Star Trek because you don't need to pay much attention to the story line to understand what's going on. 80's music is my favourite; it brings back a lot of my memories of my younger days. When I listen to it, I reflect and think about the time when I was growing up in that era and the people I used to know.

**In what ways do you think the club can be improved?** I think the club can maybe improve the reward system for leaders: in addition to a free trip card, the club can give away some bushwalking gear to the most enthusiastic leaders. The club could also have bushwalking gear for hire for those wanting to organise a more involved trip, such as a weekend base camp.

**And finally, any advice for new walkers?** Always come prepared for all conditions and don't let the weather put you off. Focus on having fun, interacting with fellow walkers as well as enjoying the nature instead of focusing on the actual walking – as this will happen anyway!

Congratulations and best wishes to Rafal and Sharon on their forthcoming wedding later this spring.

## A West Highland Fling

*John Sloan experiences Scotland's best-known long distance walk*

Starting from the northern outskirts of Glasgow, the West Highland way is an unforgettable journey into the heart of the Scottish highlands, passing along the shores of the iconic Loch Lomond, through woodland glens and lonely windswept moors before finishing at the base of Britain's highest peak.

I started my walk in Milngavie (pronounced Mull-guy) where I met up with the rest of the group, nine of us in total. We weren't the only ones about to set off – there looked to be about thirty others preparing to spend the next week hiking 153km to Fort William. Although it was a Saturday, it was still a couple of months from the peak summer walking season. Milngavie is only 10km from the centre of Glasgow, but it didn't take long to leave all traces of the city and get into the swing of the Scottish countryside.

The West Highland way can be walked in either direction, but just about everybody does it from south to north so as to experience the steadily building climax of heading from lowlands to highlands. My favourite section of the walk came relatively early however, as we headed through Trossachs National Park on the second day to climb 200-300m Conic Hill for superb views of Loch Lomond. This is Scotland's largest loch; just how vast it was became clear over the next two days as we followed the loch's shoreline for over 30km, walking through forest or over hills in open grassland, rock-hopping at times. With a distance of 30km, the third day was our longest, although being fairly flat to begin with we covered the first 15km in three hours. We stopped for some welcome refreshment at the Inversnaid hotel where I was served, from a silver pot into an elegant china cup, the smoothest cup of tea I've ever tasted. It was so good I drank the four remaining cups in the pot; they helped charge me up for the much rougher and rockier second 15 kilometre stretch for the day.



Day 3: John relaxing on Loch Lomond's bonny banks, Inversnaid

I walked the West Highland way as part of an organised tour that transported our main luggage between nightly rest points, meaning I only needed to carry a day pack. Anyone wanting to be a bit more self-sufficient won't find it too difficult however. There is a regular rail service to each end of the walk and other public transport access to several towns along the way. There are backpackers, B&Bs or more upmarket lodges at regular intervals along the track, so although something more substantial than a day pack will be needed, it isn't necessary to carry camping equipment



or more than a couple of day's food. Planning ahead and booking accommodation is essential during the busy summer months. For those wanting to rough it (or who didn't book a bed in time), there are plenty of muddy campsites along the route.

Our accommodation was in hostels, with a cook preparing a buffet of food each evening. My first taste of Scottish culture came as I was finishing a bowl of pasta but still feeling hungry. Looking for something to go with it, there wasn't much left on the table other than a bowl of mincemeat, so I helped myself to a generous serving. It was spicy but quite tasty. A little later on everyone else had finished and there was still plenty left over, so I had a second helping. After polishing that off, someone came up to me, clapped his hand on my shoulder and exclaimed "Aye, looks a' though you've taken a fancy to a wee morsel of haggis then lad?" Haggis. Scotland's contribution to global cuisine along with the deep-fried Mars Bar. Haggis is the heart, lungs and liver of a sheep, chopped up and boiled with oatmeal in its stomach. It was much more appetising when I thought of it as mincemeat! (cont'd page 8)



Day 5: North from Tyndrum towards Beinn Dorain

## A West Highland Fling (cont'd)

On day four we reached St Fillan's Kirk, the half-way point. Our leader produced a bottle of Irish whiskey (St Fillan being from the Emerald Isle) to toast our achievement, then left another bottle under the Fillan bridge as a gift for the next group.



*Day 6: A rare clear view of Glen Coe's peaks from Rannoch Moor*

My week in late May could turn out to be the best of 2008 for Scotland. Spring is one of the best times of year for the West Highland Way, as the mountains still retain their snow-capped peaks, yet the temperature has finally lifted a few notches above Arctic. We were very lucky with the weather. The term "summer" is used very loosely in this part of the world, however there are often stable periods around the turning of the seasons in May and September. And so it was with my trip – after an overcast and drizzly first day, it was glorious sunny weather, with daytime temperatures of 21-22°C for the rest of the way. Some would argue that this isn't seeing the real Scotland, but when the alternative can be walking through mist-riden mountains and not seeing anything at all, I was more than happy with what we got.

The only major animal life encountered on the walk was a flock of shaggy highland cattle on day five. A few of these beasts stood nonchalantly in the middle of a creek I had to cross. Well and truly accustomed to walkers, one of them just stared at me (maybe it hadn't seen an Australian before?) without budging as I passed barely a metre away from it.



*Atop the Devil's Staircase*

The WHW was only opened in 1980, but much of it consists of historic pathways and roads many centuries older. Gaiters are recommended for a few sections across muddy farm paddocks,

however other parts are on disused military roads built over two and a half centuries ago by invaders from south of the border, an army of rude and arrogant Sissonachs on their way to subjugate rebellious Highlanders.

That night we stayed near the site of an even earlier episode of violent history at Glencoe YHA. As a diversion from walking, we visited the local museum to see how the Scots lived in the 1600s. After our guide had told us about their weapons and the kilt he was wearing, we asked him what do they wear underneath? He responded by turning around, bending down and doing a highland fling with the rear of his kilt – no Bond undies in this part of the world. This was my second experience of Scottish culture – I think I preferred the haggis. So far however I hadn't heard even a distant wailing of bagpipes – let's hope my luck held.

After Glencoe we climbed to the highest point on the WHW, the Devils Staircase at a mighty 550m altitude. Its name sounded daunting, but it wasn't difficult – for me anyway. I'd done some training beforehand, not knowing what to expect, but the walk wasn't hard compared to overnight hikes in Victoria. Overall the walk was a "medium-plus" grade due to the average distance of 21-22km per day. There were some tough rocky sections that were hard on the feet, but much of it was flat on the old pathways and military roads. Flat didn't mean dull and boring, merely that the route went between the hills rather than up and over them. In this part of the world the hills are "undulating" or "rolling" hills, much less steep than many in Victoria.

The seventh and final day of the walk began at Kinlochleven. It wasn't impressive at first, as we proceeded through pine plantations, some of them clear-felled, but eventually it gave way to more lush, picturesque and untouched forest as we descended into Glen Nevis. Flanked by hills, we gradually approached the highest of them all, the 1344m Ben Nevis. The actual walk ended with a couple of kilometres along the main road into Fort William.

Ben Nevis is a side-trip, not part of the WHW. Unfortunately many tours such as the one I joined don't include a climb to the summit as the return trip takes the best part of a day. More often than not the summit is covered in cloud (and can be dangerous if you can't see the cliff edges) with the best views often from two thirds of the way up. There is an easy route to the top via an old pony track; anyone fortunate to be in Fort William on a clear day is highly recommended to take it. Although I didn't climb it, Ben Nevis was a suitably impressive climax to (almost) finish the walk.

This isn't a wilderness walk by Australian standards (roads or towns were never more than a few kilometres away) but was nevertheless very scenic and enjoyable. For those who are comfortable with long distances but aren't keen on steep hills, this is an ideal walk to do as part of a visit to Great Britain.

## Tips for Better Bushwalking

### #32 Time and Tide

Anyone planning a coastal walk weeks or months ahead will always have the disadvantage of being unable to predict the weather conditions on the day. An important factor which can be influenced however is the tide. Of course you can't control the tide to suit yourself – King Canute demonstrated that to the world back in the 11<sup>th</sup> century – but a walk can be planned around a favourable tide. Anyone leading a coastal walk who is unaware of the tidal conditions before they set foot on the beach hasn't organised their trip properly.

As far as walking is concerned, all the advantages are with a low tide. Scenically it is more interesting due to the rocks, pools, seaweed and other features revealed in the exposed intertidal zone. It is less taxing on the feet walking on sand that is damp but firm than sinking into the soft dry stuff. The most important reason however is safety. Some sections of coast, particularly headlands, can become impassable at high tide without getting wet feet. This can be pleasant on a warm, calm day, but dangerous if there is a heavy swell. In some situations there may not be an alternative higher route and in the worst case a group can become trapped between a rising tide and a cliff face.

High and low tide information for Victoria can be found on the internet at the Bureau of Meteorology website

[www.bom.gov.au/oceanography/tides/MAPS/vic.shtml](http://www.bom.gov.au/oceanography/tides/MAPS/vic.shtml)

This gives the times for various places along the coast. Estimate the tide based on that closest to the location you will be walking. Remember to allow for daylight saving if the walk will be in the summer months (add an hour to the listed time). The period two hours before and after low tide is generally the most suitable time for walking. Tides have approximately twelve hour cycles, so there will usually be a low tide at some stage during daylight hours. Determine if there are any critical sections where a low tide is essential (eg estuary crossings, headlands, rocks) then work out a walk plan that matches the times on these sections with a low and preferably ebbing tide.

Factors to consider are:

- ❖ If you have some flexibility as to when to hold the walk, choose a date with convenient tides.

### Grampians - Major Mitchell plateau reopens

Good news for lovers of the Grampians is the reopening in July of the Major Mitchell Plateau overnight walk following extensive track reconstruction in the wake of damage caused by bushfires in 2006. The 25km walk was one of the most popular in the Grampians, featuring magnificent views from the plateau itself and Mt William, the highest point in the park. As previously, it is necessary to obtain a camping permit for this walk, as campsite numbers are strictly limited.

Also under development is a new hikers campsite in the Wonderland Range, replacing the burnt out Mt Rosea campsite. There is no indication as yet when this will be completed.



*Apollo Bay Blowhole, Great Ocean Walk,  
an area that is only safe at low tide*

- ❖ If the walk can be done in either direction, choose the one which will have the group arrive at the critical coastal sections when the tide is ebbing.
- ❖ Walks reliant on an early start time to avoid a rising tide aren't recommended for day trips, due to the risk of delays in travelling and assembling the group at the start point. For overnight walks however, the tide may decide when everyone has to wake-up.

The most interesting and dramatic coastal walks are often the ones most significantly affected by tidal conditions. Unless you are strolling along a wide sandy beach, planning ahead to allow for the tides is important and whatever the weather conditions will make the walk safer and more enjoyable.



*Major Mitchell plateau from Mt William*

## Signs of the Times

*If ubiquitous signs are one of the things you go to the bush to escape from, then sorry but you can expect to see more of them in forests and national parks thanks to three recent Parks Victoria initiatives.*

### Improvements for reporting emergencies...

Worth noting for anyone undertaking day walks close to Melbourne is the new system of emergency markers recently installed in metropolitan parks such as Lysterfield, Dandenong Ranges, Kinglake and Lerderderg Gorge.

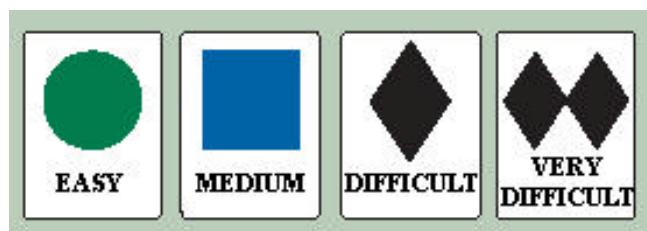
The emergency markers display a series of white letters and numbers on a green background, similar to a car number-plate. This alpha-numeric identifier can be used by anyone involved in an emergency to give a precise location when they dial Triple Zero.

The markers have been placed in locations that otherwise may be difficult to describe due to the absence of any major feature or landmark, however the alpha-numeric identifier is linked to Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA) computer aided dispatch system which contains details of the relevant location, GPS coordinates, road access route or navigational data for emergency services.



### 4WD track classification

Also being rolled out is a system of classification for 4WD tracks. The label "suitable for 4WD only" covers a wide variety of road conditions, from those which are passable by robust 2WDs in dry weather, those that are OK for "soft-road" 4WDs, all the way up to steep, rocky tracks that require solid high-clearance 4WDs with a very skilled driver. The classification has four levels, "Easy", "Medium", "Difficult" and "Very Difficult", accompanied by symbols that will be familiar to skiers.



While it is rare for the club to run walks that require vehicles to be driven on a 4WD track the signs will also indicate how interesting it will be to walk along them.

The new system is initially being trialled in Bunyip State Forest, if successful expect it to become more widespread over the next year or so.



### ... and reporting bad behaviour in the bush

Finally, you may also encounter the occasional sign for the Bush Telegraph Service which began on the Anzac day long weekend.

A single, easy to remember number, 13 2874 (13BUSH) enables reporting of behaviour that is antisocial or could damage the environment.

Further information about the Bush Telegraph service is available from the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 1963.



## In Brief

### Great Dividing Trail may become greater

The Great Dividing Trail (GDT) is a network of long distance walks in the Goldfields and Spa region north west of Melbourne. Centred on Daylesford, it currently comprises four main tracks; Wallaby (to Buninyong via Ballarat), Lerderderg (to Bacchus Marsh), Dry Diggings (to Castlemaine and Leanganook (from Castlemaine to Bendigo). These total an impressive 260km, however there are plans to extend this even further as part of a grander "Goldfields Track". Serious consideration is being given to a 95km trail from Bendigo to the Murray River at Echuca. Other possible branches from the current trails include Blackwood – Macedon and Castlemaine-Maldon.

The interest in expanding the trail has resulted from recognition of the tourist dollars contributed by visitors using the existing GDT. The development will also look at increasing this revenue by officially classifying some sections as mountain-bike as well as a walking track.

### Otways logging now history

Logging in the Otways National Park has now totally ceased following expiry of the last licences in June. This preserves the remaining old growth forest and over time will see some of the quite ugly clearfelled areas regenerate.

### Public land access licences resolved

Previously reported in Yeti (Autumn 2006) was concern that volunteer bushwalking groups such as YHA could get caught up in a tightening of the rules for licences to conduct outdoor activities on public land such as national parks.

After more than two years of discussion, the state government has finally confirmed that the status quo will remain. Community-based clubs will be exempt from the new licence fee policy intended to cover commercial operators only.

## The Green Page

*Are you worried that you may be environmentally unfriendly? You love nature, but nature just isn't returning your phone calls. Perhaps this advice from Yeti's own relationship counsellors may help you become ecologically sustainable. Let's start then with the basics.*

### How to Hug a Tree

1. Find yourself a quiet park, forest, or woodland area.
2. Walk among the trees until you feel comfortable in their presence.
3. Feel the different bark textures with the palms of your hands.
4. Smell the scent of the various woods.
5. Absorb their life's energies as you look upwards to the sprawling branches overhead.
6. Find the perfect tree that fits your mood. You will know which one is right for you.
7. **Vertical Tree Hug:** Encircle it with your arms while gently pressing your cheek to the trunk being careful not to scratch your face. Squeeze tightly. Sigh deeply. Be at one with your tree.
8. **Full Body Tree Hug:** Sit upon the ground wrapping your legs around the base of the tree and at the same time embracing it with your arms.
9. **Up in the Air Tree Hug:** Climb a tree. Sit upon a strong limb and straddle it with your legs. Bend forward and place your belly against it while wrapping your arms about it.



### Tips

1. Feel free to hug more than one tree if the mood strikes. Besides, other trees might get jealous. With a little practice you should be able to speed-date an entire forest.
2. You may like to take home a fallen leaf or nut as a keepsake from your new friend.
3. Be sure to return each season to visit your tree. And don't be afraid to talk to it as trees are good listeners.

## Dear Dr Telemark

*Yeti's veteran lifestyle coach can also assist in establishing your green credentials*



Dear Dr T,

*After a Sunday walk a few weeks ago some of us were feeling a bit hungry, so the group stopped on the way home to get something to eat. I ordered a hamburger, but no sooner had I sunk my teeth into it and felt its delicious blood-drenched juices oozing down my chin than someone else in the group started abusing me. He said it was people like me that were responsible for global warming by eating beef and that animals were being murdered in my name. Honestly, he wouldn't shut up and went all out to supplant Moby as the world's most irritating vegan.*

*I felt like delivering him a swift carbon footprint where it hurts, but the leader restrained me and suggested I seek advice from you for a less violent approach of proving that it's not me that's causing all those hurricanes and other weird weather the world has been experiencing lately.*

*Yours hopefully,  
"Hungry" Jack*

Dear Jack ,

*One of the main alleged contributors to greenhouse gases is the methane expelled by the 1.3 billion cattle currently grazing the planet. Cattle only fart while they are alive. There are more cattle alive now than at any time in earth's history. And the reason why? – because there are too people nowadays like your self-righteous eco-warrior friend that aren't eating them. They prefer to live off moong bean and cashew nut curries, totally ignoring the environmental impact caused by the increased volume of their own digestive gases compared with the more constipated segment of the population like you and me. If it wasn't for people like us that give cause to occasionally wield a cattle prod and turn some of those beasts into mincemeat, these cows would be merrily letting rip for many years to come. I'm planning an expedition to Antarctica in a couple of years, so to ensure it won't melt before I get there, I'm off to McDonalds to stifle some more burping bovines.*

*See ya,  
Dr T*

## Sarah's Social Calendar

*For those times when you aren't out bushwalking, new Social Secretary Sarah Kim has come up with a variety of activities to keep you entertained until the end of 2008.*

### MOVIE NIGHT Friday Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>, meet 7pm

The curtain lifts on YHA Bushwalking's spring social carnival with a night at the Astor Theatre, St Kilda. "The Bank Job", a heist movie with a difference and "Iron Man", one of the better superhero comic book adaptations received a total of 15½ stars from Margaret and David, so there should be something for most people to enjoy.

**Cost:** \$13    **Contact:** Andrew Stevenson 9530 3129



### BBQ LUNCHES

**Sat 25<sup>th</sup> October, from midday**

Enjoy a crackerjack afternoon at Middle Park lawn bowls club, along with a catered BBQ.

**Cost:** \$20 (BBQ & bowls)

**Book by:** October 23rd (max 10)

**Contact:** Dale Turner 0400 017 947



**Sat 8<sup>th</sup> November, from 11am**

Enjoy an afternoon on the Yarra, with a BBQ followed by some messing about on the river at Studley Park.

**Cost:** \$8 (BBQ & drinks), plus extra for boat hire.

**Book by:** November 6<sup>th</sup>, advance payment preferred

**Contact:** Krisztina Simon 0427 804 944 or [kriszti\\_mail@yahoo.com.au](mailto:kriszti_mail@yahoo.com.au)

**Fri 21<sup>st</sup> November, 7pm** Burmese House in Richmond.

**Cost:** \$35 for 3 courses.

**Book by:** November 14th (max 20).

**Contact:** Derek Gomez – 9421 2861 or [derek.gomez@eds.com](mailto:derek.gomez@eds.com)

**Fri 5<sup>th</sup> December, 7.30pm** Gurkhas Nepalese in Richmond.

**Cost:** \$30 Banquet. BYO wine & beer.

**Book by:** November 1st. \$10 advance payment (max 12).

**Contact:** Andrea Wang [arkibleu@bigpond.com](mailto:arkibleu@bigpond.com)

**Fri 19<sup>th</sup> December, meet 6.30-7pm** Gold Leaf Chinese in Burwood.

**Cost:** \$25. BYO Wine only.

**Book by:** December 16th. \$20 advance payment (max 16).

**Contact:** Robert Yuen 0422 329 063 after 8pm

### RESTAURANT EVENINGS



### INDOOR ROCK CLIMBING

**Sat 29<sup>th</sup> November, 4pm** Hardrock indoor climbing then dinner, city

A bit more physical than most of the "Social" grade activities, this should enable you to build up an appetite for the meal afterwards.

**Cost:** Group rate (min 10 people) \$18 each for 2 hours climbing.

**Contact:** Robert Potocnik 9459 4624