



### End of Year Awards

As well as the traditional presentation of Golden Boot and Silly Billy awards, the 2008 Christmas breakup dinner was also used to honour some of the year's most popular leaders and memorable moments.

Taking out the Golden Boot award yet again (we've lost count of the number of previous wins) for the most days spent walking was John Belfio.

John's achievement is all the more impressive, given that he had a couple of months off in Italy and helped survey a few of the planned walks for 2009 that didn't count towards his total. The next most frequent walkers were Vanna Walsh, Bruce Meincke, and Tamie Dick.



Walkers enjoying the view from Mt McDonald (Oct 2008) (photo: Tom Lun)



Golden Boot winner John Belfio ready to set out on another walk (while the rest of the group is still getting out of bed!)

A general thanks was given to all the leaders over the past year, with John Cobb, Sharon Saing and Rafal Rutkowski voted the most popular leaders. John was commended for his patience and amiability in managing quite large groups, whilst Sharon's Brisbane Ranges walk in May was singled out as being especially well planned and organised.

Also presented with an appreciation award was Louise Reynolds for the imagination she has put into the social events she has organised over the past couple of years. Louise's favourite so far has been the Tall Ship boat trip last January. Expect an encore of some of the popular events, along with a few new ones.

For the "Memorable Moment" of 2008, turn over to page 2.

### Also in this Issue

- ❖ **Memorable Moment** – Ken Sussex's personal 2008 highlight (p2)
- ❖ **Long weekend accommodated walks** – Bright, Apollo Bay and the Grampians (p3)
- ❖ **Summer walk selections** – A night owl walk at Kinglake, Snowy Bluff, and a hard-grade accommodated weekend (p4)
- ❖ **The Great Grampians Getaway** – A walk featuring a bee-grade monster (p5-6)
- ❖ **Know Your Committee** – New 2008 member Tamie Dick (p7)
- ❖ **My First Pack Carry** – Rafal's initiation at Wilsons Prom (p8)
- ❖ **Tour Du Mont Blanc** – Andrew and Louise experience the pitfalls of self-guiding one of Europe's iconic long-distance walks (p9-10)
- ❖ **Walks from the Vault** – Star Trekkers journey to PB (p11-12)
- ❖ **Tips for Better Bushwalking** – Whys & wherefores of blisters (p13)
- ❖ **The Art of Bushwalking** – A century of style changes (p14)
- ❖ **Mythbusters go Bush** – The one about presidential romance (p15)
- ❖ **Bushwalking Horoscope** – How the stars say you'll go in 2009 (p16)



Treasurer Cynthia Bell (l) presents Sharon with a gift of appreciation for her efforts leading walks during 2008.

### YHA BUSHWALKING COMMITTEE 2008/09

President	David Sisson
Secretary/Website	Hooi-Soon Khoo
Treasurer	Cynthia Bell
Walks Sec. (Weekends)	Paul Gottliebssen
Walks Sec (Sundays)	Hooi-Soon Khoo
Clubnight Coordinators	Jane Bateson
	Tamie Dick
Social Secretary	Sarah Kim
Search & Rescue Rep	Simon Walliss
General committee	Tom Lun
	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 May 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:

Tamie Dick  
Les Gamel  
Paul Gottliebssen  
Richard Miller  
Louise Reynolds  
Rafal Rutkowski  
Sharon Rutkowski  
David Sale  
Andrew Stevenson  
Ken Sussex  
Vanna Walsh  
Sing Wong

### A Memorable Moment of 2008



Photo: Roger Taylor

*In forty years of bushwalking, there have been many, many memorable moments. One of those moments was on a beautiful day, years ago, up on top of Mt. Cobberas No.1. Twenty to thirty metres below me, a proud brumby mare and her newly born foal were resting quietly on the grass between two giant granite boulders. Across the valley, just south of Moscow Peak, a big black stallion threw its head up into the air, screamed his challenge to the world, and charged off down the hill with his herd to the grassy saddle between Cobberas No. 1 and Moscow Peak. To my north, just below Middle Peak, another stallion rose up on his hind legs and screamed his challenge back across the valley. It was magic!*

*Another one of those moments was on a weekend walk up on the Bogong High Plains last November. Saturday had been a very wet hut hop: morning tea at Wallace's Hut, lunch at Cope Hut, then over Mt Cope to Ryder's Hut, a cosy fire, and a drop of red to share with friends. Very pleasant.*

*Then overnight, the weather cleared, and sunrise on Sunday was beautiful. After a leisurely breakfast, it was packs on and off up to Mt Jim. We saw a couple of small groups of brumbies on the way up, but on the way back, we stumbled on a herd of thirty or more horses grazing peacefully just north of the pole line. Then it happened. Just over a rise, we found a small group of mares with a foal, and two stallions facing off, stamping the ground, necks arched, and striking at each other ... less than twenty metres away from us (photo). A truly awe inspiring moment for us all.*

**Ken Sussex**

### Accommodated weekend trips

Encouraged by the success of his Melbourne Cup weekend trip (see report page 5), David Sale has organised accommodated walks for each of the summer and autumn long weekends. As there are limited places for some of the accommodation, anyone interested in these trips should book and pay as early as possible to avoid disappointment by contacting David on 0407 667 624 or email [David.Sale@bluescopesteel.com](mailto:David.Sale@bluescopesteel.com)

#### Bright Australia Day weekend (Jan 24-26<sup>th</sup>)



Bright is a relatively small town located in a valley near Mt. Hotham and not far from Falls Creek. There are a number of rivers and streams which flow into the valley. The main river is the Ovens River (pictured above), one of the main swimming spots for the town.

The accommodation will be camping at the Freeburgh Cabin and Caravan Park, located about 8km out of Bright. The camping area is a large area towards the back of the park. The park has a recreational and TV room plus pool and BBQs. Cost is \$30 (\$10/night) plus booking fees. Although cabins are available, they are quite expensive (>\$50/night) at this time of the year. I will try to organize sharing for those who don't have a tent.

There are a number of walks in the area. Some are relatively flat and follow the river, while others involve a climb. The planned walks for the 2½ days are a return walk to the Rollasons's Falls (a swim is possible at the falls), one of Mt. McLeod/Mollisons Galleries/Bright to Wandiligong, and a short walk around the Bright Gorge.

#### Apollo Bay Labour Day weekend (March 7-9<sup>th</sup>)



Apollo Bay is located on the Great Ocean Road approx. 40 minutes beyond Lorne. Because it is further from Melbourne than Lorne, it tends to have a less touristy atmosphere. As with Lorne, it provides a mixture of forest and beaches.

The Labour Day weekend is an opportunity for walking sections of the Great Ocean Walk. Most of these will involve a car shuffle. The proposed walks include: Shelly Beach to Blanket Bay (13km), Blanket Bay to the light house to Aire River (20km) [this may be shortened], and a half-day walk towards Lorne for the last day (Stephenson's Falls, Lake Elizabeth, etc). This will be varied based upon the weather and group inclination.

The accommodation will be four-share dorms at the newly opened and centrally located Apollo Bay lodge. Cost will be \$75 (accommodation & continental breakfast) + booking fees for the 3 nights. Sixteen places have been reserved initially; these are bound to be snapped up quickly, so heed the advice above and book early.

#### Grampians part 2: Easter 2009 (April 10-13<sup>th</sup>)



A number of people visited the Grampians during Cup Weekend 2008 but this only whet their appetite for more. Consequently, there will be another trip to visit some of the areas that weren't visited on the previous occasion.

This will be an accommodated trip staying at Brambuk Hostel. The cost is expected to be \$96 (4 nights)+booking fees. The hostel is bunk style accommodation with ensuite (5-12 people per room). There is a large kitchen, eating area, and lounge.

Planned walks are Mt. Difficult, The Fortress, The Chimney Pots, and Mt. Abrupt. These walks are rated M(edium) or M+. The Fortress and The Chimney Pots are in a more remote section of the park. This will involve some driving on gravel roads.

Alternative activities for those desiring a rest day include rock climbing, abseiling, various shorter walks, spa and wineries. It is possible to swim at the nearby Lake Bellfield.

### Mt Everard Night Owl walk (February 14<sup>th</sup>)

Do you suffer from insomnia, like to stay up late, are a budding vampire or just don't like daylight? Then YHA Bushwalking has the walk for you!



On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> of February we are doing a bushwalk with a difference: a night walk at Mt Everard (Kinglake NP)!

So if you are unable to get a gig at the desperate and dateless ball for Valentines Day, you may like to consider coming along for a long night walk, with an early dinner beforehand at the Yarra Glen Pub.



We will make the most of daylight savings by starting the walk at about 7.30pm to allow a gradual transition into darkness. This a good opportunity for those contemplating events like the 100km Oxfam Trailwalker or maybe just to see what happens after dark.

Due to the nature of this walk, numbers are strictly limited to twelve. The walk is graded medium plus and you must be able to walk 20kms. You will also need a good quality LED head torch with fresh batteries that can shine a beam 15 to 20 metres and have a minimum burn time on high of 6 hours.



Bookings for this walk close Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> of February; if this sounds like the walk for you contact Andrew Stevenson by telephone (9527 4792) or e-mail: [svenlobster@yahoo.com.au](mailto:svenlobster@yahoo.com.au)

### Barwon River (Sunday February 15<sup>th</sup>)

The walk is along the Barwon river for 12-14km and alongside Queens Park and Buckley falls where the Barwon meets the Moorabool river. It's very picturesque but not much water is expected on the falls. There are also some historical industrial buildings dating from 19<sup>th</sup> Century which in parts looks like something out of an English industrial landscape. The walk is mostly on the walking tracks along both sides of the river.

We are meeting at the James Harrison bridge on the Barwon at 10.15 for anyone who wants to go there direct. Coffee at Newtown after walk.

*Enquiries: Sing Wong 9482 1206*

### Snowy Bluff (March 7-9<sup>th</sup>)



A strong contender for the hardest walk on the summer programme, this will appeal to the more experienced pack-carriers. Moroka Gorge and Snowy Bluff are some of the most remote bushwalking destinations in Victoria, but the effort to reach them is worthwhile. Day one will be a walk in from Horseyard Flat carpark to Shanty Hollow, with time to enjoy a swim at Moroka Gorge. On Sunday it's an assault on Snowy Bluff, probably as a 20km return trip from the campsite. Note that this route hasn't been recently surveyed and may be quite challenging in places, particularly in the aftermath of the 2006 bushfires.

*Enquiries: Paul Gottliebsen 9537 1001*

### Mt Buller accommodated weekend (Apr 25-26<sup>th</sup>)

Before reading too much further, be aware that this is not the same type of accommodated weekend as those included on page 3. The vehicles will not be driven to the accommodation, they will be parked at the start (and finish point of the walk), with a 1200m climb necessary to reach the accommodation. If that hasn't put you off, you will probably enjoy this trip very much.

All of the club's recent trips up Mt Buller have been via the Round Mountain-West Ridge route. This time the more rarely used route of Little Buller Spur and Four Mile spur will be used, starting from the Howqua River upstream of Sheeppark Flat. Little Buller spur is an exhilarating climb. There isn't a marked track, however the terrain is quite open and navigation isn't difficult. There are some steep sections at the beginning and rock scrambling up cliffs towards the Little Buller peak.

Saturday night accommodation will be Skilib ski-lodge on Mt Buller, cost is \$35 + booking fee (ensuite \$10 extra); you need to book and pay by April 12<sup>th</sup>. For the start of the walk there is a choice of driving up Saturday morning for a 9.30am start or camping at Sheeppark Flat on Friday night. As well as standard day pack equipment, you will need to carry a sleeping sheet and a change of clothing (optional- but recommended if you want to be admitted to the pub). Food is obtainable on the mountain.

*Enquiries: Stephen Smith 9387 6481*

### Dom Dom Saddle (Sunday February 8<sup>th</sup>)

A walk through mountain ash forest leading up from the Black Spur to Mt Vinegar. Depending on the weather and fire danger we'll try to find Cleft Rock. Expect some good hills and probably a late finish.

*Enquiries: Les Gamel 9326 0360*

## The Great Grampians Getaway

*(featuring The Bee & the One-eyed Monster)*

Eighteen intrepid explorers (plus a few part-timers) set off for a long weekend of discovery at the Grampians during Cup Weekend 2008. Although I have been to the Grampians a number of times over the years, it remains one of my favourite places in Victoria. Each time I visit, I am struck by the ruggedness, especially as it comes into sight as one approaches Halls Gap.

The first day was a trek around Mt. Stapylton. This is a great walk as it has fantastic views across the north-west section and out towards Mt. Arapiles and surrounding areas. The trek does have some steep sections but is generally well marked and there isn't a great amount of compulsory rock hopping (unless one wants to reach the peak, which most people did).



*Follow the leader at Mt. Stapylton*

The peak is located at around one third of the way around the circuit, so we had lunch further on at a rocky ledge overlooking a small tree-filled valley. A certain LVDV was enjoying sitting near the edge of the ledge in the sun when she decided to conduct an endurance test on her water bottle by rolling it down the rock face. Unfortunately, she hadn't thought the experiment through and considered how she was going to get the bottle back. Actually, she had thought it through: she asked me to get it for her. So perhaps it was a psychological test rather than a structural test. For the record, the bottle was structurally sound except for some wear and tear. I also passed the psychological test except for some wear and tear.

**Lesson 1:** Be wary of clandestine psychological tests.

The second half of the track gradually descends through scrub-land and eventually returns back to the car park. The area is quite dry. At one point there was a log near the path which may have been knocked by one of the walkers in the lead group disturbing some bees. KB was stung on the arm and I went to see how she was. I noticed a few bees flying around which went for me just as I was taking off the sunglasses. One got under the glasses and stung me on the eyebrow. Another two became caught in my hair. I managed to brush those out before they stung me. Fortunately, no-one else was stung.

**Lesson 2:** Beware the bee.

I found out later that KB has a history of guys coming to her aid, but ending up worse for wear. Perhaps this was another psychological test?

The last part of the day was a short stop at the Balconies, and Mt. Reid lookout. This has changed since the bushfires as it is no longer (legally) possible to stand in the Jaws of Death. Also, it is a one kilometre walk from the lookout (it isn't possible to drive).

That evening, we had a BBQ which worked out well. A number of people had put some effort into making creative salads and other treats. Mt. Rosea was planned for the next day. However, things didn't work out as expected. My eye-brow had swollen a little during the previous evening as a result of the sting but appeared to stabilize. Unfortunately that wasn't entirely correct, as it had swollen considerably during the night to the point where it wasn't possible to open one eye. Further, there isn't a doctor or even a chemist in Halls Gap.



*Glamour shot of the one-eyed monster*

**Lesson 3:** Beware the bee (reiterated).

The track was changed to a Halls Gap - Pinnacle - Lake Bellfield car shuffle as it would be a little easier. There was some difficulty coordinating with the campers due to poor phone reception so they ended up doing the Mt. Rosea walk anyway.

*(cont'd p6)*

### The Great Grampians Getaway (cont'd)



*Rare demonstration of the Pinnacles dance*

The Pinnacle walk is another great walk. It involves some rock-hopping and steep sections, both of which require accurate judging of distances. Unfortunately, only having one eye meant I didn't have this. It is a peculiar feeling to try to grab a hand-rail, only to miss it completely. Similarly, taking a large step from one rock to another was almost a leap of faith as I found it difficult to determine the flatness and distance of the rock. This slowed my progress although I never actually fell.

**Lesson 4:** We have two eyes for a reason (Look after them!)

My eye was still closed on the third day and I wasn't keen on a long walk with rock-hopping, so I planned a smorgasbord of shorter walks. It also gave some people a partial rest day of two moderate days of walking. After the aborted first walk (due to a track closure: it was supposed to be open in early November but was still closed), one group decided they wanted to do a harder walk (Mt. Rosea). The middle group completed Mt. William, Mackenzie Falls, Lake Wartook, and Silverband Falls, while the third group enjoyed a relaxing spa after the Mt. William walk. It was during the Mt. William walk that my eye started to open - not there was actually much to see due to the low cloud. Fortunately, it fined up in the afternoon and everyone enjoyed their respective activity.

The last day was a half-day trek at Mt. Sturgeon in the south, before continuing on to Melbourne. This was a good way to finish the long weekend with views over the surrounding area.



*Most of the gang at the top of Mt. Sturgeon*

It was a good weekend. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves (or they didn't complain too loudly). And the Grampians is a spectacular place to visit. Another trip is planned at Easter, visiting some of the more inaccessible areas (see separate article, page 3).

*David Sale*

(Note: People's initials were used to protect the guilty.)

### Helping Injured Wildlife

On the way back from the Grampians trip, one of our cars killed a wallaby. The right thing was done: the poor dead body was removed from the road and put on the side of it so as not to be mangled by passing cars and to give the wild animals a chance to feed on it. The dead wallaby was laid right on the border of the road and the beginning of the bush and one of our group remarked it was too close to the road. The body was moved further into the bush: this gave a respectful hiding-place to the dead wallaby and a secure spot for the wildlife to feed on it without being disturbed by the traffic. Please remember this if a fatality occurs.

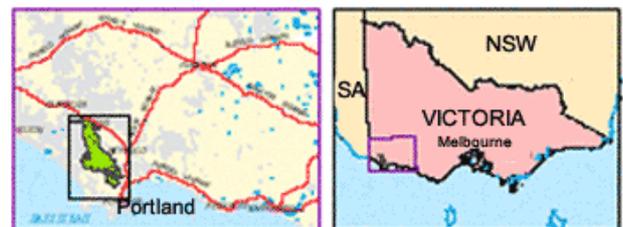
Please also remember to do the right thing if an animal is injured: make sure it is safe from traffic and a certain and horrible death and call the special RACV number to rescue wildlife 131111 (every walker and leader should have it punched in their mobiles) or the number given on the signs HELP FOR WILD LIFE.

This unfortunate incident has made me realize that bushwalkers and leaders have vague ideas on how to act in such a situation. The club trained bushwalkers in First Aid last year; I think we should also be trained on how to react to potential dangerous situations for wild life and car-passengers: may be a sponsored course in driving safely in such situations should be taken into consideration by the club.

*Vanna Walsh*

### Cobboboonee - Victoria's newest NP

**Where is it?** Opened in November 2008, Cobboboonee National Park is 18,500 hectares of former state forest extending from 5km to 35km northwest of Portland, approx 400km from Melbourne.



**What are its attractions?** The area is pleasant lowland forest and wetlands. No big hills, which can be a good thing for those after a relaxing but not too strenuous walk. It is also home to some rare species of flora and birdlife. A section of the Great South West Walk runs through it, along with a network of 4WD tracks and a horse trail. There are a couple of camping areas with basic facilities.

**Is it worth a trip there?** Not by itself, given the fair distance to get there. But as part of a long weekend trip based around the Portland area it would be very attractive. The Great South West walk is currently celebrating its 25th anniversary. The entire 220km is a major undertaking, but with car shuffles it is easy to construct a variety of interesting day walks along sections of it. The spectacular coast of Cape Bridgewater, Glenelg River gorge and Discovery Bay coastal park are recommended highlights.

**Best time to visit?** Spring; Melbourne Cup weekend is ideal, although any other long weekends between autumn and spring would also be OK.

## Know your committee - Tamie Dick

*Another of 2008's new committee members shares a few thoughts about the club and her experiences since joining.*

**How long have you been with YHA bushwalking?** Just over two years.

**Whereabouts was your first walk?** The Formal Dinner walk to Craig's Hut in October 2006.

**What attracted you to us in the first place?** A diverse range of people and walks and the fact there is no annual membership fee. Paying fees on a walk by walk basis is a great way to encourage people to come along and see if they like walking with the club without outlaying a lot of cash.

**Favourite walk so far?** My favourite walks so far are all pack carries. Helicopter Spur, Mt Magdala, Mt Howitt, Crosscut Saw and Mt Speculation in sun and snow in April 2008, Mt Feathertop in winter and the Overland Track in winter 2008.

**Least pleasant experience?** Walking up Diamantina Spur in 35 degree heat on day five of a six day walk about a year after the 2006 bushfires. The ground and trees were still black from the fires and heat from the sun was radiating off the black ground and trees. The first section was very steep and slippery underfoot due to the loss of the undergrowth in the fires. I was very glad to get to the top. However, despite all that I would definitely go back and do it all over again.

**Funniest moment?** I'm not sure about the funniest moment because I might embarrass someone but the most spectacular moment was waking up to snow for the first time ever in a tent when camping on the top of Mt Speculation in April 2008. It was raining when we went to bed, it started snowing during the night and when we got up there was 20-30 cm of snow on the ground. It was absolutely beautiful.

**Strangest thing you've seen?** Up at Federation Hut in July 2008 I saw two guys cooking up a storm in a full size wok that they had carried all the way up the mountain. All the ingredients were fresh including the meat, veggies and sauces. They even had a bottle of wine to go with it. Pure gourmet.

**Favourite food on a walk?** Spaghetti bolognese (I dehydrate my own food) with parmesan cheese and a glass of wine. Unlike the guys up at Federation Hut, my wine is usually decanted into a platypus water bottle. However, for Christmas I got one of the new platypus bottles designed specifically for carrying wine, so I'm a step closer to carrying wine in the bottle!!

**Have you made any mistakes on a walk that you aren't too embarrassed to admit?** Getting dehydrated on a hot day while walking a section of the Great Ocean Walk in January 2007. Quite simply, I didn't drink enough water in the morning and over lunch, and as a consequence I felt sick and got cramps in my legs in the early afternoon. After that experience, I bought myself a water bladder so I can drink whenever I want without having to stop to retrieve my water bottle from my pack.



*Tamie rugged up on the summit of Mt Feathertop*

**What luxury item do you never go without on a pack-carry?** I always carry a little bit of alcohol to enjoy with and/or after dinner. Either some wine or Baileys, and in winter a little bit of brandy to get the blood pumping.

**What annoys you the most on bushwalks?** It would have to be the flies in summer on a warm day with no wind. I think I need to buy a head net for summer !! It won't win any fashion competitions but would certainly make the walking more enjoyable.

**What places haven't you been to that you'd most like to visit in Australia and overseas?** Top on my list at the moment is Wilsons Prom. It is so close and yet I have never been. I hope to get down there this summer.

Overseas, I would love to go walking in Nepal and hope to do so in the next 12-18 months.

**Favourite movie?** *The Castle*. I can watch it over and over and still enjoy it.

**In what ways do you think the club can be improved?** I think we need to encourage more people to give a pack carry trip a go. The day walk program is very strong but in the two years I've been walking with the club, the number of pack carries on the program and number of people on the walks appears to be decreasing. While on day walks I've spoken to a number of people who are keen to give a pack carry a go, but they are not sure about what gear they need or they're worried about carrying the weight of the pack.

**And finally, any advice for new walkers?** Give new experiences a go. There are always people willing to provide help and encouragement out on a walk.

## My First Pack Carry Experience

*Rafal Rutkowski reports on his initiation weekend at Wilsons Promontory.*

Wow, what a weekend! My very first Pack-carry took place in early December at Wilsons Prom.

The weekend started ominously, with camping at Tidal River on Friday night trying to get some sleep to the sounds of rowdy teenagers rampaging until around 2am.

The next day, very excited and eager despite the lack of sleep, we got ready and took the bus to Telegraph Saddle to meet up with the group and the walk started. I quickly found out I had too much water for an overnight pack carry and almost not enough food!

Following the initial photos and laughter while taking photos prior to starting the walk, joy turned to annoyance as the 16kg on my unaccustomed back started to dominate my attention about 30 minutes into the walk. When we got to Sealers Cove, I could not feel my shoulders or legs and my back was in a spasm. The swim later that afternoon in the Cove went some way to easing the pain. I slept like a baby for twelve hours from 7pm.

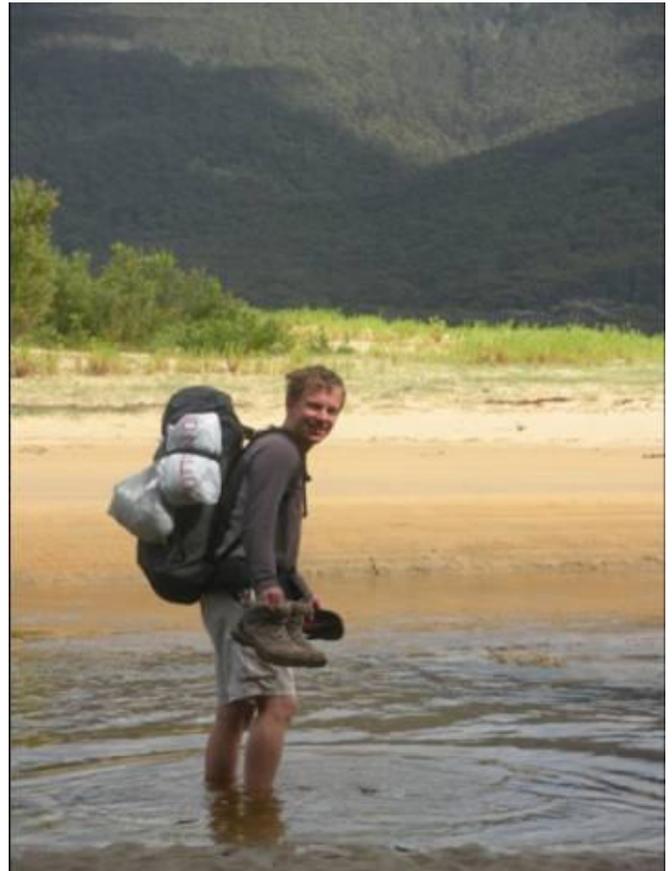
During the night, I dreamt of wombats invading our tent and eating our food. On reflection in the morning, the dream was probably a real event, as I clearly remember getting woken up at 3am when Sharon seemed to be doing something. I think all I said in my semi-lucid state was “why are you



*Vanna, Linda, Anne and Sharon at the Wilsons Prom beginner weekend – could one of this group have been another first time pack carrier as well?*

making so much noise” after which I fell straight back to sleep. In the morning, it turned out that Sharon was actually talking to a wombat with his bottom inside the flyer of the tent while enjoying a bread roll. At the time, in-between complaining about the noise, I thought I heard Sharon say something like “jeeesus, it’s got our bread rolls, dammit, arghhh, that was for our lunch!” followed by her attempts (eventually successful) to push the wombat out of the tent with her bare hands after which it quickly bolted off.

In the morning, we packed up and left Sealers Cove (see photo) backtracking along the boardwalk and a few up-hills.



*Rafal departing the campground at Sealers Cove*

When we arrived at Windy Saddle at 12.15pm to have a break, a fellow YHA bushwalker caught up and informed us that the last bus to Tidal River from Telegraph Saddle before their one hour break would be at 12.45pm. The effect was instantaneous. I bolted with my 12kg pack and armed with an energy bar, started power-walking the last 3km to the car park. Sharon was soon far behind. When I got there at 12.40pm in what could be a record 27 minutes (for what is normally described as taking 45 minutes), the bus had just arrived. I asked the driver if he could maybe wait five minutes (I said there was one other bushwalker desperately on her way trying to make the 12.45pm deadline) only to be lectured in front of the other passengers about him having only 30 minutes for lunch. At 12.44pm, to my relief, Sharon suddenly materialised in the car park and we boarded the bus at exactly 12.45pm. Close call!

Well, that was certainly a learning experience! For next time, I’ll go for 2-3 nights and pack less water and more food!

## Tour du Mont Blanc

*Louise Reynolds and Andrew Stevenson experience the pitfalls of self-guiding on one of Europe's iconic treks*

The Tour Du Mont Blanc (TMB) is one of the world's classic long distance treks. It circles the Mont Blanc Massif taking in areas of Switzerland, France and Italy. The full hike is around 170 kilometres long but there are a number of variations available on particular sections of the route and the route has changed a number of times since it was first established. We completed most of the route during a month long European holiday in June and July 2008.

We had originally booked to do an escorted tour, but just three weeks before we were due to fly out for Europe we were told the trip was cancelled, apparently due to lack of numbers. With our airfares paid and other commitments made we decided to re-book with the same tour company on their self guided hike so we didn't have to rearrange or cancel our whole holiday. We would have our accommodation pre-booked and have some luggage taken by van between accommodations each day. We were to be provided with a map and trip notes but would be on our own from there.



*Starting out: Louise and Andrew at the top of the La Flagere cable car*

When they said 'self-guided' they really meant it. After spending a lovely few days enjoying Geneva and Chamonix, we arrived at the train station in Chamonix to receive our 'comprehensive information pack.' We waited for around half an hour and eventually a young man pulled up in a van and approached us. He said 'Hi' apparently one of his three words of English. He handed us a brown paper envelope in which was a map of the region and an A4 page with bullet points listing each day's itinerary. For example: From La Fouly 'walk up to Val Ferret Valley by the normal route past La Peule then to Grand Ferret and walk down to Elena.' We were also given a list of each day's accommodation, minus any addresses or description of how to find them from the hiking trail. (The contents of this infamous brown paper envelope and the previously unmentioned bus trip described below were to become the highlights of a four-page letter of complaint followed by a 20 minute shouting match on the phone between Louise and the woman now known in our household as 'that witch from that tour company'). The young man then displayed his second and third words of English saying 'bye-bye, good-luck' before getting back in his van and driving off. Now Chamonix is not actually on the Tour du Mont Blanc route and we quickly realised that neither were we. Our comprehensive tour notes



told us to walk to Le Tour, somewhere else that isn't on the TMB route. We pondered for a while before coming up with the marvellous idea of ignoring the instructions and using the guidebook to deliver ourselves to Le Tour via the 'proper' TMB route beginning some five kilometers away in the village of Les Houches. We boarded a train for Les Houches and that's when things started to go horribly wrong.

We got off at the wrong train station and had to walk into Les Houches and find the route. The guide book has two sections, one for those walking the route Anti-clockwise and the other for those walking clockwise. Louise was reading the guide book the wrong way and went to the wrong part of the track; we walked for an hour before realizing we were going in the wrong direction. Utterly deflated, we backtracked into Les Houches and caught a bus to Le Tour.

Day two included both the highs and the lows of the walk. We took the cable car to La Flegere determined to take the route we missed yesterday and make up those lost kilometers to reach our dream of hiking the whole trail without skipping bits. Our objective was the Swiss village of Trient via a side trip to the famed Lac Blanc. (cont'd p8)



*Lac Blanc, a highlight of the TMB*

### Tour du Mont Blanc (cont'd)

The scenery was stunning all day with gorgeous views from every direction. The visit to Lac Blanc was definitely a highlight of the whole walk. We then descended the ladders down towards Tre Le Champ and saw several ibex on the way. We had been walking some six hours by this stage and it was around 4pm. But according to our guidebook we were only at the 2 hour mark of a 7 hour walk stage. It quickly dawned on us that we were not going to be able to finish this stage before dark. The day that started so well ended with us taking a train across the French-Swiss border and asking a café owner to drive us to our accommodation after we ran out of daylight. It was all Kev's\* fault!

There isn't enough space to provide a detailed day to day description of our trip, so we will summarise as best we can. After the stuff ups of the first two days we decided to just follow the instructions we were given. This turned out to be a good move.

Our favourite sections of the walk were the early stages with the stunning views of the Mont Blanc massif and other mountains in the range. The Bovine Way in Switzerland is aptly named as you will share it with many cows whose bells sound like the boom gates at a railway crossing. The green fields and wildflowers of Switzerland make a contrast to the jagged peaks with snow and ice that feature in the French and Italian stages. The valley in Italy with the row of glaciers and rock formations was also beautiful too. At times the route takes you right through the centre of small villages, particularly in the Swiss sections. The mixture of scenery and villages and the mountain accommodation mean that you never get bored on the walk.



*Preparing lunch on the Swiss-Italian border*

A personal highlight for us was stopping to cook a meal of couscous followed by freshly brewed coffee and Swiss chocolate on the border between Switzerland and Italy to celebrate the first time we crossed a border without the use of a train or bus.

The biggest disappointment was being bussed around a section of the Italian stage of the hike. The tour company for some reason has decided that this part of the TMB is not worth walking and insists clients take a bus from Refugio Elena to the town of Courmayeur and walk from there. To ignore these instructions and attempt to walk all the way anyway would have been impossible as the distance we were required to cover to reach our accommodation was around 40kilometres. We were not told until arriving in Chamonix that this was going to happen. A number of people we met along the way commiserated with us that we had missed out on one of the tour's highlights up over the pass to Bonati and then down to Courmayeur. We will have to go back another time to see for ourselves.

Despite our misadventures and disagreements with the tour company, all up we walked around 120 kilometres of the trail, saw stunning sites and met some lovely people. Along the way tears were shed, voices were raised, trekking poles were thrown, documents were left behind in hostels, wrong turns were taken and large Swiss towns mysteriously disappeared off maps only to miraculously reappear on someone else's copy of the same map. Louise learned the importance of checking the guide book frequently to be sure you're going the right way. Andrew learned how to buy bus tickets from the driver in French. We both learned we like the traditional Swiss dish of Rosti very much. We consumed lots and lots of chocolate, cheese and cheap red wine, met lovely people and had one of the best experiences of our lives so far.

We would recommend other members of the club considering this hike to get their own copy of 'Kev' and guide yourself on the tour. You can pre-book accommodation and meals at the mountain accommodation along the way. It's also possible to just do sections of the tour if you don't have the time or the desire for the full circuit. Based on our own experience we think you really don't need to pay a tour company to make your bookings for you and drive your excess luggage between hostels. The walk is pretty challenging and has some serious hills so you will need to be fit and prepared for long days in all kinds of weather. It's a wonderful experience however you choose to do it.

After the TMB we enjoyed a side a trip to Zermatt in Switzerland and then on to Paris to see the Bastille Day parade. Our last stop together was a trip to Lille in Northern France so we could make a visit to the village of Fromelles to see where Louise's great grandfather fought and died. We did a walk there too on the Circuit of the Battle of Fromelles, but that's a story for another time.

*\*KEV - The Cicerone Guide Tour of Mont Blanc by Kev Reynolds (no relation) was an excellent guide. It was quite amusing at times to see troupes of English speaking trekkers all walking along with copies of the same guide book. It seemed everyone had it. We discussed the merits of the book with fellow hikers several times. The consensus was that the guidebook was very accurate in terms of the markers it described and detailed instructions of the route. Whenever we were not entirely sure we had gone the right way at an intersection we would ask 'what does Kev say?' There was also consensus that Kev was either an army drill sergeant, hiking with no pack, never stopped for a rest or high on crack cocaine when he set the time guidelines for each stage. Everyone agreed the times set were ridiculous. We only found one crazy young Austrian who was hiking alone and carrying a 25 kilo pack who reckoned he could keep up with Kev. By the end of the tour we worked out we needed to double 'Kev time' to come up with 'normal time.'*

## Dr T's Walks from the Vault: #5 - Journey of the Star Trekkers

Our overweight pilot squeezed into the cockpit, but there was no guarantee we would reach Melaleuca Inlet, the start of an eleven day walk along Tasmania's South Coast track to Precipitous Bluff (PB). Dodging the bumpy low pressure cells, the south coast provided a magnificent view for five and a view of that morning's breakfast in the bottom of a plastic bag for one.

Earlier we'd awoken in Hobart, on the day after Boxing day, to a snow-covered Mt Wellington; blizzards from the Southern Ocean had swept across SW Tasmania for the past few days and the weather station on Maatsuyker Island had collapsed, so there was no information about conditions at Melaleuca. After being warned the plane might not be able to land at Melaleuca, six courageous (or stupid!) souls decided to take the risk; if we couldn't make it all the way, at least we would have a joy flight instead. Black clouds swirled overhead as one of our brave and hardy crew studied the manual. "No problem" he said, if something happened to the pilot he could always take over using the extra set of controls. Turbulence threw the small plane from side to side and gravel peppered the fuselage as we landed at Melaleuca; the contents of the plastic bag threatened to go everywhere.

Within minutes of landing we sighted two rare Orange Bellied Parrots and after lunch (delicious!) it was time to start walking. After a brisk 4½ hours on an easy track, we reached the beach at Pt Eric. The weather had cleared and after bodysurfing in the rolling surf, the afternoon was spent idly playing hacky sack and frisbee on the beach.

On day two we met a paying tour group at Louisa Creek. To show them how tough we were, it was arranged that during the crossing of the treacherous log bridge high above the surging river, a pack would suddenly roll into the waters below and one of our toughest walkers would fearlessly jump into the raging torrent to save it. It all went to plan until a fellow walker was nearly knocked off the log bridge. Limited gasps of astonishment emanated from the other group at the act of selfish heroism performed so ably by our unwilling leader.

Next day the crossing of the Ironbound Mountains was performed in snow, sleet, rain, strong winds and low cloud. Two keen walkers decided to do some peak bagging while the others froze their balls off waiting for them to return and begin descending the track, which looked more like a creek, to the mud plains below and slogged groin deep through classic endless Tasmanian mud to Little Deadmans bay.

Being a popular time of year for walking, we ran into many other people along the way. We'd exchange pleasantries and chat, but often never found out their names; amongst ourselves we came up with various epithets for the other groups. First was a Perth couple, decked out in brand new gear that included matching lime raincoats – they were dubbed the WA Greenies.

By now the sun was starting to shine and the clouds lifting, but a brisk wind still blew as we crossed Prion Beach accompanied by the WA Greenies. Arriving at New River Lagoon, there was much discussion and careful reading of diagrams until we decided that the best way to cross the Narrows was by boat. That explained why Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife had provided a dinghy at each side of the lagoon; the trick was to ensure that two dinghies weren't left on the same side after everyone had crossed.

The first crew were nearly washed out to sea in the strong current due to a misjudgement in timing and direction of travel, but managed to land somewhat further down the beach than expected. The rest crossed without incident only to find a full campsite, a fire and the Brady Bunch. The Brady Bunch were an extended family that didn't look as if they'd done much bushwalking before, led by Lard Arse, a person who didn't look as if she'd done much of any sort of walking. They were on a mission to honour the dying wish of their one family member who had. Luckily they knew the lightweight bushwalking tip that if you intend to scatter the remains of a loved one in the wilderness, have them cremated beforehand. The WA Greenies took one look then left in a state of shock for the next available campsite. Our tents were pitched in the only available space, and after a well-deserved wash, a game of beach frisbee and hacky sack was again played on the beach.

Another character arrived; Rubber Man, a solo walker carrying an inflatable raft for his journey up New River Lagoon. He was followed by Hoochie Man, Marlboro Man and Platypus Girl (a local expert on the animals who'd provided footage of them for a David Attenborough series). Marlboro Man was carrying a 35kg pack; 25kg was the usual junk people carry on extended walks, the remainder made up of whisky and cigarettes. After Hoochie Man and Rubber Man arrived, some intrepid rowers took to the waves to get a better view of Precipitous Bluff and the sunset.



*Wading up New River Lagoon towards the base of PB*

An early start was called for as the swan-infested lagoon was supposed to be at least crotch deep. It turned out to be not much more than ankle deep, so progress was faster than planned. Lard Arse and the Brady Bunch made a valiant attempt to catch up but were just not up to it, so we made the campsite with hours to spare and so bagged the best spots. We lazed around on the beach for a while waiting for Rubber Man to paddle in, but a puncture in the middle of the lagoon forced some running repairs and delayed him by several hours. It was New Year's Eve, so the

*(cont'd p12)*

## Walks from the Vault #5 (cont'd)

oldies went to bed early while the younger members of the group played cards on the beach, attempted to chat up two girls with little success and got pissed on the smallest bottle of Moët Chandon Champagne possible. Posers!

Rubber Man set off early, as he was doing a return day trip to the summit. Marlboro Man and the girls decided that there would be too much competition for campsites and stayed for another day. Lard Arse and her Brady Bunch were going our way, so we quickly departed, climbing forever upwards until we reached the summit where views of Pindars Peak were obtained and snowballs thrown. The Brady Bunch arrived hours later, deposited the contents of their urn, fortunately downwind of our us, and Backpacker Man arrived from the opposite direction, totally wasted from his day's effort, a hint of what lay in store for us. Dinner was served as the sun set over the Great Southern Ocean. Most of us had celebrated the turn of the century the previous year, but now it was time to join the pedants. Jan 1<sup>st</sup> 2001, the first sunset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century couldn't have been more perfect; surely this was an omen that little could go wrong in the years ahead.



All we had to do now was get down the other side and back to Hobart. The peak had been bagged, but the trip wasn't yet over; the worst was yet to come.

The next three days were spent slogging through thick scrub; Water was in short supply and progress was slow. At one stage heat exhaustion took its toll and we rested in the shade. By then our water had run out, making it necessary to dig a soak and collect a little muddy water. After a rest we decided to push on and camp somewhere along the ridge. The thick scrub and heat were starting to affect our judgement; some of us wanted to rest while others wanted to keep going. Ignoring the wishes of the weaker walkers, we continued; by the time we arrived at Wyllly Plateau, with its lush soft grass and sweet water, tempers were very short.

The long hard day had taken its toll, so it was decided that we would walk shorter days, as we had plenty of time up our sleeve. After bagging Mt Wyllly, we walked on until lunchtime then packed it in to play cards while resting in the shade.

It was not until the base of Pindars Peak next day that the Brady Bunch caught us up; they had run into trouble by losing the track, they had no water and were unwilling to drink from the muddy hole that we had left behind and so had a dry camp that night. By the time they eventually appeared, some of their clothes had been ripped to shreds by the unrelenting scrub.



*Mt La Perouse from Pindars Peak*

After arriving at Ooze Lake, a good wash was in order at the outlet of the lake. Minimum impact bushwalking principles were lost on the Brady Bunch who proceeded to strip off (not a pretty sight) and jump into the lake, using soap and shampoo to remove days of caked on grime and sweat. We were not impressed. Hoochie Man appeared over the horizon, set up his stool and waited for his mates to arrive.

Low fog blanketed the ground as we set off to Mt La Perouse and the Reservoir Lakes. Cold mist swirled around our legs as we navigated along the flat featureless terrain of Maxwell Ridge and descended to the Pigsty Ponds. Tents were pitched and while lunch was being eaten, we could hear desperate sounds of distress from Maxwell Ridge; someone must be lost in the fog. The shouting subsided, so we decided to trudge off through the murk to circumnavigate the Reservoir Lakes. After returning to the tents, we set off to bag Mt La Perouse in the fog. Reaching the large rock arrow that marked the track junction, we found part of a JAG shirt. It wasn't there earlier in the day, so who owned it? The mystery of the shouting deepened. After a few false leads the track was followed to the summit where we admired the view of the rock cairn and the fog.

Upon returning to the tents we found that the lost walkers had arrived. They had walked the wrong way, but eventually found Pigsty Ponds. It was at this stage of the walk that we found out from Platypus Girl that their group had also been coming up with nicknames for everyone else. They thought we looked a bit nerdy, so they'd dubbed us the Star Trekkers. Bastards.

The trip was almost over, as we walked through clouds along the ridge of the Southern Range, occasionally getting views of the surrounding area. We descended through magnificent beech forest to arrive at Mystery Creek in the late afternoon. A quick look at the Exit and Ida Bay caves and it was time for dinner. A group from the Lune River hostel dropped by in the evening on their way to visit some glow-worms. This started a discussion about what we would be eating at the Dover bakery tomorrow and dinner next evening. Our minibus arrived early; the normal driver had managed to get his foot run over by a tractor, so his wife was more than ably filling in. Back in the civilisation of Hobart we sated our appetite for decent food at the New Sydney hotel and celebrated the end of a highly memorable walk.

## Tips for Better Bushwalking

### #3 – Caring for your Feet

In 1999 Warren McDonald spent 28 days on an expedition to climb Federation Peak. The trip isn't an easy one for anybody, but for Warren it was exceptionally difficult, as both his legs had been amputated as the result of a previous bushwalking mishap. What would be a waist-deep bog for most people could have seen Warren stuck up to his neck, whilst the Tassie leeches only needed to make a short jump up to his groin. The one problem he was spared however was the most common ailment suffered by bushwalkers – blisters. Anyone who claims to have bushwalked without ever getting a blister hasn't really bushwalked. Some people only get blisters rarely, such as when breaking in new boots or on an exceptionally difficult walk, whilst others get them almost as soon as they put on their boots, and are resigned to taping their feet up before starting a walk.

The cause is fairly simple; excessive friction due to rubbing results in separation of the inner and outer layers of skin, with a buildup of plasma fluid being the body's defence mechanism to protect the inner layers from further damage. Prevention isn't as straightforward; there are several factors which contribute to the heat build-up that leads to blisters. All of them need to be kept under control in order to avoid problems.

There is no surefire prevention technique for blisters; all that can be done here is to gather some collected wisdom from experienced bushwalkers in the hope it will provide some useful ideas for those currently being troubled by them.

**Boots:** Ill-fitting boots are a major cause of blisters; if they didn't fit properly to begin with, no amount of "breaking in" will overcome the problems causing blisters. It is important to find the boot that is suitable for you. If a veteran bushwalker swears that brand X boots have never given them blisters, compare your feet with theirs before following their recommendation (and remember that feet have three dimensions, don't just compare the outline of your footprints). While a given brand and style of boot will be available in various lengths, the ratio of width to length won't change. Several of the well regarded European brands tend to suit narrower feet; if your feet don't match the shape of the boot, your choice will be between a cramped fit or a comfortable width but too much space in the heel or toe, both of which will result in discomfort when walking.

**Socks:** Wicking moisture away from the feet and minimising the heat generated by rubbing are what makes socks effective at warding off blisters. Most bushwalkers recommend wearing two pairs of socks, a thin inner and thick outer. Synthetic materials work best, or wool-synthetic blends; avoid cotton at all costs.

Damp socks means damp, more tender, skin that is more prone to blisters. When crossing rivers, if you don't have any alternative footwear, it is generally advisable to keep your boots on for safety, but removing socks can be worthwhile.

Dirty or muddy socks are impregnated with grit, adding to the abrasion leading to blisters. Gaiters don't always keep

your feet dry, but they are reasonably effective at preventing mud getting into your boots.

On a long day walk, socks become damp through sweat, and dirty, losing their effectiveness, so changing into one or two spare dry clean pairs part-way through is a useful tip.

**Walking too fast for too long:** Blisters don't tend to occur during sections of scrub-bashing or slow progress. Flat, open tracks, where a pace of 5-6km/hr is easy to sustain are a blister hazard. As heat is one of the causes of blisters, a fast pace means more footsteps within a given time. Compound this with the tendency to walk for longer periods between breaks when the going is easy, and it is no surprise that a blisters may start to form. If faced with several kilometres of "road-bash", remember not to pound along too fast, and still stop for a 5-10 minute break each hour to let your feet cool.

**Sore toes:** Walking downhill places pressure on the front of the feet; what seems like a comfortably fitting boot on level or uphill track can begin causing painful toes. A simple remedy for this is to ensure your toenails are well trimmed.

You've taken heed of all of the previous hints, yet still you get blisters. Don't worry, it happens to the best of us. The next step is to ensure they don't become so serious as to impede your walking.

A sacrosanct rule is that if you think a blister is starting to form, stop, have a look at your foot and treat it straight away. If the skin is red and tender, a blister may not be there yet, but it probably soon will be, so start treatment as if you had one. Don't hang on until the next rest break unless you know it is a matter of minutes away. Don't feel embarrassed about holding up the group; the consequences of soldiering on as your blister deepens and widens can slow you (and the group) down considerably more later on. Any leader who insists you keep walking requires some reeducation.

Initial treatment is to check there isn't a stone or grit in your boot contributing to the blister. After that comes dressing and taping it. There is an element of personal preference as to which particular type of plaster to use, although in this situation if a veteran bushwalker swears by Brand X, it will be worth a try. The best ones are generally regarded to be the "Second Skin" or Moleskin plasters specifically designed for blisters. Another recommendation is three layers of Lucoplast; one down, one across and then down again. When it comes down to it any plaster, even basic Elastoplast, will do; the characteristics of the better ones are how well they contour on the skin and how resistant they are to being dislodged in wet conditions. Although a leader will have a first aid kit, tape for a blisters is part of the essential equipment that every walker should carry.

At the end of the day's walk, remove the tape so the skin can dry out and harden. Drain the blister by piercing with a sterilised needle then wipe the area with antiseptic. Tape it up again just before starting walking the next day.

Feet are one of the most important parts of a bushwalker. Not absolutely essential - as we've seen it is possible to get by without them - but if you decide to hang onto them then take proper care and they'll reward you with many many kilometres of enjoyment.

## The Art of Bushwalking

As 2009 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bushwalking with YHA and the 75<sup>th</sup> for the Victorian Federation of Bushwalking (now Vicwalk), let's pause briefly and gaze back at how bushwalking movements have evolved over the past century or so.



The identity of bushwalking as we understand it today (and indeed the term itself) wasn't forged until the 1920s, when a wave of popularity which had been building since the turn of the century surged to tsunami like proportions that have never been repeated since. During the 19th century, most colonials struggled to relate to the harsh Australian landscape with anything other than an English sensibility, seeking to view it through a filter of pastoral Victorian romanticism. Anyone who sought to break away from the prevailing culture of European impressionism and tackle Australia's rugged outdoors directly was classed as either an explorer or an eccentric. Acceptable walking for pleasure meant little more than "taking the airs" with a parasol.

← *Mt Buffalo, as depicted in 1864*

After the end of World War I a revolution began to take place. Women in particular were able to free themselves from the constraints of Edwardian dresses and adopt more practical attire that enabled them to embrace outdoor activities such as hiking. Garments that were considered too revealing to wear amidst normal society of the time were acceptable in the bush. Art-deco bushwalking became a craze where it became commonplace for hundreds, even thousands, to participate in a walk.

Ironically it wasn't until this groundswell began to subside in the early 1930s that the bushwalking organisations that we are familiar with today began to take shape. The establishment of clubs gave rise to a fresh fervour of modernism. Whilst the streamlined art-deco bushwalkers had been content to flock en-masse and invade every square yard of bush within a train ride of the cities, post-war bushwalking expressionists pushed new boundaries, blazed new tracks and ventured into hitherto uncharted and inaccessible pockets of the country simply because they were there. Aided by the greater affordability of the motor car, they explored their place in the landscape to a greater depth than ever before, exhibiting a greater vibrancy and fluidity of movement than their predecessors.



*"Hands-on Approach" - Abstract surrealist bushwalkers circa 2007*

Surprisingly the 1960s, regarded a key decade of change in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, had comparatively little immediate impact on bushwalking. Pop Art was virtually ignored; what attraction would walkers see in a Campbells soup tin over more practical dehydrated alternatives? The effect of the sixties is only apparent with hindsight as the genesis of the contemporary bushwalking styles we now take for granted. Up until the mid 1960s, most bushwalking had been canvas-based, however the synthesis of more durable and lightweight materials enabled the birth and, over the subsequent decades, flourishing of minimalism. Meinckeism, characterised by a restless need for change also had its origins in this period. Exponents constantly update their palettes as soon as new pigments become available.



*"Precipitous Buff" - Ultra minimalism circa 2001*

By the arrival of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, no single movement could be said to characterise contemporary bushwalking, with it splintering into numerous sub-genres. Abstract walkers share tracks with surrealists. Styles range from those who are content to do little more than their 19<sup>th</sup> century forebears by "taking the air" along urban paths through to those who eschew any linear features (ie tracks) in their wanderings. The latter group's favourite brushes are those past thick vegetation, whose coarse textures they feel the need to experience at close range in order to authentically engage with their subject.

The progress in bushwalking over the past century suggests many exciting new directions will be fostered in the next one.

## Mythbusters go Bush

*A transcript, exclusive to Yeti, from an episode yet to be broadcast.*



### SCENE 1

**Adam:** This week we have a letter from a viewer in Australia who writes: "Dear Mythbusters, I was led to believe that being president of a bushwalking (that's downunder-speak for hiking) club was a guaranteed passport to getting engaged, marriage, a couple of wonderful children and living happily ever after. Lately however I'm not so sure and am beginning to think this could be just another myth after all. What do you think?"



**Jamie:** It sounds a bit naïve and far-fetched to me; by what skewed logic or stretch of the imagination does simply being the figurehead of a hiking club automatically mean you're going to get hitched?

**Adam:** Nevertheless there seems to be some recent history that lends credence to this claim.

**Jamie:** I reckon busting this myth is going to be like shooting fish in a barrel. Still, it gives us an excuse for a bit of a holiday down-under.

### SCENE 2: A few days later

**Adam:** Well here we are in Oz about to put this claim to the test. Assisting us is Buster who we're going to install as president of a Bushwalking Club. Buster's head is made of plastic, his torso is filled with gelatin and his legs are powered by a motor from an old sewing machine.

**Jamie:** So, a good simulation of a real president then?

**Adam:** Of course not. Buster can't talk and is much faster going up hills.

**Jamie:** OK then, let's dress him up and put him to the test.



### SCENE 3: Several more weeks later

**Jamie:** It's now been several weeks since Adam and I plus the film crew stacked a Bushwalking Club AGM and had Buster elected as president. Adam – how's he been doing?

**Adam:** Well there were a few teething problems. His left arm kept falling off, some joints got a bit rusty after a couple of river crossings, and his head still tends to wobble up and down a bit so it seems as if he's nodding a lot, but...

**Jamie:** But?

**Adam:** But you wouldn't believe this. He's been incredibly popular. Everyone says he's a good listener, respects their opinions, and is never rude to people. The more senior walkers also get on well with him, as he doesn't tell anyone over 40 to p--- off and find another club. I was expecting a bit of a backlash from the club's committee after the way we imposed Buster upon them, but they are quite pleased. They say his low-key non-confrontational approach whereby he doesn't attempt to dominate proceedings with his own half-baked ideas and just lets everyone get on with their job is working wonders.

**Jamie:** And the women?

**Adam:** They adore him. He's had several dates, and in every instance it's been the woman that has asked him out.

**Jamie:** Yes, but what we're trying to test is whether he can find a lifetime partner. How's that going?

**Adam:** Well sadly once most of the women who dated Buster got to know him a little better, they discovered he wasn't quite as compatible as they needed him to be.

**Jamie:** So the myth is busted after all.

**Adam:** Not quite. You see Buster eventually did meet someone suitable, a very attractive mannequin who works in one of the upmarket city department stores. It was her first walk – she'd just found out about the club in "*Bushwalking for Dummies*". They clicked straight away, have very recently become engaged, with a wedding coming up in the fall.

**Jamie:** So I guess this myth is...

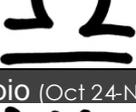
**Adam:** In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I reckon this one is – Confirmed!



## 2009 Bushwalking Horoscope

*How the stars predict you will walk this year.*

*And for those interested in walking by the stars, turn to page 4.*

<p>Capricorn (Dec 23-Jan 20)</p> 	<p>What starts out as a wrong turn will lead you to an exciting new discovery. You will then be faced with the choice of returning to your existing course of action or exploring the possibilities that have been opened up for you.</p> <p><b>Best months for walking:</b> April, August.      <b>Avoid:</b> Clothes made before 2003.</p>
<p>Aquarius (Jan 21-Feb 19)</p> 	<p>Frustration occurs as you become bogged down and take longer than expected to reach what you are striving for. Have patience however, and avoid the temptation of side-tracks which will ultimately only slow you further.</p> <p><b>Best months for walking:</b> September, December      <b>Avoid:</b> Pan-fried pizza</p>
<p>Pisces (Feb 20-Mar 20)</p> 	<p>In seeking to enlighten yourself, you go too far and possibly miss out on something important or make a choice that is not suitable for the conditions you find yourself facing.</p> <p><b>Best months for walking:</b> May, November.      <b>Avoid:</b> The number 28</p>
<p>Aries (Mar 21-Apr 20)</p> 	<p>While pausing for a moment on a spur, you make a spur of the moment decision that changes for the better the experience of yourself and several others close to you.</p> <p><b>Best months for walking:</b> January, March.      <b>Avoid:</b> Walking in bike-shorts</p>
<p>Taurus (Apr 21-May 20)</p> 	<p>The flowering of the wattle will see the blossoming of a new relationship. Be warned however that the path your heart will follow is one which has become overgrown in recent times and will require negotiating many obstacles.</p> <p><b>Best months for walking:</b> March, August      <b>Avoid:</b> Werribee</p>
<p>Gemini (May 21-June 21)</p> 	<p>Take care, the signs indicate that this could be an unusually accident-prone year for you. Should fate strike, be sure you are wearing gaiters.</p> <p><b>Best months for walking:</b> April, December      <b>Avoid:</b> Bearded people</p>
<p>Cancer (June 22-July 23)</p> 	<p>You may experience a time when you become lost amidst a forest of troubles. You will need the assistance of those around you to keep your bearing and hold a steady course back to inner harmony.</p> <p><b>Best months for walking:</b> May, September      <b>Avoid:</b> Stripy thermals</p>
<p>Leo (July 24-Aug 23)</p> 	<p>You may reach what appears to be an impassable obstacle, but after taking time to reflect and study your situation, you will see that there is a route that will allow you to safely reach your goal.</p> <p><b>Best months for walking:</b> April, October      <b>Avoid:</b> Israelis</p>
<p>Virgo (Aug 24-Sep 23)</p> 	<p>There will be a time when the direction others urge you to go in is at odds with that suggested by your moral compass. In such situations trust your instinct and remain committed to what you believe to be the correct way.</p> <p><b>Best months for walking:</b> April, December      <b>Avoid:</b> Sex on Thursdays</p>
<p>Libra (Sep 24-Oct 23)</p> 	<p>This is the year for new challenges – your chances of success are greater than ever. Set new benchmarks for yourself by striving higher, longer or harder than ever before.</p> <p><b>Best months for walking:</b> July, October      <b>Avoid:</b> Cars built before 1990.</p>
<p>Scorpio (Oct 24-Nov 22)</p> 	<p>A long walk in stormy weather will provide you with the insight to overcome a tempestuous personal crisis.</p> <p><b>Best months for walking:</b> March, September      <b>Avoid:</b> Petras Surnas' walks.</p>
<p>Sagittarius (Nov 23-Dec 22)</p> 	<p>You attempt to live life according to the guidebook, but unfortunately the guidebook is now out of date and some of your options have now been closed off. An opportune year for seeking knowledge and broadening your horizons.</p> <p><b>Best months for walking:</b> February, October      <b>Avoid:</b> Short-cuts</p>