



## President's Report

Thank you to all those who slipped on the boots or trail shoes and came walking with YHA Bushwalking in 2010. I hope that you had a great Christmas and New Year and are looking forward to walking with us again in 2011.

With the help of our trusty team of volunteer leaders, and hopefully some new ones as well, YHA Bushwalking is hoping to be better than ever in 2011.

**First Aid Training:** As we received some positive feedback about the first aid course we ran last November with First Aid Management & Training, we have decided that we will now try and do this once a year to keep all our leaders and regular walkers up to date with their training.

The year the club has reserved Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> of June for this full-day training, so if you are interested mark it in your diary. Further details will be available closer to the date.

### Club Gear Day and Social Get Together:

We will be running an outdoor gear buy and sell day on Saturday the 8<sup>th</sup> of October where you can grab or sell a bargain. Hopefully YHA Cycling and the YHA Cross Country Ski Clubs will be coming along to join us as well; we will also raffle off some outdoor goodies and run a sausage sizzle if possible. (→ *continued page 2*)

## Photo Competition Extended

The Christmas function was held a bit sooner than expected after the closure of the 2010 photo competition, so judging wasn't able to be done in time to have the results at the end of year dinner. It has been decided to extend the competition until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2011, with the winners to be announced at the AGM in May. If you didn't get around to submitting an entry last year, or took some great pictures on one of the Christmas-New Year walks, then now's your chance to enter.

Full entry conditions were in Yeti#37 and are on the [club's website](#). The only variation as a result of the extension is that anyone who has already entered before the original deadline may, if they wish, replace any of their original photos with new ones. Everyone is still subject to the maximum number of three entries per category.

Don't be put off if you don't have an expensive DSLR – one of last year's winners was taken using a compact pocket camera. Patience and creativity behind the lens contribute more towards a winning edge. For another tip on obtaining better bushwalking photos, see page 8.



Enjoying the view from the summit of Mt Feathertop during the Christmas-New Year Bogong High Plains walk.  
*(photo: Bruce Meincke)*

## Gauging Interest in Extended Trips

The Christmas-New Year period is a popular time to go away, and the high country of Victoria or NSW an ideal location. There are many other areas however where summer isn't the best time to go walking. The club wants to gauge interest in extended trips of one or two week's duration, done either as pack-carries or base-camps. There are usually one or two such trips scheduled per year, but this is your chance to tell us which particular walks you are interested in. The options for doing Australia's best known long-distance treks are covered in the feature article on pages 11-13. Send us your feedback and we'll use the results to try and schedule some walks sooner rather than later (*more details p13*).

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## YHA BUSHWALKING COMMITTEE 2010/11

President	Andrew Stevenson
Secretary	Romaine Fawcett
Treasurer	Tamie Dick
Walks Secretary	Ken Sussex
Social Secretary	
Search & Rescue Rep	Paul Gottliebssen
General committee	Anne Donaldson
	Hooi-Soon Khoo
	John Sloan

Clubnight Coordinator (non-committee)

Louise Reynolds

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. If insufficient articles are received, the editor may be forced to copy what other magazines do and fill the gaps with vapid articles about the Minogue sisters! Find a spare moment, jot your experiences or advice down then email them to [yhabush@bigpond.com](mailto:yhabush@bigpond.com)

### YETI ONLINE

"Yeti" has its own website [www.yhabush.org.au/Yeti](http://www.yhabush.org.au/Yeti) containing downloadable copies of the latest issue as well as archived articles from past editions. The web sites is well worth visiting, as it often includes 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 'Hub', 80 Harbour Esplanade, Docklands from 8pm to approx. 9:30pm. Special events start at 8.15pm sharp, everybody welcome.

### YETI THANKS

The following contributors to this issue:

Paul Dorrington

Derek Gomez

Bruce Meincke

Robert Potocnik

Louise Reynolds

Andrew Stevenson

Ken Sussex

## President's Report (cont'd from p1)

**Sunday Walks:** A big thank you to all those who set aside time to lead our popular Sunday walks throughout the year in 2010. Without the continued support of people like Les Gamel, David Sale, John Cobb, Lisa van der Veer, Derek Gomez, Sonja Radywyl, Hooi Soon Khoo, Chris Marney, Robert Potocnik, Liz Separovic and Dale Turner, who regularly lead walks for the club without question, we would find it extremely difficult to find leaders for our walks program.

For our Summer Sunday walks program there should be something for everyone, with trips to Daylesford, Warburton, Dandenong Ranges, Phillip Island, Marysville, Kinglake and the Mornington Peninsula to name a few.

We would like to encourage new leaders to help the club out by leading a walk for our walks programs throughout the year. If you are interested in doing so, please contact Ken Sussex for Saturday and Weekend walks or Andrew Stevenson for Sunday walks.

**Walks Sub – Committee:** We now have a walks subcommittee to try and help coordinate our walk programs for the club and to help Ken with the large task of putting together all the walks and activities for the year.

It can be a challenging task to fill our program with walks and activities for everyone to enjoy and to get it out on time. We hope that we can do this better in 2011, but can do so only if leaders contact us within the deadlines frame required to get it printed out and on the Website for all to see.

**Thank You to the Following:** A number of businesses and organisations have given their valuable time and effort to YHA Bushwalking during the year, so we would like to thank the following:

- The City of Melbourne for providing The Hub@Docklands, a venue that we have used for just over a year now to great success for our Club Nights and other activities. The staff at the Hub have always been helpful to our cause and without them we would not be able to coordinate our Club Nights and activities that we run there.

- The Wilderness Shop in Box Hill for running special discount buying nights for the local bushwalking club community

- Sea To Summit for generously donating prizes to give away at some of our club nights during the year.

- Bushwalking Victoria, an organisation that is often forgotten, for providing help and advice to our club and the many others in Victoria.

A final special mention goes out to *Wild Magazine* and its editor Ross Taylor who came along as a guest speaker for us during the year and generously donated a large number of magazines to hand out at Club Nights.

**YHA Bushwalking Committee:** Lastly I would like to thank the members of our committee for donating their time to help the club throughout last year.

YHA Bushwalking is one of Victoria's most active bushwalking groups and it takes a great deal of time and effort for the committee to coordinate the club and help with organising the many walks and activities that we all enjoy.

A special mention goes to Tamie Dick, our treasurer, for the large task of keeping all the club's finances in order, and Ken Sussex for putting together our programs and coordinating all our walks and leaders.

The committee is also supported by Romaine Fawcett, Hooi Soon Khoo, Ann Donaldson, Paul Gottliebssen and John Sloan; without their continued help and commitment it would be extremely difficult for YHA Bushwalking to run smoothly.

Our AGM will be coming up in May this year; we would love to hear from anyone who has some free time and is willing to come along and help out.

Regards  
*Andrew Stevenson*

## Clubnight Guest Speakers - summer/autumn 2011

**FEBRUARY 7<sup>TH</sup> : LINDA BEILHARZ**

### **Australian Adventurer of the Year**



**In 2004 Linda Beilharz became the first Australian woman to ski from the edge of Antarctica to the South Pole.**

Achieving this inspired Linda to set herself the goal of traversing the world's four largest icecaps – this left the Arctic, Greenland and Patagonia to go.

In 2007 Linda successfully crossed the Greenland Icecap and in 2009 she attempted a crossing of South Patagonia. Although this crossing wasn't successful, it didn't discourage the 50-year-old adventurer from setting off to conquer the Arctic.

On 26 April 2010, after completing an epic 55-day, 780-km journey from Ward Hut Island (the most northern tip of Canada) to the North Pole, Linda became the first Australian woman to trek to the pole and the first female to reach both poles on foot.

During both polar quests she endured treacherous conditions, including blinding snowstorms and minus 50 degree temperatures. Linda's extraordinary triumph is testament not only to her physical strength and courage, but to her dogged determination that pushed her inch by inch, across that vast white landscape.

The recently awarded Australian Geographic Adventurer of the Year is sure to be one of the most inspirational and memorable speakers at our clubnights. A larger room than normal (Atrium) has been booked for this event, but seating is limited and we may have to turn people away if we achieve a full house.

It would be greatly appreciated if those planning to attend could send their expression of interest to [yhabushinfo@yahoo.com.au](mailto:yhabushinfo@yahoo.com.au) by Wednesday 3rd of February to help us know how many to expect.

A gold coin donation is requested. The proceeds will go to Journeys for Learning, a not for profit group Linda established to help school children with personal development and team building through following adventures and expeditions.

**MARCH 7<sup>TH</sup> : JASON FOOTE**

### **Hiking in Canada along the Chilkoot Trail**

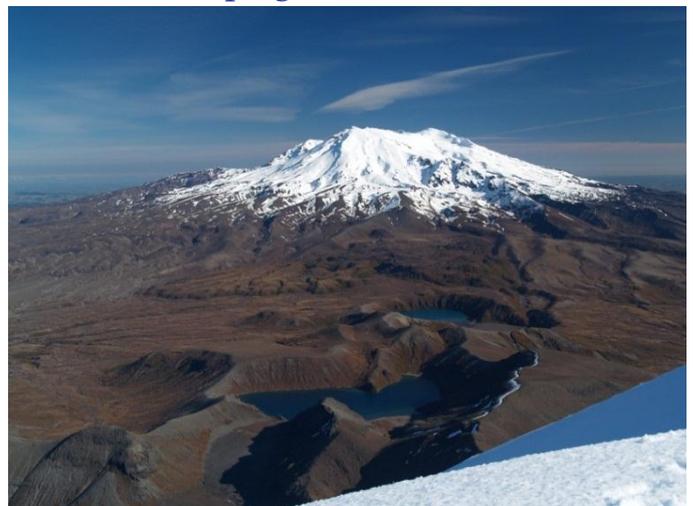


#### **Hike in the Footsteps of Tlingit Traders and Klondike Goldseekers**

Jason Foote's account of his trekking in Ladakh was one of the highlights of 2010's Clubnights, so we've asked him back for a talk on another of his adventures. Steeped in Klondike Gold Rush history and scattered with relics from the past, the Chilkoot Trail is a living museum and should be on the "must-do" list for many Yukon visitors. This rugged 55-kilometre wilderness route is a world-renowned hiking trail and the Chilkoot Trail is Canada's largest National Historic Site.

**APRIL 3<sup>RD</sup> : BRUCE MEINCKE**

### **Tramping in New Zealand**



New Zealand is just a hop, skip and a jump away to some of the best tramping trails in the world. An extraordinary variety of scenery, dissimilar to anything in Australia, is found across its North and South islands. Some NZ walks such as the Milford and Routeburn tracks are world famous, but there are many others that are equally scenic, yet aren't as crowded and offer much of appeal to anyone with a moderate amount of bushwalking experience.

Come along and find out about the main tramping regions in both islands, highlights of what they have to offer and tips on food and gear for New Zealand conditions.

#### **ALSO WATCH OUT FOR PRESENTATIONS ON:**

- **Trekking in Bhutan**
- **Caving in Australia**

## Walk Highlights

### DAY WALKS

#### **Dandenong Ranges: Sunday February 6<sup>th</sup>**

The most carbon-neutral trip on the programme; no car-pooling is needed for this walk. The options are either to meet in the city at 8.45am and catch the train as a group to Upper Ferntree Gully or make your own way to Upper Ferntree Gully station by 10.30am for a 10.45 start.

Based on a network of tracks meandering through lush forest of the Dandenongs Ferntree Gully section, the walk is expected to take about 3-4 hours. Be prepared for a few good hills; the reward will be a scenic lunch spot overlooking the valley.

**Grading: Medium Enquiries: Derek Gomez 0439 383 371**

#### **Walhalla: Saturday March 5<sup>th</sup>**

Nestled in a steep valley, where history is only slowly moving into the modern age, is the picturesque former gold mining town of Walhalla. From here the Australian Alpine Walking Track (AAWT) begins its long climb up to Australia's crowning peaks, but this walk will just explore the forest and old mine ruins close to the town.

From the town's rotunda, the walk will follow the first few kilometres of the AAWT before descending steeply to Thompson Station. From there the Goldfields rail trail and Thompson river lead to a likely lunch spot at Coopers Creek historic area. After time to explore the historic ruins, return to Walhalla is via the same route, a total distance of 18km.

**Grading: Medium Enquiries: Andrew Stevenson 9830 7622**

#### **Lake Mountain: Sunday March 6<sup>th</sup>**

Lake Mountain, at 1433m, is situated 20km from the township of Marysville and is Melbourne's closest national park destination for experiencing high-country walking.

It received extensive fire damage during Black Saturday in 2009. Since then, with the recent good rains and mild weather, Lake Mountain has experienced a boom in vegetation regrowth. Snow gums have seeded and snow grass has returned to carpet the ground.



This will be the club's first visit to the Marysville region since Black Saturday. It is an opportunity to see first-hand the extent of the fire damage but also the hard work put in by the resort management team in clearing the tracks, planting new seedlings and adding new signposts. Starting from "The Village", the walk will follow a network of groomed easy and moderate ski trails; from here we walk amongst the rich alpine vegetation of snow gums to low lying native flora. Along the way there are three lookouts where (on a clear day) it is possible to see Melbourne, Marysville and the Great Dividing Range.

**Grading: Medium Enquiries: Robert Potocnik 9459 4624**

### WEEKENDS

#### **Cape Liptrap: Feb 12-13<sup>th</sup>**

*Base-camping with a beach-side dinner.*



The walk from Waratah Bay to Cape Liptrap was only "discovered" by the club a couple of years ago as a last-minute substitute for Wilsons Promontory (which could be seen blazing in the distance).

Approx 200km from Melbourne, this is a beautiful coastal walk combining pristine white beaches, sculpted islets just offshore and rugged storm-lashed rocks. The low tide essential for some sections of the walk will be around midday, allowing for fairly leisurely timing of each day's walk (including the option of driving up on Saturday morning). Distances aren't great, the only difficult section is about an hour of rock-hopping on the final approach to Cape Liptrap then a steep ascent to the lighthouse.

Base-camp will be at Bear Gully, a bush-camping area with basic facilities and no nearby pub, but more than compensated by having dinner by the beach with views across to the Prom.

**Grading: Medium Enquiries: Robert Potocnik 9459 4624**

#### **Take Two: Mt Buffalo & Mt Buller**

A couple of recent trips didn't live up to their full potential due to inclement weather so they are being restaged; here's hoping for second time lucky.

There is plenty to keep a group of bushwalkers occupied on **Mt Buffalo** (March 12-14<sup>th</sup> Labour Day Weekend) for three days, ranging from short walks near the Chalet to full day excursions to Mt MacLeod. Base-camping will be at Lake Catani, book quickly as camping spaces are limited.

**Grading: Medium Enquiries: Sonya Radywyl 0412 475 124**

The **Mt Buller** weekend (April 9-10) will have accommodation at a very comfortable ski-lodge; the catch is it will be hard work getting there. Starting on the Howqua River, Saturday's walk will ascend 1100m via Little Buller Spur. On the first occasion of this trip, unseasonal snow forced a return via a sheltered track to the entrance gate; if things go according to plan this time, the route will be a summit view then descending along Four Mile spur back to the Howqua river.

**Grading: Med-hard Enquiries: Stephen Smith 9387 6481**

LONG WEEKENDS**Blue Waterholes: Easter April 21-26<sup>th</sup>**

The Blue Waterholes region in Northern Kosciuszko National Park was last visited during the five day Easter break in 2000. With another extended Easter this year, a return trip to the diverse attractions of this area will appeal to both veteran bushwalkers and those who've only become involved with the club over the past few years.

Mention of "Kosciuszko" conjures up images of a sweeping, possible snow-capped mountain range. Ironically that type of scenery isn't what you'll see in this part of the national park, but there is plenty else to compensate for it; limestone caves, deep gorges, plunging waterfalls and historic huts, all accessible as day walks. Those electing to do the pack-carry option can (if conditions are right to cover the distance) reach Bimberi Peak on the ACT border. More leisurely pack-carriers can just enjoy touring the region's huts; "Old Currango", Pocket Hut, Coolamine to name a few.



Unless those who leave early enough want to travel the full distance, the group will stopover at Corryong on Thursday night. After Corryong, Blue Waterholes is reached by taking the turnoff to Kiandra before turning right from the Snowy Mountains highway near the Yarrongobilly caves. One of the small creeks on the way in is the headwaters of the Murrumbidgee river.

Base-camp and pack-carry options (possibly a couple depending on demand) will be offered. Blue Waterholes is remote; the nearest towns with sizable facilities are Tumut and Cooma, both over 100km away. The attractions of this area make it well worth travelling the extra distance – it's guaranteed no-one will disagree once they've been there - but an accommodated option isn't feasible; the only way to see this unique area properly is with a tent.

*Leader contact details will be listed in the autumn program.*

**Wyperfeld National Park: June 11-13<sup>th</sup>**

*Slaking a 35 year thirst, a big drink is on the way to a region that requires floods to flourish.*

The Wimmera River was one of several rivers in western Victoria to have experienced two major floods since last September. What sets it apart from the others is that it doesn't flow to an estuary or another larger watercourse such as the Murray, but instead terminates in an inland lake, Lake Hindmarsh. When Lake Hindmarsh fills, it overflows into Lake Albury and then onto a chain of normally dry lakes in Wyperfeld National park.



Wyperfeld's lakes last filled in 1976, just after the last big La Nina year. At the time of writing it is too early to confirm the effect on Wyperfeld, but with over 100mm rainfall in the park itself and plenty of water on the way, the region will soon be at its wettest and greenest for a long time, with abundant animal and birdlife. A visit this year is a rare opportunity that shouldn't be missed.



*Bushwalking in Wyperfeld, 2006; expect the area to be transformed by the time of this year's trip.*

Wyperfeld will be the club's feature event on the Queens birthday weekend, with pack-carry and base-camp options.

Attractions include the lakes (especially if they do end up filling), sand dunes, porcupine grass (as long as you don't fall in it!), Mallee sunsets and the diverse arid-zone vegetation. Mallee fowl live in the region – some exploratory off-track walking may stumble upon a mound. And then there's "Old Be-Al", a several hundred-year old river red gum with a root system the area of a sports oval.

**Grading:** *Medium (pack-carry), easy-med (base-camp)*  
**Enquiries:** *Ken Sussex 9495 1350*

**Online Trip Enquiries & Bookings**

New for 2011, the online [Walks Program](#) page now provides the ability to send an enquiry about a trip directly to its leader. Eligible trips have the gumleaf icon →



included in their listing. This feature is being initially trialled with Sunday walks; if successful it will be extended to other events and an online booking form introduced. Online enquiries for day walks close three days beforehand; this means that queries about a Sunday walk must be sent by the Thursday evening prior to the trip.

## Golden Boot Winner 2010



With over 67 days spent walking with YHA during 2010, it's congratulations to Bruce Meincke for a well-deserved Golden Boot.

**Bruce, you've been walking with the club for over 45 years, yet this is the first time you've won the Golden Boot. What took you so long?** I've been second quite a few times, but it's taken until now to finally see off the competition.

**What were your favourite walks of 2010?** Jagungal in winter and New Zealand (the Rees-Dart and Greenstone-Routeburn tracks).

**If you aren't away on weekends you do a lot of Sunday walks as well, what were your highlights among those?** Werribee Gorge and Mt St Leonard.

**Favourite moment of 2010?** On the Cobberas Easter trip, finding the pole that marks the end of the wiggly part of the Victorian border (aka the Murray River).

**What are you looking forward to in 2011?** Mt Feathertop in winter and more trips to Tasmania and New Zealand.

**After all these years and all these walks, what haven't you done yet?** The Milford Track.

### Other Award Winners

The club wouldn't function those volunteering to lead walks throughout the year. Acknowledging these efforts, tokens of appreciation were awarded for leaders of the:

**Most Sunday walks:**– David Sale.

**Most Saturday walks:**– Ken Sussex

**Most Weekend/Extended trips:**– Bruce Meincke

**Most overall:**– Ken Sussex.

By popular vote from those attending the Christmas function, the title "Leader of the Year" was awarded to David Sale.



(photo: Kim Atkinson)

**Before you go Bruce, it was discovered on a walk last year that you and Dolly Parton are the same age (anyone wanting more detail will need to do some research elsewhere!). Given what you and Dolly have in common, how can people tell you apart?** Well I'm more into walkin' nine to five. And the only time use I'd have for silicone is to waterproof some of my gear.

**And does 40DD mean anything to you?** No, I'm larger than that - my boots are a size 46.

Golden Boot runner-up was Bruce's wife Gillian, standin' (or should that be bushwalkin') by her man for 57 days' worth of trips.

### Tips for Cheaper Bushwalking

#### #19 – D.I.Y. Gaiters



Duct tape has a reputation as an extremely versatile product. To its many uses can be added gaiters. They'll keep mud off, offer protection from being scratched by the scrub, but unless you want to throw in a leg-waxing as well, it's a good idea to wear these type of gaiters over a pair of long socks.

## Snowshoeing the Jagungal Wilderness



In late August 2010, five of us spent a week snowshoeing in the Jagungal region of Kosciuszko National Park. Set apart from the other 2000m+ peaks of Mt Kosciuszko and the Main Range near Thredbo, Mt Jagungal dominates this region of rolling plains, nascent rivers and historic stockman's huts – at least it does when it is visible. Access for Victorians is from the Khancoban-Cabramurra road, however this is closed in winter as much of it is well above the snowline. A few businesses or organisations have keys to the gate and permission to enter as far as the Tooma Dam. One of these is Corryong's veteran taxi operator Bob Wilkinson, which is how the five of us found ourselves crammed into his 4WD along with our equipment and food for a week in the wilderness.

Just a few days earlier the snow reports hadn't been encouraging. 2010 had been predicted to follow the pattern set by bumper years 1980, 1990 & 2000, but it had been one of the worst starts ever to a snow season in NSW. Groups Bob had ferried in over the past few weeks reported plenty of rain but very patchy snow. The night before however was believed to have brought something more substantial. This was confirmed as we neared the crest of the hill before Tooma Dam. "Best I've seen it for two years" said Bob, relishing the chance to finally test out his snow tyres as we ploughed through a fresh 30-40cm cover. Had it been much deeper we would have been faced with a long walk to Round Mountain, but Bob made it to a spot about 4km past the dam.

It was on with the snowshoes straight away, for a 10km plod to Round Mountain car park along what for most of the year is a major sealed road. Unsurprisingly we had Round Mountain hut to ourselves (apart from a few mice!) with the old and fresh snow forming a base of about a metre.



*A clear view of Mt Jagungal en-route to Derschko's Hut*

The next day (Sunday) had the best weather of the week for the trek to Derschko's Hut. In summer this is an easy half-day walk along a fire trail, but in winter it took six hours

albeit in pleasant conditions. The depth of snow cover made it difficult in parts to pick the route of the fire trail; it didn't matter if the exact path wasn't followed, as long as we located the bridges where it crossed the major creeks.

The region has numerous huts, and although the 2003 bushfires destroyed quite a few of them, just about all have now been rebuilt. For anyone familiar with the huts through summer walks, their character changes when surrounded and covered by snow. Some changed for the better, while others were a disappointment. The revelation was Derschko's hut – in summer this appears nondescript and cramped, but in winter it became quite photogenic and cosy. Its potbelly stove was by far the most effective heater.



*Derschko's Hut*

O'Keefe's hut, only rebuilt in 2009, looked impressive last summer with its wallpaper of 1936 newspapers, spacious rooms and furniture. Come winter however and the shortcomings in its design became apparent. The fireplace didn't draw enough air to direct the smoke up the chimney. The only way to prevent smoke filling the rooms was to leave the door slightly ajar, blizzard or not.

Patons Hut, another rebuilt one, provoked laughter when we opened the doors and saw its buckled floorboards. While the hut was generally very well constructed, green timber had been used for the flooring. What would have appeared to be well fitted floorboards in the drier months became somewhat rippled in colder damper conditions. We had to spend about half an hour rearranging them to provide *(cont'd p 8)*.



### Jagungal Snowshoeing (cont' from p7)

a flat surface to sleep on. Of course, the first group to visit the hut in spring would probably have wondered why there were so many large gaps in the flooring...

Tuesday's weather wasn't ideal – Mt Jagungal was completely hidden in cloud – but it was calm at the hut and wasn't snowing or raining. The forecast sounded like the weather was going to worsen over the next few days, so we decided to attempt the summit there and then. The route taken was the most direct, from the weather station up to the summit saddle. Ice-axes were carried, but they weren't needed. Although it was a slow but steady climb, the snowshoeing part wasn't difficult and no-one had any problems maintaining their grip. Navigation was the challenge, as once on the plateau it was whiteout and windy conditions. Suddenly the summit marker loomed a few metres in front of us; I remembered the last section as involving a small climb, but we'd got right to the top on snow-shoes. We stayed barely a minute, just enough time for a photo, before heading down out of the gale.



(l-r) Stephen, Gillian & David at Mt Jagungal summit  
(photo –Bruce Meincke)

Navigation was even trickier on the descent – the old tracks were already being obscured by wind and snow and we found ourselves going in circles. A GPS was extremely useful in this situation; it would have been foolhardy in these conditions not to carry one. The weather over the next few days justified our decision to make the summit trip when we did.

The next two days brought steady snowfalls, well and truly making up for the poor start to the season. Those of us who snow-camped woke up with our tents half-buried. We returned by the same route we'd entered from Round Mountain, but getting out was more challenging. Reduced visibility made navigation harder, whilst the deeper snow made snowshoeing more tiring. In these conditions there was a big difference in effort required between being at the front and back of the group, so we frequently rotated position to take turns breaking the trail. Between us we had the three main types of snow shoe – MSR Lightning, MSR Denali and Yowies. All performed well in the conditions, although the different footprint made by the Yowies didn't make it as easy as it should have for those following them.

The sign at the turnoff to Round Mountain hut was completely buried, and even though we knew we were near the junction, the track to the hut was very indistinct.



Gaining entrance to the hut (above) required clearing away the 70-80cm of snow that had fallen since our first visit.

As often happens there was glorious weather on the final day, but it wasn't to last long. Looking back, we'd probably picked the best week of the winter for snow. Bob turned up on time with hot drinks and a mountain of home-made sandwiches before the trip back to Corryong. Snow persisted well past the dam, even beyond the Clover Flat picnic area. Fortunately Snowy Hydro had cleared the road to the dam, otherwise we would have faced a long walk or a long wait to get picked up.

The idea for this trip originated on last summer's Christmas-New Year walk, when a few of us got the urge to see what the area would be like during its winter transformation. Given the difficulty of access, it wasn't surprising that we only saw three other people during the week, but the conclusion was that it had been well worth the effort getting there. It is less exposed than the Main Range, and for anyone with reasonable snow-camping and navigation skills, a visit is highly recommended.

*Stephen Smith*

### Bushwalking Photography Tip - White Balance



These two images of a fungus (the special category in this year's photo competition) were taken with the same exposure. The only difference was the white balance setting, a feature all but the most basic cameras have, yet many people are content to leave it permanently on AWB or "Auto".

"White light" consists of a full spectrum, but the proportion of each colour varies between different sources (eg sunlight, electric light, candlelight). White balance is about compensating for these differences so that white objects appear white, without blue or reddish tones, under whatever type of light source is present; get this right and the other colours will usually look correct too. Our eyes/brain do this very well, hence we perceive white objects as white indoors or outdoors, at night or during the day. Cameras aren't as good; the AWB setting generally works well for sunny, blue sky conditions but isn't as effective in other situations – examples are shady forests, snowscapes and sunsets.

Get to know your camera's white balance feature. Experiment (particularly with forest scenery) by taking several pictures with different white balance settings. Compare the results and decide which one you like the best. It's not always the truest tones you want but the ones that give the picture the atmosphere you are trying to convey, a deliberately warmer or cooler feel.



## Yeti Hiking Trivia: The Dirty Dozen

Your special subject is hiking, but how much do you actually know about it? Test your knowledge with this selection of questions compiled by **Louise Reynolds** from last year's club trivia competitions. Answers page 13.

1. According to the Australian museum, the Australian land leech has what characteristics?

- a: 3 jaws that make a Y-shaped incision
- b: no jaw but suckers at both ends
- c: 2 jaws that make a V-shaped incision
- d: a protrusible proboscis and true vascular system

2. Alaska's Chilkoot Trail follows the route taken by stampeding miners seeking their fortune in which gold rush?

3. Which long distance European trail would you be on if you were following these way markers? →



4. Which nemesis of Australian bushwalkers has the scientific name *Notechis scutatus*?

- a: March fly
- b: Tiger snake
- c: Mosquito
- d: Tick

5. Speaking of mosquitos, which one of these colours are they most attracted to?

- a: Red
- b: Green
- c: Blue
- d: Yellow

6. Which of these long-distance Australian trails is longest?

- a: Australian Alps Walking Track
- b: Bibbulmun Track
- c: Larapinta Trail
- d: Overland Track

7. In which country would you be if you are hiking on the Appalachian Trail?

8. If you are ascending a mountain in Africa and your Swahili-speaking guide calls 'Poli, Poli' how does he want you to proceed?

9. What European country is home to Ecco brand hiking boots?

10. In 1971, Jim Lee and John Burroughs invented a product which has made bushwalking more comfortable for many people since. What was it?

11. In the 1930s, a Catholic Archbishop spoke out against the growing number of female bushwalkers because?

- a: Men getting into women's clothes is bad enough, but the reverse is worse.
- b: They were not going bushwalking to study botany or geology, but to attract attention.
- c: They were going into the country without proper supervision. Where might it lead?
- d: All of the above.

12. Mt Buffalo is the location for a YHA Bushwalking base-camp on the 2011 Labour Day weekend, but it was also featured in which one of the following films of the 1970s?

- a: Monty Python and the Holy Grail.
- b: Picnic at Hanging Rock.
- c: Ned Kelly (the Mick Jagger version).
- d: My Brilliant Career.



## French Polynesia: Hiking the Three Coconuts Pass trail

There's a lot more to do in French Polynesia than laying by a pool, including going for a hike.

A number of hiking trails are available on the main island of Tahiti and also on the more picturesque neighbouring island of Moorea, where you will find the Three Coconuts Pass trail.

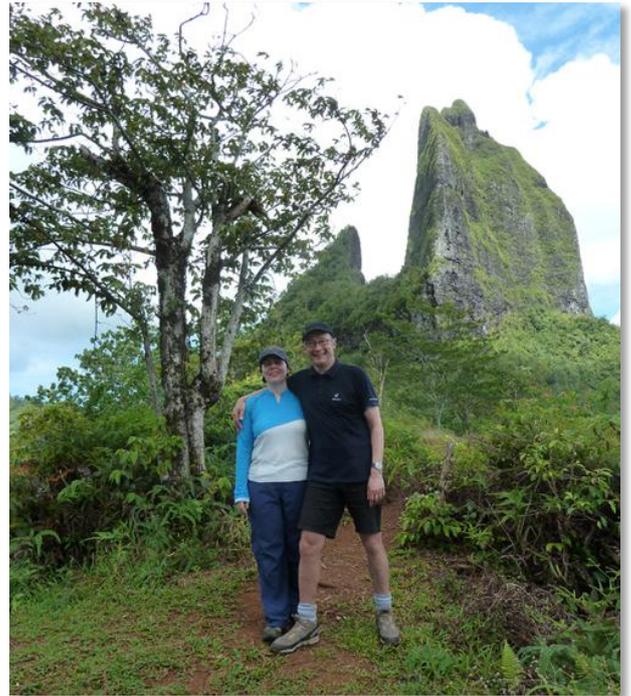
It's possible to do this medium grade half day hike on your own but you would need transport to and from the trail head. Hire cars and taxis can be very expensive. We opted to do the hike with a professional guide after being warned that trails can be difficult to follow and aren't always well waymarked. We also wanted to learn about the local environment and hiking scene from a guide.



We joined Michel from Tahiti Evasion for the relatively easy four hour return hike. Michel collected us from our resort as part of the tour and drove us to the start of the trail near the Belvedere Lookout. Before starting the hike we had time for a stop here to take in the views of the twin bays of Opunohu Bay and Cook Bay, which are split by the towering peak of Mt Rotu and the plantations in the Opunohu valley – the crater of Moorea's extinct volcano (*photo above*).



The trail undulates through forests of ferns and native mape trees before climbing steadily to the pass. Michel explains that the mape tree was used by Polynesian people as a form of communication. They would bang on the tree with a rock to create a sound like a drum beat that could send messages to neighbouring villages; note however that local authorities are growing somewhat tired of tourists trying this out!



*Louise and Andrew in front of the 'Shark's Tooth'*

The trail is clear all the way but there is not much way marking and you can see how inexperienced hikers could take a wrong turn. Although named the Three Coconuts Pass there is actually only one coconut palm remaining near the high point of the trail. As we reached our turnaround point we were rewarded with further spectacular views of the twin bays and the jagged peaks of the volcano's rim. The highest peak, known as the Shark's Tooth, loomed over us as we rested and were treated to fresh grapefruit by Michel.

It is possible to link up The Three Coconuts pass with other nearby trails but, according to Michel, they were not currently open. He explained that the upkeep of trails is left largely to local guides with little support from authorities. A trail may be cleared for a particular high profile event, such as a trail race, but will then be left to become overgrown and closed again.

Tour operators have lobbied the French government over the past few years to establish a GR (Grand Randonné) hike over several days that would circle the rim of the volcano. Sadly, the French authorities are not yet coming to the party on that. If it ever comes to fruition we will be among the first to sign up for it. We returned to the Belvedere Lookout the following day to independently explore a series of short trails that link up ancient open air temples called maraes. The trails zig zag through the forest and cross a stream revealing the temples in the midst of trees. The main marae just below the Belvedere lookout has detailed information about the history and function of the marae.

For more information about guided hiking on Tahiti and Moorea with Tahiti Evasion visit <http://www.tahitievason.com/>

*Louise Reynolds*

## Going the Distance - Australia's extended treks

Australia has two internationally recognised long distance walks and a few others that are becoming more widely known. Unsurprisingly many people, and not just regular overnight pack-carriers, are interested in them. There are three basic ways to tackle a long-distance trail, each with their own advantages and disadvantages.

- 1) With a bushwalking club.
- 2) As a privately organised trip with friends.
- 3) Join a commercial tour.

If you are interested in doing any of these iconic walks at some stage, then here's some useful information on the pros and cons of these three options, firstly as general points and then with specific details for the popular walks.

**Extended Club Walks.** The first advice for anyone hoping the walk they are keen on will appear on a future program is to tell the Walks Secretary of your interest.

*Advantages:* Cost-effective, you can join on your own but will probably end up with some people that you already know.

*Disadvantages:* Infrequent opportunities, timing may not suit.

Unlike day and weekend walks where the Walks Secretary will actively recruit a leader for a location that is due for a visit, extended walks rely solely on someone volunteering to lead them. One way of encouraging leaders is if they know there is plenty of interest in their walk – listing a trip then not knowing until shortly before it is due to start whether there are enough bookings to make it viable is a reason some

leaders are unwilling to commit themselves. So if you are interested, and even better are willing to lead one of the long distance walks, advise the Walks Secretary. If there is a sufficient number, then a preliminary discussion can be arranged among those interested others to work out a convenient date that will provide core numbers for the walk.

Other bushwalking clubs may have the trip you want, however the problem faced with most of them is that you'll need to be a member, which in turn means undertaking qualifying walks over a minimum period, in order to participate.

### Privately Organised with Friends.

*Advantages:* Cost-effective, can go whenever is convenient, you will be with people you know (quite likely having met through a bushwalking club).

*Disadvantages:* Some in the group may have limited experience in long-distance walks, none of the group may be familiar with the area. A minimum safe number still needs to be formed.

### Commercial Tour.

*Advantages:* Knowledgeable guide, meals provided (including a glass of wine with dinner!), maybe even hot showers. Don't need to carry a heavy pack. Can join as a single, regular opportunities each year.

*Disadvantages:* Very expensive (~\$200-\$400/day). May not include some very scenic sections which are harder to access, no flexibility for side-trips or extra days.

## Overland Track (Tasmania)

**Length:** 70km / 6-8 days

**Difficulty:** \* \*

Australia's best known walk is also the only one with a limit on numbers (50-60 departures per day from Cradle Mountain) and a track fee (\$190 including a parks pass between 1<sup>st</sup> November and 30<sup>th</sup> April). Anyone wanting to do this during December-January needs to book well in advance. Huts are provided, but none have enough beds if the full quota of people march through, so you need to either carry a tent or be an early starter. Once the Overland Track is started, there are no restrictions on how long may be spent at each hut or campsite. The common itinerary is six days, but it is worth having a couple of extra days to either wait out bad weather or take advantage of good weather with side trips to Pine Valley or any nearby peaks such as Cradle Mountain, Barn Bluff or Mt Ossa.

**Club:** Believe it or not, YHA Bushwalking once had a trip doing the Overland Track over the Christmas-New Year break with over 50 participants! Even with smaller numbers, the track fee and restriction on numbers now make this difficult to organise as a club walk during busy periods – bookings would need to be confirmed and paid at least 4-5 months in advance. It is more likely to be scheduled on the walks programme away from the peak periods.

**Privately Organised:** The Overland Track is an easy walk to organise privately, with coach services most days from



Launceston to Cradle Mountain and Lake St Clair to Hobart. There aren't any major cost savings booking as a group and during the warmer months there will be plenty of people on the main track to provide safety in numbers if you go alone. The side-trips are where people have come to grief in recent years, so if venturing away from the main track, do so in a group of at least four for safety.

**Commercial.** There are two main tour operators, both just offering the basic 6-day main walk without side-trips. Wilderness Expeditions runs a guided and catered walk camping at the group tent sites, at a cost of \$2000. For \$2500-2750, Cradle Mountain Huts also offer a guided walk but with accommodation in their own private huts a short distance away from the public huts at each campsite.

## Larapinta Trail (NT)

**Length:** 220km / 16-20 days

**Difficulty:** \*\*\* ½ (end-to-end walk). \*\*½ (short trips)

The Larapinta is Australia's other world-class walk, both for its quality of scenery and the track facilities. Divided into 13 sections, it is possible to do many of them as day walks, although some of the best parts require carrying a full pack with up to two day's water supply. The Larapinta season is May-September, walking outside this period is ill-advised unless you are extremely heat-tolerant.

There is no trail fee, although a small camping charge applies at sites on private land such as Standley Chasm.. There isn't a booking system for campsites, however large groups (more than eight) are required to notify the Parks & Wildlife service so that other walkers can be warned.

**Club:** YHA Bushwalking has run two Larapinta trips, neither doing the full track but as a combination of day and overnight walks on selected sections. Ongoing trips every few years are likely if volunteers are available to lead them.

**Privately Organised:** There is plenty of information about planning walks on the Larapinta Trail, starting with [www.larapintatrail.com](http://www.larapintatrail.com), with excellent maps and notes in either the Larapinta pack or guidebooks such as that by John and Monica Chapman. If you don't have your own vehicle(s), with you, it isn't difficult to find a business providing transport to trailheads (eg [LarapintaTransfers](#)). Trail transfers are expensive (over \$200 each with three food drops) if there is just two of you, but a group of 6-8 will reduce this to under \$100 per person.



A minimum group size of four is recommended for safety; although this walk is steadily gaining in popularity, it doesn't have anywhere near the numbers of the Overland Track, so meetings with other groups are infrequent.

**Commercial:** Only one company, TrekLarapinta, has an itinerary that includes entire Larapinta Trail. It's fairly costly (\$4400 + air fare), but is well planned and only requires walking with a full pack for about four days where it is unavoidable.

Many other companies offer shorter itineraries of a week or so. The walks are confined to sections easily accessible by support vehicles, so only a day pack needs to be carried. If there is a small group (3-4) of you, it is just as easy and a lot cheaper to organise the same type of 'highlights' package yourself. Tip – any itinerary that leaves out Mt Sonder isn't worth doing.

## Bibbulmun Track (WA)

**Length:** 963km / 7-8 weeks

**Difficulty:** \*\*\*\* (end-to-end walk). \*\* (short trips)

The Bibbulmun Track starts in the hills just outside Perth, takes in the tall forests and coastal scenery of southwest WA before finishing at the coastal town of Albany. Like the Larapinta Trail, it is divided into numerous sections (58 in total, 15-20km in length), many of which are close to vehicle access points and can be broken up into a combination of day or overnight walks. The most challenging sections are those involving coastal inlet crossings (by canoe or otherwise). The best times for Bibbulmun walking are Sept-November and April-May.

Facilities are good, with water and a specially constructed shelter provided at every bush campsite. Also in common with the Larapinta, there are no trail fees, but where a trailhead is at a town, commercial camping grounds need to be used.

**Club:** YHA Bushwalking is planning a two week Bibbulmun Track trip between 15<sup>th</sup> October and 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011, taking in highlights of the Tingle forest and coast between Walpole and Denmark, and a 2-3 day section over some peaks in the northern part of the track. Watch the programme for details.

**Privately organised:** Most of the walking is straightforward, transport logistics are the main challenge. With 2 or 3 vehicles, car shuffles over short 1-3 day sections are easiest to organise for a small group. Outside of regular coach services to major



towns, it is a case of finding transport/taxi operators servicing their local sections of the track. The Bibbulmun Track foundation <http://www.bibbulmuntrack.org.au/> provides a wealth of information about the track and is a source of guidebooks, maps and other useful publications (eg transport and accommodation services). For end-to-end walkers, the track regularly passes through townships, particularly in the southern section, so resupply rather than food-drops is feasible (provided the sort of items you want are stocked).

**Commercial:** World Expeditions offers a one week highlights tour, done as day trips with vehicle support. Accommodation is in tents, but none of the Bibbulmun Track campsites are used.

## Great Ocean Walk (Vic)

**Length:** 104km /6 days      **Difficulty:** \* \*

The best thing about this track is its marketing, having managed to get itself included as the only Australian entry in a bucket-list book of the world's best walks.

As noted when the walk was first opened, it certainly has some scenic sections, but has the potential to be even better by including less road and more coastal walking trails.

There is no trail fee, but using designated GOW hikers' campsites costs \$23/tent/night and needs to be booked at least two weeks in advance ([www.greatoceanwalk.com.au](http://www.greatoceanwalk.com.au)).

**Club:** As the GOW is close to Melbourne, YHA Bushwalking is unlikely to program the entire walk in one go, simply because a week is better spent travelling further afield. Instead, expect to see one trip every year doing part of the GOW, either as a single overnight walk or as day walks on a 2-3 day weekend (*Aire River – Moonlight Head, generally regarded as the most attractive section, is on this summer's program Feb 26-27<sup>th</sup>*).

**Private:** This isn't a difficult walk to organise either as a group or on your own. A thrice weekly V-Line coach services the complete Great Ocean Road (daily as far as



Apollo Bay). The trail is fairly well marked (navigation isn't as simple as it might seem due to the number of sections well away from the coast). Several sections are only passable at low tide (alternative high routes are available) so check the tide times beforehand to plan the best period for each day's walking.

**Commercial:** Luxury accommodated Great Ocean Walk holidays, where everything is done for you except move your feet one in front of the other, are available for upwards of \$3000. For those who aren't well-heeled tourists or honeymooners, a camping option with transfers (including equipment) is available for \$340-\$1200 pp depending on the group size.

## Australian Alpine Walking Track (NSW-Vic)

**Length:** 680km / 6 weeks

**Difficulty:** \*\*\*\*\* (for end-to-end walk).

The AAWT is a very long distance trail, there is a guidebook about it, but there the similarities end to the other walks mentioned here. The AAWT is not well marked (deliberately so in some places), there are no facilities set up to aid walkers, it has some very challenging terrain and requires good navigational skill and plenty of bushwalking experience in order to attempt it. Some parts of the AAWT can be done on a day walk (the best known being from Thredbo chairlift to Kosciuszko and other Main Range peaks), but mostly a weekend or longer walk is needed to properly experience it.

**Club:** Bushwalking clubs are unlikely to organise an end-to-end trip on the AAWT, instead just doing sections of about a week at a time. YHA Bushwalking completed the entire track over six successive Christmas-New Year periods a few years ago, a major walk on parts of the AAWT is likely every 1-2 years (Thredbo to Benambra is tentatively planned for Christmas 2011).

**Private:** If attempting part or all of the AAWT as a private trip, everyone in the group must be fit and very experienced. Logistics are complicated, food-dumps are needed for sections of more than 10 days; a non-walking friend is helpful to provide transport and support at the infrequent vehicle access points.

**Commercial:** There are no tour operators on the Alpine Walking Track, nor are there ever likely to be.

## Extended Walks - Expressions of Interest

As stated earlier, your very own bushwalking club is a great way to do extended walks, the only downside is the rarity of a particular location appearing on the program.

If you are interested in these type of trips (many can be done as base-camps, not just pack-carries) then let us know, email [WalksSecretary@yhabush.org.au](mailto:WalksSecretary@yhabush.org.au) with what you are keen to do and when. If there are enough like-minded people, some of these trips may be scheduled sooner than we'd otherwise plan. There's no need to be confined to the usual suspects covered above. Other ideas include: the Flinders Ranges or Kangaroo Island (SA) ; the Blue Mountains, Wollemai or Budawangs NPs (NSW); Fraser Island, the Thorsborne Trail, Carnarvon Great Walk or Lamington NP (Qld) and the Cape to Cape track (WA).

## New Tracks Opening in Autumn

**Grand Strzelecki Track:** An 85km trail linking Morwell and Tarra Bulga National Parks. Three overnight campsites will be provided on a route passing through lush Gippsland rainforest with panoramic views from its high point of Mt Tassie. This is scheduled to be completed in autumn 2011.

**Mt Hotham:** Two new tracks are due to open soon. The 12.5km Cobungra Ditch Walk (Labour Day weekend) traverses the gullies north of the Great Alpine Rd between Hotham Village and Brandy Creek track. This can be extended to a pleasant 18km day walk by either returning to Mt Hotham or continuing to Dinner Plain via the existing trail between the two villages. The Three Huts Track (April 2011) will be a 13km circuit linking Derrick, Spargo and Silver Brumby Huts. Notably, this will enable easier access to Spargo Hut from Hotham village.

Quiz answers: 1c; 2 KJondike; 3. The Tour Du Mt Blanc; 4b; 5c; 6b; 7 USA; 8. Slowly, slowly; 9. Denmark; 10 The mermaid; 11d; 12a.

## Dr T's Yearbook 2010

**January – a new challenge (I);** Another year has flown by. After ending 2009 by windsurfing across Bass Strait, I decided to set myself a more challenging task for 2010 – become a member of VNPA Bushwalking.

Fronted up for my first trial walk. Lesson one - their trips don't have leaders they have commandants. I thought I was doing well, particularly going up a steep hill, but then I was taken aside at the next rest stop. "Excuse me, but if you v-v-vant to stay in this club, you v-v-vill keep v-v-vithin 20m of me".

"Sorry", I replied, "but I was feeling fairly fit and was always going to stop at the top and wait".

"No excuses!! If you vvant to vvalk fast join VMTC, if you vvant to go slow join YHA Sunday vvalk. OK? Come back again in 3 months."

**February – Munyitgalhma;** Travel and adventure doesn't pay for itself, so I need to raise a little money from time to time. Not small change from being a guide or instructor, serious dollars - which means doing a bit of government consultancy.

My first assignment: come up with a new name for Mt Buggery. There's an ongoing program to clean up the high country, replacing names that don't tick all the boxes for political correctness with something indigenous that no-one can pronounce. Next on the list was Mt Buggery – the minister had received letters from a couple of elderly ladies in Balwyn complaining about places named after deviant sexual practices. He'd promised to change it to something less offensive. My suggestion got the thumbs up, the name the traditional inhabitants gave it after making their way up from Horrible Gap each summer - Munyitgalhma ('fucking hard climb').

**March;** The department was worried. Instead of being 200% overbooked as they were in 2008/09, places like Tidal River and Lake Catani were only 180% overbooked this summer. I suggested to the minister was that this decline in numbers could be halted by getting rid of the entry fee. I encountered a bit of resistance – a few questions about where the money would now come from to maintain these parks. After a further week's consultancy, I came up with a business case showing how this could be made revenue-neutral by installing another 50 poker machines in the western suburbs.

**April – a new challenge (II);** My second attempt to join VNPA. Luckily I'd been out late the night before, and so was tired enough not to race on ahead but still fit enough not to lag behind. Nevertheless it all caught up with me that evening, so I crashed in my tent at 7.30pm straight after dinner. Next morning I was pulled aside.

"Excuse me, but you vvent to bed vvithout my permission".

"Sorry", I replied, "but I was at a birthday party the other night..."

"No excuses!! If you vvant to join this club, you vvill socialise and tell amusing (but not too amusing) anecdotes to group until I give signal for lights out. OK? Come back in 6 months."

**May; Here I am, about to pedal over a Saharan sand-dune – and it started as such an ordinary day.**

They wanted me to test out a new bike they were planning to use for a hire scheme. Give it a hammering, make



sure it could withstand plenty of wear and tear. Problem was I'd forgotten my helmet. I didn't fancy going home for it; "You know what Melbourne's train service is like" I told the minister. Actually he didn't, as he'd never used it, so I convinced him it would be quicker to travel to somewhere with less restrictive rules on cycling headgear. Sealed the deal by agreeing to do it for half my normal consultancy rate plus expenses.

**June;** Still in Africa, where some regions are still hard-hit by famine. At one aid camp I visited, a doctor took me to one side and told me that within three months, at least half the children I could see would be dead. Absolutely heartbreaking. I couldn't help them all, but I resolved to try and bring joy to some of their brief lives. Used my consultancy money to buy them eight return airfares and gold passes to Disneyland.

**September - 127 long minutes;** Now in the USA. Caught a screening of "127 Hours", the film about the guy trapped under a rock who ends up hacking his arm off with a Swiss army knife. The movie didn't unspool in real time 24-style, but for someone like me who's ideal of concise screenplays are the dramatisations on "First Tuesday Book Club", it dragged. If only he'd carried something more substantial, I could have been out of that cinema in a fraction of the time. Yet another film glorifying someone who ventures into the outdoors ill-equipped. If it had been me, I'd have had something more suitable for the situation in my pack.



**October – I told you I was prepared;** I was with a group hiking the Appalachian trail when we came across someone with his leg wedged under a fallen tree. The log must have weighed close to 100kg, too much for him to shift by himself. All this guy had was a puny little penknife that not even airport security would have got excited about – his movie would have been "127 Days". Fortunately I had my trusty blade with me, so in a matter of minutes I managed to free him and with the aid of a tourniquet and a makeshift crutch we helped him hop back to civilisation.

**December – a new challenge (III);** Back at VNPA – a third strike and I'm out for several years. A really good walk, I was very chatty around the campfire about my time in the States, went to bed fashionably late. Everything went well until next day; I was pulled aside.

"Excuse me, but you v-v-vere overheard breaking vvind in your tent".

"Yes, it's the exercise and dried food – it does that to me. I wasn't sharing with anyone so where's the harm?"

"No excuses!! If you vvant to join this club you vvill seek clearance from me at emission control. OK?"....

*A disappointing way to end the year, but failure gives me strength. Here's to interesting times ahead in 2011.*