



75 years of Bushwalking (almost)

If you've ever noticed the "...since 1939" slogan which adorns our Walks Program and 'Yeti' footers, and then performed a simple calculation, you'll know that YHA has been bushwalking in one form or another for almost 74 years. Which means that 2014 will mark the major 75th anniversary.

A number of special events are planned next year to mark the occasion, of which more will be revealed in good time. Meanwhile, leading up to the anniversary year, the history of the club will be documented in a series of Yeti articles, commencing with the formative years 1939-1947. The next few editions will focus on the subsequent decades through to the 21st century bushwalking in which most of our current readers have taken part.

The story begins on page 13 with the official founding of YHA Victoria in September 1939 then six months of assiduous planning for the first organised event, a four-day walk to ...Kinglake.

YHA Groups Day - Sat May 25th

Venue: "The Hub", 80 Harbour Esplanade, Docklands (Clubnight location)

Time: 12.00-4.00pm.

Following the success of the first two, the YHA Groups day has become an established annual event.

This is an ideal way to find out about Bushwalking and the other YHA Melbourne-based activity groups. Representatives from each activity will give a presentation and be on hand to answer questions. The 2013 Cross-Country skiing program will also be released.

A second-hand gear sale will also be held; arrive early for the best chance to pick up a bargain on pre-loved outdoor equipment.

Walks Program Improvement

A limitation of the current one-page emailed walks program is that each event needs to fit its description within a single line.

Starting with the forthcoming Autumn program, this restriction has been overcome. Whilst the format hasn't changed, several of the walks contain hyperlinks to more detailed trip notes on our server. Provided you are online when reading it, the program is now a portal to a larger pool of information about our activities.

Leaders of winter walks wanting to take advantage of this will need send their flyers to the Walks Secretary by 27th May.



"Mi Amiga" is **Luisa Orta's** winning entry in the People category of the club's 2011-12 photo competition. Taken on the summit of Mt Difficult in the Grampians, Luisa's photo of "a very good friend from the Bushwalking club from whom I learnt everything I know about camping so far" impressed the judge: *This is a lovely shot that shows pure joy at being outdoors. It's the 'top of the world' feeling people get when they climb up to views like those in the background of this photo.*

Winning entries in the other categories are on page 17.

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YHA BUSHWALKING COMMITTEE 2012/13

President,
Sunday Walks Secretary,
Clubnight Coordinator Andrew Stevenson
Secretary Anne Donaldson
Treasurer Kris Peach
Walks Secretary Ken Sussex
Social Secretary
Search & Rescue Rep Paul Gottliebson
General committee Jan Huang
Sonya Radywyl

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 your experiences or advice down then email them to yhabush@bigpond.com

YETI ONLINE

"Yeti" has its own website 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 7.30pm to approx. 8:30pm. Special events start just after 7.40pm, everybody welcome.

YETI THANKS

The following contributors to this issue:

Marina Carpinelli
Sokheng Chheang
David De Bondi
Paul Dorrington
Jan Huang
Lutz Lademann
Bruce Meincke
Sandra Martig
Kris Peach
Robert Potocnik
David Sale
Andrew Stevenson
Emma Williams

2012 Awards



Golden Boot – With a total of 70 days of bushwalking from 29 separate trips, Bruce Meincke claimed his second Golden Boot award by a very clear margin. One of the runner-ups was Bruce's wife Gillian (pictured with Bruce on the summit of Mt Giles (NT) in June) with 39 days from 15 trips before a foot injury kept her out of action for most of the second half of the year. The previous year's winner, John Belfio had a quiet year by his standards, but still ended up as the other runner-up with 43 days on the track.

Leaders – It can't be stated too often that the club's success is dependent on those who volunteer to organise walks or other events throughout the year. Without a decent-sized pool of leaders, the diversity and quantity of activities able to be offered would be very limited. In 2012 a total of 35 led at least one day or weekend trip for the club; out of these, recognition was given to those who led the most day and weekend walks.

Day walks – Special appreciation was given to Sonya Radywyl for leading six day walks (four Sunday plus two Saturday) during the year. Not far behind were Robert Potocnik (5) and Les Gamel (four Sunday walks).

Weekends – Ken Sussex organised seven weekend walks, followed closely by Bruce Meincke (6) and David Sale (5). Taking into consideration the total trips led, including day walks, the frontrunners were again Ken Sussex (12), just ahead of David Sale (11) who once again took on the role of organising popular accommodated trips on most of the year's long weekends.

Why should bushwalkers miss out on what fans of AFL, cricket, boxing, tennis, golf, and two flies crawling up a wall take for granted? To avoid breaching the anti-discrimination laws, a deal has been made so that bushwalkers too are subject to irritating advertising from a major online bookmaker.



Want to place a stake on who'll be first back to the car-park at the end of next Sunday's walk? A form guide (samples placed throughout this magazine) will help you tip the favourite or show how much of a fortune you'll make if Peter Burridge romps home (and double your money if he's bought himself a roadworthy car to drive away in).

As a special offer, YHA members and Trip Card holders receive 10% better odds.

Autumn - Winter Clubnights

Earlier Start Time (7.30pm): In response to suggestions that Clubnights commence earlier, a 7.30pm start will be trialled during autumn and winter (March – August). The committee is interested in feedback about this; was the later 8.00pm start preferable or should it be earlier still (the venue is available from 7.00pm)? Would meeting for dinner beforehand and a nearby café appeal to those who come to clubnight directly from finishing work in the city? Please show your support by attending and send any comments or ideas to ClubnightCoord@yhabush.org.au

Wow factor of New Zealand – Mon Mar 4th

Do you really know how spectacular New Zealand's scenery is? Vistas never found in a coffee table book or hobbit movie await those who, with a little blessing from the weather gods, tramp the dozens of walking tracks in the North and South Islands. Over many visits to New Zealand, Bruce Meincke has trekked enough regions in both summer and winter to rate the scenery with a Wow factor out of 10. We can only afford to publish a photo with factor 8 scenery here (from Conical Hill on the Routeburn track), but there will be plenty of perfect 10s on show for those who come along to the clubnight presentation. And while many of the high wow-factor areas also involve a high degree of difficulty to reach, a few (you'll find out which) provide a very good return from fairly easy walking.

Budawangs: Walking amongst Gods - Wed Apr 3rd

Set a little way inland from the NSW south coast, the Budawang Ranges is an area of spectacular beauty; rugged sandstone cliffs and mesas towering above overgrown valleys. Come on a journey through Monolith Valley, file past the Seven Gods and the Shrouded Gods (above) and scale the walls of the Castle as Sandra Martig showcases photos from the club's December 2012 Budawangs walk.

See also the trip report on pages 11-12, and note the Clubnight change to Wednesday this month due to Easter.

Walking the Annapurna Circuit – Mon May 6th

Kris Peach is still coming down from a high late last year. "Annapurna circuit - higher than Everest? Well Thorong La pass at 5400m is 100m higher than Everest base camp so I'm sticking to my story. It's a long way up, 200km of trekking, lots of hard work (wish I knew about the donkeys earlier!), fabulous scenery, great culture, no rain (at least in November). So what do you need to know before you sign up to an experience of a lifetime? See you at the Hub on 6th May."

Secrets of Snow Camping & AGM – Mon June 3rd

Once again the club will have a program of snow-walks and camps this winter, which also means Bruce Meincke's popular annual talk on the equipment needed to go snow-camping in comfort. Along with slides from previous winter's trips showcasing the dazzling scenery that can be experienced, there will be examples of the recommended clothing, sleeping bags and other essential items you'll need.

The YHA Bushwalking annual general meeting will be held at 8.30pm, immediately following the snow-camping talk.

Watch out for other Clubnight topics later in the year, including "Tips for Navigating with SmartPhones" and a photo-tour of Easter Island.

To The Lighthouses

Several of Victoria's lighthouses offer overnight accommodation, and as most of these are situated in areas with spectacular coastline, they make an ideal venue for a bushwalking weekend. This year's walks program features trips to some of the best known and most scenic.

Cape Otway (May 18-19th)

In continuous operation since 1848, Cape Otway is the oldest surviving lighthouse on the Australian mainland.

Bushwalks will be in the Otways National Park and sections of the Great Ocean Walk. All walks will be of a medium grade and not suitable for beginners or first time walkers.

Self-catering accommodation will be in the head light-keeper's house built in 1857 and is limited to 16 people. It features a dining room with open fire, apacious well-equipped kitchen and, for relaxing, a lounge room, complete with a wood stove. There is an option of an extra free night for those who would like stay over for the Monday.

Bookings are open between April 2nd - May 3rd with preference being given to regular walkers.

Cost: \$115 + booking fee **Grading:** *Medium*

Enquiries: [Andrew Stevenson](#) (after 2nd April)

Wilson's Promontory (July 6-7th)



A 20km walk-in carrying something between a day pack and full overnight gear (sleeping bag, food, spare clothes) is required to reach the Wilsons Prom lighthouse, but the effort is well worthwhile. Accommodation once again is in a beautifully restored, cosy lighthouse keeper cottage. Everyone who did this trip in 2010 raved about it, so it's being offered again now that tracks to the lighthouse have been reopened following severe flood damage in 2011.

Anyone interested needs to book and pay a deposit as soon as possible. The club is only reserving places once confirmed bookings are received, so leaving it too late could see outside parties filling up the remaining accommodation

Cost: \$137 (includes Fri night camp at Tidal River + b/fee)

Grading: *Medium*

Enquiries: [Chris Gordon](#) 0416 006 925

...and watch out later this year for a base-camp trip exploring the SE coast, featuring a visit to Gabo Island and overnight stay at its lighthouse.

Social Events



How to beat the winter blues? Nothing better than to get on board a heated carriage in a century-old steam train. On a freezing Mt Dandenong night, enjoy a show of murder, mystery and suspense at the Packing Shed warmed by a log fire. You can even dress to the 1920s and 1930s era to win a prize.

The cost is \$112 including train journey, three course dinner, entertainment, tea, coffee and dinner chocolates; full details (except Whodunnit!) are on the [Puffing Billy website](#).

For this event you need to book directly with Puffing Billy - call 9757 0700 Mon-Fri, tell them you are part of the YHA Bushwalking group so they will seat us together, then advise our organiser (Jan). Car-pooling will be arranged for those who need a lift, but those attending are responsible for payment of their deposit and final balance to Puffing Billy.

This show is popular and often books out several weeks in advance, so act now if you are interested or risk disappointment.

Enquiries: [Jan Huang](#) 0467 864 701



Fancy spotting some different wildlife from the Aussie natives we usually tend to encounter on bushwalks?

Form a Herd: 11am, outside the ticket office. The ticket cost is \$26.10, less if you have a concession or seniors card.

Go on the Prowl: We'll start with a 40 minute safari tour (included in the ticket price).

Join a Feeding Frenzy: Either at the **Meerkat Bistro** or the **Meerkat Kiosk**.

Roam the Plains: After lunch we go to see the other animals (the ones that have to be kept in enclosures) or walk the trail around the park.

Hunt down some afternoon tea: before leaving the wilds and going back to civilization.

Enquiries: [Yanna Walsh](#)

Overnight Pack-Carry Walks

Wilson's Prom Northern Circuit – April 25-28th

The Northern Prom is much less visited than the Southern section and much wilder. Leaving Melbourne on Thursday morning (Anzac Day), this four day circuit will include a couple of possibly deep creek crossings, some sections with challenging navigation, some overgrown tracks, beautiful beaches and interesting marshlands.

Grading: *Medium-hard* **Limit:** 6

Enquiries: [Marina Carpinelli](#) 0428 818 089 (AH).

Beginner Pack-Carry: O'Brien's Crossing – May 11-12th

A pleasant autumn walk in the upper reaches of Lerderderg Gorge, this is ideal for people new to pack-carrying but will also appeal to those wanting to do an overnight camp in a region little more than an hour's drive from Melbourne.

After a driving up on Saturday morning to Blackwood in the heart of the Wombat State Forest, the walk will follow a series of old mining tracks and footpads along the Lerderderg River. A highlight is the Blackwood Tunnel, where miners cut through rock at a sharp bend in the river to divert the water and pan the dry former river bed for gold. There are plenty of bush-camping spots besides the river, with a total distance over two days of approximately 20km, similar to the Beeripmo walk.

Grading: *Easy-medium* **Enquiries:** [Bruce](#) 9306 2428.

Grampians: Fortress & Mt Thackeray – June 8-10th

The little-visited Western part of the Grampians has spectacular rock formations and interesting aboriginal rock paintings. Leaving Melbourne on Saturday morning, this three day circuit will include a 600m climb at the start, time to explore the spectacular rock formations and 13km of walking on a closed, dirt road.

Grading: *Medium* **Limit:** 8

Enquiries: [Marina Carpinelli](#) 0428 818 089 (AH).

Lake Tali Karng – April 11-13th

Victoria's only alpine lake, Tali Karng is a hidden jewel of the alpine national park, almost entirely surrounded by steep-sided peaks. After dropping a car off at the Wellington River bridge, the walk starts at McFarlane saddle. The first day is 20km with a 1000m elevation drop, visiting the lake for a couple of hours then camping a little way further on. The second day follows the Wellington river track (11.5km and 13 crossings) back to the car left at the bridge.

Grading: *Medium-plus* **Enquiries:** [Paul](#) 0419 335 545.

Last out of their tent in the morning	Win
John Belfio	10001.00
Marina Carpinelli	8.00
Paul Dorrington	21.00
Bruce Meincke	5001.00
Stephen Smith	5.00
Andrew Stevenson	5.00
Ken Sussex	1.09

Larapinta Trail sections 1 to 6 – June 5-15th



The rugged arid country of the West MacDonnell Ranges (Alice Springs) has its own beauty. The lack of water and poor topsoil on the ranges keep the vegetation low which enables the walker to enjoy stunning views almost all day long. Many campsites are close to permanent waterholes that hide in the gaps and provide a stark contrast to the surrounding dry country. Both sunrise and sunset turn the ranges into an amazing ocean of red.

The club has visited the Red Centre in the past two years and we will walk sections 1 to 6 of the Larapinta trail again in June this year. To participate you will need a good level of fitness and recent pack carry experience as the climbs are demanding and the rocky ground is hard on the feet. Participants are limited to eight, regular YHA pack carry walkers will be given preference.

Grading: *Medium-hard*

Enquiries: [Sandra Martig](#) 0400 136 541

The Overland Track in Winter (August 16-25th)



A nine day walk in August covering one of Tasmania's most scenic, varied and popular walking tracks. During winter, we can expect to rarely see anyone else on the track, and there should be plenty of room in the huts. The walk starts at Cradle Mountain – Dove Lake and will head south to finish at Lake St Clair.

Spectacular views of the snow-covered peaks are expected. There will be ample time to include side-trips to peaks such as Mt Ossa, the highest in Tasmania, and up into Pine Valley to explore the Labyrinth.

The walk is rated medium-hard; deep snow and heavy rain are to be expected over its 65km.

The \$200 Overland Track fee does not apply in August. Transport costs will be approximately \$350 for flights, charter bus to and from the walk and ferry on Lake St Clair.

Grading: *Medium-hard* **Enquiries:** [Paul](#) 9525 7889

Autumn Day Walks

1. Tanglefoot Track – Mar 24th

Located in the Toolangi region north of Healesville, the Tanglefoot Track is a perennial favourite, an escape amongst lofty mountain ash up to 200 years old. This will be a shortened 12km version of the full 18km track, enough to experience the beauty of the rainforest and possibly glimpse a lyrebird without making too long a day of it. From Wirrawilla car park, we'll head along the Myrtle Gully track to Tanglefoot car park for lunch, returning via the Tanglefoot Track.

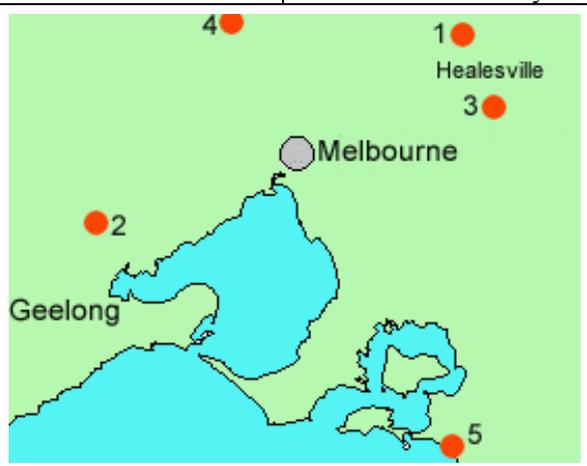
For those driving to the starting point direct, the location is the car park next to Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk on Sylvia Road; please be there by 10:30am.

Grading: *Easy-med* **Enquiries:** [Jan Huang](#) 0413 803 668

2. You Yangs by Night – Sat April 20th

Situated near Lara about 60km or 45 minutes drive from Melbourne, the You Yangs aren't particularly high, yet they provide excellent views of Port Philip Bay looking back towards the city.

The park closes to the public at 6.00pm, however the club has permission to take a small group (limit 12) there during the evening. The walk will start by heading up to Big Rock lookout to watch the sunset before doing a spot of roaming in the gloaming. The waxing moon will have already risen high and be fairly bright, but eventually it will be time to switch on torches. There'll be a dinner break during the walk, so either



bring something already prepared or cook something fresh on a portable stove; definitely no phoning for pizzas! After some more wanderings by torchlight, the walk should finish around 10.30-11.00pm.

Grading: *Med* **Enquiries:** [Andrew Stevenson](#) 0413 410 887

3. Mt Riddell – May 12th

Situated at the town edge of Healesville, the Yarra Ranges National Park is just a five minute car ride to the base of Mt.Riddell. From Healesville the road soon becomes gravel. The destination of this walk is visible from a walkers sign "Mt.Riddell 6km". A single lane gravel road (closed to public vehicles) leads to the top of Mt.Riddell. There is a feeling of isolation all to yourself. A modest gradient walk, it gradually coils its way around corners, the area is dominated by tall mountain ash trees, calling birds and there are sporadic views of the beautiful Yarra Valley. A crop of rocky cairns marks the mountain top. From there it is all downhill the same way back for a total walk of 12 km.

Grading: *Medium*

Enquiries: [Robert Potocnik](#) 9459-4624

4. Hanging Rock & Mt Macedon - June 9th

Two half-day walks at some very well-known landmarks 70km north of Melbourne. The eerie boulders and crevices of Hanging Rock will be explored during the morning. After lunch the group will drive up Mt Macedon to McGregor's picnic ground for a circuit walk taking in Camels Hump lookout (with

good views across to Hanging Rock) and Sanatorium Lake. The day will finish with afternoon tea at the café near the Memorial Cross, and the option for an easy short walk to visit the cross.

Grading: *Easy-med* **Enquiries:** [Jan Huang](#) 0413 803 668

5. Kilcunda June 23rd



A cliff top walk along the pristine and rugged South Gippsland coastline between Phillip Island and Wonthaggi.

The lunch spot is inside or outside the Killy pub and the return route will be via an historic railway trestle bridge.

It's a 14 km easy walk and the views are spectacular..

Grading: *Easy* **Enquiries:** [Emma Williams](#) 0406-758-935



Location	Win
Tanglefoot Track	1.50
Blackwood	2.50
You Yangs	41.00
Mt Riddell	51.00
Dandenongs	1.70
Cape Woolamai	151.00
Mt Macedon/Hanging Rock	11.00
Kilcunda Beach	201.00

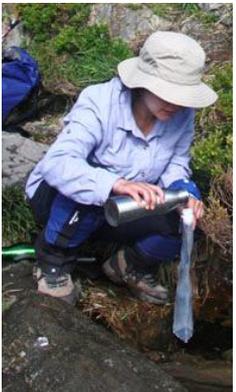
So You'd Like to Lead a Sunday Walk?

Well the club would like you to - we're always on the lookout for anyone who's become a regular walker and is interested in helping out by leading a trip. The larger the pool of leaders, the less often each person needs to be asked to run a walk and a greater variety of walk locations and styles is likely to result. While some work is involved, the results are rewarding. Three members who recently led their first Sunday walk share some thoughts and advice to encourage others; all have gone on to either lead or been scheduled to lead subsequent walks.

What persuaded you to start leading walks?



Emma Williams: I'd been a member of YHA Bushwalking for about four years and thought it was about time I led a bushwalk! Being a member of the club has given me so many lovely days, good exercise and enabled me to see some amazing parts of Victoria. but most of all I've made some great friends in the club and found willing companions for my Australian hiking adventures.



Jan Huang: It was on last April's Mt Hotham trip. I was huffing and puffing, sweating and swearing on that never ending winding track, and secretly questioning my sanity of joining this trip from the very beginning. A good friend tapped me on the shoulder and said "Jan, you should lead a walk this year!". I stared at him blank, and I was too hot to bother and too tired to argue, so I nodded. After the trip, we would forget this conversation eventually, I was hoping. Obviously he did not, that was why I led my first walk.

and with Jan's boot now on the other foot...



Lutz Lademann: After about a year or so participating frequently in Sunday walks and accommodated walks I thought it would be good to support the club by leading a walk myself eventually. A remark I made back then about this was never forgotten by Jan who later gently reminded me of my good intentions from time to time...;-)

Did you enjoy leading your first walk?

Jan (Sugarloaf Reservoir, June 2012): I really enjoyed my first walk. I am indebted to so many wonderful people in the club, especially Doug, Anne, Ann, Les and Linda who had advised and surveyed the walk with me. On the day I had a small group of people and half were seasoned walkers. Nearly everyone knew the track better than me and knew what to do. Because of the cold weather, people hastened their pace and shortened their breaks. We finished at 3:30pm. I felt a bit uneasy as it was supposed to be a day walk, not a drill. Oh well!

Emma (Mt Dandenong, June 2012): Yes, I enjoyed it a lot - how couldn't I with over 50 people to keep me company!



Lutz's group enjoy a break on his Stevenson's Falls walk.

Lutz (Marysville, Jan 2013): Yes I did - as the walk leader you automatically get involved in more conversations and get to know more people. It was good fun to talk to so many different people!

Any advice that could help other new leaders?

Jan: A helping hand from other leaders or experienced walkers is always invaluable. Get as many experienced walkers as possible in your walk so it could be self-guided!

Bribe your group with lollies and cookies (I learned that from other leaders).

If you don't want too many people on your first walk, volunteer to run it in winter.

Lutz: The survey walk I did two weeks prior to the actual walk with the group was the most important preparation - it gave me confidence that the walk was well sign-posted, easy to navigate and could be finished within a reasonable time even with the large group of people which are typically on a Sunday walk. Knowing that, I could relax and enjoy myself on the day of the walk.

Also, there is always a large percentage of regular walkers with a lot of experience on each Sunday walk. Ask one of them to be the whip.

How can the committee or walkers make life easier for leaders?

Emma: 'Car-pooling Karma' What I mean is that on Sunday walks, if you have a car and have enjoyed having a lift from a driver once or twice.....it's time to pay it back and offer to drive once in a while..... I organise a lot of car pooling for other walk leaders too and it is so hard to get people to volunteer to drive.....makes me mad sometimes! If every driver drives, every now and again, the same drivers will not always have to drive! We also get tired and would like to be driven, once in a while!!

Lutz: The club should have a guide ready specifically for new Sunday walk leaders (which can also serve as checklist for the more experienced ones). I had to spend some time to ask around and consolidate the responses before I had all the information I needed. There could even be a document repository on the YHA web server where all relevant files could be made available to walk leaders. That area could be password protected so that only walk leaders have access to it. This way, other leaders don't have to search their local file system for possibly outdated versions of the sign-in sheet or the leader guide etc. but could download from a web page on the YHA site.

Jan: Had similar comments about a Leader's Guide

(An updated Leaders' Guide is currently being compiled and should be available mid-autumn.

A Walk Surveyor's Guide

Ideally a walk should be surveyed just before it is due to be listed on the program. The leader needs to know how the walk compares with its description in a guidebook or track notes, that the advertised grading will be accurate and ensure that there is no possibility there will be any missed or wrong turns on the big day. Even if the area has been walked previously, conditions can change due to factors such as regrowth after a fire or tracks falling into disuse. While it isn't practical to survey interstate or many weekend walks, there shouldn't be any excuse for not previewing a day walk close to Melbourne. Here are a few tips:

- Take at least one or two friends with you; the hazards of walking alone in the bush aren't waived just because it's a survey.
- Record distances, signs and landmarks used to reach the starting point.
- Divide the route into distinct stages (eg track junctions, summits, creek crossings etc), note the time taken to walk each section, plus of course the overall time. Add at least a third to your own timings when planning for a large group, more if the terrain is difficult (eg steep climbs or lots of fallen trees).
- Are there options for short-cuts if some members of the group have difficulties? Note the quickest way out from various stages should an emergency occur.
- Note potential lunch and rest spots; classics are by water or a hill with a view. At the very least a group should be able to sit down comfortably. Plan to use the best spots, but have some alternatives ready in case the group is much faster or slower than expected.
- Unless a leader is really pressed for time, surveys tend to be done under pleasant conditions. Be alert for potential hazards that could develop if the weather isn't so fine on the day; higher river crossings, slippery rock faces, muddy slopes.
- If the walk has already been advertised, at the conclusion of the survey, assess whether it fits the published grading. If not, the planned route should be modified rather than rely on people finding out about a different grading through email or website updates.

Easter Accommodated Trips (Mar 29-Apr 1st)

Blue Mountains - Katoomba

The Blue Mountains has been described as Australia's version of the Grand Canyon. It consists of rugged valleys, sheer cliffs (up to 500m), and rocky plateaus. However, it improves on the Grand Canyon with numerous picturesque waterfalls, swimming spots, and denser vegetation due to higher precipitation.

The other key advantage of the Blue Mountains is its accessibility (just over two hours from Sydney airport by train) and with numerous towns located near the edge of the escarpment. Many of the sites and walks are accessible via public transport.

This trip over the Easter period will comprise three full day walks. These will probably comprise:

- i) Three Sisters + Katoomba Falls circuit
- ii) Bridal Falls-Junction Rock-Grand Canyon
- iii) Wentworth Pass).

These walks are rated medium to medium plus due to the rugged terrain, even though the distance is only 10-11km.

Cost for the trip is \$100 + booking fee, which includes four nights accommodation in Katoomba. Other costs will be airfares (approx. \$200 return), Katoomba rail-fare (\$30 return), and bus, train & taxi trips for transport to the walks.

Grading: *Medium* **Enquiries:** [David Sale](#) 0407 667 624

Grampians – YHA Halls Gap

YHA Bushwalking returns to Halls Gap for a fun weekend; pizza nights, Tom's much-loved beef goulash, and maybe a few bushwalks. The trip departs Melbourne on Friday and so only involves three nights accommodation at the YHA hostel.

Planned walks are Briggs Bluff (Saturday), Mt Rosea (Sunday) and a half-day walk to finish on Monday before heading back home.

Cost is \$108 + booking fee, payable in full by 10th March.

Grading: *Medium* **Enquiries:** [Tom Ostrowski](#) 0400 346 895



Reptilian Encounters	Win
Seeing a snake on a bushwalk (summer)	1.40
Being bitten on a bushwalk	250001.00

Lickhole Creek – Eagles Peaks (Nov 2012): Despite its proximity to Melbourne, it had been some years since the club had done the overnight Eagles Peak circuit. In the meantime, fire, drought and storms have had significant impact on this route.

The good news first – thanks to recent clearing, the track alongside Lickhole Creek was an expressway until a couple of kilometres before it started ascending Mt Darling. Fallen logs had been chain-sawed away and blackberry bushes pruned back a comfortable distance. It is quite likely that the remaining section has been cleared by now – the two kilometres of log-hopping that took over an hour made us grateful for the trackwork done before our arrival. Hopefully if word spreads that this track is now back in action, it will be used more regularly and prevented from becoming overgrown. After Mt Darling the Lickhole Creek track continues down to the Jamieson River, however for this walk it is necessary to leave the track near the summit of Mt Darling and head across to Eagles Peaks – this is where the fun begins.



Any track notes which describe Lickhole Saddle as a 'pleasant grassy campsite' are past their use-by date and should be thrown out! We didn't attempt to reach Lickhole Saddle on Saturday, camping on Mt Darling instead. The best tent sites

are on the track – there was room to fit 6-8. Getting down to Lickhole Saddle next morning took almost an hour due to the tangle of fallen trees we had to find our way around. Years of drought had weakened the forest giants to the extent that they toppled readily when storm force winds combined with soil that was once again saturated and softened. Lickhole Saddle was still flat and grassy, but covered with huge logs that would need serious bulldozing to clear away. It will be decades, if ever before this spot can once again host a tent. Ascending to Eagles Peaks, a foot-pad still remains, and after about 50-100m altitude gain from the saddle, fallen trees weren't much of a problem – the limiting factor is how fast a group can tackle what is in parts quite a steep climb and rock scramble before emerging atop Eagles Peaks. From there it was an unimpeded walk down a foot-pad to Davons Flat

As long as walkers are aware of the track conditions, this trip is still worth doing and rewarding – the scenic climb to Eagles Peaks will appeal to fit walkers who like a challenge. Just bear in mind the need for an early start on the second day and that due to the need to carry water for camp and the following day, it isn't recommended in warm weather (above 30 deg C).

Recent Walk Snapshots



Beginner Pack Carry weekend (Jan 26-27)–Beeripmo Walk.

Well fuelled with apple scrolls and large coffees from the Beaufort Bakery, we were brimming with energy and ready for the two day 21 km pack carry walk at Mt Cole State Forest. Located roughly two hours from Melbourne, the Beeripmo walk was a good choice for a beginners pack carry as the track was relatively flat but also had some steeper sections to push you that little bit harder. The trip had 17 people in total and there was a good mix of beginners and very experienced pack carriers who were generous with their useful and at times unusual tips ranging from what to bring on a pack carry to eating the 'fuel ball' of a march fly as an insect repellent! It was also a great opportunity to ask advice about tents, packs and other equipment from very informative, experienced and friendly people.

Sokheng Chheang & Ilze Kundzino

One or more booking cancellations from a weekend walk at late notice	Rain forecast	Rain not forecast
	Win	Win
Participant has not paid any trip fees	1.20	3.00
Participant has paid the trip cost in full	21.00	22.00
Excuse given for cancelling at late notice		
"I've found out that I need to work this weekend"	1.90	16.00
"I need to catch up on study"	2.00	21.00
"I think I might be coming down with something"	2.50	11.00
"My knee has started playing up"	3.50	21.00
"I've decided the walk may be too hard for me"	5.00	11.00
"Sorry, I'd forgotten I booked on this trip"	16.00	31.00
"I'm worried I might get wet"	2001.00	2002.00
Weather Events		
Rain occurs and lasts for more than 10 minutes	21.00	31.00

Kiandra – Thredbo Alpine Walking Track (Dec 26th - Jan 2nd)

The best day of the AAWT Xmas 2012 walk was the fifth day: Mawson Hut to Schlink Pass via Gungartan at 2068m.

The weather at Mawson Hut was clear but cool in the morning with no cloud. We started at about 7.50 am with a gradual climb up to the Kerries and across country towards Gungartan Pass. As we looked across to Gungartan it became obvious that the climb to Gungartan, with packs, would be too strenuous for some of the party so a decision was made to go across a creek and then head up a connecting ridge to Gungartan. The packs were left in a conspicuous saddle well below the three very rocky peaks that make up the mountain. When doing side trip to mountain summits always carry toilet paper and hand wash because you may have a nature call on the way. We headed up the ridge to the third highest rocky outcrop which was the actual summit of Gungartan with its still intact metal trig station.



Lunch was had at the summit with breathtaking views of the Main Range to the south and Mt Jagungal, 2061 m to the north. After lunch we headed down the only ridge not suggested in John Chapman's book on the AAWT. This ridge proved to be an excellent route to the road which we followed to Schlink Pass, our campsite for the night. The campsite was unburnt by fires and the best campsite of the whole trip. Everyone was happy and relaxed.

Ken and Romaine had a swim in a cold creek with Ken getting back at the march flies by feeding them to small fish in the creek. For five days the flies had terrorised Ken relentlessly. Therese and Jason had a rest and early sleep, John went exploring with renewed energy after his early dinner and David pitched his Hilleberg tent in a beautiful snow gum glade. I washed my clothes and aired my socks. Every body was happy, relaxed and ready for the next day. The best day of the walk with everything going to plan for the first time in five days.

Bruce Meincke

**Six Foot Track – Melbourne Cup Weekend.**

The 45km Six Foot Track approximately follows the original Blue Mountains route between Katoomba and Jenolan Caves. Popular amongst Sydney-siders, it attracts hundreds for an annual marathon where the fastest complete it in just over three hours instead of a more leisurely three days. But how does it rate as a long distance walk?

The Good: Days 1 & 3 (we started the walk from Katoomba). The descent into Nellies Glen gully was scenic, even when shrouded in one of the mists the area is frequently prone to. The cloud lifted later in the day, revealing views of the sandstone cliffs characteristic of the Blue Mountains. The track was six feet wide by this point, a quiet road passing by deserted villages and scattered homesteads. The most memorable part of the day was Bowtells Bridge over Coxs

River. The bridge was built to provide a safe crossing when the river is in flood – we could have waded across what was a leisurely flow (it would have been quicker) but used the bridge wearing full packs as it seemed more of a challenge. The 90m span swing bridge (and swing it certainly does in the middle, high above the river) isn't recommended for anyone with vertigo.

The third and final day was a pleasant forest walk, with occasional views as it descended to Jenolan Caves, finishing near the spectacular Carlotta Arch. We arrived by 11am, thereby having plenty of time to choose a tour through any of one of the main caves before catching the daily bus back to Katoomba at 3pm.

The Bad: Between the first and last day was the second. It wasn't as scenic as the others, and involved two 400m climbs, however the disappointing part was that all 21km of it was along a public road. Notes about the track state that parts of it are permissible for mountain bikes, but they aren't upfront about these sections also being open to general vehicle traffic. Being an unsealed road in a remote part of the Blue Mountains meant it wasn't heavily used, but convoys of weekend trail-bikers and 4WDs shattered the serenity of the forest.

Access to much of the road had been restricted at one time but has since been opened up. While sharing short sections of walking and vehicle tracks is often unavoidable, the length of this is excessive and calls into question its classification as a walking route. Comfortable grassy camping areas with basic facilities were provided, although the main water tank at one was empty, and being accessible by vehicles means running the risk of sharing it with a group of AC/DC loving trail-bikers as happened on the Saturday night.

The Six Foot Track has moderate (5/10) Wow and Difficulty factors and easy navigation. It is recommended for anyone wanting to do overnight walking in the Blue Mountains but lacking the experience or group size to attempt the more scenic but challenging walks in the area. If possible, avoid the middle section (Coxs River – Black Range Camp) on a weekend.

A Tale of Four Mortals Wandering Amongst Seven Gods
Exploring the Budawang Wilderness Area, Morton National Park, NSW

I didn't know about the Budawang Wilderness Area but Paul had walked there before. He'd talked about rugged sandstone formations such as The Castle, Mt Owen and Mt Nibelung, all regarded as challenging climbs. As well as the rugged country, the varied vegetation caught my interest - rainforest pockets in Monolith Valley, rare ferns in the shelter of rocky overhangs (that also are much-loved campsites), and thick shrubs. The steep climbs worried me somewhat, but as Paul intended to base camp and tackle the ascents with daypacks only, I signed up. Also joining him for a week of bushwalking in Morton National Park east of Canberra were fellow walkers Michael and John. Wog Wog campsite is the park entry point closest to Melbourne. From there it takes one and a half to two days walking to a suitable base camp close to The Castle and Monolith Valley.



Corang Arch (photo: Michael Johnston)

We started off on a foggy day following a well-marked track with some gentle ascents and descents. Only the final descent to Burrumbeet Brook was steep. Just before this descent it is worth looking out for Corang Arch west of the track, an interesting rock formation that is hidden from view by the ubiquitous 2m high shrubs. Our first campsite was at Burrumbeet Brook and featured a toilet, flat tent sites in the valley, and an overhang that allowed us to cook out of the rain. Interestingly, everybody choose to camp in the rain, maybe because of the grassy ground in the valley (as opposed to the sandy substrate underneath the overhang) or the proximity to Burrumbeet Brook that provided our water.

On the second day we continued towards Mt Cole. There are some swampy areas but many boardwalks led over dry ground. Luckily, water was available at the Mt Cole overhangs and the Trawalla falls were running. This allowed us to erect a base camp underneath the overhangs – a beautiful and protected spot – and spared us from carrying heavy packs through Monolith Valley to the Cooyoyo Creek campsite, which has a more reliable source of water. Camping in Monolith Valley is prohibited to facilitate revegetation after previous overuse. The omnipresent almost impenetrable 2m high shrubs tell a tale of success but would have made pack carrying hard work.

Mt Owen Circuit (green line on map)

Mt Owen and Mt Cole are two adjacent plateau mountains with a fairly flat top and steep sides. They are separated by a gully which also provides the easiest ascent route to Mt Owen. We headed west from Trawalla falls to enter the gully



Climbing Mt Owen (photo: Michael Johnston)

from the west. Our walk notes instructed us to watch out for 'a faint trail climbing out [of the gully to the right] through a mass of tree roots dangling down from the top of a small cliff' (all citations from *Bushwalking in the Budawangs* by Ron Doughton). We did as instructed and found a north-south ramp and after some scrambling reached the flat summit of Mt Owen. Despite this being a wilderness area, cairns marked the way up and a path led through thick vegetation then over open flat rocks to the south-eastern edge of the plateau. We enjoyed stunning views of The Castle and the Pigeonhouse – another impressive legacy of eroded sandstone. After a rest we back-tracked across the summit plateau and entered the gully between Mt Owen and Mt Cole where we exited before, then turned east to follow it through to Monolith Valley.



There were some impassable sections in the gully that forced us to explore a tributary to the south and later to descend a 6m high vertical cliff hanging onto the roots of a, luckily healthy, rainforest tree. After having seen one after the other of my fellow walkers happily (!) disappear over the cliff edge I stopped pacing like a caged tiger and followed Paul's instructions hanging onto the roots – and surprisingly made it down safely! The gully is fairly shady and retains just enough moisture to keep the rocks slippery, which added some challenge to the boulder hopping and rock scrambling in sometimes steep areas. We once encountered a rope of some sort that helped negotiate a small cliff, albeit none of us fully trusted it. Eventually, the gully entered Monolith Valley which we followed northwards, enjoying the afternoon sun in

the Green Room – a narrow section with vertical walls on either side that is home to beautiful rainforest vegetation. A stop at the base of the Seven Gods Pinnacles provided both a welcome rest and more views before we turned westwards around Mt Cole and walked back to our camp.

Our planned 6.5km half day circuit ended up taking us about 7 hours but it was great walking. In hindsight we probably should not have entered the gully between Mt Owen and Mt Cole so far west. Instead we should have followed the cairns on the northern edge of the summit plateau eastwards before descending into the gully. Ron Doughton uses exactly the same words to describe the exit from the gully when ascending from the east or west which seems to refer to one and the same exit, but admittedly, there are many places with tree roots dangling over cliffs and the tracks definitely are faint.

The Castle (brown line on map, previous page)

Starting from Trawalla falls this trip includes the entire length of Monolith Valley, a beautiful and varied section where small side gullies invite to be explored, the sun illuminates ever changing vegetation and the lucky ones may spot a lyrebird. One could consider spending at least half a day here. However, although The Castle isn't far away, the going is slow and an eye needs to be kept on time. The track in the northern part of Monolith Valley is easy to follow. But it is somewhat hidden by dense shrubs where it turns southwest towards the plateau that lays east of Shrouded Gods (the people naming these rugged pillars of eroded sandstones must have been in awe or scared).

We first followed the wrong chain of cairns on this plateau but eventually found Nibelung Pass – the exit from Monolith Valley – where permanent chains are a most welcome assistance to negotiate the steep cliffs. From here it is an easy walk to the ascent on the western side of the tail of The Castle. Arrows indicate the best way up and it is worth following them. About five sections of the ascent are difficult to negotiate without rock climbing skills. Ropes were installed on each of them; sometimes dangling from a tree and I was wondering who maintains them. Again I watched my fellow walkers proceed without fuss and decided to follow suit. The views from the summit were well worth the effort and included Mt Owen on one side and the Pigeonhouse from a different angle on the other. As we lost much time earlier in the day we did not proceed to the southern end of the plateau where the views are said to be even better and a visitor's book is hidden.

Mt Nibelung (gold line)

'For those walkers who have made The Castle ascent, this ascent should be added to the list, because of its challenge and rewarding views' (*Bushwalking in the Budawangs* by Ron Doughton). It was the "challenge" part that made us decide to tackle Mt Nibelung. We had difficulties finding the turn off eastwards from the Monolith Valley track resulting in bush-bashing along animal tracks through dense shrubs to cross the valley at the base of Mt Nibelung. We aimed to enter a seemingly gently sloping gully on the north-west of Mt Nibelung but may never have entered the gully proper. Instead we kept scrambling up animal tracks on the western ridge of the gully until we reached the northernmost aspect of the summit plateau from where we enjoyed the view over rugged sandstone plateaus from yet another angle. However, our little vantage point was separated from the summit-



The Seven Gods (photo: John Belfio "God of Eating Small Things")

plateau proper by a ravine – probably the above mentioned "challenge" – that would have required 'sliding down a leaf covered slope on [our] back side with the climb out of the ravine looking forbidding but not being as bad'. We wondered how we should climb that leaf covered – almost vertical – slope on our way back and in the absence of a convincing solution decided that the challenge of climbing Mt Nibelung proper was beyond our skills.

Mt Tarn/Hidden Valley (red line)

On our way back to Wog Wog we dropped the overnight packs at the turn-off to Mt Tarn northwest of Mt Bibbenluka and spent a day exploring Mt Tarn and Hidden Valley. The track from the turn-off to the base of Mt Tarn crosses a beautiful open plain – a welcome change to the 2m high shrubs. Mind you, there are enough shrubs and poorly formed tracks on top of Mt Tarn. The track reaches Mt Tarn at a vertical cliff and turns east passing several overhangs where ferns and other plants take advantage of the available moisture and shadow and create a different world.

The summit is reached by scrambling through a reasonably gently sloping gully. There is a tarn somewhere on the summit plateau of Mt Tarn but it is well hidden by high and dense vegetation and 'walkers tend to stumble upon it rather than reach it'. - We didn't. The summit plateau of Mt Tarn is different to the other summits as it is surrounded by buttresses, retains the water in swamps and supports more varied vegetation. The descent was gradual and lead into a swampy area that needed to be crossed and caused some wet feet. On the other side an old timber-getter track awaited us and provided some easy walking. The turn off towards Hidden Valley is marked unconventionally with the initials HD on a tree fern. From there the track once again becomes and is easily lost. Boulders mark the entrance to Hidden Valley which is entirely surrounded by cliffs and buttresses but the dense (recovered?) vegetation made it somewhat difficult to appreciate the surroundings. We returned the same way, camped where we dropped our packs earlier and returned to Wog Wog campsite the following day.

As it turned out, the climbs were challenging even with only a daypack and basic rock climbing skills would come in handy in this area. Nevertheless, it was a great week away in remote country that doesn't hold back with amazing rock formations protecting pockets of rainforest between them and supporting surprisingly diverse vegetation in the drier areas.

Sandra Martig

YHA Bushwalking History - The First Steps (1939-1947)

On 21-25th March 1940 two groups, one of 12 young women from Melbourne University, the other a mixed party of 20 hiked between a series of hostels on what is now the north-eastern outskirts of Melbourne. Starting from Ringwood station, the university group hiked 11km to Windermere hostel at Christmas Hills.

It was a gorgeous moonlit night, perfect for hiking, and we had shed all cares and responsibilities – except our packs which were unfamiliar and needed a bit of adjusting from time to time. – as reported in ‘Woman’ 8th April 1940.

The following day it was a fairly tiring 32km tramp on to Warrandyte hostel, and then 22km the next day to Clifden Farm (slightly north of St Andrews) where they met up with the other group who’d walked from the opposite direction.

This was the inaugural walk of YHA Victoria. It would be a few more years before a day walk would be led, and 7½ years until a separate Bushwalking committee formed, but the origins of YHA Bushwalking go back to this first hike in Easter 1940. As any Walks Secretary will tell you, walks don’t just appear, they take time to plan and schedule, particularly if the overnight accommodation has to be acquired as well. Thus day one for the club is considered to be 4th September 1939, when a public meeting in Melbourne was held to launch the Youth Hostels Association in Australia.

The vision was for activity-based accommodation. Hiking and hostelling had soared in popularity overseas since World War I, but the success of this combination of them in Australia would initially be curtailed by the next great global conflict.

Hiking Gains Legs

Victoria’s first walking clubs formed in the 1890s, but for their first three decades were largely regarded as the domain of eccentric gentlemen walkers, relatively well-off professionals with the means to readily escape the city. Apart from the occasional “Ladies Day”, the walks were for men-only, with Melbourne Women’s Walking Club not formed until 1922. Then, in the late 1920s, hiking became extremely fashionable and a worldwide craze reached Australian cities. Activities promoting physical fitness and health were encouraged as a means of rebuilding a generation scarred by World War I. Hiking, with its liberal dosage of fresh air was seen as an ideal way to develop the ‘health and virility’ of the nation’s youth. The craze peaked in 1932, when thousands boarded trains each weekend to embark on mystery hikes. The boom had well and truly subsided by the end of the 1930s, but in its wake hiking had been firmly established as a popular pastime and shed its image of eccentricity. The craze also enabled women to free themselves of the constraints of pre-war Edwardian fashion, eschewing cumbersome skirts for more practical breeches and ultimately shorts. The sight of so much hitherto unseen female flesh raised a few eyebrows and got senior members of the clergy hot under their dog-collars, but sheer force of numbers ensured that modern hiking wear became socially acceptable and here to stay.

Hostelling Travels Down Under

The concept of youth hostels as a means of providing low-cost accommodation to young people hiking the countryside originated in Germany. The first one opened in 1912 and a large network was soon in place. After WWI the idea spread to other European countries, leading to the birth of the



Ready for Rain : Inaugural walk, 1940 (photo: Nancy Morgan)

International Youth Hostel Federation (IHYF) in 1932. Overseas travellers to Britain and Europe were impressed by what they saw and returned to Australia keen for something similar to be established here.

One of the instigators was Dr Fritz Duras, director of Physical Education at Melbourne University who in 1937 began lobbying for his vision of a chain of youth hostels for hikers and skiers. Something that would introduce youth to the beauty of the bush and redress what he felt was an appalling lack of knowledge of the country; “*walking brings one right alongside nature – the calls and smells of the countryside, the sunsets, stars and sunrises*”.

In August 1938, 300 representatives of various youth organisations went on a day trip to the Dandenongs. A 15km return hike from Upwey to Mt Morton was followed in the evening by a meeting at which support was pledged to establish youth hostelling in Victoria. A committee, including Dr Duras, was appointed to seek financial support from government, councils and other organisations.

At a meeting of youth organisation representatives a year later on 4th September 1939, the Victorian Youth Hostels Association was formed. A day earlier Britain, with support from commonwealth countries including Australia, had declared war on Germany. Although the extent of World War II was yet to unfold, the inauspiciousness of the timing of YHA’s formation was evident at the outset. It was clear that the nations resources would be diverted to the war effort, constraining the grand plans for acquiring or building hostels, nevertheless it was resolved to continue.

Nowadays hostels are sited in places backpackers gravitate to because of already existing activities and attractions. At its outset however, both hostels and activities were set up by YHA. Chains of hostels no more than a day’s walk apart were planned. Some would be close to, but not necessarily a short walk from, stations and travel between them would be by foot or bicycle. And just in case anyone was affluent enough to own a car, a fundamental rule of youth hostelling - not overturned until 1966 - was that guests were not allowed to arrive by private motorised transport. Networks of hostels were envisaged in the Grampians, the Alps and Gippsland, but during the first half of the 1940s the first generation of approximately 15 hostels was largely confined to the outer northern and eastern environs of Melbourne.



Entering Kinglake NP, Easter 1940 (photo: Nancy Morgan)

In the months following YHA Victoria's formation, advertisements were placed for proprietors of guest-houses to offer their property for use as a youth hostel. A sufficient number was established to form the Kinglake circuit in time to meet the deadline of the first Easter tour.

History was thus made, with Dr Duras proudly leading one of the groups and some journalists accompanying the party to provide publicity for the fledgling organisation. The walk was considered a success; the main complaint from a deputation of sore feet was that the 20 miles between Christmas Hills and Warrandyte was too far for a day's walk. Effort was soon put into obtaining another hostel between the two.

Early Trailblazers

It wasn't enough just to establish hostels, there had to be interesting routes on which to hike between them. Enter the YHA Routes and Survey committee; its task was to map out paths, making use of existing bush tracks, avoiding main roads as much as possible and blazing their trails by marking them with the international YHA symbol. Regular appeals were made to members to provide the raw material needed for the hundreds of markers required; kerosene or large jam tins were favoured, cut into 6" (later just 4") equilateral triangles and painted red. Chief amongst the 1940's trailblazers, who also engaged in some map-making, was Sgt Roy Wicks. Sgt Wicks led many a weekend dedicated to trailblazing, forging a number of different routes, many centred around Clifden Farm.

Another set of hostels was acquired in the Dandenongs. Further tours, walking and cycling, were organised over the next two to three years, mainly on long weekends, but the effect of the war had begun to bite hard and it was a struggle for YHA to obtain the funding or membership to expand its activities. Hostels were available for individuals and groups from other organisations to conduct their own hikes. Servicemen on leave were given honorary YHA membership

and appreciated being able to use the hostels for R'n'R, but YHA volunteer-led hikes didn't start to pick up until 1944, finally beginning to flourish as the war drew to a close and the nation turned its attention back to home.

The Coming of the Day Walk

The concept of a day walk goes back further than ancient Babylon. They weren't unpopular, hadn't been patented (thus requiring royalty payments), and weren't banned under wartime security regulations (although YHA had been cautioned to ensure its members didn't gossip about air force or other military matters during their activities). So why did it take until mid-1944 to organise one? YHA regarded the hostels as its main source of income and so wasn't particularly interested in activities that didn't involve overnight stays. Requests for day walks initially fell on deaf ears, however they became more frequent and the suggestion was finally accepted as a means of enabling members to more readily meet and socialise. On 30th July 1944, YHA's first day walk was led by Peter Allnutt from Hurstbridge to Wattle Glen. The exact attendance isn't recorded, but it was noted as a success and the Routes & Survey committee was requested to suggest routes for further day walks. Another one followed in November to Mt Morton, with others every three months thereafter. Requests were made to run day walks more frequently but attendances, despite one of 55, were erratic and it wasn't until the end of the decade that they moved into second gear and became monthly.

The Golden Age of Rail

The rail network played a pivotal role in fostering the hiking boom; with cars yet to gain mass affordability, trains provided the means for the general population to travel to the bush. Places now firmly entrenched in suburbia such as Ringwood, Wattle Glen, Hurstbridge and Mt Evelyn were sparsely populated and well-forested. Rail back then not only serviced these now familiar outer suburbs, it extended well beyond them. Whittlesea, Yarra Glen, Healesville and Warburton were a Sunday morning train ride away, whilst country towns such as Bright, Mansfield and Daylesford benefitted from now long-gone branch lines.

In return for the patronage they provided, Victorian Railways offered hikers concession fares and for some of the mass walks would arrange special drop-off or pick-up points away from the regular stations. It is no surprise then that almost all of the YHA hikes in the 1940s used trains and the occasional linking bus service for transport to the trailheads.

A Truly Overnight Walk

If being tucked up in a hostel bed after the 10pm lights-out doesn't count as an "overnight" walk, then the first YHA overnight walk can be considered to be on 9th November 1946. Guided by Jim Dyall, one of the more energetic of the early leaders, a group boarded the midnight train to Mooroolbark. Under a full moon, they walked to the summit of Mt Dandenong. The plan was to sit around a campfire consuming coffee and frankfurts until dawn, but dawn almost reached Mt Dandenong before the walkers. With breakfast over, it was back down again to rendezvous with a late



This Young Couple have just finished a 15-mile walk, washed their clothes, eaten their evening meal, scrubbed their dishes, and—are still sufficiently energetic to "jitterbug." Scene is at Clifden Farm Hostel. (Easter 1940)

morning train back to the city. The overnight walk was a huge success, yet despite having been in existence for over seven years, YHA was yet to offer a “bushwalk”.

“Hiking” versus “Bushwalking”

The terms “hiking” and “bushwalking” are used interchangeably these days; asked if there is a difference, most people tend to say “bushwalking” is just the regional (Australian) term for hiking. One rambles in Britain, tramps in New Zealand, gönguferð in Iceland but bushwalks here. The term “bushwalking” came into common usage in the 1920s – as did “hiking” as an import from America. Prior to that, more genteel terms had been used such as “walking”, “tramping” or even “pedestrianism”, none of which captured the harsh rugged experience of moving through the Australian bush. Bushwalking meant serious walking – camping, traversing untracked or even unmapped wilderness, whilst the hiking undertaken by the masses was regarded as frivolous by “real” bushwalkers. This disdain was best summed up by

Hikers go and get themselves lost, bushwalkers rescue them.

After WWII ended, organised hikes were run twice a month and reports from the time suggest they were always well-attended. Yet there were only so many permutations of walks between hostels that could be offered, even with further trailblazing to provide alternative routes. YHA had gained permission to use some forestry commission huts in places such as Cumberland Forest and Lake Mountain. These required a sleeping bag to be carried (strictly forbidden in hostels) without the need for a tent but weren't enough to satisfy a growing number of YHA members keen to explore other regions of Victoria. They wanted trips to inaccessible country not opened up by hostels, trips that required carrying a tent and full kit to camp overnight, trips referred to as ‘bushwalks’. On 16th October 1947 an enthusiastic meeting was held to form the first Bushwalking committee: Dudley Gross (convenor), Gwen Morris (secretary) and Geoff Wilms. The initial wish-list of new territory to strike out and explore included Mt Disappointment, the Baw Baws, Powelltown and the Poley Ranges. It was the latter which on November 29-30th gained the honour of YHA's first “bushwalk”, a circuit based on Warburton and taking in Mt Donna Buang – Boobyalla and the Acheron Way, locations familiar to present-day fans of harder day walks.

For a short while YHA had Bushwalks and Walking trips, but within a year organisation of day walks became the responsibility of the Bushwalking committee and by the early 1950s they looked after hostel trips too. A core part of the club's modern identity, the diversity of bushwalks catering for all tastes and abilities, had taken shape.

Next issue: Part 2 – Finding its Feet:

Peaks and Troughs; early struggles to sustain interest amidst post-war prosperity.

The Young Bushwalker's Handbook; what purpose did a pyjama cord, a razor blade and Condy's crystals serve in a hiker's kit?

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Tips for Better Bushwalking

- #10 How to Walk Downhill



One way of categorising bushwalkers is which they dislike most, steep uphill or steep downhill sections. Many opt for the first, but while a steep climb can leave you thirsty and exhausted, recovering from its effects takes minutes or at worst hours. Steep descents on the other hand place stress on joints that, with the added risk of a slip or fall, can result in a more lasting injury.

Tips for walking uphill have been covered previously (Yeti #41); some of them have equivalents or are identical when heading in the opposite direction, beginning with...

1. Zig-zag. Walking trails where possible will traverse a steep slope back and forth on a moderate gradient rather than directly up or down it. This reduces erosion and makes for easier walking. If descending an untracked slope, do the same with your route and zig-zag down on a more comfortable gradient.

2. Least slippery terrain. If on a track, assess which is the least slippery out of the track or the terrain on either side and walk on that. The result can depend on whether conditions are wet or dry. Loose gravel or dead leaves should be avoided if very dry whilst mud, rocks and grass, particularly alpine grass, should be treated with caution if it's wet.

3. Trekking Poles take some of the load off the knees. For descents, lengthen them (if adjustable), plant slightly ahead and turn on the anti-shock mechanism if they have this feature.

4. Don't lean back, but don't lean forward either. Keep upright or very slightly forward, with your centre of gravity above your hips and knees. Have your knees slightly bent, particularly when planting the downhill leg.

5. Side-step. Angling the body away from the line of the slope takes stress off the knees and provides greater stability. For very steep slopes, have the feet at right angles to the slope and side-step down.

6. Slow, short steps. Lengthy descents on mild gradient, while less likely to result in falls, can cause knee damage by walking too fast. Resist gravity's gentle temptation to put on extra speed. The loading on joints increases markedly with stride length and speed. The effect of this extra pounding on the knees, particularly with the added weight of a pack may not be felt immediately, it may not even be felt at the end of a day or next morning, but the damage is accumulating and will eventually manifest itself on anyone who frequently walks too fast for too long.

In Profile - David De Bondi

To complement the features on YHA Bushwalking's history, we'll chat to some of the club's veteran walkers, beginning with someone whose bushwalking experience spans five decades.

Tell us a bit about your history with YHA Bushwalking.

I started in the early sixties, I don't remember what the first walk was. I walked with the club until 1968 then went overseas. I did a couple more walks when I returned in 1972. I then disappeared for a few decades to raise a family before starting once again walking and leading trips for the club over the past two years.

What attracted you to the club?

I wanted to be in the bush at every opportunity, and so walked with several organisations including VMTC, YHA, Senior and Rover Scouts.



David admiring the view at Lord Howe Island

What has been your favourite walk?

Any time in the bush is heaven anywhere, but guess alpine views across mountain ranges to infinity is hard to beat.

And were there any experiences you'd rather forget?

Eight days in Tassie with unrelenting rain had lost its glamour by day eight, as everything became sodden including our spirits.

What sort of changes have you noticed between when you began bushwalking and the present day?

Technology has improved gear no end. Lightweight, quick-drying, comfortable clothing, lightweight tents, mats, stoves, packs etc., compared to the lumpy heavy gear of old. Transport to/from hikes in the old days was in a furniture van which ensured you emerged covered in dust and grit and appreciating the fresh air after a good dose of exhaust fumes. *(the full story of the furniture van will feature in a later instalment of the club's history)*

On the other hand, does anything strike you by way of having changed very little over that period?

The thing that hasn't changed is that people still want to experience the beauty and atmosphere of the bush.

Is there anywhere in the world that you haven't visited yet would still like to walk?

The world would take many lifetimes to even scratch the surface bushwalking. Circumstances prevented me travelling through Yugoslavia in earlier days, so walking in Eastern Europe would be great.



You've had a "boob job" recently, but I gather you have mixed feelings about it?

The Aarn packs have their pros and cons.

Pros. (advantages) - Keep the front pockets well weighted and your centre of gravity stays normal so you don't have to bend forward from the waist to balance the load.

Cons. (disadvantages) - The front pockets can be a hindrance when rock scrambling and trying to move through chimneys. They also impede movement through fallen tree branches. If the pockets are not weighted well, the advantage of the pack is lost, so continually adjusting your load is part of the course.

Having only recently started leading walks, what has been the most enjoyable aspect?

I'm always happy if I've got people into a new area that they haven't been to before, as they may see something different or new to appreciate in our diverse bushland.

Do you have any suggested improvements for the club?

Having recently had an incident on one of my day walks, (heart attack) with all emergency services involved except BSAR, I believe that a Sunday walk of 25-30 people is too large a group for one leader to be expected to handle in an emergency.

An alternative would be to have two smaller groups both with leader and whip. Communication along a line of 30 people strung out over 250 metres or more and not in sight poses a worry to me as a leader.

And finally, any advice for new walkers?

My advice to first time walkers is to go fully prepared with the appropriate gear, fit, sufficient food and drink etc. to remain comfortable under hostile conditions (weather, tree-hopping, accidents, etc.) - that way, they are likely to walk again and not be turned off.

Not Taking Enough Food on a Weekend	Win
First-time camper	501.00
Others	101.00

Photo Competition Winning Entries

Congratulations to Bruce Meincke for taking out first prize in the Landscape, Wildlife & Campsite categories. Luisa Orta's winning entry in the People category is on page 1. Thanks to Belinda Smith, editor of "Wild" magazine, for judging the competition; Belinda's comments are included with the photos below.



Landscape: Blue Lake and Mt Franklin, Nelson Lakes NP, New Zealand.

Date: March 2012

Photo: Bruce Meincke.

Judge's comment: *"Sometimes it's easy to get lost in photos of mountains, and often if there's no size comparison they can lose some of their impressive stature. This epic mountain range, trimmed with snow, almost overpowers the photo - but the glimmer of blue water keeps the landscape grounded and we can see just how big they really are."*

Wildlife: Lizard (gecko) on the track near Pocket Saddle, Northern Kosciuszko National Park, NSW:

Date: April (Easter) 2011

Photo: Bruce Meincke.

Judge's comment:

"I love that this little reptile looks so incredibly grumpy, as if the walking track has no business being where he lives. Which, in a way, is true."



Special category (campsite): Snow-camp on Mt Bogong, at the top of Staircase Spur:

Date: July 2011

Photo: Bruce Meincke.

Judge's comment:

"The bold slashes of red and yellow against the white snow are stark reminders how extreme weather can be, and the looming grey sky in this photo hints at more snow to come. I've climbed Staircase Spur but only in summer, and it's completely different."