



## President's Report



This last year has been yet another successful one for YHA Bushwalking, with an exceptionally high number of walks and other events, many new leaders and a record number of walkers. My sincere thanks to all committee members who have contributed their time to make all of this happen. And, most importantly, many thanks to all of our leaders – without them, there would be no events on the program at all and no YHA Bushwalking!

I would like to welcome the new members on the club's committee: Jon de Jong (treasurer), Dani Langma and Tobias Ziegler (general committee members) have come aboard to help out with running the club. We are looking forward to the new ideas they will bring to the committee!

The Meetup group we created in August 2014 has continued to be a great success and grown to over 2000 subscribers. This has made the Sunday walks so popular (with many attendances exceeding 40) that we have stopped advertising the details on Meetup (for the time being) in order to avoid numbers getting out of control.

Last December a second Meetup group "YHA Multi-Day Walks" was created to promote all pack-carry and accommodated weekend walks; its group size has already reached 500. Thanks to Andrew Francis and Dani Langma who have done an incredible job over the past year listing all of our events on Meetup.

The combined successes of advertising through Meetup, the newly introduced bus trips and an increased number of Saturday walks resulted in a dramatically increased total attendance of 2100 on events held during 2015/16, compared to 1,400 the previous year. Sunday walks alone accounted for 1,500, an average of 30 per walk.

There are many plans and ideas for the upcoming walking year. If we find enough volunteers to help, we might be able to realize most of them!

One of these plans is to turn the newly introduced bus trips into a regular event for each quarter.  
(cont'd → p2)



Craig Beer (rear, brandishing a map) and group on part of a year-long series of walks he organised over the entire Great Dividing Trail.  
(photo: Erryn Stephens)

Long-distance trails are a theme of this issue; along with Craig's experiences on the GDT, there are articles reviewing the Falls to Hotham, Tasmania's Three Capes Walk and the first stage of the ambitious Grampians Peaks Trail.

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**YHA BUSHWALKING COMMITTEE 2016/17**

President,	Lutz Lademann
Secretary	vacant
Treasurer	Jon de Jong
Walks Secretary	Craig Beer
Club Communications	
General committee	Sonya Radywyl
	Dani Langma
	Kris Peach
	Ken Sussex
	Tobias Ziegler
Non-Committee:	
BSAR Contact	Paul Gottliebsen
Trip Cards	Bruce Meincke
Yeti Editor	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](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 Celtic Club corner Latrobe & Queen Streets, CBD from 7.30pm to approx. 9:00pm. Special events start just after 7.40pm, everybody welcome.

**YETI THANKS**

The following contributors to this issue:

- Craig Beer
- John Braakhuis
- Paul Gottliebsen
- Stuart Hanham
- Lutz Lademann
- Mei Li
- Chris Marney
- Bruce Meincke
- Shirley Palmer
- Roger Palmer
- Sharon Saing
- Andrew Stevenson
- Ken Sussex
- Tobias Ziegler

**President's Report (cont'd)**

The first two trips, Blowhard Circuit and Two-Bays Walk, were fully booked and have been very successful. For the bus trips we are looking at organizing walks which would be difficult to do as day walk without the convenience of a bus – e.g. a one way 27km walk. If you have a suggestion for one of the next bus trips or can help out with leading one of the groups on the bus, we would love to hear from you!

We would also like to reinstate the role of Sunday Walks Coordinator, so that not all of the workload for creating the next program is solely on the shoulder of the Walks Secretary. If you are a keen Sunday walker and interested in helping, please shoot an email to [walks@yhabush.org.au](mailto:walks@yhabush.org.au)

Not ignoring the social side of the program: It has been a while since we had the last BBQ event (2014, at the club's 75th anniversary) so we think it is about time to organize such a big event again in late spring when the days are longer and warmer again.

Looking forward to meeting you on a walk soon!

**Lutz Lademann**  
President YHA Bushwalking



**New Look Trip Cards a Hit**

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, the cost of an annual YHA Bushwalking Trip Card has been reduced to \$15 for YHA Members. The cheaper price has proved popular, with 59 Trip Cards issued during the first six months of 2016, compared with 36 for the entirety of 2015. Many of last year's Trip Cards were issued free for leading three or more days of walks, whereas the majority of this year's batch has been sales.

A Trip Card saves paying individual Trip Fees (\$3 day, \$5 weekend for YHA members), but other costs such as accommodation, transport and camping permits are still applicable.

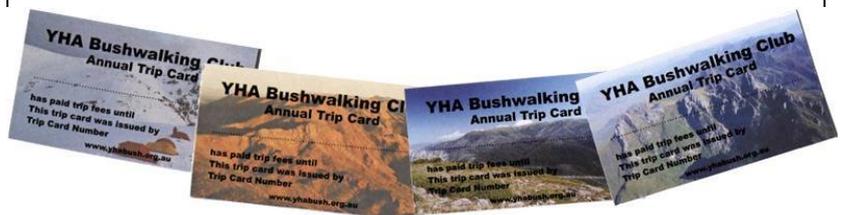
To request a Trip Card, use the online form.

<http://www.yhabush.org.au/TripCardRequest.htm>

Payment needs to be made by deposit into the YHA Bushwalking bank account (details are on the form and the back of the emailed program). Along with payment details, YHA number and expiry date must also be provided if requesting a \$15 card (YHA Membership can be purchased online from \$25/year – <https://www.yha.com.au/membership/> ).

The latest Trip Cards have a colourful new design, a set of twelve landscapes all taken on YHA Bushwalks. Feedback on the new look has been positive; from mid-July 2016, the Trip Card form will allow a preferred image to be selected with the request. Who knows – one day your ticket to YHA Bushwalks may match the vista you find yourself gazing upon.

Thanks to Bruce Meincke for administering the Trip Cards, and designing their new look.



## Bus Trips are Back!

Bus trips were once a mainstay of the club, but it has been several years since one was run. The idea of using a bus for a Saturday walk was trialled late last year, filling up a 25-seater to Lake Eildon. The second event was bolder still, a 57-seater to the Mornington Peninsula Two-Bays walk on 9<sup>th</sup> April, but it too sold out.



This number would be large for a Sunday walk, but for Saturday walks where the accepted wisdom has been that people have other things to do and groups rarely exceed a dozen, this is well and truly a record. The bus-load was split into three groups, led by Lutz, David and Lisa, with options to do either the entire 26km or a cut-down 18km. There was concern given the large numbers, that a few may have bitten off more than they could chew, but no difficulties were reported and the full track was finished in just over six hours.



Despite these successes, as bus-trips require a lot of administrative effort (volunteers wanted!), there is unlikely to be more than one per program. The next will be 27<sup>th</sup> August in the Castlemaine region. The full walk will cover 25km of the Dry Diggings trail between Vaughan Springs and Castlemaine Heritage Park; a shorter option will also be available. It's a perfect time of year for this walk, the wattle will be in full bloom, so book early. Enq: [Dani](mailto:Dani) 0423 927 675

## Day Walks

### Navigation Training (Sat 13<sup>th</sup> August)

Basic navigation skills and the ability to use a map and compass are recommended for all regular bushwalkers, not just leaders. Navigation isn't simply about finding the way from A to B, it also involves estimating how long it will take to get there, deciding upon the best route and visualising what features will be encountered along the way.

The next Navigation Training day will be in the Mt Disappointment area on 13<sup>th</sup> August. The country is moderately rugged but open forest, providing useful terrain to practice off-track navigation. The overall group will be divided into smaller sized parties of 3-4, each accompanied by an experienced leader as instructor. Total distance for the day will be less than 10km and may include one or more short, steep climbs, but will include plenty of stopping to discuss navigation skills.

Maps will be provided, but you'll need to supply your own compass. If you've navigated previously with a GPS or Smartphone App, bring it along – the exercise won't cover how to use them, but it can be useful to relate them with the first principle map reading skills you will learn.

**Grading:** *Easy-medium*    **Enquiries:** [Ken](mailto:Ken) 0422 253 996

### Dandenongs Moonlight Walk (Sat 17<sup>th</sup> Sep)

Experience the sight and sounds of the forest after dark; while some animals go to bed at dusk, many others come out to play. Starting 7.30pm at the Thousand Steps, the walk will head up and across towards Olinda

Have a light meal first, but leave room for a shared supper on the walk. September is (Chinese) Autumn Moon festival time, so don't be surprised to see some traditional Mooncake from some of our walkers.

**Grading:** *Medium*    **Enquiries:** [Jan](mailto:Jan) 0413 803 668

## Vale Norm White

I found your magazine online with a photo of our picnic van and a story about the many walks and weekends away with my father Norm White.

I also saw a mention of Bruce and Gill Meincke and David Burnett who were great friends of Dad's.

Can you please let all at YHA know that Norm passed away late last year on November 26.

He had mild dementia for two years prior and an infection in September last year caused him to go downhill rapidly.

Dad loved the YHA and we remembered his many trips and experiences at his funeral.

On behalf of our family, I would like to thank the YHA for being such a significant part of my father's, and our families, lives.

Kind regards,  
David White

*Norm White, along with his father Les, provided van transport for the majority of YHA Bushwalking trips between 1961 and the early 1990s. The main story is in YHA Bushwalking history part 3 ([Yeti #45](#)), but the van also features in the latest instalment (pages 16-19)*

## Snow Adventures

### Snow Train: Saturday July 23<sup>rd</sup>

Last year's Snow-Train excursion to Mt Baw Baw proved successful, both for the operator running it (they are putting on two this season) and YHA Bushwalking, so it is again featured on our winter program.



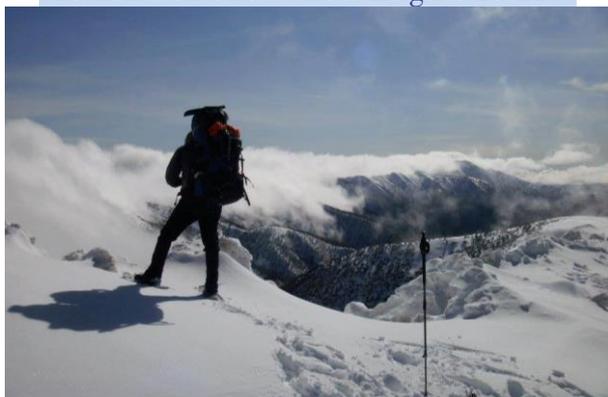
Leaving via steam train from Southern Cross station we head down to Gippsland before transferring to a bus to take you up to Baw Baw Alpine Village. Here we will put on snow shoes for a quick alpine adventure following the cross country ski trails outside of the Baw Baw Alpine Village. There will be approximately four hours in the snow at Mt Baw Baw, with two hours or more for snow shoeing before taking a bus back to Moe for the return train journey.

Train service will include a kiosk serving snacks, hot and cold drinks, plus a licenced bar.

The cost is \$119 (transport) and \$16 if you need to hire snow-shoes. You will need warm waterproof clothing and boots suitable for snow conditions. The trip is limited to ten people

**Grading:** *Easy-med* **Enquiries:** [Andrew](mailto:andrew@yha.org.au) 0413 410 887

### Razorback Snow-shoe: August 20-21<sup>st</sup>



This trip will head out to Mt Feathertop via the Razorback, camping overnight at Federation Hut, before descending to Harrietville via Bungalow Spur. Along the way, take in some of the best views of the Victorian Alpine Region from the Razorback and the top of Mt Feathertop, the state's second highest mountain.

This will be a hard alpine walk limited to eight people with previous experience in snow-shoeing and the use of ice-axes and crampons.

The \$55 cost covers transport from Harrietville to the start of the Razorback, booking is required by 1<sup>st</sup> August.

**Grading:** *Hard* **Enquiries:** [Andrew](mailto:andrew@yha.org.au) 0413 410 887

### Mt Stirling beginner snow-camp 3-4<sup>th</sup> Sep

This is a great opportunity for those who wanting to experience snow camping for the first time with the comfort of an alpine hut close by. Shouldn't a beginner snow-camp be near the start of the season, before the harder trips? Ideally yes, but as conditions can be much icier and harsher early on, late-season is the best time to get started.

The walk will leave from Telephone Box Junction (Mt Stirling car park), heading up Bluff Spur Trail to Bluff Spur Memorial Hut where the overnight camp will be set up. After lunch, snow-shoe to the summit of Mt Stirling, exploring Stanley Bowl, South Summit and Geelong Grammar School (GGS) hut before returning to camp for a to Geelong Grammar School Hut for a well earned fireside dinner.



Although there is a cosy hut to socialise in, a good four-season tent and warm (-10C) sleeping bag will be needed for camping. The walk is described as "Beginner", but that refers to the snow-camping component; participants should have good fitness and prior camping experience away from the snow.

**Grading:** *Easy-medium* **Enquiries:** [Andrew](mailto:andrew@yha.org.au) 0413 410 887

### Winter Classics

Snowfalls of 30-40cm in the second half of June and sizable follow-ups predicted in July promise good conditions for this season's snow trips. In addition to the three already previewed, there's also the YHA Bushwalking "classics".

July 16-17<sup>th</sup> is the annual Mt Feathertop snow walk, once again led by Bruce Meincke. This is suitable for "medium-hard" grade pack-carriers with a good four-season tent and sleeping bag, even if they don't have prior snow-camping experience.

A Mt Buller day trip (Aug 6<sup>th</sup>) and Mt Bogong (Sep 3-4<sup>th</sup>) require previous snow and ice experience such as Mt Feathertop. Both of these peaks have steep slopes prone to ice that may require use of an ice-axe and crampons.

Finally, for those with extended pack-carrying and some snow-walking experience - the Overland Track in winter (Aug 6-14<sup>th</sup>). This iconic walk takes on a different character for each of the four seasons. The track doesn't normally get permanent snow-cover during winter, but falls are common on the higher sections between Cradle Mountain and Waterfall Valley, and Pelion Gap. Doing this walk without crowds but with its famous peaks such as Mt Ossa, Barn Bluff and Cradle dusted in snow is a magical, highly recommended experience.

**Accommodated Weekends**

**Ballarat/Beaufort (Cup w/e 29<sup>th</sup> Oct – 1<sup>st</sup> Nov)**

West of Ballarat are some of the more remote and infrequently visited areas of Langi-Ghiran State Park, Mt Buangor State Park, and the Ben Nevis State Forest (highest point in the area). Despite their remoteness they are very worthwhile, with great views and rugged terrain.



The specific walks will include a section of the Creswick-Ballarat Great Dividing Trail (also known as the Wallaby Track); a circuit walk around the Mt. Buangor/Beeripmo area with some small waterfalls, forest, and a number of lookouts. Another more challenging walk will encompass Ben Nevis with a climb to the peak via Red Rock lookout, and a rather steep descent. Depending upon group inclination, there may be substitute walks for a second section of the Beeripmo track or Langi Ghiran (some offtrack walking).

The accommodation consists of a rented house in Ballarat. Cost is \$127 + booking fee for the four nights.

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

**Mansfield 15-16<sup>th</sup> Oct**

Staying in lakeside cabin accommodation near Mansfield, this trip will feature walks to the nearby peaks of Mt Samaria and Mt Stirling.



The Mt Samaria walk begins at the ruins of an old sawmill before heading up through lush eucalypt forest to its summit that on a clear day provides good views towards Benalla. The return leg of the 12km circuit passes Wild Dog Falls.

Another circuit walk is planned at Mt Stirling, heading up to its summit for panoramic views of the Victorian Alps, with stops at Bluff Spur and Geelong Grammar Huts.

Cost is \$85 + booking fee for two nights accommodation.

**Grading:** *Medium*      **Enquiries:** [Stephen](#) 9387 6481

**Upcoming Weekend Pack-Carries**

**Beginner pack-carry, Kooyora SP: 10-11<sup>th</sup> Sep**

This walk will appeal to those wanting to try overnight walking during this year's spring-summer program, as well as those who've taken it easy during the winter and don't want to resume with anything too difficult. Daily distances with a full pack are only 8km, with moderate climbs of less than 100m.



Kooyora state park is approximately 200km north west of Melbourne, reached via the Calder Highway. It is best known for Melville Caves, a bushranger hideout during the 1850s, which will be explored as part of the walk. The campsite will be near the base of Mt Kooyora, the highest point in the park. In early September, this park is usually at its greenest, with wattle in bloom adding to the colour.

**Grading:** *Easy-medium*      **Enquiries:** [Stephen](#) 9387 6481

**Pink Lakes: 30<sup>th</sup> Sep – 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct**

The Pink Lakes, their colour caused by algal pigmentation, are part of the Murray-Sunset national park in northwest Victoria's Mallee region.



Before being declared a national park, the lakes were used for commercial salt-harvesting.

The Sunset Remote walk is a three day/66km hike that begins amidst the lakes before heading north into the vast expanse of "Sunset Country". Daily distances are evenly divided, 22-23km over flat country, with water tanks provided at the two walkers-only campsites.



Abundant wildlife, colourful displays of spring orchids and other wildflowers make this the best time of year to visit the region, as temperature are still mild, so make the most of this opportunity to explore north-western Victoria at its peak.

**Grading:** *Medium-hard*      **Enquiries:** [Stephen](#) 9387 6481

## Clubnight Explorations

Looking for ideas on a walking holiday away from Victoria? The next few Clubnights will feature presentations on hiking destinations interstate, Across the Ditch, and Moorish peaks on the other side on the world.

Clubnights are now being held at the Celtic Club (second floor, corner Queen and Latrobe Sts, CBD). Presentations begin around 7.30pm, there is also an option to enjoy dinner beforehand in the ground floor bar. A table is reserved for YHA Bushwalking from 6pm, ordering a meal by 6.30pm allows sufficient time to finish before the presentation starts.

### Cape to Cape Track (WA) - 1<sup>st</sup> August



Wildflowers, Whales and Walking - a lovely 5-7 day, 135km bushwalk through Western Australia's Margaret River region with a variety of beach, cliff and forest walking. Capes Naturaliste and Leeuwin are the landmarks which give the track its name. Purpose-built, the track has attractive camping at wilderness sites and even some campgrounds with hot showers.

Club leader and long-time walker Robert Irvine did this trip last October and is still raving about it. He's encouraging lots of others to do it too, come along to Clubnight to see why he found it so awesome.

### Atlas Mountains & Spanish peaks - 3<sup>rd</sup> October



John & Monica Chapman are well known amongst the bushwalking community for their guidebooks, and have been regular Clubnight speakers for many years (but never repeating a presentation). Their latest talk and slideshow will feature breathtaking treks in the Atlas mountains (Morocco) and, on the other side of the Mediterranean, the higher regions of Spain. These include Picos de Europa (pictured) in the north, and the country's highest peak, 3453m Muhacen in the Sierra Nevadas.

### Banks Peninsula (New Zealand) - 7<sup>th</sup> Nov

November's Club Night will feature information on The Banks Peninsula Track, a spectacular 35 kilometre tramp in the Canterbury region of New Zealand's South Island. Its vista spans the sheltered Akaroa harbour, rugged mountain tops above, and the wild Pacific-facing western coastline.



Opened in 1989, the Banks Peninsula Trail was New Zealand's first privately run tramping trail. During the 1980s uncertainty brought on by drought led nine farming families to cooperate to create a track that would help subsidise their livelihood through income obtained by walkers crossing their lands to enjoy the region's beauty and wildlife. Each of the landowning families set aside a pocket of their land as a wilderness reserve.

In its first year 320 people walked the four-day route, which offers comfortable and unique accommodation along the way. Today the annual number of walkers averages over 1800. The track is open from October to May, being closed from June to September for safety reasons and maintenance.

While on the trail you mainly get a feel of walking through rolling hills of farmland with an abundance of sheep that keep a watchful eye over your journey along the way.



The main town of Akaroa boasts an interesting history where around 50 French settlers escorted by a French naval corvette nearly claimed the Banks Peninsula and the South Island of New Zealand for France in 1840.

The arrival of Europeans in the early 1800's brought sealers, whalers and farmers that inflicted a heavy toll on the local wildlife and changed the landscape forever. Today the area is more tranquil and walkers can enjoy a walk that balances farmland management, the conservation of remnant forests and pest control for the protection of the endangered Yellow Eyed penguin.

*Andrew Stevenson.*

*The weather gods smiled kindly on this year's two major long weekend walks in the alpine country.*

First up was a circuit of Mt Howitt, the Cross-Cut Saw and Mt Speculation over the Australia Day weekend. The concern at that time of year is of having at least one hot day and the inherent fire danger; fortunately the four days coincided with a spell of mild but sunny weather, showcasing one of the most scenic parts of Victoria's high country.



A group of nine led by Andrew Stevenson set off from Upper Howqua campsite, up Howitt Spur to Macalister Springs. Despite doing it the hard way (compared to a one hour walk from Howitt car-park), we were among the first to arrive and had a good choice of campsites. The spring was still running, albeit slowly given the dry period since Christmas. The views traversing the Crosscut Saw next day took the mind off the at times steep rocky track. The second campsite was half-way up Mt Speculation; there were very few other walkers about and surprisingly no 4WDs gathered at its base. Mt Speculation's spring flowed healthily, confirming that it is one of most reliable water sources in the region.



The third day's goal was to get all the way back to the vehicles. There was some discussion about the best route, given some in the group were slow on the steep sections. Rather than go back over the Crosscut Saw it was decided to descend from Mt Buggery via Queen Spur and then traverse via an old logging track. Although slow-going to begin with due to the steep slope of Mt Buggery and a series of rock walls, this proved a relatively quick way to lose height. The track was overgrown up until the Stanley Name Spur track junction, but was still passable and much faster than no track at all. Despite crossing several gullies, including an upper branch of the King River, all watercourses were bone dry, so there wouldn't have been any intermediate campsites between the Howqua River and Mt Speculation.

An aspect of the trip that worked well, and is worth considering when planning other extended walks, was camping with the vehicles on the last night. If the car-park is also a good campsite, this allows a long day's walk to be followed with food and drink luxuries from the car and a very relaxed and early drive home the following morning.

## Recent Walk Snapshots

The first Easter visit to Mt Kosciuszko since 2006 was also the largest pack-carry group (17) in some time. Led by Bruce Meincke, the first couple of hours was a 600m ascent from Dead Horse Gap before encountering the crowds who'd got there the easy way via the chairlift. A cross-country section to the Charlottes Pass road ended by the headwaters of the Snowy River for the first night's campsite. As everyone set up camp it became clear that, despite the warnings in the trip notes, some tents were far from alpine-grade ("half a season" was how Bruce described one) and wouldn't stand up to any serious wind or rain. Fierce storms and blizzards had occurred on other Easter walks in this area, but fortunately the weather this time was the most benign Bruce had experienced in his long history with the club.



At 8.30am next morning there was already a steady procession of people heading up to the Main Range from Charlottes Pass to make the most of the perfect conditions. Side trips to Blue Lake and Mt Twynam were followed by a march amongst hordes of others along the Main Range track, turning off just before Mt Kosciuszko. Campsite on a high plateau near Mt Townsend provided grandstand views of the sun setting on Mt Kosciuszko. The following morning internet weather sites, as they had all weekend, showed the area as cloudy and predicted rain, but it remained resolutely sunny. A side trip to Mt Townsend (*photo below*) and Alice Rawson Peak provided views with a sense of wilderness grandeur totally absent from the country's highest peak at lunch time, where dozens congregated around the summit and even the airspace above was occupied by drones.



The final camp was near the base of North Ramshead. Arriving early afternoon provided ample time to visit the main Rams Head peak and then climb North Ramshead. Finding a route through the large granite boulders wasn't obvious to those who hadn't been there before, but it existed and the late afternoon view from the summit overlooking the campsite was a fitting highlight to conclude the trip.

## Photo Competition 2016

YHA Bushwalkers are invited to choose their favourite photos from recent walks (since November 2015) and enter them in this year's photo competition. The winners will be independently judged by editorial staff from Wild Magazine and announced at the club's end-of-year function in December.

Prizes will be awarded in the categories of Landscape, People & Wildlife. It is up to entrants to decide which category to enter a photo under (and yes, some cases can be tricky). Some good photos can be disadvantaged by not being entered in the most appropriate category, so here are a few hints:

**Wildlife:** Can feature flora or fauna, but whatever your subject is should be in reasonable close-up. Eg. if a photo has kangaroos in it, but they are only in the distance, it is best classed as a landscape.

**People:** The person or people should be the main point of interest of the photo. If a picture has people in it, but they are mainly providing perspective or incidental to the scene, enter it as a landscape.

**Landscape:** The focus is the scenery, but it does not matter if there are people in it as well.

There will also be a prize for the best photo from a Sunday walk. Past winners have tended to be dominated by entries from overnight walks possibly because Sunday walks don't usually (unless something goes seriously wrong) offer opportunities for sunset, night-time, snowscapes and other wow-factor photos. "Sunday Walk" is a subset, not a separate category; entries should still be under Landscape/People/Wildlife, but to assist identifying them to be judged for this as well, add 'Sunday' to the category, eg "Landscape (Sunday)".

(But if you are out after dark, next page's tips on Night Photography could be of some help!)

Prizewinners in the Landscape, People & Wildlife categories will receive a years' subscription to Wild Magazine, with different prizes for the Sunday Walk and Best Overall winners.

### Basic Conditions of Entry

1. Digital photographs must be sent via e-mail (JPEG format) to [photo-competition@yhabush.org.au](mailto:photo-competition@yhabush.org.au) Photo sizes must be between 500kB and 8MB, one photo per email.
2. Make sure you label each digital image with a title and the category it is entered under. Also in your e-mail list the walk name, date, who led it, a brief description of the photograph and include your contact details.
3. There are three categories: Landscape, People and Wildlife. A maximum of three photographs per category may be entered, ie up to nine total entries if the full quota for each category is used.
4. All entries must have been taken on YHA Bushwalking trips on or after 1st November 2015.
5. Digital manipulation is not permitted. Cropping, brightness, contrast and colour-balance adjustments are allowed, however the original image may not have any elements added, removed, relocated, resized, retouched or reshaped.
6. Wild Magazine and YHA Bushwalking have the right to publish any entry.

**Entries must be received by 11:59pm EST, Monday 14th November 2016**

The complete Terms & Conditions are at <http://www.yhabush.org.au/photocomp2016.pdf>

Here's a recommended accessory for those off hiking in search of a winning photo competition entry.



The dilemma for bushwalkers whose camera is too large to fit in a pocket is to be able to carry it comfortably and securely, but be able to have it ready for action quickly should a photo moment arise. Stowing it inside a pack meets the first two requirements, but animals can move away, or perfect light disappear in the time it takes to retrieve it.

Enter the Capture Pro, a clip that enables quite bulky cameras to be firmly fixed to a backpack strap, with a quick release button when it is needed.



RRP \$59.95 (standard)  
\$79.95 (Pro)

Further info: [Peak Design](http://www.peakdesign.com)

## Night Photography Tips in the Bush

Does your camera only come out during the hours of daylight? Night photography can be one of the most rewarding genres you'll shoot. Information about camera settings (ISO, shutter speed, aperture and other camera specific functions), the blue hour as well as settings for moon, star trails, and milky way photography can easily be found in the internet. Give it a try and discover this diverse genre. This short article will take the focus on the basics for you being out on a hike somewhere in the wilderness.

### 1. Use daylight hours to choose your object and shooting location.

Be especially aware of possible hazards which are obvious during the day but hard to spot in the dark such as bumpy terrain, cliff edges, and water holes. It is also a lot easier to think about your photo composition during the day as you won't see much using the view finder or live view in the dark.



*Mt Kosciuszko NP, April 2016*

Nikon D7000, ISO 1600, F3.2, 25sec, wide angle (11mm) lens

### 2. Be brave.

It's already been a long day, it is cold outside and your luxury down sleeping bag is waiting for you. But remember, no reward without effort. Wear comfortable warm clothing since you'll most likely sit or stand next to your camera for quite a while. Beat the cold and get out there, it's worth it!



*View near Macalister Springs, January 2016 (9.30pm)*

Nikon D7000, ISO 800, F2.8, 6sec, wide angle (11mm) lens

### 3. Don't touch your camera.

When you finally set up your equipment, a tripod and a remote is your best option. However, if you don't want to carry the extra weight, a rock or any other stable surface and self timer will do the job just as well. Try not to walk around during the exposure to avoid unnecessary vibration and possible camera movements.



*Snow Camp, Baw Baw National Park, August 2015*

Nikon D7000, ISO 1600, F4, 25sec, wide angle (11mm) lens

### 4. Remember the way back to your tent/camp.

Since YHA Bushwalking generally chooses very scenic campsites, you'll often be able to take great shots just in front of your tent. However, if you decide to leave the camp for a perfect photo location, always remember that camping somewhere in the wilderness without any light sources can make it difficult to find your way back to camp. Don't trust the moon, since it can get cloudy quite quickly. Always take a head torch with you and be aware that the average range is between 10-100m only. Your mates are probably already asleep by the time you return to the campsite and one by one, bright and colourful tents will disappear from the landscape. Again, it is all about scouting during daylight and setting of navigation points. PLAN AHEAD and DON'T GET LOST!

### 5. Don't forget to take the time to enjoy the unique atmosphere!

*Tobias Ziegler*

## Tips for Better Bushwalking

### - #76 Emergency Awareness App

Australia's Triple Zero Awareness Working Group has developed a smartphone app for iOS, Android and Windows devices to:

- provide the caller with information about when to call Triple Zero
- provide the caller with information about who to call in various non-emergency situations
  - State Emergency Service (SES) (132 500)
  - Police Assistance Line (131 444)
  - Crime Stoppers (1800 333 000)
  - Health Direct Australia (1800 022 222)
  - National Relay Service
- assist the caller to dial the relevant number
- display the GPS coordinates of the phone's location that the caller can read out to the emergency operator.

The app is free of charge and available for download from [iTunes](#), [Google Play](#) and [Windows Store](#). It is the officially recommended one.

In an emergency, if there is reception, a mobile phone should be used instead of a PLB.

Triple zero (000) can only be contacted by a voice call (ie not SMS, email etc). No app is able to send through your location to the operator, however GPS coordinates can be read out from a SmartPhone display.

**Great Dividing Trail : June 2015 - May 2016**

The Great Dividing Trail (GDT) is the overall name of a 285km network of tracks centred on Daylesford. Passing mostly through forest with frequent relics of the region’s 19<sup>th</sup> century gold-rush days, proximity to Melbourne makes the track popular for both day and weekend walks. Established in the late 1990s, there is currently talk of adding a further arm from Blackwood to Mt Macedon; hopefully this will fare better than an apparently shelved 2009 proposal to extend it from Bendigo through to the Murray River at Echuca. Over the past year, Walks Secretary **Craig Beer** organised a series of trips that walked nearly all of the GDT, finishing in May with the gorge section of the Lerdererg Track.

**How many days in total did you need to complete the walk?** Sixteen altogether – four days from Ballarat to Daylesford, three days from Daylesford to Castlemaine, four days from Castlemaine to Bendigo, and five days for Daylesford to Bacchus Marsh.

**Did you leave any bits out?** While the track is promoted as ‘one track’, there are some parts that are made up of fire trails, gravel roads, mountain bike paths and even 6-7 km sealed road. These all exist to link the smaller walking tracks together. We did manage to skip some of the sealed and gravel roads.



Early stage, Dry Diggings Track June 2015

**What were your favourite sections of the trail?** It’s probably easier to say which sections I didn’t enjoy; the first two days or so out of Ballarat were scrubby, and the last two days heading into Bendigo were also scrubby or even quite urban. I particularly enjoyed around Blackwood in the Lerdererg Forest, and Daylesford to Castlemaine was very pretty. I’d definitely go back to those regions when the chance arises!

**Are there any parts that are only worth doing for completeness?** The last day leading into Bendigo Railway Station. You can also complete a section from Buninyong to Ballarat, but I didn’t bother, as it was just walking through the suburbs of Ballarat.

**Were there any tricky sections to navigate?** We did get particularly lost in the Lerdererg Forest once and I had to break a cardinal rule; I used my phone’s GPS function to figure out what was going on . . . but the track is mostly very well marked.

We also missed a turnoff on the first day’s hike, which turned an 18 km day into a 22 km day. I thought it was great exercise, but some people lost their sense of humour after a while . . .

**Did you prefer doing this as day trips or part of a long weekend?** Long weekend, definitely. You can match it up with dinner at some of the excellent pubs and restaurants in the area. The Farmer’s Arms in Daylesford, the Railway Hotel in Castlemaine and the Cambrian Hotel in Bendigo were particular highlights.

**What improvements could be made to the trail?** The track is a lot of fun to walk along, and lends itself to other possibilities. For example, the club could do some overnight pack carries in the area which would suit most people, because there aren’t any really strenuous climbs. However, you’d have to carry a lot of water. The club could also run a ‘base camp’ where we camp with our cars and do a few day hikes as well. This means people won’t have to carry stuff, and can enjoy a few glasses of wine with a campfire outside of fire season.

**Any advice for other leaders interested in doing one of the GDT trails?** Check the weather – it’s dry, scrubby country, and I wouldn’t like to be in any of these forests on high fire danger days. Also, check out the maps and books available from [gdt.org.au](http://gdt.org.au)



Nearing the end: Lerdererg Track May 2016 (photo: Kyle)

Online extra: [GDT photo compilation MP4](#) by Suhail

## Grampians Peak Trail (stage 1)

During autumn 2016, both accommodated and overnight camping trips walked stage one of the Grampians Peaks Trail, the only section officially opened so far. The full length trail will be 13 sections totalling 144km from Mt Zero at the northern end down to Dunkeld. Stage 1 from Halls Gap – Mt Rosea – Borough Huts was the low-hanging fruit, entirely using existing tracks and just requiring construction of a new hiker campsite, Bugiga, which will eventually fit into the overall walk as night 6 out of 12.

Work has just commenced on stage 2, although it isn't clear which sections or campsites will open next, or when. The original plan was to complete the central section (Halls Gap through to Major Mitchell Plateau), then the northern part and finally the southern leg along the Mt William Range. The latter has a lot of promise, 30km of new track opening up a section of the Grampians hitherto restricted to hardy scrub-bashers. The tentative completion date is 2025, assuming work isn't disrupted by fires, floods or budget cuts.

While the stage 1 track isn't new, it will still be one of the most popular parts of the finished trail, taking in the attractions of Wonderland, such as the Grand Canyon and Pinnacle, and the spectacular views from the Mt Rosea ridge. It could also end up being one of the most difficult sections, as the new tracks will be constructed in accordance with modern standards, whereas this original historic trail is steep, rocky and uneven in many places (but satisfying and highly recommended).

### Bugiga Campsite

All of the campsites are planned to use a similar design, so Bugiga gives an idea of what to expect.



The design is impressive, spaciouly arranging twelve camping platforms around the perimeter with a tunnel-shaped shelter at its centre. The shelter is large enough to comfortably seat a group of 12, providing protection from rain and sun, although on the night we stayed its tunnel unfortunately aligned with the direction of a chilly wind.

The circular plan gives each tent site its own view looking outwards. Each location's campsite will obviously have its own distinct scenery, but if they are all as attractively situated as Bugiga (facing Mt Rosea) it bodes well for the finished trail. The wooden platforms are different to what's been used on the Great Ocean Walk (cleared ground) or Falls – Hotham (mesh), providing a solid base to pitch a tent n, although some trial and error is likely to work out the best way of anchoring it (see Tips).



**Room for Improvement:** The group liked the design of the shelter, but it would be better still if it had a separate table for cooking rather than using the benches for both sitting and spilling food on.



If the trail is to be a world-class walk charging \$31/campsite, there needs to be a reliable water supply, not the usual Parks Victoria BS about no drinking water available and not guaranteeing there will even be water in the tank.

**Tips:** A self-standing tent is recommended, as there are no fittings on the platforms that can be used to peg or otherwise anchor a tent. Guy ropes can be tied to a steel cord encircling the platform.

No more than two people are allowed per platform, but for those in a group carrying separate tents, there is



space to fit two single-person tents and some of the skinnier model 2-person ones such as a Moondance 2 or MSR.

**Jury Still Deliberating:** Underneath each platform, accessible via padlockable hatches are wire cages envisaged as food or equipment lockers.

There's an opportunity for entrepreneurs to use these to provide food-dumps for long-distance hikers (or even deposit a tent and other camping equipment for the slack-packer market); unfortunately all they seem to be used for so far is rubbish bins.



Overall Verdict: ★★ ★½

## Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Tips



The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing was officially opened during summer 2013/14, seemingly with the intent of marketing it as another iconic Victorian long-distance walk. Since then there have been two YHA trips on it, providing the following impressions and advice for other leaders contemplating something similar.

**A “New” Trail?** The 37km route has trailheads at Mt Loch car park and Rocky Valley Dam, with overnight campsites at Dibbins and Cope Huts. Unlike the Great Ocean Walk and planned Grampians Peaks trail, which involve a significant amount of new track construction, the Falls – Hotham route is entirely on tracks (including pole-lines) which have existed for decades. Back in the days of bus or van trips, YHA Bushwalking frequently ran walks between Falls Creek and Mt Hotham. The only “new” aspects are the colourful signs and camping platforms. Nevertheless the attractive brochure and new track-markers appear to have encouraged people to the area who don’t regularly pack-carry but are attracted to a well-marketed trail. Demand for the trail has resulted in a shuttle-bus service between Falls and Hotham, previously a logistical headache for anyone wanting to walk this type of route, so kudos for promoting the area.

**Transport:** Advice for those contemplating a car-shuttle: don’t, use a bus. A car-shuttle on the winding mountain roads between Mt Hotham and Falls Creek will take about half a day; the only thing worse than several hours setting up vehicles before starting the walk is going through it all again at the end, and then driving home. Falls Creek offers a shuttle bus during January and long weekends for \$65pp. With a group of at least six, a charter mini-bus can be organised for a similar price at any period.

The official trailhead is at Rocky Valley Dam, 3.5km away from the shuttle-bus stop at Falls Creek village. Either factor in the extra road-bash when planning your trip, or do a mini-car shuttle from the village to leave at last one vehicle at the end point.

**Which Direction?** The trail was designed to be walked north to south (ie Falls to Hotham) as the views are supposedly more scenic facing that direction, this also means the final day is the shortest. On the other hand, as it’s better to be dropped off by a bus and finish at your vehicles, using the Falls Creek shuttle means the walk ends up being Hotham to Falls. This direction is also very scenic (the accompanying photos were taken walking in this direction), but has the disadvantage of a short first day descending to Dibbins Hut. A recommended alternative, particularly in good weather, is to carry on to Tawonga Huts, a slight deviation from the trail made up for by an attractive campsite and shorter second day.

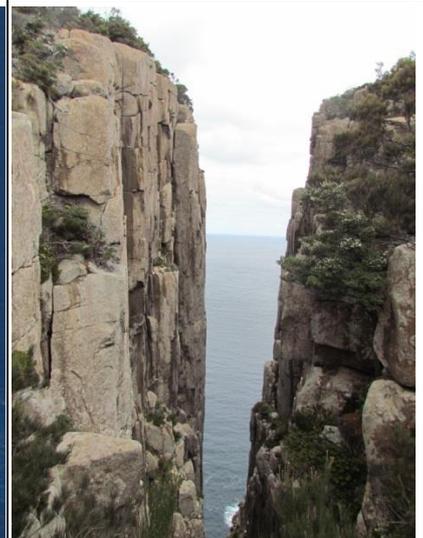
**Campsites:** New camping platforms, at \$30/night, are somewhat controversial as Bogong High Plains camping has otherwise been free and unrestricted. They provide a relatively dry base to pitch a tent in wet conditions (although the lack of ground insulation makes tents noticeably colder), but the other reason given for them of protecting the environment is somewhat dubious. There is a large free camping area in the vicinity of Dibbins Hut that satisfies the rule of being more than 100m from the platforms and usage, even since the track opened, isn’t heavy enough to degrade the area. Cope Hut camping isn’t as good, so the platforms are worthwhile if you want to stay there, but there are nearby alternatives such as Wallaces Hut or Ryders Yards.



**Alternative Routes:** There is a network of trails across the Bogong High Plains and the open alpine plains also make for easy off-track walking. The official route links together sections of existing tracks and is well-chosen, visiting many of the region’s highlights. But no single route can visit everything. Unless you are only interested in ticking off the canonical trail Parks Victoria have marked out, there are many alternate paths between Falls and Hotham that have other worthy attractions.

- Via Pretty Valley, camping at Tawonga Huts; the original Falls to Hotham route, highlights include Pretty Valley pondage and hut, views from Mt McKay and along Ruined Castle. Ski-runs enable a direct route to/from Falls Creek village. From Tawonga Huts, a one-hour side trip provides views from Mt Niggerhead/Jaithmathang. This route is readily doable in two-days; the availability of shuttle transport makes this an attractive option that doesn’t require a long weekend.
- Via Fitzgerald’s Hut, Mt Nelse; doing a three-day south-north walk, but reaching Tawonga Huts on the first night allows a longer but manageable (22km flat) day two, ➔ p14

## Three Capes Track, Tasman Peninsula



The Three Capes Track is a new track opened by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service in December 2015. It's a four-day, three-night, 46km walk, starting and finishing in Port Arthur. The walk begins with a boat cruise to Denman's Cove, from where it's only a 4km walk to the Surveyors cabin. The next night is spent at Munro Cabin, an 11km walk away. Munro Cabin is the base for a 12km return walk down to Cape Pillar and then it's a further 5km on to Retakunna cabin. The final day is probably the hardest, with a 14km walk over Mt Fortescue to Cape Hauy, then onto Fortescue Bay where a bus will take you back to Port Arthur. It costs \$495 for adults, and seems to be offered as an easier alternative to the Overland track. Full details and bookings are available through the website [threecapestrack.com.au/](http://threecapestrack.com.au/)

Unfortunately, it's not possible to walk the full track as an independent walker, but you can still get to Cape Pillar and Cape Hauy. Here are some of the options, and photos from a daytrip I made to Cape Pillar in January 2016.

Independent walkers are not allowed on the boat, and you're not allowed to walk westwards towards Surveyors cabin from the track junction to Munro/Retakunna cabins (to stop fungal dieback). Independent walkers will need to start at Fortescue Bay:- unfortunately there's no public transport to there, but there is a good campsite which you'll need to book through the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service. If you can't get in there, Port Arthur has a commercial campsite with good backpacker dorms (a great choice for anyone wanting to lead a YHA accommodated walk).

The first part of the walk from Fortescue Bay to the junction of Munro/Retakunna cabins is as described in any of the walking guidebooks that cover the walk to Cape Pillar. Cape Pillar is a 29km round trip, so you'll need an early start. The track to the first junction hasn't been upgraded, but when you reach the junction, it's like going from a dirt road to a German autobahn. You're now on the Three Capes Track itself, and it's the most impressively engineered track I've ever seen – all the nearby vegetation has been cleared, the surface is graded, and there's kilometres of wide boardwalk equipped with handrails, non-slip protectors, and frequently spaced seats where you can enjoy the views.

After a few kilometres of enjoying the track, you reach Munro cabin. This is newly built, and has gas stoves, solar power, with USB chargers and even an open air shower. The ranger let me have a look around and told me that no-one who has done the walk has **complained about the cost** – and once you've seen these facilities I

can believe it. There's a common room/kitchen, separate sleeping dorms (4 per room, max 48 people), and plenty of decking where you can relax and enjoy the view (*photo below*).



After leaving Munro Cabin, the track meanders through gullies and heathland before reaching the clifftops, where Cape Pillar comes into view. There are lots of signs warning you to stay on the track due to the unguarded cliff edges, but with care you may be tempted to have a closer look. Tasman Island can be seen past Cape Pillar.



There's a narrow path that takes you right to the top of the Blade – the tallest dolerite pillar on the cape. If you enlarge the photo at the bottom of the previous page, you may just make out three walkers on top, which gives you an idea of the scale.

At the base of the Blade, there's a sign pointing to The Chasm. Unfortunately, they haven't bothered upgrading this track which is a shame, as the views from the Chasm lookout back to Cape Pillar, and then The Chasm itself are spectacular. It's worth taking this track for 100 metres to get to a view point where you overlook a seal colony on Tasman Island, but after that, the track deteriorates to a taped route involving pushing through dense, scratchy vegetation and climbing near-vertical slopes with unguarded drops. It took me about an hour to cover the one kilometre to reach The Chasm itself, which is a 200 metre deep cleft in the rock straight down to the sea (see photo at the beginning of this article). After seeing this view, you'll need to retrace your route back to the Blade, and then all the way back to Fortescue Bay.



*Cape Pillar and Tasman Island*

If you don't fancy a long day walk, then a pack carry is still possible. Wughalee Falls (between the Munro and Retakunna cabins) is the only remaining campsite still open to independent walkers. All the other campsites that may be marked on old maps (Perdition Ponds, Lunchtime Creek) have been closed. Campers would be able to return via Mt Fortescue and Cape Huay, and it would be also possible to do Fortescue Bay – Retakunna Cabin - Cape Huay – Fortescue Bay as a long day walk. Independent walkers will need a Parks Tasmania pass that covers all days spent on the track. Whichever way you choose to get there, a walk to Cape Pillar is highly recommended to marvel at some of Australia's best coastal scenery and excellent tracks.

**Chris Marney**

(➔ **cont'd from p12**) camping at either Fitzgeralds or Kellys Hut. On the third day there is extra time for a side-trip to Johnston Hut and/or Mt Nelse, with views across to Mt Kosciuszko while still finishing around lunch time.

- Via Ropers Lookout; probably better if finishing at Falls Creek, a 2km off-track detour from the Heathy Spur track leads to Ropers Lookout. From there a marked track heads down to Rocky Valley dam.

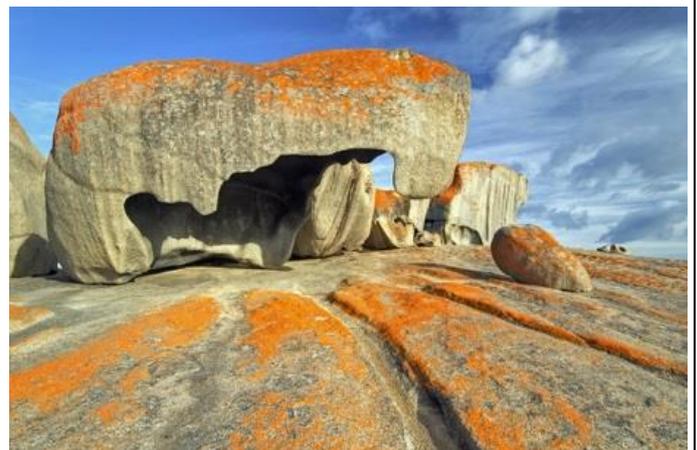


A re-routing of the Falls to Hotham has been proposed that will extend it to 40km and include the Razorback, a highlight of the area. This will give the walk more “wow” factor, but will add to the difficulty by requiring an 800m ascent of Diamantina Spur. The official itinerary will become a three-night experience, although a fit group could skip camping on the Kiewa River and comfortably complete the section from Tawonga Huts to the Razorback in one day. Having three campsites could cause issues by groups converging on the middle campsite from opposite directions unless, like the Grampians Peak trail, the trail ends up being restricted to be walked from north to south only.

**Words:** Stephen Smith, **Photos:** Tobias Ziegler

### New Kangaroo Island Wilderness Walk

Later in 2016, another long distance walk is due to be opened, the five-day/65km Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail. Mostly located in the Flinders Chase National Park, the route takes in the rugged coastline of the island's southwest, including the Remarkable Rocks. Although there is potential for upmarket eco-lodges to cater for tourists wanting a slack-packing experience (similar to the Great Ocean Walk), the trail has been designed primarily with overnight campers in mind, augmenting upgraded existing tracks and campsites with newly constructed ones.



## Basic Safe River Crossing Tips

By Sharon Saing

With La Nina back in the ascendancy, rivers will be flowing with more vigour has been usual over the past couple of years; here are some timely hints on how to cross them safely.

A bushwalker should always be prepared and ready to adapt to changing track conditions as it is possible that you may need to wade through a river multiple times in one day. If this happens, here are some points and risks to consider as a group to help the walk leader decide whether to go ahead or not. Safe crossing is:

- No strong currents
- Water not above knee height
- No slippery surfaces
- Vegetation, such as sharp rocks, overhanging trees, loose logs or unstable terrain below water surface



Once you have assessed the above points, apply some of these basic rules to cross the river safely:

1. Find a suitable spot to enter the water that's far away from hazards, swamp and dense vegetation.
2. Next work out your route to get to the opposite bank and be prepared to change if it becomes dangerous and unstable at the bottom. Work out your river exit point as soon as possible.
3. During the crossing, if the water speed is somewhat rapid, it's important that you establish a suitable moving speed to avoid being swept into a more difficult situation.
4. Backpack straps should be loosened before entering the water in case you fall over and have to swim to safety if you're swept into deeper water.
5. Spare sandals are handy to bring on the walk if you know there's a possibility of creek crossing, as this will eliminate potential foot injuries due to sharp objects hidden on the river bed, such as trees, rocks and anything sharper.
6. Let the strongest person lead the way, with the rest following their direction and moving quickly to the opposite bank in single file.



7. Crossing together as a group ensures everyone is out safely.
8. If you decide to cross individually, my suggestion is to find a sturdy stick or tree branch for support and to test the depth of the water as you make your way to the opposite bank. Where there are multiple river crossings, getting past the first crossing will leave you mentally prepared for any other crossings.
9. If you must cross a river to complete a walk, don't ask for a piggy back. This could cause a potential fall into the water and you'll be risking injury and potentially being swept away.



10. Once you have crossed the river and are out of the water, offer a helping hand to anyone who may be struggling to exit the water. Make sure your feet are dry before putting on your boots, and continue with the rest of the walk.

If you consider yourself 'hardcore' and have done many river crossings before, you should still apply the common sense approach outlined in this article.

After many river crossings, the experience becomes an adventure and a fun thing to do on a bushwalk.

## YHA Bushwalking History part 5 - Maintaining the Tradition (1980-1989)

At the beginning of the 1980s, YHA's fifth decade since starting in Victoria, a range of activity groups were well-established and flourishing, not the least of which was Bushwalking.



*Snowy Bluff—Easter 1980* (photo, above and centre: Bruce Meincke)

Members, still predominantly from the latest generation of twentysomethings, regularly flocked on Monday evenings to the VRI Ballroom above Flinders Street station for YHA Clubnight. Often over a hundred people would mill around tables dedicated to each activity. Committee members and leaders of upcoming events would attend to answer questions and take bookings, so by the end of the evening most of those present would have at least their next weekend mapped out. Club treasurers would leave carrying several hundred dollars cash that needed to be tallied up and banked over the next few days.

Bushwalking was the most popular of the activities, offering fortnightly Sunday walks or, on the alternate weekends, overnight pack-carries. The meeting point was on Batman Avenue, the old route off St Kilda Rd where Federation Square is now. Around 9.30am Sunday, or 6.30pm Fridays for weekend trips, transport would arrive, still a converted furniture van (aka 'picnic bus') for most trips, occasionally a more comfortable bus for larger walks. Those who'd signed up for their first walk at the previous clubnight discovered a well-organised club with experienced leaders and expert navigators who'd either been trained on one of the club's own instructional weekends or undertaken the now-defunct BMLC (Bushwalking Mountain Leadership Certificate).

By the 1980s there weren't many areas that someone in the club hadn't already explored, but for those wanting to discover them anew for themselves there was a vast pool of knowledge to draw upon. A good number liked what they saw, became regular walkers and wanted to give something back by applying their talents to the committee. Inheriting a healthy bank-balance, a steady stream of new members and a tradition built up over a period now greater than the age of the club's current walkers, there was little motivation for further change. The pioneering phase was over, the focus of the 1980s was simply to keep the club running smoothly and maintain the tradition that had attracted them in the first place. Change did continue, but from that decade onwards it was mostly driven by external factors rather than within.

### Madam Chairman

Although no-one would dare call it a "tradition", Bushwalking committees have been male-dominated with a male Chair/President. The only exception to this was Shirley Hardman in 1980. Making her debut in 1977 on a pack-carry up Mt Bogong, Shirley only realised afterwards that it was the highest climb in Victoria. Not that she'd had any difficulty with the walk, nor had the leader (a Mr B. Meincke) felt the need to screen participants, as the general level of fitness was higher back then. Mt Bogong whetted Shirley's appetite for more adventurous trips such as Tasmania's South Coast Track (before its bogs were duck-boarded) and a multi-day one along the Caledonia River. On the latter the group was almost struck by lightning, then had some anxious moments worrying about a fire spreading from the site of the lightning strike, before eventually being doused by rain. Although aware at the time that there hadn't been any previous female Chairs, Shirley didn't have any particular agenda or points to prove; like many who subsequently took on the role, she just regarded it as doing her bit to help run the club.

YHA Bushwalking has a roughly even ratio of male/female participation; statistics from the first half of the 1980s show an overall balance of 55% (m) /45% (f). On day walks women slightly outnumbered men, but weekend walks were a very different picture. Although there was a good number of tough, capable women in the club, men outnumbered them by almost two to one on the overnight camping trips.

An exception to the predominance of males on the Bushwalking committee was



*Shirley Hardman atop Mt Niggerhead*

the period 1986-1989, when numbers evened up or men were in a slight minority. Noteworthy contributions to committee during the second half of the 1980s came from sisters Roslyn and Margaret Asplin. The gender balance on committees reflected the level of participation in the club. Women have frequently volunteered for the important roles of Secretary and Treasurer, but to date none have offered to do the influential role of Walks Secretary, one that can shape the style and content of the bushwalks offered by the club.

### Tough Tracks for Racehorses

One such Walks Secretary, making a big mark on the club during the late seventies and early eighties, was Bill Jessup. Joining the committee in this role in 1977, Bill did it for three years, eventually becoming Chairman in 1983. Bill was amongst a sizable group dubbed "racehorses" who liked to walk hard, reaching a summit then heading straight on to the next one. Nepal and New Zealand were among the adventurous walks of the period that Bill led, but south-west Tasmania was a favourite.

Leading a group of fellow "racehorses", Bill spent the 1980/81 New Year period on a SW Tasmanian epic. After

completing the SW Cape circuit, dining nightly on freshly caught mussels and crayfish, some still had energy to burn so they decided to set off cross-country from Melaleuca Inlet for Federation Peak via the Old River. Federation Peak is one of Australia's hardest walks – and that's via tracked routes from either Farmhouse Creek or the Eastern Arthurs. The Old River route isn't marked, but was the way used by the first successful expedition to the summit in 1949. Progress was difficult due to thick regrowth just trying to reach Old River; Bill bailed out while the others pressed on. Eventually Stephen Lake also became anxious about what they were getting themselves into and decided to abandon the attempt.

Next Christmas a fresh group headed back to Tasmania determined to succeed. A boat ride on Bathurst Harbour bypassed the scrubby section that had previously defeated them, dropping the party at Old River inlet. Next day a dawn start began a 14 hour walk/1000m climb up to Hanging Lake. Federation Peak was summited the next day. On the easier route out via Farmhouse Creek, the group met a couple on their way in to the peak – a couple of days later came news that one of them had fallen to his death.

Bill was very well liked but had his idiosyncrasies; he never carried a stove, living off unconventional hiking food such as Mars Bars and just dressed casually, never wearing shorts or any "bushwalking" clothing. A relaxed leader, he inspired many who became involved with the club around this period. Regarded as one of the club's best navigators, in a pre-GPS age he carried an altimeter as well as a compass, the instrument providing the only indication of progress on climbs through head-high Tasmanian scrub. A rare instance of navigational difficulty in a blizzard on Mt Feathertop resulted in a very tight situation. Unsuccessful in finding the top of NW Spur from the summit, Bill eventually ended up in Federation Hut almost choked by his map case. The wind had twisted the map around and around to the extent that a sharp knife was needed to cut the cord, much to Bill's relief.

On one of his Federation Peak expeditions he got to know Rosalind, beginning a courtship that culminated in a large contingent of bushwalkers attending their wedding in 1983. Sadly the club found itself regathering the following year for a more sombre occasion; Bill was cut down in his prime by a brain tumour, passing away in November 1984 aged 34.

### Restoring Order

There was no shortage of volunteers to serve on committee during the 1970s & 1980s. This resulted in the largest ever committee of 16 in 1986/87, but unfortunately it was somewhat dysfunctional. As with many organisations (even the country), the club has occasionally found itself led by someone who whilst being intelligent, meticulous and good with the written word, was lacking in the people-skills necessary to lead a team. Having the opposite effect to the likes of Bill Jessup, one such person was Stephen Lake, an experienced hard-core walker since the early 1970s but whose increasingly erratic behaviour alienated many in the club. After one year as chairman, it fell to John Warrick and then John Braakhuis to restore organisation to the committee and put the focus back on running safe walks.

Both Johns typified the 1980s generation of YHA Bushwalkers, becoming involved with the club in their early twenties after tertiary graduation. John Braakhuis was attracted to the more challenging walks, developing his navigation skills on off-track ventures with the now 'veteran'

1970s bushwalkers. These were put to the test on a walk to Kanangra-Boyd NP in NSW, one of the few areas not hitherto visited by the club. Using maps from the 1930s, it soon became apparent that 50 years on, few of the marked routes still existed. The 8-day trip ended up mostly off-track, at times almost running out of water, but he led the group out in one piece. On subsequent trips, navigation seemed very easy! John was Chairman for the last two years of the 1980s, aiming for a style of committee that operated quietly, almost invisibly in the background as it moved the club along.

### Transport Modernisation

Moving people to bushwalks was by contrast often noisy and very laboured, as the furniture van showed increasing signs of old age. On a Lake Tali Karng walk, the slow grind between the Wellington River and the McFarlane Saddle took forever due to the three rest stops needed to cool down the overheating engine. At least it got there, unlike a 1986 Sunday walk which had to be abandoned due a blown gasket.

At the beginning of the decade, Whites furniture van was still being used for most trips, but it was clear that its days were numbered. Transport regulations had been toughened, with the intent of phasing out the use of such vans as people carriers. Existing licenceholders were allowed to renew them, but they weren't transferable to another vehicle or operator. In 1984 licences for vans used by other clubs were handed back when their owners passed away. YHA Bushwalking was almost the last club using a van - but not quite. One Sunday at the Batman Avenue meeting point a group of disabled people went to board YHA's van. Upon being told by John Braakhuis that the walk wasn't suitable for them, they became abusive, accusing him of being discriminatory and a few other things it's best not to print. The argument became quite heated, until another van turned up, one for a Melbourne Bushwalkers special outing, after which embarrassed apologies were proffered.

An increasing level of car ownership led to calls by members with heavily bone-shaken backsides for private vehicles to be used on weekend walks. For van trips, those wanting to drive still had to pay the fare unless the van was either full or had insufficient numbers to break-even; this resulted in a tactic of delaying bookings to force its cancellation. A problem for those lobbying to use cars was that there weren't always enough of them. There was also a faction who still preferred not having to drive after a tough walk.

Another hurdle to the use of private vehicles was that under late 1970s road regulations, passengers sharing petrol costs could be interpreted as "for fare or reward". This was illegal unless the driver was licenced to do so. To get around this, passengers didn't directly pay petrol costs, they bet the driver an amount similar to their share of the fuel that they wouldn't return safely! Eventually the law was clarified to recognise car-pooling. In 1980 a sub-committee was set up to develop the Bushwalking club's first car-sharing policy, not least of which was a complex formula on how drivers were to be compensated for petrol plus a wear-and-tear component. Initially the extra fee was 0.8c/km, then petrol went up and it became 0.9c/km; fuel went up again, making it 1c/km, then 1.1c... until 1985 when someone came up with the idea of doubling the fuel cost and dividing by the number of occupants, a formula that has remained to the present day. Cars steadily displaced the van over the course of the decade, from 10% of trips at the beginning to 75% at its end.

### Other YHA Activities

At its outset, YHA's aim had been not just the provision of low-cost accommodation, but the fostering of activities to utilise its hostels. Of the state-based administrations (which were largely autonomous until being consolidated into a national YHA organisation during the past decade), Victoria had the most active activity groups. Separate activity committees began in 1947, but the formation of Melbourne Regional Group in 1970 as a governing body sitting between the activity groups and YHA state administration led to the creation of more activities. Although Bushwalking has been the most popular, by the mid-1980s YHA members had a dozen alternative ways to exercise. Nowadays just Cross-Country Skiing, Cycling and Canoeing survive; since the mid-1980s peak, activity groups have only died off with no new ones forming, so this chapter is perhaps the appropriate place for a roll call of them.

- ❖ **Surfing;** 1948-1957. Very popular for a while. established its own hostel at Lorne, wiped out through sudden apathy in the late 1950s.
- ❖ **Horse-riding;** 1950 - 1990. A popular activity, based for a time at Broadford hostel, sent to the knackery by crippling increases in insurance premiums following a run of claims.
- ❖ **Scuba Diving;** A summer activity that didn't resurface after February 1985.
- ❖ **Water Skiing;** 1958 - ~1999. Left high and dry when the lake it was based at dried up during the drought.
- ❖ **Field Studies (aka Tracks);** 1972 - 1990. Like Bushwalking, but slower-paced and the leaders knew the names of all the flowers and wildlife.
- ❖ **Flatten the Tum;** Set up with the aim of helping an increasing number of more senior YHA'ers deal with their middle-age spread. Unfortunately its Chinese Banquets and Dirty Dick nights were more popular than their gym and aquarobics sessions, so most participants' waistlines expanded further after joining.
- ❖ **Portable Hostels;** 1954 - early 90s. Tents, tables, beds, kitchen equipment to cater for up to 80 people were trucked into town campgrounds to set up a temporary hostel.
- ❖ **Canoeing (Kayaking);** 1947 - present
- ❖ **Cycling (Bicycle Touring);** 1947 - present
- ❖ **Car-Touring;** Given the original rule that guests were not allowed to arrive at a hostel by private car, this activity was very ironic. The ban on private cars was relaxed in the 1960s, as hostels spread throughout our wide-brown land and it was acknowledged the alternative modes of transport weren't practical. Established in the 1979, this activity didn't last long. Its chief assets before sputtering to a halt in 1982 were a VW Beetle, then a Renault, both acquired for \$50.
- ❖ **Young at Heart;** Over 50s activities, 1980s to ~2000.
- ❖ **Nordic Skiing;** 1983 - present
- ❖ **Sailing;** 1946 - headed into the Bermuda Triangle ~2003
- ❖ **They also served;** Tennis, Squash, Badminton.



Snowy River, Cup w/e 1982 (photo: Bruce Meincke)

Although other factors contributed to the decline and disappearance of the other activities, a symbolic starting point was the closure in 1986 of the VRI Ballroom (this legendary venue has now been mothballed for 30 years). Clubnight moved to the less central Horticultural Hall on Victoria St. No venue since matched the size or convenient location of the VRI Ballroom, and members began to realise that a phone call could take the place of a Monday night outing to sign up for a walk.

While Dirty Dick nights may have been the evening entertainment for another activity, Bushies Balls were a popular hangout for this club. Beginning in the mid-1970s, once or twice a year a bushdance was held in town halls such as Collingwood or South Melbourne. They usually sold out, the proceeds providing a useful income to YHA Bushwalking at a time when there was still financial risk from not breaking even on the occasional bus or van trip. Bushies Balls lasted until 2006, continuing to draw good crowds but ending due to the lack of a volunteer to take over from the then organiser Ron Bell.

Another regular social function that has fallen by the wayside was the Christmas break-up weekend. A base-camp was set up in the bush or a nearby town, with a variety of walk options amidst a common celebration. Avon River was a favourite of John Braakhuis, organising a few breakups there and further demonstrating his knack for upsetting disabled people! Amongst the 60 or so attending, one woman was more interested in climbing than walking. John assured her an 8km walk would be easy. Just before the start, she turned heads by removing her leg, claiming the prosthetic was too difficult to walk with. Making do with crutches, she ended up very slow and needed a car to fetch her, earbashing John about how he'd underrated the walk difficulty because the riverside walk had too many hills.

### The Lake Tali Karng Windsurfing Club

The Bushwalking programme isn't always confined to straight bushwalks and to this day features occasional extra-curricular activities of its own such as kayaking. One of the most unique was an attempt to combine bushwalking with windsurfing.

In 1988, Australia's Bicentennial year, YHA had a pack carry to Lake Tali Karng, a remote alpine lake in Gippsland, north-east of Licola. Group member Rowland Crosse decided to take his windsurfer to the lake, so he rigged up a buggy with two bicycle wheels and a harness, and assembled a small team to help him to tow the board 13 kilometres. In the

Visitors' Book at the start of the trail, he signed, "Rowland Crosse and windsurfer". Rowland's team headed off separately from the main group, and due to the effort and the hot weather, ran out of water and became dehydrated. Meanwhile, the other party struggled down the steep zig-zag track to the lake and set up camp. When the "B Team" finally arrived, Rowland was very keen to start surfing as soon as possible, so he put his bathers on and sailed off into the middle of the lake.



Unfortunately, the fun was cut short by a huge thunderstorm that roared through the trees like a freight train. Tents were nearly blown away and there was worry about Rowland's mast being hit by lightning. Wisely, he headed straight for the shore. That *night*, another group member decided to go for a swim in the very deep waters. Near the middle, she became cold and disorientated, swam around in circles while trying to locate the spot where she entered the lake and nearly drowned!

The route back to the cars was via the Wellington River, which meant eighteen crossings. One walker didn't want to get his feet wet, so went to great lengths to find dry crossing points. Rowland decided, probably due to a lack of willing assistants for the difficult journey out, to leave the windsurfer at the lake, but hide it in bushes. About two weeks later, he returned with a recovery team. Club history was made and probably Lake history was made, too. It's doubtful whether anyone has repeated Rowland's feat.

### The Unsolved Statistic.

YHA Bushwalking maintained good attendance on walks throughout the 1980s. Although there were fluctuations from year to year, average numbers on both Sunday and weekend walks were in the mid-twenties.

Committees of this period had a Publicity Officer, or at times a sub-committee, responsible for promoting the club. Regular articles about Bushwalking appeared in the Hosteller, while free radio advertising and listings in the Age Friday 'EG' helped spread the message to the outside world. Programs were distributed to hostels and outdoor shops. By these means, attendances, particularly those of day walks, would be boosted whenever they showed signs of flagging.

Very detailed statistics were kept during the 1970 and 80s, despite not having the use of sophisticated spreadsheet software. One figure that concerned the committees of the early 1980s was that over half of those on a first-time walk with the club never return. Theories have been advanced on

the reason for the high drop-out rate (too easy/hard, too few/many people, no-one talked to them) but no surveys (walk exit polls) have ever been conducted to back them up. In the 30 years since, human DNA has been decoded, Fermat's last theorem proved but this statistic endures, with no-one any the wiser on why so many never come back.



*Mackays Hut (Jagungal), Christmas 1985* (photo: Bruce Meincke)

### Inter Mutanda Constantia

Over the course of the 1980s, Gore-Tex became the material of choice for keeping bushwalkers dry, fleece replaced woollens to keep them warm and Thermarests took over from Styrofoam mats to make them comfortable. A magazine 'Wild' was founded to promote such gear and where to use it. The decade ended on a high note with proclamation of the Alpine National Park, victory in a campaign with YHAers amongst its activists that began in the 1970s and fended off a 1980s proposal for a gondola from Harrierville to Mt Feathertop. Within YHA Bushwalking there had been a drop off in hard-core "racehorse" type walkers, but overall numbers were steady. Jumping aboard committee was Ken Sussex, beginning a record-breaking unbroken term whose coda is yet to be writ. To those who'd joined in the 1980s and stuck around to help steer the club, it was still flourishing, its program of social and walking events the envy of many similar groups. The tradition had been maintained.

Yet on the cusp of a new decade, some changes over the past ten years wouldn't have their full effect felt until the next ten. In 1980, shops closed by 1pm Saturday and football (VFL) matches were all played on Saturday afternoon. The social changes that brought about deregulated trading and Sunday afternoon football would have as big an impact on YHA Bushwalking as the imminent retirement of its furniture van.

**Next issue:** The start of several new traditions; an epic series of walks along the Alpine Walking Track, formal dinners in the bush, a web site, and this newsletter.

### Acknowledgements - thanks to:

- John Braakhuis
- Stuart Hanham (for the Tali Karng Windsurfing story)
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- University of Melbourne Archives

**Yeti Online Extra:** [Walk Statistics](#), [AGM Reports](#), [Car Trip Policy 1980](#), [More photos](#).

## Leaders Page

*To those without whom this club couldn't function, this page is for you, although anyone aspiring to join our legion of leaders is welcome to read this too.*



**Walk Information Sheet;** Leaders of all weekend or longer walks are strongly encouraged to provide an information sheet for their online trip listing. This will avoid wasting time responding to those who simply want to find out more about the walk without wanting to commit to it. Visitors to the website also prefer to browse the trip notes of all the events on the program order before deciding what they want to do, without having to send multiple enquiries.

A snappy information sheet covering the key points about your walk (where it is, distance, difficulty, cost, plus an attractive photo) will enable people to decide whether or not the walk appeals to them before contacting you. Confine the online version to one page; the full details, such as how to get there and how many towels to bring, only need to be sent to those who have confirmed their booking. Ideally the information sheet should be ready when your walk is included on the website, but it can easily be added later.



**Online Booking Form;** The Walks Program offers the option of either an Enquiry or Booking form link against a walk. Most leaders prefer to use Enquiry for initial contact, this allows them to confirm places are available and the person is adequately experienced before inviting them to book on the walk.

There are two options to use for a booking form. The traditional MSWord document is available from the leaders' website. This is the tried and true method, but some people have problems filling them in using the software on their device and then there are those who print it out and fill it in by hand before returning a scanned copy you can't cut and paste from onto a Master Sheet.

An online booking form has been trialled and is available for use by leaders comfortable with moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The specific link for each walk is obtainable from the Leader's page, all you need to do is send the URL to participants. Experience so far has shown a much faster response using the online form, typically within a day compared to 2-3 days editing or scanning a document. Key contact information can then be easily copied into a Master Sheet (although one day the goal is to have this done automatically by the website – any volunteers with suitable coding experience?).

### Problems with Email links.

Some problems have occurred whereby enquiries via the website to some email domains are rejected and hence not received by the leader. This is due to overzealous anti-spam filtering, with Hotmail addresses the main ones affected and to a lesser extent Gmail and Yahoo.

Send a test enquiry to yourself (ideally using a different email address). If it doesn't get through, enter "@yhabush.org.au" into the Safe Sender list.

If you've tried the above and emails still don't get through, an address using the @yhabush.org.au domain can be set up for you instead.

**Prompt Responses Please;** The Enquiry form promises users that someone will get back to them within 2-3 days. There have been complaints about not hearing back from a leader until after a much longer period; this reflects poorly on the club, and as well as risking someone losing interest in your walk and finding a better offer. If newcomers have a poor experience, it may discourage them from trying other club walks. Please acknowledge all enquiries or bookings as soon as possible after you receive them. If you haven't finished putting together an information sheet, just say so and promise to send it later, rather than wait a week or two until it is ready before replying. If you will temporarily be difficult to contact via email, let the Walks Secretary know, so that the Enquiry link can be disabled until you get back.

**New Leaders Nights;** The Club has started hosting dinners once or twice a year for those interested in leading a walk of the first time. So far, bribing with free pizzas appears to have paid off with quite a few leaders debuting over the past one or two programs.

### Awards 2015

- Golden Trip Card / Life Long Membership:  
**Andrew Stevenson & Ken Sussex**
- Most Sunday Walks – **Chris Marney**
- Most Saturday Walks – **Ken Sussex**
- Most Accommodated Weekends – **David Sale**
- Walk Leader of the Year – **Bruce Meincke**
- New Walk Leader of the Year –  
**Andrew Francis (aka Mr. Meetup!)**

Most active Committee Member - **Craig Beer**



### New Leader Tips: Mei



- Remember to bring a plentiful supply of the paperwork (sign-in sheets), pens and change.
- Remind people at the start of the walk to let you know if they feel unwell or unfit to continue during the walk

## Dr T's Bushwalking 2020

*Yeti's long-time contributor has been doing a bit of time-travelling and reports back from the near future.*

### VBs Quench a Thirst for Adventure

The club's newly launched Virtual Bushwalks (VB) are proving popular, allowing members to experience some of the planet's five-star day walks without the hassles of car-pooling, lengthy travel time and the increased navigational difficulty since GPSs became unreliable. Just turn up at 10am every second Sunday to the inner city venue listed on the program.

I joined in a VB along a section of the Larapinta Trail. Ably led by Lutz, he configured his app to simulate glorious weather without any flies. Upcoming ones are planned to Mt Kilimanjaro, Tongariro Crossing and, for those who just want a leisurely beach stroll, the Cinque Terre.

Next program will trial overnight VBs, starting post-Christmas with the Overland Track (where a thylacine sighting will be guaranteed). Early in the new year, to mark the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of the Thin White Duke, watch out for an epic trek along Valles Marineris.



*Hikers admire the view from Mt Sonder on the Larapinta Trail.*



### Unburdened Bushwalkers

For those who still prefer traditional bushwalking, technology will make your life easier as well. Despite ever more lightweight materials, the average overnight pack has got steadily heavier since the turn of the century due to the ever increasing number of gadgets people can't bear to leave home without. Now the ultimate gadget to carry is a gadget that carries your pack full of gadgets.

The latest model drones now generate sufficient lift to transport up to 20kg. And if that isn't enough because you want to take along your battery-operated Thermomix or something as mundane as a week's supply of food, pilot a pair of them. Battery life and fast solar-powered recharging have advanced to the point where drones only need about ten minutes per hour to be grounded for sustenance, the same time as a typical bushwalker.

### Magnetic Anomalies

Following a High Court challenge, the Laws of Magnetism were found to be discriminatory and repealed. Instead of dipoles with attraction only between their north and south ends, since the ruling 3% of magnets must contain homopoles. These have been used to develop a must-have accessory for heterosexually-challenged bushwalkers, the gay compass.

Compasses have had a resurgence since by order of the President, NavSats were scrambled for locations outside the US. With normal compasses, the red-tipped needles can't abide one another, but walk with a pair of gay compasses too close together and they may spend more time pointing towards each other than where they you want to go, causing navigators to contend with some serious magnetic deviation. Uncertainty over their compass's orientation has reportedly resulted in a number of parties getting lost; in one instance a polarity crisis caused a compass to transition part-way through a walk, leading a group in the opposite direction.



*It's at this stage that I should point out that I haven't just returned to 2016 to write this article. With Donald Trump just elected for a second term, I've been sent back on a mission... Unfortunately if I fiddle with the future there could be side-effects and what you've read may not quite pan out as described, but I'll be as careful as I can. Hasta la vista - Dr T.*