

THE BUSH CLUB NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2014

www.bushclub.org.au

Walks Reports Summer p. 12
Walks Program Autumn p. 20

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CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

Please send anything you think will
interest our members to

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Summer in the Snowy Mountains

By Maureen Carter

Walkers: Maureen Carter (leader); David Carter; Paul Frederickson; Margaret Rozea; Jacqui Hickson; Tony Hickson; Stacey Bryce; Anthea Michaelis; Erith Hamilton; John de Coque; Adrian Jones; Julie Jones; Ted Woodley. **Guests:** Christine & George Floyd and Patricia Bell.

We arrived at the Southern Alps Ski Club lodge, Charlotte Pass, in stages. Eight of the party stretched our legs after the drive from Sydney by climbing *Mt Stillwell*. A footpad winds its way up the hill from opposite The Chalet to the Pass itself and continues along the ridge and on to a lookout before the final climb to Mt Stillwell Trig.

Hailstones

A few of us considered investigating a route to the ruins of an old ski chair lift but when we saw dark clouds heading our way we changed our minds, which was fortunate, as the area was soon deluged with hailstones. Everyone settled into comfortable double rooms with en suites and enjoyed the first of our happy hours.

Next day we had planned to climb *The Sentinel* with its famed views of the *Geehi*, but smoke haze from the Victorian fires and a fierce wind made us change our minds and instead we turned off at *Carruthers Peak* and walked past *Lake Albina* before summiting *Mt Kosciuszko*. There was the usual January crowd on top of Australia, but lunch was calling and we continued on to *Rawsons Pass* with its fancy toilets and lounged around in the snow grass outside *Seamans Hut*. After lunch, we walked the long and boring road back

to Charlotte Pass. But the scenery was far from boring with superb views across the Snowy River to the many rocky delights that are hidden from us cross-country skiers.

By the next day, I realised there were walking paths under the snow and in such clear weather it was easy to travel cross-country on the soft snow grass. We headed across the Snowy River once more by rock hopping without getting wet feet and again climbed up past *Hedley Tarn* and *Blue Lake* which was truly blue on such a magic day.

...the flowers had all the shutterbugs out...

The temperature had dropped but the clouds lifted as we headed for *Mt Twynam*. Some people summited *Little Twynam* and then rejoined the group to find a sheltered spot for lunch with clear views across to Guthega Village. The flowers had all the shutterbugs out with a variety of daisies and billy buttons to fill the frames with backgrounds of snow gums. It was interesting to see the epicormic growth with healthy new snow gums growing up after the devastating fires of 2003.

Lofty morning tea

The next day involved a walk from *Perisher Valley* to *The Porcupine* which follows an obvious track to the spectacular rocks overlooking Crackenback Resort and the Alpine Way. Some of us scrambled to a lofty perch for morning tea. Then the walk became interesting as we had no trouble following the ski poles back to Charlotte Pass; but half the group detoured via some rough country around *Trapyard Creek* before joining our friends for lunch and the laborious walk out, often on spongy vegetation, via *Wrights Creek*.

Mountain celery...and more

The next day, we tackled the *Mt Guthega Circuit* and found a good track from Guthega Dam up towards the highest point near *Guthega Trig*. This well defined footpad led us to



Descending Tate

Consett Stephen Pass and on to lunch just below *Mt Tate*. Again, the flowers were something to behold especially the minute white and red flowering plants in boggy places. The bluebells and mountain celery were worth stopping to photograph too. We were lucky to have such glorious sunshine and clear views but we left *Tate East Ridge* too early and did not pick up the poles which lead downhill near the original and long since abandoned ski tow down to the Guthega River. Everyone negotiated the ankle breaking country very well with only one slight mishap and we were soon criss-crossing the water to return to Guthega Dam and our cars. For future reference the so called *Gills Knob* tow actually starts just in the treeline almost 1km south of Gills Knob. We stopped on the way back at the Eyre Café near Perisher for a celebratory drink and arguably the best hot chips in the universe.



Below Twynam

On the last day, three of us stopped at Sawpit Creek on the way home to walk the tree studded 6km *Waterfall Loop* with the bird calls and wallabies which had been absent from the high country. It was a very successful trip which I would like to repeat. I had learned that not only are there tracks where we usually ski, but that it is possible to lead from the middle or back of a large group as well as from the front where David often scouted a good route and kept the faster walkers happy.



Walks Leader Training

By Michael Keats

Walk leaders are the Club's most valuable resource. Without them there would be no Club.

What makes a walk leader? There are no quick or easy answers. What we do know is that without a constant supply of new leaders there would be no bushwalking clubs. Indeed, the history of every defunct walking club, and there are many, comes down to the simple fact that they became extinct

because they ran out of members willing to lead.

...clubs become extinct because they run out of members willing to lead...

It was the above dictum that concentrated the collective mind of our committee to focus its most intense efforts to up-skill a continuous supply of members willing, able and confident to lead walks. With a growing membership the need has never been greater.

I pondered these thoughts, and more, as an invited observer at a club Leader Training day held recently at Lane Cove National Park. Under the joint direction of Training Co-ordinator, **Sandra Bushell**, and Encouraging New Leaders Co-ordinator, **John Hungerford**, twelve members plus several experienced leaders presented an interactive program broken down into small, essential, bite size chunks that addressed each and every issue, from walk concept to post walk protocols.

The course was user friendly and the bush setting, generous morning tea and tucker was a great way to begin.

Bev Barnett took the first segment *Before the Walk* by suggesting new leaders choose a walk they have enjoyed doing and moved on to cover the resources available for planning, benefits of pre-walking to pinpoint the location of facilities, early exit points, transport etc.

Lynn Dabbs, Walks Update Coordinator, raised some process issues around *How to lodge a Bush Club walk*. **Bev Barnett** then covered the walk description, safety issues and dealing with prospective members and guests. She pointed out that if the

leader is limiting numbers, *Contact Leader* walks are more suitable. They also provide an opportunity to get some idea of the skills the member may have.



New leaders in the making

Carol Henderson did a recap on what to do on the *Day of the walk* starting with the weather forecast to decide whether the walk may have to be cancelled; checking walkers have sufficient water; appointing a person as tail; setting the ground rules; the length of morning and afternoon tea breaks and reminding walkers to drink plenty of water by creating drink stops. Other topics included the need to check on how the group is faring, requesting feedback and saying farewell at a place near the end of the walk but before it becomes visible.

Graham Conden spoke about the *Post walk reporting process* and, importantly, a check list of what to do regarding injuries and accidents. On the day, checking to see who has first aid qualifications is useful to note. He emphasised that, in the event of an accident, the leader is more a manager than a first aid expert. He outlined the essentials of what to do if

it becomes necessary to split the walk into two parties. He rightly suggested it is desirable for all walkers to do a first aid course, particularly if walks are planned in bush areas remote from paramedic services.

Towards the end of the session, participants were asked to devise a walk they would be prepared to lead. In turn, they spoke about what they proposed with input from other participants. I found the Q & A session between new leader **Allison Boyle** and **John Hungerford** especially useful. It was fresh, real and pertinent. Most important of all, the whole training session took place in a relaxed, supportive and constructive atmosphere. I am sure all participants will go on to lead walks, and in turn encourage other members to do the same.

*Congratulations to participants:
Adrienne Kinna, Allison Boyle, Barbara Mitchell, Debby Ryan, Elizabeth Hungerford, Graham Richter, Kevin Williams, Lynn Dabbs, Noeline Wallis Rosemary Livingstone, Sonja Pettersen, Thomas Dlugosch.*



Smiles from Allison Boyle (in purple) and others

Barbara Guest

By Michael Pratt



The club has lost a valued Life Member, Barbara Guest, who died last October, aged 98 years.

Barbara may not have been known to many current members but her name still resonates for others. She is associated with the 1960s, 70s and 80s and our core value people with names such as Stillman, Lawler, Brearley, Hodsdon, Packard, McGrath, Cadzow, Gillott, Fried, Graham, Milton, Hill, Hay and Bryant to recall but a few.

Under the clock at Central

She joined the club in 1958 and found herself amongst like-minded folk who loved the opportunity of going bush each weekend, either day walking or backpacking which was particularly popular. These were the days when members assembled under the clock at Central before boarding a train, when the billy was boiled and sausages cooked at lunch-time and backpackers slept in japara tents with a poncho providing a floor. Barbara's enthusiasm thrived in this environment. Determined, forthright and passionate about club issues and conservation, she attended meetings and slide evenings. She served on the committee 1965-66; as secretary

1966-69; vice-president 1973-75 and president 1976-78. She was a member for 55 years.

...ten years younger courtesy of correction fluid and typewriter...

She was known to be a self made woman who, following a disrupted education and world travels, attended Sydney University at night to gain an Arts degree. Having then decided to become a teacher, she found herself too old at 50 years for Department of Education funding. She suddenly became ten years younger courtesy of correction fluid and a typewriter. After a Diploma of Education was gained, she concluded her career teaching Ancient History at Pymble Ladies College.

Splish, splash...go home...

Barbara quickly became known as a club character and famous for her utterances during walks. There was one memorable incident backpacking on the Coxs: Pearl Gillott was some way behind us as Pearl was wont to be. Suddenly a shout and splash and Pearl had fallen in. We dropped our packs and rushed back to where she sat in the river, weighed down by her pack with the water lapping her chest. Commiserations and encouragement were offered by all as we prepared to haul Pearl out. That is, except from Barbara who proclaimed loudly before Pearl could be pulled from the water: 'Pearl, if you can't keep up you shouldn't come.'

A couple of months later, Pearl and Barbara were seen sharing a tent together on a Tasmanian walk.

Barbara was a keen leader of walks and camping trips. She was also an independent traveller who ventured away from tourist tracks whilst visiting

countries overseas. However, it was a more civilised environment with a party waiting that she found herself detained by a locked door in the Berowra station loo.

Don't wag your tail at me

One of her pet hatreds was dogs in national parks. I remember one hot, humid day at Lawson. As we descended the track, a small dog came running to greet us. It hung around our feet before continuing the way from which we had come. Barbara was already wound up by this encounter when, just as the dog disappeared, a young couple joined us on the track. She immediately launched into a tirade, quoting national park Acts, the dog Act, the local council Act, the environment Act.

She never paused for breath and we were rendered speechless by this outburst. No one could

...I hope you fall off (your bike)...and he did...

get a word in edgewise but eventually she paused and the young couple did. They said seven simple words: *Actually, lady, it is not our dog.*

We all enjoyed a quiet chuckle as the thought had crossed our minds. But Barbara was undeterred and quickly launched into another tirade. She was also known for shouting at a trail-bike rider: *I hope you fall off.* And he did.

There are others active in the club with memories of Barbara. Her activities and achievements are recorded in Minutes and publications. She was a dynamic lady who lived life to the full. Well into her mid-90s, she looked forward to and read our Newsletter.

A simple service was held at Newtown and attended by nine family members

and club friends – Life Members Joan Adams, Arthur Cunningham, Eric Cadzow, myself and former member Janet Jones.



Bushwalking etiquette

We all know the so-called rules of bushwalking - arrive on time, don't tread on the heels of the person in front etc. The walks program also sets out the basics – fitness requirements, how much to contribute to the driver if you share a lift, drinking water etc. But it's not a bad idea to remind ourselves every now and then of a few other simple points that will make the leader's job easier.

- Offer to be the tail for part of the walk. Alternatively, change places on the walk so you are mingling, not just with the leader, but the entire group particularly prospective members.
- If a leader is happy for faster walkers to go ahead – say up a hill – that's fine, but please check with the leader about when or where to wait for everyone to catch up. It is very dispiriting for a leader who may have slowed down over the years, to be constantly trying to walk at the pace of the fastest walkers.
- If someone further back is hurt, it is essential for everyone to wait and help the leader deal with the situation.
- Allow the leader to decide when to start off again after lunch and other breaks so all of the group have an opportunity to be adequately rested.

- Make things as easy as possible for the leader. Don't attempt to change the itinerary or make too many suggestions unless the leader is asking for ideas, especially when the leader is trying to work out tricky navigation.
- If you are planning to leave the walk before the official finish, let the leader know beforehand.
- And, offer petrol money before being asked.



Six degrees of Separation under a Gum Tree

By Michael Pratt

It is Christmas morning in Australia 2013 and summer celebrations have begun with people gathering around the harbour foreshores, while in the distant wintry northern hemisphere, it is approaching the magic hour of midnight as preparations are completed to celebrate Christmas indoors.

None of this was on my mind as I walked to Forty Baskets beach accompanied by **Arthur Cunningham** on a Christmas morning stroll between The Spit and Manly that has become something of a tradition. We were planning to drop in on the Ramblers picnic on our way past.

As we arrived at Forty Baskets, I spotted an empty table but as we headed for it, a lady approached from the opposite direction. We arrived at the same time and I decided, if she wanted the table as it appeared she did, I would graciously concede. However, following season's greetings she initiated a conversation in which I was not much interested. I began

responding out of politeness but unexpectedly found myself drawn in.

'Have you walked from The Spit?' she asked?

'Yes,' I replied, adding without any real desire to know: 'are you local?'

'No,' she replied, 'I'm from England.'

Well, so what? Aren't we all? Not detecting an accent and still without interest I asked 'which part?' 'Leicestershire,' she replied.

My interest quickened as my mother's family came from Leicestershire and we enjoyed many Christmas gatherings there. Quickly I nailed her down further and unbelievably, out of all the cities, towns and villages of Leicestershire, found we shared familiar turf. 'Melton Mowbray and its famous Pork Pie shop? Oakhama?' I asked.

'Oh, I do my shopping there,' she replied.

'Owston?' I ventured, 'that little hamlet of a dozen families with no pub, post office, petrol station or shop?'

She was excited now. 'I live in Owston, and am here with my husband visiting relatives in Manly.'

Suddenly I was excited too. 'Then you will know my dear cousin Barbara and her husband Alan Hartley.'

'Barbara and Alan are my dearest village friends,' she replied.

I went on to explain how I, too, had visited Barbara and Alan in Owston. How I, too, had strolled this ancient hamlet, visited its decaying Abbey church, fingered its tilted mossy gravestones which hint of a once larger population.

There is the saying *it's a small world* because these unlikely encounters

happen to others, too. When we met this lady my mind was on Sydney harbour, the Ramblers and the picnic. But suddenly I was sharing memories of Leicestershire with a friend. This happy chance encounter is one I shall always remember. It really made my day



Birdwatching or birding is the observation of birds as a recreational activity. It can be done with the naked eye, through a visual enhancement device like binoculars and telescopes, or by listening for bird sounds. Wikipedia.

The details are scarce as to how **Lee Owens** found himself on such a recent birdwatching tour in Bhutan, but we can safely assume he won't try another. Here's his account:

The bus swings round one of the endless torturous bends in the road.

'There, on the right, the third tree, second branch from the top, right side,' says a voice.

Sixteen pairs of binoculars snap into position, long lens cameras point upwards, general muttering, then silence.

'Ah, yes, the red-capped, long-tailed Bhutan hyperbole,' says another voice authoritatively.

General murmur of assent. 'Female,' says a third, 'and endangered.'

Appreciative hum.

'Have a look at my photo,' offers another. A camera is handed round, along with several bird books open to the relevant page.

Me? I'm still looking for the tree.



Currawong Heritage Cottages **Discount price**

For those who haven't discovered this piece of paradise, Currawong Beach is 42km north of Sydney, in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, on the western shores of Pittwater, beside Great Mackerel Beach and north of The Basin. Coasters Retreat and Palm Beach are located nearby.

The cottages have a fascinating history and, despite many ups and downs, are still open for business and – better still – offering discount prices to club members (see below).

Currawong, originally named Little Mackerel Beach, goes back to 1823 when it was settled by a NSW military veteran named John Clarke. Twelve years later, it was leased to Patrick Flinn, a convict, whose family lived there until 1908. It was then purchased by the Stiles family who built a house they called *Africa*, which still stands today (now called *Midholme*). The Stiles family went on to construct another building *Wilderness* which was used as a general store and guest house. In 1942 Little Mackerel Beach was purchased by the Port Jackson and Manly Steamship Company.

Workers' Holiday camp

Seven years later, following the introduction of 40-hour working week, and two weeks of paid annual leave, the NSW Trades and Labour Council purchased the beach and four cottages from the Port Jackson and Manly Steamship Company for 10,000

pounds to provide affordable holidays for members. They built another eight cabins and a manager's house.

According to the current manager, Wendy Worthington there was a period in the 1990s when the site was under threat of being sold to developers but *The Friends of Currawong* and others saved the day and it has since been purchased by the NSW Lands Department and is now managed by Pittwater Council.



Currawong beach

So, no need to worry about any of that – just go along and enjoy the Currawong experience which, apart from swimming and water sports, is in the middle of a range of good bushwalks from West Head Road.

Enquiries: www.currawong.com.au
Phone: 0299744141



Heritage cottage

Welcome to New Members

Bev O’Gorman, Sally Reynolds, Astrid Van Blerk, Robert Lynn, Charles Magro, Chris Woods, Laurie Olsen, Ros Kitson, Bruce Abrahams, Graham Byrne, Jan Spencer, Thuy Tran, Brian Everingham, Liz La, Frank Agostino, Lenore Jamieson, Kim McVicar, Ray Stallworthy, Joanne Farrar.

Current stats: Prospectives: 96
Members: 694.

What happens when a walk is cancelled?

Our current policy is that a leader, or representative, needs to go to the start of the walk and let members who arrive know that the walk has been cancelled. This policy is becoming out-of-date because most members now have access to emails and receive Walks Updates electronically.

Leaders are the lifeblood of our club and we need to make things as easy as possible for them. It is hard these days to justify asking them to go to the start of a walk when it is a simple matter for members to check for themselves.

Independent walkers

The club expects members to be independent walkers – ie, making sure they have the right equipment, first aid gear, food, water etc. and that the walk they have chosen is the right one for them. If they are concerned about their level of fitness, or ability to do the walk, they are encouraged to phone the leader to discuss.

Similarly, as outlined in the policy below, it is now up to members to check themselves whether a walk has been cancelled.

Walks Cancellation Policy

Leader's Responsibility

When time and practicalities permit, leaders should try to find a replacement using the club Bulletin or Walks Update Program.

If possible, at least 48 hours notice should be given for a cancellation using the electronic Walks Updates Program.

Leaders who give less than 48 hours notice should go to the start of the walk, or send a representative.

Leaders should check for national park closures, fire, tide and weather warnings a few days before so they can make an informed decision about a possible cancellation or change to the walk for safety or other reasons.

Member's Responsibility

Members who access the electronic program should check the day before to make sure there hasn't been a cancellation or change.

Members who do not have access to the electronic program should phone the leader or another member to confirm the walk or activity is going ahead.

Members, as independent walkers, should also check websites for national park closures, fire, tide and weather warnings so they can make their own informed decision about whether to attend a given walk or activity.

Bush Club Committee



Facelift for Grand Old Icon

*It's had more makeovers than Dame Nellie Melba had farewell performances, but the **Hydro Majestic** in the Blue Mountains is in the middle of its most lavish yet – a \$30 million redevelopment aimed at bringing its golden age back to life.*

*In its heyday, the Hydro was famous for scenes reminiscent of *The Great Gatsby* when guests danced the night away in the splendid vaulted ballroom, took bushwalks in long dresses and dress coats and, while men played billiards, ladies sat on sofas on the long corridor known as Cat's Alley.*

A giant basket was lowered to the valley floor three times a day to collect produce from the hotel's vegetable garden.



When it was opened by retailer Mark Foy in 1904, everything 'Asian' was the rage so the chefs were Chinese with two non-English speaking Turks serving Turkish tea to guests all day. The journey from Sydney took 9 1/2 hours.

The work is due to be finished mid-2014.

Current Committee

President:	Lynne Outhred
Vice President:	Bob Taffel
Vice President:	Carol Henderson
Treasurer/Public Officer:	Barbara Mitchell
Membership Secretary:	Diane McPhail
Secretary:	Carol Henderson
Assistant Secretary:	Katherine Gloor
Walks Secretary:	John Cooper
Events Coordinator:	Graham Lewarne
Ordinary Member:	Gabrielle Sushay

Webmaster: Jacqui Hickson

Ordinary members appointed by the committee: Graham Conden; John Hungerford

Honorary Auditor: Bob Wood



Assisting the committee

Membership Registrar:	Ron Mead
Newsletter Coordinators:	Judy O'Connor Bev Barnett Tam Khuat
Webmaster	Jacqui Hickson
Electronic Program Coordinator:	Lynn Dabbs
Insurance Officer:	Alan Sauran
Librarian/Achivist:	Michael Keats
Training Officer:	Sandra Bushell
Confederation Reps:	Dick Weston
Search and Rescue Reps:	Dick Weston Graham Conden Keith Maxwell
Updated Program Approval Sub-committee	Graham Conden Jacqui Hickson Bob Taffel Lionel Sontag
New Members Approval Sub-committee	Graham Conden Ron Mead Diane McPhail