

# Armidale Bushwalkers



ARMIDALE BUSHWALKING CLUB VOL 1 No 2 JAN 2005  
EMAIL [bushwalkingclub@waterfalltrack.com](mailto:bushwalkingclub@waterfalltrack.com) PHONE 67759214

## Blue Hole Gourmet Walk, 5th December

Some years ago, a couple of us went out with a group that specialised in very casual short walks followed by very organised long lunches. The memory of those prompted Blue Hole Gourmet walk.

Thirteen of us parked at the Blue Hole. We short-cut across the river at the point where the concrete sluice used to lead the water off from the now-destroyed dam. The sluice runs along the contour, and as the Threfall Track runs beside it, it was very easy walking. Andrew lead us along the path to the right, and we saw the cuttings and embankments that allowed the grade to be maintained. The walk was well signposted, and there was a major display after about 250 metres, giving a good overview of the construction and use of the scheme. The commonest plants are *Casuarina cunninghamiana* (River Oak), *Bursaria spinosa* (Blackthorn), *Lomandra sp* (Mat-Rush), and *Leptospermum polygalifolia* (Teatree), and a number of other plants were flowering.

About 2.1 km from the start, a sign showed where a large pipe lead the water down into the generating station 140 m below. Apparently, water poured down the 40 cm 'penstock' at up to 2000 cubic metres a second, reaching velocity of 48 metres per second, and generating up to 1000 horsepower..

About 300 metres later was one of the highlights of the walk. A track leads off to the right to an exposed, and unfenced, lookout. From here you can look up the gorge to see the large tumbled granite boulders characteristic of the Gara, and see the large walls of rock opposite that make Gara Gorge a Mecca for local climbers. Some of us, lacking a head for heights, were glad to get back onto the less exposed main track.

A further 400 metres on, we came to the Power station Lookout (with Strong Safe railings!) There's a good view of Mushroom Rock opposite, and you

can see where the Power Station used to be located. We thought about climbing down into the bottom of the gorge to work there on a rainy midwinter day- how grey and miserable it must have been. It's surprisingly hard to see the course of the river, as it turns right behind a bluff towards its junction with Salisbury Waters to become the Macleay. The track originally ended here - now it continues on, round to left, to start to climb up to the Rotary seat, where we paused to get our breath back. At this point, a couple of the party had to head back, but the majority followed David's lead to turn right off path and head straight uphill (almost due East) about 150 metres. We crossed the fence running N-S at the corner, then walked on bearing of 30 degrees (along the edge of the gorge) for a further 700 metres to another fence, from which we could see the carriages. We crossed a sharp little gully, then another fence, and about 10 minutes later arrived at the Carriages.

The Carriages are on the property "Silverton", owned by the Waters family, telephone 0267-753755. You should ring them as a matter of courtesy, after booking through the Uniting Church (telephone 0267 - 7723233) - they actually manage the site. The campsite is best accessed from the Grafton road, turning right onto the Silverton Road just before Cooney Creek, 18.4 km from the Grafton Road -Marsh Street intersection. It's then a further 7.7 km of well-formed dirt to the Carriages campsite (total 26.1 km)

We wandered around discussing their feasibility for future activities, then backtracked to the Threfall walk. A further 30 minutes and we were back at the Blue Hole picnic shelter starting the real business of the day- lunch.

First came the drinks - a variety of beers, wines and cordials. Then a range of cold meats, salads, and comestibles, with Margaret's quiche winning a

---

place near one walkers heart (his stomach). Then the sweets- a variety of cakes and slices, including one that had ridden a bicycle out with Paul to meet its fate. When people were too stuffed to move, we held a surprisingly productive meeting, elected a new secretary (Jane Grows) and planned a number of walks taking us into the second part of the year. Maybe we all realised that we'll need to keep walking if to reduce the damage to our fitness done by the excellent lunch. It was a *GOOD* day!

(For those interested, there's a detailed plant list and a Blue Hole/Carriages planning list -about 30 pages- available from David . )

## **Minutes of meeting of Armidale Bushwalkers Club Inc. at Blue Hole Picnic Area Sunday 05 December 2004**

3.00pm Attendees (as per indemnity form)

David Lawrence advised resignation of secretary and Jane Grows was nominated by Isabelle Tasker seconded by Margaret Brown, carried.

Treasurer reports funds held @05 December 2004 \$442.00 and current confederation members = 21. Insurance cover is provided by confederation:

Professional Indemnity cover = \$10 mil. Personal cover = 70% of bill after health fund claim, includes rescue & ambulance cover.

1st Walk – Gibraltar Range NP – Leader Peter Rogers 14 Nov. 11 walkers, day walk, everyone satisfied by walk beauty of waratahs

Peter Roger suggested walk in that area again as an overnight walk

2<sup>nd</sup> Walk – Barokee to Native Dog – Leader Col Wood

28 Nov. 6 walkers, beautiful day. magnificent scenery & pure natural spring drinking water. Paul McCann suggested off track walk

Notice of Motion – prospective members to contribute \$5.00 per walk

Motion withdrawn. Membership – annually month of January, confederation will be meeting 22 Dec 2004 to "adopt us"

### **General Business**

Topographical maps should be listed on programme for all walks;

Great Outdoor Camping store offers 10% discount for members, bonafides not

Necessary;

Col Wood will research first aid certificate course – where, when?

Meeting closed at 3.35pm

*Next Meeting* – End of walk scheduled for 06 March 2005



### **Three Months Walks Calendar, *approval in principal.***

Date Proposed by      Where

12/13 Feb 05 Peter Roger Gibraltar Range N.P.Camp overnight at Grassy Creek Terrain undulating, early Sat start

26/27 Feb 05 Col Wood Bullock Creek to Serpentine, Serpentine

toBarwick.Off track, rock hopping 67759214

06 Mar 05 Isabelle Tasker Long Point, close to Armidale

12/13 Mar 05 Paul McCann TBAMedium grade, overnight

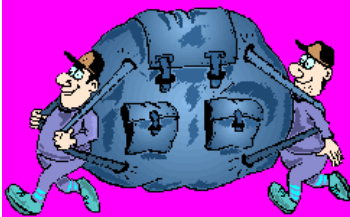
01 Apr 05Easter David Lawrence TBACanoeing will be the features

23/24/25 Apr 05 David Lawrence Backpack walk from Blue Hole to Dangar Falls

Specifications for Walk Sat/Sun 12/13 February 2005

### Overnight walk Gibraltar Range N.P.

Camp Saturday night at Grassy Creek Carry usual equipment plus 2 lunches, 1 evening meal, 1 breakfast. Bring fly net if available. GRADE – easy/medium on well defined track. DISTANCE to be covered approximately 20 kms.



Good *introductory walk* if you are of average fitness but haven't carried a rucksack in recent times.

TERRAIN – undulating – no steep climbs. Possible side trip without packs to higher point if time permits.

MAPS – NP Visitor Guide – “Gibraltar Range & Washpool N.P.”

DURATION – Early Sat. morning departure with short car shuffle required.

Finish around 4.00pm Sunday.

TRANSPORT – Private vehicle Transport contribution around \$20.00

CONTACT – Leader: Peter Rodger 67720464 Blue Hole Gourmet Walk, 5th December. In week before the activity preferred, please.

Walks 2006

*Kunderang* – Easter 2006, proposed by David Lawrence, entry by muscle power only in conjunction with Inverell club and National Parks, possible numbers 500.

*Waterfall Way*- Spring 06, 6-8 weeks with walkers joining and leaving walk at *Walk* various points, homestays a feature, opportunity for sponsorship

with this historic walk. Members floated various ideas for discussion – Paul suggested deadline for walks programme Isabelle felt that each quarter one walk should be close to Armidale, family friendly Nick suggested that walks should go ahead unless the leader withdraws David concluded that walks programme will be endorsed prior to newsletter distribution.

## Essentials to bring on all day walks

Lunch - snack m/tea - Personal first-aid kit, including insect repellent and sun screen - warm top - wet weather gear - torch - hat. Water, at least 1 - 2 litres depending on conditions, hot days at least 2 litres for day walks.

Overnight walks check with leader about availability of water onsite. **Check with leader for what to bring on overnight walks**

---

# First Aid - How Not To Do It.

© Belinda Keir

There is lots of material available about how to do first aid, and we imagine the main hazards of outdoor activities are the spectacular ones - fractures and falls. However, far more walks are seriously disrupted by bad blisters, a dose of the trots or someone getting burnt on a hot billy. These "minor" injuries can be a major pain, so the best first aid of all is to think "prevention".



Here are seven ideas for preventing some popular ailments.

1. Make sure as many people as possible have a current first aid

certificate.

This has several advantages. The first is that if you have an accident the rest of the group will know what to do, instead of standing around arguing about things they saw on television. They will treat the most important things first and will be able to improvise splints and bandages.

Additionally, having spent two days at a first aid course they are hopefully aware of potential hazards and will be on the lookout to prevent accidents.

Bushwalker Wilderness Rescue runs two St John Ambulance Senior First Aid courses every year, or look for courses in your community.

2. Keep everyone's pack light

Some people (particularly beginners) feel free to carry as heavy a pack as they like, assuming they'll be the only person to suffer. In fact this is a really irresponsible attitude when you are part of a group:

- it slows down the person (and therefore the whole group)
- it makes them more susceptible to twisted ankles, bung knees and sore backs
- if they get injured the rest of the party has to divvy up their overweight pack
- if someone else gets injured they won't be able

to take part of the casualty's gear

One rule of thumb is to treat one sixth of your bodyweight as a maximum load, and Paddy Pallin's maxim "watch the ounces and the pounds look after themselves" still applies even with metrification.

If you do have to carry a heavy pack - perhaps for an extended walk - be extremely careful. Help each other put packs on and off, lift with bent knees and straight backs and perhaps plan shorter days for the start of the trip when packs are heaviest.

3. Look after your feet

Blisters are miserable, and bad ones can cripple a walker. The best treatment by far is to stop them happening, generally by finding the right combination of socks and shoes and applying tape to parts of feet which always rub. Everyone's feet are different so no-one can be dogmatic about "this is THE way of preventing blisters". Some things to try include:

- wearing two layers of socks, so they rub against each other instead of your skin.
- wear different types of sock - cotton, wool, polypropylene (good against the skin if you have sweaty feet), thick, thin.
- tape up any areas that tend to blister. Elastoplast is often a bit strong, especially on a longer walk where feet are re-dressed daily (after pulling tape off every day for a week you end up pulling the skin off too). Instead try two or three layers of Micropore tape and re-apply the top layer as it wears away.
- find the best footwear for your feet and for the type of walking you do. Never go walking in brand-new boots

Make it clear that if anyone feels the beginning of a blister they should stop immediately and apply tape. Don't slog to the top of the hill or the next meal break because by then the damage could be crippling.

It's also important to look after feet at the end of the day. Have dry socks for night time and guard them with your life. Don't forget the old "bread bag" trick for wandering around camp in the evening - put on dry socks, then bread bags, then your wet shoes. On long walks some people take thongs to

wear around camp. It lets feet "breathe" and dry out, but if you do this be EXTREMELY careful not to step on anything.

#### 4. Funny tummies aren't funny

At home a dose of the trots is inconvenient, but in the bush it can be life-threatening. Be super-careful about drinking water and hygiene and encourage others to do the same, especially newer walkers:

- regularly put items in your club newsletter about going to the loo in the bush

- be ostentatious about handwashing. Use soap and get someone to pour water over your hands to rinse them well

#### 5. Tell silly buggers to bugger off

It may be boring and conservative, but the bush isn't the place to muck around. Don't roll boulders, chase snakes, jump into unknown waters or play practical jokes, and if you think someone else is being idiotic tell them so rather than fume in silence.

#### 6. Be aware of pre-existing conditions.

While some walkers are nature's perfect specimens, most of us aren't. If you have an underlying health problem make sure it is well-managed when you go walking. You should also let the rest of the party know about any signs and symptoms which can occur:

- diabetics need to adjust their food and insulin intake according to the difficulty to the walk

- if you have a bad knee or a problem back see a physio for exercises to strengthen it. Learn the right sort of strapping and lift your pack safely every time.

- carry the right medication for asthma or any other condition.

- if you've been ill immediately prior to a walk think seriously about whether you should go.

#### 7. Travel home safely and sensibly

Make sure your car is up to the trip there and back. Share the driving, and don't drive when you are too tired - "better late than dead on time".