

# Bushwalk Australia



A World of Walking

Volume No 21, February 2017

Bushwalk Australia Magazine  
An electronic magazine for  
<http://bushwalk.com>  
Volume 21, February 2017

**“We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this vast land which we explore. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and thank them for their stewardship of this great south land.”**

Cover picture



“No, Sir, I wasn’t mauled by a Bengal Tiger. I just finished hiking down Tasmania’s west coast.” by Cam Honan

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We would love you to be part of the magazine, here is how to contribute - [Writer's Guide](#).

The copy deadline for the April 2017 edition is 28 February 2017.

Warning

Like all outdoor pursuits, the activities described in this publication may be dangerous. Undertaking them may result in loss, serious injury or death. The information in this publication is without any warranty on accuracy or completeness. There may be significant omissions and errors. People who are interested in walking in the areas concerned should make their own enquiries, and not rely fully on the information in this publication.

The publisher, editor, authors or any other entity or person will not be held responsible for any loss, injury, claim or liability of any kind resulting from people using information in this publication.

Please consider joining a walking club or undertaking formal training in other ways to ensure you are well prepared for any activities you are planning. Please report any errors or omissions to the editor or in the forum at BWA eMag.

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## From the Editor

Reading this edition it really struck me that we live in an extraordinary world and time.

We live in a world that offers incredible opportunities to explore.  
We live at a time with unprecedented ability to connect with other adventurers.

We live in a world with vast stretches of wilderness in pristine condition.  
We live at a time of incredible insight and scientific understanding.

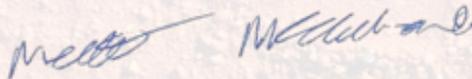
We live in a world that we know is warming and that our actions are causing that warming.  
We live at a time when we understand that a rapidly warming planet will be devastating.

We live in a world with leaders who seek to [prevent people sharing important knowledge](#).  
We live at a time when [US Park Rangers](#) courageously continue to share their knowledge.

My hope is that Jacques Cousteau was right when he said "People protect what they love."

As adventurers and members of a democracy it is more important now than ever before to consider how great we have it and how fragile our wild places are. I encourage you to continue to explore and enjoy these amazing places. I also encourage you to continue to share your adventurous spirit with others. Keep the conversations about the importance of wild places alive and vibrant.

Enjoy this edition, happy walking.  
Matt :)



Matt McClelland (aka Wildwalks)  
matt@bushwalk.com



### Declaration

The bushwalking community is a small world and paths often cross. To improve transparency I thought it would be helpful to list my associations within the outdoor community. In many cases I approached the authors of the articles included in this edition and suggested the topics. The opinions stated in articles are those of the authors and not of those involved in the production of this edition. The authors are mostly people I know through [Bushwalk.com](#). I operate [Bushwalk.com](#) and [Wildwalks.com](#) and have written several walking guide books, published by Woodslane, I have also written for Great Walks. I contract part time to National Parks Association NSW on an ongoing basis to coordinate their activities program. I have had a partnership with NPWS NSW and have hosted advertising for *Wild* magazine. I have also partnered with a large number of other organisations in environmental campaigns and have a regular bushwalking segment on ABC regional radio. There is some commercial advertising through the magazine. I have probably forgotten something - if you are worried about transparency please either write to me or raise the issue on [Bushwalk.com](#).

# Videos

## How forests heal people

Learn how forests have the ability to heal people.



## Overland Track - Lake Dove to Waterfall Valley Hut

Day one of the Overland Track in Tasmania saw us set off from Dove Lake under blue skies and climb Marions Lookout. We witnessed a dramatic helicopter rescue from the slopes of Cradle Mountain before continuing to Waterfall Valley where we camped.



# South West Tasmania Traverse

## Cam Honan

In March 2016 I completed a traverse of south-west Tasmania, one of the wildest, most pristine wilderness areas on the planet. The trip took 24 days to complete and combined the rugged, untracked coastline south of [Strahan](#), with the Arthur Range, arguably Australia's most spectacular mountain chain.

Cape Sorrell Lighthouse



<b>Distance</b>	About 300 kilometres
<b>Start</b>	Cape Sorrell
<b>Finish</b>	Farmhouse Creek Trailhead
<b>Time</b>	24 days
<b>Daily average</b>	12.5 kilometres

### Difficulty

Extreme. A combination of hiking, scrambling, climbing, bushbashing, paddling, swimming and crawling on all fours.

### Maps and general information

I used a combination of the brief notes in John Chapman's [South West Tasmania guide](#) and the [TASMAP 125,000 Topographic map series](#) (20 maps total).



Food bags for the seventeen day first stage. There was another smaller bag just out of shot

### Resupply

Just one. I sent provisions by post to the small town of Maydena. I hitched there and back from Scotts Peak Dam on the eighteenth day of my journey.

### Wildlife

Amazing variety. Tasmanian Devils, wombats, seals, tiger snakes, starfish, sea anemones and yellow-tailed black-cockatoos. Not so great was the fact that there were also leeches, ticks and plenty of mosquitos on the coastal stretch.

### Stage 1 - The West Coast

The first two weeks of the traverse were spent making my way down the remote coastline south of Strahan. The terrain was a combination of rocky shoreline, pristine beaches, buttongrass plains and dense bands of inland scrub.

“... this section represented some of the most challenging conditions I have encountered.”

In more than a quarter of a century of hiking all around the world, this section represented some of the most challenging conditions I have encountered. It was difficult for two primary reasons: bushbashing and coastal gulches.

In regards to the former, there were a handful of days when I hiked for twelve hours straight only to cover a total of five or six kilometres. The vegetation was incredibly dense and fighting through it was an exercise in both patience and perseverance.



Sunset over the Indian Ocean, Evans Creek, day four



I took this photo not more than a minute after making it out of this gulch

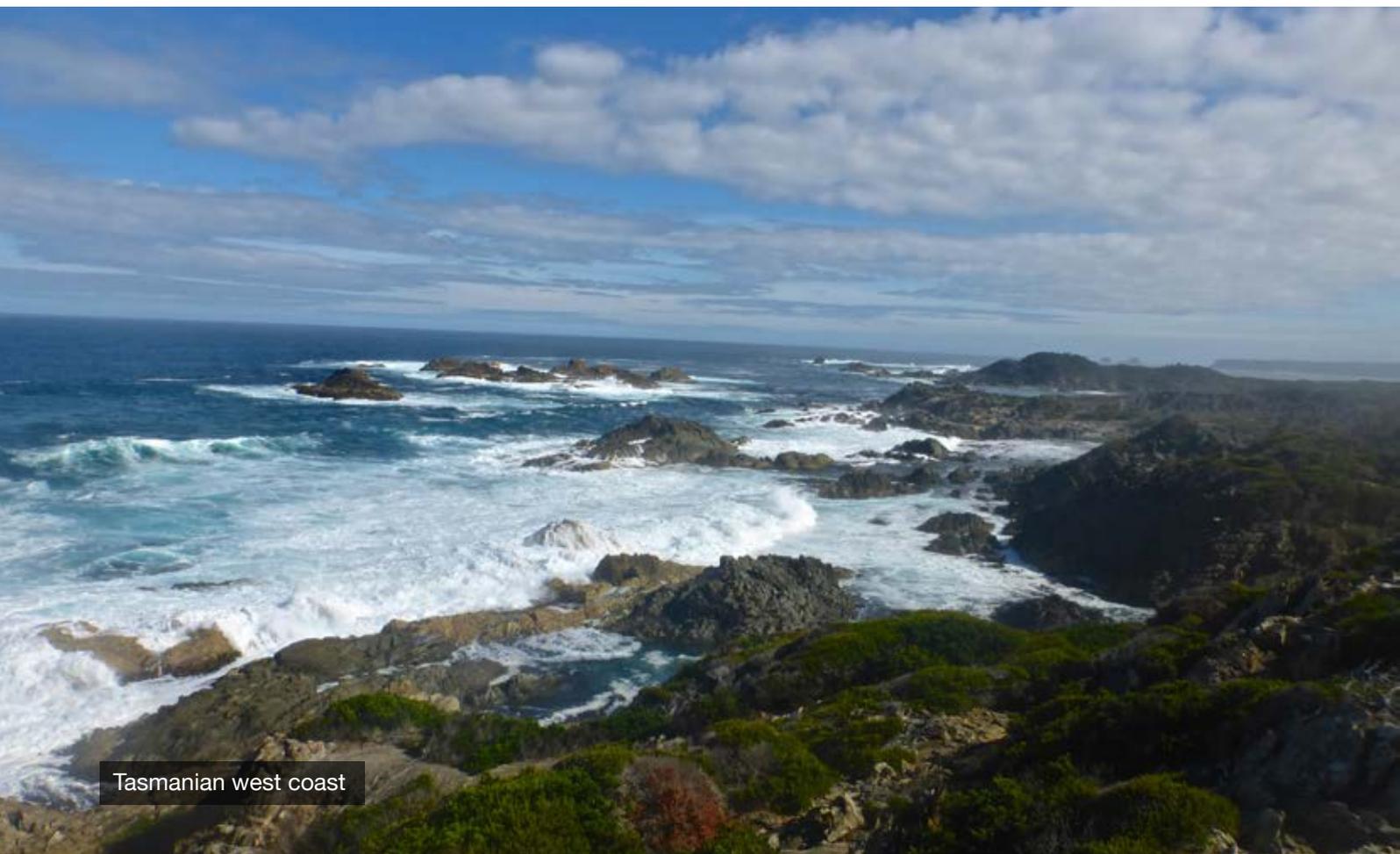
As for the gulches, they constituted the most dangerous and technically difficult aspect of the entire walk. Timing was key in negotiating these jagged and slippery ravines, which are regularly pounded by three to five metre high waves. Before attempting the more difficult gulches, I would often sit and watch the surf coming in for ten to fifteen minutes before

I was satisfied that it was safe to go (note: waves come in sets). The potential price of making an error in judgement, was getting smashed into the rocks, washed out into the Indian Ocean, or both.

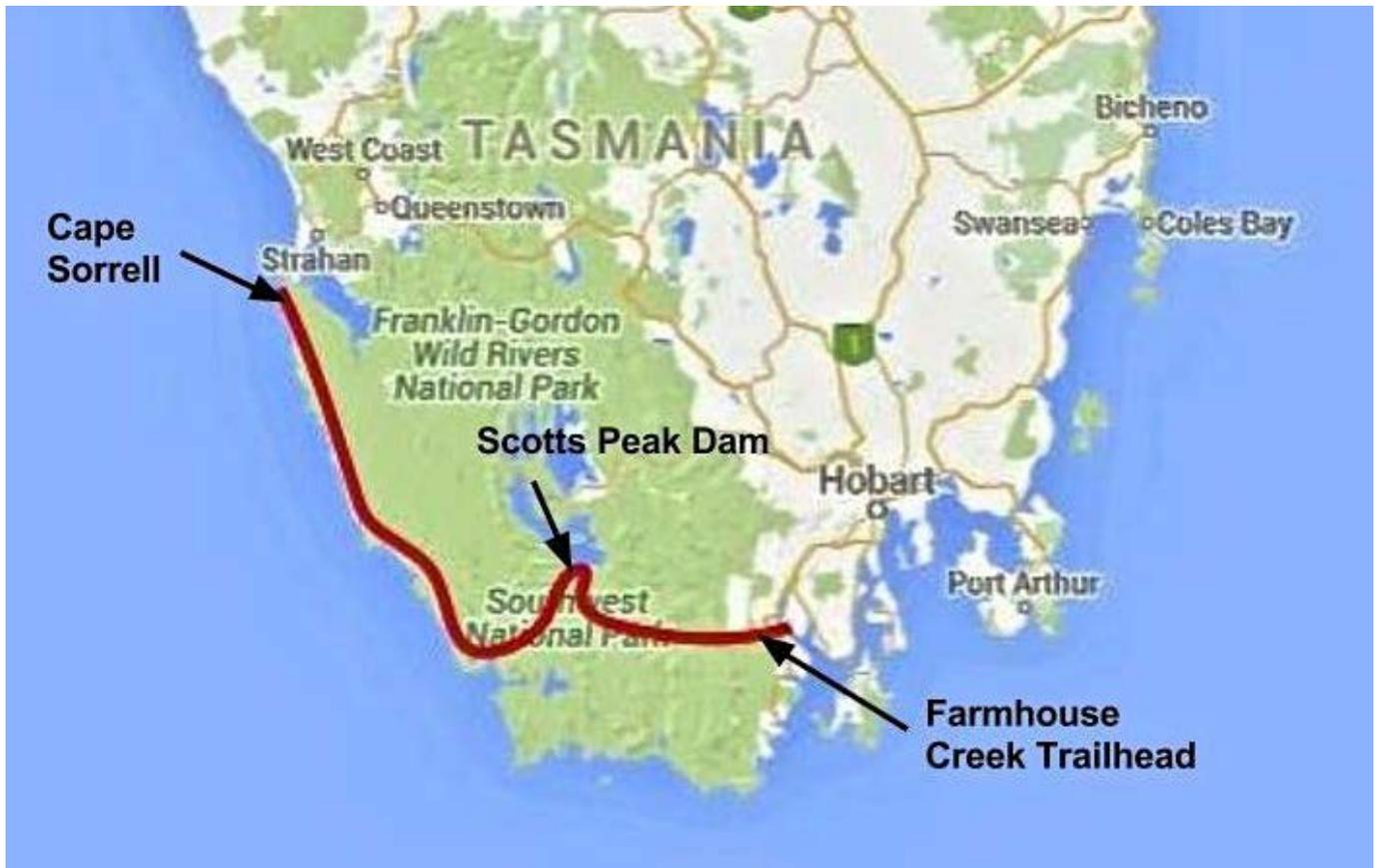
Thankfully, the arduous bushbashing and gulches were broken up by some far easier stretches of beach walking. Indeed, every time I emerged from the rocks or scrub onto a long expanse of golden sand, I'd break out into a big smile. This was partly because it was a welcome respite, but mostly due to the fact that the beaches were beautiful and there was not a footprint to be seen. This was a tangible reminder that it was just me, the coast and the ocean.

Indeed, during the first fourteen days of the traverse I only saw one person; a fisherman just north of Endeavour Bay on day five. For someone that has always enjoyed spending long periods of time by himself in nature, the solitude afforded by the south-west wilderness was one of my favourite aspects of the trip.

On the morning of day fifteen, after negotiating the rugged coastline I headed inland for the final time. It was a cold, rainy and foggy farewell. The inclement conditions



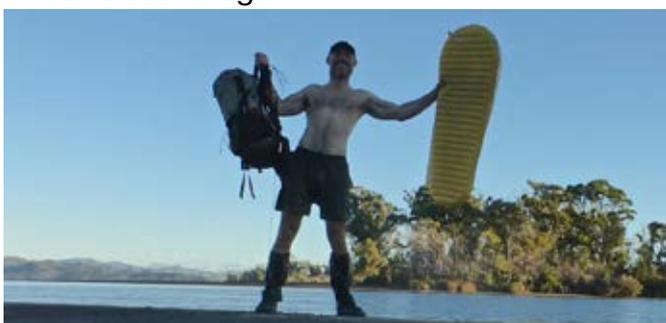
Tasmanian west coast



continued until late afternoon, when the weather finally broke and the sun emerged. The timing could not have been better, for I was just about to attempt what would be final significant challenge of stage one - a crossing of the 150 metre wide Davey River.

The waters of the Davey are both very cold and deep and hypothermia was a distinct possibility. However, in planning the trip I decided against carrying a packraft or wetsuit, and instead opted to negotiate this and other lengthy crossings on my inflatable sleeping mat. With my backpack floating behind tied off with a two metre piece of guyline, the system worked like a dream. Nonetheless, I was more than a little happy when I eventually reached the other side of the channel!

Almost two days after the crossing I made it to Scotts Peak Dam, the finishing point of the West Coast stage.



Celebrating after crossing the Davey River on my Thermarest NeoAir

Before beginning the second part of my trip, I needed to pick up some supplies in the tiny town of Maydena, population 245. In order to do so I would have to hitchhike there and back. Which begged the question - *would anyone give me a ride looking like this?*



No, Sir, I wasn't mauled by a Bengal Tiger. I just finished hiking down Tasmania's west coast

## Stage 2 - The Arthur Range

Despite my less than presentable appearance, I did manage to procure rides out and back to Maydena. The following morning (day 19) I began the second stage of my journey; a six day crossing of the Arthur Range from Scotts Peak Dam to Farmhouse Creek.

Arguably Australia's most spectacular mountain chain, in fine weather the Arthurs are a bushwalker's dream. Jagged quartzite peaks, hanging valleys and glacier carved lakes. Stunning views from one end to the other. Unfortunately there's a rather large caveat when it comes to bushwalking in this area: the weather.

“... a place that averages 250 days of precipitation per year.”

Thanks in no small part to the *Roaring Forties* (i.e. gale-force westerly winds found in the southern hemisphere, generally between between 40° and 50° latitude) the Arthurs receive some of the most extreme conditions on the planet. The winds are often accompanied by horizontal rain and snow, and when coupled with the fact that much of the walking is done on exposed rocky ridges, it is not a place you want to be without good backcountry skills, the right equipment and an ironic sense of humour.

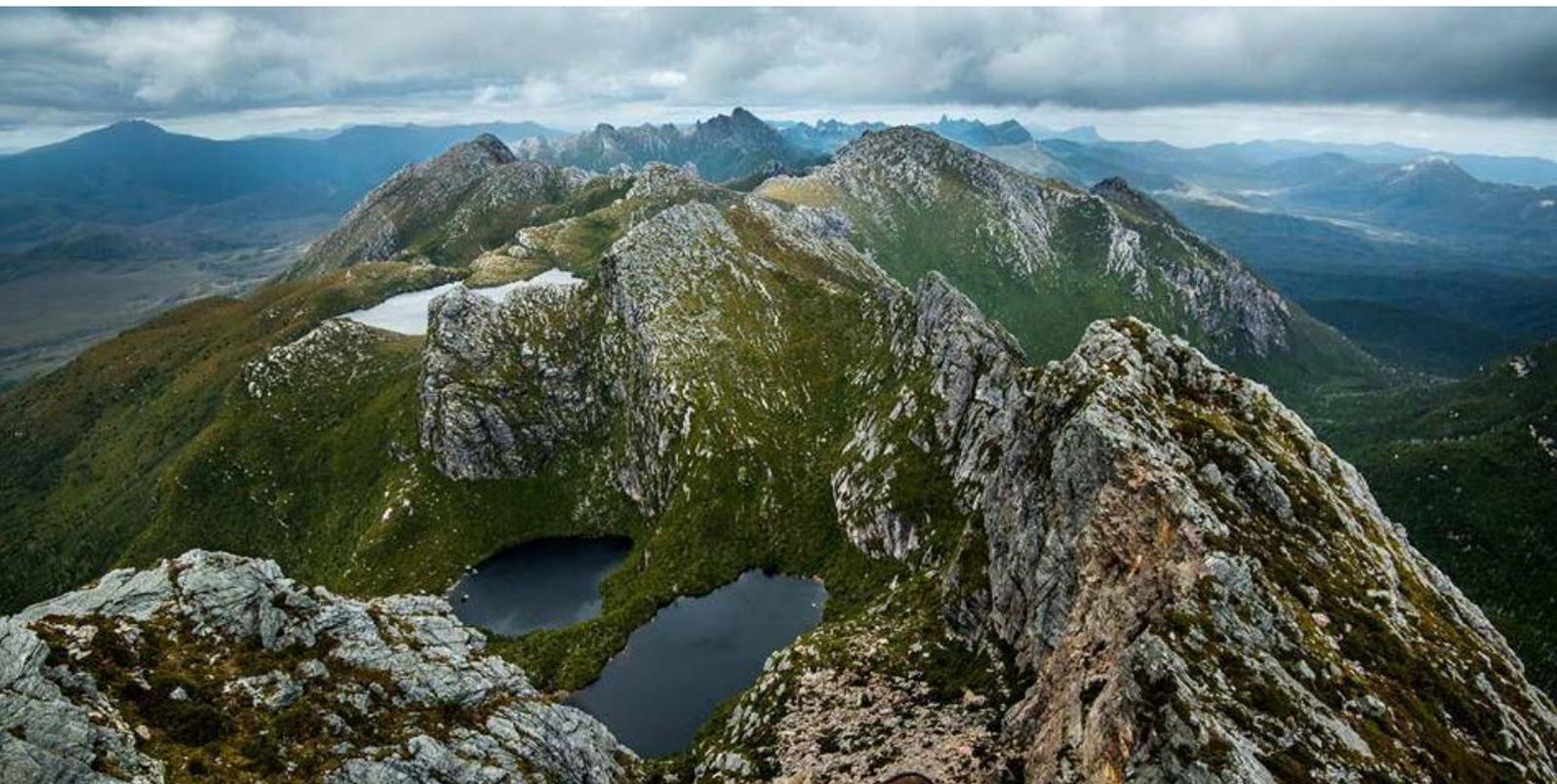


The Direct Ascent Route, Lake Geeves below  
Photo by [Jason Macqueen](#)

During two previous trips to the area, I had experienced more than my share of inclement conditions. In 2016 I was much more fortunate on the meteorological front. Out of the six days it took to reach Farmhouse Creek, I encountered heavy rain and wind for only a day and a half. Not too bad for a place that averages 250 days of precipitation per year.

Despite the relatively mild conditions, walking in the Arthurs is never easy. The vast majority of the track is either steeply up or precipitously down. Lots of scrambling, climbing, mud, roots and rocks. Indeed, if you are looking for a walk in which you can stretch out and cover big distances

“We're talking six hundred metres pretty much straight down to Lake Geeves ...”



Arthur Range  
Photo by [Viktor Posnov](#), whom I met during the second stage of the traverse

on a daily basis, it may be best to look elsewhere. In the Arthurs, one kilometre per hour is usually considered to be very speedy progress!

One of the highlights of the second stage was ascending Federation Peak. While this is a holy grail of sorts for many Australian bushwalkers, more than half that attempt to summit are turned back due to foul weather.

Fortunately, on Day 22 the conditions were relatively fine and I managed to make a successful climb to the top. I took the direct ascent route; not technically difficult, but extremely exposed. How exposed? We're talking six hundred metres pretty much straight down to Lake Geeves; definitely not for those with a fear of heights!

Upon reaching the summit I broke out into a huge smile and let out an ebullient exclamation. If memory serves, it may have been something along the lines of, *"You #!\*" little beauty!"*

I had the mountain all to myself, and spent the next hour soaking in the amazing 360° panorama. Eventually the clouds started rolling in and I knew that it was time to head back down. Federation Peak is no cake walk in dry conditions; in wet weather it can be treacherous.

The final day and a half of the traverse was relatively uneventful. After Federation I descended from the Arthur Range via the Bechervaise Plateau and Moss Ridge. The "track" was steep and more of a hand over foot scramble than a walk. Ducking and weaving my way through fallen trees and overgrown vegetation, I eventually bottomed out at Cherry Creek.



Farmhouse Creek

From that point on, the terrain was relatively flat and not-so-relatively muddy. The highlight was some early morning rays piercing through the forest canopy just a few kilometres from the end.

At 11am on the twenty-fourth day of my journey, I reached the Farmhouse Creek trailhead, the finishing point of the south-west Tasmania Traverse. The sun was shining. I broke out into a wee jig. I then put down my pack and went for a ten minute swim in the creek.



Looking back at the Western Arthurs from Mt Taurus

Soaking in the pleasantly warm water, I floated on my back and looked up at the pale blue sky. I thought about the last three and a half weeks. There was no way around it; there had been some very challenging moments.

Scrambling in and out of the wave smashed gulches, coming within centimetres of stepping on a Tiger snake and even a malfunctioning Personal Locator Beacon, which starting going off when it was inadvertently submerged in seawater on the morning of day five!

I began to chuckle.

If truth be told, I've never been one for dwelling or second guessing. Stuff happens out in the wilderness, and my preferred method of dealing with it has always been to shrug my shoulders, learn from the experience and get on with things.

I think that's one of the most important lessons I've derived from spending so much time in the woods over the past three decades. Not to over-analyse. There are no "what ifs" in the natural world. Everything just is what it is.

And that very simply is a big part of what keeps drawing me back.

“There are no “what ifs” in the natural world. Everything just is what it is.



One of the world's most prolific hikers, Cam Honan has trekked more than 90,000 kilometres in some 56 countries since the early 1990s. In 2015, [Backpacker Magazine](#) called him “the most travelled hiker on earth.” In recent years he has pioneered traverses of Mexico's Copper Canyon region, Peru's Cordillera Blanca range and South Dakota's Badlands National Park. When not out in the wilderness, Cam runs [The Hiking Life website](#), and can be found splitting his time between Australia and his adopted homeland of Mexico.

You can reach him at  
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Approaching Federation Peak ... the tall one

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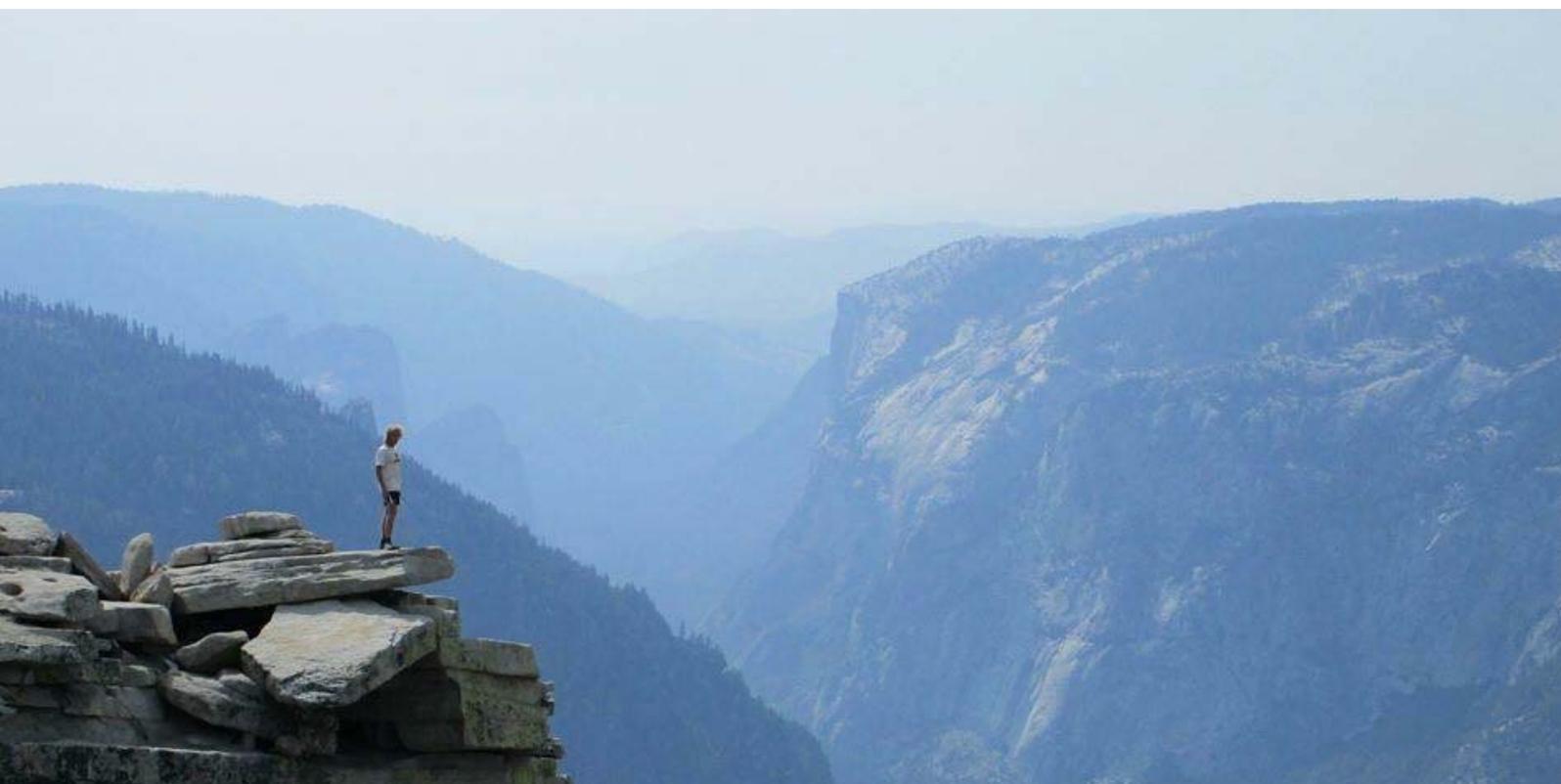
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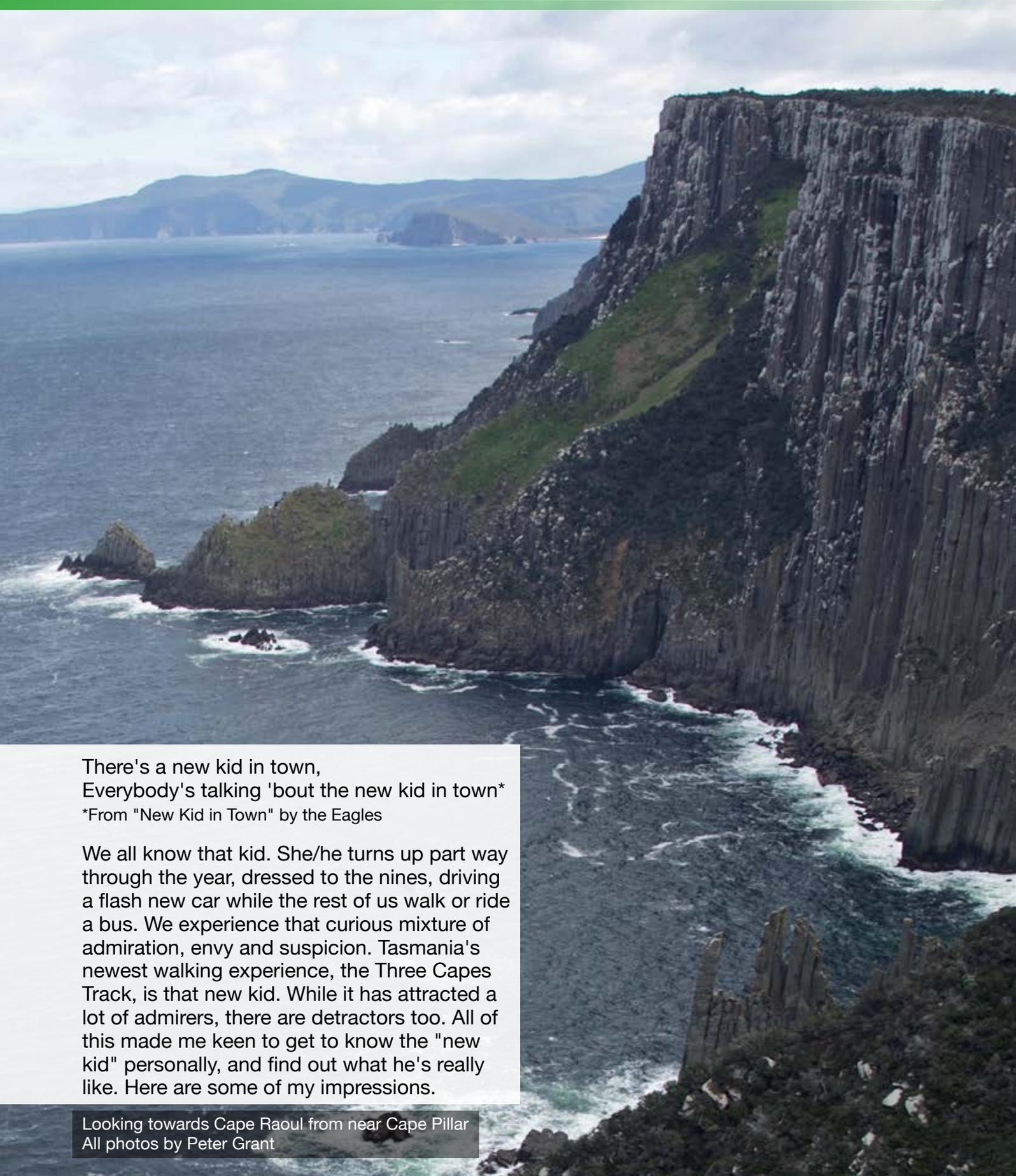
# Three Capes Track: First Impressions

## Peter Grant

There's a new kid in town,  
Everybody's talking 'bout the new kid in town\*  
\*From "New Kid in Town" by the Eagles

We all know that kid. She/he turns up part way through the year, dressed to the nines, driving a flash new car while the rest of us walk or ride a bus. We experience that curious mixture of admiration, envy and suspicion. Tasmania's newest walking experience, the Three Capes Track, is that new kid. While it has attracted a lot of admirers, there are detractors too. All of this made me keen to get to know the "new kid" personally, and find out what he's really like. Here are some of my impressions.

Looking towards Cape Raoul from near Cape Pillar  
All photos by Peter Grant



### The Boat Trip ... or "The excursion you have to have."

You start at Port Arthur, the World Heritage convict site on the Tasman Peninsula, and take what could be a simple 10 minute boat trip. Instead it lasts 90 minutes, with the boat describing a series of loops up and down the waters of the large inlet, before it delivers you to Denman Cove where the walking starts. Some critics describe it as an expensive and unwanted excursion. For everyone on our trip it was a great way to come to grips with the lie of the land - and the water - as well as a way of including "the third cape", Cape Raoul, in the trip. (You get to see it from the water).

### The Track ... or "It's bushwalking Jim, but not as we know it."

The track is constructed to "dry boot" standard, and capable of accommodating two walkers side-by-side for much of its length.

“ ... it was a great way to come to grips with the lie of the land ...

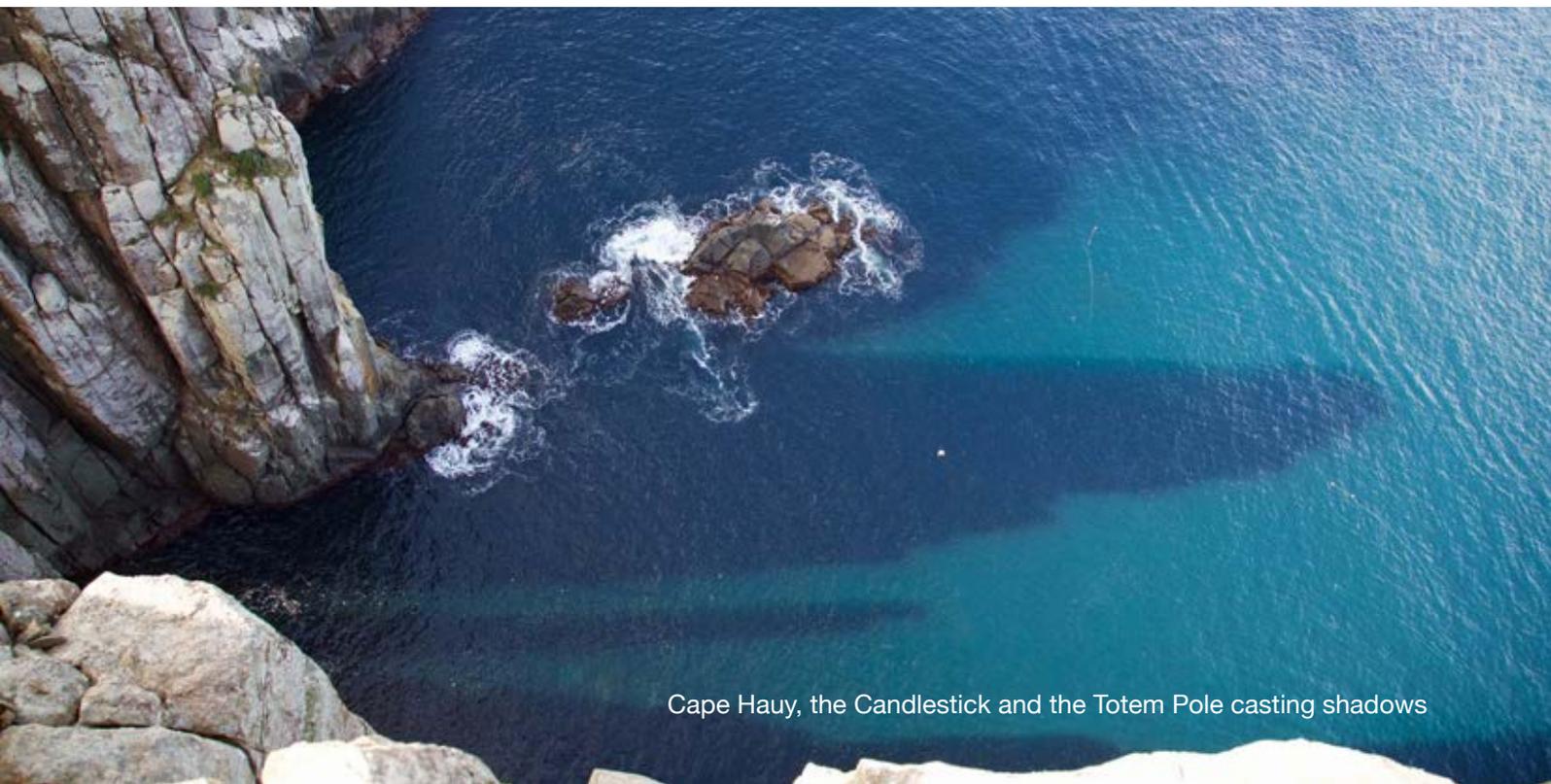
Some, particularly long-time

bushwalkers, consider the track over-engineered, too expensive, and too intrusive on an otherwise wild landscape. In parts - particularly the boardwalk on the way to Cape Pillar - they may have a point. But those who walk it generally love that they are not having to dodge mud or otherwise worry about their footing. This means that it will attract many first-time walkers.



Inspecting a "story-starter" on the boardwalk

It also should be said that some of the rocky sections of track are so expertly made that they're almost works of art. The track looks as though it will last for hundreds of years. However it is a 46 kilometre walk, and it does require a degree of fitness and determination.



Cape Hauy, the Candlestick and the Totem Pole casting shadows

### The Experience ... or "Once upon a time there were Three Capes."

Q. When is a bushwalk not just a bushwalk?  
A. When it's also an experience.

The Parks and Wildlife Service team that's behind this walk speak of it as an "experience" and not just a walk. Of course all bushwalks are more than just a walk. So is this "experience" business just so much tourism wank?

The way I read it, "experience" is about integrating those "other" aspects of a walk into your thinking from the very beginning. Here it is factors such as the variety of walking; its rich social aspects; the depth of stories held in the landscape; and the varied ways you're invited to approach those stories, that help to offer a seamless and rich experience.

For instance, the track has a large number of "story starters", various installations, sculptures, or other prompts, that invite walkers to think about the wealth of stories related to this place. Rather than "signs-on-sticks", you are pointed to the informative booklet that's given to each walker.

But does it enhance the walk? Certainly the walkers I went with thought so. They raved about so many aspects of the walk, but many singled out the wonderfully low-key interpretation, and the thought-provoking installations.

“ ... the track has a large number of "story starters" ...

Those walkers universally reckoned they'd come again. There was one caveat: the cost. The usual fee of \$495 per person includes four days, three nights, the boat trip, bus retrieval and a two-year pass to Port Arthur. For some of our group this was too much. They only came because of the special national park centenary offer of \$250 per person, which has now ended.

Of course it's arguable that the level of service here, from the boat trip to the track to the presence of host rangers, warrants a higher fee. And then, of course, there are the huts.

### The Huts ... or "He sees the vision splendid of the sunlit cliffs extended."

When New Zealand trampers thought the new Anchorage Hut on the Abel Tasman Coast Track too grand, they ironically dubbed it the Anchorage Hilton. The huts on Three Capes attract similar jibes. They're seen as too large, too plush, too intrusive and too costly. It's fair to say they are all of these. And yet ... the walkers who use them (remember quite a number of these are first-time bushwalkers) generally sing their praises.

“ ... each hut commands a stunning site.

Each overnight site has comfortable dormitory-style rooms, with eight bunks in each, and mattresses supplied. Should the snorers trouble you, the host rangers can supply ear plugs. Interconnecting decks lead to separate



Sharing sunrise above Munro Bight

rooms for cooking/dining/socialising. Gas cook tops, pots and pans, and basic cooking utensils are provided. Water is supplied from roof tanks, and accessed via hand pumps over large indoor sinks. Toilets are in separate buildings, with fly-in/fly-out "sputniks" to collect the waste, making the smell minimal.

It's fair to say that each hut commands a stunning site.

That's particularly true of the Munro site, high above Munro Bight. Its viewing deck gives truly stunning views towards Cape Hauy. The deck chairs (yes, they're supplied at each hut) can be taken onto the deck, allowing walkers unique rewards for their efforts in getting here. And sunrise from Munro's nearby helipad can be an amazing experience. It certainly was for our group. Munro Hilton anyone?

“... sunrise from Munro's nearby helipad can be an amazing experience.

### The Development Issue ... or "Is this the thin end of the wedge?"

Some Tasmanians (in particular) are not happy with this style of development within a national park. They see it as intruding on the area's rich natural and cultural values to pander to the wealthy and the "soft". And there is a strong fear that this is a "thin-end-of-the-wedge" situation. A counter-argument is that sensitively opening an area to a wider variety of people, and not just hardy bushwalkers, can only increase the number of people who will value its conservation, and push for its ongoing protection.

“... I was not prepared for how extensive and how beautiful the forests would be ...

After walking the track, and seeing many on it who would not otherwise bushwalk, I would lean towards the counter-argument above. The bulk of the track, and the



Walking through rainforest near Mt Fortescue

siting of the huts, has been done relatively sensitively, given 21st century fire, building and safety regulations. Personally, I loved the experience, and would happily go back numerous times.

That said, I don't think "traditional bushwalkers" have been adequately considered in the current model. I think there should be a way for them to experience the whole track, and to have the option of camping instead of staying in huts. There is just one camping site provided, at Wughalee Creek, off the Cape Pillar Track. This is hardly an attractive or convenient site, and nor does it allow camping walkers to experience the first day and half of the track, between Denmans Cove and Munro.

Given the high cost of providing the track and other services; and given the precedent of camping walkers having to pay the full Overland Track fee, I'm not arguing that Three Capes camping walkers should be given a significant discount. But I am arguing that a fuller camping option for the full track should be considered.

“ If I had to sum up the whole experience in just three letters, they would be WOW!

**The Landscape ... or "So much more than ABC."**

Blasé tourists in Europe sometimes use the acronym ABC to refer to the surfeit of grand buildings. (ABC can variously refer to "another bloody castle" or "another bloody cathedral".) In the context of this walk, there were some who thought the experience would attract the ABC acronym with regard to cliffs. How wrong they would be! Simply put, the sheer variety of landscapes on this walk - from cliffs to seascapes; heath to woodland; cloud forest to rainforest - is quite stunning.

I've been visiting this area for many years, and thought I knew what to expect. I had little doubt that the cliffs would attract the most "wows". But I was not prepared for how extensive and how beautiful the forests would be, particularly the rainforest on the flanks of Mt Fortescue on the final day. I also underestimated the extent and beauty of the wildflowers.

Of course the cliffs deserve every rave they get, and not only because of the grandeur of the outlook they provide. For the patient and observant, they can also offer views of wildlife that'll keep the jaw dropping. White-bellied sea eagles, wedge-tailed eagles, albatrosses and many other birds can be seen.

In the off-shore waters whales and dolphins are frequent visitors, and both Australian and New Zealand fur seals can be spotted resting on the rocky shores.

“ ... the sheer variety of landscapes on this walk ... is quite stunning.

If I had to sum up the whole experience in just three letters, they would be WOW! If you've been thinking about walking the Three Capes Track, just do it!

There's more information at [threecapestrack.com.au](http://threecapestrack.com.au)



Peter's photo by Lynne Grant

Peter Grant is a writer and long-time bushwalker based in Hobart, Tasmania. He worked on staff with Tasmania Parks & Wildlife Service from 1991 until July 2015. One of his final projects was to start the interpretation aspects of the Three Capes Track. He handed that on to some "very creative staff and contractors" before his retirement, so can't claim either credit or criticism for those aspects of the walk. He adds "I paid to do this walk, and the opinions expressed here are my own, based on my August 2016 trip". Peter writes about his walks in his blog at [naturescribe.com](http://naturescribe.com).



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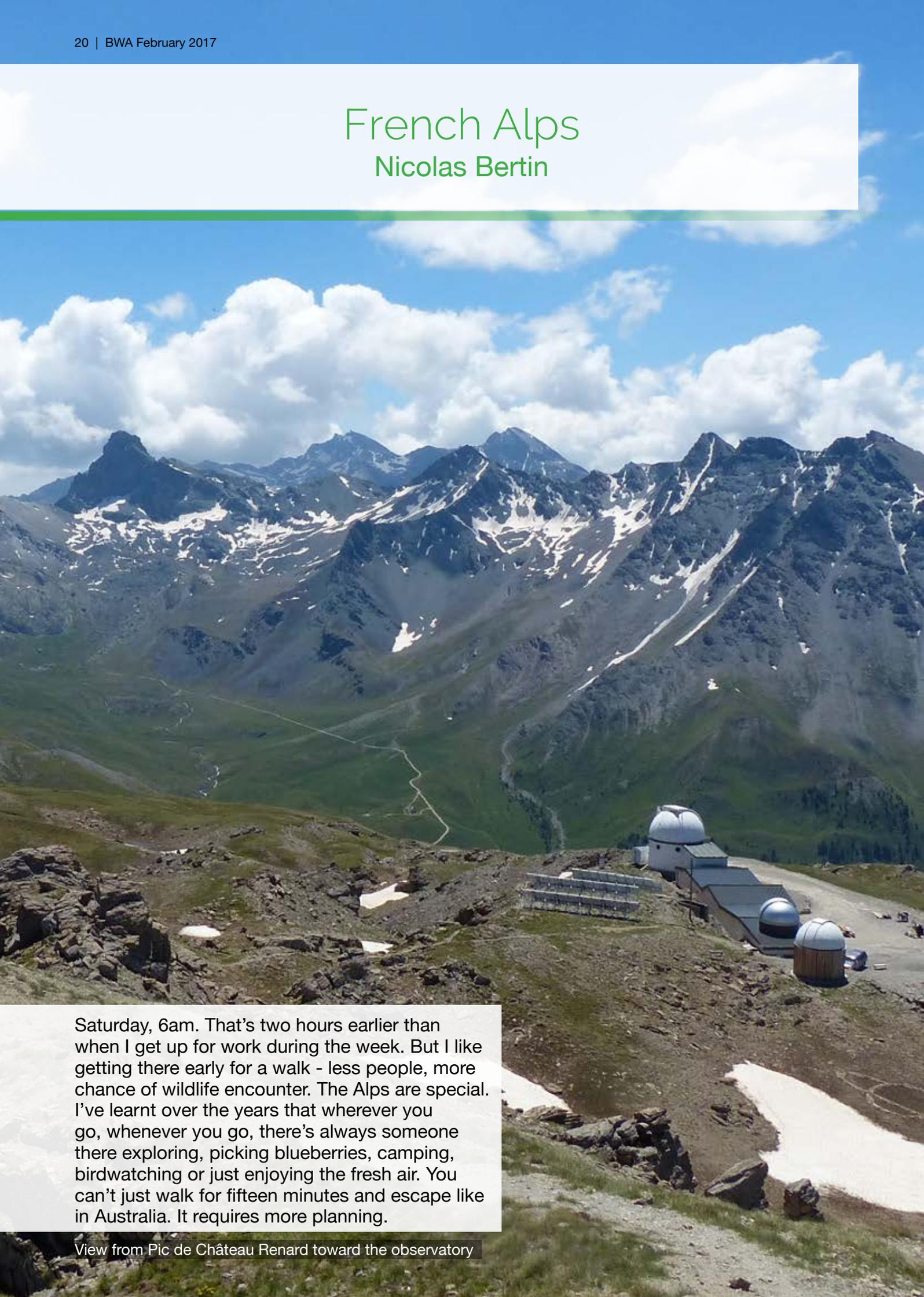
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# French Alps

## Nicolas Bertin



Saturday, 6am. That's two hours earlier than when I get up for work during the week. But I like getting there early for a walk - less people, more chance of wildlife encounter. The Alps are special. I've learnt over the years that wherever you go, whenever you go, there's always someone there exploring, picking blueberries, camping, birdwatching or just enjoying the fresh air. You can't just walk for fifteen minutes and escape like in Australia. It requires more planning.

View from Pic de Château Renard toward the observatory

An icy morning in autumn can make for the most dangerous conditions on a steep track. Winter is even worse. You need low avalanche risk combined with good weather on week-ends. Spring means avoiding the shady spots where névés, those hard compacted snowfields, can turn a nice stroll into perilous walking where you have to carve steps on the side of a steep drop. Summer means having to wake up even earlier to beat the crowds. Most car parks are full by 10am in July and August.

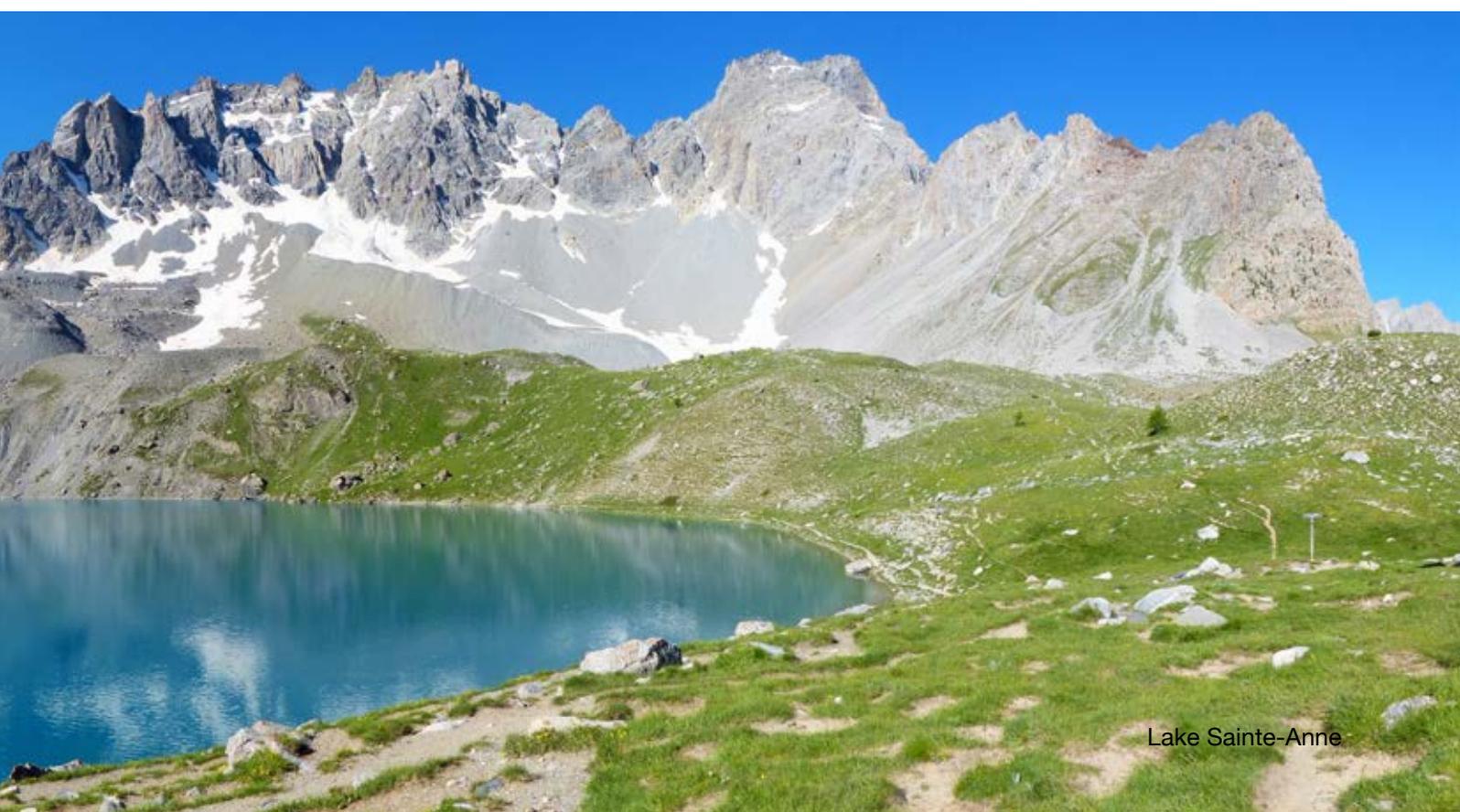
But it's worth it. I live in Grenoble. This means I have numerous mountain ranges less than two hours from my home: Vercors, Chartreuse and Bauges are three "low" mountain ranges, i.e. less than 2500 metres. Belledonne, Grandes Rousses, Aravis and Taillefer are 3000 to 3500 metres high. Then you can find the big daddies: Ecrins, Vanoise, Mont Blanc. They're rugged, with summits above 4000 metres, cascading glaciers, and tough people.

But this morning, it's none of those I'm heading to. I'm heading to one of my favourite places: Queyras, a mountain range long forgotten. Well known by cross-country skiers and seasoned walkers, it's the last fully authentic range in the French Alps. Ski slopes can be counted on one hand, it's home to the highest town in Europe (Saint-

Véran, 2042 metres), picture-perfect alpine lakes, gorgeous autumn colours with the larches, a rocky desert with surreal spires, and easily accessible 3000+ metres peaks. It's one of those places that impacts you instantly. You feel at home.

It's early July. A late spring meant you couldn't walk very high in June: too much compacted snow, dangerous conditions. But now the flowers are in bloom, and the snow has finally receded. The first walk of the weekend is my first 3000 metre peak ever. Well, 11 metres shy of 3000 metres to be honest. Pic de Chateau Renard is known for the observatory built near the summit. It's an easy peak, nothing technical. With 1000 metres elevation gain, it's also nothing unusual in the Alps. But above 2500 metres, I feel the altitude and progress is a lot slower. Some people feel it at 2000 metres, some don't feel it until 4000, everyone's different, and it's not about physical fitness.

The walk starts near a river, and climbs steeply in flower meadows. At 8:30am I'm alone. It was worth getting up early. Amongst the trees and flowers, it's pleasant, with enough shade not to suffer too much. Soon I reach the treeline and end up in a large valley. A couple of marmots play hide and seek, and then I scare off a herd of chamois, one of the two types of mountain



Lake Sainte-Anne

goats native to the French Alps. Having reached the 2500 metres limit from which I usually start coughing up my lungs, I start to progress more slowly. But then I reach a nice saddle, col de Longet, offering me great panoramic views. I see Italy in the north, already in the fog. In summer, moisture from the Pô plain gets heated and results in a sea of fog every afternoon. You can observe this phenomenon best on the col de la Traversière walk, where an ancient tunnel for merchants with mules carrying salt between Italy and France was carved in 1480. Luckily the French side doesn't have the fog.

The second part of the walk follows a dirt road to the observatory. It's not very glamorous, but at least progress is easy. After the observatory, it's a short steep walk on rocky terrain to the vertiginous summit. Queyras is very rocky and wild, no glaciers. The view is spectacular.

On the way back to tonight's camp ground, I enjoy Queyras' authenticity. Old chalets in picture perfect villages, wood-working artisans born from the necessity of staying busy in winter, bee-keepers, and of course cheese farmers. The camp ground is small, there's no individual camp site, but it's cheap. Hard to beat 7€ per night with showers and flush toilets. I've underestimated the cold though: it hit almost 0°C that night, on a sunny July weekend.

The next day I picked an easy hike, only about 400 metres elevation gain. But it's one of the most spectacular in the region.

Although quite rocky and dry, there are many lakes in Queyras. Amongst the most beautiful is lake Sainte-Anne. The start of the walk is steep but in the forest it's enjoyable. Then the views open towards a small valley and a nice waterfall fed by the lake. With a final push, I reach the lake itself. It's one of those gorgeous amphitheatres the Alps are famous for. A perfect turquoise lake fed by melting snow, rocky peaks in the background, the traditional cross, and a nice little chapel.

I'm too tired to climb further, so I just enjoy the view, battling an annoying wasp. With no ski resort in sight, Queyras is one of the last refuges for people like me. Many hidden valleys in the Alps offer the same feeling, but Queyras is a whole region. Sure it's not wild like Australia, but nowhere is it like that in Western Europe. You come to the Alps for the special relationship between people and mountains. And nowhere in France is it more poignant than here.



Nicolas is a French physicist who fell in love with bushwalking during a two year job contract in Melbourne, walking extensively in Tasmania and Victoria. He returned to Grenoble in France, near the French Alps, and has been exploring many regions of the Alps since. He walks in all seasons: crampons for icy conditions, snowshoes in winter, and long day walks the rest of the year. He loves travelling, and has been lucky enough to explore some of the mountains of New Zealand, Norway, the United States and Canada.



Fond de Chaurionde from Lake Sainte-Anne



# It's the Pits!

Paul Millgate and Vince Murtagh



We've re-discovered the long-lost Pindar brother's Ochre Pit on our walk into the Brisbane Waters National Park on Tuesday, 25 October 2016. We had very little information as to its exact location nor what an abandoned Ochre Mining Pit would now look like after 100 years.

The out of print Dunphy sketch map of the Brisbane Waters National Park area shows that on a spur a little west of Pindar Cave, there was “ML4”, a mining lease for an old ochre mine”. The Ochre Pit was reportedly mined by the Pindar brothers before their internment, as possible enemy aliens at the start of World War One. Research suggests that after WWI the Pindar brothers never returned to the area to resume mining at the site. Ochre is an earth pigment of iron oxide, used in those days for decorative purposes by both the Aboriginals and early NSW settlers. There are only 17 known Aboriginal ochre pits in NSW.

The Ochre Pit was then accidentally sighted back in 1983 by a party of walkers from the Sydney Bushwalking Club (SBW). The SBW October 1983 magazine details that walk. The magazine article notes that the Pit was dug into the side of a spur and measured approximately “20 metres by 4 metres” and that there was also a “wrought iron core extractor” nearby as well as evidence of fencing a bit further west.

The motivation to re-find for the Ochre Pit came from Jim Smith, Phil Gough and Vince Murtagh. An initial attempt by the latter two, with friends, was aborted because of dense untracked scrub on both the ridges and gullies near Pindar Cave, and no water beyond the cave.

Our October 2016 exploratory walk’s aim was to locate the Pit again. Would it be still in its original undisturbed condition? Our expectation was that it would be now heavily overgrown and entombed in thick scrub!

Our party was just three walkers, members of both the Catholic Bushwalking Club (CBC) and National Parks Association (NPA) comprising Paul and Jane Millgate and Vince Murtagh. We took a scenic train trip to Wondabyne railway station, north of Sydney and then walked to Pindar Cave, about two hours of walking from Wondabyne on a well-formed track.

Immediately after we left Pindar Cave we encountered the dreaded dense Pindar scrub. There were no paths to follow where we were heading as we bush bashed our way through the untracked scrub. It was hot, tiring and thirsty work.

Our aim over the next two days was to explore each of the seven potential spurs, searching until we found the Ochre Pit.

We navigated our way to our first targeted spur, selected by Paul after a close reading of the old SBW article. Luckily, within minutes of exploring that particular spur, we noticed a strange, densely overgrown feature.

“ The Ochre Pit was ... accidentally sighted back in 1983 ...



Paul Millgate alongside the core extractor after they have brushed all the leaf litter away to see exactly how long it was  
Jane Millgate

This strange feature appeared to be the “20 metres by 4 metres” sized pit as per the SBW 1983 report! Albeit very overgrown with trees and full of many years of leaf and branch debris but how to be sure?

The 1983 SBW article referred to a “wrought iron core extractor ... which could extend to 6 metres”, supposedly near the site. We looked but we couldn't find it. Then something underfoot felt wrong. Looking down, there was the core extractor lying under our feet!! Covered in decades of leaf mulch, barely discernible and rusting, just as it had been left abandoned back in 1914!

Well, we were elated! We had found the Ochre Pit! Close by we found the Pit's tailings and there was evidence of another large pit to the west of the main pit. We didn't see however, any evidence of the fencing mentioned in the 1983 SBW article. During our next trips to the site we will explore around it a lot more.

Back at our Pindar Cave base camp, the cool dripping water was refreshing nectar. It was a great day out! We felt a sense of achievement and elation. The re-discovery of the Ochre Pit was a closure for those who had inspired us to extend ourselves and find another dimension to the Pindar area.

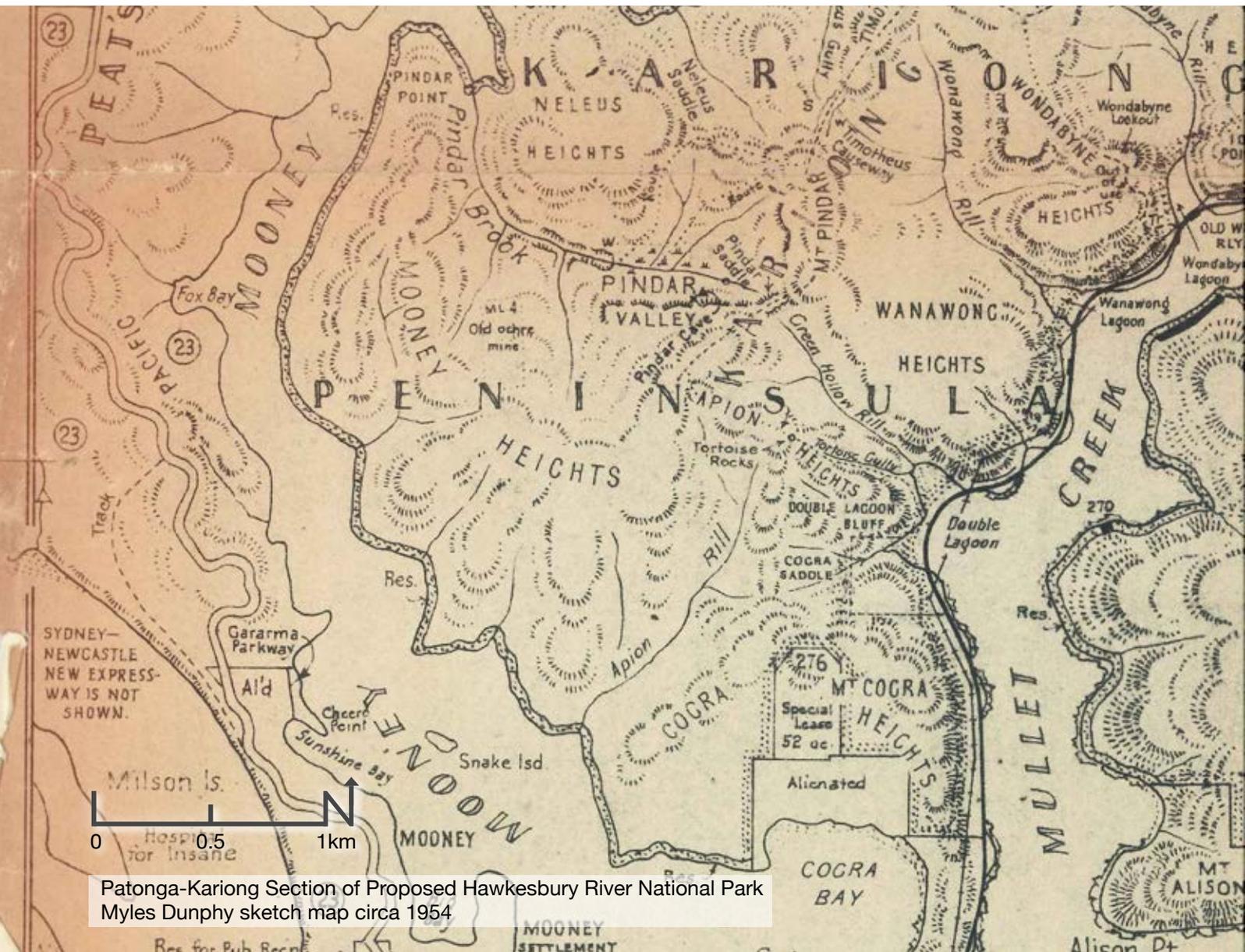
We joked and enjoyed a leisurely dinner and looked forward to the easy walk out the next morning.

The Ochre Pit is a site well worth preserving. We left it undisturbed so that those who also “re-discover” it can enjoy its pristine state. The actual Ochre Pit location is not exactly where the 1983 SBW article stated. We advised NPWS of its exact GPS location should they wish to follow up.



**References**

- Maps: Gunderman 1:25,000; Dunphy sketch Brisbane Water NP Kariong section
- Sydney Bush Walkers (SBW) article October 1983. (Frank Woodgate)
- Catholic Bushwalking Club (CBC) member Philip Gough - personal communication



Patonga-Kariong Section of Proposed Hawkesbury River National Park  
Myles Dunphy sketch map circa 1954

# Upcoming Events

## 65K 4 65 Roses Walkathon

**25 February 2017**

Join Sydney's [longest one day walkathon](#) and help support Cystic Fibrosis NSW and the Children's Hospital at Westmead.

## Coastrek 2017

**17 March 2017 in Sydney, 26 May 2017 in Melbourne, 28 July 2017 in Sunshine Coast**  
30-60 kilometre [team trekking challenge](#) to restore sight.

## Great Illawarra Walk in New South Wales

**18 and 19 March 2017**

An annual [100 kilometre walk](#) over two days, with the option of just walking the 50 kilometre on the second day.

## Canberra Walking Festival

**30 March-3 April 2017**

The [Canberra Walking Festival](#) is a non-competitive event open to everyone. The walks take you along Canberra's extensive footpath and recreation path network.

## Hiking Expo, Belair National Park

**23 April 2017**

An expo to celebrate the start of the South Australian bushwalking season. With the arrival of cooler autumn weather, hiking is an ideal outdoor activity. South Australia's bushwalking clubs and Walking SA are coming together to celebrate the occasion with [a unique day in Belair National Park](#).

## Big Red Run

**24-29 June 2017**

Australia's first and only [250 kilometre multi-day race](#). Come to the Outback, take on the Simpson Desert - are you up for it?



# Strzelecki Bushwalking Club

## Michael Haynes



Gippsland is a great place to walk, so when I took early retirement I joined my local bushwalking club. I first started bushwalking through Scouting, many years ago, and although the years between, filled with work, family and home, had not allowed me much opportunity to participate, the love of walking in the bush remained strong.

I decided that I needed people to walk with to increase the fun and for safety, and also to encourage me to walk in places that I not previously been to, or known about. A bushwalking club met all those needs. Over the years I have found myself becoming involved with Bushwalking Search and Rescue, and with Bushwalking Tracks and Conservation, both of which are organisations of Bushwalking Victoria, and with other groups such as the Friends of Baw Baw and the Grand Strzelecki Track.

Strzelecki  
Bushwalking  
Club (SBWC)

“ A bushwalking club met all those needs.

began in 1991 when three friends, sitting in a small tent in pouring rain in Tasmania, thought that there must be other people “out there” who would also enjoy such things, and decided to start a club in their area when they returned home. The rest, as they say, is history. The club has about 100 members and draws its membership primarily from the Latrobe Valley in Gippsland, Victoria, but also has members living as far afield as Melbourne, Castlemaine and Geelong. Visitors and new members are always welcome on our activities or to the club nights, which are held monthly in Trafalgar.

SBWC has a very active program, with not only day, weekend and extended walks, but cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, kayaking, cycling, snorkelling and even caving. In conjunction with Parks Victoria, SBWC creates and maintains walking tracks. Naturally, SBWC activities are mainly centred



Bunyip State Park  
Ron Cann

around Gippsland. Popular walking locations include Baw Baw NP, Mt Worth SP, the Strzelecki Ranges, Bunyip SP and Walhalla, but we often feature walks in other parts of Victoria, in Tasmania, NSW, central Australia, New Zealand and sometimes even further afield. Some of the excellent extended walks in Victoria I have been privileged to participate in with the club have been the Great Ocean Walk, the Great South West Walk, the Grand Strzelecki Track, the Upper Yarra Track, and sections of the Australian Alps Walking Track. I am currently making plans to walk the Hume and Hovell Track in NSW.

The club is affiliated with Bushwalking Victoria (BV), which provides assistance to clubs with such things as insurance, first aid, leadership and navigation training, and in maintaining a website with details of many walks. BV also represents bushwalkers with governments and Parks Victoria.



Monarchs Walk, Mt Erica, Baw Baw National Park  
Ron Cann

Each year a different BV affiliated club or group of clubs organises a weekend of fellowship, featuring a variety of walks. In 2016 the Federation Walks were based in the Grampians and many SBWC members participated. I went on a walk to Hollow Mountain and Red Cave on Saturday, and to The Fortress on Sunday, both of which took us to some spectacular parts of the mountain range. Members who went on other walks reported considerable diversity in terrain and sights, and all participants were full of praise for the beauty of the area. The Saturday night dinner included a presentation by a local PV ranger talking about the opening of the first part of the Grampians Peak Trail which includes such popular spots as Halls Gap, Wonderland and Silverband Falls.

More locally, in late 2016, many SBWC members spent a weekend based in Rokeby, where the West Gippsland Bushwalking Club, based in Warragul, were our hosts for the annual Combined Gippsland Walking Clubs weekend. This weekend also gave us an opportunity to meet and socialise with walkers from other clubs, and invitations to participate in those clubs' activities were frequently given, in the same way that other walkers are always welcome to attend any of ours. The walks during this event were all around the Bunyip State Forest, with the theme being "In the presence of giants". This

theme was borne out by walks to giant trees, including the famous Ada Tree, and to huge rocks, such as The Four Brothers and Seven Acre Rock.

Further information can be obtained via the [SBWC website](#).



Michael's photo by Hans Van Elmpt

Michael Haynes was a primary school teacher in many parts of Victoria, as well as stints in England and the USA. He and his wife Heather have two sons and two grandchildren. At 68 he enjoys bushwalking, cross-country skiing and kayaking, and he finds himself regularly on the road visiting family and seeing the country. Michael is the president of the Strzelecki Bushwalking Club, and the vice-president of the Grand Strzelecki Track committee. He is a member of Bushwalking Search and Rescue, a Field Officer with Bushwalking Tracks and Conservation and a member of the Friends of Baw Baw.



Gavin, Chris, Gary and Michael (me) on the Crinoline, Victoria on a club walk in 2014  
Rachel Hammond

# In the News

## Association of National Park Rangers (US)



On 30 January 2017 Former Director Jon Jarvis made a statement about recent events involving the National Park Service, critical of the US federal government:

"I have been watching the Trump administration trying unsuccessfully to suppress the National Park Service with a mix of pride and amusement. The NPS is the steward of America's most important places and the narrator of our most powerful stories, told authentically, accurately, and built upon scientific and scholarly research."

For the full statement [see here](#).

## Feral horses in Victoria



Feral horses in the Alpine National Park  
Alexandra Blucher

After many years of deliberations, the Victorian government is following the leads of ACT and NSW and [taking action about feral horses](#). Whilst feral horses are loved by many, the damage they cause is immense, with significant environmental and economic costs. The most recent aerial surveys showed up to 2500 horses in the Alpine National Park, and up to 300 in the Barmah National Park. Plans to control feral horses in the Alpine and Barmah National Parks are due to be finalised by April.

## Bibbulmun Track



Gully Bridge that crossed the Murray River in the south-west on the Bibbulmun Track. This iconic bridge was sadly burnt down in the bushfires of early 2015

Michelle Ryan is walking the Bibbulmun Track end to end, starting in April 2017 over 53 days. At the Kalamunda finish on 28 May 2017, Michelle has planned a fundraising event for the Bibbulmun Track Foundation. This is to give back to the 300 or so volunteers who dedicate their time and effort in keeping the track at a high standard.

Why not get on board and join her? The donation page for this is at [fundraiser](#), with [information about the walk](#) and [her website page](#).



# The Grand Strzelecki Track

Michael Haynes



Following the disastrous 2009 bushfires in the region, which devastated so much of the country around the Strzelecki Ranges and affected so many people in the area, some local people applied for Bushfire Recovery funding to construct a new track.

Butlers Track  
Richard Appleton

Their aims in creating the track were to provide a boost to the local economy, to add to the sense of community in the locality and to provide a lasting legacy of access to a beautiful, and often under-visited or unknown part of the state. They were successful in their application, and with funding also being provided by other generous sponsors, construction of the track began. This track was the combined brainchild of two groups of visionary local people. One concept was to have three loop trails, centred on and radiating out from the Tarra Bulga National Park. The other was to create a track joining the Morwell National Park in Churchill with Tarra Bulga National Park in Balook. It was to be called the Grand Strzelecki Track (GST), and a committee was formed to oversee its construction.

In 2011 my club was approached by this committee, seeking the input and assistance of bushwalkers. I attended some meetings to represent the club and subsequently joined the GST committee.

“... its route includes two national parks and has a great part of its length on private land ...”

The GST is unusual in that its route includes two national parks and has a great part of its length on private land which is controlled by Hancock Victoria Plantations (HVP). Lengthy discussions took place before permission was granted by HVP for the track to be constructed on their land, but once agreement had been reached they were very generous in assisting us in many ways and in allowing us to route sections of the track over some of their logging access tracks. Where practicable the GST has utilised “Cores and Links” on HVP property, where the company has undertaken to maintain natural bush corridors as access for migrating wildlife. Parks Victoria also permitted us to route some of the GST along sections of their existing tracks, and to put up signs along the way.

“The route follows Billys Creek upstream through a valley with steep sides, crossing the creek 57 times.”

The GST is 110 kilometres long, but it lends itself to shorter walks of one or two days, although it is worth doing in one go if time permits, which was how I tackled it as a



Grand Strzelecki Track opening day at Balook, May 2012  
Richard Appleton

club walk over an extended Melbourne Cup weekend in 2012, although I have also walked most sections several times as shorter walks. As we intended to camp we carried full packs for the first two days. We began at Morwell National Park off Junction Road in Churchill.

The first part is very easy, winding along beside Billys Creek until a small weir is reached. Then starts the most challenging section of the GST. The route follows Billys Creek upstream through a valley with steep sides, crossing the creek 57 times. During a dry summer many of the crossings can be accomplished with dry feet if one is nimble, but in wetter times it is necessary to simply

“... we were woken by bird calls, particularly obvious being two lyrebirds ...”

wear old boots or the like and just wade across. A walking pole or two for balance can be very helpful here. The picturesque Billys Creek Falls makes a good lunch spot.

From here the track climbs more steeply, and the lush vegetation becomes even denser. One needs to look carefully for the posts with triangular yellow markers featuring Eric the Echidna to stay on the track. When the track leaves the creek it crosses Road 4 and climbs steadily until reaching the GST camping ground at Jumbuk – a distance of only 13.1 kilometres but taking seven hours or longer to walk! This camp site is only accessible by walkers, and is in a delightful bush setting. It has water, a lovely airy toilet, a cooking shelter with space to pitch two tents under a roof if desired, and a picnic table with seating.



Billys Creek Falls  
Darryl Whitaker



Jumbuk Rest Area  
Richard Appleton

After a quiet night we were woken by bird calls, particularly obvious being two lyrebirds giving us their full repertoire of calls. Back on the track we walked through a beautiful fern gully, then traversed a eucalypt seed orchard before joining a quiet 4WD road and passing through 2009 fire regrowth areas until reaching Traralgon Creek. This was the only creek we needed to cross today, so at the stony ford we removed our boots. An easy walk then took us down 4WD roads to a junction with Grand Ridge Road. Here was

our second camp site, at Pattison Rest Area. This is a smaller site, with less facilities – just a toilet, water and a small shelter – but quiet and peaceful. We had walked 13.8 kilometres but this section only needed about four hours.

Over the next three days we walked each of the loops centred on Balook and the Tarra Bulga NP, but because we returned to Balook each night we only carried day packs. We camped at the old Balook school and camp site, but this is now overgrown, although the GST Committee is trying to obtain its use as a joint community and GST site where walkers could camp. Camping is currently available by arrangement in the Balook Guest House grounds, or one can stay in luxury at the guest house itself! The three loop walks are fairly long, so if time is no object each could be done over two days.

Probably the most popular section of the GST is the Mount Tassie Loop. This is 18.3 kilometres and takes about 6.5 hours. It incorporates the Duff Sawmill Heritage Trail, a 3.8 kilometre section which reflects the story of an early timber harvesting settlement, but



Signboard near the start of the Mount Tassie loop  
Richard Appleton

also includes remnant old growth eucalypts, some regenerating rainforest and a beautiful Blackwood forest. The track then climbs to the top of Mount Tassie, where we passed two telecommunications towers before reaching a picnic area. There's a cairn here in remembrance of the bushfires, with panoramic views of the Latrobe Valley and the Strzelecki Ranges. The return track follows some 4WD roads and some newly constructed walking tracks, passing the Forget-Me-Not Falls and the Morningside Grange Homestead site, where camping is permitted, but no facilities are provided. Alternatively, it is only a couple of kilometres from here back to Balook.

The Tarra Valley loop is longer, nearly 23 kilometres. It passes through some spectacular bush before the track divides. For those choosing to break their walk, it is a quick 2.5 kilometres south to the Tarra Valley Caravan Park. Otherwise a turn to the



Mossy boulder on Tarra Valley Link Track  
Sharon Williams

west (right) takes us past two small waterfalls to join the Tarra Valley Road near what was once the separate national park of Tarra Valley. Here there are toilets, picnic shelters and a short walking path to Cyathea Falls. The track then follows the Great Forest Walk around to cross Grand Ridge Road and wind our way back to Balook.



Mount Tassie Rotary cairn overlooking the Latrobe Valley  
Richard Appleton

The longest loop, at 25 kilometre, is Macks Creek, incorporating Wild Cherry Track, and it has four creek crossings where you will probably get wet feet. Camping is available about halfway around at Macks Creek Hall, although there are no facilities here unless the hall itself is hired (see the GST website). The walk back to Balook (when looping clockwise) treats us to some great views out towards the coast, which can be seen on a clear day.

The GST is the chosen venue each year for the [Duncan's Run](#) 100 ultra-running event, comprising runs of 6, 28, 50 and 100 kilometres. The sections chosen by organisers vary from year to year, so runners have a new challenge each time.

The GST has just celebrated the launch of the second edition of their map set, comprising five detailed maps and an overview of the entire track. The maps are available for purchase online, as are some designed for downloading to electronic devices. I would strongly advise anyone thinking of walking the track to obtain copies of the maps before setting out. The Strzelecki Ranges are not particularly high, but snow is recorded each winter, and weather conditions can change quickly, so going prepared with suitable clothing and other gear is very necessary. The GST



Trail post  
Steb Fisher

is a grade four track, which means it has some challenging sections and walkers are expected to be able to navigate from a map and to be self-sufficient and well-equipped. Letting someone know in writing of your plans before you leave is very advisable.

If any readers are interested, the GST would always welcome more members to their Friends group, and new Committee members are eagerly sought. Contact can be made through the website [grandstrzeleckitrack.org.au](http://grandstrzeleckitrack.org.au)



Corrigans suspension bridge, Tarra Bulga National Park  
Steb Fisher

# Photo Gallery



Sunrise, Point Eric. Red sky in the morning, sailor's warning ... A two-day storm followed.  
Lex Harris



Competition: Tasmania March 2009

# BWA Photo Competition

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# Other States

## February 2016

### WINNER



Balls Pyramid  
John Walker

A very unusual experience - an unexpected opportunity to see and photograph the tallest volcanic sea stack on the planet (562 metres ASL). Seeing this impressive piece of the natural world at fairly close range was unfortunately not on a bushwalk. My method of access was possibly like using a sledgehammer to crack a walnut - a 138,000 tonne cruise ship got us within a kilometre or so of the impressive edifice. However, in my efforts to try and get a decent shot I did climb several flights of steps, endure near gale force headwinds at one point, evidenced by the Everest-like plume near the summit, and got chased off the forward deck by security because it was too dangerous. Balls has been visited and climbed in the past, but these days is off limits except for authorised research and for management purposes. Part of the reason is that it is home to *Dryococelus Australis* — the critically endangered Lord Howe Island Phasmid, Land Lobster (or stick insect). These creatures no longer exist anywhere else and were thought to be extinct until evidence of them was found in the 1960s, and ultimately a live population was discovered by an expedition in 2001. Although out of view, another highlight for me was the unmistakable silhouette of Lord Howe Island on the horizon about 30 kilometres away.



Horsehead Rock  
landsmith



Exploring the rocks  
Brian Eglinton



# Tasmania February 2016

## WINNER

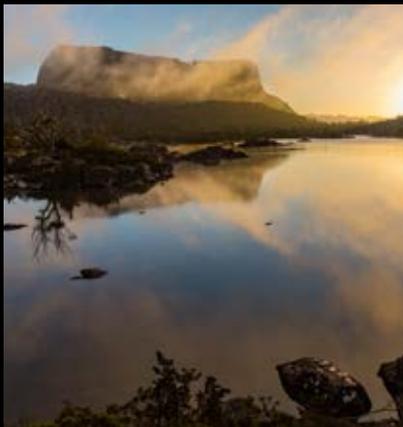


Blue Oberon  
Wilkography

After two days of hiking and climbing through the driving rain and wind, which included a slight case of hypothermia on the first day, I arrived as a sore, sodden but exulted witness to Lake Oberon.

I remember the first time I had really taken notice of the original photograph of this place which was made famous by the legendary Peter Dombrovskis. I was in another life, a darker unhappier stage that I'm happy to forget. Looking upon that original image I made a decision to change my lifestyle and start to live life to its fullest, I vowed to visit this area.

Three years later I achieved my goal and it was everything I had hoped for and more. I was a different person and most importantly I was happy within myself. I spent five days in the area and of them three were almost a complete white out, with visibility very low. I really wanted to witness sunrise over the area and the chance to capture it in my mind and on my camera seemed to be slipping out of my reach.



The dawn of another  
perfect day at Lake Elysia  
MJD

On the last day I was bunkered down in my tent with unrelenting wind and rain. There was one morning left for the weather to pass and I was hoping with all of my worth that it would magically clear and the gods of photography would shine upon me.

It took a few moments but late in the evening I realised that my tent wasn't being folded in half by the wind. I poked my head outside and it was dark but low and behold I could see the stars, the weather had passed and it was clear! I scrambled about and grabbed my camera gear stumbling out into the scrub in my thermals, it was cold but amazingly visibility was 100%. After capturing some beautiful night images of the area I went back to bed feeling confident that the morning would be what I had hoped for.



Into the mist my friend  
Thornbill

At 5am the alarm went off, I cleared the sleep from my eyes and poked my head out of the tent to be treated by amazing pastel tones you see in the image, IT WAS ON!! I called out to my friend Francois Fourie with excitement to get out of bed and hastily grabbed all my gear and scrambled over rocks and scoparia finally making my way to the end of a massive quartzite ledge that hung out over the area. I was hundreds of feet up and my vertigo was on fire but nothing was going to stop me from capturing this shot.

I'll never forget sitting there watching this scene unfold in front of me. The exultation of achieving my goal, the effort it had taken to get there, the fact that on the last day the weather had cleared and the pure power of nature putting on a display that is only witnessed by a few people each year made it an overwhelming experience.

This image means a lot to me personally and I hope I have shared its story with you. My intention is to inspire you to get out there and realise your goals no matter what they are. I will always look on this photograph with the knowledge that if you dream and believe in yourself then nothing can stop you.



# Landscapes February 2016

## WINNER



Flynns Beach sunrise  
landsmith

Luck plays a significant part in photography, as any long term snapper will testify. So it was that we found ourselves at Flynns Beach, Port Macquarie, for an overnight stay. I was determined to get up and shoot the sunrise, as was my partner. While we were there we met a lady who said she'd been down for the last four mornings but this was far and away the best she'd seen. As I say, you have to get lucky.



Hyperion near the summit  
of Walled Mt  
MJD



Sugarloaf  
Brian Eglinton



Nice place on a hot day  
John Walker



# Non-landscapes February 2016

## WINNER



White naped honeyeater  
landsmith

I'll never forget this. I pulled up the motorhome at a rarely used rest stop on the Jingalalla River (that's all right, I hadn't heard of it either until I pulled up), en route to McKillops Bridge in north-east Victoria. The place was alive with birds and you couldn't help but get a shot of some. During the hour I spent there only one other vehicle went by and I took time out to immerse myself in the stream while nature played all around.



Sax on the summit?  
Thornbill



Beach boulders  
Brian Eglinton



Read my lips  
John Walker



# Other States March 2016

## WINNER



Mallacoota sunrise  
landsmith

I'd driven past the turnoff that many times, always saying I must go there one day. So coming back from the Phillip Island superbikes I pulled in for a couple of nights with my partner. We both loved the place but were also glad it wasn't holiday time. If you like fishing or just being near the sea, you too might well like to stop here.



The creation of tide  
Lorraine Parker



On the edge  
Brian Eglinton



Skull rock  
John Walker



# Tasmania March 2016

## WINNER



The world awakes  
North-north-west

Mt Field West was my first Abel and is still one of my favourites - not least because there's such brilliant camping up on the plateau. And on mornings like this, with the scars from the logging in the Styx and Florentine valleys covered by fog and the skies flushed with colour, it feels as isolated from civilisation as the moon. You can just sit back and watch the light show while enjoying breakfast (or forgetting breakfast 'cause you're too busy with the camera).



On the Spires looking  
across The Font  
MJD



Call of the South West  
Tortoise



A little sun on  
Little Throne  
Peter Grant



Evening at Lake Youl  
Osik



Sunset over  
the South West  
CasualNerd



Sunset at Wild Dog Creek  
Ben Trainor



# Landscapes March 2016

## WINNER



On the Blade  
Ben Trainor

The Blade is a spectacular feature of the Three Capes Track at Tasman Peninsula. It is normally the highlight of day three of the walk. As we had made good time on day two, we continued to the Blade. Toward the end of Cape Pillar the track rises up a rock staircase to a grandstand view over Tasman Island, and views to the other two capes, Raoul and Hauy. I stood on top of a block at the end of the track and pointed the camera down. On two sides cliffs plummet hundreds of metres below to the ocean. Exhilarating.

A full trip report can be read here  
[bushwalk.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=42&t=23307](http://bushwalk.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=42&t=23307)



Sunset at Rhona  
North-north-west



A deserted Lake Rhona  
looking as beautiful as ever  
MJD



Cemetery Beach  
Lorraine Parker



Rocks behind  
Camel Rock  
landsmith



Top spot  
John Walker



Moonrise, sunset,  
Blue Peaks  
Peter Grant



# Non-landscapes March 2016

## WINNER



Pandani calligraphy at  
Twilight Tarn  
Ben Trainor

We spent a few days doing short walks around Mt Field. Just as the fagus was starting to turn golden we walked along the Tarn Shelf. We descended towards Twilight Tarn. After exploring the old skiing relics in Twilight Tarn Hut, I wandered to the edge of the Tarn and took this photo of the fronds of a large Pandani.



Red wattle bird  
landsmith



Styx'n'stones  
North-north-west



The Old Creek crossing  
John Walker



Small Wonders,  
Tasmania's Central Plateau  
Peter Grant



Pandani spirals  
Andrew Smyth



Lost in the bush  
Brian Eglinton



## Gaiters Scott King



The decision on whether or not to wear gaiters really depends on where you are walking. It's a question that seems to be asked a lot online, with new bushwalkers seeing others with these carefully crafted things wrapped around their legs and wondering what they're for. Here are a few of the advantages of wearing gaiters.

Scott on the summit of Minotaur with Mount Gould in background

### Why wear them?

#### They stop your boots filling up with mud, sand, leaves, or snow.

If you spend a day walking without gaiters you'll quickly find you are dealing with stuff starting to fill up your socks and boots. Leeches and ticks also fall into this category of things you don't want on your legs and in your socks! Note that gaiters will not stop all detritus, just most. Also, leeches and ticks can burrow past clothing. However, gaiters are a very good barrier.

#### They protect your lower legs.

Most people find that the Australian bush is quite abrasive and will start to wear through the bottom of your favourite walking pants, or if you like to wear shorts then the scratches on your legs will have you wishing you had some protection. This is particularly relevant for off-track walking.

#### They keep your feet dry.

Mud, puddles and wet undergrowth all seem to be out to get water inside your nice dry boots. Gaiters can keep your feet dry for a few days if you're careful. Wet feet can lead to blisters, so best to keep your feet dry.

### Snakes!

Many ask if gaiters are snake-proof. Of course this is difficult to test! Bushwalking gaiters are not snake-proof but they definitely can help if a snake thinks you are worth biting. Heavier gaiters made of canvas, Cordura or the like are better at resisting snake bites. One person has sewn ballistic fabric into his gaiters, the material used in so-called bullet-proof vests.

There seems to be no test about gaiters and snakes. A few general comments. Longer heavier gaiters are the most popular, and provide most protection against snakes. However, it may be that heavier gaiters allow a snake to latch onto the gaiter. It may be that with gaiters that seem to be more snake-proof the wearer will take more chances. In snake country – perhaps on most bushwalks – always exercise care about snakes and other hazards.

“Gaiters can keep your feet dry for a few days if you're careful.”



## What types of gaiters are there?

### Ankle high

These are great for trail running and travelling in dry, hot environments where sand and seeds are likely to fill up your shoes.

### Alpine and Cross Country Skiing

Designed to keep out snow and ice, these are usually reserved for mountain adventures above the snow line.

### General purpose

This is the type seen most at popular places like Tasmania's Overland Track. These gaiters take many forms and are the topic of much discussion and debate at campsites and online.

### Fabric

The fabric used in gaiters is critical to how useful and durable they'll be. So what materials are best?

### Nylons

These are some of the most abrasion-resistant fabrics available, so are great for gaiters. Sometimes called Cordura or Kodra. They are usually polyurethane coated on the inside. Some of the cheaper gaiters are made entirely from these fabrics; the more expensive types tend to use them on just the lower sections, where abrasion is a problem.

### Breathable

Gore-tex, eVent or other varieties of these fabrics are used on the more high-end gaiters. They are not the best fabrics for abrasion so will commonly be used for the upper sections. There is a lot of debate regarding which of these fabrics is the most breathable. These fabrics use Durable Water Repellent (DWR) which is an invisible coating on the outer layer, making water bead on the surface to ensure the fabric can still breathe when wet. When used on gaiters the DWR tends to wear off really quickly meaning once wet, they don't breathe at all. With a bit of sweat, over time the pores in the breathable membrane tend to clog up meaning even when dry, breathability is not that great. There is also the annoying problem of them falling down if they are not tight around your leg.

“When used on gaiters the DWR tends to wear off really quickly meaning once wet, they don't breathe at all.”

### Canvas

My personal favourite for gaiter uppers. It's breathable when dry and waterproof when wet. Canvas is also very durable and will live through years of abuse and still be in one piece. It's also quite stiff which means gaiters tend to be able to hold themselves up without being tight around the leg.



The perfect pair of gaiters can be pleasant to wear, you forget you have them on and you can enjoy your walk. Poor quality gaiters can be annoying and have you worrying about them instead of enjoying your walk. Worse still, you end up just taking them off and carrying them!

“ Many designs are made with boots in mind and aren't really suitable for low-cut shoes.

### Top tips for general purpose gaiters

- Choose gaiters that will hold themselves up. The best way to avoid sweaty legs is to be able to open the top of the gaiters and let some air flow in. If your gaiters don't have this stiffness then you'll need to have them tight around your calves, trapping all that heat in. The best breathability you'll get is to be able to open the top of the gaiter when it's hot.
- Make sure your gaiter is low enough to overlap your footwear. If you wear trail runners then you need to make sure you get a good amount of cover by a gaiter that sits nice and low. Many designs are made with boots in mind and aren't really suitable for low-cut shoes.
- Weight on your feet can be really taxing on a long walk so choose gaiters that are suitable for the type of walking you are doing. If you tend to walk mainly on formed tracks and won't be seeing too much scrub then choose light gaiters. If you plan on heading off track then invest in a good pair of heavy, high-fitting gaiters that will give you maximum protection. The extra weight of these easily pays off when the going gets tough.
- If you wear long pants, tuck them into the gaiters so that the pants hang over the top of the gaiters. This means that small pieces of scrub, pebbles and dirt will flow over the fold and outside.

- Gaiters generally fasten at back or front. The front is easier to access and the back has more protection from scrub. Studs are good providing they can be done up, which may not be the case unless the gaiters are a size bigger than the boots and legs. Velcro may work well if it's wide enough. The gaiter hook for the lower boot lace needs to have depth so that it will not jump out.

The most important thing is that you get out there and find out what you like, nothing like a few days in the wilderness to give you time to think about all the pros and cons of your gaiters. See you out there!



Scott and his family live in Tasmania's north in the Tamar Valley. His father introduced him to bushwalking, dragging him on extended trips as a reluctant teenager. He never quite understood his father's passion for the Tasmanian bush until he was older but now takes every opportunity to get out and explore in remote areas. In his spare time you will find him climbing some of the lesser-known Tasmanian mountains on the Abels list ... He started [Tasgear](#) after seeing a need for gear that would be suited to the conditions encountered in Tasmania. He believes that an island with such a strong bushwalking community should have locally made gear.



# Australian Hiker

## Tim Savage



I launched Australian Hiker in November 2016 with the aim of being the “go to site” for all things hiking in Australia as well as providing an Australian perspective on overseas hiking.

The moon over the Orny Glacier, Switzerland, just before sunrise, from the Orny Hut  
Tim Savage

The idea for this blog originated in 2014 and developed out of a struggle to find relevant information I needed for our 2016 Larapinta Trail trip. As you can probably guess I'm a compulsive planner who needs every bit of information that I can lay my hands on, and there is no better way to demonstrate this than to own up and say that I'm currently working on seven major hikes. I will be undertaking these hikes over the next seven years and they range from a week to over 1500 kilometres.

If you haven't twigged by now I'm also a bit obsessive.

Now I also need to explain what I mean by "relevant information". Much of the key information is readily available in many of the excellent guidebooks and websites but for me there is a lack of what can only be described as fringe information. I'll use the example of last year's Larapinta Trail trip to better explain what I mean. In planning my 2016 Larapinta Trail trip I couldn't find where I would get mobile phone coverage. The Larapinta guidebooks as wonderful as they are, are also written from a perspective of travelling east to west and don't read particularly well when you travel the trip in reverse by starting at Mt Sonder. As much as I searched, I couldn't find anyone who had walked the entire trail in trail runners and who had posted their experience online. These are just some of the examples that for an obsessive planner drove me insane.

In addition, many of the gear reviews available online are from a European or US perspective about products that are often not easily available in Australia. I have size 14 US feet and as a result have a very limited range of choice in footwear - I have had to do my own research based on overseas sites as a starting point. It was these experiences and others including for a week-long hike in Tasmania that I am currently planning, convinced me there was a gap in the Australian blogosphere and one I wanted to fill in part by sharing my experiences and knowledge.

Being a compulsive individual, I have spent the last two years planning the launch of Australian

“... there was a gap in the Australian blogosphere and one I wanted to fill ...”

Hiker. Choosing a name, getting the website developed, registering business/website/twitter and other social media names and working out how I wanted to present the brand. I listened to a number of podcasts on setting up blogs including about the potential pitfalls; I managed to fall into every one of them even though I knew what they were. Even with two years of planning, I couldn't meet my self-imposed of launch date of 1 August 2016 as life just got in the way.

In late 2015 my wife Gill threw me a curve ball when she suggested that I should also do a podcast. I'm an avid podcast listener and listen to about 11 hours of podcasts each



Tim Savage recording an Australian Hiker podcast  
Gill Savage

week including a number of outdoor podcasts from around the world. For some reason I hadn't even thought of this as a possibility. It made sense as not everyone wants to read websites to get their information and podcasts allow you to do more than one thing at once. Personally, I listen to podcasts when I walk to and from work each day as well as when I hit the gym.

I'm a born extrovert who doesn't shy away from a conversation. I have lectured at university and TAFE, planned and run conferences, given talks to very large crowds and I am more than happy to do so. But sticking a microphone in front of my face with no one else in the room for the first time was a real culture shock; I hated the sound of my own voice as apparently everyone does when they hear their recorded voice replayed. It was the podcast that delayed my launch date. Not just getting over my apprehension but also learning all the processes and the technology that was needed. For Gill and I, episode 11 was where we were starting to really feel comfortable. I am sure if you listen to the shows in release order you can hear us grow. While hiking the Larapinta Trail last year, I undertook a series of interviews and

most people I approached were happy to chat about their experiences, which provides a unique perspective on what life on the trail is like.

The Australian Hiker podcast, is our point of difference to other sites and is released every second Wednesday with an additional bonus on-trail episode published at least once a month. As this article goes to print, I will have released about 15 episodes and will release a further six by the end of March 2017, which can be downloaded from iTunes, Stitcher Radio as well as from our website. As at early January 2017, we were being listened to in 10 countries with the uptake growing exponentially with each episode release.

“The Australian Hiker podcast, is our point of difference to other sites ...

Prior to our launch date, I managed to convince my wife that she should also be involved in Australian Hiker and while this is essentially my baby, she plays a prominent part in the podcast as well as undertaking hiking and gear reviews from a female perspective. Gill also keeps me grounded in reality and plays the role of editor in chief - I have a very quirky writing style that I developed in a previous outdoor career!



Tim and Gill after completing the Larapinta Trail west to east in August 2016  
Stephen Long

Now I'll be the first to admit that for one website/blog/podcast to attempt to be the "go to" resource is a big ask. I have learnt the hard way in the last three months exactly what is involved to grow a blog. On average I spend about 12 hours a week at the computer and I'm still learning from my posts what works, and to be honest, I'm not always a good judge. I'm not afraid to identify the good with the bad so don't sugar coat reviews but rather tell it like I see it.

I have an overall goal for where Australian Hiker is heading. It will take me six years to get there and I'm looking forward to sharing the journey with you. Keep an eye out online as we grow our web presence and also keep an eye out for us on the trail; we'll be the ones with the digital recorder who may ask you if you want to share your experiences.

Happy Hiking!

Internet [australianhiker.com.au](http://australianhiker.com.au)  
 Facebook [@AustralianHiker](https://www.facebook.com/AustralianHiker)  
 Twitter [@aussiehiker](https://twitter.com/aussiehiker)  
 Instagram [@australianhiker](https://www.instagram.com/australianhiker)



Gill and Tim

The best way to describe Tim is obsessive. He's a compulsive planner; a compulsive walker has a love of learning, as well as a love of helping others to learn. For Tim walking is a way to connect with the world in an almost primal manner and he identifies most of his 'spiritual' moments throughout his life as coming from time spent outdoors. He has a background in landscape architecture, horticulture and cultural heritage with a particular interest in how we engage with the environment. He has been a hiker on and off for over 40 years and enjoys walks ranging from a short walks to work through to multi-day hikes. In recent years he has become interested in long-distance and ultralight hiking.



Gill and Tim after coming off the Orny Glacier going to the chairlift that will take them back to Champex Lac  
 Paulo Pieroni

# Sunscreen

Carly Chabal and Helen Smith



Sunscreen is great for covering areas that clothing can't always protect like the face, nose, ears, and hands. No one wants sunburn, and sunscreen is an easy way to create a barrier against sun damage.

Sunscreen works by absorbing or reflecting the more dangerous parts of the spectrum of sunlight. Organic sunscreens are carbon-based and contain avobenzone or oxybenzone, which absorbs UV light, thus preventing it from reaching the skin. Inorganic sunscreens, often zinc, scatters or reflects UV light. Considering how lightweight and easy it is to apply, sunscreen is remarkably effective. However, care must be taken to re-apply frequently, especially after swimming or moderate sweating. Skin sensitivity to the sun varies between individuals, so different sunscreens work better for some people than others. Sunscreen has SPF ratings, measuring how much protection is given from sunburn. The higher the SPF rating, the higher the level of protection.

If all other things, like time spent in the sun and level of protective clothing worn, are equal, sunscreen effectiveness depends on skin type and how well the sunscreen stays on the skin.

Where possible, select a broad-spectrum sunscreen as this protects from UVA and UVB. To cater for more sweating, a sports-specific or water-resistant sunscreen is preferable on bushwalks.

A medical study found that the optimal way to apply sunscreen is 15-30 minutes before sun exposure and then again after 15-20 minutes in the sun. Once this initial reapplication is done, reapply sunscreen every two hours (or as directed on the label) and sooner if sweating a lot since it comes off through perspiration. On a bushwalk, it might be easy to forget the first re-application after 15-20 minutes in the sun, so aim to do it at the first break and then again at lunch and afternoon tea.

When trying new skin products, it is always best to test for allergies. This testing is done by applying a small amount to your wrist and checking for any irritation or swelling. Always remember to check the expiration date of your sunscreen to make sure you're getting the maximum effectiveness from it.

Sunscreen is undoubtedly a fantastic solution for sun protection, but there are environmental considerations. Zinc oxide is

commonly used in sunscreen: it's effective at absorbing harmful UV light, and there are reports showing no known side effects to human health. However, there may be adverse environment impacts. Zinc oxide nanoparticles may have toxic effects on marine animals with knock-on effects to whole ecosystem processes. Even at tiny concentrations, nanoparticles may interrupt essential cellular processes and make some marine species more susceptible to further contaminants.

So that means we have to make a choice between protecting our skin or an animal's skin, right? Not

necessarily. Perhaps the solution is a compromise. For example, if the group is planning to take a swim in a creek or natural pool, consider alternatives to sunscreen such as clothing or swimming in shady areas to avoid excessive sun exposure. It's important to minimise the amount of chemicals leached into the water, but equally important to protect yourself.

Consider wearing a light layer of sunscreen on your face and exposed skin when not on a bushwalk or at the beach. Protecting your skin from sun exposure keeps your skin looking younger, as well as preventing sunspots that can become cancerous. Maybe try to make a light sunscreen application part of your morning routine. Or keep sunscreen in your car for those extra sunny days. Wearing sunscreen may sound like common sense, but using it regularly and limiting direct sun exposure can improve the health of your skin, making time outdoors more enjoyable.



“It's important to minimise the amount of chemicals leached into the water, but equally important to protect yourself.”

Carly Chabal is a senior geology major at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, USA. Her passion for the outdoors has lead her to Sydney where she has a spring internship with the National Parks Association helping out with the campaign and activities programs. After exploring the city during the week, Carly likes to head out into the bush or to a remote beach on the weekend.

# Things Enjoyed Most While Bushwalking



The [Bushwalk.com forum](#) has a [thread](#) about what we enjoy in the bush. This can be hard to quantify, and may mean different things to different people. There's a few aspects that most would probably agree on – the beauty of the mountains, the slow pace, being able to cast aside the demands of modern life, nature, friendship with those that are met. Banjo Patterson's *Clancy of the overflow* describes friendship nicely:

And the bush hath friends to meet him, and their kindly voices greet him  
In the murmur of the breezes and the river on its bars,  
And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended,  
And at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars.

There's also the sense of mateship, of looking out for each other, even people not in your party. Redgum wrote about a war, and their *I was only 19* lyrics apply to the bush:

But you wouldn't let your mates down 'til  
they had you dusted off,  
So you closed your eyes and thought about  
somethin' else.

The posts are set out below, with three people writing more expansively.

Stephen Lake

I'll go with the need to be in nature, soak up the scenery and to just be in the moment.

Being in the moment is kind of essential when navigating or finding a new off track way to somewhere. Bushwalking, particularly off track, clears my mind of clutter like nothing else.

Neilmny

No phone reception!!

Pazzar

Sitting around the fire at the end of the day.

Ribuck

The solitude.

Tacblades

Just the need to be in nature.

Walkon

At first I wanted to get into overnight bushwalking for fitness plus the challenge of being able to leave on foot and to "survive" with what I carry. Then I discovered that I'm happiest when I'm out walking and camping. Being focused and immersed in my Aussie surroundings, away from civilisation.

Neo

Being completely aware in the present moment.

Devoswitch

Views ...

Wildlife encounters ...

Incoming nasty weather ...

Lungfuls of fresh forest air ...

Ofuros

Love the outdoors, helps reset the stress meter, great opportunities to make great memories. Also I'm a sucker for rain, embrace the suck!

Taipan821

I go bush because I love the feeling of having a place to yourself. So often these days it's hard to find special places that haven't been loved to death by too many people. Bushwalking gives me the ability to visit this places and spend some time in them. My aim is to leave it exactly as I found it so that others can experience it as I have.

Scottyk



The Mount Anne Range shelf camp with Mount Lot in the clouds  
Scottyk

## Venturing into unknown territory Tai

After retiring in 2014 from decades of a desk job I went bushwalking for the first time in April 2016. (It took a while to buy all the gear and be confident enough to join a bushwalking club.)

The anticipation at the beginning of each walk is what I like best. To me each walk is like venturing into unknown territory, never knowing what to expect until the walk is done and dusted.

The sudden feel of a cool breeze on a hot day is bliss.

Water getting into the lunch box while having lunch under the trees in the rain on a cold, wet winter day is priceless.

The balancing act required to keep the feet dry while stepping over wobbly stones on a flooded creek and the final acceptance of the need to wade through ankle deep icy water in full grain leather hiking boots and merino socks all made the walk more challenging. The joy of discovering that walking in wet boots aka mini swimming pools is not too bad after all, and toes remain warm if water is squeezed from your socks is knowledge treasured.

Staying warm and dry while wearing overpriced rain wear eased the conscience a bit.

The self-doubt and asking what am I doing here when the relentless steep ascent and descent kept coming. The feeling of achievement while walking towards the car at the end of the walk and maybe I will book another walk that's a bit harder.



Glorious day at Marions Lookout, Cradle Mountain  
Tai

## Freedom to go where I feel like going North-north-west

*... and but for the sky there are no fences facing.* (His Bobness, Mr Tambourine Man)

I walk for many reasons, not least as therapy. The best things about bushwalking are the freedom to go where I feel like going, the solitude, the beauty, the peace. Exploration - not going somewhere no-one else has been, but simply somewhere new for me, and hopefully by finding my own way there instead of blindly and blithely following someone else's path. Doing that, and coping with whatever the terrain and conditions might throw at you (and, in Tassie, they tend to throw an awful lot) provide a sense of achievement and competence that are almost totally lacking elsewhere in my life.

There's a question that pops up at fairly regular intervals in the forum, and also is asked outside it when people find out you're a serious bushwalker: "Why?"

I once answered that with another quote. (And I'm still not sure who originally said this; I can't find a reference to the line anywhere. Even Google can't help.) "Walking isn't a way of going somewhere, it's a way of being somewhere." It's my favourite way of being places; wild places, especially. You don't have to go fast or far, just meander along hither, thither and yon, immersed in a landscape whose details change with every

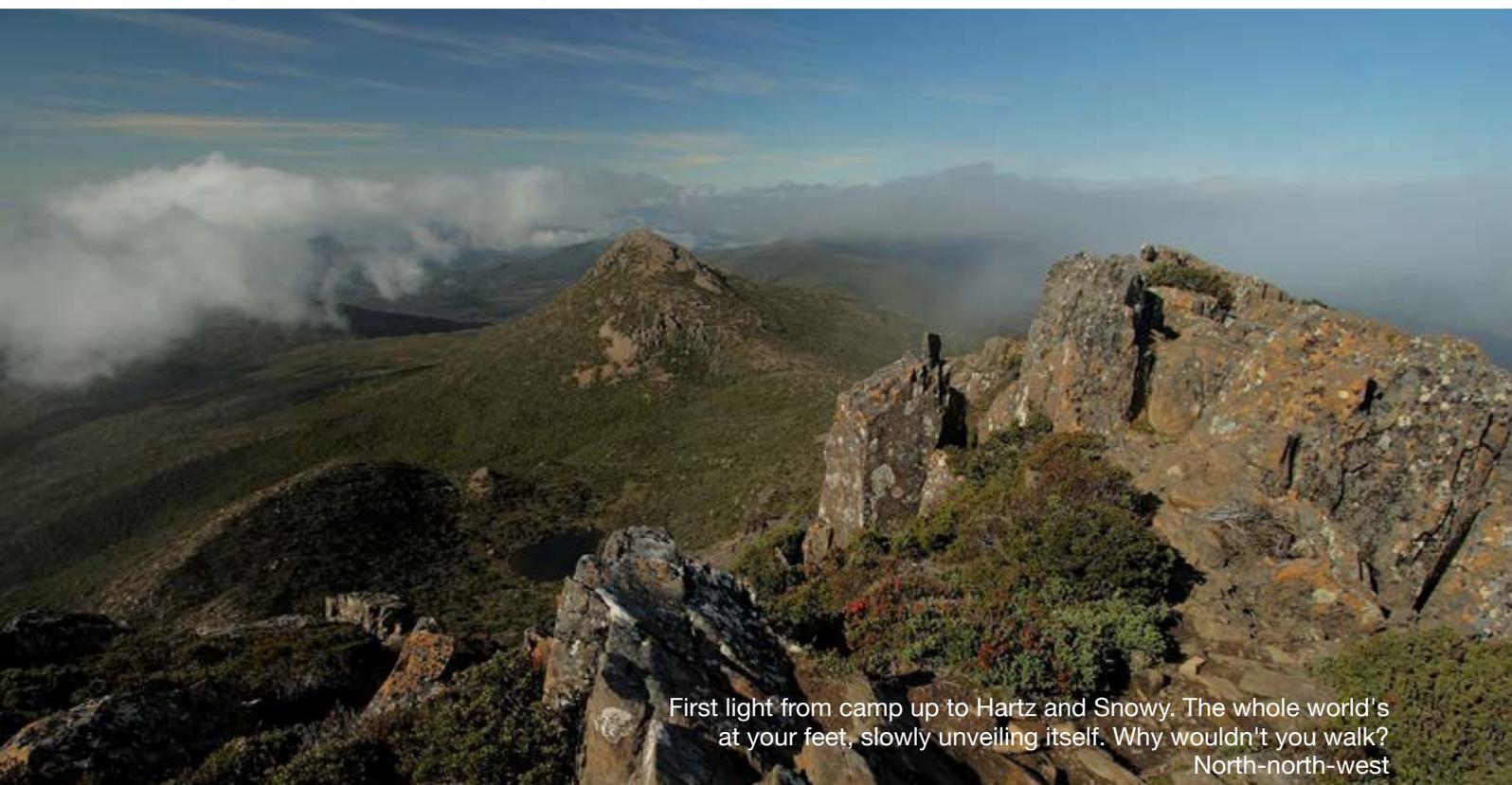
step but which is as close to being timeless as anything can be in this world.

But the best thing about it ... there are times, mostly on mountains for me, when I've struggled and sweated and sworn and stumbled my way, alone, to a summit or lookout. It might have taken just an hour or so, it might have taken a week or more to get there, but that doesn't matter. All that matters at that time is the being; being there, in that place, at that time, so totally a part of the place and time that you've achieved something like the Buddhist nirvana and are not only at peace with yourself and the world, but a part of the world, of the universe, subsumed within it. Aware but unconcerned. You soar - your mind, your whole awareness is outside of yourself. There is no pain, no discomfort, just glory. Something beyond joy. "And thus I am absorbed, and this is **Life**."

To sit on rocks - to muse o'er flood and fell,  
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,  
Where things that own not man's dominion  
dwell,

And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;  
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,  
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;  
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;  
This is not Solitude, 'tis but to hold  
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her  
stores unrolled.

Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto II, Stanza XXV.*



First light from camp up to Hartz and Snowy. The whole world's at your feet, slowly unveiling itself. Why wouldn't you walk?  
North-north-west

## **A feeling of calmness, nostalgia, and of just belonging there**

**Nicolas Bertin**

I used to hate hiking when I was a kid. Every year my parents took my brother and me to the Pyrénées. When you're a kid, you don't understand scenery. I also used to get nasty blisters after a few hours of walking, and I'd be unable to walk for days.

When I was 27 I moved to Melbourne and everything changed. First of all, I enjoyed the amazing wildlife, and the joys of camping. In Australia you can camp in the bush, and at least at the time in 2011 it was still inexpensive to camp in Victoria. I started to enjoy solo bushwalking, buying maps, guidebooks, looking at where to go next. I love the bush and most of all wildlife. I became descent at birdwatching, loved bumping into kangaroos, echidnas, emus etc ... I basically blew all my money on travelling all over Australia: Western Australia, the Top End, New South Wales, and my favorite, Tasmania. There's a feeling of

calmness, nostalgia, and of just belonging here I haven't found anywhere else in the world. I've also enjoyed motivating friends to go with me in the bush. It's a great feeling to show people places they miss by being too timid to just go there.

Coming back to France, I found a job in Grenoble. That meant the walking bug I had developed needed another way of feeding itself in the French Alps. This is real mountain hiking, with daily climbs of up to 1500 metres, commonly 1000 metres. I got used to it, and now I hike all year, snowshoeing in winter, using crampons in late autumn when there's ice on the tracks. I never regret going for a walk, you'll always find something. It can be a close encounter with wildlife, a great view that impacts you deeply, the opportunity of showing foreign friends how great your country looks, finding traces of ancient cultures, and more. It's just a big part of my life now, and having to change job soon, again, my first criterion is "is it close to great walking tracks?"



Near Col de l'Iseran in Vanoise, France  
Nicolas Bertin

# In the News

## 10,000 members



In January 2017 the [Bushwalk.com forum](#) membership reached 10,000. In 2016 the forum had 315,000 people in 670,000 sessions looking at 2.7 million pages. Bushwalk.com manager Matt McClelland said, "The quality advice and support, friendship and fun games are key metrics which I just can't quantify that I see as being of great value."

The Tasmanian game [Where am I?](#) has now hit 1000 screens. See how well you know Tassie, or play the Australian version [Where is it?](#)

## South Coast Track upgrade



Surprise Bay bridge

Tasmania's Parks and Wildlife Service is continuing its [upgrade](#) of much of the South Coast Track. The completed works include sections of new track, significant boardwalk repairs, and drainage and erosion control works. Surprise Bay has a new bridge, and Louisa River has a new toilet. These improvements build on the work already completed as part of a four-year \$2 million project that has resulted in the construction of a new boardwalk in the Deadmans Bay and Freney Lagoon area, new footbridges at Melalueca Inlet and Moth Creek, and replacement of boats and other upgrades at the New River Lagoon crossing.



Louisa River toilet



Buoy Creek Plains completed track



# Tasmania's Ancient Forest Fires

David Bowman

In Western Tasmania, more than 72,000 hectares have been burnt by a cluster of bushfires, most of them ignited by a spectacular dry lightning storm that crossed the island on 13 January 2016.

After the fire  
Doogs

The geographic scale of the fires can be seen on the [Tasmanian Fire Service website](#). These fires pose an enormous, ongoing challenge to the fire service, with little immediate prospect of a speedy resolution to this crisis given the absence of soaking rains in the foreseeable future.

Thankfully there has been no loss of life and comparatively limited damage to property because most fires are in remote areas. But there is mounting concern about the environmental impacts of the fires to the Tasmanian World Heritage Wilderness, especially fires in the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and Cradle Mountain-Lake Saint Clair National Park. Bushwalking tracks, such as the popular Overland Track, have been closed until at first week of February 2016.

Faced with so many fires, the Tasmanian Fire Service has implemented a triage process, focusing on threats to life and property. This includes farmland, critical infrastructure such as major hydro-electric transmission lines, and also some core areas with extraordinary biodiversity values.

Remote area teams, including specialists from New Zealand to help exhausted fire crews, supported by water bombing aircraft, are fighting the fires in Cradle Mountain-Lake Saint Clair and Walls of Jerusalem National Parks.

### Why are world heritage values threatened by these fires?

The fires are extremely destructive for two main reasons.

First, the fires are threatening vegetation that is unique to Tasmania, including iconic alpine species such as the Pencil Pine and cushion plants, as well as temperate rainforests.

Second, the fires are burning up large areas of organic soils upon which the unique Tasmanian vegetation depends. It is

extremely unlikely burnt areas with the endemic alpine flora will ever fully recover given the slow growth of these species and the increased risk of subsequent fires given the change to [more flammable vegetation](#) and the slow accumulation of peat soils, which takes thousands of years.

Past fires have resulted in a permanent switch from the unique Tasmanian alpine vegetation to [more fire-tolerant vegetation](#).

“... fires are threatening vegetation that is unique to Tasmania, including iconic alpine species such as the Pencil Pine and cushion plants

“It is extremely unlikely burnt areas with the endemic alpine flora will ever fully recover given the slow growth of these species ...



### Is climate change the cause?

Destructive fires in the alpine zone are known to have occurred in western Tasmania in the past 10,000 years, yet these fires were extremely infrequent until European colonisation. Due to the reckless use of fire by prospectors, pastoralists, recreationalists and arsonists there has been a drastic contraction of much of Tasmania's unique vegetation.

Since the declaration of the World Heritage Area, fire has been carefully regulated with a prohibition of campfires, which has sharply reduced the number of bushfires. Unfortunately, over the last decade there have been an increasing number of lightning storms that have ignited fires.

For instance, in 2013 the Giblin River fire that burned more than 45,000 hectares was set off by a lightning storm, one of the largest fires in Tasmania in living memory.

The current fire season is shaping up to be truly extraordinary because of the sheer number of fires set by lightning, their duration, and erratic and destructive behaviour that has surprised many seasoned fire fighters. The root cause of the has been the [record-breaking dry spring](#) and the largely rain-free and [consistently warm summer](#), which has left fuels and peat soils bone dry.

There are two ways to think about the recent fire situation in Tasmania. We can focus on the extreme climate conditions and unusual fire behaviour, or we can see what is happening as entirely predictable and consistent with climate change.

“... such destructive fires are likely to become more common under a warming and drying climate ...”

I have formed the latter view because the current fires are part of a global pattern of increasing destructive fires driven by [extreme fire weather](#).

A critical feature of the current Tasmanian fires is the role of lightning storms – climate is not only creating the precursor weather conditions for the fires, it is also providing the storms that ignite them.

### What can be done?

Obviously we need to maintain efforts to contain the fires in the iconic World Heritage Area. Given that such destructive fires are likely to become more common under a warming and drying climate we need to increase the capacity to attack fires quickly using both air craft and specially trained personnel.

However, under a warming climate the ecological niche of much of the unique Tasmanian vegetation is shrinking, so serious thought is required about moving species to artificially protected environments, such as botanical gardens. In the worse case scenario moving some species to sub-Antarctic island may not be far-fetched.

“... fire has been carefully regulated with a prohibition of campfires, which has sharply reduced the number of bushfires.”

More fundamentally, the loss of vegetation that takes thousands of years to recover from disturbance is a warning shot that climate change has the potential to result in bushfires that will impact food security, water quality and critical infrastructure.

“... the loss of vegetation that takes thousands of years to recover from disturbance is a warning shot that climate change has the potential to result in bushfires that will impact food security, water quality and critical infrastructure.”

In other words, like the Pencil Pines, our ecological niche will be threatened.



#### David Bowman

Professor, Environmental Change Biology,  
University of Tasmania

The article was first published in [The Conversation](#) (an independent source of news and views, sourced from the academic and research community and delivered direct to the public) on 29 January 2016.

# Magazines



## Wild Issue 157

Wild returns in 2017 with an action-packed issue brimming with adventure. From bushwalking in the Snowys to pack rafting Tassie's Jane River, and even luring goshawks on Christmas Island – this issue has a little of everything!



## AG Outdoor Jan-Feb issue

We reveal six of the best Queensland outdoor destinations, offer an extensive adventure guide to the South Island of New Zealand, and describe an epic rafting trip down

the legendary Snowy River here in Australia. We also tackle the spectacular Arkaba Walk in South Australia, and explore the best family 4WD trip in Australia - the spectacular Binns Track in the NT. We go bikepacking in Tropical North Queensland and Canada's British Columbia, and reveal the essential canoe kit for that family paddling adventure.



## The Great Walks Feb-Mar issue

From the Noosa Hinterland to Mount Baw Baw in the Victoria High Country they showcase some of Australia's best summer hikes.

This list also includes some

amazing overseas destinations including Israel, Ireland and Italy.

They also showcase top gear to beat the heat and if you're training for that BIG walk you'll love the first two parts of their four-part training/fitness special in the Walksmart section.

They interview a BBC nature documentary cameraman, give you some choice DIY hiking snack recipes – and as a bonus they've got another great competition where you and your hiking buddy can take a multi-day guided walk with our good friends at Life's An Adventure.



## Outer Edge Issue 50

- Beyond the Arctic circle
- Alyssa Azar: Everest
- 50,000 stars: Uluru Trek
- Paddle challenge at Solomons

- Swallowed by the sea
- Ebikes exposed
- Crocodiles and ice



# In the News

## Wild magazine business for sale

*Wild* magazine was founded in 1981 by Chris Baxter, a Victorian climber who was well respected by his peers. Chris mortgaged his house to start *Wild* - serious stuff. *Wild* became the benchmark for outdoor magazines.

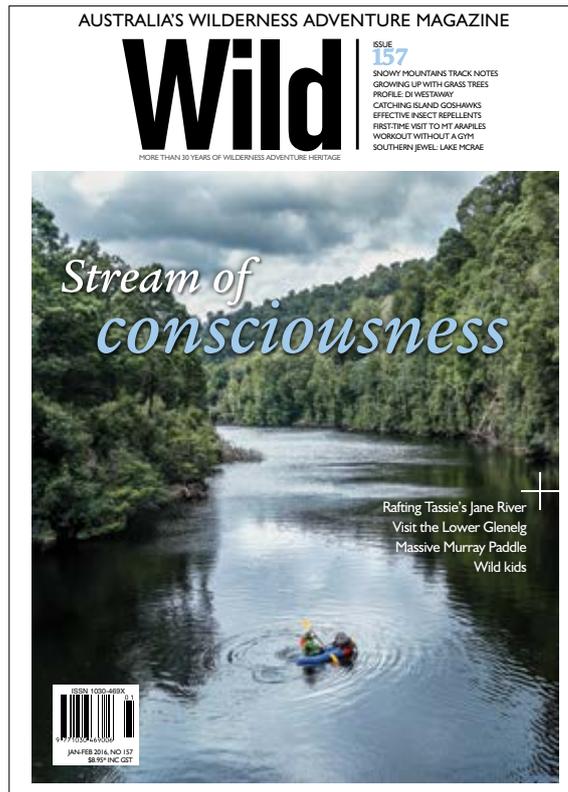
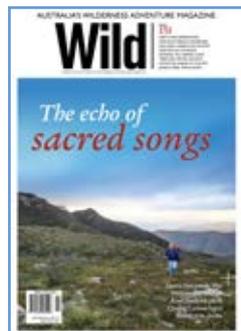
Increasing postal costs meant a challenge, but readers remained loyal. Chris had to cease involvement in his magazines due to ill health. In 2002 he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for "service to environmental journalism, through the promotion of wilderness activities and protection of the environment." He died in 2010.

The new owners faced a major challenge – the internet. Print media is slowly withering because online publications can get similar results for minimal cost. Ah yes, but a screen does not have the same quality as a 90 gsm glossy art four colour process page.

Now *Wild* is being sold, and it is hoped that *Wild* continues. Whatever happens, *Wild* and Chris have left their indelible mark on the Australian outdoors. See the [forum discussion](#) for more comments.

*Wild*, Australia's wilderness adventure magazine since 1981, is now seeking a good home following the announcement that it's current publisher is continuing to focus on its B2B-only strategy. With a long heritage, including a back catalogue of almost 160 issues over 35+ years, prospective new owners stand to gain much more than an established brand and loyal readership.

Expressions of interest should be sent to John Blondin, Media Broker, at [jblondin@mediatitles.com.au](mailto:jblondin@mediatitles.com.au).



# In the News

## Trans Canada Trail

The world's longest unbroken network of land and water trails at 24,000 kilometres in length will open this year in Canada, spanning the entire country.



Photo by Miachael Gil

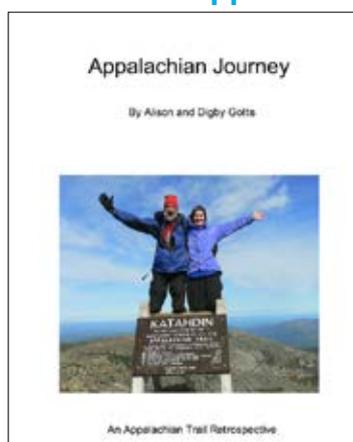
## This is the last summer to save the wild orange-bellied parrots



Only 14 birds of this species are left in Tasmania. Researchers will monitor them whole summer through to make sure they breed successfully.

Female Orange-bellied Parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*), Melaleuca, SW Conservation Area, Tasmania. Photo by JJ Harrison

## A book on Appalachian Journey



Digby from Bushwalk.com forum just self-published an ebook of their stories from walking the Appalachian Trail in 2010. It is available as 270 image-rich pages for \$A20 from this link [blurb.com/ebooks/610972-appalachian-journey](http://blurb.com/ebooks/610972-appalachian-journey). About 70 pages can be previewed without payment.

A hard copy is available, but he hasn't put it on public display as it costs out at about \$A130, but if anyone is that excited by it, he could make it available.

The stories are focused mainly on the people on the trail, rather than the personal hardships, logistics and scenery, although they do play a role.

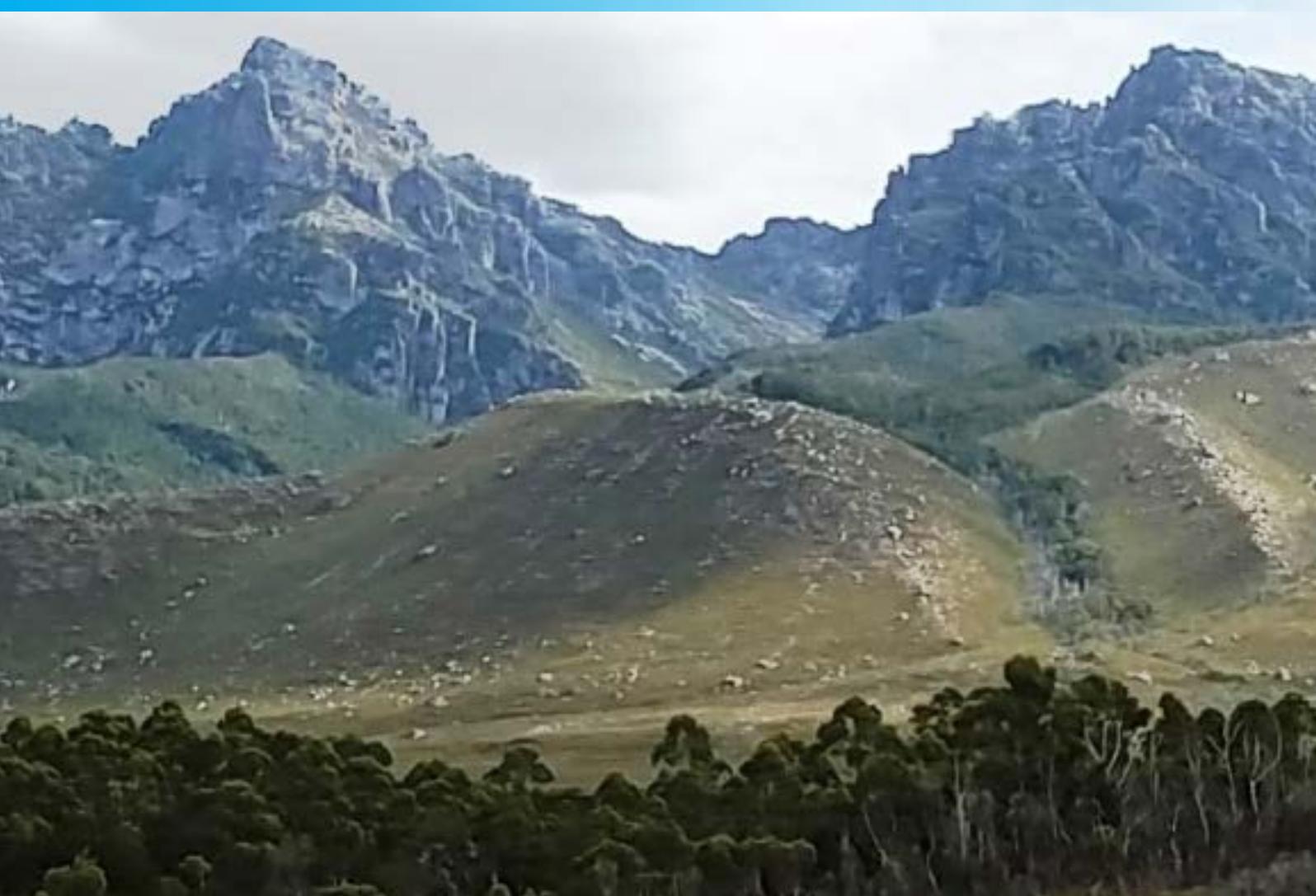
## Tasmania Police search operation to rescue a lost diabetic

A bushwalker took insulin to last four hours on a one hour walk. He and his friends got lost and were evacuated at night by a helicopter.



# Food to Feed a Tribe

Sonya Muhlsimmer



Before the year goes on any further, I hope you all had a safe and an adventurous Christmas and New Years break. Did you spend it somewhere special? I did, with an awesome bunch of friends. I spent New Year's eve at Lake Oberon, in the Western Arthur Ranges in Tasmania. Oh what a mighty walk that was. I was out for 10 days and walked up the Alpha Moraine and down the Kappa Moraine.

My pack weighed around 22 kilograms at the start. One friend pointed out that I was carrying around 40% of my body weight. (*Sub-editor note – Sonya needs to eat more and put on weight.*) Well it sure felt like it. Perhaps my pack was a little on the heavy side, just a little ... But we had a group of five so we needed lots of food (um, well snacks, oh and wine for celebration). We were out during New Year's eve so we had to celebrate somehow. And of course, I always make sure I have lots of good food.

One of my friends is a vegan, so I also had to be picky about what food we could share for our celebratory meal. It had to be nutritious to get us up, over, down, and around the mountains. It had to be tasty for everyone, light to carry and easy enough to cook for five people. For those that have done this walk, do you remember the Beggary Bumps? I lost count at six but apparently there were 15 bumps to negotiate. My oh my, what a walk that was.

My friend Chris Riley took this photo on day one, Western Arthur Range in view. Here we come! Thanks Chris! I dropped my camera in a pool of water under a waterfall going up the Alpha Moraine on a wet and rainy day. Let me say that my next camera is going to be a waterproof one ... Or I could walk in the Simpson Desert.

# Spaghetti Bolognese for Five (Vegan)

Now, who does not like spaghetti bolognese? Yes it can be vegan too. So why not cook up an old-time favourite for a hungry tribe of bushwalkers? Cooking for five can be a bit tricky, but it can be done with one big pot, if you have a big enough one, or two pots and one stove. With a hearty meal, (and a sweet dessert to end the night) that suits everyone, you're going to be the favourite in your group. And you never know, your super-fit friend might even come back and carry your heavy pack up that last section of the huge hill that never seems to end the next day. How good would that be? Pretty good I say!

## At home preparation

Label the bags and place all ingredients into the allocated bags. Print out the Method at camp and keep together with the bags.

## Method in camp

In a pot or bowl, soak the TVP mix (Bag 1) in around 2 cups of water for about 10 minutes. After the soaking time of the TVP mix, add the remaining water into another pot then add the pasta and cook for about 5 to 6 minutes. You may need about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup more water to cook the pasta, depends on what pasta you use. Just make sure the pasta is covered with water. Take the pasta pot off the heat, pour the remaining water over the TVP mix, then cover the pasta and set aside. Place the TVP mix on the stove and cook for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the tomato paste and olives and stir through for about a minute. Serve some pasta in your bowl and spoon some sauce over the pasta. For a one pot method, cook the pasta in the 5 cups of water and after 5 to 6 minutes add the remaining ingredients and cook for a further 2 to 3 minutes.

## Hints

Mushroom floss can be found at any good Asian shop. Buy the smallest size and quickest cooking time pasta that cooks in 5 to 6 minutes.



## Bag 1 (TVP mix)

TVP	1¼ cups	100 grams
Dried mushroom	½ cup	7 grams
Fried shallots	5 Tbsp	30 grams
Mushroom floss	3 Tbsp	35 grams
Brown sugar	1 Tbsp	17 grams
Vegetable stock	2 tsp	12 grams
Paprika	1 tsp	3 grams
Dried onion	½ tsp	2 grams
Dried garlic	½ tsp	2 grams
Dried rosemary	½ tsp	1 gram
Salt, pepper		few pinches
Chilli		few pinches

## Bag 2 (Pasta)

Pasta		350 grams
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## Keep separate

Tomato paste		4 Tbsp or 2 sachets
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## Keep separate

Olives (dried or fresh)		25 each
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## Water

5 cups

# Mango Tapioca Pudding for Five

This is a vegan recipe so again, anyone can eat it, and it's a very easy dessert to cook. But I must say if you have not had tapioca (or sago) before it could be quite an interesting experience for you. Hopefully a good one! However, the texture may not be for everyone. Before I go on, tapioca is made from the starchy root of a cassava tree and sago comes from the stem of the sago palm tree. However, they look and are prepared identically. Tapioca or sago does not have much flavour in it themselves, so it is what you do with them that counts. But really, how could you go wrong with a dessert that has coconut milk, vanilla sugar and dried mangos in it that anyone can eat, and can easily be cooked for five in one pot? You can't. Enjoy! Do you know how to start a bushwalk in the Western Arthurs? Sago.

## At home preparation

Label the bag and place all ingredients into the allocated bag. Copy or print out Method at camp and keep together with the bag.

## Method at camp

In a pot add the contents of the bag and pour in the water, stir together. Bring the pot to the boil then simmer for about 7 minutes. Take the pot off the heat, cover and sit for 5 minutes. Serve.



## Bag 1 (pudding mix)

Tapioca pearls	1 cup	200 grams
Dried mangos	16 pieces	100 grams
Coconut powder	4 Tbsp	80 grams
Vanilla sugar	6 tsp	32 grams
Coconut sugar	2 tsp	16 grams

**Water** - 5 cups



To read more about the author or find more delicious recipes check [xtremegourmet.com](http://xtremegourmet.com)





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- > Conondale Range Great Walk
- > Rewilding
- > Sun Clothing



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- > Melaleuca log book
- > Choosing a GPS
- > Water requirements



**Bushwalking Conservation**

- > Australian Alps Walking Track
- > High Horses: Kosciuszko NP
- > Another shot at the GNW
- > Mapping feral animals



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- > Colong wilderness walk



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- > 2 weeks in Fiordland
- > Hypothermia



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- > Bushwalking Tracks



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- > Are you in a Club?



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- > Is it safe to walk?



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- > What is BWA
- > Larapinta Trail NT