

Bushwalk Australia



Staying Home

Volume 40, April 2020

Bushwalk Australia Magazine
An electronic magazine for <http://bushwalk.com>
Volume 40, April 2020

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.



Watching nature from my couch
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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 June 2020 edition is 30 April 2020.

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.

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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

Hi all

I hope this edition finds you well and at home.

The word "unprecedented" has been used a lot over the past few months. Following an unprecedented hot summer, bushfire seasons, storms, and flooding we now have controls to manage a deadly outbreak. I think the meme "2020 written by Stephen King directed by Quentin Tarantino" sums things up well.


I must say, I have been very impressed with how the vast majority of people have responded to each of these crises. Communities have rallied and supported each other well. Some people and businesses are really suffering massive losses with no obvious hope in sight.

The situation with COVID-19 varies across the country and the world. Restrictions and recommendations will continue to evolve in different places at different times. This is a time to play it cautiously and stay home except for essential travel. At this stage all Australian governments are still encouraging people who can leave their house to stay active locally, which usually means walking hyper-local. If a national park is open on the other side of the city or state, it is not an invitation or permission to drive there for bushwalking.

The next few months are about enjoying staying home, staying local, planning adventures, making gear, experimenting with food dehydrating, sorting photos, writing blogs, and catching up online with old friends.

Restrictions will at some point start to ease and we will be able to practise our new social distancing and personal hygiene in more and more remote places again.

Stay safe, and happy (hyper-local) walking.

Matt :) 
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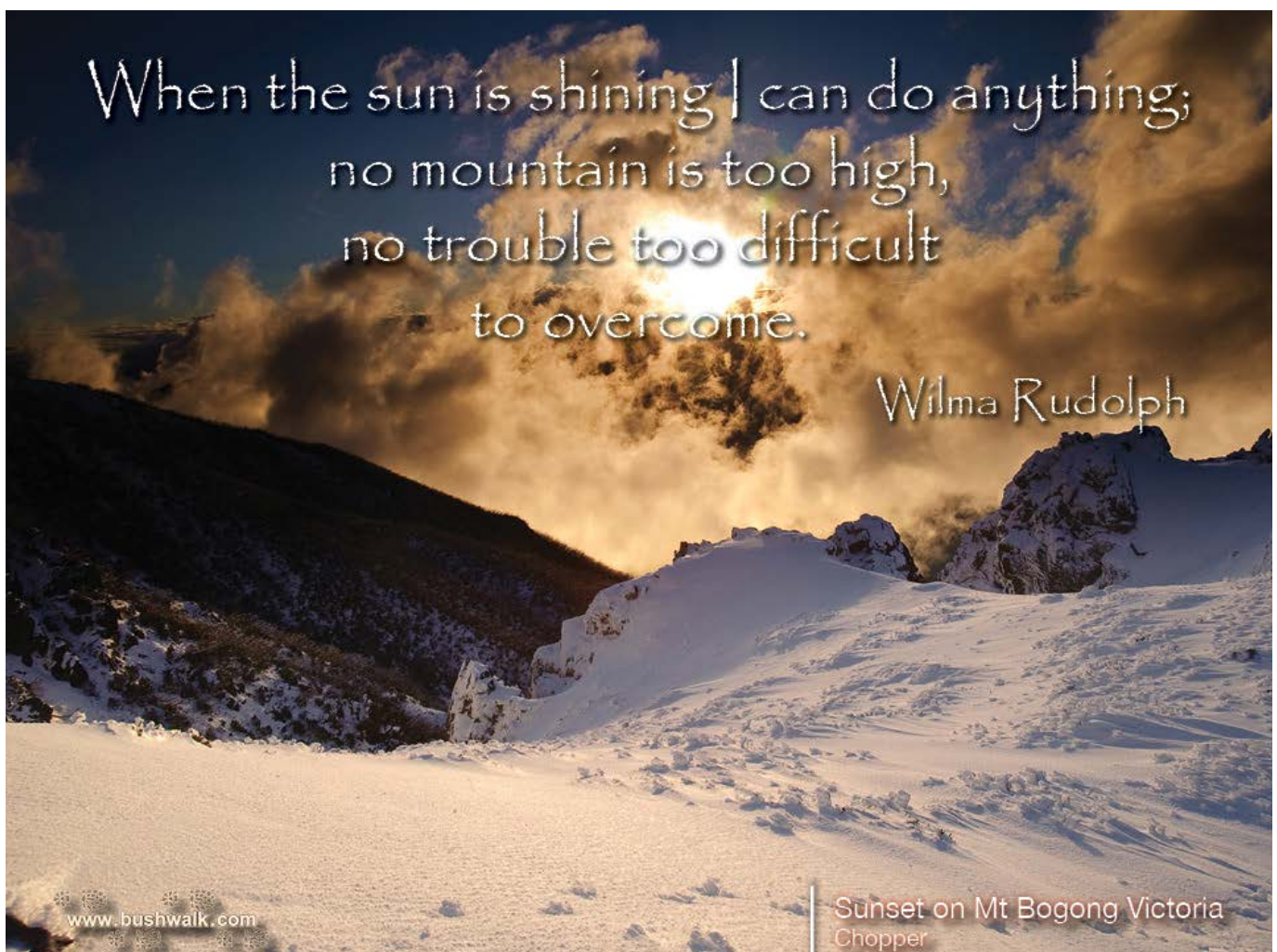
Declaration

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

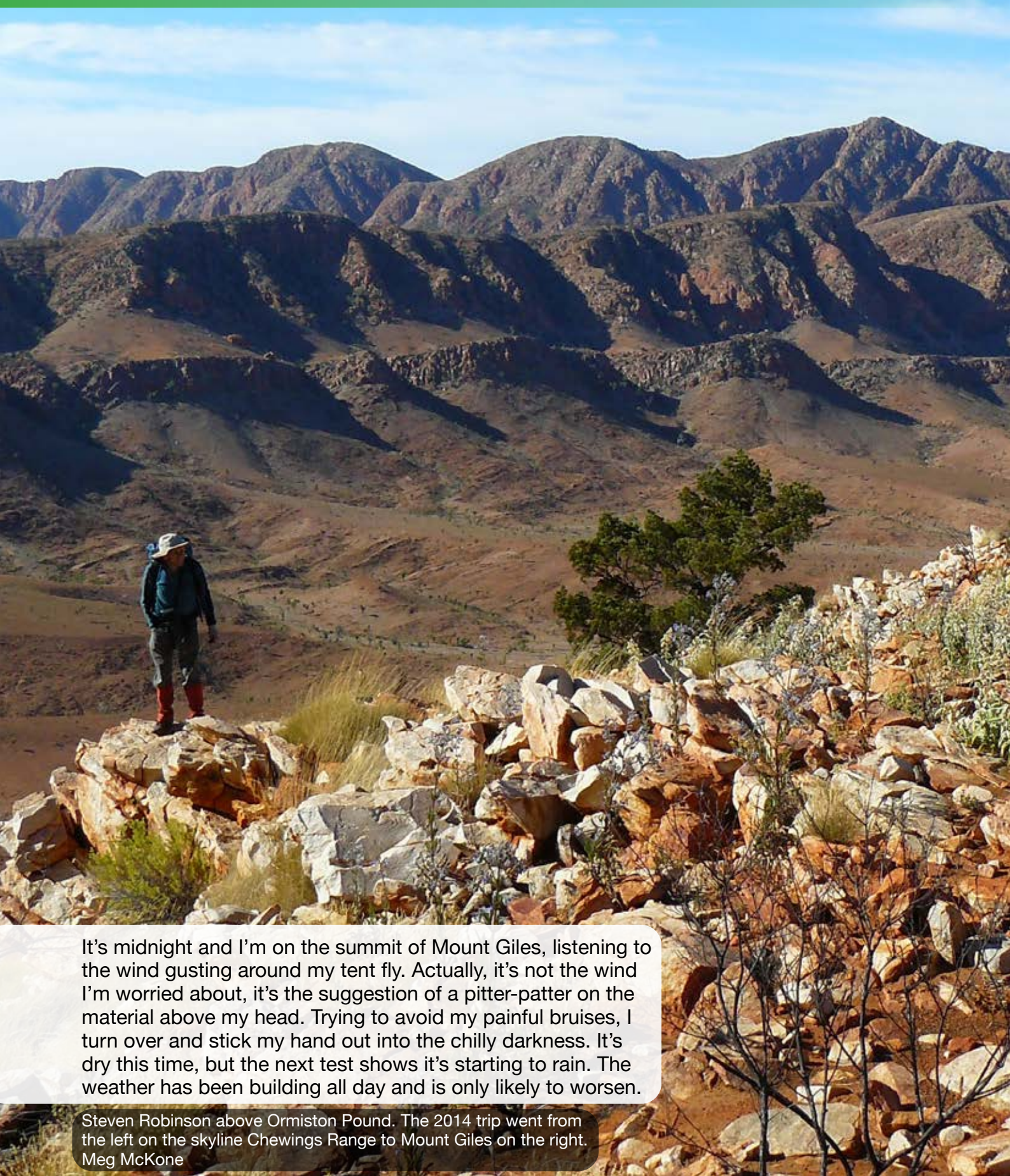
Federation Peak in a day

Jen Brown and Justin Boocock ran 47 kilometres in less than 24 hours, up one of Tasmania's most remote and exposed mountains in the wild South West.



More Than One Way to Climb Mount Giles

Meg McKone



It's midnight and I'm on the summit of Mount Giles, listening to the wind gusting around my tent fly. Actually, it's not the wind I'm worried about, it's the suggestion of a pitter-patter on the material above my head. Trying to avoid my painful bruises, I turn over and stick my hand out into the chilly darkness. It's dry this time, but the next test shows it's starting to rain. The weather has been building all day and is only likely to worsen.

Steven Robinson above Ormiston Pound. The 2014 trip went from the left on the skyline Chewings Range to Mount Giles on the right. Meg McKone

This is not what I'd envisaged. After two weeks of sleeping most nights under a canopy of stars progressively dimmed by the waxing moon, I'd hoped for just one more clear night, once more to watch the sun set and the full moon rise from this desert vantage point. But aesthetic considerations are fading fast as I face the practicalities of finding the southern spur off the mountain in the rain when I've only climbed this spur once, 34 years ago. Back to sleep, to see what the morning brings.

Mount Giles, 1389 metres, is the third highest peak in the Northern Territory. It's about 120 kilometres west of Alice Springs near the end of the Chewings Range, a few rises before it falls away into Ormiston Pound. Yet the range does not disappear, for ancient geological forces have twisted it first north, then west, to form the walls of Ormiston Pound and Gorge, above which rises the serene beauty of Mount Sonder, floating on a haze of blue. It is this magnificent view which makes the peak such a worthwhile destination, and once having ascended it by the most easily accessible southern spur, there are other, more challenging routes to attempt.

“Mount Giles, 1389 metres, is the third highest peak in the NT.

Note: Since few of the geographical features in the West MacDonnells have been named on the official maps and it has not been possible to obtain their Aboriginal names, I have used unofficial names where I have been unaware of any other names, putting them in inverted commas at first use.

The 1980 and 1989 trips

My first ascent was in August 1980, with Frank and Joan Rigby, veterans of West MacDonnells bushwalking. We started out from Serpentine Gorge and after an exploratory day walk up onto the Chewings Range from Giles Yard Spring and back, we continued westward to the base of Mount Giles. Leaving our spare food in a tree, safe from dingoes, we climbed the steep spur to the summit, where we cleared a few sleeping spaces among the rocks before eagerly awaiting the sunset. We weren't disappointed. As the colours changed from daytime rusty browns to brilliant reds and purples, indigo shadows etched sharp-edged gullies into scalloped ridges. I turned

“I turned around and caught my breath, for in the east a huge full moon was rising over the range.

around and caught my breath, for in the east a huge full moon was rising over the range. This was something that I had to see again, sometime, especially when I found that my



moonrise photos were blurred. Next morning the rising sun spread a golden glow across the landscape. Then we had to find our spur again for the descent, which was not at all obvious from above. I was glad that Frank and Joan were there to lead us safely down.

My next trip to the MacDonnells was in July 1989 when we walked a circuitous route from Redbank Gorge to Serpentine Gorge. We were keen to spend some time on the northern side of the Chewings Range, more difficult to access than the southern side and in general steeper, redder, rockier and more rugged. After climbing onto the “Red Wall” from Bowmans Gap and walking half of it, we cut through the gap behind the Red Wall and circled around to the “Mini-Pound” on the northern side of Mount Giles. After a fruitless attempt to find the entrance to a spectacular canyon I’d seen from the top of the Chewings Range nine years previously (we explored it in 1992, calling it the “Canyon

“ It provided quite good going at first but had some heart-stopping drops ...

of Defiance”), we camped in a creek bed as the sun set the cliffs aflame. The Mini-Pound is often dry, but rain the previous day had filled a rock hole hidden in the scallops of the rim between Ormiston Pound and the Mini-Pound.

A direct route climbing 400 metres up the extremely steep north face of Mount Giles didn’t look like a goer, so we climbed up onto the rim first and sat for a while, marvelling at the spectacular buttresses sweeping down into Ormiston Pound far below. If you climb Mount Sonder, you will see similar buttresses on its eastern face. There was still a big climb ahead, first up to the corner then a change of direction and over some calf-wrenching knolls until at last we stood at the summit cairn. This time we weren’t camping on top. After traversing the summit ridge eastwards to the next big saddle, we decided to drop off the range down a creek heading south. It provided quite good going at first but had some heart-stopping drops lower down in a gully overhung with rotting bollards of rock which threatened to topple over at any moment and join their fallen mates. We



Geoff and the view east on the Chewings Range above Upper Giles Yard Spring
Meg McKone

finally made it safely to the bottom where we found a pleasant campsite close to water. It was not a route I would recommend.

The July 2014 trip

As the years passed, the thought of spending another night on Mount Giles was becoming more beguiling, though if I didn't do it soon by the approach that interested me most, it would be beyond me. In 1999 we had climbed Mount Giles in a long day from Giles Yard Spring, walking seven kilometres along the crest of the Chewings Range and back – a spectacular route though a rugged one, with deep saddles, exposed arêtes and punishingly sharp rocks underfoot. Now, 15 years later, I hoped I could manage it just one way, carrying water and gear for overnight on the summit, and descending the next day down the popular southern spur.

Our party of four set out from the Ochre Pits on a superb fine day, one in a run of cloudless skies with little or no wind. The track through Inarlanga Pass joins the Larapinta Trail, which we followed briefly until we could turn into the gap in the northern ridge of the Heavitree Range. I had barely stepped off the trail when I became aware of a snakeskin with an unusual yellow and green diamond

“But snakeskins don't puff themselves up, flick out their tongues and hiss!

pattern at my feet. But snakeskins don't puff themselves up, flick out their tongues and hiss! Startled, I took a few steps backwards, whereupon the snake subsided and slid back under a rock. I later identified it at the Alice Springs Desert Park as a highly poisonous mulga snake, rarely seen during the winter months.

Once through the gap, we climbed a low ridge whose northern slopes merge into the broad valley which ends abruptly in the great blue barrier of the Chewings Range, stretching right across the horizon ahead. The Giles summit is just another bump on that long ridge, identifiable by its inverted V shape unlike its more rounded neighbours. I studied the steep spurs dropping off its southern face, knowing that I would have to select the correct one for the descent if we were to avoid being cliffed. I'd consulted John and Lyn Daly's *Take a Walk in the Northern Territory* to work out which of several possible spurs it could be (their mud map proved most useful as it identified the creeks, and so by default the spurs), and had written out their ascent instructions in reverse.

Also identifiable was the deep cleft of Giles Yard Spring, seven kilometres to the east of Mount Giles. Camping has been banned at the magnificent pool and waterfall to protect the rare ferns, and a camping area has been



Sometimes it was easier to sidle the steep Chewings Range knolls than to go over the top. Geoff at the top, Kerri-Ann and Ute at the front
Meg McKone

set up some 500 metres downstream. We left early the next morning, glad that there was no need to collect our water for the night on the summit at the Lower Spring, for 200 metres from the top of the range in a shallow valley lies a hidden gem – a reliable spring with several pools of good water from which we each packed five to six litres.

The first few kilometres along the tops were relatively easy. I'd done this section several times as part of an intricate high-level route to the mouth of the Canyon of Defiance on the northern side of the range, but soon the going became much tougher with the rugged terrain requiring constant vigilance. At lunchtime my eyes were wandering idly over the rise ahead when I realised with a sudden shock that it was surrounded by a vertical wall of rock. Fortunately, as we soon discovered, hidden behind a section of cliff was a steep, rocky gully, just climbable with our heavy packs. But with the difficulties came spectacular rewards. At a rounded knoll where the range does a dog-leg to the south, amazing views unfolded – one east along the jumbled peaks of the winding range to the top of Hugh Gorge and beyond; the other west across Ormiston Pound to Mounts Sonder and Razorback, the Red Wall, Bowmans Gap and Mount Zeil. Perhaps this would be the best place of all to view the sunset – after time spent clearing sleeping spaces in the rock-strewn ground.

The summit

At mid-afternoon we were making steady progress, expecting to reach the summit in time to set up camp well before sunset, when I stepped onto a projecting lump of rock. It broke, and I went arcing through the air before hitting the ground head-first in a jumble of sharp quartzite and spinifex. I lay there for a minute, taking stock of the situation. Yes, my head was bleeding profusely, but I was still conscious. Yes, I had deep bruises along one side, but nothing seemed to be broken. I called to the others and by the time I'd wrestled my pack off my head, they arrived, bearing a first aid kit. Kerri-Ann wiped the blood off my face and Geoff took my pack while I made a few tentative steps. One forearm was very weak, but it had recovered by the next morning. The only lasting damage was a hole in my wonderfully comfortable, brand-new One Planet pack, purchased on the spur of the moment a few weeks previously at the Lone Dingo in Alice Springs.

The afternoon wore on as I dragged myself up, down and across a seemingly endless number of peaks. The day had begun with a few pretty streaks of pink cloud. By the time we saw the summit cairn, evening was approaching with a thick grey blanket obscuring the sky and the sunset merely a thin, pallid bar across the western horizon. The moon didn't put in an appearance at all. Due to my status as an Injured Person, the others offered me the best of the cleared tent



Our 2014 party at the summit of Mount Giles, about to descend into the mist.
L-R: Geoff Jones, Ute Foster, Meg McKone, Kerri-Ann Smith.
Kerri-Ann Smith

sites. I took the first I saw, weighted my tent pegs down with rocks and crawled inside just on dark without even visiting the summit, 10 metres away.

At dawn I peer out of the tent. Though it's raining lightly, the ridges are still visible. We need to get out of here quickly, and it's time I located the rest of the party. Geoff and his tent look quite sprightly. Ute's tent, erected on a tiny spot, is drenched and droopy and I wonder if she's stayed dry. Kerri-Ann is sitting up smiling as usual though her open tarp is twisted beneath a bush. I stagger up to the summit and look at the book. There seems to be some sort of competition going on as to who can climb the mountain fastest. I write something incomprehensible and return to my tent to pack. Job done, I look around and my heart sinks. The mist has come in.

The start of the descent is obvious – west, then southwest over a few saddles and down to a big cairn. Here we veer left and descend 70 metres to the top of several possible spurs. I select one of them and waste time climbing down then up again, peering into the mist, trying to judge the terrain on either side. But right or wrong, it's time to make a firm decision. Geoff goes first to select the best route over the angular, slippery boulders of our chosen spur. When Ute points out one cairn and then another, I almost weep with relief. A hundred metres from the bottom we emerge from the fog; never has a valley looked more beautiful. We lunch in a creek bed standing up in the rain, then start our freezing march across Ormiston Pound. Our original plan to camp in the Pound is not even mentioned, it is so obvious that no one wants to spend a night out with sodden clothes in a wet tent. We reach the Visitor Centre just on dusk – our second nine hour day. Despite our parkas and thermals, we've been cold and wet all day, with only constant activity staving off hypothermia.

Postscript: The 2015 trip

Though I balked at climbing Mount Giles again, I was determined to capture those sunset and sunrise moments, with or without a full moon. In August the following year, we climbed to the top of the Chewings Range up Pats Canyon, next to the Canyon of

Defiance, on the northern side to camp on the "Dog Leg Knoll" with its amazing views. After spending an hour or two clearing rocks for sleeping spaces, we rugged up against the chilly wind and waited. A magnificent sunset came and went, leaving us the hours of a largely sleepless night to appreciate the stars blazing away in a moonless sky as the wind pushed icy fingers into our sleeping bags. I was up at the first inkling of dawn, watching the light gradually create the landscape anew from the murky darkness beneath me. At last the sun shot bolts of brilliant colour across the country, highlighting the magnificent scenery at the western end of the Chewings Range. Though Mount Giles itself was out of sight behind another bump on the range, our alternative campsite had given us rich rewards.

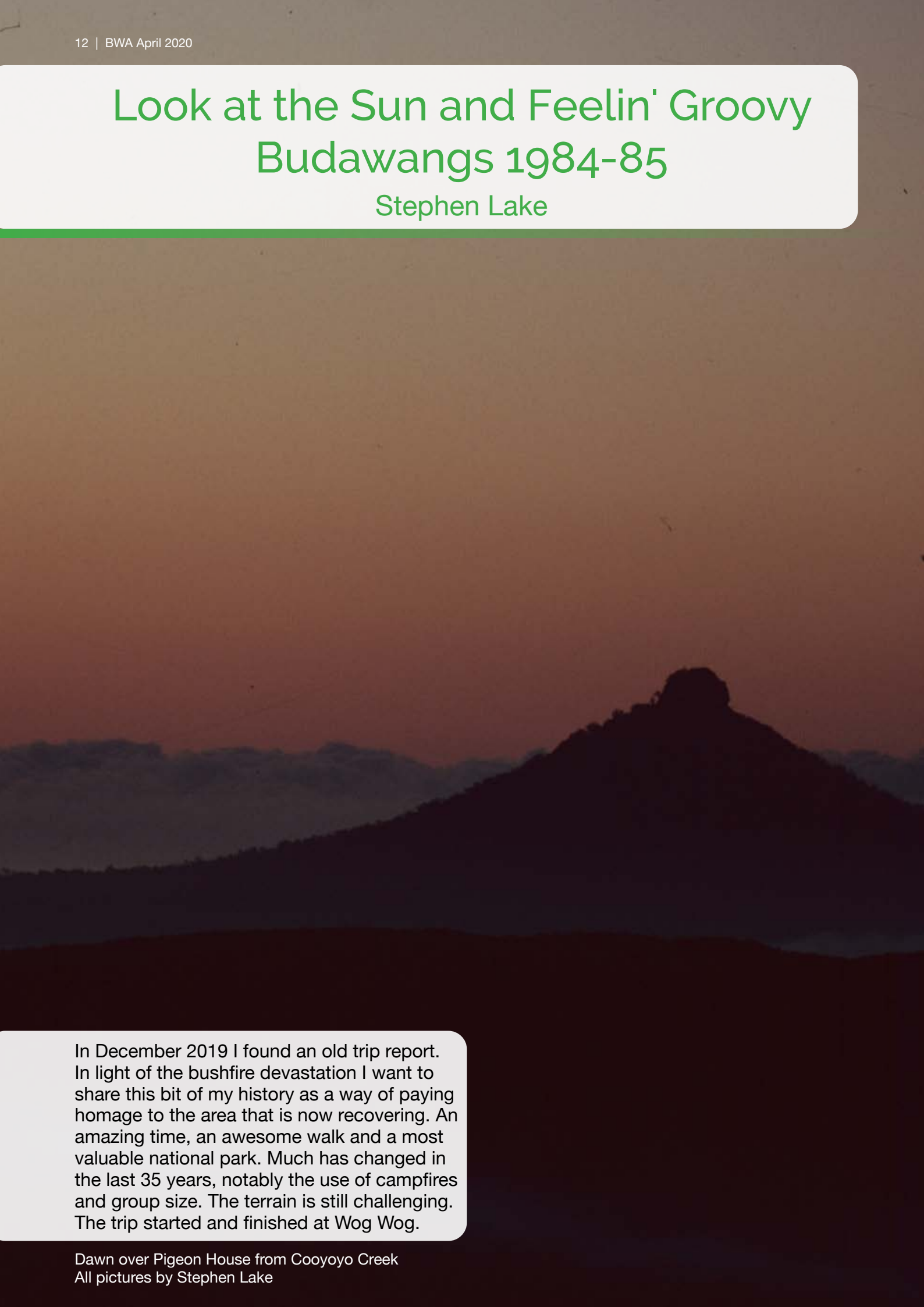
NB: Permission is needed from the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory to camp off-track in the West MacDonnells National Park.



Meg began bushwalking with her family at an early age in national parks around Sydney and joined the Teenage Section of Coast and Mountain Walkers in 1959. In 1973 she moved to Canberra where she joined the Canberra Bushwalking Club and taught in secondary schools until her retirement. Her favourite bushwalking areas include the MacDonnell Ranges, the Blue Breaks in the Southern Blue Mountains and the Central Queensland highlands. She especially enjoys leading exploratory walks and pioneered trips into the Canyon of Defiance and Portals Canyon in the West MacDonnells. She is very concerned by recent threats to national parks including feral horse protection, damming of wild rivers and private developments which exclude the general public.

Look at the Sun and Feelin' Groovy Budawangs 1984-85

Stephen Lake



In December 2019 I found an old trip report. In light of the bushfire devastation I want to share this bit of my history as a way of paying homage to the area that is now recovering. An amazing time, an awesome walk and a most valuable national park. Much has changed in the last 35 years, notably the use of campfires and group size. The terrain is still challenging. The trip started and finished at Wog Wog.

Dawn over Pigeon House from Cooyoyo Creek
All pictures by Stephen Lake

Time for my annual yearly resumé (printers please include the accent) cum PM (postmortem) cum re the Bushies Christmas jaunt where did we go? The place was the Budawangs. Where? Near Batemans Bay, twixt the ACT and the sea, a series of high plateaus, cliffs, and deep river valleys. Even before we started there were two casualties: Kerrie and Margaret, come on a walk soon, and go easy on training trips.

The start

The Southern Aurora chugged us to Goulburn. This was at some expense, but better than a headline “Bushwalker injured in four car pile-up at Yass.” Don't they drive on the right in NSW? Breakfast at 6.15 am. Who invented early?

Then the coach to the walk area. With 13 of us and a 49 seater coach there was a lot of room. Put the frisbee away - not that much room.

So, at 10 am, with the leader dragged screaming from the bus “I'm too young to go, and I thought that this was Arapiles” the circus attempted to set off. “Who put rocks in

“Who put rocks in my pack, I can't lift it?”

my pack, I can't lift it?” “You're standing on the waist belt.” “Thanks.” “Did you say food for ten days or two?” “Where are the sherpas or burros?” Miscreants!

Rage across the plains, looking for action, to the foothills. Up a little to the rim. “Wow,” they chorused dutifully, mindful of the rock in the leader's hand. Fantastic views, nearly 360°, with a 50 metre cliff below. Click, click. “Mrs Dewhurst, we were seeing who could lean out over the cliff furthest, and your Neil won.” Oops. At least 12 people in the party is luckier than 13. Neil is biodegradable.

Trundle on to the Corang Arch, walk right out on top, hope that it doesn't become the Corang Pillars. Down from the bluffs, check out some caves. On a bit to Bibbenluke, with more panoramas of rocks and trees. The weather looks not good. Surge onto a cave; too small. This way to camp. Bash, scrape, smash, crash in thick, prickly, sharp most unfriendly scrub. Just before the camp, a track. “Well, it was different,” I said, justifying my path and checking escape routes. “Yes, we want a different leader.” Ho, hum.

“... we want a different leader.”



Tarn, Hidden Valley, Quiltys Clearing, Red Johnnys Cave

Next day dawned. (Bright and sunny are two fictitious words in my trip advertising.) Up to Mount Tarn, then over the top. Photography is useful for a slow pace. Rest. I put my pack under an overhang, but the drizzle results in the group crowding me out, so it's time to move. Around Houghton, slow on the wet rocks. Miss the ridge down - navigation delays - but I know where I am going, even if I do lose over half the herd. Kangaroos bounce close by.

Onto Hidden Valley. Most turn back at the near-vertical descent: I press on with a few stalwarts with no fear of heights and small brains.

“ I press on with a few stalwarts with no fear of heights and small brains.

We find the easy way in; room enough for the Light Brigade to charge. To Quiltys Clearing and more drizzle, which eases off so we can put up the tents, light a fire, cook dinner then rain, rain and more rain. We had a massive downpour, overnight, more rain than I can recall. There were two centimetres of water under the tent, all tents leaked, and the tide rose. So after this less than satisfactory night we retreated in order to be dry. (Read that both ways!) Red Johnnys Cave was only 30 minutes away, and was very un-wet. A rest day.



Descending Folly Point, very wet



Rest day at Red Johnnys Cave

Folly to Cooyoyo

As the sun moved high above the clouds the next day, we received the contents of the aforesaid clouds.

They dumped, solid rain to Folly Point. Down Folly Point and Watson

Pass - a form of underwater-bushwalking suicide. Wet steep rocks, lowering of packs and nearly people with ropes, small waterfalls to descend, lots of water. Down to the cave and lunch at 2.15 pm; it was too cold, wet and exposed to stop before this. Dry out slowly.

““ The photocopy maps are dissolving. This may even be interesting.

After a restful dry night, we set off again, but the track died and it took us an hour to walk a kilometre. Fortunately, the pace improved, and we sailed down to Hollands Creek. Fight the killer leeches, and quickly move up to Darri Pass. Find a flat spot at 12.15 pm.

“Lunch here?” I asked hopefully. “No, let's go to the top of the pass.” Foolishly I listened. We pushed on. And on. The track petered out, the scrub came down, and there was unhappiness. I felt like Moses leading the lost tribes to the promised land. “Promise you won't lead us back here?” They waved money before my bleary eyes: a DM, an Indian Rupee, a Dutch Guilder! Lunch arrived at about 2 pm on the top of the pass. Then

a little scrub, then a lot of scrub, then rain, and finally leeches. The photocopy maps are dissolving. This may even be interesting. At 5 pm we arrived at a fair to good campsite, even if it's somewhat exposed. This viable campsite is one of only four in the last two days, which were the mentally toughest I can remember.

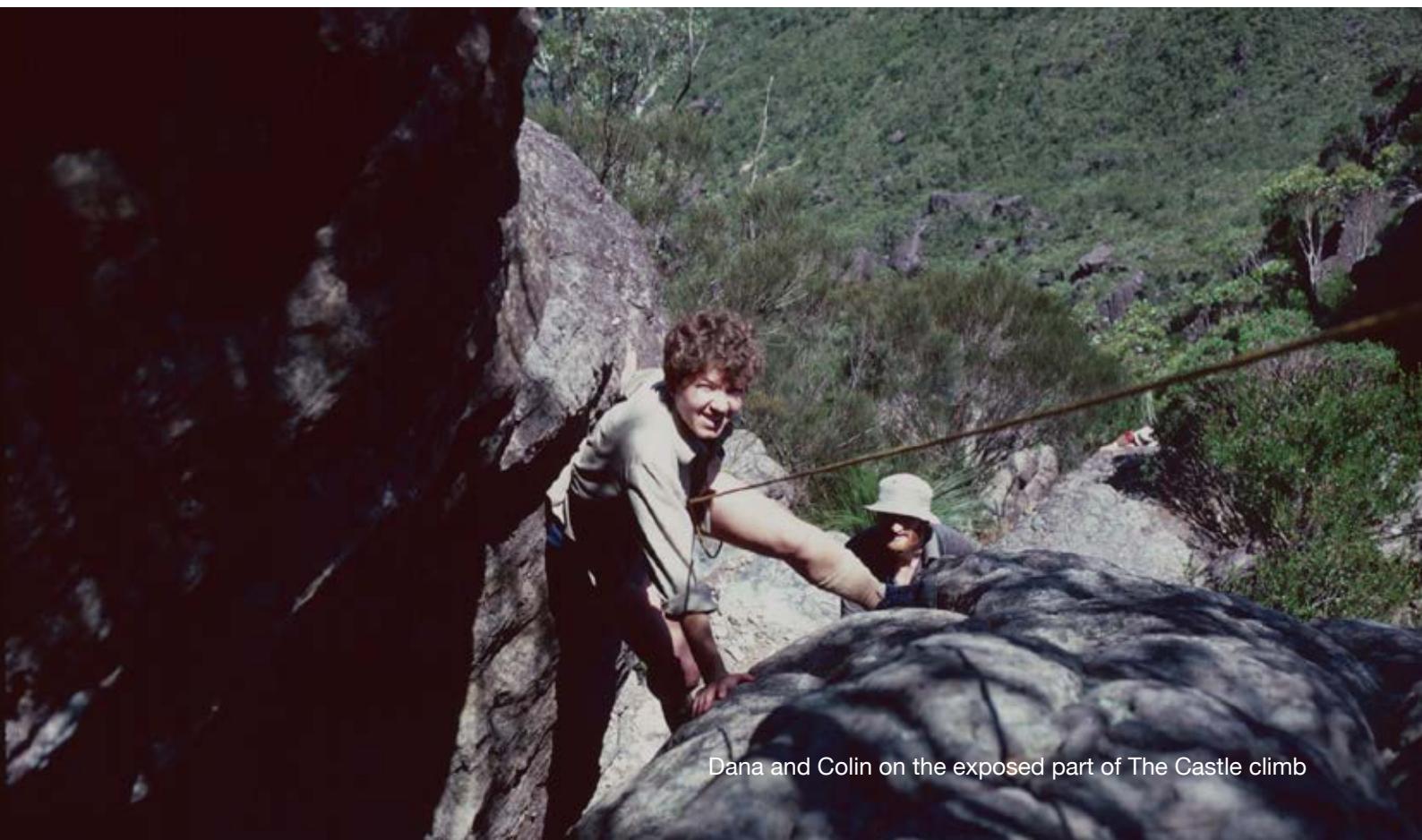
““ I felt like Moses leading the lost tribes to the promised land.



Christmas cheesecake in a frisbee

Nibbelung, The Castle and New Years Eve

Next day: sun! I had a dictionary, and looked it up. Concern was expressed at the lack of rain. Disregarding the unexpected change of weather, we climbed Mount Nibbelung, and a few pushed on up The Castle. Most



Dana and Colin on the exposed part of The Castle climb

were content to just rest. New Year's Eve was officially postponed due to bad light and cold winds. On 1 January, up The Castle again with the masses who missed out last year. A challenge on dry warm rock with ropes and encouragement. Some people really pushed their limits on this one, and the reward was greater. The others buzzed up Shrouded Gods Mountain. At 10 pm we celebrated New Year's Eve, Eastern Standard (Budawangs) Summer Time. More balloons and cheesecakes. I made a diary note "Trip enters second year."

Mount Cole, Corang River and the road

Dawn. One tent heeled over in the wind, hang gliding for walkers. Over to Monolith Valley, the caves, massive rock walls, the arches and grottos. Climb up to Seven Gods in a deep rift, Laze in the sun, then on to camp in a cave under the west flank of Mount Cole. While about half the group rested, some climbed Mount Cole, returning via the abyss near Mount Owen. Wander back to camp with a shower au naturel in a convenient waterfall. I know, only dirty people wash, but ...

“I enjoy planning and leading long trips.”

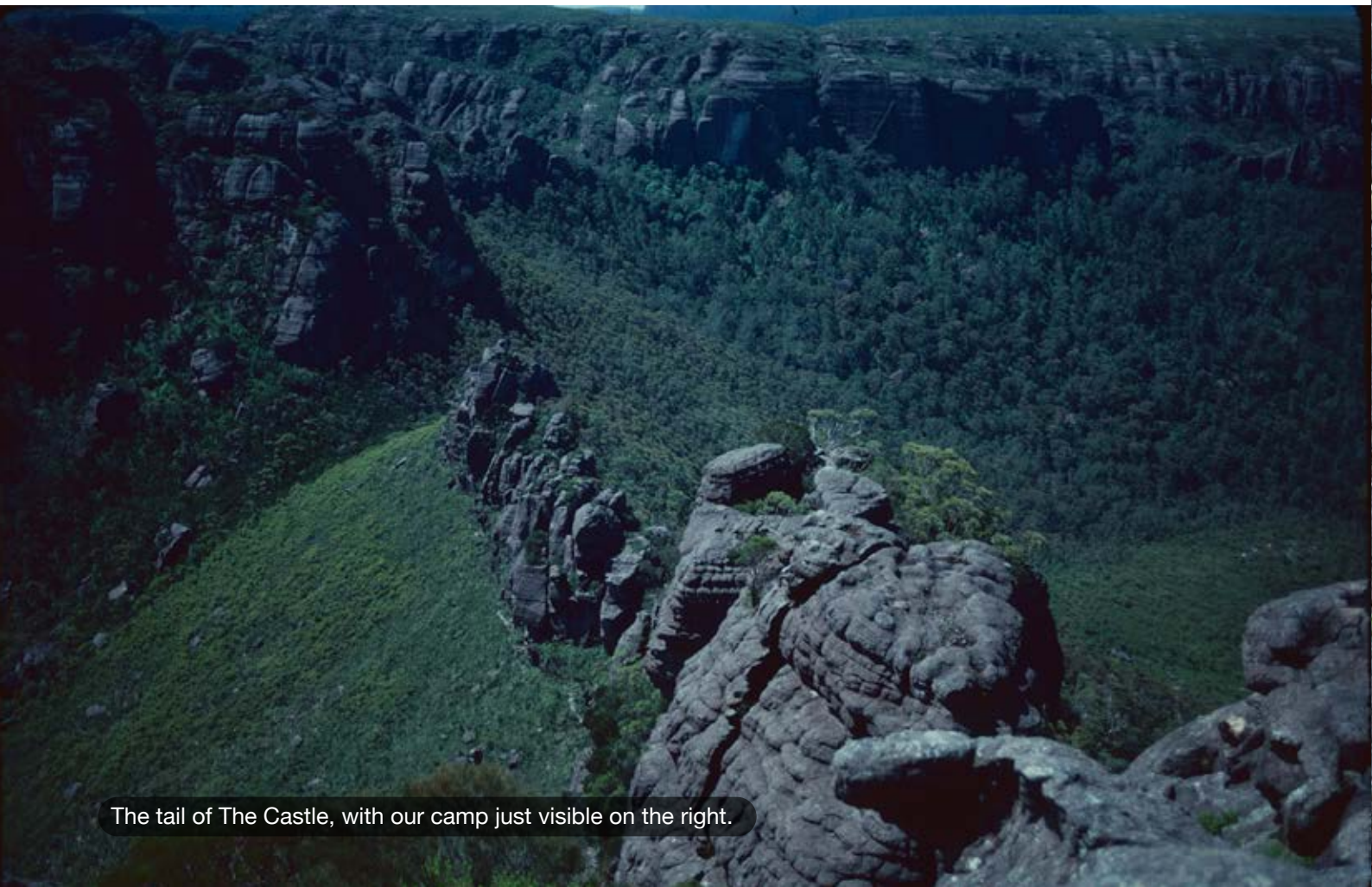
Dive into the morning with more scrub (miss the track), then coast along to the lookout. Puff, pant. Roll down the track, then scrub. Lunch on the Corang River, sun, a swim. On to camp, a crippling 40 minutes after lunch. Hard! Another swim, more sun, and Earl Grey Tea. Relax. Last camp.

Off into the clear morning light, with only the odd patch of heavy scrub. The hoped for track is a non-starter. Lunch for two hours, with a swim, near the pickup point. Move to the road, 200 metres, take a few pics, and the bus arrives. Perfect timing.

The wrap

I enjoy planning and leading long trips. The anticipation, the problems, meeting new people, doing the best in varying circumstances, making the right and wrong decisions, learning from the wrong decisions, the intense personal happiness in organising a good time, the extended isolation.

The Budawangs was not the Walls of Jerusalem a year ago - quite a different trip. Rain, rock, leeches and scrub took the edge off the enjoyment for four days. But when the weather cleared, we were in a perfect spot to rest, dry out and climb our main objectives



The tail of The Castle, with our camp just visible on the right.

to return safely and on time. The challenge for all people heightened the goals achieved, and made the summits that much sweeter. It was different to the trip that I had envisaged. For too long it was survival, and not scenery.

“... the intense personal happiness in organising a good time, the extended isolation.

No-one was ready for it. But we all coped, more or less, and in coping, perhaps expanded our own limits of the possible.

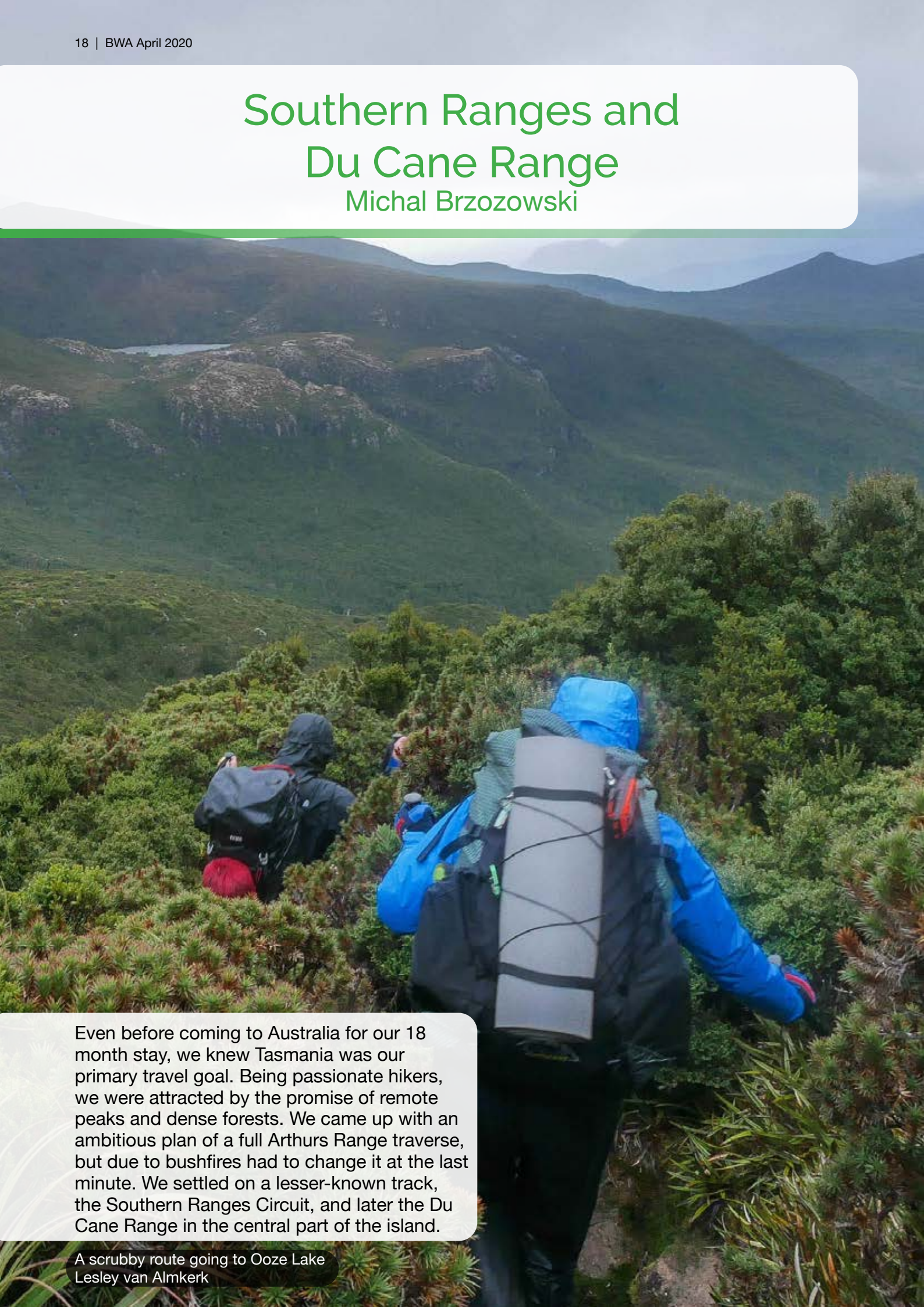
Perceptions will doubtless mellow, but in our torrid time there was a quickening of the pulse with a reliance on each other and self.



This waterfall appeared after rain. From near the Folly Point cave.

Southern Ranges and Du Cane Range

Michal Brzozowski



Even before coming to Australia for our 18 month stay, we knew Tasmania was our primary travel goal. Being passionate hikers, we were attracted by the promise of remote peaks and dense forests. We came up with an ambitious plan of a full Arthurs Range traverse, but due to bushfires had to change it at the last minute. We settled on a lesser-known track, the Southern Ranges Circuit, and later the Du Cane Range in the central part of the island.

A scrubby route going to Ooze Lake
Lesley van Almkerk

Day 1 - Hobart to Moonlight Ridge

We landed in Hobart on the morning of the 6 April, and met our hiking partner Lesley, whom we found on the [Bushwalk.com forum](https://bushwalk.com.au/forum). We dropped off half of our food at a hostel and caught a bus to Dover, from where we hitchhiked further south. Thanks to a couple of lucky rides we still had a few hours of daylight left when we reached the start of the walk.

The path started off relatively easy and flat, but after a few kilometres it began climbing up the Moonlight Ridge. We passed through a beautiful forest, full of very tall gum trees. We managed to reach a height of about 700 metres and camped at a nice sheltered spot just before the track crossed the tree line. As the weather turned very rainy and windy in the evening we were happy to find this spot.

Day 2 – Moonlight Ridge to Ooze Lake

The track kept climbing up the ridge, but we were now mostly above the tree line, and had some nice views to the south. We tried to keep our shoes dry by jumping over mud and puddles, but it was a losing battle. They quickly got soaked, and didn't dry until the end of the hike. We crossed a small, burnt forest before reaching the top of the ridge. The wind there picked up and started throwing us around, thanks to our backpacks working as sails.

We crossed Moonlight Ridge (1036 metres), observing clouds moving quickly over distant ranges and dropping walls of rain. This caused some anxiety, and we debated camping early next to the Reservoir Lakes. We didn't want to be caught in heavy rain and wind on a long, open ridge. We decided to keep going, crossing Maxwell Ridge without trouble and descended to Ooze Lake. The track was in dense scrub, which protected us from the weather, but slowing us down, and giving everyone a few bruises.

Ooze Lake disappointed us with a very windy camping spot. We pitched our tent with a lot of trouble, and ended up with a bent pole. Lesley crawled into his bivy bag at first, but came out after a while to also pitch his tent. We spent the night trying to sleep despite snow bashing loudly on our tent walls.

Day 3 – Ooze Lake to an unnamed saddle

The sun came out in the morning and lifted our spirits. A layer of fresh snow made the mountains very beautiful. We packed slowly and climbed towards Pindars Peak (1230 metres). The weather turned bad again, and we were now miserable in the wind and falling snow. We passed below Pindars Peak in the clouds, after which the official track seemed to end. We followed a very faint, unofficial path into dense scrub. Our packs kept getting stuck in the branches, and we



often had to get on our knees. We were very slow. Luckily, the faint track never really disappeared and didn't branch, so navigation was easy - we just had to push through. After spending most of the day in the scrub, we camped on a swampy, open area between two hills.

Day 4 – An unnamed saddle to below PB

We climbed through the scrub again, and soon reached a more open area below Mount Wylly. From here we saw the sunny coast in the south, and the scary-looking Precipitous Bluff (PB) (1145 metres) in the west, partly hidden in clouds. Both lie in our path.

In the afternoon we reached a sharp ridge where a bit of climbing and rock hopping was required. Tired by the rocks, we descended slowly towards the last camp spot before the climb up Precipitous Bluff. We thought about camping at the top, but we weren't sure about the difficulty of the climb, and decided it's better to do it in the morning on fresh legs.

It kept raining, our gear was getting more and more wet, and we were cold. Janka slept with all her warm clothes on, trying to dry them for the next day. I boiled a bottle of hot water for her to put in her sleeping bag to warm her up a bit.

Day 5 – Below PB to the South Coast Track

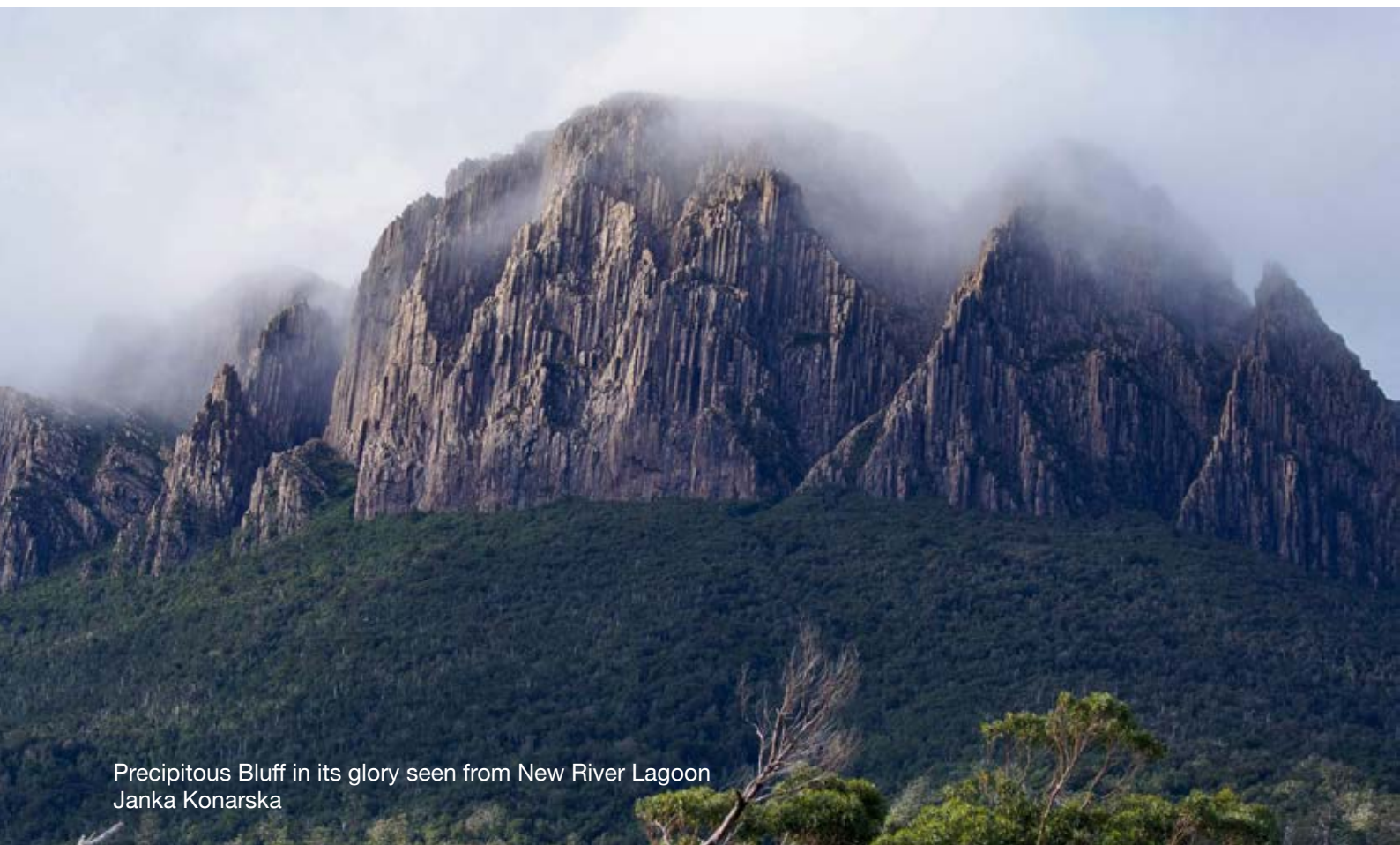
At this point we were nervous, because we were behind schedule. We didn't expect we'd be this slow in the scrub. We left camp at 7 am, and started the climb right away. It was a bit technical in a few spots, but we dealt with it easily and arrived at the top of the climb within an hour and a half.

To our disappointment, due to being surrounded by a cloud we could see nothing. There wasn't much to do other than continue down immediately. We were anxious about the descent, as it is reported to be quite hard. The track dropped a bit and then traversed left under the vertical walls of PB.

“... this was probably our favourite moment of the hike.”

We were amazed by the tall, magnificent columns of dolerite. The clouds created a very mysterious atmosphere and this was probably our favourite moment of the hike.

After about an hour the track went straight down steeply into dense forest towards New River Lagoon. It was marked only by ribbons tied to branches, and we got lost a few times in the scrub, which wore us down. After about five hours from the summit we reached New River Lagoon.



Precipitous Bluff in its glory seen from New River Lagoon
Janka Konarska

The track ended here, and we were supposed to follow the coast of the lagoon for seven kilometres, while walking about knee-deep in water. We had a gpx track from someone else's trip, which implies this part takes about four hours, but we quickly realised that the party must have used packrafts, as we were much slower. To make things worse, there were several river outlets that we had to cross by going inland, and find a fallen log to walk over. This made us lose an extra two hours, and we arrived at the campsite exhausted at 10 pm, after seven hours of wading. The whole day took us 15 hours of hiking with few breaks. There is no fresh water at the campsite, so Lesley fetched some from the nearest river, which took him another hour.

Day 6 - South Coast Track to South Cape Rivulet

We were now on the South Coast Track, which is much more popular, and well maintained. We started walking east, and in the beginning it was very easy, at least compared to the day before! Parts of the track followed beautiful beaches, and we stopped for an hour to bathe and relax a bit. The weather turned clear, and we had great views all around. We could see Precipitous Bluff in all its glory, and Federation Peak far in the north.

We left the last 10 kilometres of today's stretch for the afternoon, and to our dismay this part of the track was very muddy, eroded, and full of roots. Some kilometres took as long as 40 minutes. We arrived at the campsite at 10 pm again, even more exhausted, and with minor injuries. While crossing a stream just before the camp, Lesley took a wrong step, and fell in. At least it cleaned the mud off him!

“ We arrived at the campsite at 10 pm again, even more exhausted, and with minor injuries.

Day 7 – South Cape Rivulet to Hobart

There was little distance left to cover today, but we left early to make sure we didn't have a hard time hitchhiking back to Hobart. The track was now well-defined all the way to the end at Cockle Creek, including long sections of boardwalks. We quickly swallowed the remaining kilometres, pulled off the last few leeches from our legs, and caught a lift to Hobart. Our driver took us directly to our hostel! Time for some sweet recovery time.

Days 8 and 9 – Hobart to Pine Valley

We stayed two nights in Hobart to heal a bit from fatigue and injuries. Our further plan assumed hitchhiking to Lake St. Clair, which is the official end of the popular Overland



Descent from Precipitous Bluff to New River Lagoon
Michal Brzozowski

Track. There didn't seem to be any public transport going there, so we hired an Uber to a small town out of Hobart, and tried to hitchhike from there. We stood by the road for a few long hours, until a friendly Swiss couple in a tiny car took us directly to Lake St. Clair. We were lucky to arrive just in time to catch the ferry across the lake, after which we had an easy hike to Pine Valley Hut, where we spent the night with a group of very loud school kids.

Day 10 – Pine Valley to The Labyrinth

A well maintained track climbs from Pine Valley up to a large plateau called The Labyrinth. We did a few side trips here and summited Mount Parthenon (1260 metres) and Walled Mountain (1431 metres). The day was warm and sunny, the views were amazing, and we finally felt like we were on a holiday, and not in some kind of survival reality show. We finished the day at a beautiful spot near the Pool of Memories, and watched the full moon rise from behind Mount Geryon. The night was extremely windy, but our tents were well sheltered.

Day 11- Geryon day trip, Pine Valley

The forecast was very bad for the evening and night, so we did a quick summit push to Mount Geryon (1509 metres). The mountain consists of three sharp peaks, two of which we understood are accessible only to rock climbers. Geryon North gets summited by hikers, but it's quite a scramble. We reached a minor peak to the north of Geryon North, and judged the remaining bit as too hard for us. Lesley was determined to keep going, but incoming rain cooled his enthusiasm. To us it didn't matter much anyway, as we were happy with the views. We could spot Mount Ossa (1617 metres) to the north, the highest peak in Tasmania, and Frenchmans Cap (1446 metres) to the south.

Back at the Pool of Memories we met a gentleman with a big, old-school medium format camera. He was also there last night, taking pictures of the moon behind Mount Geryon. We packed our things and backtracked through The Labyrinth to Pine Valley. Our legs were completely spent by now, and we suffered on the steep descent.



Wading in New River Lagoon in the dark
Michał Brzozowski

It's going to take a couple of weeks for injuries to heal back at home before we can enjoy physical activities again.

We were very happy to have a lazy afternoon in the hut. At night, when very heavy rain came, we were glad to have a roof over our heads.

Day 12 – Pine Valley to Hobart

A small surprise awaited us on the easy track back to Lake St. Clair: the boardwalks were flooded! A week ago we wouldn't even blink an eye, but today we were expecting an easy walk back, and were unhappy to get our shoes wet again. We were lucky to get into the fully booked ferry across the lake, and were soon able to treat ourselves to a good meal and beer at the restaurant. The remaining challenge for today was finding a lift back to Hobart. We spent a few hours asking people leaving the car park, and were finally picked up by a Polish couple and again taken straight to our hostel.

We spent our remaining time in Hobart by visiting the Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary, where we admired such beauties as the Tasmanian Devil and the quoll, and even hand fed some kangaroos! We strongly recommend visiting this place if you're around!



Michal is a software engineer developing indie video games, also interested in programming language design, and cryptocurrencies. In his free time he enjoys running, and spending his holidays on extreme adventures with Janka.

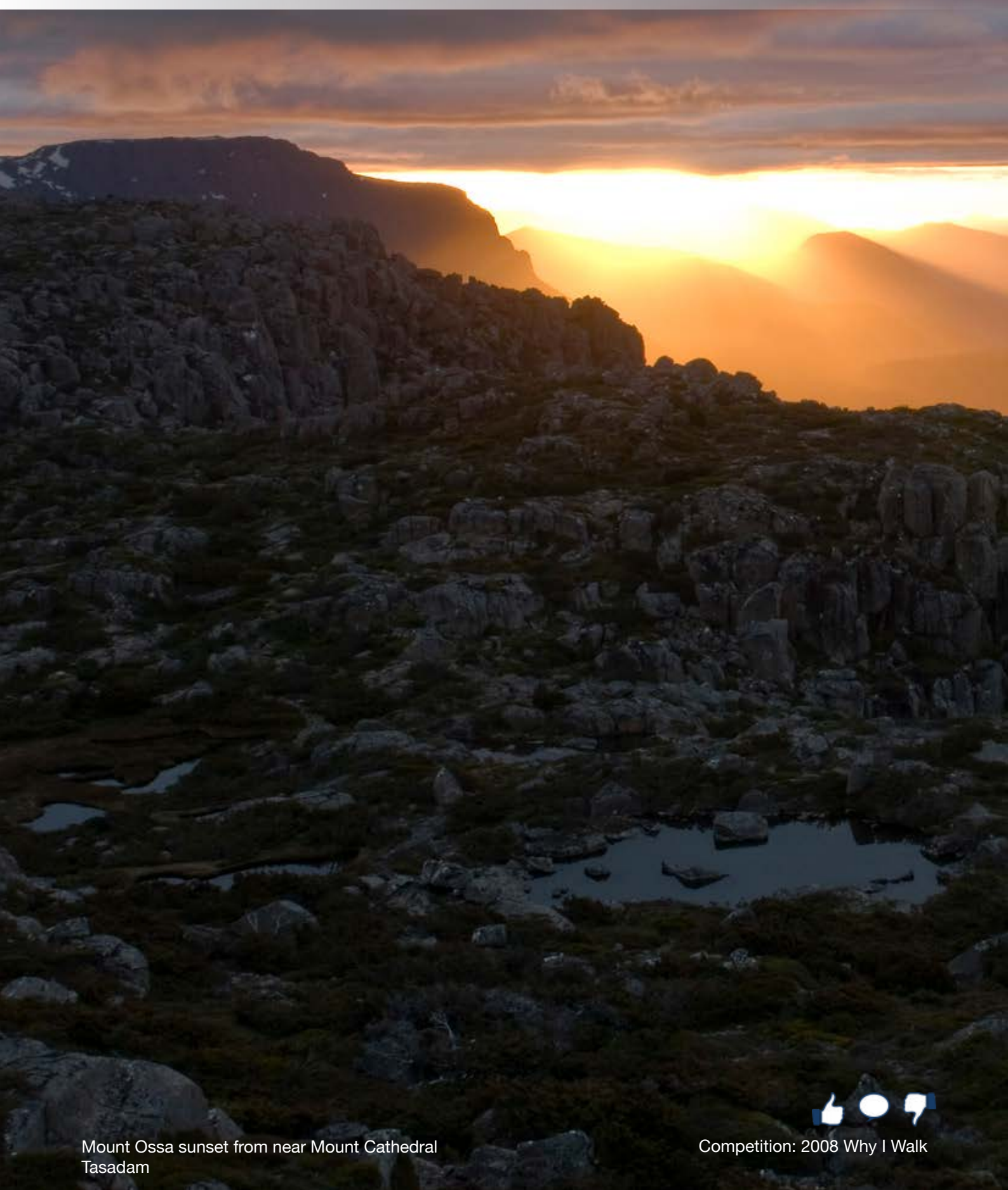
Janka is a scientist visiting Melbourne to research how trees and climate affect each other, and how we can be smarter about planting trees to let them cool us better. She loves dogs, travelling, practising karate, and playing video games.

Lesley is a competitive distance runner, mountaineer, and general sports junkie from the Netherlands. He is currently working and travelling around Australia, keeping an eye out for long-distance hikes that he could crush in record-breaking time.



On Mount Geryon
Janka Konarska

Photo Gallery



Mount Ossa sunset from near Mount Cathedral
Tasadam

Competition: 2008 Why I Walk

BWA Photo Competition



Landscapes

April 2019

WINNER



Freycinet
Brian Eglinton

Visits to Freycinet have often been a drier and sunnier alternative when the west is in rain.

But our plan was to introduce some friends to the less populated parts of Freycinet by taking them on another three day circuit.

On another trip I had noticed a nice spot two-thirds up Mt Freycinet, so we pushed on up the steep climb and then settled in to watch the sun set over the isthmus from a great set of boulders.



Autumn up high
Bogholesbuckethats



Mt Olympus South
ILUVSWTAS



One more high camp
North-north-west



After the fire
Andrew Smyth



The waterhole
John Walker



Pool of Siloam
landsmith



Non-landscapes April 2019

WINNER



Little show-off!
Andrew Smyth

??



Rinadena
North-north-west



Standing tall
Iaindtiller



New life
landsmith



Just hangin' around
John Walker



Symmetry
Bogholesbuckethats



Somewhere to rest
your weary head
Peter Grant



Tasmania April 2019

WINNER

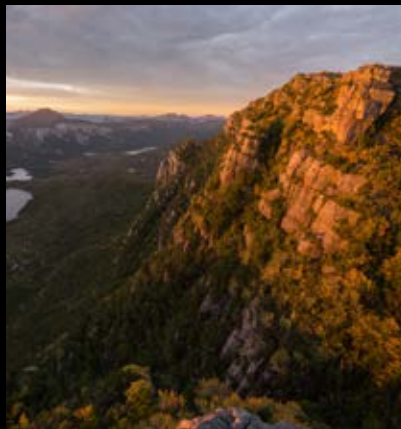


The turning of the Fagus is an event that happens here in Tassie around Easter every year. Here the shore of Lake Oenone is lit up in beautiful yellows.

Nothofagus gunnii
season
ILUVSWTAS



Autumn glory
Brian Eglinton



Gold on Gold
Bogholesbuckethats



Sunrise
North-north-west



Solace on
the Tyndall Range
Lefroy



February Plains towards
the Overland Track
Peter Grant



Calm reflections
Iaindtiller



Other States

April 2019

WINNER



Werribee Gorge
Brian Eglinton

When travelling long distances it is good to break the trip up with some short walks.

On this particular trip to Tasmania, we dropped in at Werribee Gorge.

It is just off the Western Freeway, but feels a world away from it all.

The track along the river is delightful and has a bit of adventure, at one point traversing a rock face with some cables to assist.



Above the creek junction
John Walker



Banksia, past its prime
Lorraine



Cometh the autumn
landsmith



Landscapes

May 2019

WINNER



Of course the weather is
like this every day ;)
North-north-west

My personal rule for peak-bagging is that it doesn't really count if there aren't photos, so when the cloud moved in as I hit Ida's summit the first time, I knew I'd have to return. Second time it was by kayak to a peaceful lakeside camp and an easy climb up through open forest before tackling the rocks again. It was also very different conditions ...



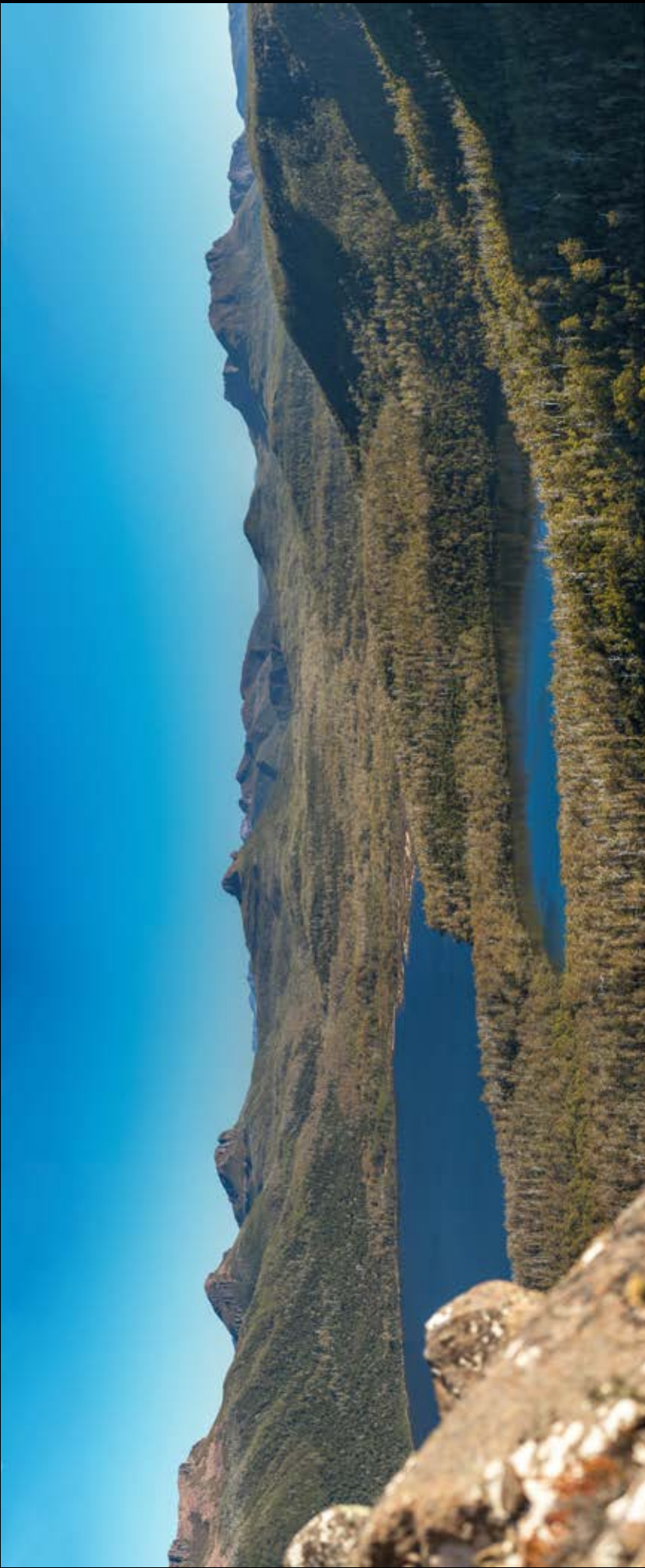
Moody in the mountains
Brian Eglinton



Heading for
the Winter Track
Vagrom



Secret pool
John Walker



Non-landscapes

May 2019

WINNER



It rained last night ...
North-north-west

On cloudy and dull days one's focus tends to change; it's more on the smaller and lower things than the grand landscapes. This water-hoarding leaf was waiting quietly on the track into Travellers Rest one such morning.



Fungi stack
Brian Eglinton



How low can we go
John Walker



Tasmania

May 2019

WINNER



Morning fog
in the reserve
North-north-west

The St Clair Dam is a wonderful place to wander early in the morning or late in the day. The light, in particular, seems different there; softer and gentler than elsewhere on Leeawulena's shores.



Other States

May 2019

WINNER



Refraction
Brian Eglinton

A favourite local walk in Adelaide is to Morialta Gorge.

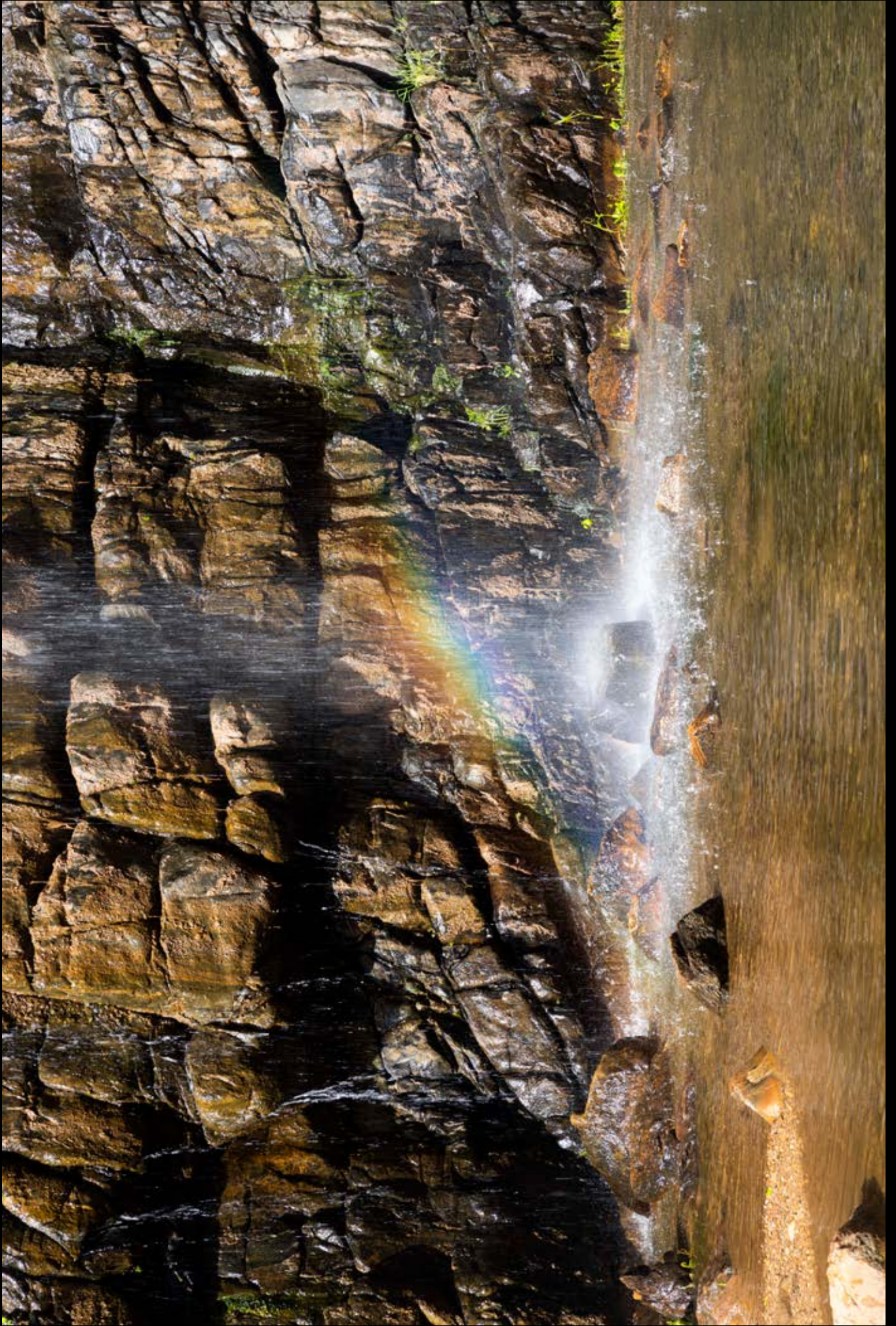
It is a small taste of country similar to the Flinders Ranges but only a short distance from the centre of Adelaide.

It also has a bonus of a series of waterfalls as the creek descends out of the Adelaide Hills.

This shot was catching the sun's refracted beams at the base of the dramatic first falls.



Temptation Creek
John Walker



Bushwalking in a Pandemic

Matt McClelland



We are all going through an unprecedented time. We have seen large parts of Australian native landscapes burn this summer and communities devastated by the same fires. We then had a series of storm and flood events causing further strain. While we were distracted by these important things, an even more serious emergency was bubbling away in the background. I was on my way to America in mid-January when I first got a sense of this virus; now as a community it is all we can talk about.

The future is unknown. Overland Track
Matt McClelland

We now think back to our math classes trying to remember the concepts of exponential growth and have new terms like “flatten the curve” in our lexicon. People online have switched from being “experts” on climate change to fire management, to storm forecasting, to virologists, to public health, to pathology testing. In the next few weeks they will think they are experts in intubation, ventilators and medical equipment procurement. Financial experts are many, with wildly differing views. This will keep going as we work through all the further pending issues and the series of debates, reviews and comparison of countries different responses and outcomes. We then need to brace to see if there will be a second wave of this virus next year.

As I write this the USA has just surpassed Italy and China to have the highest number of raw recorded cases. India is going on lock down and Australia has just limited the maximum general gathering size to two people. The world is changing.

As with all parts of society, bushwalkers have also been impacted. At this stage it is not from the virus itself but from the series of behaviour changes that have been encouraged to slow the spread of the virus that is causing the impacts. Everyone has responded differently to these. Some feeling we need to do a lot more than the government is asking and others saying it is a massive overreaction. Most seem to be adapting to the changes well.

Sometimes what looks like and overreaction is simply effective. It is not always obvious how effective something was and ironically the more effective it is the more likely it is seen to be an overreaction. This is common when you manage a burn for someone.

They come in contact with something hot, you encourage them to cool running water quickly and stay there for 10 minutes.

Afterwards when they see there is hardly any burning, many people will say, “What an overreaction, the burn is tiny.” Effective management techniques that are not well understood often look like an overreaction. In the case of the pandemic we will see so many different experiences over the world. We will see some countries completely overwhelmed and others that have much more effective control measures. Time will tell how the communities views these differences and how well we learn to prepare for the next pandemic.

Anyway – I digress. I am here to think about what we as individual bushwalkers have done and can do in response to the pandemic.

In an effort to keep bushwalking in clubs safe I came up with recommendations for a large bushwalking group. The context was that they walk in a large range of contexts and have a large population of people considered vulnerable due to being over 70 years old.

“ Sometimes what looks like and overreaction is simply effective.



Three sisters practising social distancing
Inspired by The Blue Mountains Times

The members adopted the new behaviours very quickly and willingly, a significant number of members and leaders made the wise decision to self-isolate.

I was expecting it to be in place for a few weeks before needing to tighten things up more. However, a week later the NSW government asked organisations to “cancel **non-essential activities** such as ... extra-curricular activities and sporting events”. Although legally we could still operate, we made the decision to pause the program mid-March to better protect members and the broader community. The main issue we saw was not the bushwalking itself but the travel to and from as well as the potential congregating that may be out of our control.

So why all the national park closures?

This is a moving target. The moment we send out this article this information will be out of date. It is helpful to remember that the situation and the advice evolve over time.

It is clear why lookouts and popular areas are closed. Lots of people together means an infected person can spread the virus to many more people than if in smaller or less dense groups.

But why the differences across the country with park closures? I was not part of the conversations with these so I do not know the actual rationale but here are the things I suspect played a significant role.

Compliance

The federal government makes announcements about limits of outdoor gatherings, which started with a limit of 500 then changed to two as I finished the article. Then each event coordinator and land manager needs to work out how they can implement and ensure that. Sometimes managing these potential visitors is difficult; one beach closes so people heard to the next beach announced on Facebook. In national parks many of the areas like popular lookouts, picnic areas, and beaches have no easy way to limit numbers. In some cases they just need to close places to ensure they comply with the pandemic rules.

“... limits of outdoor gatherings ...”

Staff safety

Staff safety is going to be a key decision maker for all organisations. There are so many issues and unknowns in this space at a time like this. It is not just the risk of becoming sick with COVID-19, although this is a real risk, especially in visitor centres and the like. There are extra risks around potential crowd management and other practical new work that needs to be done. One difficult issue to assess will be pre-empting when hospitals and emergency services reach capacity dealing with the outbreak, meaning that the resources are stretched to a point where they may not be able to support staff with other health emergencies.

“Staff safety is going to be a key decision maker for all organisations.”

Visitor and community safety

The issues under staff safety will still play a roll here, but visitors tend to require more resources in the case of an emergency. I also suspect a key issue here will be around constant messaging. If the government is saying “no non-essential travel” and remote parks that require driving for hours to access are open, then the mixed messaging will cause confusion. So we will see states with lots of smaller quiet parks in built up areas are more likely to stay open, while visitor numbers remain low and social distancing rules been applied. Remote parks are more likely to be closed to help send a clear message.

“Remote parks are more likely to be closed to help send a clear message.”

Community spread

Different states and territories have different rates of community spread and imported infections. The timing of closures will vary depending on the rate of community acquired disease.

Capacity building

In all emergencies, governments are pretty focused on capacity building. Especially in the case of a pandemic they are very focused on “surge” capacity building. They will be training a range of health care professionals in ICU life support skills.

Basically, there will be an expectations for all government staff to be ready to change roles from less essential to more essential tasks. This may well include staff from parks departments being asked to help with welfare, logistics, equipment distribution or medical admissions. Even if never asked to change roles there will be work that senior staff will be doing to manage the possibility.

Limited resources

The other side of the capacity building coin is reducing potential resource drains. It is important to avoid significant drains on resources. At normal times S&R teams have the capacity to go out and perform their extraordinary duties. At times of surge capacities these resources are stretched performing immediate life-threatening roles, such as helicopters transporting patients or equipment. If helicopters are needing to respond to a bushwalker who is lost, having a heart attack, or a broken bone, then there is a real question of whose life do they try to save. This will mean some states suspend overnight walking and close very remote areas. I know that as experienced bushwalkers we feel an accident cannot happen to us. Perhaps it is less likely, but it still can. This is all a numbers game. If we say no to 1000 people we may save one resource. I know that being out bush feels like the perfect way to practise social distancing, but this is one of the main reasons it is not advised.

Rapidly changing

We have all become familiar with graphs and the idea of exponential growth. The struggle with pandemics of high infectious diseases is the rate of growth seems so slow at first, then suddenly it is overwhelming. As disease spreads, the rules and community expectations will change rapidly. Most agencies will try to keep a bit ahead of the compliance requirements to give themselves a buffer zone.

When the government announces significant community changes they often do it with only 24 or 48 hours' notice. Agencies need to be very agile to be able to just implement these changes, let alone deal with all the community communications and compliance.

“... all government staff to be ready to change roles ...”

Risk to remote communities

One of the reasons to discourage non-essential travel is to protect remote communities. Remote communities are often more vulnerable to disease due to reduced exposure to similar illnesses and significantly lower access to medical resources. Simply filling up with fuel or popping to a bakery when driving a few hours to go for a walk may inadvertently spread the disease into this and other communities along the way.

So what does this look like at time of publishing?

The following table is a quick snapshot of how each region's national park service has responded at the end of March 2020. You need to visit their websites to get the details and latest information. This table is to give a sense of national happenings rather than giving you local advice.

So what is the core message?

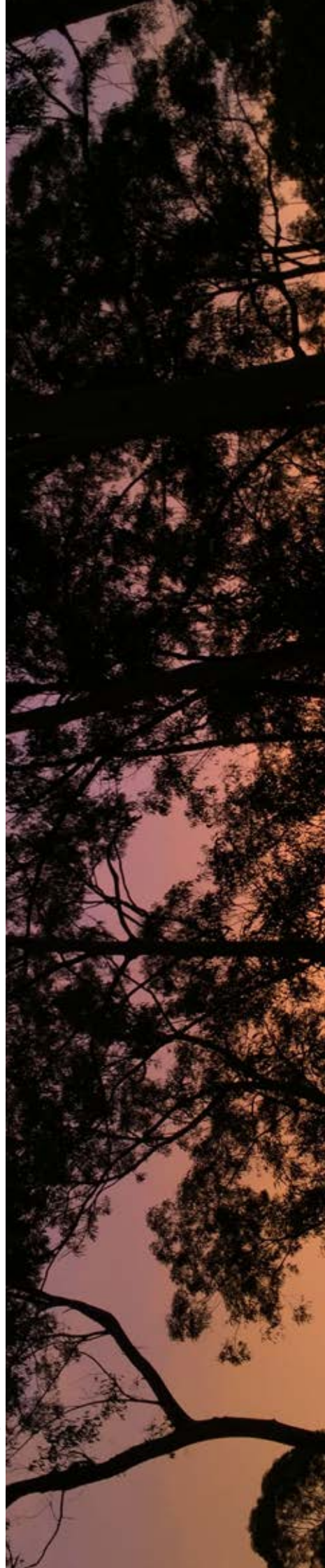
The core message is really everything we have been told a thousand times already. It is wash your hands, minimise your interactions with other people, keep distant from those you do interact with, stay home as much as possible. Stay home if you are vulnerable, when you are sick, or when required to by law.

Even as Australia becomes more locked down, those who are well and not required to stay isolated, will be allowed out to the supermarket and to do essential jobs. Chances are we will still be allowed out to walk locally (in pairs). So let's stay home to do our bit. Stay fit by walking locally from your house, explore local bushland.

After we peak and the hospital capacity returns to normal we will get the opportunity to start doing more and more again. Life as we knew it will probably never return to “normal”, and we will learn new helpful behaviours that are good for us to keep. Life will return with all the usual freedoms again, but here are some tips that are likely to be helpful as we find our new “normal” life again. Some of this will be for a short time as the virus finally dissipates and others will stay for the long term.

State	Parks	Tracks	Lookouts	Comment	More info
NSW	Most open	Most open	Popular ones closed	All campgrounds, most visitor centres, cafes, and high-visitation areas are closed.	NSW NPWS
ACT	Most open	Most open	Most open	Namadgi NP and Visitors Centre, parts of Tidbinbilla and Bimberi Wilderness area remain closed following fires.	Environment ACT
SA	Open	Open	Open	Events are closed and social distancing is been encouraged.	NP&WS
VIC	Most open	Most open	Popular ones closed	Popular sites such as Wilsons Promontory NP have significant limits. Twelve Apostles Visitors Center and Lookouts as well as the 1000 steps are closed.	Parks Victoria
TAS	Closed	Closed	Closed	After closing huts, then camping sites, Parks Tasmania closed all parks and reserves until further notice.	PWS
WA	Open	Open	Open	Group events are cancelled and social distancing is been encouraged.	DPAW
NT	Some closed	Most open	Most open	Some parks are still closed for season and popular parks are closed due to COVID-19.	NT Parks
QLD	Most open	Most open	Popular ones closed	All camping areas in Queensland national parks, state forests and recreation areas are closed from 26 March 2020 until further notice. Social distancing and hygiene protocols for popular parks are in place.	Parks and Forests
AUS	Closed	Closed	Closed	After initially offering free entry to many Australian NP, all parks are now closed (including Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta NPs).	Parks Australia

Campsites closed in all states.



Personal Hygiene



*Minimise your risk of infection and
minimise the risk of spreading the virus*

Wash hands often

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Rewash hands after touching public surfaces (such as trains, handrails, bus or toilet)
- Rewash hands after sneezing or coughing
- When soap and water not available, use hand sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol

Cover every cough & sneeze

- Cover your sneezes & coughs (with your elbow or tissue)
- Dispose of tissues as soon as possible (use a plastic bag until you can dispose of them)

Avoid touching your face

- Eyes, mouth, nose are vulnerable to infection (wash hands before touching face)

Social Distancing



*Reduce the spread of the virus.
Physically distant, but socially connected.*

Avoid physical contact

- Keep about 1.5 metres from other people
- Avoid physical contact (nod or bow instead of handshake)
- Create extra space from people sneezing/coughing

Minimise public transport

- Minimise time on public transport (walk locally)
- Avoid touching surfaces with hands

Minimise car sharing

- Keep all car-sharing rides less than 1 hour
- Maintain physical separation of people in the car (only two people in a three-person bench seat)

Self Isolation



*Limit the spread.
Isolate if you are potentially contagious.
Protect those who are vulnerable.*

Travel limits

- Follow government advice and be risk adverse when considering travelling overseas and interstate
- No visit very remote communities (as per government advice)

Do not join an activity if you

- are required to self-isolate (eg due to overseas travel or known exposure)
- have any flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, body aches, sore throat, headache or runny nose)
- suspect you are infected or are awaiting test results
- are a vulnerable person (Keep up to date your state health updates on who is vulnerable. In unsure seek your doctor's advice.)

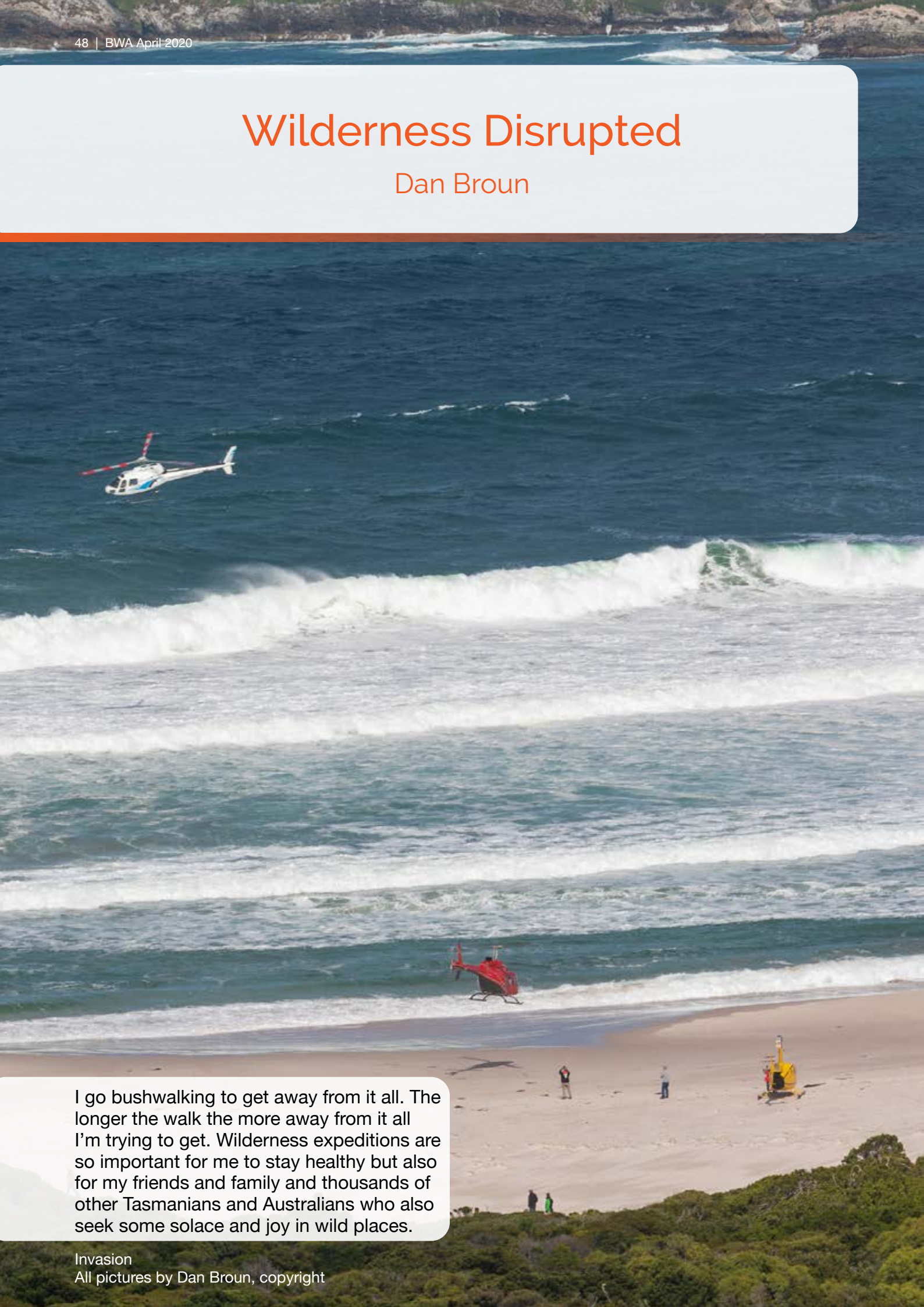
Continue the conversation on Bushwalk.com forum.

- [Where are you headed when this is over?](#)
- [Bushwalk during pandemic](#)



Wilderness Disrupted

Dan Broun

A wide-angle photograph of a coastal scene. In the upper left, a white helicopter with red and blue markings is in flight over the ocean. Below it, a large, white, foamy wave is breaking across the middle of the frame. In the lower middle, a red helicopter is on the sandy beach. To the right of the red helicopter, a yellow helicopter is also on the beach. Several people are standing on the beach, and a few more are visible on a grassy dune in the foreground. The background shows a rocky coastline under a clear sky.

I go bushwalking to get away from it all. The longer the walk the more away from it all I'm trying to get. Wilderness expeditions are so important for me to stay healthy but also for my friends and family and thousands of other Tasmanians and Australians who also seek some solace and joy in wild places.

Tasmania has a completely free physical and mental health retreat for us all to take advantage of.

A recent walk in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area was a much needed escape after a very busy time. My partner and I packed for two weeks with a plan to disconnect from society and tune back into the simple pleasures of nature. This plan took us to the great South-West Wilderness of Tasmania.

We walked deserted coves and wild beaches, tracts of pristine rainforest, delightful gullies of tannin-rich streams tumbling from heights unseen. We crossed mountain passes and sat on summits with only eagles and each other as company. Distant islands and the occasional passing yacht were the only hints that another human existed nearby.

On the sixth day of our walk we were starting to connect with the place, truly slow down, getting stronger, and breathing deeply. We had just spent two nights at Noyhener Beach (which is about as far as you can get from anywhere) exploring the natural wilderness of the coast and taking in the profound cultural significance of the area.

It was February 28. After packing up camp in the morning we were hiking through a patch of coastal forest climbing up a hillside.

The sun was warm and the breeze more than a touch stronger than “fresh”. We were feeling excited about a big day seven climbing over the South-West Cape Range. Then we heard a helicopter.

My first thought was for the well-being of a fellow hiker we’d met in the area. Were they in trouble? But, then the sound of a second chopper? That’s weird, really weird. I rushed up the track aiming for an open buttongrass ridge to get a look. As I did this the sound got louder and more confusing ... was that a third chopper? A fourth? Topping out on the ridge bought quite the show as another helicopter swung in towards the beach. They were landing on Noyhener beach, our haven for the past two nights. What was going on?

All sorts of possibilities ran through my head.

An army exercise? A disaster of some sort? A visiting dignitary? Most likely a tourism developer on a junket given the current Tasmanian government “eco-tourism” policy ...

“Then we heard a helicopter.”



Noyhener Beach

As we got some more elevation I reached a clearing and was able to drop my pack and take some photos. All the while yet more choppers could be seen approaching. Over the next twenty-odd minutes we counted 14 or 15 helicopters in total swing in from the north, bank sharply over bushland and land on that beautiful wild place we'd just spent two days exploring and respecting.

“... we counted 14 or 15 helicopters in total swing ...

After they got out of their machines, we surmised they were tourists of some sort. They were dressed inappropriately for the location, wandered about looking at each other's shiny toys and then started leaving.

The whole show lasted less than an hour. Their “Wilderness Experience” continued down the SW coast and out of sight. All they left us with was a strong smell of jet fuel and a sharp severing of that carefully planned escape we had executed from cities and machines. A week of hard won wildness melted in moments. It took us several days to process the disruption we had just encountered.

“A single act from well-heeled ignoramuses in helicopters damages a lot more that it will ever build.

The people on those choppers probably spent a day or two in Tasmania, they bought a bit of fuel, had a couple of meals, maybe even stayed in a hotel for a night. But what did they really give Tasmanians? Some anxiety perhaps?

Although I seek deep wilderness immersion to “escape” the trappings of a busy life, others retreat to their rural property on the Tasman Peninsula or their shack on the east coast for their slice of solitude. Maybe a spot of fishing or a wander in their local bushland to wind down. We are all spending lots of money all the time and are deeply invested in the essence of what makes Tasmania unique.

A single act from well-heeled ignoramuses in helicopters damages a lot more that it will ever build.

The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area is unique for its true wilderness nature. We are currently at a tipping point, where certain interests are prepared to forever compromise its integrity.

Proposals like the [Lake Malbena FIFO fishing farce](#) truly are the thin edge of the wedge.

This flock of noisy, smelly helicopters I encountered in the Southwest National Park genuinely felt like the harbingers of a very tacky and troublesome future for Tasmanian



tourism. Tasmania is in mortal danger of losing the one thing it has that no-one else on the planet has: actual wilderness.

Show your outrage for this boorish behaviour from the super-entitled and write to your local member and lobby with groups like the [Fishers and Walkers Against Helicopter Access](#) (FAWAHA) in the hope the chopper operators are charged heavily for what is surely a criminal act. Mr Broun and his companion have provided detailed statutory declarations to PWS investigators.

We can as wilderness-loving Tasmanians can push back against this destructive tide of pointless and vacuous tourism. It's past time the government and tourism bodies listen to and reflect upon the wishes of their bosses, the Tasmanian taxpayers.

Since this article was published on 11 March, Parks and Wildlife (PWS) have contacted Tasmanian Times with the following statement.

PWS has launched a compliance investigation into reports of the landing of several helicopters on a remote beach in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Penalties apply for the landing of an aircraft without an authority and limited commercial landings are only permitted in designated areas and zones under licence as prescribed

by the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 2016.

Action will be taken if the PWS investigation reveals there has been a breach of the law. As this is now an active investigation, PWS will not be making any further comment at this time.



Read more on the [Bushwalk.com](#) forum.



Dan Broun is a wilderness photographer and filmmaker based in Hobart. He's an avid bushwalker having explored vast tracts of the Tasmanian wilderness estate and has a keen interest in preserving natural areas for future generations to enjoy and take inspiration from.

This article first appeared in [Tasmanian Times](#) on 11 March 2020.



1200 Kilometres to Track Lizards

Sophie Cross



In 2017 and 2018 I walked the equivalent of 28 marathons in the scorching Western Australian outback. Why, you ask? To assess how some of Australia's largest lizard species interact with restored mines.

The method used GPS and a VHF tracking antenna to follow the perentie.
All pictures by Sophie Cross

As part of my PhD research, I hiked in often extreme heat on a mine site in WA's sparsely populated Mid West region. My fieldwork was both physically and mentally demanding, as I spent many hours each day walking through the bush looking for signs of monitor lizards.

Being in a remote location and mostly alone, I had plenty of time to ponder the wisdom of my career choice, particularly on days when temperatures exceeded 40 degrees Celsius and not even the lizards ventured from their homes.

Pushing through these mental challenges was difficult at times, but my work has provided me with some of my most rewarding experiences. And what I discovered may be crucial for restoring habitats destroyed by mining.

Restoring abandoned mines

Habitat loss is a leading cause of biodiversity loss worldwide. Although mining typically has a smaller environmental footprint than other major industries such as agriculture or urbanisation, **roughly 75% of active mines are on land with high conservation value.**

There are **around 60,000 abandoned mines in Australia**, but very few of them have been officially closed. How to restore them is a growing public policy problem.

Recovering biodiversity can be an exceptionally challenging task. Animals are vital to healthy ecosystems, **yet little is understood about how animals respond to restored landscapes.**

In particular, reptiles are **often overlooked** in assessments of restoration progress, despite playing key roles in Australian ecosystems.



Sophie Cross walked more than 1200 kilometres and tracked a young adult perentie to find out whether they were using a restored mining area.

Do animals return to restored habitats?

I wanted to know whether restored habitats properly support the return of animals, or whether animals are only using these areas opportunistically or, worse still, avoiding them completely.

To study how reptiles behave in restored mining areas, I hand-caught and tracked a young adult [perentie](#). The perentie is Australia's largest lizard species, growing to around 2.5 metres in length, and is an apex predator in arid parts of the country.

I tracked the lizard for three weeks to determine whether it was using the restored area, before the tracker fell off during mating.

Previous methods of tracking assume the animal used all locations equally. But I used a [new method](#) that measures both the frequency with which animals visit particular places, and the amount of time they spend there. This provided a valuable opportunity to assess how effective restoration efforts have been in getting animals to return.

Restoration needs more work

My research, [published in the Australian Journal of Zoology](#), shows that while the perentie did visit the restored mine, it was very selective about which areas it visited, and avoided some places entirely. The lizard went on short foraging trips in the restored mine area, but regularly returned to refuge areas such as hollow logs.

This is because hot, open landscapes with minimal refuges present high risks for reptiles, which rely on an abundance of coverage to regulate their body temperature

and to avoid predators. Such costs may make these areas unfavourable to reptiles and limit their return to restored landscapes.

In comparison, undisturbed vegetation supported longer foraging trips and slower movement, without the need to return to a refuge area. Unfortunately, areas undergoing restoration often require exceptionally long time-periods for vegetation to resemble the pre-disturbed landscape.

How can we help reptiles move back into restored areas?

Restored landscapes often lack key resources necessary for the survival of reptiles. As vegetation can require a long time to reestablish, returning fauna refuges like hollow logs and fauna refuge piles (composed of mounds of sand, logs, and branches) could be crucial to aiding in the return of animal populations.

My research team and I have called for [animals to be considered to a greater extent in assessments of restoration success](#). In the face of increasing rates of habitat destruction, we need to understand how animals respond to habitat change and restoration.

Failing to do so risks leaving a legacy of unsustainable ecosystems and a lack of biodiversity.



Sophie Cross

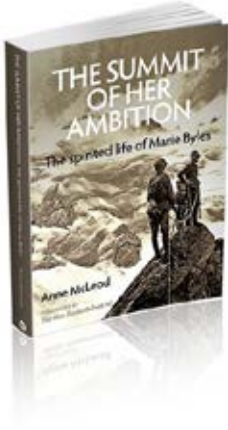
PhD candidate, Curtin University

This article first appeared in [The Conversation](#) on 7 February 2020.



The tracking device revealed how the perentie navigated a restored mine, before it fell off during mating.

In the News



The Summit of Her Ambition: the spirited life of Marie Byles

Lawyer, feminist, environmentalist, mountaineer, Buddhist - the exceptional story of the first woman to practise law in New South Wales. The book is now available (Print on Demand) through [amazon.com.au](https://www.amazon.com.au) or through writers' website: annemcleod.com.au

Bushwalker lost near Hobart

An avid bushwalker got lost on Mount Wellington because of the overgrown tracks.

Internet speeds affected because of COVID-19

As millions of Australians started working from home, the internet speeds slowed down.

A hiker returns from wilderness to a total lockdown

James Johnston went bushwalking on the Routeburn Track in New Zealand's South Island and definitely didn't imagine to come back to a world in a lockdown.



Online Food Supplies

Sonya Muhlsimmer



So you have a big trip coming up and it is now time to start preparing your food. There are a lot of recipes you can make at home with a few simple ingredients from the supermarkets, Asian shops and health food shops and of course online suppliers. This article will talk about some online supplies that are on my go-to list. I love online shopping as you can compare prices and check out what is on the market all from the comfort of your own space. You can shop at any time of the day or night and not have to drive anywhere, find parking and deal with the sometimes crazy busy shops, unless you like that kind of thing of course.

Since publishing my book *Xtreme Gourmet* I have had numerous people asking me where to get certain ingredients, and unfortunately some of the ingredients that were readily available in the supermarkets are not available in the shops any more. That is due to those pesky food manufacturers that sometimes delete products even though they are a great product, or the supermarket stop selling an item in a certain area as the market is not strong there. You should be able to find a substitute for something, or if not, shop online and see what you can find. There is

“ You should be able to find a substitute for something, or if not, shop online and see what you can find.

a plethora of ingredients you can buy online just as long as you don't mind paying the postage.

This is not an exhaustive list as there is so much out there, but gee, it will get you a few good supplies. Except iHerb, all these online shops listed are Australian. I like to support the Australian businesses. Did I mention the petrol and kilometres you will save from shopping online? This also keeps a delivery driver in a job, win-win.

Disclaimer: this list was correct at the time of writing, but the information may change at any time. Also, I do not have any affiliate association with any of these companies, I just like some of the products they offer.

Where to buy

Egg powder

Supplier	Product	Weight	Cost
Australian Egg Company	Egg powder	2 kg	\$55
Bob's Red Mill	Egg replacer	340 g	\$8.50
Farm Pride	Whole Egg Powder	150 g	\$5.95
Orgran	No Egg – egg replacer	200 g	\$3.90

This is expensive due to the process involved. You can always vacuum seal this product in small quantities and it will last for years, or share with friends.

Sometimes, if you are lucky, Farm Pride - Whole Egg Powder is available at some Coles or Woolworths supermarkets. It can be found in the baking section, or in the fridge near the eggs. Check online to see if the supermarket close to you has it in stock.

If all else fails you can use Orgran No Egg, Egg replacer, or Bobs Red Mill Egg Replacer which can be found in health food shops. Prices can be different depending where you get it from.

Olives

Supplier	Product	Weight	Cost
Doorstep organics	Semi Dried Olives	150 g	\$6.75
iHerb	Pitted Peruvian Botija Sun dried olives	227 g	\$28.66
Mt Stirling Olives	Sun dried olives	500 g	\$12.50

Peanut butter and honey powders

Supplier	Product	Weight	Cost
True protein	Peanut butter powder	250 g	\$20
Inspired Ingredients	Freeze dried Manuka honey	100 g	\$35

Bacon bits

Supplier	Product	Weight	Cost
Doorstep organics	Coconut bacon	60 g	\$7.95
iHerb	Bac'uns vegetarian bits	70 g	\$6.85
Spice wagon	Bacon flavoured bits	100 g	\$5.95

Beef jerky

Supplier	Product	Weight	Cost
Byron Jerky	Smokey, teriyaki, char grill, chilli or hot	120 g	\$17.50
Byron Jerky	Biltong in a range of flavours – traditional, garlic, chilli	2 x 150 g	\$32
Jerky House	A range of flavours	40 g to 1 kg	\$6-89

Chorizo

Supplier	Product	Weight	Cost
Goose on the loose	chorizo, jerky, pepperoni and salami	3-400 g	\$22-\$25

Without naming names, I organised food for a 90 day expedition for someone, and I got a range of salami, jerky and chorizo and it lasted well through the trip. This stuff is the bomb. It can last up to a year with proper storage.



Salami storage

Freeze dried ingredients

Supplier	Product	Weight	Cost
iHerb	Corn	224 g	\$15
	Vegetable soup blend	453 g	\$28
	The same corn product is in Melbourne vitamin shops for \$49.95		
Inspired Ingredients	Apple, apricot, beetroot, banana, blackberries, blueberries, capers, mango, peas, corn, freeze dried powders such as tomato powder. Soups, tomato paste replacer and porcini mushroom.	Up to 150 g	\$19 to \$32
Freeze dry industries	Freeze dried fruit	10 x 10 g	\$39.50
	Freeze Dried Cheese	pack carton	\$64.50
Spices Australia	Vegetables and powders such as spinach, tomato granules, carrot, capsicum, leek pumpkin powder	500 g to 2 kg	Starting from \$8

They are pretty expensive, but you only need a little as a little goes a long way. Again share with your friends.

Again share with your friends.

Storage of dried food

The secret to longevity of these ingredients is storing these foods correctly. Apart from salami and chorizo, store the ingredients in an air-tight container in the cupboard, or vacuum sealed in the cupboard and you can get years out of most dried foods. Avoiding light and air is the secret. Dried foods can last a long time even after the best before date. Don't tell anyone but I have a packet of Freeze Dried Capers in my cupboard that was best before August 2017, and they are still fine to eat. Salami and chorizo can depend on how they are made as to how to store them correctly.

“... you can get years out of most dried foods.”

Food Co-ops

Not all Food Co-op shops are online but they are great. They are a non-for-profit, community establishment. They are run by an army of volunteers and if you become a member and you do a bit of voluntary work every now and then, you get a good discount. These are the kinds of shops that can be found. [Blue Mountains Food Co-op](#) and [The Raw Food Store](#).

Generally speaking, you can take your own containers and bags. It cuts down on buying too much as you weigh out exactly how much you want to buy, so buy as little or as much as you want. They also offer some packaged goods and if you forget your bags or containers, they have jars and paper bags you can take for a very small fee. The planet will thank you for reducing rubbish.



You're in Pain

Stephen Lake

Tune: [You're so vain](#)

You walked high on the Main Range like you were on a short day trip.
Your broad brim hat always keeping off hot sun,
Your scruffy shirt has a rip.
You had one eye on the weather as you found a place to kip.
And everyone wanted your ultra-light pack,
Your ultra-light pack, and ...

You're in pain, your blisters rubbing inside of both boots.
You're in pain, I'll bet you would love some new boots.
Don't you? Don't you?

We came here several years ago pretty flowers bloomed on high.
When you said that you knew a good sheltered spot,
A place that was always dry.
I did what I'd not done before, a pleasurable afternoon.
I had sweet dreams, as we stayed in your small tent.
Stayed in your small tent, and ...

You're in pain, your blisters rubbing inside of both boots.
You're in pain, I'll bet you would love some new boots.
Don't you? Don't you?

I had sweet dreams, as we stayed in your small tent.
Stayed in your small tent, and ...

You're in pain, your blisters rubbing inside of both boots.
You're in pain, I'll bet you would love some new boots.
Don't you? Don't you?

Well I hear you went out to Dicky Cooper and said it was a lot of fun.
Then you walked fast back to summit Twynam,
To see the colourful setting sun.
Well you're camping in all the wild spots,
And when you're not you're in an old remote hut,
Or back in the Eagles Nest, back in the Eagles Nest, and ...

You're in pain, your blisters rubbing inside of both boots.
You're in pain, I'll bet you would love some new boots.
Don't you? Don't you?



Bushwalk Australia



Fire and Fury

- > The Great Dividing Trail, VIC
- > AAWT fastest known time
- > 2019-20 bushfires overview
- > In memory of Four Mile Hut



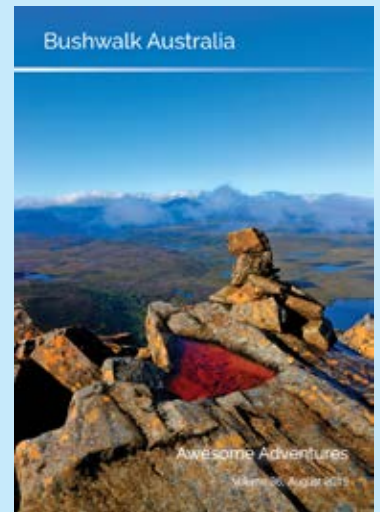
Hills & Valleys

- > Orange Bluff
- > Two State 8 Peaks
- > Walking on fire
- > Hand Hygiene in the Bush



Alpine Adventures

- > Hannells Spur Loop, NSW
- > Australian Alps Walking Track
- > Skiing With the Bobs, take two
- > MUMC – 75 Years Old



Awesome Adventures

- > McMillans Track, Victoria
- > Island Lagoon
- > Franklin River, Tasmania
- > Long-Distance Walking Tracks



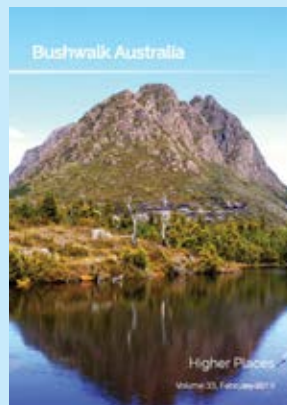
Wild & Rugged

- > Queen Charlotte Track, NZ
- > Huemul Circuit, Argentina
- > Never Say Never



Going the Distance

- > Mt Wills to Mt Bogong
- > Hume & Hovell WT
- > Walk of Wonders



Higher Places

- > AAWT
- > Tassie Winter Trip
- > Our High Country Lore



Peak Promenade

- > Pindars Peak
- > Cordilleras in Peru
- > Brothers Point, Scotland



Ridges & Valleys

- > Buffalo, The Bluff and Mt McDonald
- > Skiing with the Bobs



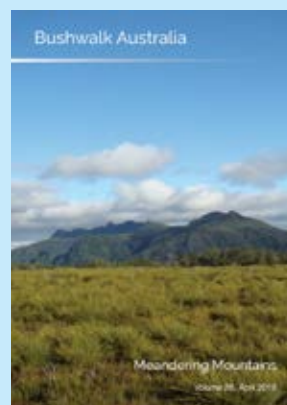
Ambling Adventures

- > An Abel challenge
- > Pack hauling



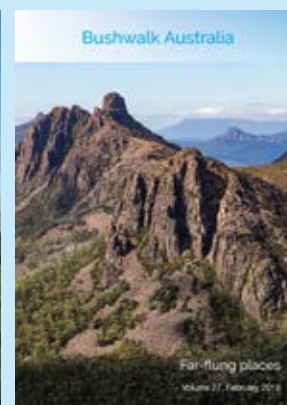
Act Now

- > Viking Circuit
- > Overland Track



Meandering Mountains

- > D'Alton Peaks, Grampians
- > Three mighty peaks



Far-flung Places

- > 10 reasons to hike the PCT
- > The Spires via Holley Basin



Bushwalking Heritage

- > Kidmans Hut Walk
- > Conquering the Giant