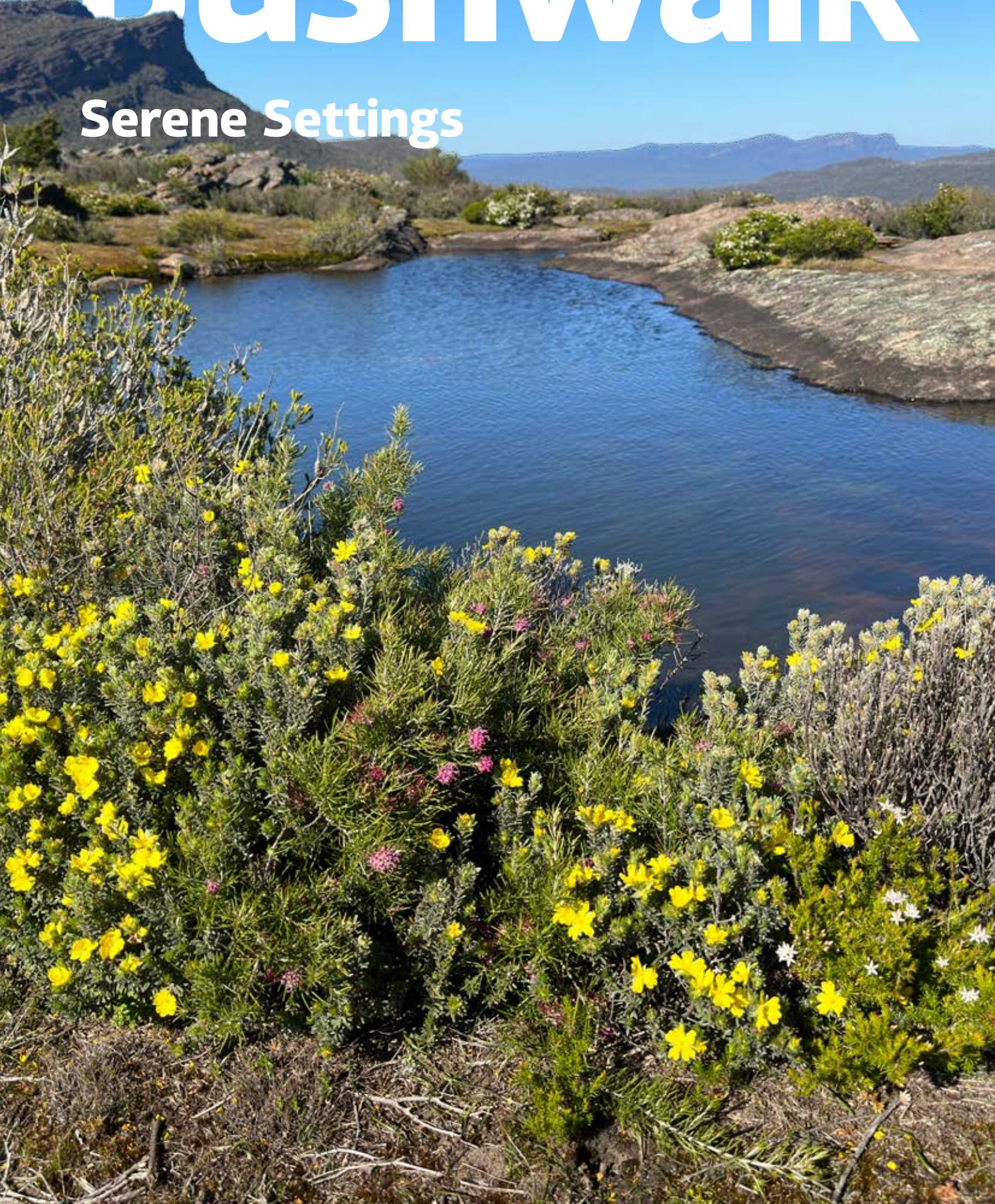


February 2024

Bushwalk

Serene Settings



Contents

- 4 **Bogong Circuit**
The epic revisit of the track
- 12 **In the Shadow of Mount "Jugular"**
Alpine touring in Mt Jagungal region
- 22 **Longpoint West/East Loop**
Father and son's adventure in Grampians
- 30 **Blue Mountains**
An underestimated walk
- 36 **Photo Gallery**
Surreal landscapes to enjoy
- 46 **Sore Muscles**
It's not lactic acid
- 50 **Mini Mountain**
Adventures and snacks



4



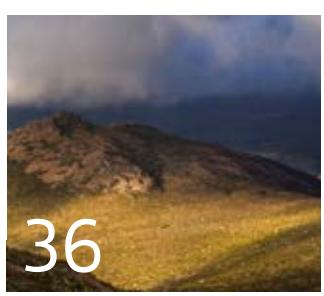
12



22



30



36



46



50



**Always Was
Always Will Be
Aboriginal Land**

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

Editor's Letter

Hi all

I hope this edition finds you well.

I want to start by saying a huge thanks to Stephen Lake for his more than ten years of incredible service and dedication to the magazine and to our community.

In light of the weather events this summer I thought I would give a nod to Dorothea Mackellar's My Country – I love a sunburnt country.

Matt :)



Matt McClelland (aka Wildwalks)
matt@bushwalk.com



My Bushwalk - I love a serene setting

Oh what a summer, wild and extreme,
Across this vast land, a weathered dream.
Dorothea Mackellar, in her poetic grace,
Might marvel at the tumult we now face.

Tyrone's journey, Bogong's path retreats,
Success this round, where once he might've fled.
Terry leads to Jagungal's snowy peaks,
Where winter's touch in frosty silence speaks.

Nigel, with young Ollie by his side,
Takes on Mt Difficult's steep, challenging stride.
And Ian roams, where Colliers Causeways wind,
At lookouts paused, nature's grandeur finds.

In articles where sore muscles speak,
We learn not all pain is lactic's technique.
And Sonya's tales, of mini mountain quests,
Invite us all to try high-protein bests.

Enjoy the trails, this Bushwalk mag imparts,
Happy walking, where nature's art starts.
May our paths cross, in time's gentle swoon,
Under sunlit skies, or by a silvery moon.

Cover image

Tarn near the turnoff to
Briggs Bluff
Nigel Woodman



Bushwalk Magazine
Edition 63
February 2024
An electronic magazine for bushwalk.com



Editor
Matt McClelland
matt@bushwalk.com



Design manager
Eva Gomiscek
eva@wildwalks.com

Declaration

The opinions stated in articles are those of the authors and not of those involved in the production of this edition. If you are worried about transparency or any editorial aspect please either write to me or raise the issue on Bushwalk.com. The bushwalking community is a small world and paths often cross. To improve transparency I thought it would be helpful to list my main associations within the outdoor community.

I operate Bushwalk.com, Wildwalks.com and Overlandtrack.com, a number of other smaller websites (and related apps) and have written several walking guide books, published by WoodsLane. I contract to National Parks Association NSW and I am a member of the Walking Volunteers. I have had contracts with state and local government departments regarding bushwalking and related matters. I have also partnered with a large number of other organisations in environmental campaigns. Any commercial advertising or sponsorship will be clear in the magazine.

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 Bushwalk magazine.

Please send any articles, suggestions or advertising enquires to Eva. We would love you to be part of the magazine and we are here to help.

Bogong Circuit

Text

Tyrone Boi

Photos

Tyrone Boi
Spira Stojanovik

After completing this loop years and years ago with a good mate, we thought it was time to revisit. It's a great route and our favourite in the Bogongs – challenging and spectacular.



Spira looking east on Eskdale Spur
Tyrone Boi



Spira on the Staircase
Tyrone Boi



Tyrone and Spira having a break on the Staircase Spur
Tyrone Boi

Day 1: Mountain Creek to Bogong Creek Saddle (almost), 15 km

We headed off from the inner north of Melbourne around 10 am, a later start than usual. There was a buzz of excitement in the air as we hadn't hiked together for a good few years. Each time we go away seems to always turn into an epic.

After a tasty preparatory lunch in Myrtleford, we drove the last one and a half hours to the Mountain Creek car park, arriving a bit after 2 pm. Only one other car was there, so we knew we had the mountains to ourselves – a bonus of going midweek and post long weekend.

We headed up the fire trail to the Staircase Spur trailhead, and after signing the intentions log book we started the steep walk up at approximately 3 pm.

Now one thing to note here is my hike companion Spira is a master chef in the wilderness, and for this trip we decided to share our dinners. I determined that making my backpack weight a lot heavier than normal would be worth it to experience Spira's culinary creations, but more on this later!

We dropped packs and refuelled our water at the Bivouac Hut, which sits at 1450 metres above sea level. Warm and sweaty, but we were making good progress, just the final stretch now lay ahead to the summit. After four and a half hours we hit summit cairn at sundown. The temperature had dropped a lot, so it was time to layer up and head to our intended camp spot at Bogong Creek Saddle. As night fell, we navigated down Quartz Ridge to the west by headlamp, where we were treated to an amazing lightning storm in the distance. Every few seconds the sky would light up completely, illuminating the mountaintops. We stopped for a few minutes to take it all in.

As it was getting on to 9:30 pm, we decided to stop at the next flat open area to camp, as we were still an hour off Bogong Creek Saddle. After pitching our tents, we started dinner. On the menu was rice with broccolini, tuna, anchovies and snake beans - fantastic, as we were hungry!

“

Every few seconds the sky would light up completely, illuminating the mountaintops.

After dinner we retreated to our tents. I tried to settle in, but bug light insects had invaded and were buzzing in my face, driving me crazy. I was waving my arms around like a conductor, and one actually flew deep into my ear, driving me further insane for a good ten minutes. I was panicked and feeling like a little toddler. I whined out to Spira for help. He shouted out a few suggestions with the help of Google. Luckily, it flew out shortly after, because I wasn't keen on the idea of pouring olive oil down my ear! I was looking forward to a good night's sleep, but the weather gods had other ideas!

We had checked the forecast and radar images prior, and knew there were storms to the west and northeast of us, but they appeared as though they would miss us. At approximately 11:30 pm it started to rain heavily, and then a stellar storm hit us with

hail, thunder and lightning. Every crack of thunder would shake my body from the inside out, it was terrifying! With every lit sky I would brace myself, waiting for the thunder. To add to the drama, the seam tape on the fly was leaking water into my tent directly on my head, causing anxiety for most of the night. I lay there thinking of ideas to fix this problem and constantly checking the BOM radar for when the storm would pass. I ended up using my rain jacket on top of my pillow and slipping my head under the jacket to stop the drip on my head, avoiding the "Chinese water torture method"! My sleeping bag was also getting wet at the foot end because I was pressed against the inner tent to the fly sheet, trying to avoid the drip on my head. It was a frustrating experience, and I knew if my sleeping bag was too wet by morning, the trip couldn't go on. It was a sleepless night. The rain finally subsided after 4 am.



Bogong summit cairn
Spira Stojanovik



Day 2: Bogong Creek Saddle to Ropers Hut via Grey Hills Track, 16 km

After both having a rough night with little to no sleep, the mood was sour and morale was low. Spira's tent had also had a leak. He too was up all night. I had thought it was just me having a bad night, but after exchanging stories of the night's challenges, we walked an hour down to the Saddle stocking up on water before starting the ascent on the Grey Hills Track to Mt Arthur. It was 11:30 am by this stage, and our moods had lifted and smiles returned following the previous night's excitement.

The terrain on this part of the route was very rough under foot. Five years ago, we had lost the trail for the first 3 km up to Mount Arthur and had to bash our way through thick scrub. Luckily this time it was clear! This stretch was also riddled with angry ants, which like to bite if they have a chance and bite they did!

Once you pass Mount Arthur, it's all undulating with the odd steep pinch along the way. Spira was match fit, having just walked the Larapinta Trail. He stormed ahead like a Nepalese porter. I was certainly feeling it as I am not used to carrying 19 kg of gourmet food, including cans of coconut cream, tuna, sweet potatoes, etc ... LOL. My left shoulder had a sharp needle pain and my lower back was suffering, slowing me right down. The last push off the Grey Hills involved climbing up Crowsnest - a proper lung-buster! Then onto the Spion Kopje Fire Ttrail.

“

The last push off the Grey Hills involved climbing up Crowsnest - a proper lung-buster!



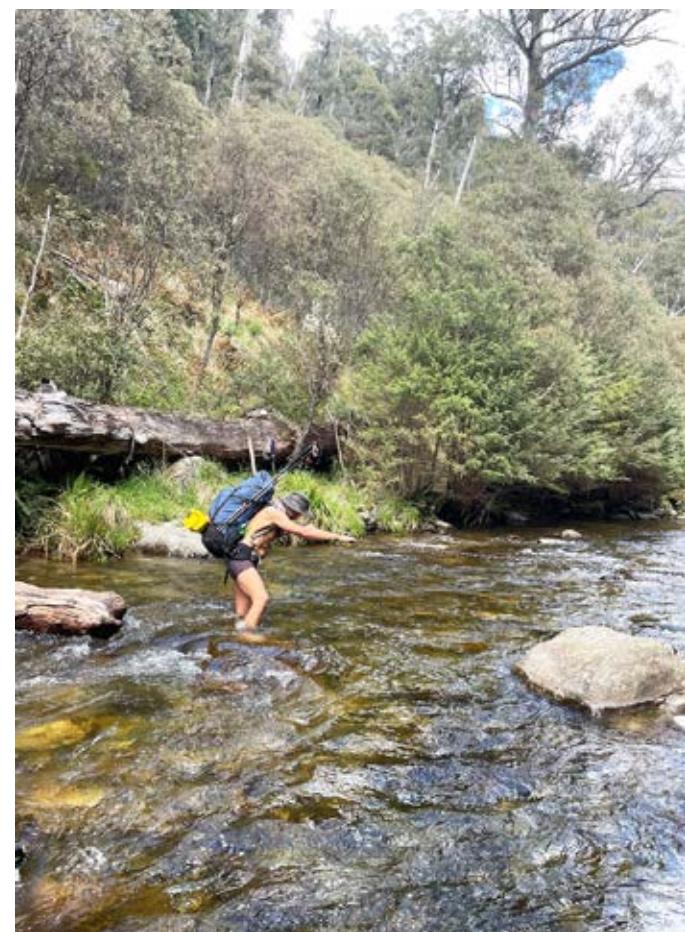
Campsite in the morning on Quartz Ridge post storm
Tyrone Boi



Spira on the Grey Hills Track
Tyrone Boi



Spira relaxing while waiting for Tyrone on Spion Kopje
Spira Stojanovik



Spira crossing Big River at bottom of Duane Spur
Tyrone Boi

My energy reserves were zapped as we hit the fire trail around 5:30 pm. We headed for Ropers Hut. My slow pace had Spira offering to take a couple of kilos off me, hopefully relieving the weight and pain on my shoulders, which felt like I was carrying a bus. I also had a headache and dragged my feet at snail pace the 5 kilometres on Spion Kopje to the junction. My mind wanted to walk, but my legs didn't want to cooperate, so it was mentally grinding.

Spira was well ahead out of sight and with fading light and temperature dropping, I had a vision that he was already at the hut, and when I arrived the fire would be lit and a green curry ready for me when I limped through the door. It was just a pipedream. Spira was feeling it too after 11 hours on our feet.

Finally making it to the junction, we walked the final 3 kilometres into camp by headlamp, arriving around 8:30 pm. By this stage I gave myself a 10% chance of continuing the next day and started to think of an escape plan to abort the hike. I was toasted and was

also feeling unusually cold and shivering. We collapsed, and after another yummy dinner of vegetable green curry we retreated to bed. I was too lazy to set up a tent and having the place to ourselves, I decided to sleep in the hut. We had a good night's sleep apart from the mice making a racket, but they soon went to sleep too.

“

I was toasted and was also feeling unusually cold and shivering.

Day 3: Ropers Hut to Michell Hut, 14 km

Surprisingly waking up refreshed and free of painful shoulders and lower back, I was good to push on!

We headed down Duane Spur to Big River. The sun was out, the sky was blue, and it was warming up. We spent an hour down at

the river having a refreshing dip and snacks with coffee. We made the stiff climb up the T Spur. Our aim for today was to reach Michell Hut on Eskdale Spur, giving us a shorter walk back to the car the next day. The last time we attempted this, in early March 2019, we bailed somewhere near the Rock Saddle on the exposed plains towards Bogong summit. That time, we got caught out in a storm and drenched with cold wind and rain, we huddled behind the rocks yelling at each other as it was so loud. Scary thoughts of three walkers who perished in a blizzard in 1943 in the area come to mind. There is a memorial plaque high up on Staircase Spur, so we retreated back to Cleve Cole Hut. We certainly felt alive in those moments.

This time with clear blues skies and a gentle breeze, we stopped at the Rocking Stone Saddle for tea and a snack. Today's walking was relaxed, and having no rush, we were excited to arrive at camp around 6 pm, well before sundown with plenty of time to relax.

Dinner was spaghetti al la puttanesca, all meals cooked from scratch – cheers "Masterchef Spira!". It was a nice evening with a lovely sunset. I was in bed by sundown and drifted off by 9:30 pm.

Day 4: Michell Hut to Mountain Creek, 12 km

Having slept for a good and much-needed nine hours, we had a lazy morning over breakfast and Macedonian-style coffee. We headed down Eskdale Spur Track in another stunning day of sunshine and blue skies. The walk back to the car involved 7 kilometres of road bash from the bottom of Eskdale Spur. Not much to report really, as it's a

“

We headed down Eskdale Spur Track in another stunning day of sunshine and blue skies.



Spira crossing a creek near Cleve Cole Hut
Tyrone Boi



Tyrone and Spira on Mt Bogong summit
Tyrone Boi

rather tedious, boring walk compared to the stunning scenery on other parts of the trail. Last time we managed to hitch a ride back to the car, but having the whole mountain range to ourselves, there was not a soul in sight – which I suppose made having to endure this last part worth it.

A dip in the river was amazing and refreshing, and our 4 days of adventure (and sometimes torture!) were finished. A lunch was enjoyed before heading back to Melbourne. We decided it was a better ending than our previous time walking this loop, and the trip was far more epic. Next time, we will attempt it reverse - in another 4 to 5 years I'd say!



A beetle sat on my shoe
Tyrone Boi



Spira bathing in Big River on Mountain Creek Road
Tyrone Boi



Tyrone in Wadi Rum, Jordan



Tyrone Boi works as a tradesman in the building industry. He is open minded to different experiences. He loves the outdoors and the sense of adventure it brings. He is also an avid cyclist. You can find him on [Instagram](#) or on his [Hiking Tales](#) blog.

In the Shadow of Mount “Jugular”

Text and photos
Terry Cornall

A wee bit of whimsical hyperbole and poetic licence in the title. Just a smidge.

This is a trip report for four days of alpine touring I did in the Mt Jagungal region of the NSW Snowy Mountains, with ski-buddy Gordon on 11/9/22. Remember 2022, when we still had good snow in September?



Gordon heading towards Mawsons hut



Whites River Hut from the dunny at midnight

We rolled into the Island Bend campsite not far from Guthega Power Station (GPS) on Sunday evening after driving up from Gippsland Victoria. After a lovely mashup of sausages and veggies we hit the sack under Gordon's basecamp pyramid tent. It was a bit breezy and chilly, but I was plenty snug in my Western Mountaineering Antelope GWS alpine bag. Despite being beaten about the head a bit by the flappy tent I got a good sleep, lulled by the rushy sounds of water from the Snow River nearby. The GWS stands for Gore Wind Stopper - although it adds a tiny bit of weight and also makes the bag a bit harder to compress, it adds water repellency and resistance to chilly breezes to an already great big poofy warm bag. Rated to -15° C I'd trust it down to -10° happily.

Day 1: Guthega Power Station to Whites River Hut, 8.2 km, 3 hrs

We rose next morning after sleeping past the alarm, a trend that I am happy to report continued for the entire trip. Packing up and

heading for the Power Station we arrived shortly and then got the trip truly underway. It was a bit grey and dreary, and that continued all day with short bits of sunshine. The snow conditions meant we could don skis only after a short climb out of the Power Station. We skied more or less without having to take them off more than a few times to cross gnarly bits where the snow had turned to dirt or been washed out by small tributaries. We had some navigating fun in the snow flurries and poor visibility, not at all aided by my photochromatic smart glasses, deciding that they should stay blacked out even though the sun was hidden. Cold will do that to them,

“

... not at all aided by my photochromatic smart glasses, deciding that they should stay blacked out even though the sun was hidden.

I have found. Eventually I swapped to better-behaved stupid glasses that just stayed clear all the time and then I could read the damn InReach Explorer+ satnav and Fenix 7 watch properly. More by good fortune and Gordon's instincts than my navigation, we did end up on the Horse Camp Aqueduct Track that stayed fairly high above the Munyang River. The only other adventurer about was a young chap with snowshoes who left the Power Station at the same time as we did. He made it all the way to Whites River Hut and met us again on his way back to the car park before we were even halfway to the hut. He was powering along on his snowshoes compared to us old plodders with packs on skis. A wee bit of decision making at the weir that marked the end of the Aqueduct Track, and then we were onto the Schlink Pass Road and a short hop from Whites River Hut. We considered going on to the Schlink Hilton, but decided that enough was enough and it was time for a brew and some sleep. We had the hut to ourselves that night. I took this photo from the dunny in the middle of the night, just lit by moonlight. I was amazed that it came out so well. Good 'ol Google Pixel 5 smartphone.



Terry at Schlink Pass

Day 2: Whites River Hut to Tin Hut, 7 Km, 4 hrs

On the next day the weather was fine with a smattering of new snow, and the sunscreen and my buff came out to keep the sun off my head without being too hot. Gordon made do with a triangular bandage tied around his pate which made him look like an escapee from a trauma ward but served the purpose. I still managed to get the tip of my nose and my temples (where the snow goggles didn't quite meet the buff) badly burned. My small beard (grown over the Covid period as a sort of passive-aggressive protest at being locked in) helped shade my face, but I decided it had to go as soon as the trip was over. Somehow it had gotten the smell of garlic flavoured olive oil into it and it was like being followed around by a rancid pizza.

We were originally planning to go to Valentine Hut that day and then on to Mawsons followed by Tin Hut, but Gordon had a fortunate brainwave when we got to the bit just past the Schlink Pass where we could head on up to Mt Gungartan. "Why don't we head for Tin Hut today while the weather is



Some beer-holder derived neoprene, some glue and the toe of a stocking and no one has to know I hacked my boot-liner ...



good?" I thought about it. It meant a sharpish climb to begin with but the beautiful weather made it an easy decision. "Let's do it," I cried and we donned skins and headed up. It was pretty easy going on the firm crusty snow, probably easier going up than it would have been coming down. It meant that once the climb was over, the rest of the trip would be downhill and it made for a relaxed tour. I'd recommend going anti-clockwise if you are doing the Tin Hut, Mawsons Hut, Valentine Hut, Schlink Hut circuit like we were.

I had taped up my feet that morning, to protect the insides of my arches from rubbing raw by the Dynafit ski boots. It did work to an extent, but I feared I had made the tape too tight on the top of the arch and it was feeling a bit funny. It turned out later that it was actually tearing the skin under the tape there. Sigh. If it isn't one thing it's another with the dang boots. Why, despite being told multiple times that I needed to be able to tour in the damn things and not just go downhill, did the fitter insist that they had to be so tight, and why did I not insist on them actually fitting? I know better now, I suppose. I could also

feel (a pressure that would lose the toenail if it went on) that my efforts to punch out the plastic boots to give my little toe on the right foot some wriggle room, hadn't solved the problem and I resolved to attack the toe with a knife. The toe on the inner lining of the boot that is, not my precious flesh itself. This was a good decision and I didn't regret desecrating the boot liner. It turned out that the outer boot was fine, just the inner was a size too small! I could put a patch over the hole when I got home.

Once over the broad Gungartan Pass, we skied toward the bend where the hut was, trying to work out which patch of trees it was in. I spied its dunny on the far side of a clearing surrounded by trees, and headed straight for it, but was baulked by a cornice that I really didn't want to ski over (marked as avalanche zone on my map ...). So I had to traverse around a bit to where Gordon had found the correct line. We found the star-picket fence that I later worked out we should have been using as a turn reference (looks like I had the retrospective navigation turned on again). Then the hut became barely apparent



Tin Hut



Gordon halfway between Tin Hut and Mawsons trying to figure out which bump on the horizon was which

through its screen of snowgums. It would be very difficult to find it in poor visibility, hidden by the trees from the north and west approaches as it is.

Again we had the hut to ourselves and we were only too glad to settle in and have a brew. But it wasn't too long before we got bored and headed out to find some slopes to play on. We ended up climbing back up to the 2000 m line on the ridge to the southwest of the hut, just so we could ski down it. Had to finesse it a bit to avoid the cornices I'd found on my way in, but it worked out nicely. Good snow, though a bit broken in a couple of places where the heath had come through. We invented grassading (a nod to the French term "[glissading](#)" here) to describe skiing on grass which was actually easier than walking through the heath. And later, the term "skier ferrata" to describe crossing rusty metal

footbridges on skies (derived from Via Ferrata in the Italian Alps. Youtube is good for my education).

All tuckered out by a great day, I slept well that night and missed the alarm again. Yay!

Day 3: Tin Hut to Mawsons Hut, 5.5 km, 2 hrs

The next day was fine and sunny again, so we headed out down the Valentine Creek Valley for the shortish trek to Mawsons Hut. Possible ideas of going on to do Mt Jagungal were considered. Snow bridges to cross the creek were becoming a wee bit fraught, but not too bad. Another week of this sun would render them much more exciting, I thought. However, we reckoned that getting over Valentine Creek to go onto Jagungal would require wading and we weren't up for that.... too cold!

After a leisurely few hours of skiing, we got to a point where we could see Mt Jagungal, Cup and Saucer Hill, Mailbox Hill and the ridge that Mawsons Hut would be behind. We weren't sure which ridge it was though and also weren't sure which bump on the horizon was which (apart from the newly renamed "Mt Jugular" which stood out like dog's balls). It wasn't navigationally important to sort it out at that point but I took this photo anyway and when I got home I looked to see if anyone had an app that would identify things on the horizon from a particular point. Sure enough, I found that 'there is an app for that'. See peakfinder.org to find out more.

Mawsons Hut (named not after the famous Sir Doug but a much more relevant fellow who managed a cattle lease and got the hut built way back in the day) eventually rolled into view where we expected it. We didn't get our feet wet getting to it because we'd been careful to stay on the correct side of the creek.

Once again, nobody home, so we had a brew and attempted to repair our Swix adjustable ski-poles, of which we both had one that developed an annoying tendency to just spin freely when we were trying to adjust them.

We worked out what the problem was and tried to centre-punch the lower part of the ski-pole back onto the locking mechanism using a handy rock and nail.

It didn't work, although Gordon was able to fix his that way (using a proper hammer and punch) when he got home. I just superglued mine (when I got home, not having had the foresight to pack superglue or two-part epoxy) to stop it rotating. For the rest of the trip, we used a method of pushing the two parts of the pole together when twisting, that helped somewhat.

After a bit of a rest we headed out to play and found some nice slopes to climb and descend in the warm sunlight, until we were both knackered and then we headed back for tea and an early night.

Speaking of the night. I wandered out in the middle of it, as you do, and it was startlingly clear (and consequentially cold), so I tried to get a snapshot of the heavens. I had to trick the Google Pixel camera app into going into and staying in Astrophotography mode from Night Vision, which it only does automatically if it is still and dark. So I placed it on the dark ground with its lens down and screen up so



Mawsons Hut



Gordon going Paleolithic on his Swix Stix



Milky way from Mawsons Hut

I could see what was happening. Not the obvious choice, pointing at the ground, I grant you. Especially when you want to take a shot of the Milky way which is usually in the other direction, but bear with me. I then left it alone for a bit. This convinced the software that it was dark and still enough to go into Astro mode. Then I carefully pressed the go button without jiggling the phone (which stupidly would take it out of Astro mode and back into Night Vision). Then once it had shown me a four minute timer countdown (which I could see because the screen was up as the lens was still flat on its face), I flipped the camera over so it could start stacking photons and get me a picture. This worked because it was dark, so the movement in the dark didn't add much, if any noise to the photo. It appears that once committed to taking the shot the phone doesn't care about motion, only when you are trying, in the middle of the freezing night, to convince it to stay in Astro mode. Also, surprisingly, it appeared to adjust the focus correctly once pointing at the stars. Great imaging software and hardware, stupid user interface. The shot was a little off centre (I cropped it here), but I was not going to stick around for another four minutes to try again. It was COLD.

Day 4: Mawsons Hut to Schlink Hilton 9 km, 4 hrs

Next day dawned less salubriously than prior, and we headed out in poor visibility, rain, hail and grim nastiness to find our way to

Valentine Hut. The InReach Explorer+ satnav and Fenix 7 watch with maps did their jobs nicely and we got to a point where we were expecting to find an old rusted steel footbridge that I had marked on my map. (Thanks to Feral Kaza for the track notes!) Whilst I fiddled with the nefarious devices Gordon looked around for the bridge. "Nope, not here....hang on, there it is!" It was very low to the water and obscured by bushes, but sure enough, our rusty "skier ferrata" awaited. Coordinates S36.23005° E148.37782°.

On the other side, we headed for a dimly visible col and up and over it, down the other side and there was the lovely red Valentine Hut! Just in time for lunch.

We were delighted to find an entry from just that morning in the logbook by Heidi who was doing a [solo winter skiing traverse of the AAWT](#). Great pity we missed out on having a chat, as Gordon and myself had both done the AAWT together previously, albeit in summer and not all in one go. Kudos for her having the fortitude to lug skis through all that nasty bush in Victoria. I wouldn't have. I'd have thrown them in the Black River and watched them float away. The ski boots would have followed shortly thereafter. Hopefully she only had to lug the skis on the sections where they would be useful.

After a brief stay at Valentines we pushed on up the hill, then along the track to Schlink Hilton. We had passed a party of five going

on to Valentines that mentioned that Whites River Hut was chockers, so we determined that Schlink was the destination for us. It came up soon enough and the deteriorating weather made it a welcome sight. It was empty, so we lit a fire in the stove and settled in to dry sweaty clothes and make chocolate pudding and concoct a better version of Nasi Goring than had come out of a freeze-dry meal packet a couple of nights previous. I'm gonna call that previous one Nasty Boring, it was so tasteless. My new improved version had two packets of soup for flavor, two cups of freeze-dried rice for substance and half a packet of Surprise dried peas for texture and was far superior. Oh, and the last of the garlic flavored olive-oil. The wind howled up a storm that night and I was so glad that we weren't out in the Big Sky Chinook, supposedly four season tent, that I had lugged all the way. It might have taken the wind, but I wasn't at all sure the wind wouldn't have taken it. Some of those gusts shook the hut! I think I'm gonna need a stronger tent. (I bought a Mont Krypton a few days later. We'll see if it is good in the wind ...).

Day 5: Schlink Hilton to Guthega Power Station, 10 km, 5 hrs

The next day dawned grim, but we had a few centimeters of fresh snow, so that was nice. After a bit of kerfuffle finding the track again in the crap visibility, we crossed the bridge

and headed back down Schlink Pass Road for the power station and the car. Passing Whites River Hut, we saw no sign of occupants nor skis outside, so either they'd all packed up their tents and gone home, or onwards over Gungartan Pass, or they'd all been rescued by the snow-cat that we found the tracks of. It wasn't bad skiing, we only had to walk maybe the last three kilometers, but that was enough to make me glad I'd lugged my lightweight Solomon Ultra X Mids along all the way, as they were glorious to walk in compared to ski-boots. I had to stop in the middle of a ford across a creek to test the water-proof Sealskinz socks I was wearing, much to Gordon's consternation, as he was following close behind and didn't have any Sealskinz to test. Oops. The socks worked, BTW. I'd recommend the calf-length ones in the snow for normal boots though they are too thick for tight-fitting ski boots. They are nice and warm, as well as waterproof. (Downside is if they do get wet inside they take forever to dry).

We were happy to find that the car didn't have flat batteries (it had happened before from a carelessly left on boot light or passenger light). We headed off for Gippsland, glad for a chance for non-freeze-dried food, hot showers and a proper coffee or two.

In summary, great trip, not hard, glad of the two sunny days and the firm snow.



I was caught up in mountain pursuits as a teenager, involved with the Shepparton High School Mountaineering Club under the stern eye and rigorous tutelage of Don Moore. That's where I met Gordon. We did numerous hikes and camps in the snow, culminating with a trip to NZ to climb Mt Cook via Zurbriggen's Route at the tender age of 16. Between university, marriage, jobs, raising a family and retirement, I managed to stay in touch with Gordon, and we regularly did a hike or ski-tour every year if we could. Over a few summers starting in 2016 we hiked the AAWT together, a few hundred kilometers at a time. Since retirement, my focus has been on trail running, and I recently tried (but failed at the 140 km mark due to broken running poles, broken body and severely dented spirit) to complete a 160 km run in the Grampians. I swore never to do that event again, so naturally, I just signed up for the 2024 event to try again.

Upcoming Events

Oscars100 Hut 2 Hut Challenge, VIC

16-18 February 2024

Starting and finishing at Mount Buller Village, this [100 kilometre circuit](#) takes in 10 climbs and 8 iconic huts, gaining around 5700 metres of elevation.

Oxfam Trailwalker, VIC

1-3 March 2024

This epic challenge is coming to its end. The March event will be Oxfam's last after 25 years of adventures. [Register](#) to be a part of this final story.

Mount Bogong Conquestathon, VIC

2 March 2024

The [21 kilometre return trek](#) takes you to the top of Victoria's highest mountain, Mount Bogong at 1986 m. Walk for charity and for spectacular views from the top.

Great Illawarra Walk, NSW

9 March 2024

Walk the 40 kilometres from [Shellharbour](#) to [Austinmer](#) to help raise funds for KidsWish charity.

Coastrek coming to Canberra, ACT

15 March 2024

You can opt for a 30 kilometre daytime adventure or a twilight 20 kilometre trek that finishes at dusk. Either way you will [combine fun, fitness, friends and fundraising](#), all in support of the Heart Foundation. The next opportunity will be on [3 May in Sydney](#).

Aussie Peace Walk, ACT

23-24 March 2024

This two-day event offers plenty of different options to choose from, all with the goal to help raise funds for several fundations. [Register](#) and do something great for yourself and the community.



Longpoint West/East Loop

Text and photos
Nigel Woodman

Located 3.5 hours NW of Melbourne, the Grampians National Park, known as Gariwerd in local Aboriginal language, offers more than just a hiking experience. It is a journey through diverse landscapes, ancient history, and cultural transformation.



Mount Difficult/Gar



Close to the GPT track junction with Mt Difficult in the background

Over two days, 23-24 September 2023, we embarked on a trek that furthered our love and respect for this remarkable region. Having walked the full Grampians Peaks Trail in 2021 we were keen to return. The Longpoint West/East Loop avoids a car shuffle and has some of the last remaining free hikers campsites in the National Park.

Key points

Hiker Information

Refer to the [Parks Website](#) for latest information. Click on “This area has reported issues” for key updates.

Water

Water cannot be relied on in the Grampians at any time of the year. We have been caught out before, even at a designated campsite with a Serviced Water Tank. It is worthwhile calling Parks to get the latest information.

Parks Victoria

Phone: 8427 2058

Water tanks on this hike

1. Gar hike-in campsite but note this is not a serviced water tank, so may be unreliable during summer months.
2. Longpoint West (free campsite). This is filled from the roof of the toilet block, so again, it may be unreliable during summer months.

Geology

The geological story of the Grampians begins approximately 430 million years ago, during the Silurian period. At this time, the area was part of a deep sea where sediments accumulated over millions of years. The thick layers of sediment that formed on the sea floor eventually solidified into sandstone. This sandstone is predominantly quartz-rich, contributing to its durability and the distinctive colouration in the ranges. The Grampians mountains, known as a horst, were formed due to significant earth movements, particularly during the Devonian

period (around 400 million years ago). These movements caused the crust to fracture and uplift in places, raising the sandstone layers above the surrounding landscape. Over millions of years, erosion sculpted the uplifted sandstone into the dramatic ranges and rock formations visible today. Weathering and erosion are responsible for creating the Grampians' notable features, such as rugged ridges, steep slopes, and the many unique rock formations.

Aboriginal heritage

The Grampians are deeply rooted in Aboriginal history, serving as a cultural and spiritual site for the Jardwadjali and Djab Wurrung peoples for over 20,000 years. The park's numerous rock art sites, some of the most extensive in south-eastern Australia, offer a window into the lives and beliefs of its original inhabitants.

In the Dreamtime stories, Bunjil, often depicted as a wedge-tailed eagle, is an influential and respected figure in Aboriginal mythology. He is considered the world's creator and is associated with life, leadership, and justice. The landscapes of the Grampians/Gariwerd, with their dramatic rock formations and rich biodiversity, are often attributed to Bunjil's creative work.

European settlement

The landscape underwent significant changes with the arrival of European settlers in the 19th century, led by the Scottish surveyor Sir Thomas Mitchell (born 1792), who named the ranges after Scotland's Grampian Mountains in 1836. From his journal:

"I ascended one of the low sandstone ridges and obtained a satisfactory view of the Grampians. Seeing the grand outlines of these mountains lying to the westward, I named them at once from their similarity in outline to the Grampian mountains of Scotland. These hills, or rather mountains, with their lofty, rocky, and inaccessible summits, formed a most magnificent feature in the otherwise uninteresting country around them."

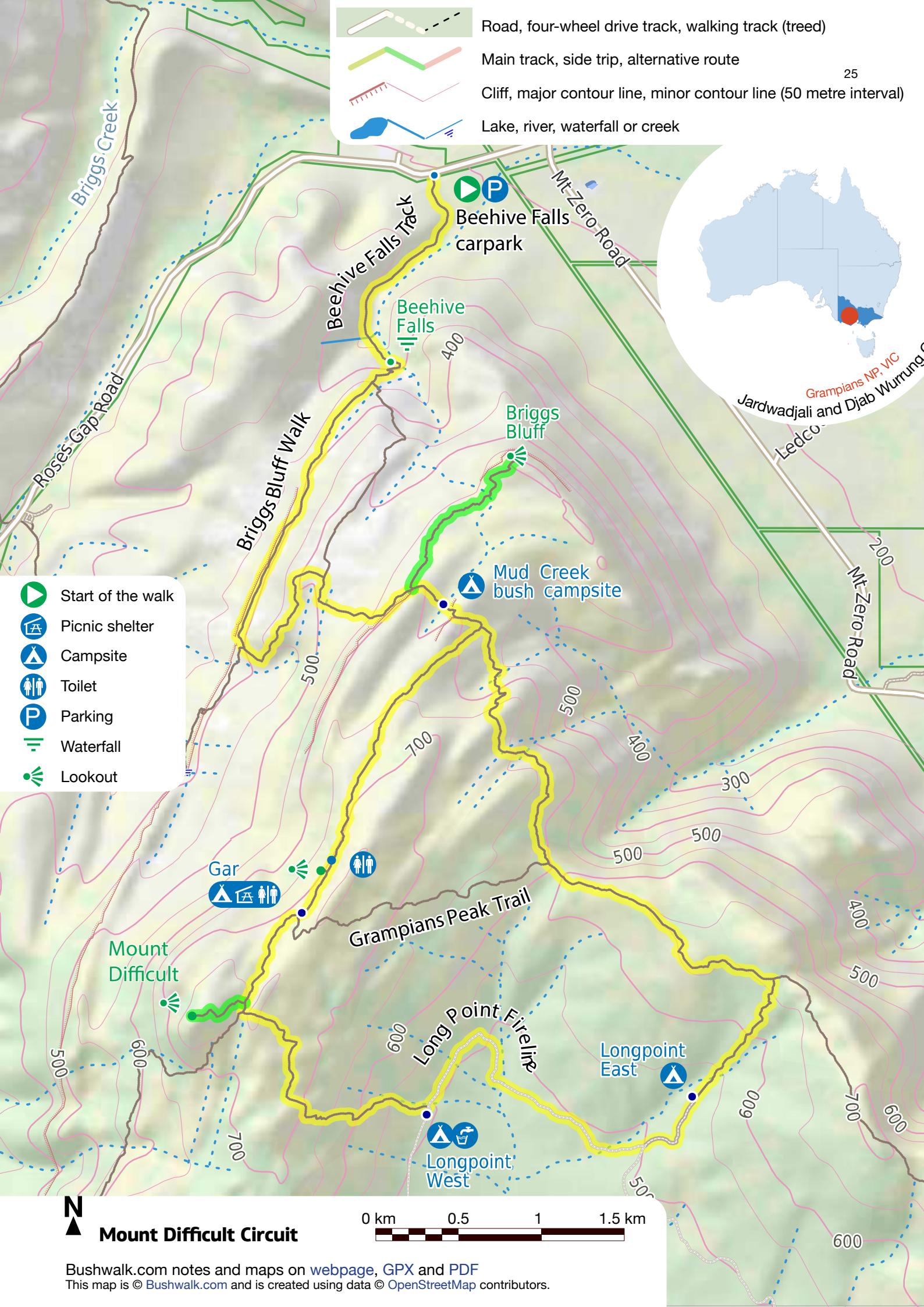
This period marked a new chapter in the region's history, characterized by agricultural development and the consequent impact on the Aboriginal communities.

The making of a national park

In 1984, recognizing its unique natural, historical, and cultural value, the Grampians was declared a national park. This designation has been instrumental in preserving the area's diverse ecosystems, Aboriginal heritage, and geological wonders.



Briggs Bluff



Day 1: Roses Gap to Longpoint East, 20 km, 6 hrs

My son Ollie and I set off from Beehive Falls Carpark in Roses Gap just after 10 am, winding our way through the park's signature sandstone terrain. The track took us on a leisurely stroll to Beehive Falls. Just past the falls, a sign left in little doubt that the work rate was about to increase considerably.

The climb from here was steep, with some minor scrambling. These days, Ollie sets a cracking pace; the torch has well and truly been passed. After about 30 minutes, the track joined the main GPT trail. Wildflowers were in abundance, and though it was warm, there wasn't the intensity of heat we had encountered a couple of years back. Early spring hiking in this part of Victoria is a joy.

“

These days, Ollie sets a cracking pace; the torch has well and truly been passed.

As we had plenty of time, we took the short walk to Briggs Bluff (30 minutes each way). The track headed north from the GPT along the cliff line. Avoid the temptation to swing east (right) about 200 m along the track as the markers are a little obscured, and bias left. The track eventually swung around to the NE to climb up to the Bluff. The views across the surrounding farmland and Lake Lonsdale were spectacular.



Track steepens after Beehive Falls



Track is well marked but requires some scrambling



Ollie at Briggs Bluff



Tarn near the turnoff to Briggs Bluff

From the Briggs Bluff turnoff it is approximately 40 minutes to the Gar hike-in campsite. We noted that a helicopter pad was under construction a few minutes from the campsite. We had lunch in the shelter there. A tap on the tank indicated it was full. A site glass or indicator on the tank would be welcomed to make sure.

“

We noted that a helicopter pad was under construction a few minutes from the campsite.



Communal shelter at Gar Hike-In Campground



Lunch in the shelter



Ollie at Mount Difficult/Gar

Muscle memory had us drop our packs at the turnoff to Mt Difficult. We soon realised our mistake, fetched the packs, and carried them to the turnoff to Mt Difficult/Longpoint West. From there, it was a 10-minute climb to the top of Mt Difficult/Gar. The track here works its way around a small ridge, so favour any track that leads slightly north of west (bias right initially). Even if you miss the track, the climb is not too technical. The track was more obvious on the descent, so a glance back can often give you some clues. Again, there were great views, this time across Lake Wartook.

The track to Longpoint West descends and is quite fast. We reached Longpoint West after a 30-minute brisk walk. The campsite has some basic infrastructure, a toilet, a tank and some reasonably flat tent sites. The water tank was appreciated, and we took advantage of it and had an early dinner. However, we decided to hike to Longpoint East with enough water for the following day.

We reached Longpoint East in 30 minutes after an easy hike along the 4WD trail. The campsite at Longpoint East was a step up in our opinion. While small, it was nice and flat. There was also a little amount of water flowing across the road so we had a late supper. As no rain was forecast we opted for some cowboy camping.



Amenities at Longpoint West Hike-in camping area



Cowboy camping at Long Point East Hike-in camping area



Track from Longpoint East



Descending the Mount Difficult Range to close the loop

Day 2: Longpoint East to Roses Gap, 10 km, 3 hrs

The next day, we set off early for us (7 am), and it was nice not to have to pack up tents covered in condensation. The track started a short distance back down the 4WD trail from the campsite. It was pretty overgrown but still reasonably fast. We crossed over the creek, which is 5 minutes up the track from the campsite. It was flowing well by Grampians standards, but it looked like it would dry out quickly.

From here, the track linked up with the GPT for a short section, then became rockier and the navigation a little more challenging. Some well-placed cairns supplemented the markers

nicely. This was our favourite part of the trail, and the descent down the little creek was really good fun.

The track then re-joined the GPT, completing the loop. We then backtracked back to Beehive Falls and Roses Gap car park.

While it was interesting to travel up via Beehive Falls, a potentially more scenic route, especially after rain, would be to ascend from the Troopers Creek Campground (Gar Trailhead) following Bullocks Creek. This was one of my favourite sections of the GPT. The Longpoint West/East Loop turned out to be a great spring overnighter in one of my favourite national parks in Victoria. The free camping was a bonus in this age of user pays.



Nigel (on the right) with guide Kumar (Scenic Nepal Treks and Expeditions) in front of Khumbutse Peak



Nigel has been an avid hiker for more years than cares to remember. His enjoyment of the outdoors is all the better for sharing it with his children and as they got older, their peers in the wider community of Scouts. He has had the good fortune and privilege to lead hikes on the Larapinta Trail, The Grampians Peaks Trail, the Overland Track and the South Coast Track. He is heading back to Nepal this year for a trek to Mera Peak (6476m) after 2023's trek to Everest Base Camp (5364m) and Island Peak (6189m).

Colliers Causeway Blue Mountains

Text and photos
Ian Smith

Lunch was a gourmet pie for both of us. There was little initial discourse because we were so hungry. We'd started out around 10.15 to do a listed 5.2 kilometre walk. How hard could that be with only 281 metres in height variation? We'd both done bits of the trail before, just not the way we were doing a full loop today.



Mr. C checking on how to get out while I shoot from Fort Rock



Porters Pass



Lamberts Lookout

It was now 3:10, as in the p.m.; how had we underestimated the time factor so badly? Four and a half hours, on average just over one kilometre per hour, what had happened?

Since we were both into photography, that got the initial blame, but for me, in truth, the trail was so time-consuming because of the variation in surface. Revisiting the internet site we'd used for guidance showed that they claimed to have taken 2 hours 20 minutes with 281 metres gained; they were young, and even they complained about the roughness of the trail. They also hadn't attained 70 years, not even when you combined their ages, something we couldn't claim.

“

Rutted, rocky and decidedly uneven, it demands constant footfall attention.

Later checking of another site said to allow 3½ hours, with a 473-metre height variation, which better reflected our experience. It just goes to show not to believe even the most visited site on the internet. Yet another site listed the distance as 6.2 kilometres.

The crux is that Porters Pass, Colliers Causeway and the Overcliff Track are not part of the NPWS area of Blackheath. I'd like to say it's council cared for, but that would be so erroneous. It may be under the council's control, but other than some signage, they obviously don't have it on their priority list. They probably figure that there's little benefit for locals. Thus the trail is in appalling condition in parts, unaided by the heavy rains in recent years. Ruttred, rocky and decidedly uneven, it demands constant footfall attention.

Yet this walk is one of the most scenic and has more variety than any other I can think of in the whole Blue Mountains. Many internet sites rate it the top walk. There are waterfalls, giant cliffs, panoramic views, canyons, ragged

rocky outcrops covered in colourful lichen, and a variety of flora and fauna. It's also a mecca for rock climbers, whose grunts and efforts echo eerily across canyon walls. They're so prolific that they even have pitons permanently fastened on many rock faces.

We'd started from Burton Road, where there's no real car park, just a couple of spots at the end of the street. Me and Mr. C, whose name is also Ian Smith, but I've chosen to identify him by his middle initial. We'd met a few years previously on a misty, drizzly day on the eastern side of the Blue Mountains. We'd fortuitously bumped into each other on the trail, the only two people out that day, and we'd met; what were the odds we both had the same name?

Since then, we'd done a couple of walks together and kept in touch via the internet. We'd explored new territory, nearly been landed on by some base jumpers and had seen a trio of waterfalls at their best.

Today was windy, chilly and overcast, the latter making it better for photography, with even light making for less contrast. Initially there was not much to see, but we soon came to Lamberts Lookout. Here, I appreciated the fact that I'd brought both a jumper and a parka, not to mention a beanie, as we gazed out beyond a nearby sandstone cliff across to Kanimbla Valley and got blasted by the wind. It's just a warm-up, pardon the pun.

“

... as we gazed out beyond a nearby sandstone cliff across to Kanimbla Valley and got blasted by the wind.

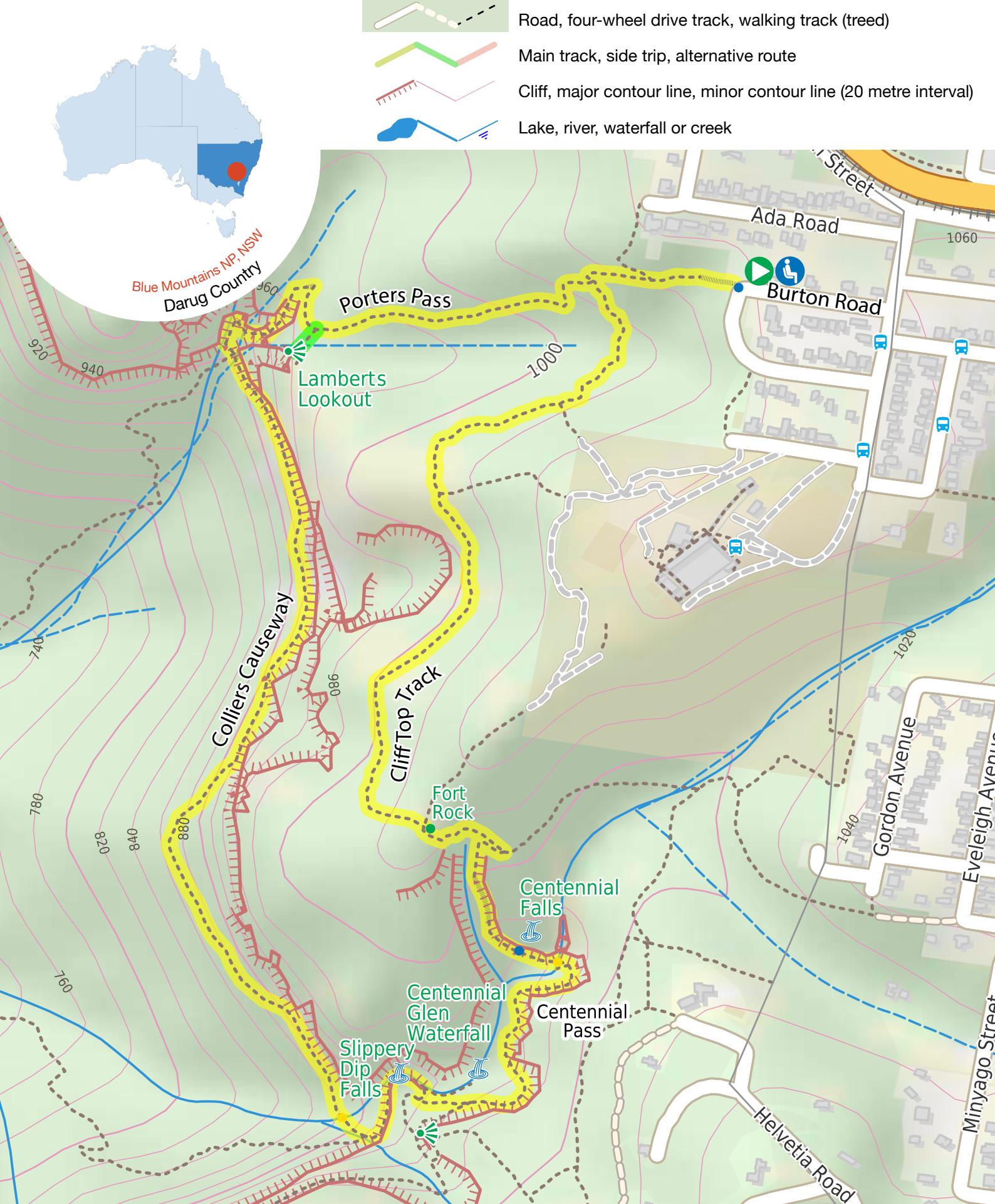
Next it was all downhill, winding our way to the base of the massive cliff face on uneven steps and turning left onto Colliers Causeway,



Colliers Causeway



Ian on Colliers Causeway



Bushwalk.com notes and maps on [webpage](#), [GPX](#) and [PDF](#)

This map is © Bushwalk.com and is created using data © OpenStreetMap contributors.

- Start of the walk
- Lookout
- Seat
- Waterfall

constructed in 1916 on top of a talus slope and named after Henry Justice Collier – a Blackheath store owner, one of the first trustees of the Blackheath Reserves and Mayor of the Blackheath Council (1922-23).

I was so glad I'd purchased my first-ever walking poles only the day before; they proved to be more beneficial than I could have dared hoped for. Continually falling behind due to photographic opportunities, I needed them to hasten the chase.

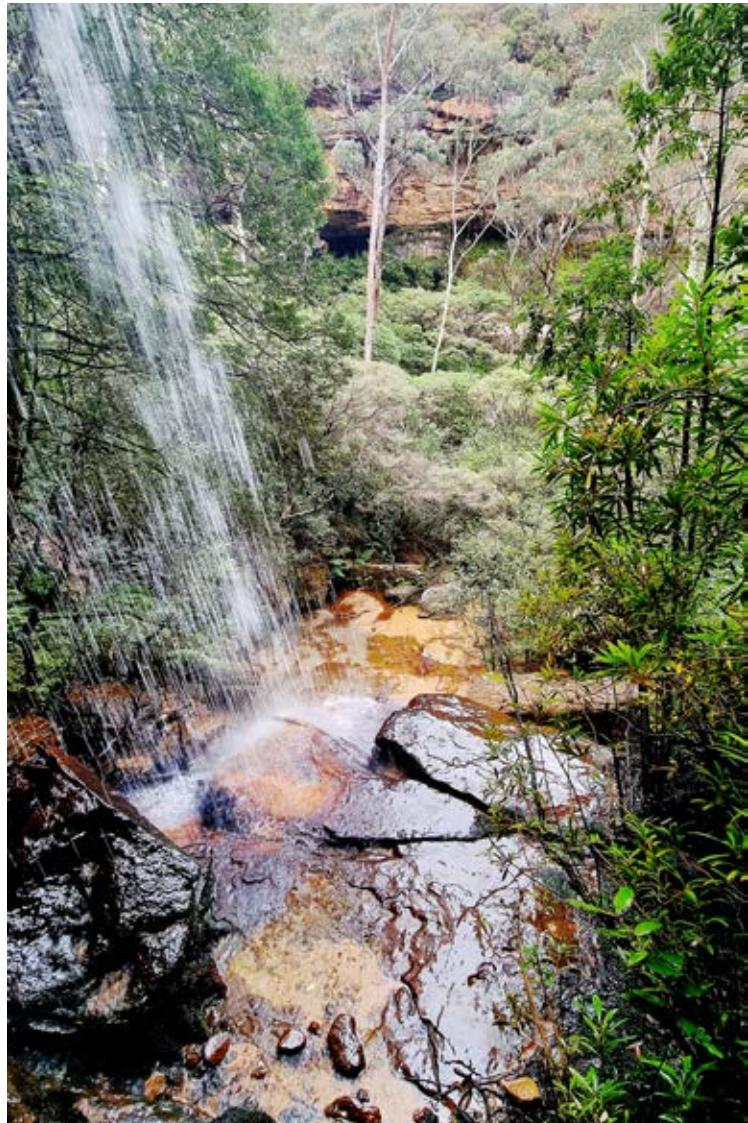
The dominance of the cliffs cannot be understated; places where massive slabs have sheared off could be clearly seen as we gazed skywards. The trail along Colliers Causeway undulated continually. The footing wasn't always secure, but we were making progress, and the scenery was breathtaking.

The next variation in scenery, after about a kilometre (seems further), was Slippery Dip Falls. We could hear it before we got there and I knew I didn't need to worry about catching up to Mr. C, because waterfalls, or streaky photos of same, are his dream time, and he'd blow lots of time getting the right image.

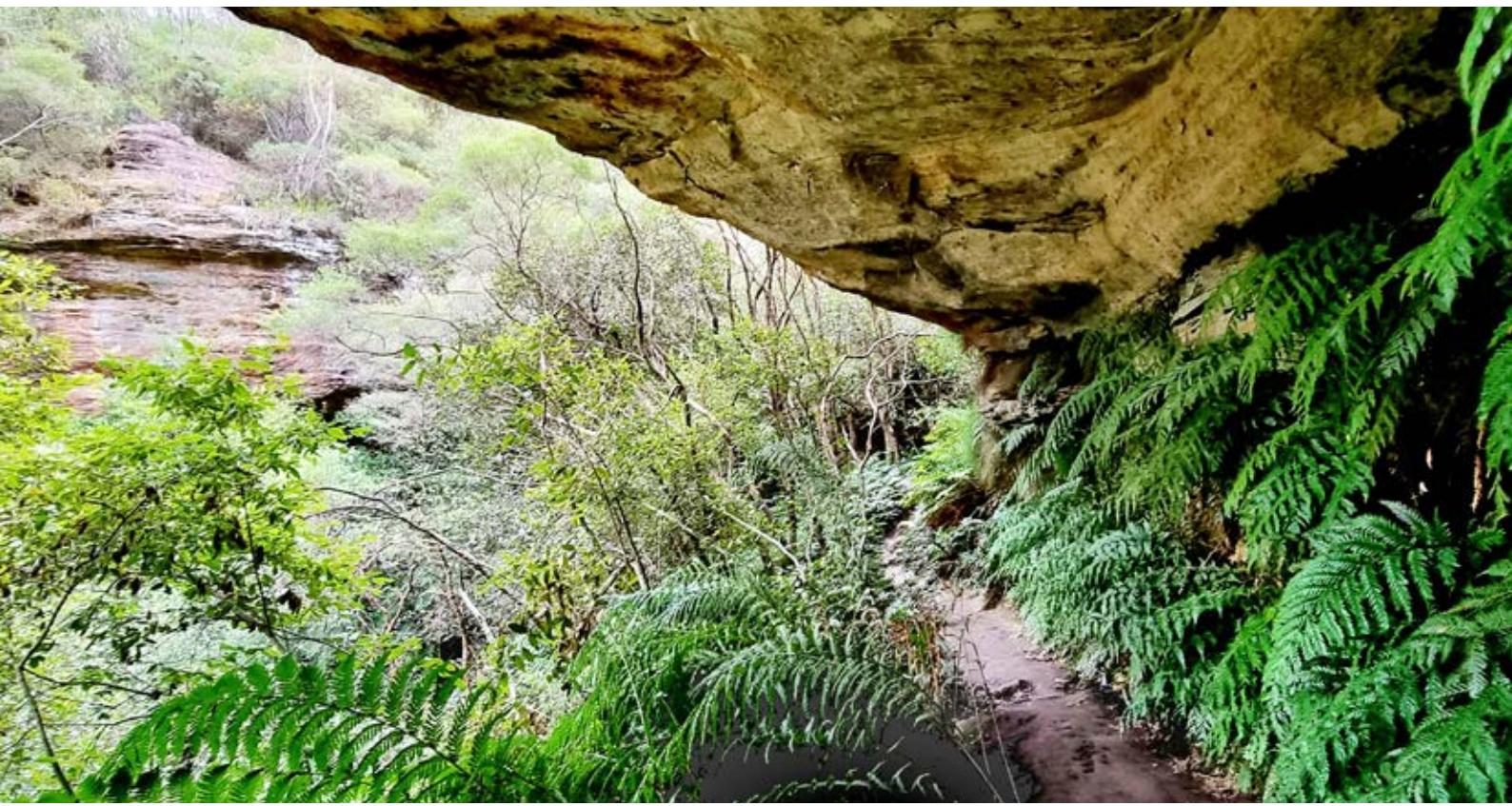
One of the most dramatic bits of walking in the whole Blue Mountains, we had to rock-hop a stream, find a way through large moss-covered boulders and then mercifully grab

“

I was so glad I'd purchased my first-ever walking poles only the day before ...



Slippery Dip Falls Centennial Glen



Centennial Glen

a handrail to launch ourselves upwards on the narrowest of staircases cut into the rock face with the slimy brown cascade beside us. Those with vertiginous problems need not apply!

Up we went to an intersection where a short diversion took us into a small canyon, aptly titled The Grotto. It features a low overhang with a picturesque waterfall and a pool, a favourite for locals in the summer. Then it was back on trail and heading upwards to Centennial Glen, replete with old-growth eucalypts standing tall, memorable overhangs with lush fern clusters, a walk behind a couple of waterfalls and the echoing sound of those climbers/abseilers.

It was all a bit surreal, but then, after another sharp climb, we were suddenly on top of the plateau, and everything changed. We'd reached Fort Rock. Welcome to banksia land, low scrub and 360-degree panoramas. Up here, the trail is not as well trod, and we occasionally queried if we were heading in the right direction, except there is no other way to go.

Reaching a clump of weather-battered exposed white gums is a sign you're getting close to the end, which is good, because Mr. C's strength is not in going uphill these days. We met a man walking his pet greyhound whose name was Jamie. Over the next quarter of an hour, he walked with us, invited us for coffee, (we politely declined) and, after pointing out his house, almost obscured by the forest, told us to "Drop around anytime". I reflect that these are the kind of people you meet bushwalking: chatty, friendly and willing to share.

Finally, we were at the final intersection, and it was just five minutes back to the car or, more importantly, less than ten minutes to a gourmet pie, which is where we came in.

“

I reflect that these are the kind of people you meet bushwalking: chatty, friendly and willing to share.

Photo Gallery

Photos
Bushwalk.com photographers



Check this and
other entries at
Bushwalk.com
Photo competitions



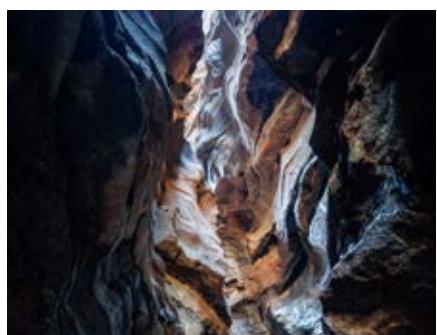
Eldon Bluff in memory of E.L.B.
Dan Broun

Landscapes

February 2023

Winner
Thumbs up
North-north-west

It was love at first sight for me in regard to The Thumbs. And that feeling has not diminished over the years since I originally saw its distinctive summit piercing the clouds above the Gordon basin. Two visits, two high camps close to that summit, two glorious evenings for photography.



The Chasm
Tom Brennan



The last of the sun shining
on the Razorback trail from
Mount Feathertop. Mount
Hotham visible in the far
distance.
Joe J



Dry crossing
John Walker

Non-landscapes

February 2023

Winner
Waiting, watching
Tom Brennan

A large greedy Eastern Water Dragon, used to the hordes of canyoners stopping for lunch, at the end of Butterbox Canyon.



Knot a bad place to grow up
in
Teak



Robin
Brian Eglinton



Last of the sandpipers
landsmith

Tasmania

February 2023

Winner

Gordon cliffs and the Denisons

North-north-west

First time up here I went out to the west. This time it was north and east while busily hatching a plan to explore all that enticing terrain seen here above the river.



Other States

February 2023

Winner

Waiting for the sun to set from Mount Feathertop

Joe J



Canyon cascade
Tom Brennan



Gnarly grass
Brian Eglinton



River reflecting
John Walker

Landscapes

March 2023

Winner

Early morning light, south coast Tasmania

David Edwards

The last morning along the South Coast Track and the low-angled sun shining through the mist along the coast doesn't encourage one to hurry to the waiting transport back to "civilisation".



Morning mists
North-north-west



The view West from
Lendenfeld Point with Mount
Bogong summit still visible on
the right
Joe J



Wild Country
Brian Eglinton

Non-landscapes

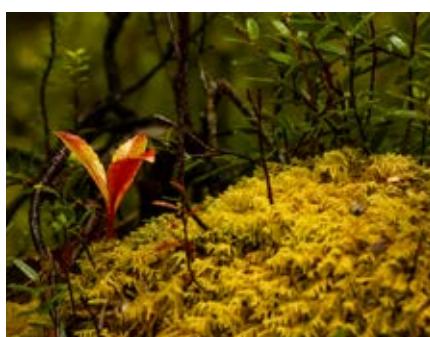
March 2023

Winner
Delicate
Brian Eglinton

The weather was not kind to us as we attempted Lake Judd and the Lonely Tarns. The boardwalk to Judd was great, but it ends in a short section of bare muddy track and jumbled moraine clambering. It was working through this, that I spied this small green fungi on a short drop right in the pathway. Well worth the time to setup for a shot in the dim light.



There's a track in here somewhere
North-north-west



Take time to enjoy the little things (South Coast Track)
David Edwards



A B&W shot of the long evening shadows over Ropers Hut
Joe J

Tasmania March 2023

Winner
Walls of Jerusalem
Teak

The weather forecast was favourable so I went for a day walk to the Walls of Jerusalem. This photo is from the Temple, looking at the central Walls area.



Lunchtime on Livingstone
North-north-west

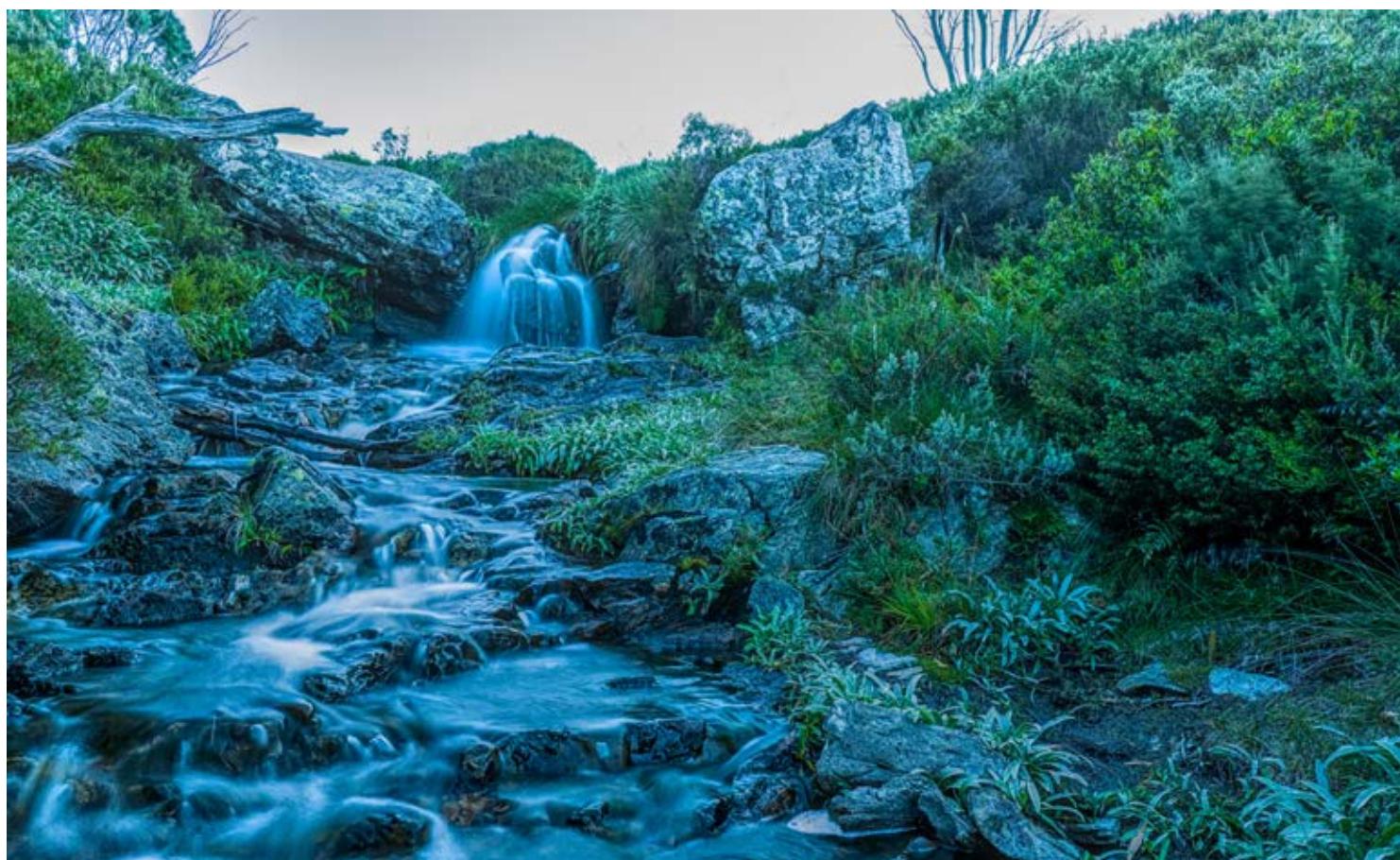


Sarah Jane Veiled
Brian Eglinton

Other States

March 2023

Winner
Duane Creek located behind Ropers Hut
Joe J



Byaduk Caves
Brian Eglinton

Sore Muscles

Text

**Robert Andrew Robergs
Samuel L. Torrens**

As many of us hit the gym or go for a run to recover from the silly season, you might notice a bit of extra muscle soreness.

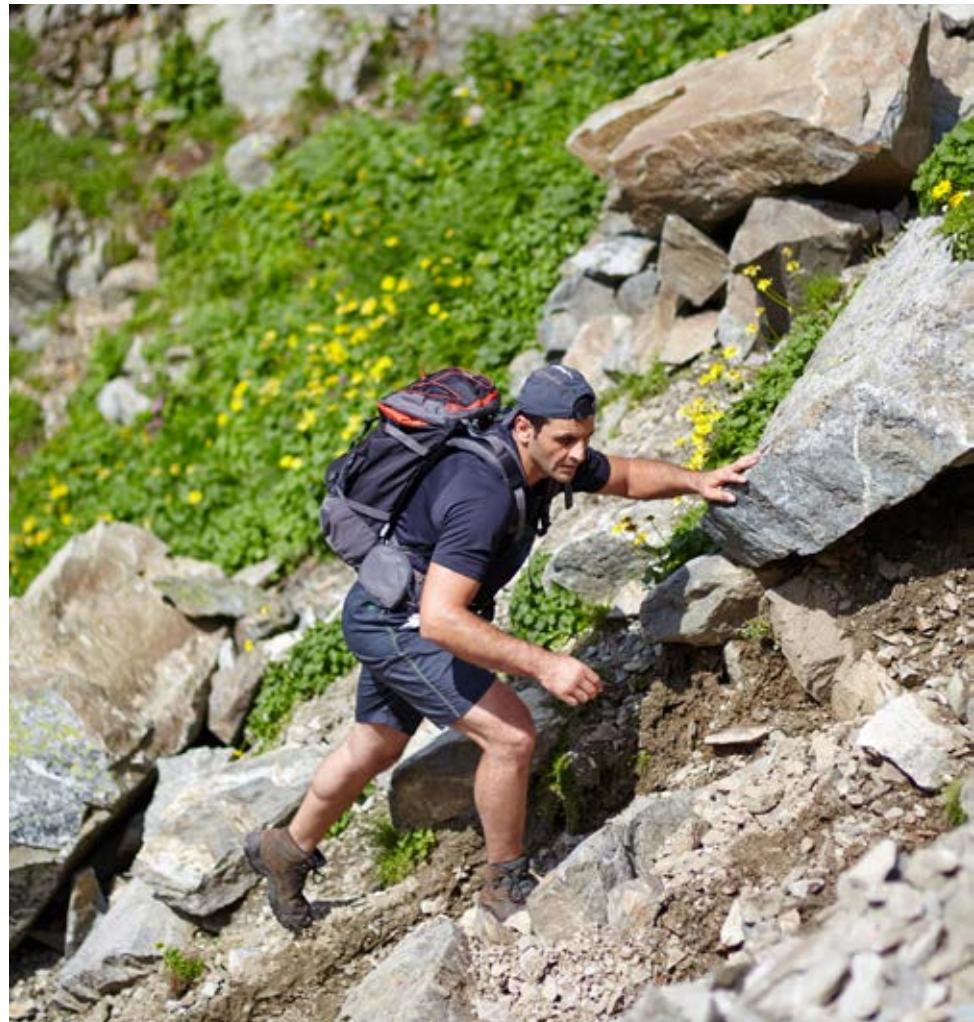
This is especially true if it has been a while between workouts.

A common misunderstanding is that such soreness is due to lactic acid build-up in the muscles.

Research, however, shows lactic acid has [nothing to do with it](#). The truth is far more interesting, but also a bit more complex.

It's not lactic acid

We've known for decades that lactic acid has [nothing to do with](#) muscle soreness after exercise.



In fact, as one of us (Robert Andrew Robergs) has long argued, cells produce lactate, not lactic acid. This process actually opposes not causes the build-up of acid in the muscles and bloodstream.

Unfortunately, historical inertia means people still use the term “lactic acid” in relation to exercise.

Lactate doesn’t cause major problems for the muscles you use when you exercise. You’d probably be worse off without it due to other benefits to your working muscles.

Lactate isn’t the reason you’re sore a few days after upping your weights or exercising after a long break.

So, if it’s not lactic acid and it’s not lactate, what is causing all that muscle soreness?

Muscle pain during and after exercise

When you exercise, a lot of chemical reactions occur in your muscle cells. All these chemical reactions accumulate products and by-products which cause water to enter into the cells.

That causes the pressure inside and between muscle cells to increase.

This pressure, combined with the movement of molecules from the muscle cells can stimulate nerve endings and cause discomfort during exercise.

The pain and discomfort you sometimes feel hours to days after an unfamiliar type or amount of exercise has a different list of causes.

If you exercise beyond your usual level or routine, you can cause microscopic damage to your muscles and their connections to tendons.

Such damage causes the release of ions and other molecules from the muscles, causing localised swelling and stimulation of nerve endings.

This is sometimes known as “delayed onset muscle soreness” or DOMS.

While the damage occurs during the exercise, the resulting response to the injury builds over the next one to two days (longer if the damage is severe). This can sometimes cause pain and difficulty with normal movement.

The upshot

Research is clear; the discomfort from delayed onset muscle soreness has nothing to do with lactate or lactic acid.

The good news, though, is that your muscles adapt rapidly to the activity that would initially cause delayed onset muscle soreness.

So, assuming you don’t wait too long (more than roughly two weeks) before being active again, the next time you do the same activity there will be much less damage and discomfort.

If you have an exercise goal (such as doing a particular hike or completing a half-marathon), ensure it is realistic and that you can work up to it by training over several months.

Such training will gradually build the muscle adaptations necessary to prevent delayed onset muscle soreness. And being less wrecked by exercise makes it more enjoyable and more easy to stick to a routine or habit.

Finally, remove “lactic acid” from your exercise vocabulary. Its supposed role in muscle soreness is a myth that’s hung around far too long already.

Videos

Gears & Gadgets



Darwin ontherail's favorite backpacking gear of 2023

Check the top 10 items on Darwin's favourite hiking gear list. Perhaps there's something to make your next bushwalk even more enjoyable.



A backpacking gadget for sleeping pads
Zero Pump is world's smallest pump for sleeping pads. Watch the video to see it's pros and cons.

Backpacking gear list for 2024

Liam Brown has been hiking all over Europe and UK. In this video he shares his list of items he'll be using on his hikes this year.



Justin Outdoor's favourite backpacking gear of 2023

After testing gear for over 100 days, Justin sorted his favourite gear according to categories.

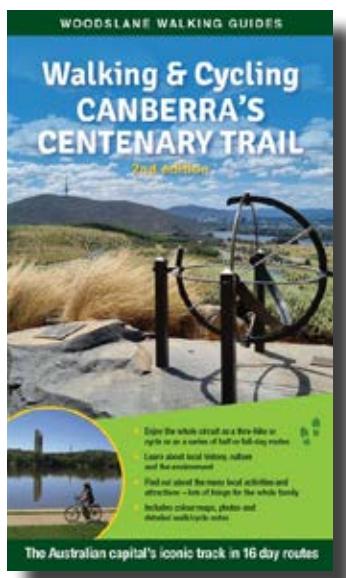
Published

Walking & Cycling Canberra's Centenary Trail, 2nd Edition

Tallis Dicott, Nina Hvoslef and Martin Fisk

This guide has day walks and cycling trips on Canberra's Centenary Trail, from leisurely urban strolls to the more rugged tracks deep in the bush. Detailed descriptions and maps help the reader explore the parks, bushland, lakes, rivers and urban areas. There are over 150 colour photographs and detailed maps for every section. A summary table of routes has distances, facilities and highlights to help the reader find exactly the right route for the occasion.

Paperback, 188 pages.
A\$32.99

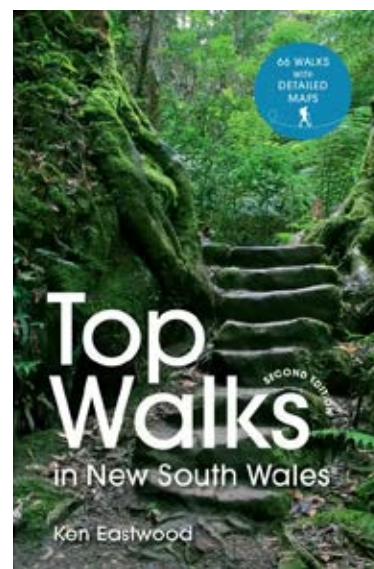


Top Walks in New South Wales, 2nd edition

Ken Eastwood

Ken Eastwood has done all of 60+ NSW walks in this newly published book. The book has extensive track notes, tips, maps and photos, with six new walks to explore. Walks suit every experience level. Many are family friendly, but for those seeking more of a challenge, look for the multi-day walks.

Flexi bound, 376 pages.
A\$29.75



Mini Mountain Adventures and Snacks

Text and photos
Sonya Muhlsimmer

Recently, I had some friends ask me to take them on a small adventure. This adventure requires driving a long way on a dirt trail, where a 4WD is required if wet weather is forecast, then navigating a small unmarked track down into a canyon, and at some points, the trail can be a bit hard to find. Then, of course, wandering through the canyon itself.



Eating protein balls in the canyon, as you do ...
Danielle



Left to right: Kat, Danielle, Mel, Sonya, Es

The canyon is a short and sweet canyon that you walk through and you will potentially get wet up to your thigh or chest. It depends on how tall or short you are. This canyon is a perfect introduction to canyoning for non-canyoning friends as there are no abseils to contend with, just a few slippery rocks to scramble over.

The River Caves Canyon is near Lithgow, north of Newnes Plateau and south of the Wollemi National Park. Although this canyon has been here for a very long time and was discovered in the late 1940s, it seems like it is a recent discovery with all the hype it has been getting recently, thanks to some folk posting it on Instagram ... It is a beautiful spot to explore, and I was very happy taking my friends out for a day. I am glad however I did not see a huge amount of people trying to get their best Insta shot.

What made this canyon impressive is once you get down to the creek, then turn left, the canyon just opens up to a beautiful constriction immediately. The walking is easy through two main constrictions. The first one has towering walls with wide slots for sun rays to light them up, then the second one is more cave-like with narrower slots, so it is darker. You can choose how wet you get or how dry you stay as you can avoid the waist or chest deep wade by scrabbling over a boulder and taking the ledge. The canyon itself is short and you have a choice to either reverse the canyon or do a loop walk. We chose to reverse the canyon as it was so nice, and you get to see it from the other side, so to speak.

I took this opportunity to try a new quick and easy recipe as I had some willing testers. The night before I was researching some ingredients to make into a high protein and

energy snack. Protein is important in our diets as our muscles are made up of protein. They are the building blocks of life, as every cell in our body contains protein. I chose a few ingredients that were readily available in my pantry and I must say, the Protein balls tasted good.

I will just call out the nutritional benefits of just a few ingredients here before I share the recipe. Due to the fact that these were only tried on a day hike, I mean canyon, I do not know how they would fare on a longer multi-day hike as they were pretty soft. I guess there is only one way to find out.

Health benefits of some ingredients

Oats are a very healthy grain. They contain manganese, phosphorus, magnesium, copper, iron, zinc, folate, vitamins and minerals. Oats are also high in carbs, fibre and protein.

Peanut butter, or at least the peanuts, are high in protein, folate, magnesium, copper, manganese. Peanuts also contain healthy fats and vitamins and are low in carbs. However, the manufactured product does contain a bit of sugar.

Amaranth is an ancient grain high in fibre, protein, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, iron and antioxidants.

Chia seeds are high in fibre, protein, calcium, zinc, phosphorus and omega-3 fatty acids. Chia seeds are a complete protein, which means the seeds contain all the nine types of amino acids your body needs.

Whey powder is high in protein and other beneficial nutrients like cysteine, which helps make protein in your body.

Honey is a natural sweetener and is rich in antioxidants. It also contains a mix of amino acids, vitamins and lots of minerals.

So, you can see these snacks are pretty healthy and pack a punch of protein. They are also so easy to make. Oh, by the way,



my friends really enjoyed their first taste of canyoning. I wonder where they will want me to take them next time. I better jump on Instagram to see the next point of interest of where the influences are going next.

Protein balls

Ingredients

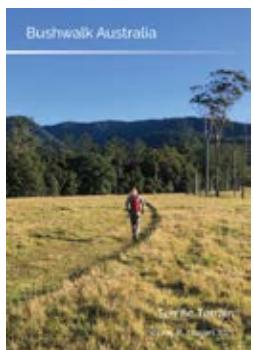
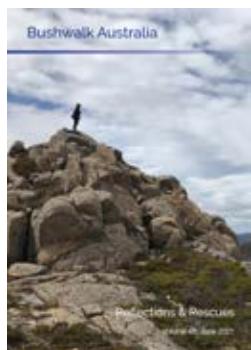
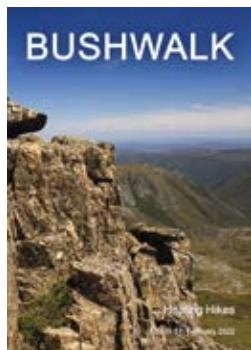
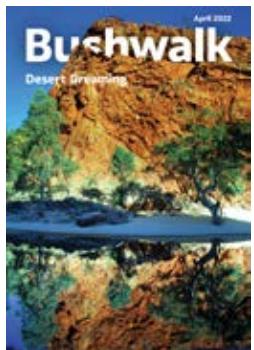
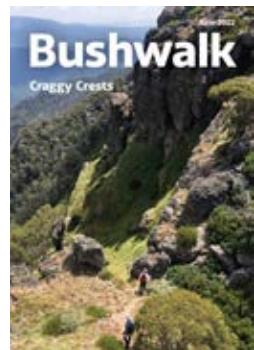
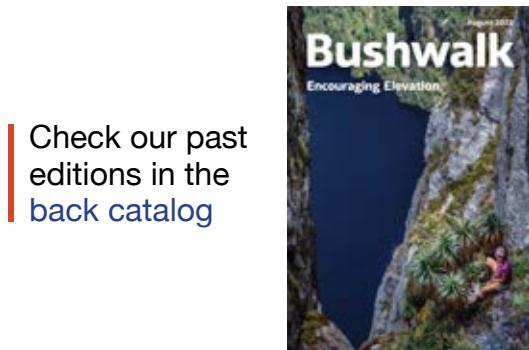
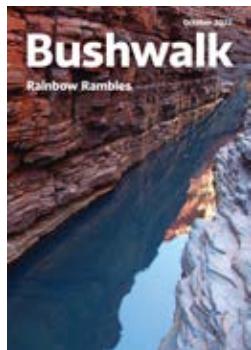
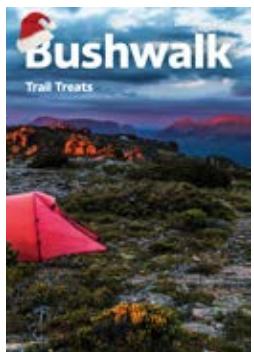
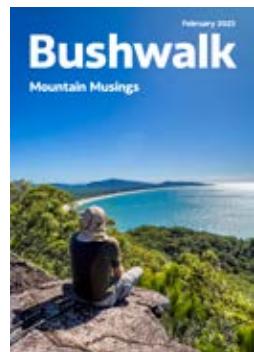
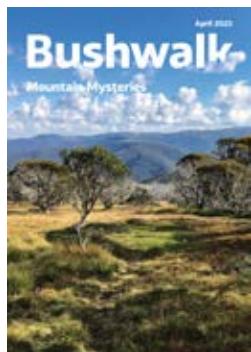
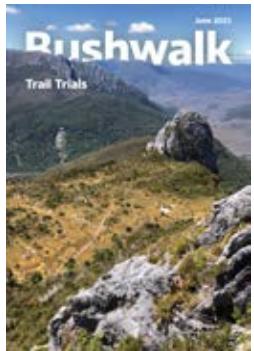
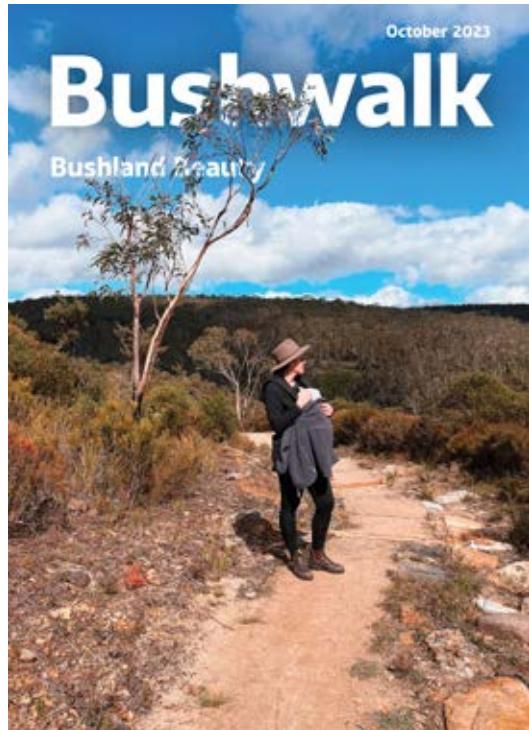
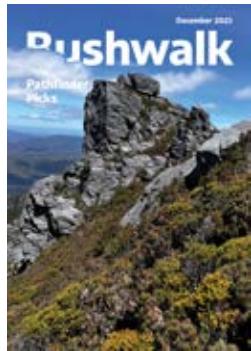
Peanut Butter	½ cup
Oats (quick or rolled)	½ cup
Whey powder	⅓ cup
Honey	¼ cup
Desiccated Coconut	¼ cup
Chocolate chips	1 Tbsp
Amaranth	2 tsp
Chia seeds	2 tsp
Vanilla essence	1 tsp
Cinnamon	1 tsp

Method

In a food processor, pulse the oats and chocolate chips together for about 20 to 30 seconds. Add all other ingredients to the mixer and pulse for about 2 minutes until the mix starts combining together. Scoop out the mix with a spoon and roll into balls in your palm. Place in a container and store in the fridge for a couple of hours. Enjoy on your hike, or canyon.



The River Caves Canyon
Kat



Check our past editions in the back catalog