

Bushwalk Australia



Wandering the World

Volume 23, June 2017

Bushwalk Australia Magazine
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Volume 23, June 2017

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

Cover picture



Hiker walking in autumn mountains by Mayguttyak

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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 August 2017 edition is 30 June 2017.

Warning

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

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

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

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From the Editor

Welcome to Winter - my favourite time of year. The days are shorter but the cooler weather makes for great walking.

Another two months and another great edition. The night after I read the Pacific Crest Trail article on [page 6](#) I had the most vivid dream about setting off on a three month hike in the USA. As with most dreams, things were all over the place, I was both setting off and at the three-month point with another two months to go. I don't often dream about bushwalking, but now I really have an urge to go enjoy a ultra-long walk. I am feeling inspired.

In this edition, we share journeys of people walking in the USA, NZ, remote Tasmania and elsewhere. If your style of bushwalking is stepping out the back door and wandering for an hour or perhaps longer, I hope you find inspiration and tips that make your next adventure even better.

I really enjoyed sinking my teeth in the "Should they be stopped?" article. It is always hard looking at the people's terrible misfortune, but I do hope that we can learn from other people's loss to avoid repeating the same mistakes. There are no easy answers in making bushwalker safer and open to more people but I do feel it is a topic worth tackling. I am really looking forward to working with Stephen on the next phase of this article as we dive deeper into the topic.

As always, I would really love your feedback, letters to the editor or article ideas. Please join in the conversation on the forum [BWA magazine discussion](#).

Happy 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

Hiking through tragedy on the Pacific Crest Trail

Kira Saniford completed the 4264 kilometres [Pacific Crest Trail](#) despite facing a great personal loss.



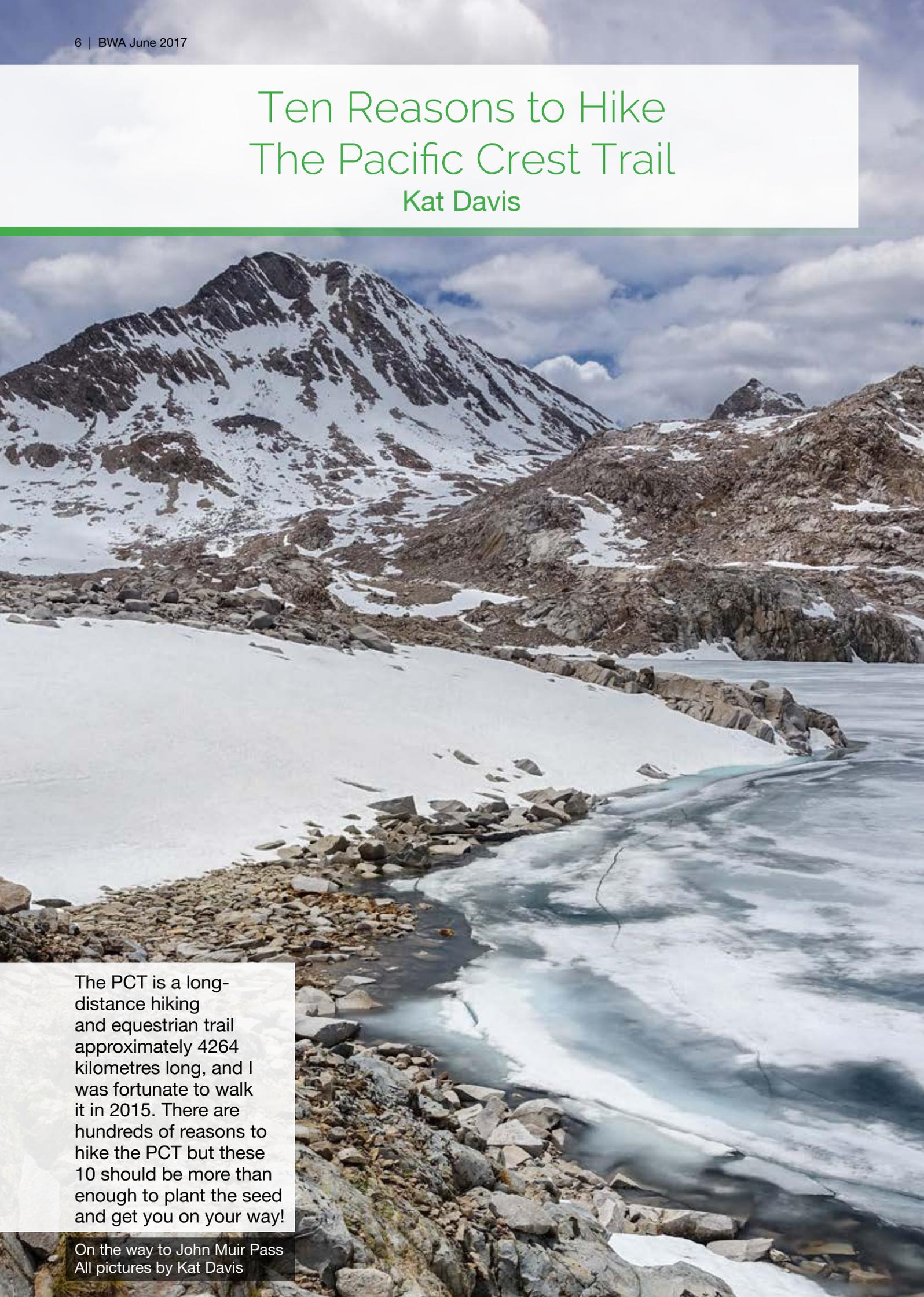
A wonderful video and a petition for Royal National Park

Royal National Park is a wonderful place that should be World Heritage listed. [Add your name](#) today and ask Minister Frydenberg to include this Place for Belonging to the Australian Tentative List.



Ten Reasons to Hike The Pacific Crest Trail

Kat Davis

A high-altitude mountain landscape. In the foreground, a rocky, scree-covered slope leads down to a stream of water partially frozen into a thick layer of clear, blue-tinged ice. The middle ground shows rugged, brownish-grey rock formations with patches of snow. In the background, a large, jagged mountain peak is partially covered in snow under a cloudy sky.

The PCT is a long-distance hiking and equestrian trail approximately 4264 kilometres long, and I was fortunate to walk it in 2015. There are hundreds of reasons to hike the PCT but these 10 should be more than enough to plant the seed and get you on your way!

On the way to John Muir Pass
All pictures by Kat Davis

1 Go for a jolly long walk

Imagine walking along the coast from Adelaide to Cairns or walking 101 marathons back to back. That's the length of the PCT. The trail starts at the Mexican border near San Diego and passes through California, Oregon and Washington, ending just across the US border in British Columbia, Canada. Most people hike the PCT northbound (they're called Nobos) and the hiking season is typically from April to September with an average hiking time of five months. The trail can also be hiked southbound (Sobos) but fewer people walk this direction as most hikers like to ease into the trail in the Southern Californian desert and have their "trail legs" ready by the time they arrive into the wild and mountainous Washington.

2 Experience nature

Desert, mountains, lakes, snow-covered peaks, alpine flowers, glaciers, waterfalls, lava fields, forests ... all of this and more! You start out in the Southern Californian desert before reaching the Sierra Nevada mountains, home to Yosemite National Park and Mt Whitney, 4421 metres, the highest mountain in the lower 48 states. From the Sierras you're into Northern California, then Oregon passing day after day of



Mother bear and her cubs

beautiful lakes and crossing Mars-like lava fields. Washington is stunningly wild and remote with moss-covered forests and crazy daily ascents; consider it a good day in Washington if you don't get rain or snow even in summer! The daily landscapes are just breath-taking.

“... rattlesnakes are considered the “gentlemen” of the reptile world ...

3 Wildlife viewing opportunities

In the USA, rattlesnakes are considered the “gentlemen” of the reptile world due to their warning “rattle” and it's unlikely you'll get by without at least seeing or hearing one.



Burney Falls in Northern California

Hummingbirds, black bears, mountain lions (rare), deer, marmots, pika, squirrels, mice and chipmunks also consider the trail home – these last three can be a nuisance chewing through tents and backpacks to get to your food so you may soon forget you ever thought they were cute!

“If your faith in humanity was ever lost, it would be fully restored after hiking the PCT.

4 Get fit and eat whatever you want without putting on weight!

Swap the treadmill in the gym for the PCT and after five months you'll be fitter and probably thinner than you've ever been! You will also save five months of gym membership fees that can be your chocolate fund instead on the PCT! Now I'm not recommending a daily diet of junk food, but there comes a time on a long-distance hike when you just can't get enough nutrition and energy from salads and this is when a good ol' Snickers bar really does satisfy! It's thought that hikers walking 30-50 kilometres

per day are burning up to 25,000 kilojoules a day so food is a constant thought and you'll be craving high-energy food.

5 Make friends for life

“It's not where you go, it's who you meet along the way.” From *The Wizard of Oz*.

Even if you start out solo like many hikers do (myself included) you're bound to meet other people that you might walk with for a day, week or even months. Friendships that are formed on the trail can be tested to the max but when it's all over, these are probably the memories you'll look back on and cherish the most.

6 Be humbled and experience generosity on a whole new level

The concepts of “Trail Angels” and “Trail Magic” was foreign to me before starting the PCT. On numerous occasions I passed Eskys on the side of the trail miles from anywhere, with a PCT sign stuck to the lid and they would be full of soft drink, beer, fruit and occasionally snacks. Often I'd walk past and they'd be empty too! There are



Trail Magic!

many stretches with limited water supplies and sometimes I would come across a water cache with gallons of bottled water brought to the trail by Trail Angels. The golden rule here is to treat this as a bonus but never rely on it and be self-sufficient. For a donation, strangers open their houses along the trail for smelly hikers to stay, whether it be a bed or a piece of lawn. These people are Trail Angels and they're providing Trail Magic. And then there's all the people who pick up hikers when you stick out your thumb to hitchhike into a town to resupply. If your faith in humanity was ever lost, it would be fully restored after hiking the PCT.

7 Complete two hikes in one!

The PCT merges with the 340 kilometre long John Muir Trail (JMT) through the Sierra Nevadas from Mount Whitney to Yosemite. With Washington state, this is a definite highlight of the PCT as it passes through Sequoia, Kings Canyon and Yosemite National Parks as well as the Ansel Adams Wilderness. You'll also cross nine passes over 3000 metres high and inevitably be able to build a snowman on at least one of them! The PCT permit allows you to hike the JMT without the need for a separate permit, but conditions apply.

8 Watch the sun rise and set every day for over five months

When was the last time you saw the sun rise and set on the same day? Hikers are usually up before or around sunrise (it gets hot in a tent with the sun beaming down on it), hiking all day then setting up camp in the late afternoon and eating dinner while watching the sunset. "Hiker midnight" is considered to be 9pm and by this time most are tucked away dreaming of eating a large burger in the next town five days away!

9 Learn some new slang

Bounce box – a box of food or gear that you bounce (post) further down the trail.

Cowboy camp – camp under the stars with your mat and sleeping bag without setting up your tent.

Hiker box – a box full of unwanted hiker food, gear etc. One person's rubbish is another's treasure and these hiker boxes can be a great source of ... everything! And a money saver!

Hiker trash – a term to describe smelly and dirty hikers after days of hiking.

“ You'll also cross nine passes over 3000 metres high ...





I made it

HYOH – Hike your own hike, that is, at your own pace and listening to your body.

LNT – Leave no trace.

Nero – Not quite a zero day, a short mileage day.

PUDS - Pointless ups and downs!

Thru-hiker – A hiker who hikes a long-distance trail in its entirety.

Trail Angel – Wonderful people who open their homes, give rides, leave food and drink on the trail and generally help hikers.

Trail Magic – Food and drink left on the trail by Trail Angels for hikers.

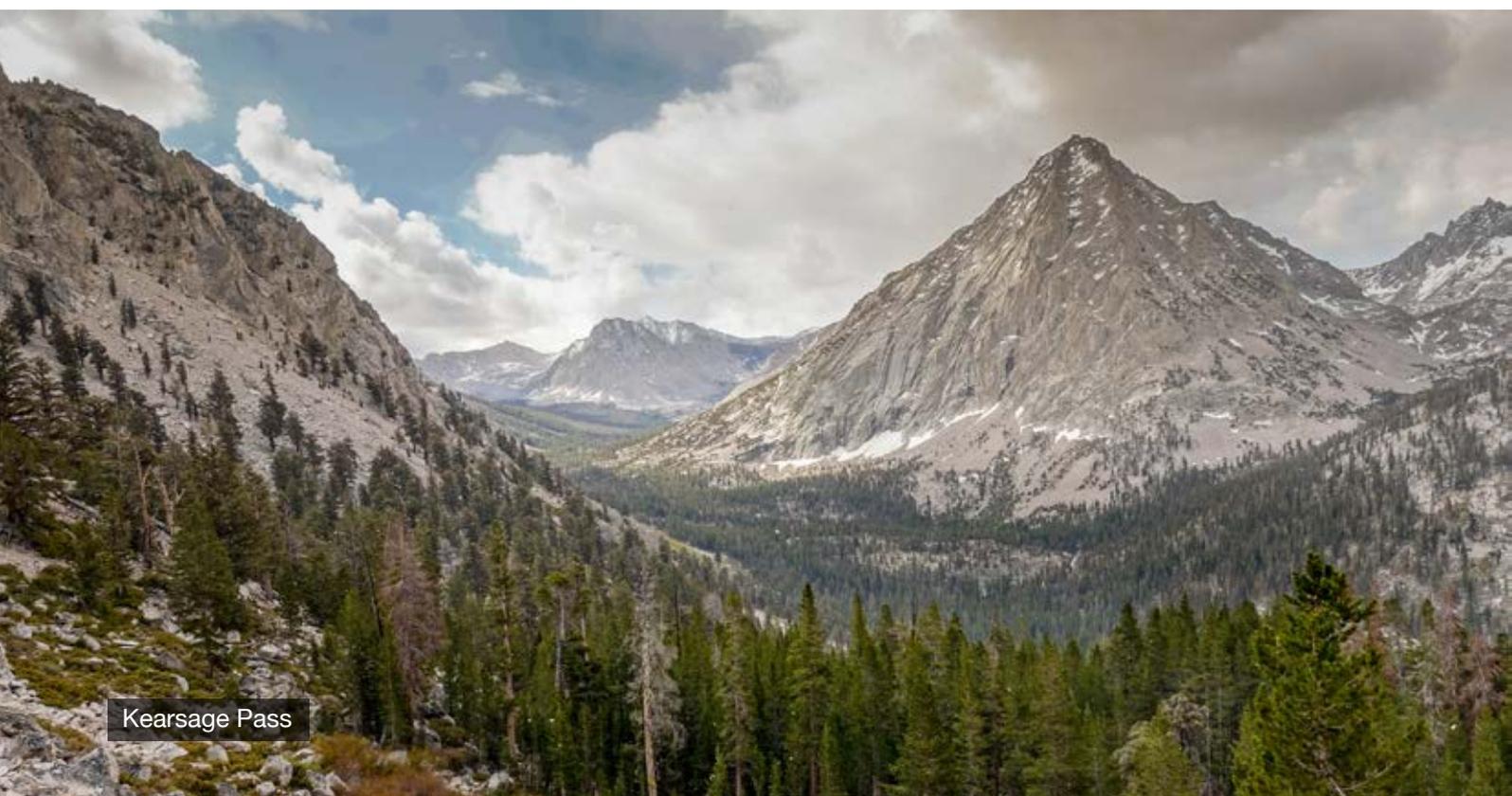
Triple Crown – To be a triple crowner is to hike the three longest trails in America: Continental Divide Trail (CDT), Pacific Crest Trail (PCT), Appalachian Trail (AT)

Vitamin I – Ibuprofen.

Zero Day - Zero miles hiked (would usually say zero for zero miles and nero for nearly zero miles)

10 Challenge yourself, develop new skills and feel alive!

Imagine the moment you arrive at the northern terminus after hiking for over five months. There might be tears, screams of delight, dancing, selfies and maybe a cheeky swig of something special you've carried from the last town. You'll be so proud of your achievement; you challenged yourself in a way you didn't know you could or ever would. You'll believe in yourself and deservedly so. You'll also know exactly how to pitch a tent in record time and sleep on a downward slope if that's where you've pitched it, how to fix a blister, what trail food



Kearsage Pass

you will never eat again, how much energy is in a packet of M&Ms and more importantly that the only ingredient worth putting in trail mix is M&Ms.



Camping by Mt Thielsen with Yama Cirriform DW

My one guarantee is that you'll feel alive, maybe more than you ever have and you won't want that feeling to disappear ... that's when it's time to plan the next hike!

Resources, tips and tricks

- www.pcta.org for everything you need to know about planning your hike
- www.yogisbooks.com the most popular guidebook to the PCT, and a printing service for Halfmile's maps
- [Halfmile's maps](#) – the most trusted maps
- Apps Halfmile's PCT ([Google Play](#) or [iTunes](#)), Guthook Hikes [Google Play](#) or [iTunes](#)), eTrails ([iTunes](#))
- An awesome [video](#) (shameless self-promotion here!)

You can follow Kat:

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Kat is from Melbourne and is now based in London. In 2013 Kat quit her office job to walk the Camino de Santiago and has never looked back. She has since walked over 10,000 kilometres in Spain, Portugal, England, Italy, Japan (climbed Mt Fuji seven times) and America. Kat has been bitten by bedbugs, slept on a bar table (and in a dog kennel), worn through 12 pairs of shoes, completed six Caminos and experienced incredible human kindness along the way. She is currently working on a guidebook about the Portuguese Camino and dreaming of her next adventure.

The Spires via Holley Basin

North-North-West



Names matter. And a name like “The Spires” conjures so many ideas and images it’s hard to believe it can be lived up to. But in SW Tassie, on the northern shores of the Gordon impoundment, there’s a range by that name that not only honours the name, but surpasses one’s assumptions of its nature. A glorious wild place with some wonderful peaks, including three Abels*. And it had reached the top of my “to do” list this year ...

Shooting me, shooting you ... on the morning of day 4 NNW

Solo is my preferred way for most things. (No, I will not elaborate about those things best done non-solo; you can probably guess one or three). This is, not least, so I don't have to conform to someone else's timetable or manner, and nor do they have to concern themselves about mine. But every now and then (such as a New Years trip to Nereus in 2015-16) an opportunity arises that makes me reconsider temporarily - although by the time it's over I'm back where I started: Just. Leave. Me. Alone. PLEASE!

Insanity has been defined as repeating your behaviour and expecting a different result. By that definition, agreeing to go on this walk was the act of a certifiable raving loony ... as was asking me to go along.

Now, I'm upfront about being a certifiable raving loony, just not so much about the hows and whys and wherefores. Which does make it awkward for people to know how to react to my behaviour. Some of it's just me being difficult. Some of it's related to my various mental disturbances. Some of it, even I don't know where it comes from. This is just one more reason why it's easier for me to do things alone.

Nonetheless, one day, while sitting on her own in a small study in Southern Tasmania, a middle-aged woman suddenly was invited on a particularly interesting route to this place that she was planning on visiting soon anyway. This time it was right, it would work, and there'd be no nailing anyone to anything. We hoped.

Reader, I ~~married~~ agreed to go with him.

We went with minimal information about most of the route, which was off-track and very rarely walked. A quick buzz over the planned route on [Google Earth](#), some notes from recent visitors about the usual access routes to one section, a roughly sketched GPS route, a couple of maps, and we were off.

Day 1 - Walking on water

We left around 7am, still debating which route to use. We were both intrigued by the possibilities of the Holley Basin line, so that's the way we chose. Down to the Gordon Dam

boat ramp, unload the kayaks, pack all the gear in, and we were on the water at 10.15am.

“... invited on a particularly interesting route to this place ...”

It was a beautiful morning, still, clear, shining. The paddle was an easy four hours, just dodging a few partially submerged forests and having one's mind totally and utterly blown by the rock formations in the Twelvetrees Narrows, then on through the Holley Narrows up to where the lake gave



Map of the route - yellow is the paddling, green is the walking (believe it or not, they're about the same distance).

out - which was still some 2 to 3 kilometres from where the maps say the river mouth is located. (Straight line map distance; this being Tasmania, we were not able to walk in a straight line for more than ten steps together). Thus we spent the rest of the afternoon walking on the blue bits of the GPS display. This does make navigation interesting but we had an aid - all we had to do was follow the river.

“... we were not able to walk in a straight line for more than ten steps together.”

Note: following rivers is best done without falling into them. This is made harder when the bank is badly eroded. Oh well, it was only two metres down, into only one metre of water and - despite the bag being open and filling with water - the camera did survive ...

Dan had set up his camp on a gravel bar, with another pitchable spot not far away. After repeating to him everything I'd said when falling in (none of which is suitable for publication), I waded another twenty metres up the river to another bar, and found a well established tentsite up on the bank. This was the first sign of past human presence since the boat ramp and the last until a small cairn

on our fourth peak. (It was also the sort of lucky fluke that makes you think your original doubts about the route were ludicrous. More Fool. I.) Almost made up for the bath.

Admittedly, the bath stopped mattering so much when I realised the camera was still working. I even apologised for all the language.

Dan swears he saw both fish and crays in the river. All I saw was moss, wood, rocks and my feet.

Day 2 - Wet, wet, wet

Started okay and gradually went all grey and damp. Waded up the river until lunchtime, crossing and recrossing continually, with occasional forays into the forest, then pushed through scrub, scrub and more scrub to reach the spur we wanted to climb. We then (mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa) crossed a second creek gully and climbed up on to the wrong spur. We finally pitched our tents on a rough, damp saddle late in the evening and hoped it would be better (easier) going the next day. (This spot will forever be known as Meltdown Camp; to protect the guilty - not that I'm saying who that might be - the details of the naming shall be kept private.)



Day 1, I fell in the water, days 2 and 3, the water fell on us

Day 3 - Are we there yet?

Still grey. Still nippy. Still wet. Still as scrubby as SW Tasmania. Still as slow as a geriatric sloth with severe rheumatism. We made it up to the ridge, and then traversed a series of rocky, scrub-sided knolls that kept getting bigger and higher and narrower and harder and scrubbier. Finally, one gave way to a slightly more open saddle, and a long rib of rock that climbed up towards what looked like our first target peak: Southern Cone. Too knackered to do the short side-trip to the putative summit, we set up another cramped, damp camp in a bowl between the rocks and rested.

“Still as slow as a geriatric sloth with severe rheumatism.”

Day 4 - Oops!

A late start as there was something strange going on - after a long consultation we agreed it was “sunshine”. So photos were taken, Brocken Spectres admired, gear dried out, and a lovely time had by all while we tried to make the maps fit the observed reality. It wouldn't, so we just packed up and headed into the next saddle, dropped the packs and toddled off to the lovely little bump out to the side. There were tears in eyes and lumps in throats about knocking off our first peak - until the

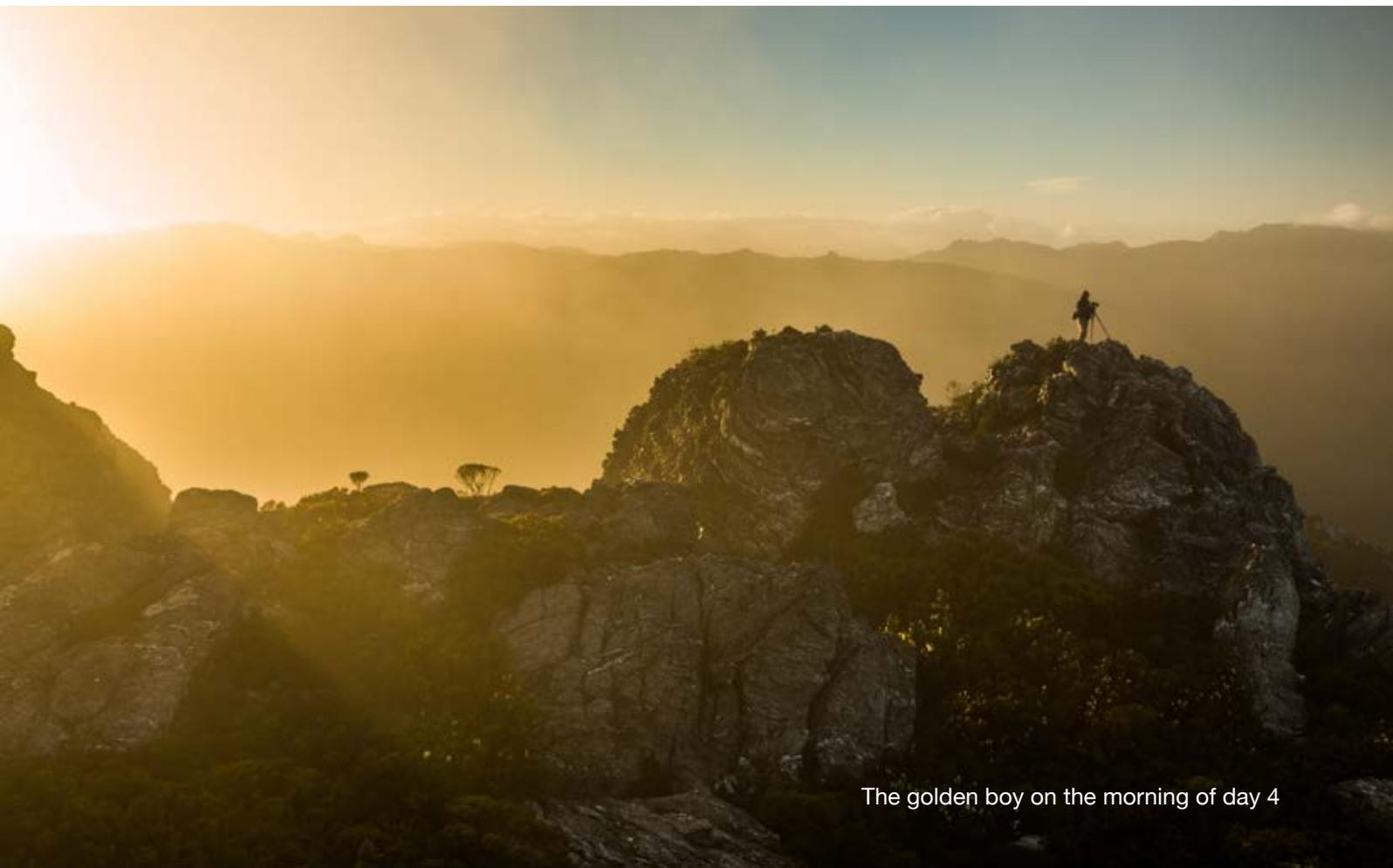
mist parted along the ridge and we realised the high point was - as my GPS had insisted - still another 250 metres away ...

“There were tears in eyes and lumps in throats about knocking off our first peak ...”

Back to the packs. Further along the ridge. Up to the bump. Bumps ... Southern Cone has a double summit. We hit both to make sure that this time it was right, this time ... oh, sorry, I've already done that bit. Two whole points*, and it only took three days!

And look - that's the spur we should have climbed ...

This part of the ridge is a little less scrubby, so we made somewhat better time moving further north, apart from a couple of interesting steep (sheer) scrambles. The final climb up White Pyramid wasn't too bad once you realise you go around the little cave rather than through it, and we were basking on our fourth point and second summit for the day. Another discussion about which rock was the recognised high point, a leisurely lunch and it was time to try to get down and on to the Camel and the saddle just north of it which was our planned campsite.



The golden boy on the morning of day 4

Now, in hindsight, the best route would probably have been to retrace steps a little, do a partial descent, and sidle the steep bits. Not us - we tried to go north; some inconveniently high undercut cliffs stopped that. So we went westish, and jagged our way down through gullies and small cliffs, lowering packs a number of times, until we reached a crux point that required a traverse across a cliff with what looked like a 20 metre drop below.

Along with other things, I've also made no secret of my growing vertigo and acrophobia. They're intermittent fortunately. Well, they decided to hit on that traverse. It wasn't made any easier by Dan saying, when I expressed doubts about my ability to cope with the traverse, "Well, it's that or falling off the cliff." Gee thanks, mate, that helps. He was obviously losing patience, so I gave it a whirl. We wasted over an hour there, until we gave up and found an easier way down to the next shelf. It was a shameful display but that's the nature of phobias.

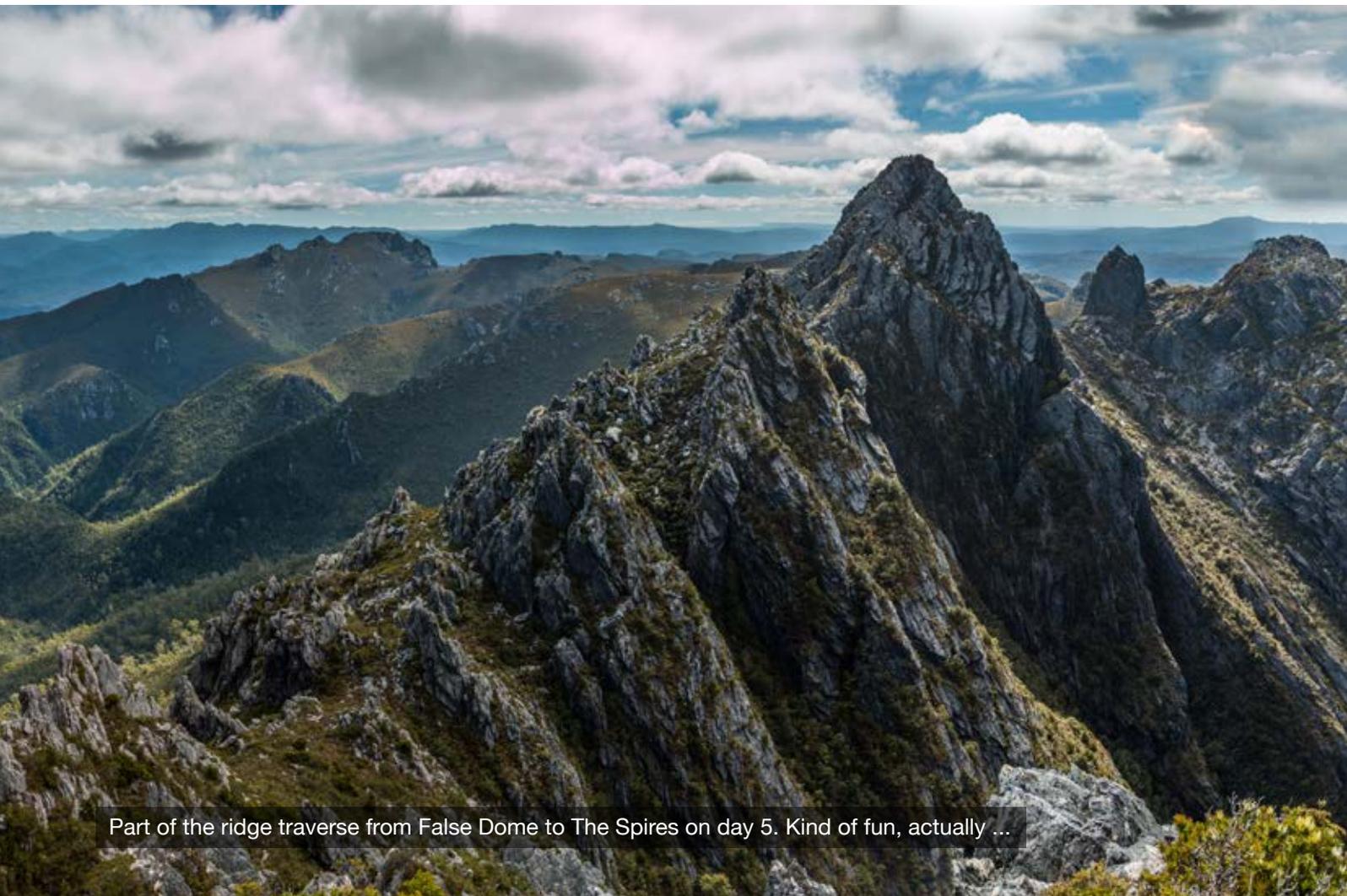
“The next time I was stuck, unable to find a route through the thickest stuff, he reappeared.”

It was getting later than we liked here, and the scrub scrubbed up again, so we were making slow progress. At one point Dan went on ahead trying to find a way through the scrub while I crawled along in his wake. He came back and carried my pack through one bit, then went on again. The next time I was stuck, unable to find a route through the thickest stuff, he reappeared. He shouldered through and then dropped the pack, swearing even more than I did when I fell in the river - his GPS had come unclipped somewhere in the scrub.

He got back to his pack, informed me of his intention to camp there, and went looking for the GPS, while I kept going through the dusk to the planned camp. A bit of space was best for both of us.

Day 5 - Oh no, not again!

Up early, backtracked to the Camel under a grey but lifting and dry sky. Dan reached the top just as I was starting back down to my camp. Packed, a few more photos, another bit of discussion about what had gone wrong and why and how to deal with it (and each other), and on we went again, still marvelling at the chaotic rock formations. You can see



Part of the ridge traverse from False Dome to The Spires on day 5. Kind of fun, actually ...

why they called this range The Spires - it's not just the area above the Font with Flame Peak, the Abel, and its companion towers, the whole range is a jumble of tip-tilted (often vertical) rock; high, low and everything in between.

False Dome was a relatively easy climb and even the descent on the far side and the traverse along the perilous looking ridge simpler than expected. It took a while and a bit of scouting, but there was always an obvious way forward through all the towers and pinnacles. Down to the last saddle after lunch and a steep climb up, a short sidle over a shoulder and up again and we had not only our third summit for the day but our first Abel* of the trip!

“ False Dome was a relatively easy climb ...

Took our time on top - after all, this one is visited a fair bit compared to what we'd just been through. The route onward will be obvious. Right?

Wrong.

This gully? That gully? Down that? Over there? Is that a cairn?

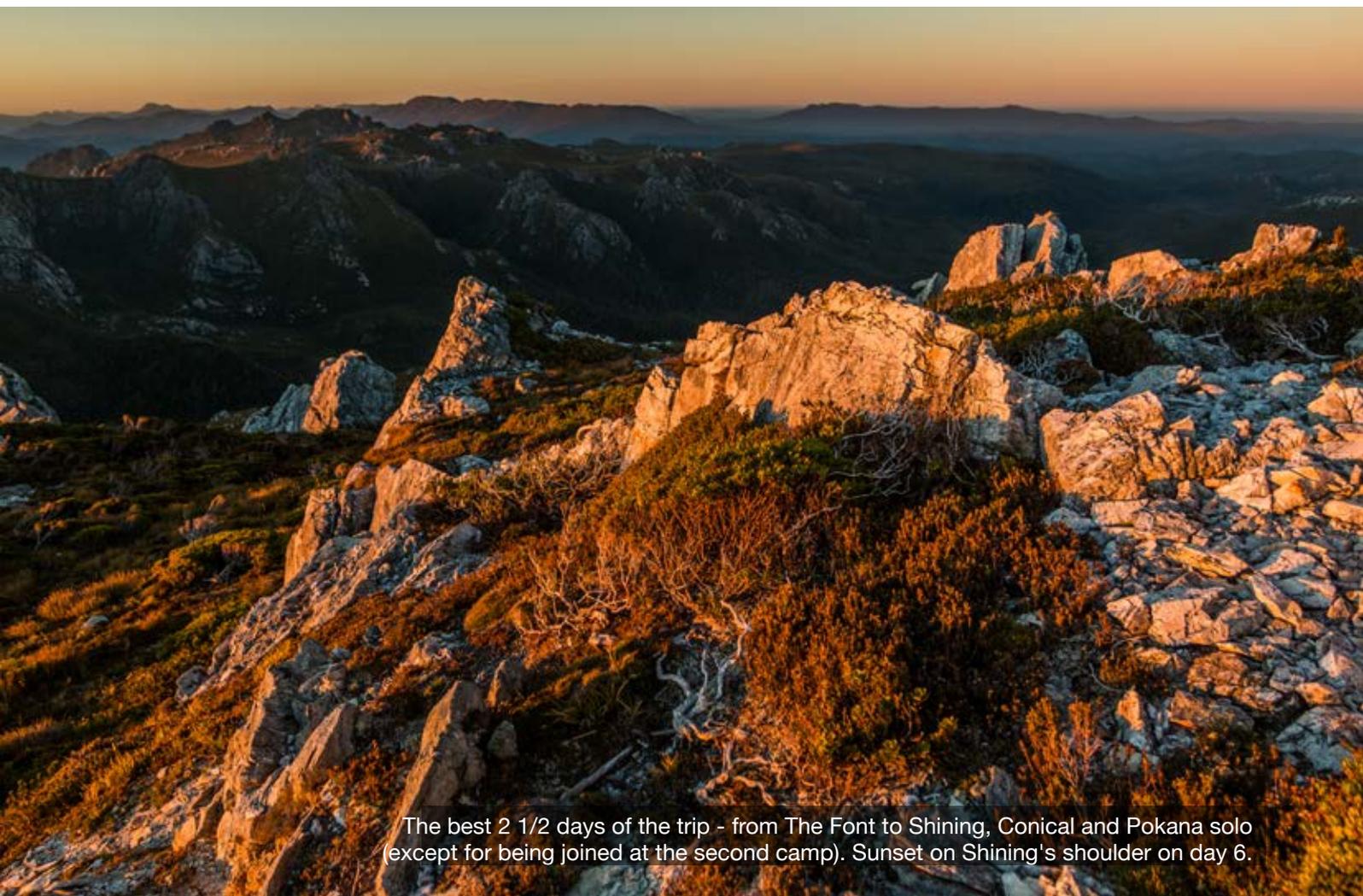
Unsurprisingly, Dan was being a bit overly conservative after my freak out on White Pyramid, so we probably missed a steep but climbable route down and through the next towers. Instead we ended up descending a long steep gully westward and pushing through scrub around the rocks until we were below the saddle above The Font. Then up, Dan again out of patience and heading off quickly to get up in time for sunset to get some decent photos; me, as usual, crawling along as best I could well behind him.

From the saddle, we had a real pad, down to the shoulder above The Font with a small pool for water and a spread of lovely tentsites from where to watch the last light on Shining and Conical and the Denisons.

“ ... we probably missed a steep but climbable route down and through the next towers.

Day 6 - (Most likely) You go your way and I'll go mine

A glorious morning; clear skies, beautiful light, the peaks behind us being set alight by the rising sun. The perfect start to the best bit of the trip.



The best 2 1/2 days of the trip - from The Font to Shining, Conical and Pokana solo (except for being joined at the second camp). Sunset on Shining's shoulder on day 6.

After all the dramas of the last five days, we both desperately needed time alone. Dan headed off to Innes High Rocky for the day, with plans to try to join me at Shining that night, while I was content to take my time, a few more photos, and a leisurely route around the Font, down to Reverend Creek and up to Shining Mountain. No fuss, no rush, no stress even when I kept losing the pad down the moraine. It was a hot day so plenty of rest was taken, and shade eagerly sought.

Reached the high shoulder of Shining mid-afternoon - yes, I'd have had time to knock off Flame that morning after all, but this made up for it. Down to the little tarn below the summit, back up the far side, explored the ridge, giving a quiet greeting to the resident skink on the summit rocks and finding an easy route back to the pack. Then back down for water and a slow and rambly set-up.

Spent the whole evening (apart from cooking, eating and taking photos) looking for Dan and hoping he would think better of pushing on that day. Luckily he did - Innes HR was followed by a swim in The Font and a quick scramble up Flame Peak, and he didn't leave until the next morning.

“ The best night of the trip was followed by the best morning.

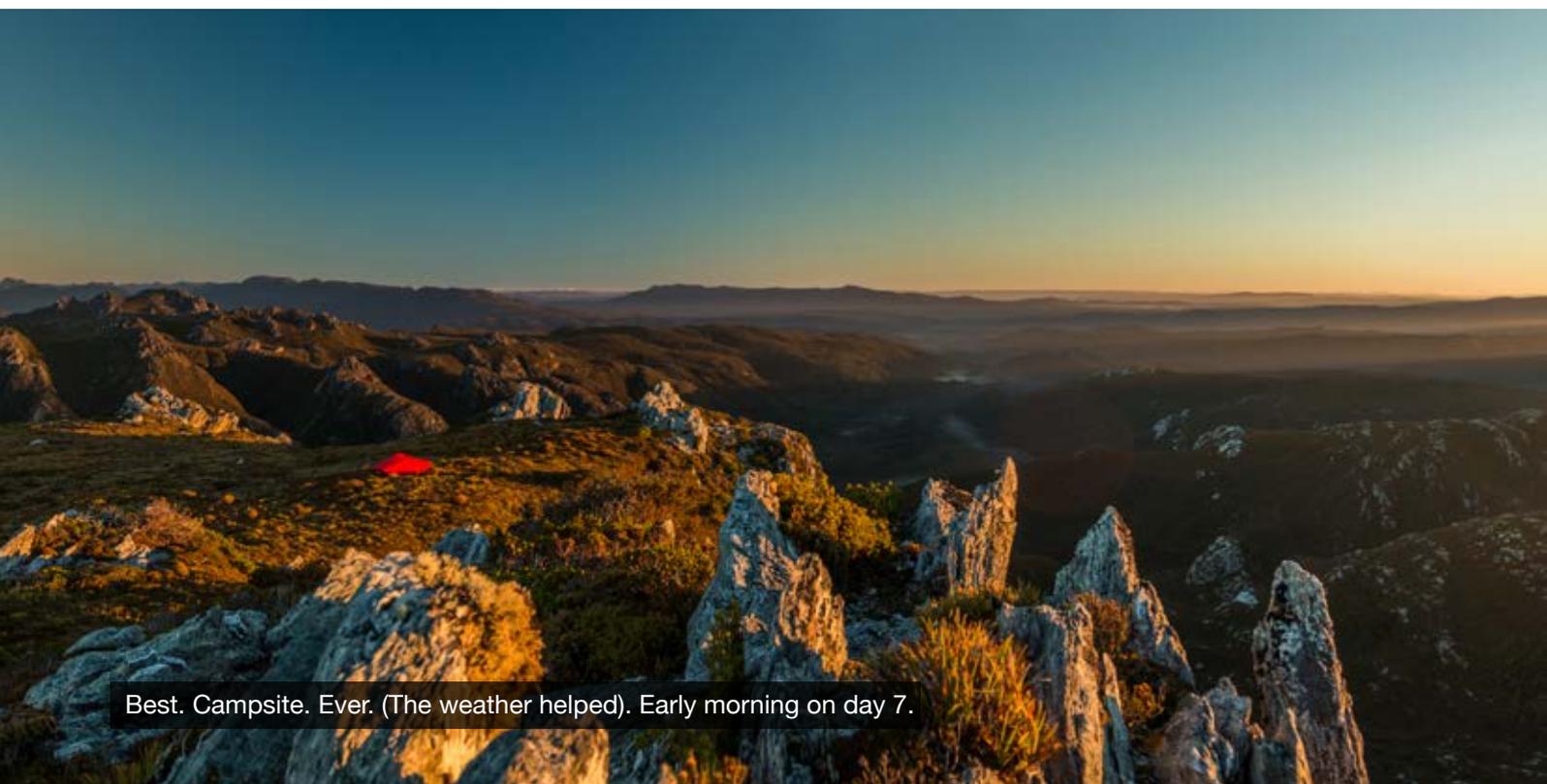
Day 7 - Alone again, naturally

The best night of the trip was followed by the best morning. Another stunner, just like yesterday but this time I had it to myself, along with a perfect campsite in perfect conditions. Took more photos at Shining than any other two days of the trip.

Then pack, along the ridge and a steep descent to the next saddle, past some even more outlandish rock formations than usual, and up to Conical. Here I left a note for Dan (my ancient phone couldn't pick up a signal there or on Shining) before continuing along the undulating and mostly open ridge, to the deeper saddle before the climb up to the Pleiades ridge.

This route goes through a narrow, steep-sided gully in which I lingered, relishing the cool dampness after the dry heat of the exposed ridges. Bliss.

Finally up on the ridge and serious thought was given to the possibility of a side-trip out to Curly - another mountain I fell in love with at first sight - but it had to be left for now as the map showed it to be further than it looked. Stopped for a break above the final Pokana Cirque lake, where I finally saw Dan sweating his way along to catch up. We pushed on another couple of hundred metres, to camp at the head of the moraine leading to the lake. I graciously let Dan collect our water as he was obviously in need of another swim. Just sooo thoughtful, eh?



Best. Campsite. Ever. (The weather helped). Early morning on day 7.

There was a smell of smoke in the air, and it coloured the skies during the evening, but the fire was a long way away.

Day 8 - Three out of three

Another beautiful morning, but with a thick smoke haze in the valleys.

Left camp first and tried to go over the first major rockpile but it was a long, sheer drop on the other side so backtracked and sidled. Dan was up and facing my direction when I was backtracking so I figured he realised we couldn't go over. Apparently not, as he made plain when he finally joined me. But it wasn't too far to the junction of the ridges, where I dropped the pack in the shade of the rocks and headed out to Pokana.

This thing has approximately 57,439 false summits, but the rocks are all so enticing you don't mind spending the extra time scrambling over them, especially when you stumble over small patches of orchids (*Thelymitra*) growing in the cracks. It's also mostly easy open walking. The final scramble is fun, and it's a shock to see the summit marker - one of those ugly concrete survey pillars - but I was so rapt I hugged it. Ecstatically. Lingeringly. That's 155 down, three to go*.

Dan joined me soon after, looking hotter and sweatier than when we'd met the previous

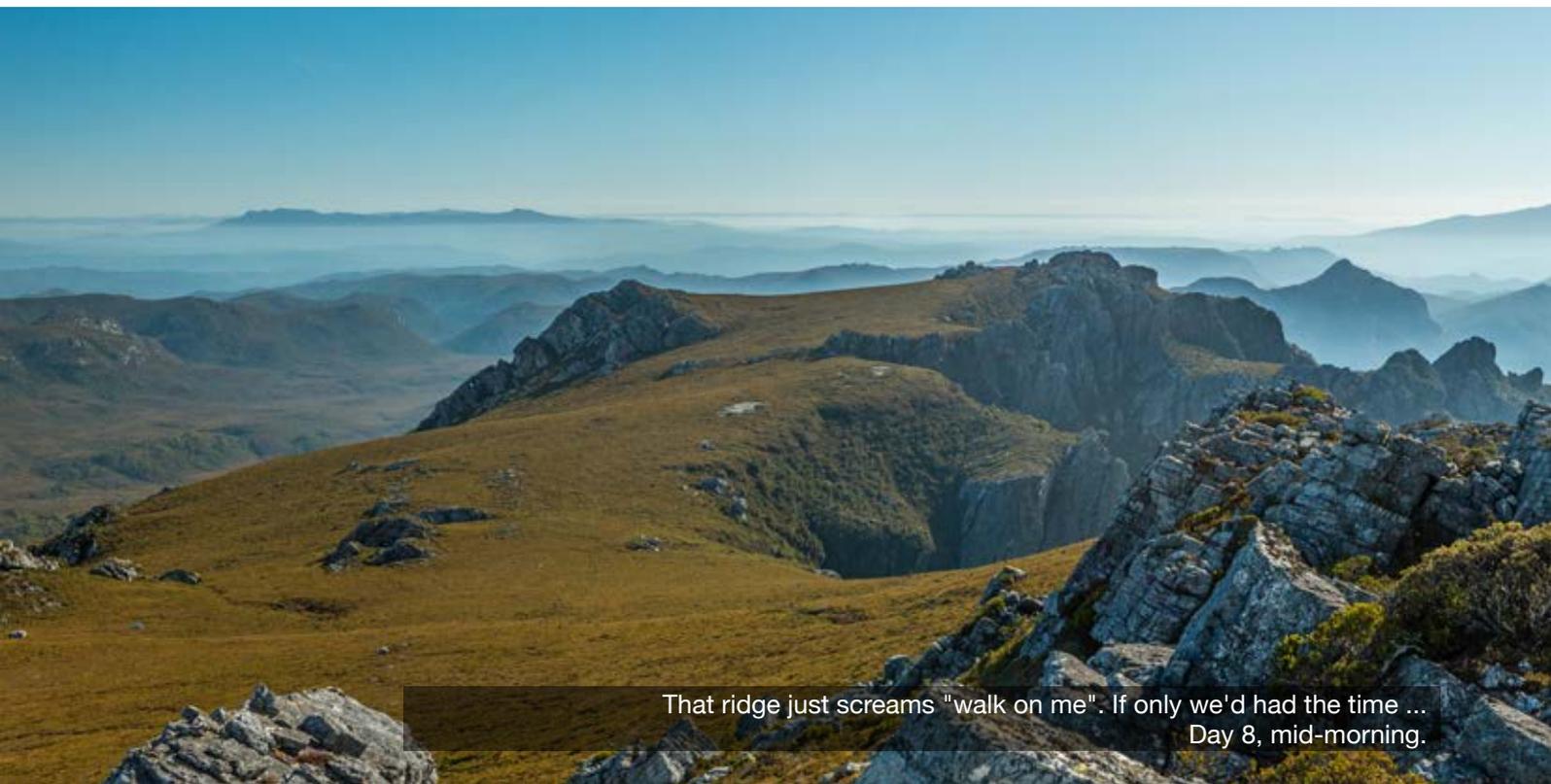
“ This thing has approximately 57,439 false summits ...

afternoon (I'd already sweated more that morning than the whole previous two days together). Then back to the packs to make our way along the Pleiades ridge to the Pokana Bay turnoff. This was not made easier by my keeping the notes from a mate's recent venture into the area on hand, but not the map; the notes said "stay east of the rocks", the map shows a clear line to the west ... Well, we figured it out for ourselves, but the first bit was hard going, sidling steep rock walls through woody scrub, climbing up and up until we crested the ridge.

We reached the northern side of the final rockpile around 4pm and, after being cheered on our way by a flock of cockatoos and having another short break, we went the other way to most walkers, heading west to our last high camp in the saddle at the head of the spur leading down to the river flats.

Camp couldn't come soon enough - I was light-headed from repeated nosebleeds, and tired from weaving through the bloody buttongrass. Even the photographic opportunities couldn't keep me from stretching out on the groundsheet and staring at the buttongrass blooms outlined against the sky before finally setting up the tent.

“ Dan was so relieved to reach decent water he almost dived into the river fully dressed and geared up.



That ridge just screams "walk on me". If only we'd had the time ...
Day 8, mid-morning.

Day 9 - There must be some way out of here

A few photos in the early morning, of the mist lingering around the high points, and then we started down the undulating, rocky ridge. Some outcrops could be sidled, some we went over. Then we got turned around in the scrub while crossing one final gully until our fearless leader was pulled up by a faint, hesitating voice saying “Errrr, why are we climbing back up this side of the ridge?” Debate was ended by the GPS display. That sorted, we crossed the gully and climbed up, then headed along the last spur almost to its end, before making our way down through a series of leads and wombat pads to the muddy buttongrass flats, and across them to the east branch of the Holley River. Dan was so relieved to reach decent water he almost dived into the river fully dressed and geared up. While he stopped for lunch, I kept plodding on along the river. Past the junction, through the water, the rocks, the occasional scrubby bit where we had to avoid the deeper pools. (But without falling in this time!)

Finally at the kayaks, load, in the water, and off. Easy enough at first where we were sheltered, but further around we’re pushing into a rising SW wind, the water chopping up, which made it hard work and noticeably slower than the trip in. Some days earlier I’d

said “Wouldn’t it be great to spend a night camped by the lake?” and Dan’s eyes lit up, so we were thinking of a short paddle before hauling out somewhere for the night, but there’s nowhere to beach the kayaks much less camp. Thus we ended up going all the way through the Twelvetrees Narrows before spending the night on a low headland just to the west.

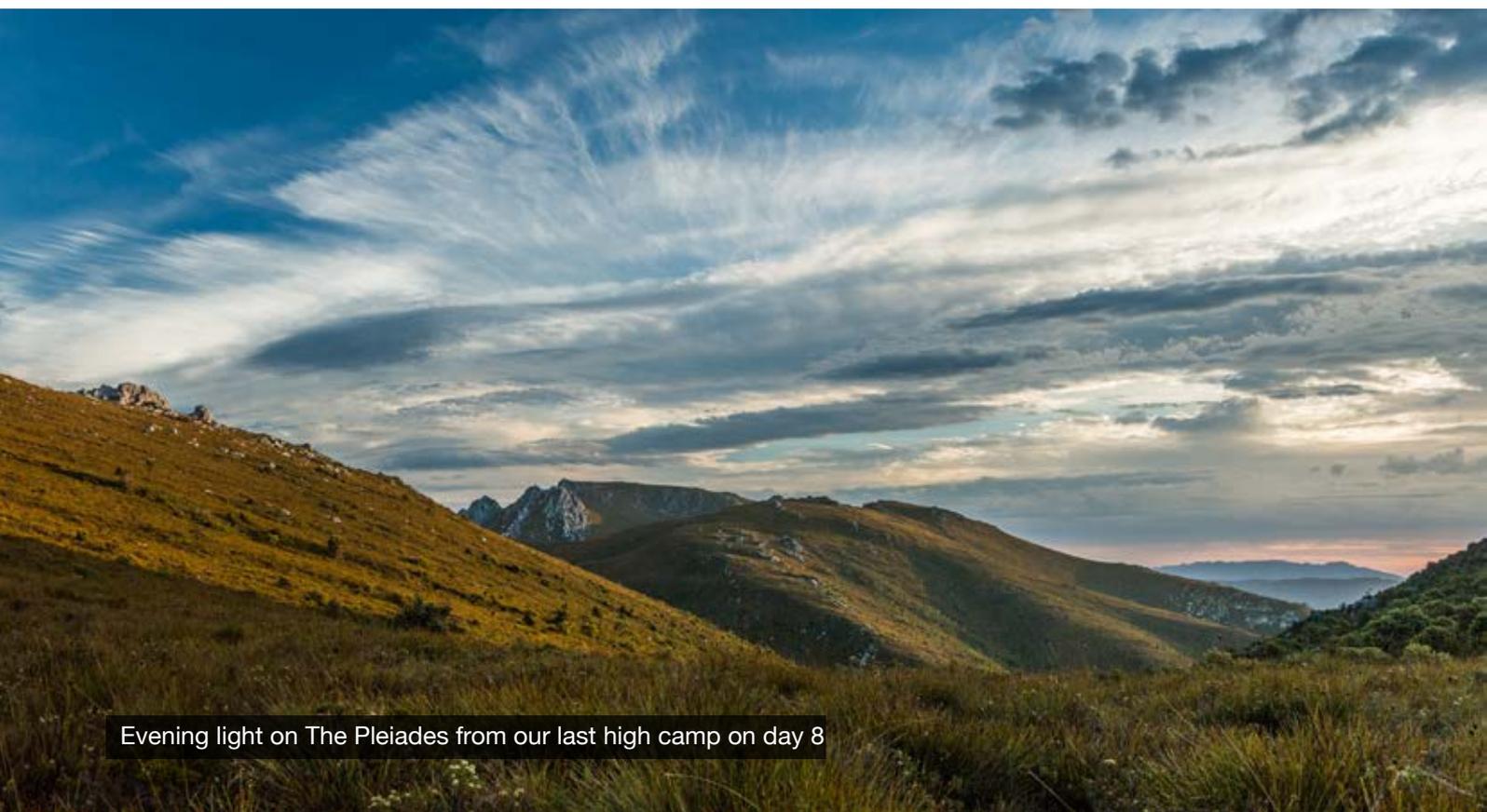
The wind dropped overnight. For the first time, despite being at the lake’s edge, we had a mosquito-free night so I could keep the tent fully open. More bliss.

“ I covered close to 100 kilometres all up, including the paddling.

Day 10 - So long, and thanks for all the fish

Lake is a glass-out. Photos galore. Slow pack, gentle paddle back to the boat ramp, unpack the kayaks, load up the car, one last selfie. Stopped at The Possum Shed for lunch (the burgers there are even better than the Hungry Wombat’s, but no chips).

I covered close to 100 kilometres all up, including the paddling. Dan did an extra 12 kilometres or so (Innes HR and Flame). All off-track, with just a few intermittent pads to make it easier. Dan did the bulk of the route-finding and scrub-crushing, not just because he’s bigger and stronger and better at it, but because he’s so much faster. Mostly I just



Evening light on The Pleiades from our last high camp on day 8

tried not to inconvenience him too much. (This was seldom successful.) But we both agreed that, despite the difficulties, we were glad we did it that way, and not just for the points*.

The gear suffered - our scrub gloves were shredded, as were my rainpants. The gaiters Scott had given us to test were also on their last legs. Shirts, pants and packs were torn in various places. Inevitably, things were lost during the trip, apart from the GPS (no, he didn't find it): weight, skin, blood, tempers ... also a pair of sunglasses, and for once they weren't mine!

The thing with walking in company is that there needs to be a degree of compatibility, in both personality and walking styles. Dan and I walk very differently and my personalities aren't even compatible with each other much less anyone else's. So, in some ways, the hardest thing was finding a way to make the partnership work. Not entirely successful, but we are still mates so it wasn't a complete bust. Plus, with all the little fights and make-ups (no, not that sort; keep your mind out of the gutter) we've achieved a better understanding.

Still, I've made Dan promise never again to ask me on a walk anywhere more adventurous than Russell Falls or, maybe, at a pinch, Friendly Beaches. Mind, I did that after the Nereus trip too ...



*For the uninitiated: many, many moons ago, the Hobart Walking Club issued a PeakBaggers' Guide, a list of peaks and ridges around the state for bushwalkers to use as a hint for possible walks. Each summit is awarded points (decided by an arbitrary and obscure system that is illogical and inexplicable even to its perpetrators). To get the points you have to "touch the very tippy top"; near enough is not good enough. This list has been amended and expanded a number of times and now includes almost 500 summits for a total of just over 900 points.

Abels are one of the major subsets on the list - peaks with a minimum height of 1100 metres and a minimum all-round drop of 150 metres. There are 158 and, so far, fewer than 20 people are known to have completed the lot. Your humble author is getting very close to completing her round, hence the almost fanatical insistence on taking time to get out to Pokana.

NNW is from Tasmania, and describes herself as "shortish, female and crazy." She has extensive Australian and overseas bushwalking and outdoor experience, starting with the old Lake Pedder aged 13. For the Peakbaggers, she is on 578 points, with three Abels left to climb. NNW has had her photographs published extensively in BWA magazine and calendars, and is in the latest [Tarkine in Motion](#) exhibition.



Holley River, near the junction of east and west branches, days 1 and 9

Queen Charlotte Track

Tips From the Track

Juliet Gibbons



The Queen Charlotte Track (QCT) is located in the north-east tip of New Zealand's South Island. This area is known as the Marlborough Sounds and is a geographically unique part of New Zealand. Unlike the fjords of Milford which are glacial formed, the Marlborough Sounds are a series of flooded river valleys. This part of New Zealand is comprised of more than 1500 kilometres of coast and it is this setting in which the Queen Charlotte Track is located, following the ridges and bays of this beautiful landscape. Here are some top tips about the Queen Charlotte Track from Wilderness Guides.

Blackwood Bay, Queen Charlotte Track
Wilderness Guides

1 How to get there

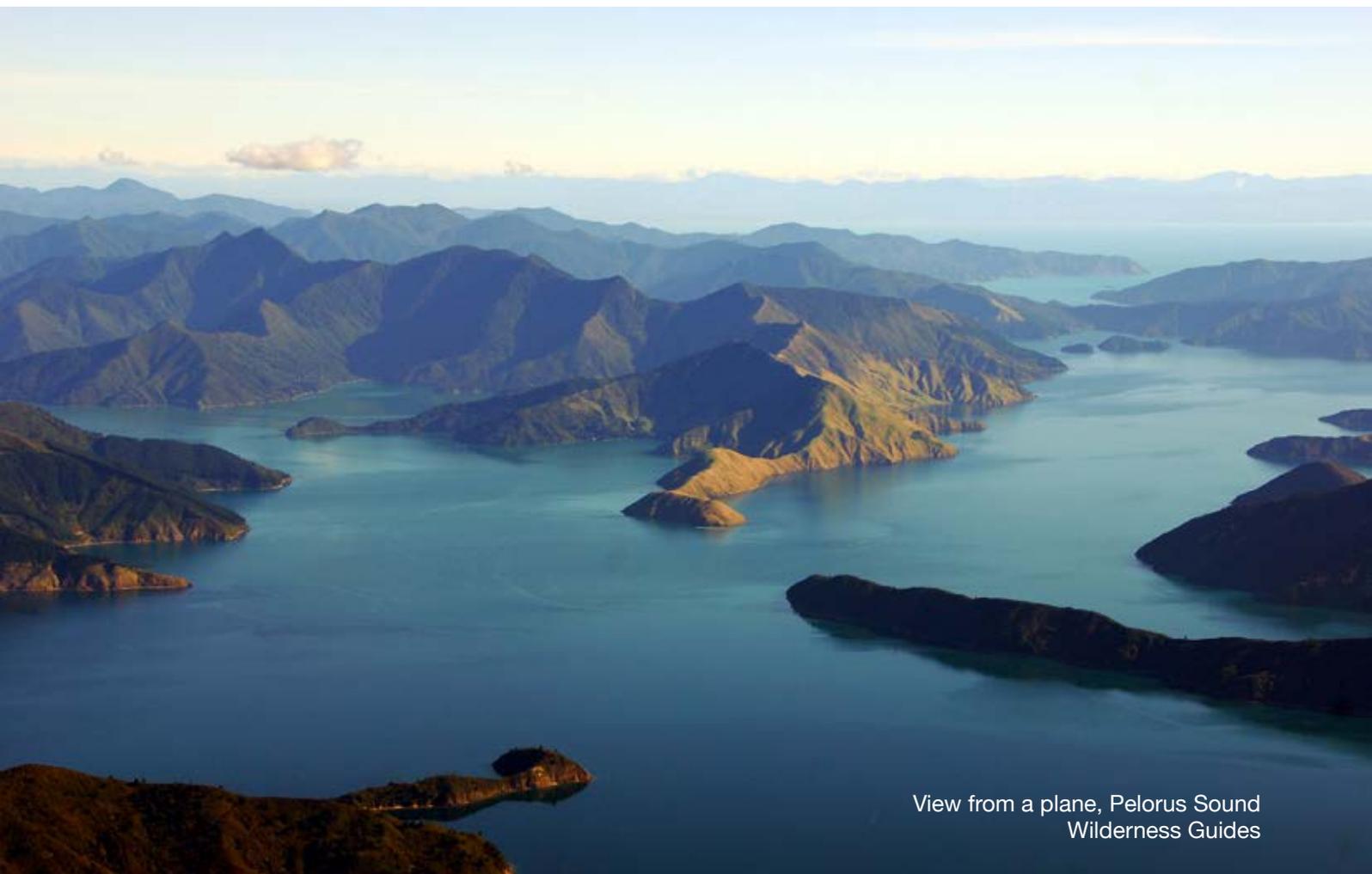
The [Queen Charlotte Track](#) is accessed by boat from the pretty little seaside port of Picton (population around 4500) at the heart of the Marlborough Sounds. You can fly from Wellington into Picton with local airline Soundsair or fly into Auckland and then on to Blenheim with Air New Zealand. Alternatively, travel by ferry from Wellington to Picton. All are good options and avoid the current disruptions to State Highway 1 caused by the Kaikoura earthquake. Picton has a beautiful harbour aspect and a great selection of cafes and restaurants – it fair hums in the summertime with a relaxed and friendly vibe. Picton is an excellent place to stay.

2 How fit do I need to be?

The 70 kilometre QCT is normally walked over four days and is relatively evenly split – two shorter days followed by two longer days. A good degree of fitness is recommended. The longest day is 23 kilometres and is the most difficult with a climb of more than 450 metres and many other shorter climbs throughout the day. However, there are water taxi options for those that don't want to walk this section. Walking this section has a reward: the sweeping views across the Marlborough Sounds.

“QCT is normally walked over four days ...”

Day	Description	Distance kilometres	Time hours	Comments
1	Ship Cove to northern side of Endeavour Inlet	14	5	This day includes two low saddles, the highest just over 200 metres.
2	To Camp Bay, southern side of Endeavour Inlet	11.5	3	A coastal section with no climbing.
3	Camp Bay to Torea Bay	23	8	A long day along the ridge with a number of climbs, the highest to 450 metres.
4	Torea Bay to Anakiwa	20.5	7	One climb of 400 metres.



3 Turn the mobile phone off (emergency only)

Okay, well, you can bring a mobile phone as a good safety device in times of need but along the Queen Charlotte Track, you won't be able to use it for the first two days. So, it's a great chance to have a holiday! A Personal Locator Beacon is a great idea and will work as long as it is set up to be used internationally although the many entry and exit points by boat along the QCT means help from the water is never far away.

4 Food and accommodation

Sorry to disappoint those hoping to shed a few kilograms but the QCT is well known as the gourmet's track – and for good reason! You won't need to pack two minute noodles or freeze dry foods. Each night you will find a great restaurant at your accommodation or a friendly host ready to cook you a meal. The best you can hope for is to come out even in the intake versus energy spent by the end!

There is a wide range of accommodation along the QCT from Department of Conservation camping grounds serviced with tent sites, running water and toilet blocks through to backpackers, lodges and even hotels with en suite rooms.

5 For the history enthusiast

If you have a penchant for history, look no further than Ship Cove. It was here in 1770 that the English explorer Captain James Cook found fresh water, strong timbers and a sheltered cove which was to become his base as he and his crew explored the South Pacific. In 2020, New Zealand will celebrate 250 years since that first significant European arrival. If history interests you, then a guided walk will add lots of value to your trip.

The QCT draws its name from the Sound of the same name, which was named by Captain Cook on his first visit in honour of King George's consort at the time, Queen Charlotte Sophia. Nearby, Cook climbed a high point on Arapawa Island and saw for the first time that New Zealand had two islands separated by a body of water which he named Cook Strait.

6 Guided or independent?

One of the great aspects about the QCT is the range of options available. From one day to multiple days, with a guide or without – the choice is yours. The rule of thumb is if you would like an upmarket tour with an emphasis on gourmet food and wine with everything provided including



Fine dining at Raetihi Lodge, night three
Raetihi Lodge

interpretation on the area, then a guided walk is for you. Guided walks are for those who want to complement their walking experience with the knowledge and security of a professional local guide, tasty food and local wine, and superb accommodation. If you are more independent of spirit but would still like certain elements such as your accommodation, transport and daily lunch arranged, then the freedom packages offer this. Unguided track packages are for more independent walkers, who wish to walk the track on their own but have certain elements like accommodation, water transport and daily lunches pre-arranged.

“ Eatwells Lookout is a must visit on the Queen Charlotte Track.

7 Keep an eye out for ...

Eatwells Lookout is a must visit on the Queen Charlotte Track. This iconic lookout is on the third day of the track between Camp Bay and Torea Bay. The lookout was created by landowner Rod Eatwell who was instrumental in establishing the track in the early 1990s. This is an absolutely stunning lookout, with 360 degree views across the Marlborough Sounds landscape with its amazing ocean network of bays and coves and worth the steep eight minute side trip from the main track.

8 Bikers and walkers

The QCT is shared between walkers and cyclists, an arrangement which works very well for the most part. The top reaches of the track from Ship Cove to Camp Bay (normally day one and two if walking) are closed to bikers from 1 December to 28 February as these are peak months for walkers. The track appeals to mountain bikers and is not regarded as an easy cycling track although planned upgrades in the next few years intend to address some of the steeper sections.

9 Remember that Crowded House song?

Four seasons in one day – yes, Crowded House sung it and it's true. When you come walking in New Zealand be sure to come prepared for all weather conditions. The QCT enjoys a temperate year-round climate, which means adventure is possible here at any time of year in reasonable weather.

If walking in summer, the temperature can range from an overnight low of around 10° Celsius up to a daytime temperature in the high 20° Celsius region. In autumn the nights are cool, down to 3-4° Celsius but days are still temperate. Winter is often down to zero overnight with day temperatures up to 15° Celsius. Day temperatures begin to warm to summer highs from November onwards.

“ The QCT is shared between walkers and cyclists, an arrangement which works very well for the most part.

10 When is the best time to come?

The QCT may be walked all year round, although in winter some accommodation places operate with limited facilities. The best time to come is when you can! As February and March are the most popular months, if you are keen to walk then be sure to book early as accommodation does fill some time in advance. Most people tend to book for the most popular months (January to March) the previous winter. Christmas and other holiday periods are also booked many months in advance. Wilderness Guides can help you plan your trip – visit wildernessguidesnz.com for more information.



Steve, Ben (aged 10), Lizzie (aged 7) and Juliet Gibbons

As a journalist on a guided walk writing an article for the local newspaper and then as a guide on the Queen Charlotte Track, Juliet knows the QCT like the back of her hand (or boot should we say). Such was her passion for this track that she and her husband Steve decided to pursue a business introducing others to the track, and have been running Wilderness Guides for 18 years. Juliet now spends her time bringing up two children and marketing the business while a great team of local guides led by Steve continue to deliver a wonderful walking experience for guests.

Photo Gallery



BWA Photo Competition



Other States

June 2016

WINNER



Stern Yackas
Brian Eglinton

Winter is an ideal time to visit the Flinders Ranges in South Australia.

I had been drawn back to the Dutchmans Stern near Quorn, camping out with four young lads. The park has notable bird life and animals and passes a few rocky shelves with views of ranges near and far on a loop route which also traverses above a gorge.

The high spot of the walk is adjacent to the cliff faces which are lined by clumps of yackas with their gnarled twisted trunks and colorful grass skirts.

A vivid blue sky with wispy white clouds over a countryside of rich winter green made it a delightful setting for lunch.



On Mt Barbara,
Heysen Range
Beardless



Not where
you might think
John Walker



Tasmania June 2016

WINNER



Pure morning
Geevesy

The photo was taken during a six day walk along the southern half of the Overland Track - it was quiet on the track at the end of May, and I made the effort to be on top of Mt Ossa for a sunrise. That day there was a lot of fog in the valleys, and fortunately I was well above that, able to see sunrise colours, an unforgettable experience!



The twice-drowned land
North-north-west



Mt Parsons
Cameron Semple



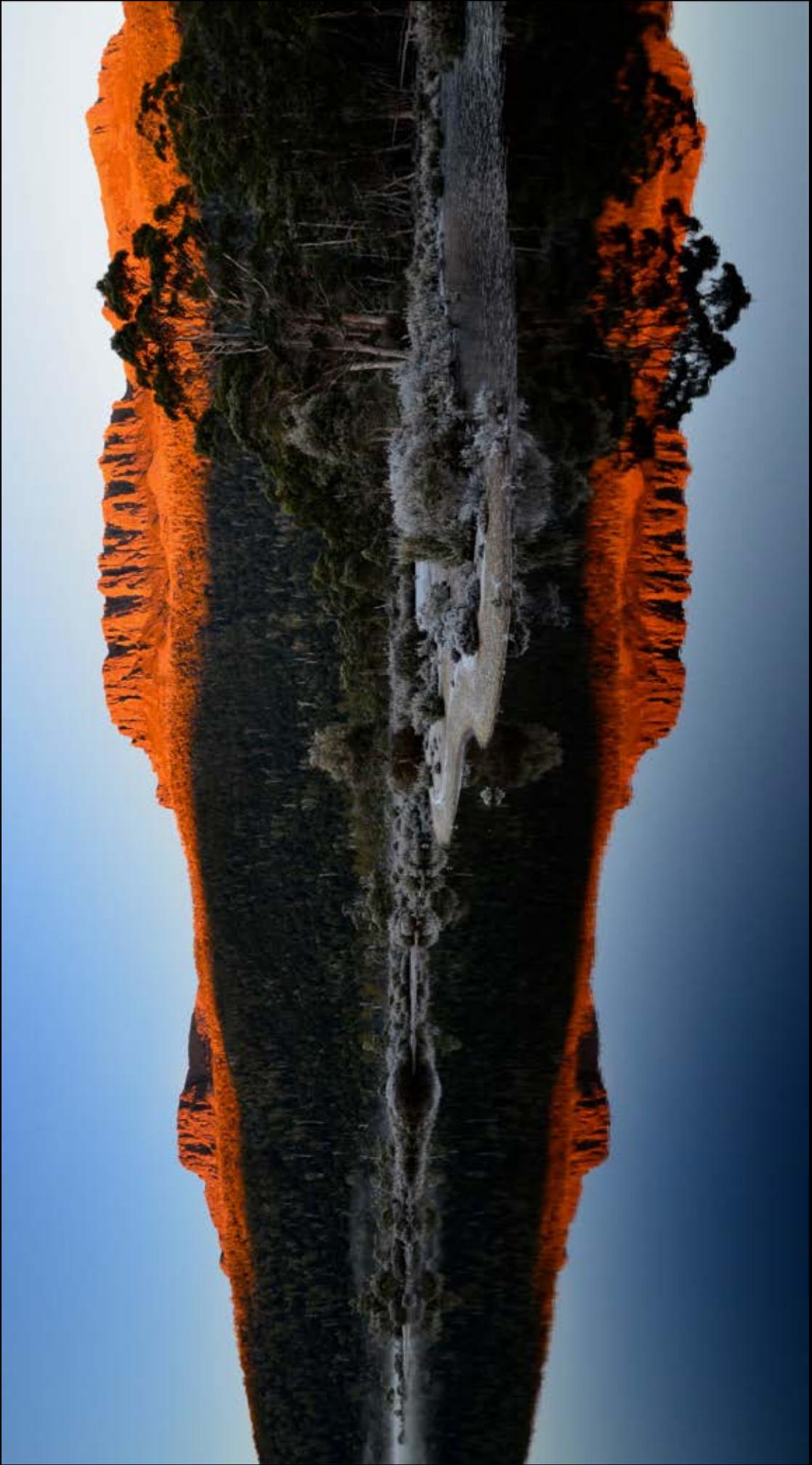
Netherby Creek
Teak



Walking out of the cloud,
Cradle Mountain
Peter Grant



Pelverata Falls
Caedo12



Landscapes June 2016

WINNER



Evening in
the South-West
North-north-west

Mt Cullen isn't a big name in bushwalking circles, but it's a neat little short off-track walk, made all the easier by the fires that went through there a few months before I climbed it. The morning rain had stopped, the cloud was lifting and breaking, so up I went in the late afternoon. And, after exploring much more of the ridge than intended, down I went in the late evening, eventually stumbling back onto the road well after sunset. Of course, the return would have been so much earlier without all the photography ...



Devil Pool
Brian Eglinton



The Amphitheatre
Cameron Semple



Acoustic Canyon
AJW Canyon2011



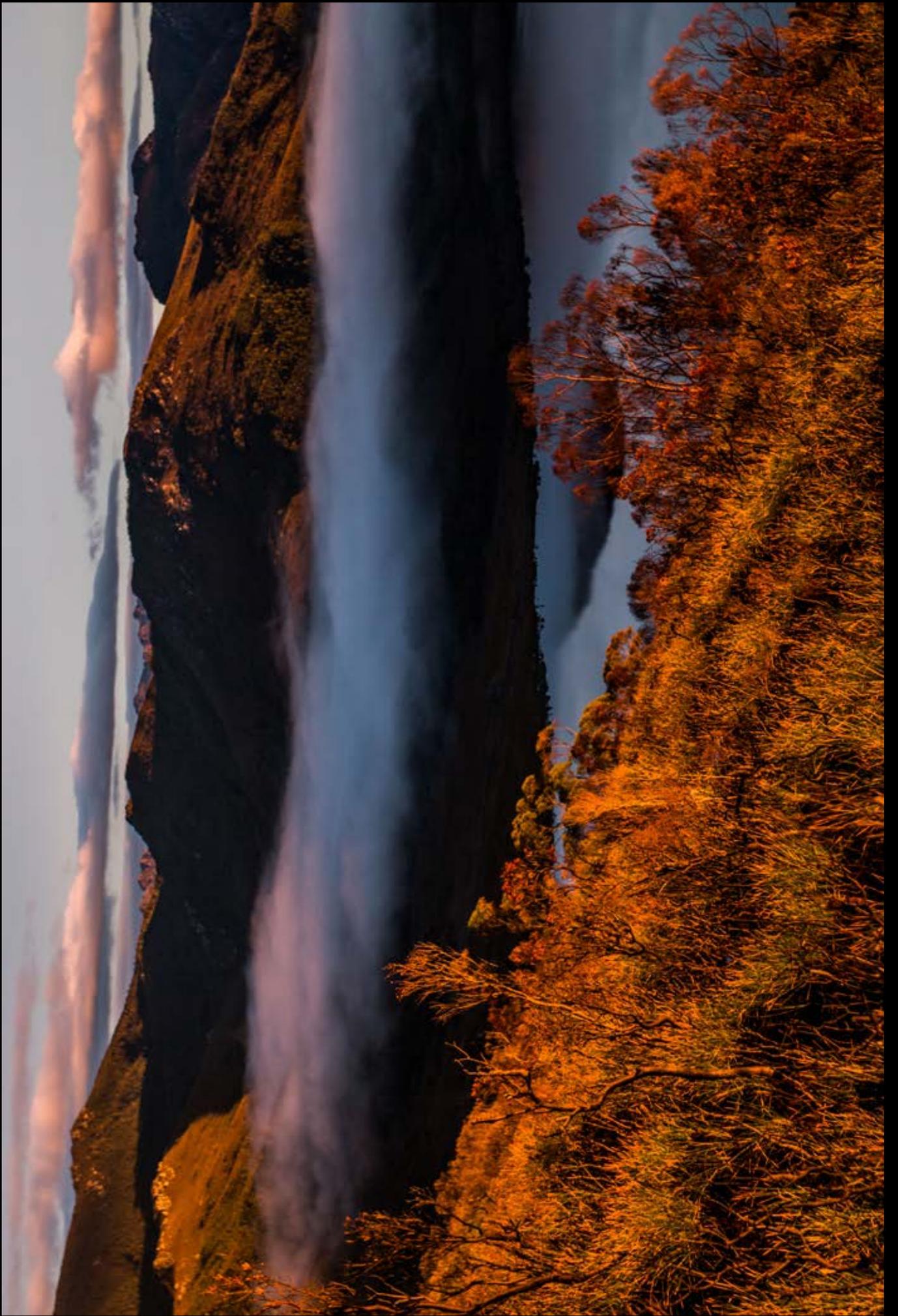
Barn Bluff and
a very Waterfall Valley
Peter Grant



East coast low
landsmith



Where's Trevor?
Beardless



Non-landscapes June 2016

WINNER



Swamp Gum
Cameron Semple

This amazing swamp gum specimen at Mt Field caught my eye because of the huge hanging flake of timber seen on the left of the trunk. How did this happen? Using a wide-angle lens serves a dual purpose of fitting as much of the tree in the shot, as well as emphasising its impressive height.



Flinders Fungi
Brian Eglinton



There's a track here
somewhere ...
Peter Grant



Ain't mushroom
Toni Harrison



Shining a light on
Grose Head South trig
John Walker



King Parrot
landsmith



Other States July 2016

WINNER



Feathertop is one of my favourite destinations all year round but I think it's especially beautiful when covered in snow. The night prior to this photo the temperature was -5° Celsius and the snow was a frozen layer of ice. The sunshine was a welcome addition to the day.

Iced better than
a cupcake
Snowzone



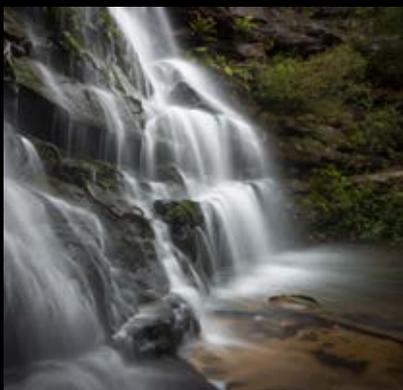
Sunset Lake Moogerah
Lorraine Parker



Winter afternoon
on the Lockley Track
John Walker



Mount Greville
landsmith



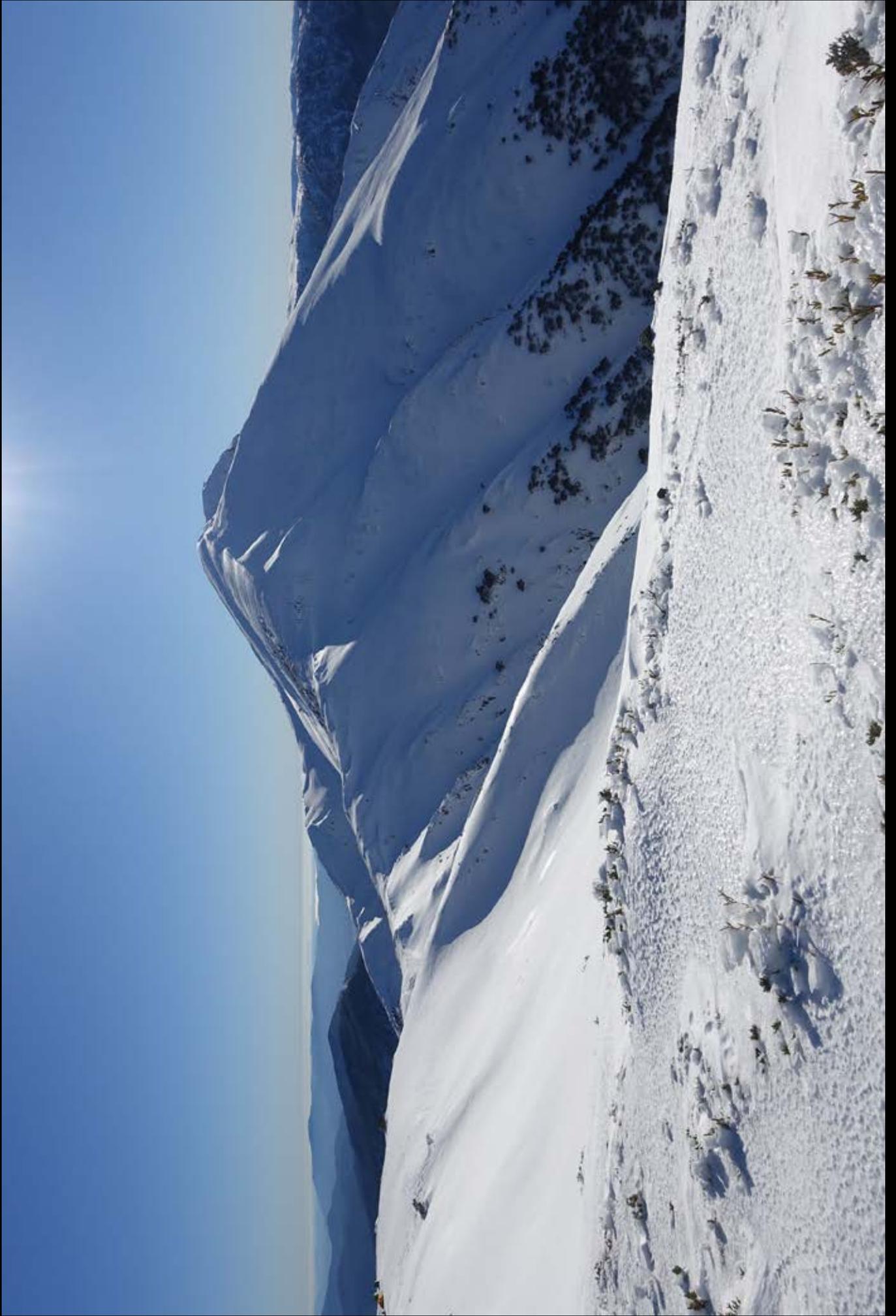
Kariong Brook Falls
Tom Brennan



Emerald Creek Falls
Brian Eglinton



A frolic on Sealers Cove
GazmanfromMelbourne



Tasmania July 2016

WINNER



A walk in the woods
North-north-west

Wet days are perfect for wandering through rainforest. I was heading up the Overland from Cynthia Bay, spending the first night at Echo Point, and not caring about anything much at all despite it being wet and cold - and for once with the tripod. The little creeks and runnels were flowing nicely, all the ferns were shiny wet, the moss lushly green, fungi sprouting on every fallen log. So it was a later departure than usual the next morning due to mucking about with the camera.



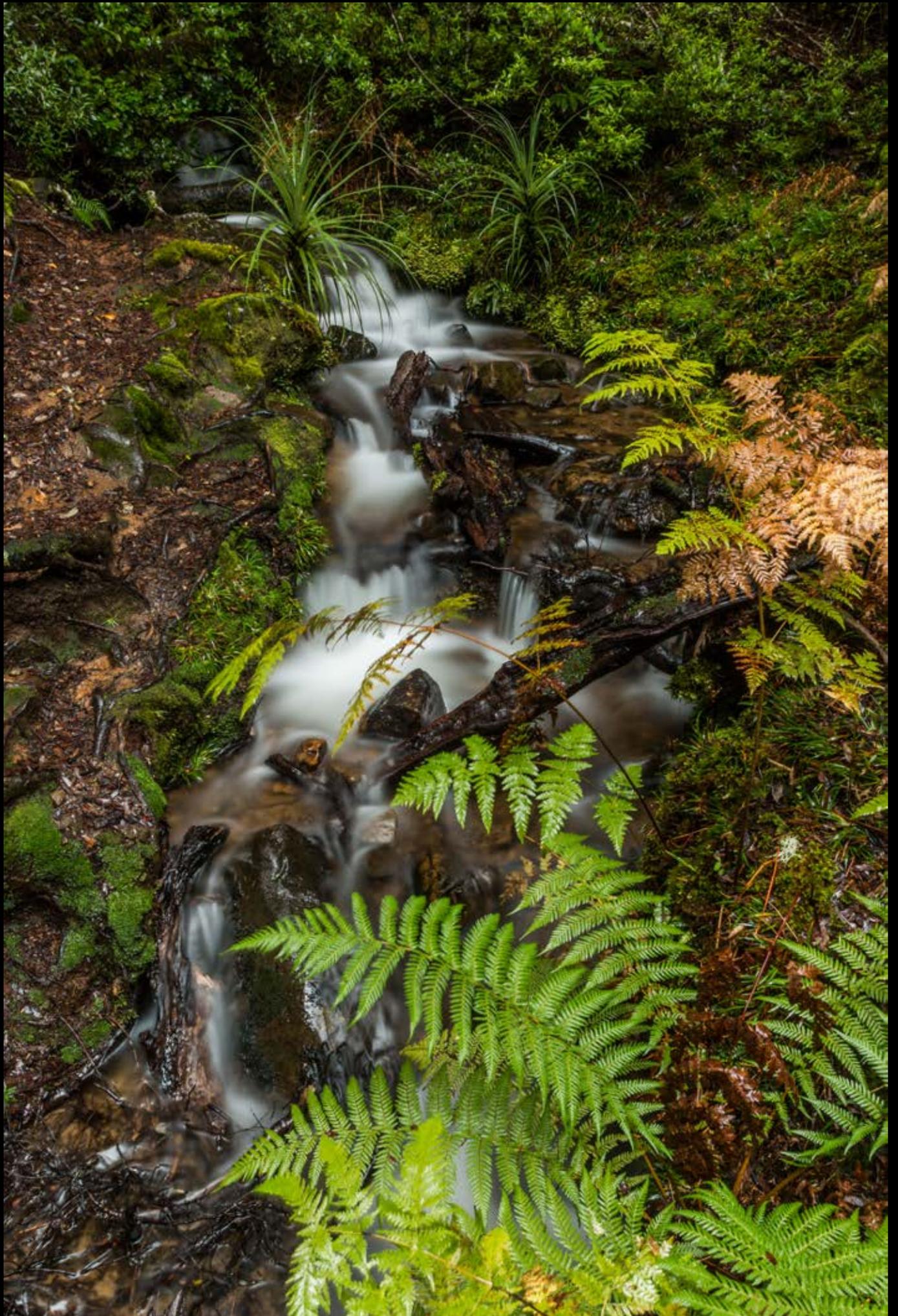
Falling up the hill
Cameron Semple



Nelson Falls
Caedo12



Head up in the clouds
Geevesy



Landscapes July 2016

WINNER



Descending Pelion East
North-north-west

Arrived at the Gap too late and tired for Ossa, so an evening toddle up Pelion East had to suffice. Squelchy mud, scratchy scoparia, slippery ice ... the usual companions of a winter evening on a Tasmanian mountain; but who cares when the views and light are like this, and are yours alone?



On Calna Creek
John Walker



Myrtle Forest cascade
Cameron Semple



Moogerah Lake sunrise
Lorraine Parker



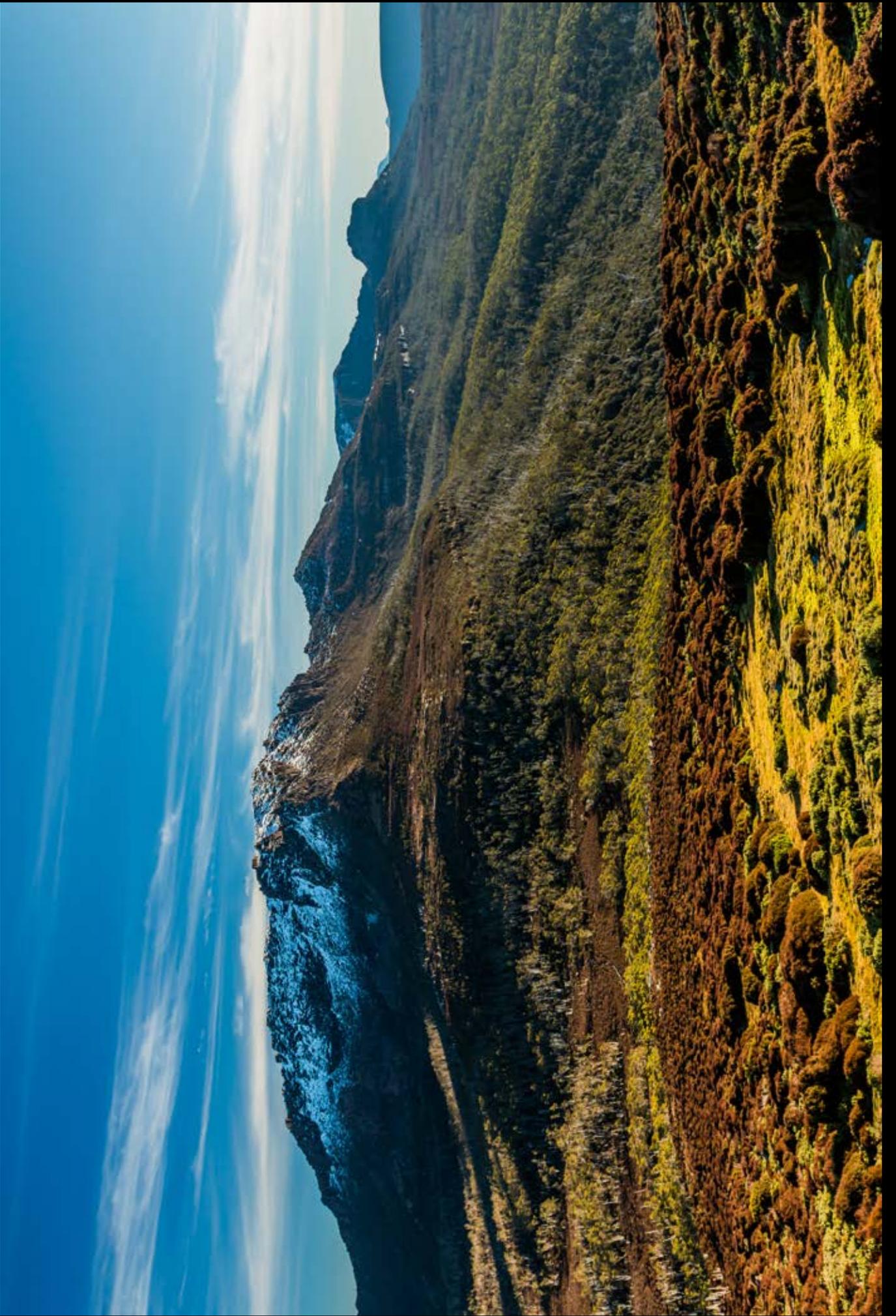
Last flight of the pelican
landsmith



Sunset at
Davenport Creek
Graham51



Sealers Cove at The Prom
GazmanfromMelbourne



Non-landscapes July 2016

WINNER



Frozen
North-north-west

A clear night in winter/early spring at Pelion Gap, and everything is touched with frost the next morning (plus the ice and occasional remnant snowdrift). And the tiny complex arabesques of ice crystals in the pools are bewitching ... magical ... an otherworldly beauty.



Brown Honey Eater
landsmith



Touching the sunlight
Cameron Semple



Memories
Snowzone



Montezuma Falls
Caedo12



The ambience of
Dr Darks Cave
John Walker



The dragon
Graham51



Camping Etiquette

Helen Smith



In BWA April 2017 we covered bushwalking etiquette on the track. We ran through some guidelines for making sure you and everyone else in the trip has a great time in the bush. This edition we're going to take that one step further and cover camping etiquette – how to make friends, and keep friends in the bush!

Camping etiquette includes making arrangements that are considerate of others sharing the campsite or who will visit the campsite later. The key here is being mindful of other people's reactions and responses and being respectful of other people's needs and privacy, but at the same time not isolating people either.

Be aware that expectations for the night vary, and people respond to things differently compared to while walking. Some people are right at home in the bush, others are not. On overnight trips, walkers are more likely to be tired than on day trips due to the extra pack weight, so a little understanding can go a long way! Again, the etiquette used around camp isn't a set of rules, but rather a set of guidelines that are worth considering to help create an amicable, respectful environment.

Be mindful of others by keeping personal gear inside tents or at least tidied away in shared areas. Accept that some people may need a bit of down time away from the group after a full day of walking. However, if there is a new person to the group that is quite shy, it might be appropriate to encourage him or her to join the group for dinner rather than eating alone in their tent.

If tensions arise, often, a quiet chat to the people involved can solve it. This is best done in private, away from the group. Similarly, seemingly obvious questions like "There's not that much space around my tent, would you mind if I set up my stove next to your tent to cook?" can go a long way to making sure that everyone is comfortable with the campsite arrangement. The leader will advise departure times, toileting areas and so on. If unsure, just ask a simple question.

“... a little tolerance can go a long way!”

Sleeping

Campsites are often shared by different bushwalking groups, so it's necessary to work together to effectively share the space, yet give everyone a bit of privacy. Upon arriving at camp, think about what tents are in the group and split up the space wisely. If someone is using a fly and needs to be close to a tree, then free-standing tents should be pitched elsewhere. Make sure that beginners have help in choosing a suitable spot. More experienced bushwalkers are generally much better at being creative with space use, so help beginners get settled first.



Another group may arrive later, and if space is at a premium, then site your party's tents accordingly. Even if there's plenty of room, it's nice to have your group together rather than scattered. If tents are poorly sited then later parties may be obliged to camp outside the customary camping area, and this may be something to avoid.

“ In some areas camp fires are banned.

Ideally, tents should have at least a few metres between them to give people space to easily move around. If space is tight, consider sharing sleeping quarters, or at least do a coin toss for good spots so that whoever is stuck with the lumpy sloping ground has won it fair and square. On longer trips, a roster or agreement means a fair outcome for all. Lastly, be mindful of others and avoid loud conversations late at night.

“ If you do decide to light a fire, find an existing fire site ...

A good example of sleeping conflict is when two bushwalking groups arrive at the same campsite but have two completely different ideas about how they want to spend the night. One is there to catch up on sleep, the other is there to stay up all night to party. If this appears to be the case, chat to the other group to find a compromise. This might be as simple as inviting the quiet group to join the noisy group for a shared dinner.

Campfires

Campfires are used as a social place to gather around to keep warm and cook on. However, careful consideration should be given to [lighting a campfire](#) because campfires can have substantial impacts. If you do decide to light a fire, find an existing fire site and be careful about digging a fireplace where the fire may spread.

In some areas camp fires are banned. The reason is usually environmental – too much timber has been used for firewood in a localised area, and the environment is



suffering. Another reason is that the area is at risk from bushfires, and by not having a campfire the risk is less. If campfires are allowed, keep the fire small. If there's plenty of timber a fire may be possible, but only when safe. In general, campfires should be avoided at popular locations and in alpine regions. Use existing fireplaces, and if there are none, dig out a fireplace. Before leaving drown the ashes, scatter them and put the sod back. The grass that is, not the leader.

A good cooking fire has lots of smouldering embers, and a warm fire has lots of fuel and flames. If people are cooking on the fire, check before building it up because sudden changes in temperature can easily burn food and make it hard to remove billies. Conversely, if people are using the fire to keep warm, then putting several billies on the flames won't keep the fire warm for long. Check with the rest of the group how the fire is being used, and consider splitting it into two sides: a hot built-up side, and a cooler side with embers for cooking.

Most paper rubbish can be safely burnt on a campfire. Due to the release of toxic chemicals, plastic should not be burnt on campfires. Although plastic is burnt in factories, it's done at a much higher temperature than a campfire, hence producing different and less toxic gases. Any paper put in the fire should be checked

“ Soap must never be used in creeks, rivers or pools.

for plastic or foil lining. Foil should never be put in the fire because it does not burn and produces tiny flakes of foil that remain in the fireplace. Tins should be washed well away from water sources, crushed, and carried out.

Washing and soap

To avoid pollution, wash well away from any water source. Anything that's been washed in a water source affects aquatic wildlife and floats downstream to other campsites. Hence, billies and cutlery should be washed well away from water sources and huts. Some bushwalkers use soil or vegetation as a scourer to clean billies and cutlery. When done well away from water sources, this keeps any soil or vegetation matter polluting the water source. Soap must never be used in any type of water source. Some soaps say that they are suitable for use in the bush but such claims should be disregarded, and should be used well away from water sources as described in [Section Hiker](#).

Campsite clean up

Clean up the campsite before leaving and carry out all rubbish, including tins and apple cores. If there is any additional rubbish lying around at the campsite, carry out as much as possible. Pack up any remaining rubbish so it doesn't get blown or washed away alert the appropriate park ranger when back home. When breaking camp, check for small pieces of litter, tent pegs, gear and so on.



Nature Scribe Blog

Peter Grant



Peter Grant is a long-time BWA member, and the man behind the “Nature Scribe” blog, which is found at naturescribe.com.

Crossing McKellar Saddle on New Zealand's Greenstone-Caples Track
Peter Grant

First of all Peter can you tell us a bit about yourself? Where you live, where you work, etc?

I live in Hobart, Tasmania, in the foothills of Kunanyi/Mt Wellington. I'm one of those "Tasmanians by choice", having moved here in 1980 with my wife. After 37 years we're almost "naturalised", and have three adult children and eight grandchildren all living in Tassie. I have an education and writing background, and worked in that field with Tasmania Parks & Wildlife Service for almost 24 years. I took early retirement in 2015, so I could spend more time writing, bushwalking ... and chasing grandchildren.

“While life has trials and difficulties, our planet is also full of wonders.

What is *Nature Scribe* all about?

The blog covers some of the outdoor activities I enjoy, especially bushwalking, cycling and other forms of self-powered travel. I also have a great curiosity for what's happening in the natural world, so I often include observations on what I find when I'm outside. My approach to writing is biased towards the personal and reflective rather than the guide-book style.

Why did you start a blog?

I love writing. I wrote a book *Habitat Garden* for ABC Gardening Australia in 2003, and was keen to publish more. I'd also founded a prize for nature writing (*The Wildcare Tasmania Nature Writing Prize*), and wanted to do some of my own writing in that style. With full-time work making that difficult, blogging looked like a good way of keeping myself writing. Blogging suits shorter forms of writing, and gives you the chance to create content you can adapt and use later. You can also experiment more, and include photographs and other media in the blog.

“I also have a great curiosity for what's happening in the natural world ...

Do you have an overall goal?

When I worked for Parks & Wildlife, we had a slogan that went "Share the Wonder". And I suppose that's what I try to do through my blog. While life has trials and difficulties, our planet is also full of wonders. Some of that is hidden from us some of the time, and writing is one way of helping people to uncover and celebrate those wonders for themselves.



Why Tasmania's Central Plateau is sometimes called the Land of a Thousand Lakes
Peter Grant

You write about more than just bushwalking, but this is certainly prominent in your blog. Why is that?

On the surface of it bushwalking is, literally, a very pedestrian activity. But what seems ordinary has turned out to be hugely significant to me, and I'm sure it is to a lot of others.

“I've gained significant spiritual and psychological insights from being “out there” ...

In one blog post I suggested that walking “[hovers somewhere between the pedestrian and the celestial.](#)” Personally I've gained significant spiritual and psychological insights from being “out there”, and especially in my two favourite walking places: Tasmania and New Zealand's South Island.

What are some of your favourite walks, and why?

There are so many! But in terms of gaining significant insights, climbing Federation Peak in 1991 was huge. Overcoming my fear of that difficult walk, and especially that

final ascent, helped motivate me to move from unemployment and self-doubt into a meaningful career. There's more of that story starting [here](#).

“The relative intactness of Tasmania's environment makes it one of those very precious places on a global scale.

I also have a great love for the Walls of Jerusalem and Central Plateau area, and have found many different ways – both on- and off-track – to explore that slightly gentler wilderness. I'm especially fond of the pencil pines you can see in abundance there. To me they have endearingly ent-like characteristics (a la Tolkien), 'though I fear for their survival as climate change hits the Tasmanian highlands. I've written about that [dire threat](#).

“But what a privilege it is to be able to get out there and send back reports as long as I'm able!

Some of my other Walls experiences include [Solitary](#), [Blue Peaks](#) and [Possums](#).



An almost-view from the summit of Frenchmans Cap
Peter Grant

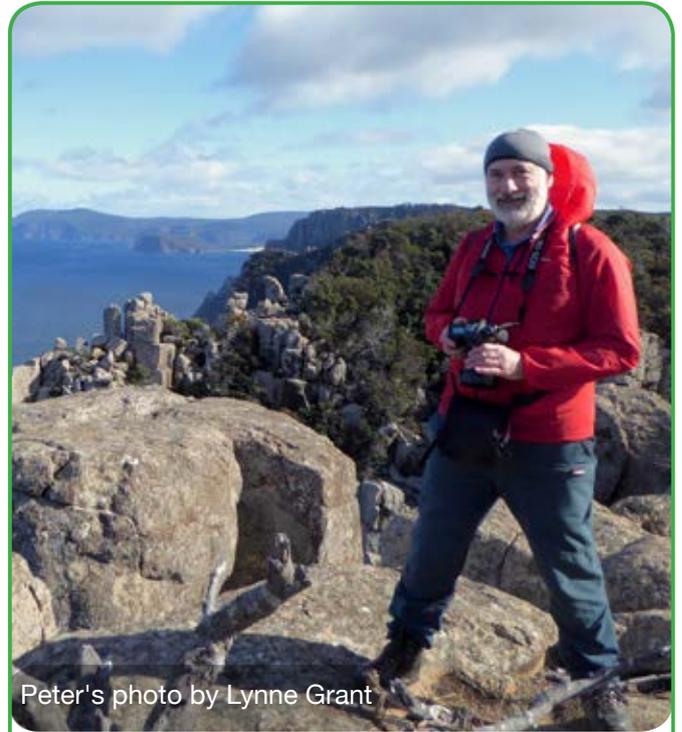
In New Zealand I particularly love the walks around the Glenorchy area, including the Routeburn, Rees-Dart and [Greenstone-Caples](#) walks.

I find the beech forests of the South Island very familiar to me as a Tasmanian, 'though the surrounding mountains, with their Alp-like proportions, are something else altogether. That said, NZ's natural environment has sadly been trashed by human activity and introduced pests. 100% pure it is not!

The relative intactness of Tasmania's environment makes it one of those very precious places on a global scale. That's why I'm passionate about its protection. I certainly don't expect I'll get to see all of its beauty in this lifetime. But what a privilege it is to be able to get out there and send back reports as long as I'm able!

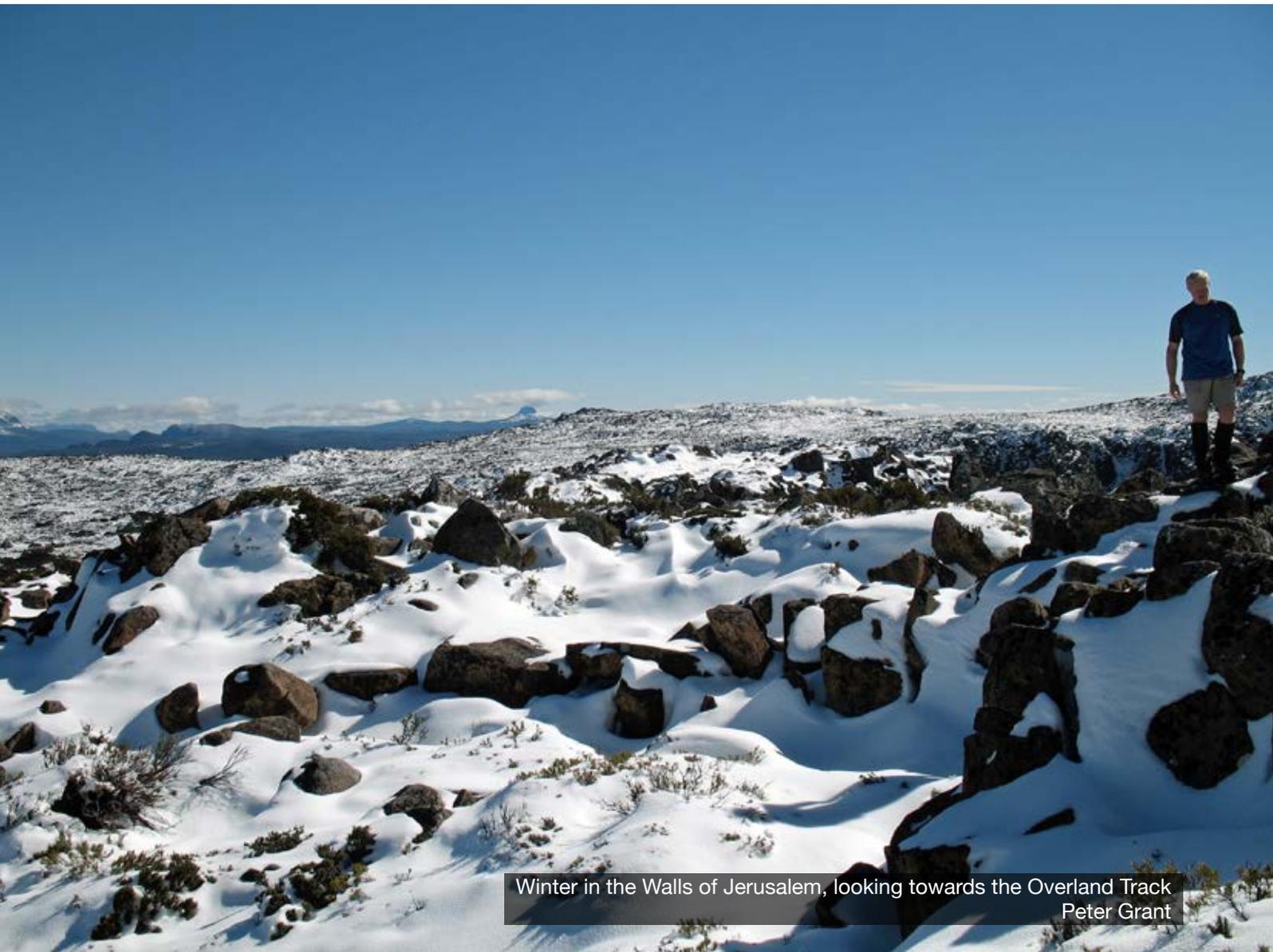


“ I find the beech forests of the South Island very familiar to me as a Tasmanian ...



Peter's photo by Lynne Grant

Peter Grant is a writer and long-time bushwalker based in Hobart, Tasmania. Peter writes about his walks in his blog at naturescribe.com.



Winter in the Walls of Jerusalem, looking towards the Overland Track
Peter Grant

From Hiker to Globewalker

John Feeney



In the space of a few months, my life took an unexpected turn for the better. I've gone from being a slightly obsessed hiker, to an outdoor blog owner, to a MeetUp organiser and now an outdoor company owner.

But first, let's take a step back to where this all began.

With the MeetUp group at Boronia Peak, Grampians, Victoria

My obsession with hiking came at the expense of another love of mine – Australian Rules football. In October 2014 my journalism and public relation studies were getting quite hectic and I was doubting my ability to commit to football in 2015. I decided to give up footy for 12 months but saw that I needed to be involved in an activity which would give me enough motivation to go back for 2016.

Enter hiking.

By November 2014, I had made my decision and began finding as many tracks as I could; with my first hike on the Sherbrooke Forest Circuit. After a few more hikes, I was slowly becoming hooked and in late February 2015, I went on my first solo overnight hike on the Walking Into History Trail in Warburton, Victoria.

But that wasn't enough. After watching a DVD of two Americans and their New Zealand guide destroy their bodies in seven days walking about 200 kilometres from the Lord of the Rings filming location of Hobbiton (Matamata) to Mordor (Mt Ngurahoe in Tongariro National Park), I had found my long-term challenge.

I watched that DVD so many times that it got to the point that not only was I convinced that I could do what they did, but do it better and not destroy my body in the process. So with three friends, I spent the better part of 2015 getting used to kilograms on my back and putting kilometres into my legs.

We ended up hiking 240 kilometres over 10 days, with one rest day, from 27 December 2015, to 5 January 2016. On the final day we did the Tongariro Alpine Crossing and climbed Ngurahoe.

It was the culmination of 12 months of hard work and solidified my belief that hiking and camping were going take up the next phase of my life in some capacity.

“ We ended up hiking 240 kilometres over 10 days ...

After completing three years of studying, in mid-2016 I decided to start my own hiking blog – [The Hiking Society](#). Much like other hiking and outdoor blogs, the point of The Hiking Society blog was to showcase hiking and camping spots, both known and unknown, and really reinforce the greatness of the outdoors.



Start of the Tali Karng Track at McFarlane Saddle, Victoria

Further, through particular articles I wanted to introduce “hiking hacks”, unknown brands and my general thoughts on the industry to readers. As a full-time social media manager, I know how powerful social media can be so I was always going to use it as a distribution platform.

After I had finished my Bachelor of Communications my first goal was to set up this blog. After a short period, I decided to create a [MeetUp group](#) of the same name. A MeetUp group is a great way to meet like-minded people and spend a few hours doing something you all love. Launching on Father’s Day 2016, the group grew quite quickly for the sole reason – well, this is my belief anyway – that it was the first weekend of spring and I’m sure everyone was expecting sunshine and awesome weather in the months to come.

Having this MeetUp group also helped with creating content for the website. It allowed me to blog about every hike that I led and perhaps introduce some spots to others who had never been there before.

While I am always amazed at the numbers we get on the hikes, the biggest positive for me with this group is the relationships formed due to the group. So many people have joined the group and haven’t known anyone. Typically, their reason is that none of their friends like hiking or camping. So they come along to our group, get chatting with other people and find out that they have similar interests apart from hiking. They then connect on social media, become friends and start hanging out away from the MeetUp.

I think that is absolutely amazing and is a reflection of just what a MeetUp group can do outside of its primary intention.

“... the biggest positive for me with this group is the relationships formed due to the group.”

Now, this is just one example and I have no doubt that many other groups are experiencing the same connections that are occurring in my MeetUp. If you’re not a part of one, and it doesn’t necessarily have to be outdoors related either, then I’d highly recommend joining one. They’re a lot of fun.



Emerald Lake on the Tongariro Northern Circuit, New Zealand

In late October 2016 I approached an outdoor clothing company [Globewalker](#) to see if I could do some guest blogging for them. The owner, Kasia Pilch-Kozina, suggested we take it a step further by sending me one of her products to field test and review. As far as I knew, this company wasn't very well known so it was the perfect fit for the type of content I wanted to produce on [The Hiking Society](#) website.

Three weeks passed and I hadn't heard anything from Kasia. Had she forgotten? Was she not interested any more? Curious, I emailed her - what was happening? She said that there was probably no point in her sending me products because she was thinking of selling the business. She then asked if I was interested in buying.

Given that it would most likely be a significant financial investment and something I hadn't even thought about before, at first I wasn't too sure. After much discussion with my brother, who also has his own business, we decided to buy it outright

as partners. We spent most of November sending emails back and forth to Kasia about every aspect of the business, and on 1 December 2016 we bought it.

So what is [Globewalker](#) all about and what do we sell? Globewalker is a Melbourne-based company that sells outdoor clothing and gear, but more specifically we sell high-quality European-made active wear, thermals, outdoor-related socks, down sleeping bags and mountaineering gear. At the moment we stock three brands – Brubeck, Malachowski and Cumulus.

Our position and message within the outdoor clothing and gear market is fairly simple – we see the world differently and we resonate with the ordinary person who is going on or wants to go on extraordinary adventures. Further, we believe that our products have the ability to offer a valuable point of difference in today's market.

“... we see the world differently and we resonate with the ordinary person who is going on or wants to go on extraordinary adventures.”



At the base of Mt Ngauruhoe on the Tongariro Northern Circuit, New Zealand

To date, building the business has been a lot of hard work and a lot of fun at the same time. A couple of years ago something like this would have scared the hell out of me and I wouldn't have had the confidence to do it. And yet, I'm so calm about everything at the moment even though we are still running at a loss and will do for some time.

Like any challenge, what excites me most about this challenge is the opportunity to bring awareness and exposure, not only to Globewalker, but to the three brands that sit underneath.

“... what excites me most about this challenge is the opportunity to bring awareness and exposure ...”

Despite Globewalker existing for the better part of six years, all three brands are largely unknown in this country and that excites me to no end.

With all that in mind, at the end of the day, I'm still an outdoor enthusiast right down to the core and despite my life being absolutely turned on its head in the last six months, I wouldn't change any of it for the world.

Whether it be the blog, the MeetUp group or Globewalker, each facet of my outdoor life offers a unique satisfaction and they all motivate me to do more and to continue to challenge myself on a daily basis.

Blog and website links:



- [Globewalker](#)
- [Globewalker Facebook](#)
- [Globewalker Instagram](#)
- [The Hiking Society](#)
- [The Hiking Society Facebook](#)
- [The Hiking Society Instagram](#)
- [The Hiking Society MeetUp](#)
- [The Hiking Society NSW MeetUp](#)



Checking the map, MeetUp group, Grampians, Victoria



John Feeney, outdoor blogger of The Hiking Society and co-owner of Globewalker, is a Melbourne-based outdoor enthusiast. A father of two daughters, John also has a keen interest in social media marketing and is a full-time social media manager for a digital marketing agency in St.Kilda, Melbourne. Safety first and being adequately prepared for anything in the outdoors are the priorities for John when he ventures out. He is a fan of many of the popular day hikes in Victoria, but he believes that there are so many hidden day hike gems that don't get recognised nearly as much as the others do.



Precipitous Bluff from near Mt Victoria Cross, Southern Ranges, Tasmania
Stuart Bowling

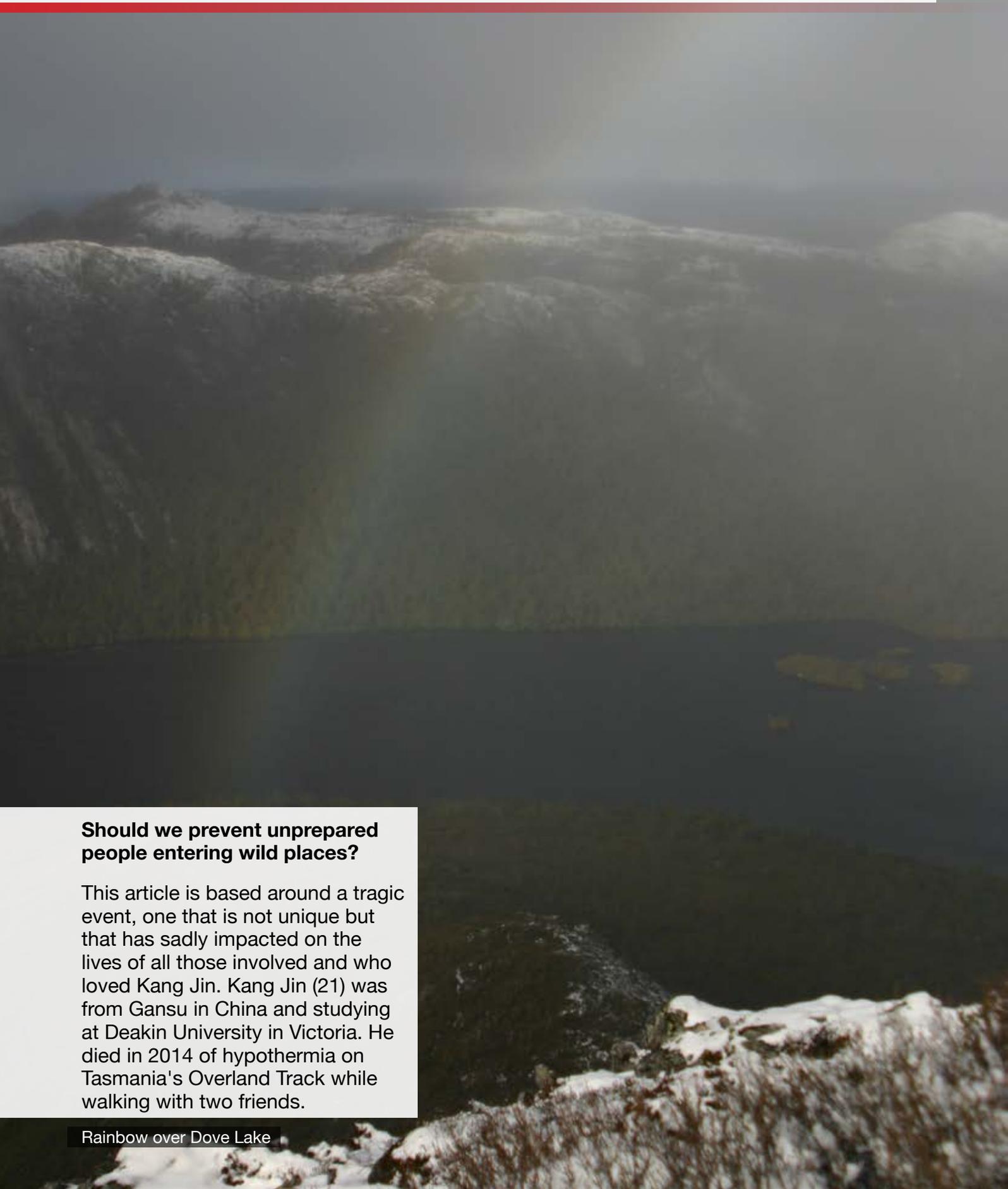
Should They Be Stopped?

Matt McClelland

Should we prevent unprepared people entering wild places?

This article is based around a tragic event, one that is not unique but that has sadly impacted on the lives of all those involved and who loved Kang Jin. Kang Jin (21) was from Gansu in China and studying at Deakin University in Victoria. He died in 2014 of hypothermia on Tasmania's Overland Track while walking with two friends.

Rainbow over Dove Lake



“I recommend that PWS ... prevent persons embarking on the Overland Track walk when they are observed to be inadequately prepared for the conditions such as to place the safety of themselves and others at risk.”
Olivia McTaggart, Coroner.

It is easy to point the finger and say that this was a clear run of errors and a death that could have been so easily avoided. However, I would like to take pause, sit back and think about what we can do better, primarily:

I hope that we can better understanding of how quickly things can go bad.

I hope we can appreciate the heroic efforts of other bushwalkers involved.

I hope we can better understand the issues that language and cultural barriers present.

I hope that we can come up with good ways to care for novice bushwalkers.

Let's start with a few quotes from the [Coroner's findings](#) to set the scene.

“In February 2014 Bojie Yang and her housemate, Lianguan Yu, decided to walk the full length of the Overland Track at Cradle Mountain. They invited Kang Jin. As described further, their preparation was inadequate for the walk.”

“On 20 February 2014, the weather conditions were very poor. It was cold, rainy and windy. The wind was increasing in strength, and was expected to further increase as the day went on. The weather was colder than normal for the month of February, and the conditions were challenging for walkers. At 11.45am the group approached the counter at the Visitor Centre and spoke to Mr Gregory Wall, the supervisor. Mr Wall noticed that the group were carrying 30 litre packs contrary to the common practice to carry a 60 litre pack when walking the Overland Track. The group were wearing light clothing and were asked by Mr Wall if they had a change of clothing, including waterproof pants. The group were informed the weather was going to get colder, and they nodded their heads that they understood”.

“Mr Wall asked the group if they had tents, to which Bojie Yang replied that she had a tent for three people. The group was asked if they had sleeping bags and if they were prepared for cold weather. Bojie Yang replied "yes" and Kang Jin and Lianguan Yu nodded their heads. Mr Wall was concerned that the group were not properly prepared and asked the same questions three times. He spent approximately 30 minutes with them before passing them over to Gail Oliver, a customer service officer at the Visitor Centre.”



Waterfall Valley Hut

“Kang Jin, Lianguan Yu and Bojie Yang were obviously ill-equipped for the walk. Their food supplies and clothing were inadequate. Kang Jin was wearing a thin spray jacket (purchased just prior to the walk at the Visitors Centre), a blue and black windcheater, a cotton shirt, a pair of tan trousers over boxer shorts, and open black sandals. His clothing was wet through to the skin at the time the rescue party reached him.”

The trio did not have enough experience to know what they did not know. They seem to underestimate how the weather will impact their bodies, gear and clothing. They seem to not appreciate the need for more appropriate clothing and footwear to protect them from the weather. There are little details about what else they were carrying, but it seems reasonable to assume that their food, cooking gear and shelter were also unsuitable for the conditions.

In the last five-ish years the number of people bushwalking in Australia [has nearly doubled](#). That's a lot more people out and exploring amazing places. At the same time

“The trio did not have enough experience to know what they did not know.”

we have access to an incredible amount of information online about walks, gear, waterproofs, reviews, gear lists, weather, bushwalking technology and much more.

I think there are two major things missing from this online experience.

1 Wisdom

In a world where the Bear Grylls-type experience is promoted as fun and adventurous, I suspect people lack the insight to distinguish between what looks like fun on television and what is actually a positive experience in real life. Seeing someone surviving in crazy situations on the small screen it's too easy for many people to assume that they can survive as well. There are many blogs and television shows that seem to be based on the idea of preparing to survive extremes or even benign wild areas rather than preparing to have an enjoyable and safe time with suitable gear, experience and fitness.

2 Promotion

Too much effort from parks agencies is spent in promoting the ultimate “experience” rather than equipping people for the journey. Somewhat ironically I think, the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) are better at



Overland Track near Ronny Creek

equipping people than most other agencies around Australia. Promotion should be more educational, setting reasonable expectations and providing the resources to help people be better equipped to undertake the walk.

We know that walks like the Overland Track attract people from around the world, so we need to ask questions about how we deal with language and cultural differences. Language differences are somewhat easy to deal with and are addressed in the Coroner's report; cultural differences are much harder.

One example of a cultural difference we see is with European tea houses. In parts of Europe (and China) you can go on many popular walks with the reasonable expectation to come across a tea house for lunch or overnight stay. If the weather turns there is shelter, warmth and food. I've met people near the top of Mount Kosciuszko looking for a nearby tea house - there are none. It's understandable that people come to Australia expecting one thing but not finding it. A challenge we have in Australia is to know what these expectations might be and pro-actively help people understand our unique environment.

Another example is the use of the terms "bad" or "cold" weather. While every region has "bad" and "cold" weather, what is bad weather in one part of the world is different to another and what gear and experience are needed to deal with those different conditions also varies. People may be used to high winds in warmer conditions. Another I have seen is that people used to very cold conditions in North America can struggle in Australian near-zero temperatures where snow and ice melt and make your clothes wet rather than just brushing off much colder snow.

“... what is bad weather in one part of the world is different to another ...”

I also do not want to suggest that this is a cultural issue alone; people come unstuck and die on bushwalks for many different reasons. I think that this cultural issue is not considered enough when promoting walks. I know I do not do enough to deal with it either.

Walks like the Overland Track are always going to be promoted with the big blue sky images, with beautiful people dancing along the track. The challenge is how to better communicate the real difficulty walks like this can present and how to better prepare. Following this specific incident, I think PWS are making some great moves to address many of these issues and better equip people for their walks. In fact I think PWS have been leading the way in pro-actively equipping and welcoming visitors to iconic walks for a long time.

“The challenge is how to better communicate the real challenges walks like this can present and how to better prepare.”

In no way do I wish to criticise the work of PWS or the Coroner in this case. I simply wish to explore the idea of doing things differently so we can all enjoy wild places more and more.

Is regulation the answer?

The main question I would like to raise is from the first recommendation from the Coroner in this case.

“I recommend that PWS give consideration to the availability and use of legislative powers, and consequent development of procedures, to prevent persons embarking on the Overland Track walk when they are observed to be inadequately prepared for the conditions such as to place the safety of themselves and others at risk.”

On the surface this seems like a good idea, especially in light of this party who were so clearly ill-prepared for the journey.

There are many challenges when giving staff the ability to ban walkers, mainly that it is so hard to make a reliable call if someone is adequately prepared for a specific journey. In favourable weather conditions, someone with excellent bushcraft skills can undertake a journey like this with very little gear. Equally, someone with enough money can buy a lot of gear at a bushwalking store, walking out with very fancy gear, but have no idea how to use it and come unstuck very quickly. Fitness, stamina and judgement may be low or nil for such people.

Preparedness is not a simple spectrum, with the well prepared at one end and poorly prepared at the other. If this was the case then we could draw a line in the spectrum and say this is the preparedness level required. Preparedness is a web with an infinite number of elements and levels. There is no place to draw a line.

Using general gut feeling and experience we could all fairly easily pick people who are very unprepared and those who are very well prepared. The challenge is with the masses in the middle where it is much harder to make a judgement call. If the party considered by this inquiry set off a few days later then they probably would have enjoyed the walk, perhaps eating other walker's leftovers, and with some cold nights.

A few years back I met a solo walker near the end of the Overland Track in mid-winter. He was walking in jeans, a cotton jumper and gum boots with very stinky nylon socks. He was the only other person we had seen for six days. He started the walk with two dozen hard boiled eggs and some tea. If I saw him at the start I would have advised him that he was very poorly equipped for the journey, but I met him on his second-last night and he seemed to be fit and well. Some people get away with bushwalking with very different gear from what I am comfortable with. If the snow was deeper, or the weather was colder it may have been very different, but I do not know.

“ Requiring land managers staff to make a call on who is and is not adequately equipped seems very troublesome to me.

Requiring land management staff to make a call on who is and is not adequately equipped seems very troublesome to me. Practically, it is very difficult to implement a policy on how to make the decision. There's a big difference between preventing someone undertaking a walk and suggesting that they change plans to something else. Policies have the trouble of drawing lines in the sand in very fuzzy areas. People can end up setting limits on specific ages, fitness, (dis)ability, specific equipment or formal training. It is much harder to make the decision in areas that are more likely to predict safety such as wisdom, experience and preparedness. Actually the thing is, there is very little research I can find that gives us any guidance on what attributes do actually predict safe (and enjoyable) journeys.

Part of the Coroner's role is to make recommendations that will reduce the chance of a similar death in the future. I greatly respect the role of Coroners and the difficult job they have.

We readily accept licensing and bans when we think about cars. Licensing and other controls exist for recreational pursuits such as paragliding, boating, fishing, scuba diving and hunting. I struggle to make an argument where I can show that bushwalking is fundamentally different from those activities. So I can understand why the Coroner made this recommendation. At the same time I really struggle with the idea of formal restrictions deciding who can and can't do a specific bushwalk.

“ He started the walk with two dozen hard boiled eggs and some tea.



Old Waterfall Valley Hut

My thesis is that by banning people who lack wisdom, experience or specific equipment from undertaking a specific walk will not solve the problem - they will still lack the wisdom, experience and equipment. They may still undertake the walk illegally or simply go to a more remote area where there is no policing and less support, putting them at much greater risk.

I wish I had easy answers to make bushwalking safer and more accessible to newcomers. If land managers are given the authority to prevent visitors undertaking a walk because of safety concerns there some likely notable advantages, risks and unintended consequences.

“ We need to better help people new to bushwalking ...

Advantages of allowing land managers to stop people walking

- Land managers will need to develop clear policies and information around what it means to be prepared and not prepared. If communicated it will potentially allow visitors to be better prepared.
- Allow land managers to reduce the chance of obviously preventable deaths on specific tracks.
- Give the majority of walkers a sense that they are well enough prepared before setting off.

Risks of allowing land managers to stop people walking

- Visitors who are refused access to the track at the start of the walk have already travelled and in their minds are ready to walk. A reasonable number are likely to consider walking in a more remote area to avoid being prevented from walking. As they are likely to walk in a more remote nearby area, with less chance of assistance or rescue, they are likely to be at a greater risk of harm.
- Liability risk to land managers. Once it is established that land managers have the authority and responsibility to prevent people from participating then it suggests they also have a greater duty of care than

previously. If visitors suffer a loss due to being ill- prepared then they have an argument that the land manager should have prevented them undertaking the walk.

- With the potential increased risk of liability come a potential over extension of what it means to be well prepared. Specific gear such as PLBs and training such as first aid may in time become compulsory for participants.
- Risk posed to people is context specific, impacted greatly by weather, duration, experience and so on. The decision the land manager needs to make will either need to be fixed on the worst case scenario for these conditions (to be consistent with all visitors) or vary daily requiring a great deal of judgement. On longer walks like the OLT, it is likely to be based on a probable worst case scenario to allow for weather not yet forecast. In any case, the mountains make their own weather.
- Potential impact of people with a disability. Land managers may end up discriminating against people with physical or intellectual disabilities or people with mental health issues. We have seen this happen with laws around alcohol consumption as it becomes very difficult to know where to draw the line.

Other options

We need need to better understand how to predict a safe journey and how to better equip people for that. I would like to see greater effort spent nationally addressing these knowledge and cultural gaps. We need to better help people new to bushwalking in any region to understand what they don't know and the risks they put themselves (and others) under - and how to address it. This is different from just telling people what they need to bring and do; it is also helping set reasonable expectations of the overall experience.

“ ... banning people who lack wisdom, experience or specific equipment from undertaking a specific walk will not solve the problem - they will still lack the wisdom, experience and equipment.

My gut feeling is that as bushwalkers we need to think and talk about this, before rules are imposed. We are better off if we pro-actively address these issues, to better understand and improve our pursuit. We need to welcome newcomers in a way that sets them up for a long life of enjoying bushwalking. We need to discourage policies that segment the community into those who can and can't walk. We should encourage policies and systems that focus on building wisdom in the community about when to walk and how to prepare. We also need to make it easy for people who are not equipped to either become equipped or easily find a good and safer alternative experiences.

I'm struggling with how as a bushwalking community we deal with:

- Wise decision making and dignity of risk;
- Getting people excited and equipping them well;
- Encourage adventure and discourage stupidity;
- Effective promotion and setting reasonable expectations;
- Learning through structure and learning through trial and error;
- The responsibility of land managers and responsibility of visitors; and
- How to encourage interesting evidence-based bushwalking education and discourage the sharing of harmful clickbait articles.

I'm sorry I have no solid answers for this, but I hope it has raised some interesting and helpful questions. In the process of writing this article it has become clear to me that there is a lot I do not know about bushwalking. In future articles we will dive more deeply into the idea of what makes a bushwalker safer. To start this process Stephen and I are starting to look through more Coroner's reports and hopefully identify common trends on what has made those areas less safe. So keep tuned.

“... policies and systems that focus on building wisdom in the community about when to walk and how to prepare.”

I encourage you to read the [full report](#) from the coroner. It is a sad reminder of the impact this has on family, friends and bystanders. It is well worth reading the heroic efforts of other bushwalkers willing to stand up and help. I would like to finish with the wise words of the Coroner:

“... make it easy for people who are not equipped to either become equipped or easily find a good and safer alternative experience.”

“The sad death of Kang Jin serves as a reminder to persons contemplating the Overland Track walk of the need to understand the demands of the walk, to be physically and psychologically prepared and to have appropriate clothing and equipment.”

Stay safe.





Marions Lookout, looking over Dove Lake

The Truth About Spider Bites

Ronelle Welton and Bill Nimorakiotakis



Recent news reports that a man had both his legs amputated after being bitten by a [white-tailed spider](#) have again cast this relatively harmless spider in a negative light. Experts have since said amputations [may have been wrongly blamed](#) on a spider bite, and authorities now consider a [bacterial infection](#) to be responsible for the man's injuries. Despite this, the damage to the largely harmless white-tail may have been done.

The venom from the white-tailed spider is [listed as non-lethal](#). It has not been shown to cause necrotic ulcers, which could result in the need for amputation. And there has never been any clear evidence necrotising arachnidism – the name given to a syndrome where the skin blisters and ulcerates following spider bites – has been seen in [Australia](#).

There is currently no clinical test to determine if you have been bitten by a spider. And there is no blood or swab test that can be performed to positively identify what spider it is if a bite is suspected. Whether it is a bite from a spider or another insect, [the management is the same](#) – most will get better without any medical treatment.

Spiders in Australia

The majority of spiders in Australia are voracious predators of insects. For the most part, they play a useful role in lowering insect numbers.

The venom transmitted through [bites](#) of some Australian spiders can cause harm to humans and even be life-threatening. The better known of these are the redback spider (*Latrodectus hasselti*), and the funnel-web spiders (genera *Atrax* and *Hadronyche*). Antivenom is available for both spiders.

Redback spider venom can cause a lot of pain. Advice would be to go to hospital if pain lasts for longer than a few hours and simple pain relief is not helping. Funnel-web spider venom can cause local swelling in addition to increasing heartbeat, salivation, muscle spasms and [respiratory distress](#) (trouble breathing).

Without appropriate first aid, quick access to hospital and antivenom, these bites can be lethal. For the “big black hairy” funnel-webs, appropriate first aid needs to be applied and it is advisable to call 000.

Other spiders that have concerning bites include the trapdoor, whistling, sac, ground, orb

and huntsman spiders. These may cause milder symptoms such as headache, swelling and pain, which does not last for a long time.

“ There is currently no clinical test to determine if you have been bitten by a spider.

The white-tailed spider

White-tailed spiders (*Lampona* sp.) can be recognised by their cylindrical body shape and a white or grey spot on the end of their abdomen. They are found in eastern and most southern areas of Australia and New Zealand.



The redback spider is considered one of the most venomous to humans in Australia
Graibeard

These spiders are active hunters, preying on other types of spiders and insects. They may transiently roam inside houses, especially in warmer weather, where they may be found in bedding or clothing that has been left on the floor.

One study of over 70 spider bite cases in which white-tailed spiders were identified showed patients experienced only a **mild localised reaction**, such as swelling, local pain or headache. To date clinical research has not been able to associate tissue loss with the venom of these spider bites.

Flesh-eating bacteria

The man at the centre of the recent story linking amputations to a white-tail spider bite was **said to have** a “flesh eating” infection. But there is a very **low probability of an association** between spiders and **necrotising fasciitis** (commonly known as flesh-eating disease).

Of course, any injury that causes a break in our skin leaves the capacity for bacteria to enter our body. Therefore be sure to keep an injury area clean. Questions have been raised as to the possibility of a **spider introducing infections**, but again, despite it being theoretically possible, it is unlikely.

Contributing factors to infection are if people have conditions such as diabetes or take medications, such as steroids like prednisolone, that lessen the body’s ability to fight infection.

How to prevent spider bite

- Leave them alone.
- Wear gloves if gardening.
- Humanely remove spiders from your home and limit hiding spaces where possible inside the home.
- Knock out shoes before putting them on; these are nice quiet homes for spiders.

For **first aid** after a spider bite, please see the **Australian guidelines**. Many bites don’t result in envenoming and death is very **rare**, so it is important to remain calm. But seek medical attention if there are concerning symptoms such as those described above: difficulty breathing, increased heartbeat and pain lasting longer than an hour.



Ronelle Welton

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The article was first published in **The conversation** (an independent source of news and views, sourced from the academic and research community and delivered direct to the public) on 31 January 2016.



White-tailed spider
fir0002 | flagstaffotos.com.au

In the News

Backpackers with a mission

Three friends who travelled thousands of miles across the American Hiking trails [cleaning up trash](#) that they found along the way have been inspiring people all over the world with their story. Follow their progress of Packing It Out at packingitout.blogspot.co.uk



A new campground in Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park Western Australia

Leeuwin-Naturaliste NP will have a [new campsite](#) completed by mid-2017. It will deliver 45 individual camp sites and two group camping areas. The Cape to Cape Walk goes through this area which will offer bushwalkers a perfect place to stay overnight.

Mount Everest rock face collapses

According to mountaineers the Hillary Step, a near-vertical rock face near the summit of Mount Everest named after Sir Edmund Hillary, [has collapsed](#) supposedly because of the damage caused by the 7.8-magnitude earthquake which struck in Nepal in 2015.

A 137-mile-long Sinai Trail in Egypt

It's neither the longest or the hardest of the world's long-distance routes but hiking a landscape steeped in history, [guided by Bedouin](#) whose lives are intertwined with the land, is definitely one of the most rewarding.

Sky-walk above the Mount Buffalo Gorge, Victoria

The [proposed sky-walk](#) would be similar to the Grand Canyon Skywalk in the United States.



Classic Walks, Meals and Drinks

Sonya Muhlsimmer



The Great North Walk was opened for the Bicentennial in 1998. It is a classic walk that spans over 250 kilometres from Sydney to Newcastle. I've done in dribs and drabs over my many years of bushwalking, and I've never got a chance to actually complete the walk in its full glory from start to end as a through walk.

However, I did have a good crack of it, well at least a recent four day walk. I started at Hunters Hill, then wandered through the Lane Cove National Park to Thornleigh, down the steep track into Galston Gorge, then up through to Berowra Creek and all the way to Cowan. The track can be easily accessed from many starting points near public transport, making this walk ideal to do over a few weekends or many day trips. The scenery and bush are quite diverse through this relatively small section of the walk I did, so far I highly recommend it. Well, um except for the part when you walk up the steep hill with an extra five kilograms of water as there is no water available at the campsite ... Regardless, I have started planning the next leg of the journey. So, for a classic walk I can suggest a classic meal and a classic drink to enjoy when you are winding down for the night after an enjoyable day of bushwalking and beautiful scenery.

Pizza

Now who does not love Pizza? It is such a diverse meal as you can have so many different toppings. And really, who can beat a fresh, crusty base? Just thinking about it is making me hungry. While the recipe can be a little bit fiddly, overall it is pretty easy to make. And after a few day's walking, to bite into a freshly made pizza, well it is something else.

At home preparation

Label the bags and place all ingredients into the allocated bags. Cut two pieces of baking paper to fit the bottom of the pan and place with the bags. Copy or print out Method at camp and keep together with the bags.

Method in camp

Place the contents of Bag 1 (flour mix) into a bowl, then add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water slowly, stirring together to make a dough. Knead the dough in the bowl for a few minutes until it comes together to resemble a smooth elastic dough, then leave to sit for about 10 minutes. For the vegetarian option soak the mushrooms (Bag 3) in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water for 10 minutes while you are waiting for the dough. When ready, place a piece of greaseproof paper on a pan, spread the dough out as much as you need to cover the paper. Place on a low heat and cook on one side for 2 minutes until the dough sets on the bottom. Take the pan off the heat, place the spare baking paper over the upper side of the base and flip the dough over. Remove the paper over the top (the side that was on the pan) and spread the tomato paste over the dough. Spread the contents of Bag 2 (parmesan and herb mix), sun dried tomato and the salami (or mushrooms for the vegetarian option) over the base, making sure that the mushrooms are fully rehydrated before adding them. Or even add a few slices of cheese from your ration. Put the pan back on the heat, cover with a lid and cook for about 5 to 6 minutes then enjoy.



Bag 1 (flour mix)

Plain flour	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	130 grams
Raw sugar	1 tsp	5 grams
Dry yeast	1 tsp	4 grams
Salt, pepper	few pinches	

Bag 2 (parmesan mix)

Grated parmesan	$1\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp	18 grams
Real bacon bits	1 Tbsp	11 grams
Italian herb mix	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp	1 gram
Ground chilli	few pinches	

Keep separate

Sun dried tomatoes	2 each	10 grams
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Salami	8 thin slices	15 grams
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Tomato paste		25 grams
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Water - $\frac{1}{3}$ cup

Bag 3 (Vegetarian option)

Dried mushrooms	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	4 grams
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Water - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup for soaking

Mayan Hot Chocolate

The Mayans started drinking chocolate beverages over 2000 years ago, and apparently drank up to 30 cups a day. Can you believe that ... In fact the Mayans loved their hot chocolate drink so much they called the cocoa tree “Food of the Gods”. It was considered sacred and used in religious ceremonies, financial transactions, marriages and funerals. Then the Aztecs cottoned on to this drink, then Spaniards and soon after, it spread across the globe. Now anyone anywhere can experience how good this beverage was (and still is). Oh by the way, you can have it hot or cold, or just with cinnamon if you don’t want the chilli and even with a pinch of pepper, and orange peel or cloves. Talk about classic! To find the Mayan Cacao powder, I recommend going to your local health food shop. Believe me, it is worth it.

At home preparation

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

Method at camp

Put the contents of the bag in a cup and a small amount of water (about 2 Tbsps), mix to make a smooth paste. Bring the water to a boil, add to the cup and stir through. Or just add cold water and stir through. Enjoy.



Bag 1

Milk powder	2 Tbsps	20 grams
Coconut milk powder	2 Tbsps	20 grams
Mayan cacao powder	1 Tbsp	7 grams
Vanilla sugar	1 tsp	4 grams
Ground chilli		few pinches
Ground cinnamon		few pinches

Water - 1 cup



To read more about the author or find more delicious recipes check xtremegourmet.com



Bunyeroo Gorge (Flinders Ranges)
Ian Smith



Longer and Wilder

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- > Bibbulmun Track
- > Skinners
- > Why Do We Hike?

A World of Walking

- > South West Tasmania Traverse
- > Three Capes Track
- > Australian Hiker
- > Gaiters - a few advantages

Summer Swelter

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

Walking Wisely

- > Six Foot Track
- > Melaleuca log book
- > Choosing a GPS
- > Water requirements



Bushwalking Conservation

- > AAWT
- > High horses
- > Another shot at the GNW

Winter Walking

- > Fig Tree Point
- > Gear freak - footwear
- > 10 Tips for Snowshoeing

Best of NSW

- > Best walks of NSW
- > Wolgan Gorge adventure
- > S Shoalhaven Coast walk

Best of VIC

- > Best walks of Victoria
- > Wilsons Prom
- > Aarn Pack review

Best of TAS

- > Best walks of Tasmania
- > Overland Track
- > Rescue at Cradle



Best of SA

- > Best walks of SA
- > Bungy Pump poles

Best of WA

- > WA - a hike for everyone
- > Forests and logging

Best of NT

- > Best walks of NT
- > Larapinta track

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- > Best walks in Queensland
- > Walking with insects

Best of ACT

- > ACT's best walks
- > Gardens of Stone



Keep Your Cool

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- > Sports drink

Best of Australia

- > Best walks in Australia
- > Bushwalking blog

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- > Dehydrating food
- > Colong wilderness walk

Winter Edition

- > 2 weeks in Fiordland
- > Hypothermia

Autumn Edition

- > Aboriginal rock art
- > Bushwalking Tracks

Lifetime of Walking

- > What is BYO?
- > Are you in a Club?