

Bushwalk Australia



COVID Contingencies

Volume 42, August 2020

Bushwalk Australia Magazine
An electronic magazine for
<http://bushwalk.com>
Volume 42, August 2020

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



Andy Oates and Bernie Mills on Mount Massif during a five day Du Cane traverse.
Rod Lawlor

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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 October 2020 edition is 31 August 2020.

Warning

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

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

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a food group



From the Editor

Hi all

I hope this edition finds you safe and well. We are now well into the second half of 2020 and what a ride it has been so far. As I write this, Melbourne is back in lockdown, state borders are closing again and we are all wishing we lived in Tasmania, except for those lucky ones that already do.

I have really enjoyed this edition. Big thanks to Rod for the cover shot, what an adventure. When you open this edition up, Jules will guide you through the much underestimated, but awesome Barrington Tops NP in NSW. Tracey will take you from Dove Lake to the summit of Mount Emmett and Rob will loop around the rugged South West Cape of Tassie. Yvonne reflects on the craziness that has been 2020 whilst the Tasmanian National Parks Association has an update on the fight to keep Lake Malbena wild. We get a bit nerdy as well and look for what makes a good sign out bush then celebrate with chocolate as Sonya helps us better appreciate the value and yumminess of our favourite food.

I love how as a community we share our adventures, stories, thoughts and images through this magazine. If you have something you would like to share, please reach out.

Happy walking
Matt :)



Matt McClelland (aka Wildwalks)
matt@bushwalk.com



Declaration

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

In the News

Lost on Victoria's Mount Disappointment

A teenager spent two nights in near-freezing conditions lost in the Victorian bush and survived.

Why bushwalkers react like they do when lost in bush

Professor Kenneth Hill explained why those wandering forests and wildlands react the way they do.

Summer bushfires exposed Indigenous artefacts

Black Summer fires may have great consequences on Aboriginal drawings on rock shelters, rock platforms, caves and walls.

A series of incidents after coronavirus bans eased in Tasmania

The Helicopter rescue team are telling people to go bush better prepared.

The critically endangered nightcap oak survived bushfires

After six months, red shoots are sprouting from the burnt stumps of burnt nightcap oaks.

Quicksand on Tasmania's west coast

Moving of quicksand affected by different wind, tide and sea conditions makes this part of Tasmania a dangerous place.

Climber Macciza "Macca" Macpherson's fall in Blue Mountains

With 30 years of experience in climbing the half a minute fall was almost fatal.



Barrington Tops

Jules Cook

This is a trip that is local and I do regularly enough, so it's something I wouldn't feel compelled to typically write a trip report on. However, I thought with the world shrinking due to COVID-19 and the fact that I encountered two other parties up there who had travelled some distance to walk as their very first "eased restrictions adventure" that it would be worthwhile sharing.

Looking across Edwards Swamp
All pictures by Jules Cook

Barrington Tops National Park is located about an hour's drive northish from Newcastle, on the NSW north coast. The national park has significant variation in altitude, near sea level to 1500 metres. At lower levels the rainforests are part of the [Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage Area](#). My walk was from Lagoon Pinch at 685 metres to Careys Peak at 1544 metres via the Corker Trail, where the bulk of the gain in elevation is achieved in the first 8.5 kilometres of the Track. Day two was a meandering loop walk on Edwards Swamp Trail and Aeroplane Hill Trail before heading back down the Corker Trail.

The weather forecast was pretty dismal, with 80 km/h winds predicted. The temperatures were predicted to dip sub-zero and there was an excellent chance of snow. I had a few days off and was keen to be in my tent again after bushfires and then COVID-19 putting a stop to anything other than day walks. I deliberated over my gear choices, packed, unpacked and packed again and then added in a few redundancies should it all go to poo for me up there. The second

day I was to be away was looking not as foul as the first, so I wrote a detailed trip plan with my two options to give to my husband, who also watches me from home via the Inreach mapping page. I elected to take the XMid tent over my solid interior Marmot tent as I felt that although a "colder" tent with the mesh sides, the XMid was the more storm-worthy of the two and had withstood some crazy winds in Victoria last year.

Lagoon Pinch carpark to Careys Peak via the Corker Trail

I got to Lagoon Pinch carpark and was surprised to see another car there, then as I was lugging my pack on, another turned up with three guys about my age from the ACT who were originally planning on going up overnight but decided to day walk due to the weather. I went ahead of them and powered up the Corker. Near the turn off to Selby Alley Hut I encountered two other walkers, who were wearing only light cotton hoodies and had a very small daypack shared between the two of them. I did worry that they didn't seem to be well prepared. It was sunny but extremely cold and windy at that moment ...



Camp for the night, Careys Peak

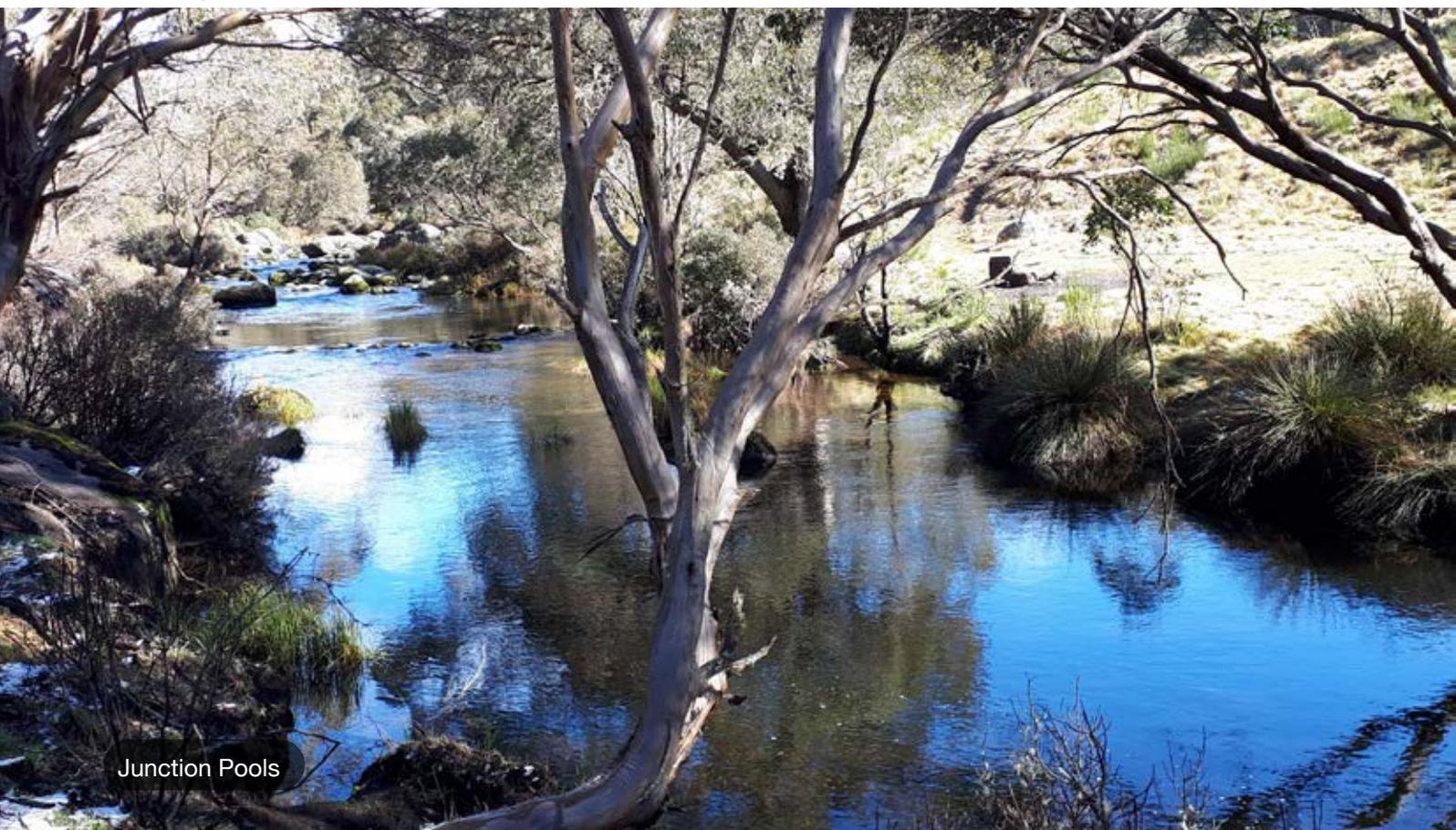
By the time I got to the junction of the Link and Corker Trail the weather had rolled in and snow and ice were wailing down. It was about lunch time, so I made for the dunny at Wombat Creek, where I settled in to have a lovely lunch and a hot coffee. Classy. I decided to go with my other plan, which was not to walk very far the first day, deciding that it was better to bunker down in my tent. I refilled my water at Wombat Creek and potted on up to Careys Peak, passing the three guys I had seen in the carpark near the junction of trails that lead to Careys Peak or Black Swamp.

Now here I will add something about being a solo female. I am happy to walk on my own and accept that in terms of axe-murderers I am more likely to get in strife walking to my car in a carpark. But if encountering a group of males who are asking what my plans are, where I am overnighing etc, I can be very cagey and noncommittal. I am sure these guys were nice and just interested, but telling them my plans was not something I wanted to do. I would have appeared defensive, socially awkward and seemed to have an ill prepared plan as I was purposefully vague, yet in reality I had a very clear plan which those at home were aware of- I just didn't want to share it with a group of men in the middle of nowhere. Oh and I am typically not socially awkward.

The direction that the wind was blowing meant that the little saddle upon which the primitive hut stands was not too exposed at all in the scheme of things and there is a nice clearing where I felt confident that no snow gum would land on me. I whacked the XMid up, orientating it to maximise its chance of still being standing in the morning, changed out of my walking clothes and settled into a nice afternoon of reading, drinking port and eating a metric tonne of fruit and nut cheese.

The weather continued to rage and the snow continued to fall. I was all warm and cosy and had enough mobile reception that my husband sent me a pic of him, the kids and the dogs all lounging by the fire at home. Cheeky!

The tent performed beautifully and I only had to do one adjustment as the ridge had got a touch of slack in it and the particularly big gusts would lift it enough that my trekking pole handle (I go tip down with it) would slip from position. I contemplated going outside and adjusting the guys, but opted to fix it from the comfort of my sleeping bag and just whack my trekking pole 2 cm higher on that side which re-tensioned everything and had no further issues. I slept well other than waking at midnight and needing to peel a layer off as I was too hot.



Junction Pools

Careys Peak to Lagoon Pinch

I woke to a clear morning, with the temperature definitely warmer than the previous day and the icy snow that was laying around told me as much. I had a leisurely brekky and wandered to the lookout, then headed off along the Barrington Trail, turning off onto the Edwards Swamp Trail to go out toward Junction Pools. I hadn't realised just how far the bushfires had reached on the plateau. Within 1.5-2 kilometres of Careys Peak I started seeing signs of the fire, the charred trees such a contrast with the white of the snow. I crossed the many streams and rivers on Edwards Swamp Trail and loved seeing the beautiful alpine swamps. I saw plenty of kangaroos and signs of wombats, but the only animals I came close to was a group of wild pigs, the boar was **huge**, thankfully moving off when I whacked my trekking poles together, but I had been eyeing off nearby trees I could scale in case they didn't take my hint.

Just before crossing the Barrington River, I encountered a large mob of feral horses. Seeing them is always a mixed bag for me.

In the main instance I am angry and sad that they are damaging the national park yet if I am honest, a tiny bit inside me finds joy and wonder to encounter them. I blame Tom Burlinson and *The Man From Snowy River* for my somewhat shameful flicker of excitement at seeing them.

Arriving at Junction Pools, I descended the river bank and decided to cross at what in retrospect, was a bad spot. Although wider, it looked as if I could get across on rocks and avoid any wading. I got two thirds of the way across and realised my legs are not as long as I thought and then had to sit on a rock and better plan out my crossing. It was a very pretty spot to ponder my error though, with snow still on the rocks and gorgeous surrounds.

After my crossing I headed along the Aeroplane Hill Track, which was not overly attractive since the fire meant that the trail had been made wider for vehicle access presumably and there were many burnt and fallen trees. It was churned up and was equal parts like walking on a 7-Eleven slushie



where the icy snow persisted or shoe-sucking mud in the other sections.

I had planned on eating lunch at Black Swamp and had just started applying a ridiculous amount of vegemite to my wraps when I saw two other walkers coming down the trail from the opposite direction. We exchanged greetings and they asked if I would mind if they sat and joined me for lunch. These gentlemen were walkers, just out there doing what I was and I felt totally at ease with them. As flaky as it sounds, so much of social interaction in these situations is on “gut feeling” for me.

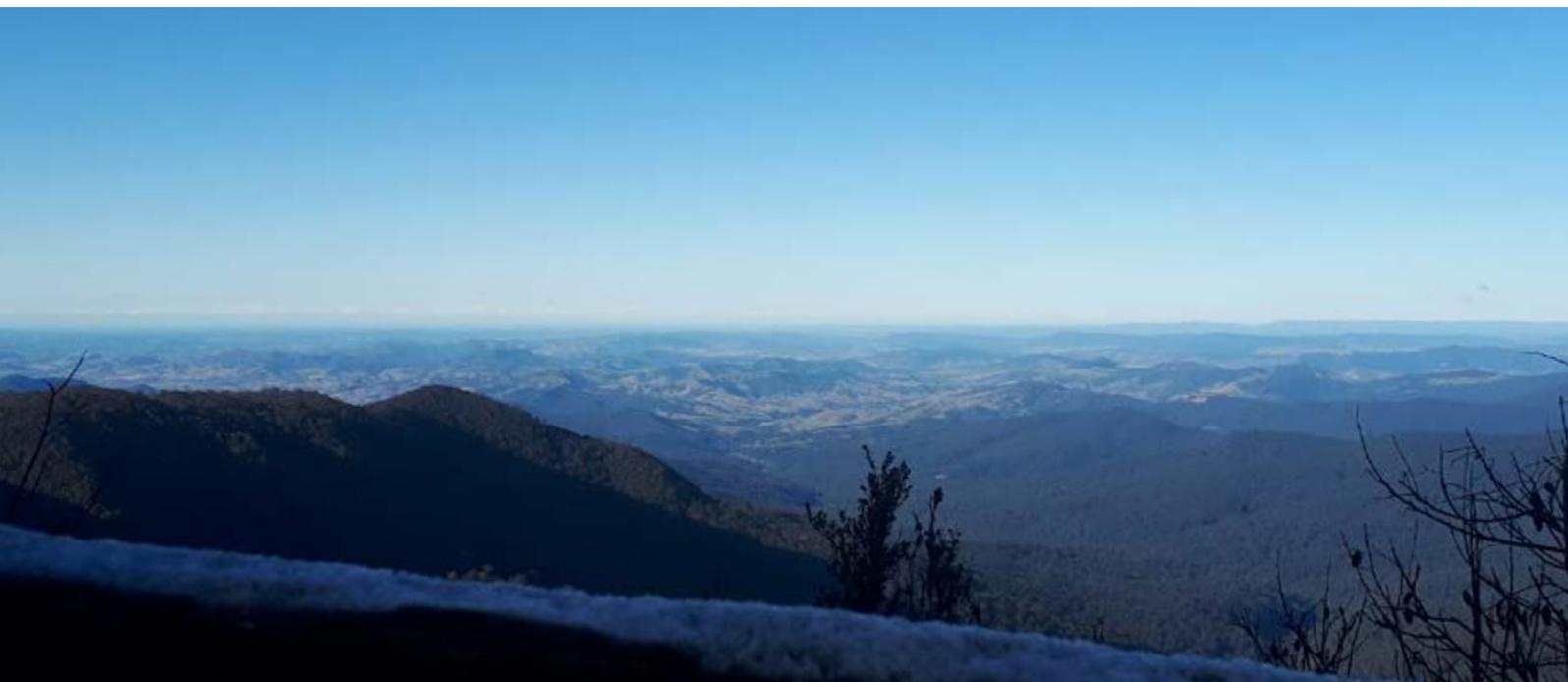
We had a lovely chat and I learned they were from the North Coast and had overnighted the night before at Wombat Creek, being tent-bound from the early afternoon as I had. They had been to Careys Peak that morning and had seen the square in the snow of where my tent had been and had wondered who it had been. They had a further two nights planned and we exchanged info about routes and spots to camp. They were really nice guys. It was one of those wonderful, chance meetings that we happened to converge in the same spot at the same time. We bid each other farewell as they headed off to Junction Pools.

Not much more to say, except that I fairly flew down the Corker from there, with thoughts of chicken, chips and gravy on my mind.

It was a beaut two days away. Although local to me, I looked at the area and this trip with a new wonder and joy, recognising it for the privilege that it really is.



Jules is from the Hunter Valley, NSW and is a mother, grandmother and midwife. In her spare time she enjoys bushwalking, kayaking with her family, annoying her husband with attempted conversations about the merits of various outdoor equipment, running slowly and cycling with her “gang”, having been made honorary member of the local Prostrate Peloton. Jules appreciates the principles of lightening a pack for carrying comfort, except when it comes to coffee, where she would be happy to carry a commercial coffee machine on her head than go without her tri-daily intake of quality caffeine.



Careys Peak lookout. If you squint you can see the ocean. It's quite special to have your feet in the snow yet see distant sand dunes

Overland Track App

This app is to help you plan and prepare for the Overland Track in Tasmania, and then navigate this safely and enjoyably.

You will find detailed packing lists, information on each day of walking, itineraries, yummy recipes, a guide to flora, fauna, geology and travel planning, first aid and much much more. The app has a navigation section with topographic maps that will work offline, photos, terrain profiles, track notes and weather forecasts.

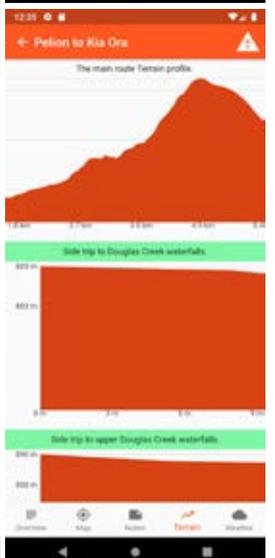
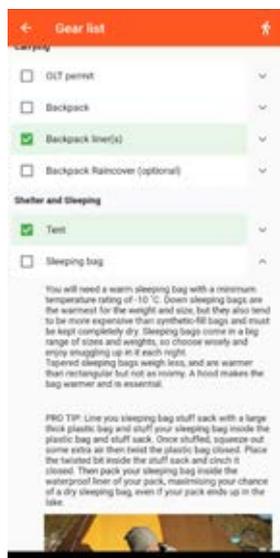
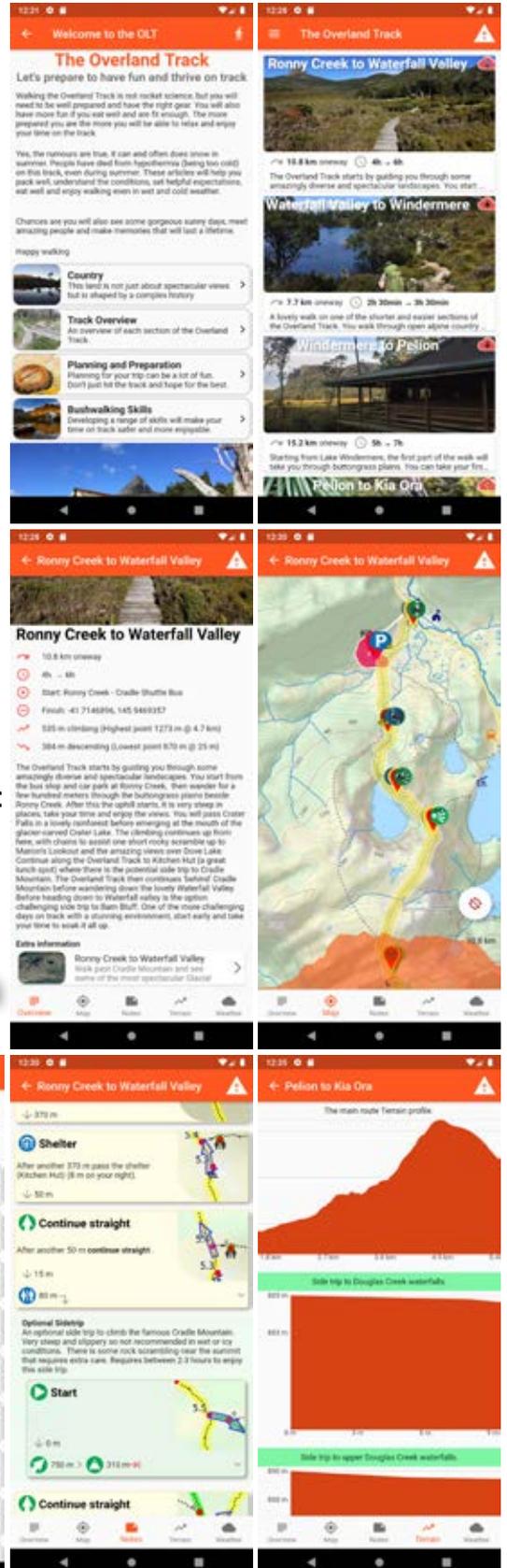
Think of this as the ultimate reference for the Overland Track, a happy marriage between a GPS and a bushwalking guide book.

Each section of the walk has an overview and a moving map (download the map tiles for offline use before hitting the track).

Information on bushwalking skills and equipment also applies to other parts of Australia to help you build your bushwalking skills before getting on track.

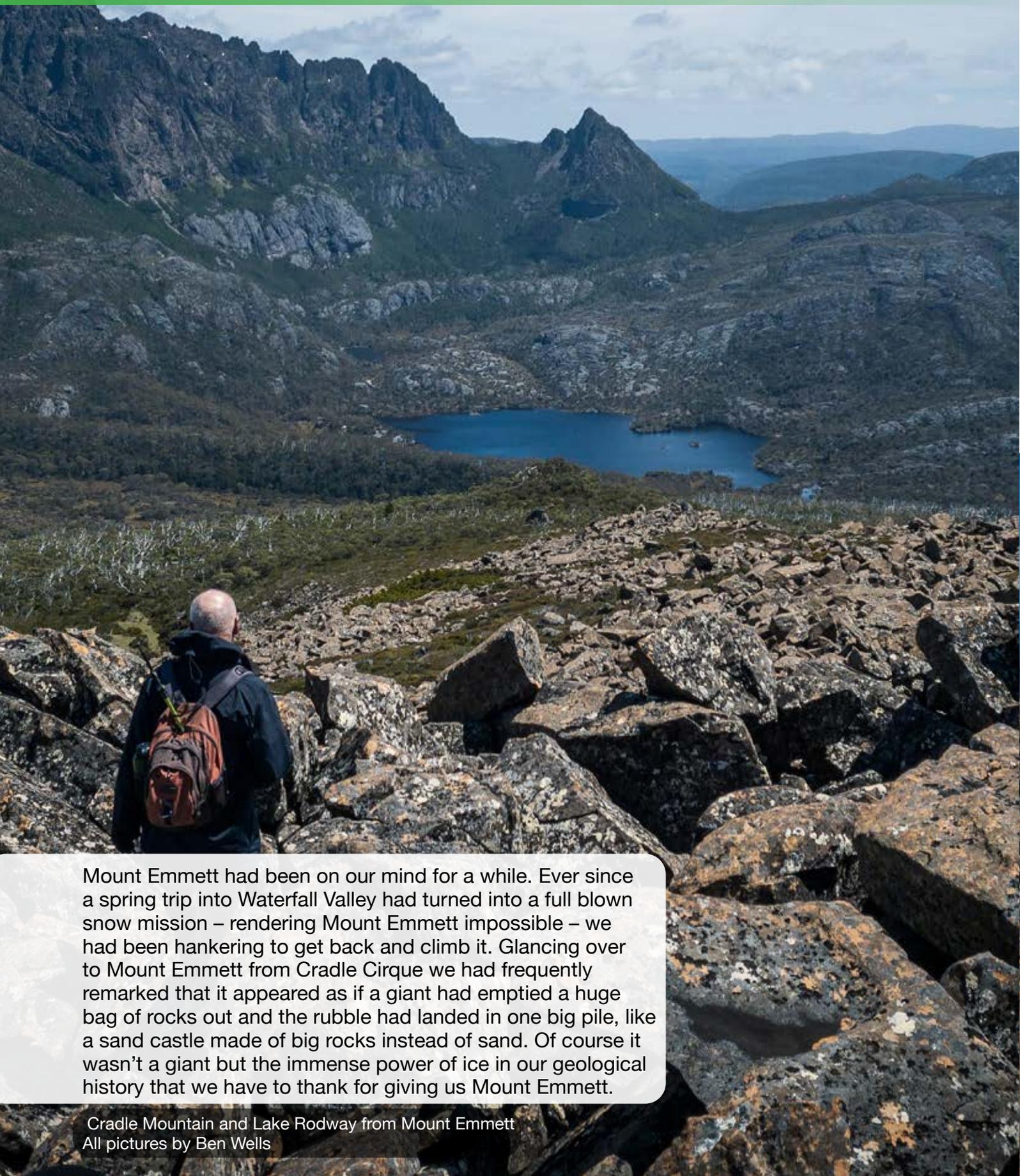
This app was made to help you get the most out of your time on the Overland Track, and is designed for all people: those new to bushwalking, hiking or tramping up to seasoned walkers.

More information at www.overlandtrack.com



Mount Emmett

Tracey Orr



Mount Emmett had been on our mind for a while. Ever since a spring trip into Waterfall Valley had turned into a full blown snow mission – rendering Mount Emmett impossible – we had been hankering to get back and climb it. Glancing over to Mount Emmett from Cradle Cirque we had frequently remarked that it appeared as if a giant had emptied a huge bag of rocks out and the rubble had landed in one big pile, like a sand castle made of big rocks instead of sand. Of course it wasn't a giant but the immense power of ice in our geological history that we have to thank for giving us Mount Emmett.

Cradle Mountain and Lake Rodway from Mount Emmett
All pictures by Ben Wells

Location	Near Cradle Mountain, Tasmania
Date	5 January 2020
Summit	1410 metres
Distance	About 23 kilometres return from Dove Lake car park.
Time	10 hours including lunch and numerous photo stops.
Difficulty	The Abels book classifies Mount Emmett as a “hard” day walk. While it is a long day and does involve considerable scree, we would classify this Abel as moderate at worst, definitely not hard, just long.
Route	The Overland Track (OLT) to the Lake Rodway junction, then off-track with obvious pads for much of the way to the final scree approach.

The Launceston Walking Club (LWC) had Mount Emmett on its latest walking program and we were keen to walk with them again.

They were going to enjoy a night’s camping at Little Plateau before making an ascent of Mount Emmett the following day. We had prior commitments and as such would not be able to join them for the night but instead arranged to meet them at 7:30 am near Kitchen Hut on the OLT.

We had our good friend and fellow Abel bagger Lynnda to keep us company and the three of us set off bright and early from the Dove Lake car park just as dawn was breaking. The morning was crisp and a heavy mist was settling so we stopped briefly at Kitchen Hut to layer on our wet weathers, preventing any dampness creeping through and chilling us. Even with a clothing change stop we made fast time to the LWC meeting spot.

“... their collective wealth of knowledge on everything bushwalking is amazing ...”

We love walking with the LWC because their collective wealth of knowledge on everything bushwalking is amazing and they generously share it. Steve, our leader, had a good plan for the day as he had attempted



Big rocks. Really big rocks at times. Barn Bluff is on the horizon

Mount Emmett twice, with inclement weather turning him back both times. It was such a pleasure to wander the OLT with them and listen to the history of the national park and have them point out areas they had been to that are not regularly visited. The day before they had climbed Fury Divide Prospect as the weather had been too bad for Barn Bluff. Our party of nine happy bushwalkers continued along the OLT until we reached the junction of the Lake Rodway track.

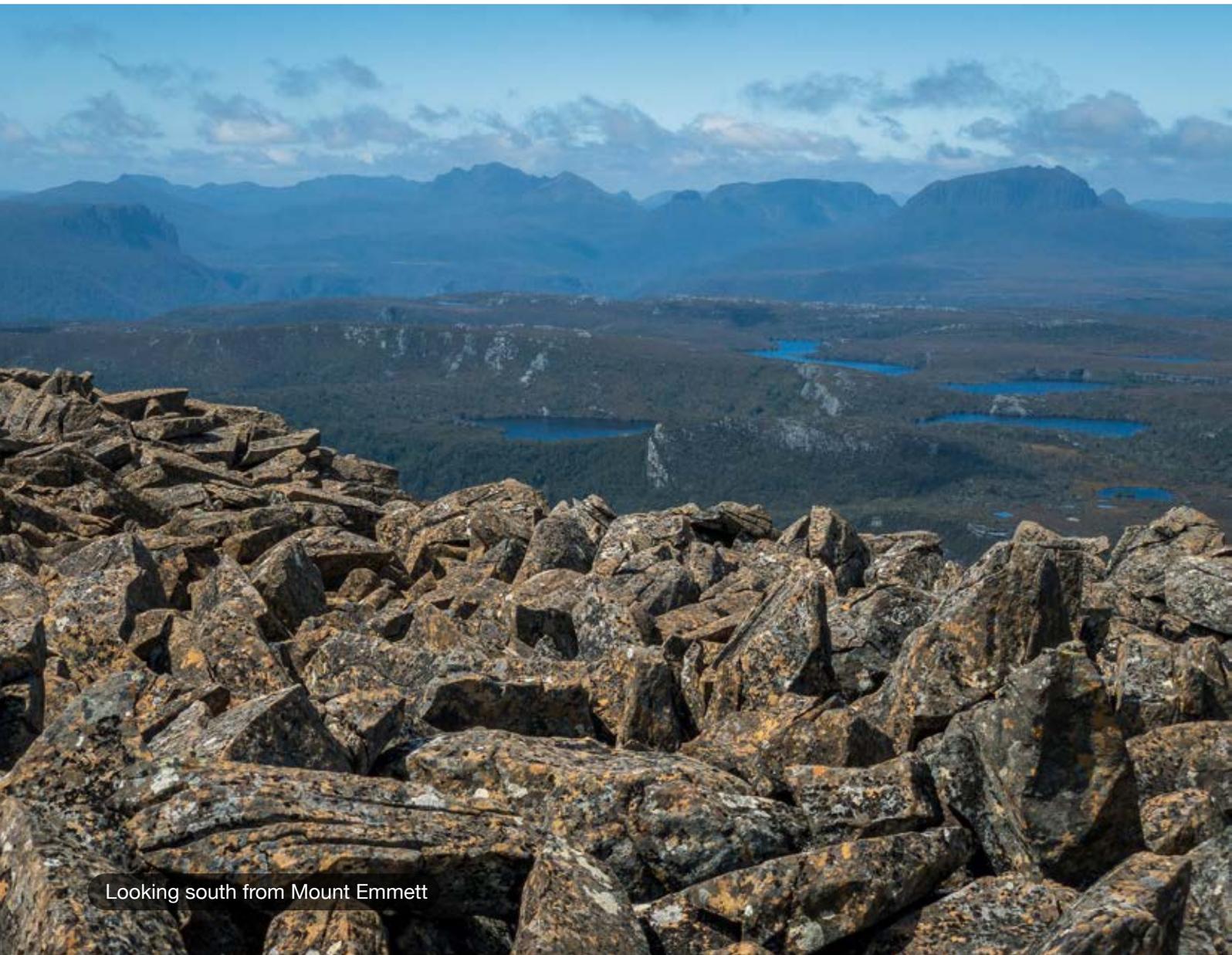
Stepping off the OLT onto the Lake Rodway Track that leads towards the Scott-Kilvert Hut we could clearly see the unnamed low hill we would need to cross before approaching Mount Emmett. We would not be dropping down the valley to the Scott-Kilvert Hut but rather traversing the ridge that joins Cradle Mountain and Mount Emmett. From here the hike to Mount

“From here the hike to Mount Emmett would be “untracked”.

Emmett would be “untracked”. That said there is a plethora of pads, both human and animal, that lead almost to Mount Emmett’s rocky base!

Rather than trying to skirt around the low hill it is simple enough to climb straight over it on your way to Mount Emmett. There are many naturally formed shale paths leading to its high point and the views from the top make the short climb entirely worth it. With this unusual vantage point we could see to the south-west Cradle Cirque’s many cliff faces with running waterfalls. To the north-east a spectacular view of the south of Cradle Mountain’s summit and Little Horn as well as the crystal blue water of Lake Rodway in the valley below.

As is nearly always the case when you have a bird's eye view you can see tracks and paths much clearer and this was true when standing on top of the unnamed peak. Even though the eastern side of the hill had a



Looking south from Mount Emmett

denser cover of scrub, the way across the ridge between it and Mount Emmett was obvious. We set off down the hill. Steve was happy for me to lead the way down the hill and I love a choose-your-own-adventure!

“... I love a choose-your-own-adventure!”

Reaching the bottom of the hill the scrub became denser still with a generous amount of scoparia. However, almost all of the scoparia between the hill and the snow gums that form a band in front of the base of Mount Emmett can be avoided by sticking to the obvious pads towards the northern edge of the saddle. Weaving in and out of multiple pads we made fast progress over the saddle. When the pads became less distinct in sections it was merely a matter of looking “down through” the scrub to the ground below where the pads again became visible. Mount Emmett’s summit was still shrouded in mist and we hoped it would lift.

After passing an obvious and isolated boulder we reached the small band of snow gums just before the scree fields. Here the pad disappeared briefly before becoming obvious again after only a few minutes of forceful pushing. Back in low alpine heath we continued on the pad which ended at a small dried tarn, a perfect spot for morning tea before the scree climb.

Mount Emmett is a majestic pile of rocks at first glance but closer inspection reveals twin rock pile peaks connected by a saddle of boulders. The closer north-western peak is the lower one and the true summit lies on the more distant south-eastern peak. Both peaks have a summit cairn and they even look surprisingly similar. The 1410 metre true summit was our goal.

“Mount Emmett is a majestic pile of rocks at first glance ...”



A mist covered Barn Bluff behind the girls.

It made sense that we traverse along the base before entering the scree as it would be quicker and easier. Then our plan was to climb just high enough on the boulder field to be above any green belt but not so high as to waste time and energy on elevation gain to only have to drop down in between the two peaks. Once in the boulder saddle between the two peaks we would ascend to the true summit. A sideways climb of sorts.

We quickly understood why Mount Emmett is a fair weather mountain! The endless boulder climb consisted of very generous sized rocks with the majority of the boulders being covered in black moss. This was fine for us today in the dry conditions we were enjoying but the rocks would be a nightmare if wet. Ben loves scree so he was in his element boulder hopping whilst us mere mortals were taking a little more care with picking a path occasionally having to back track momentarily when met by boulders too big for my little legs to get over. Still, in a little over 40 minutes we had reached the green base of the final climb to the summit.

We had less than 100 metres distance to reach the summit and the day had been thoroughly enjoyable and certainly not hard in any manner. To our delight the sun was now shining fully and the mist had lifted. Yay – views! After crossing a small scrubby section between the two rocky peaks we began climbing the boulders once again choosing the best possible path up and over the large rocks.

Given Steve was our fabulous leader for the day we thought he should touch the holy grail that is the summit cairn first. Third time is a charm and he had a big smile on his face to have it in the bag. One by one we thanked the mountain and reached the top. The views from the top of Mount Emmett were glorious. Many of the OLT's stars were on show – Barn Bluff, Mount Ossa, Pelion West to name just a few. To the south the many lakes on view were dotted

“ Third time is a charm and he had a big smile on his face ...

“ One by one we thanked the mountain ...

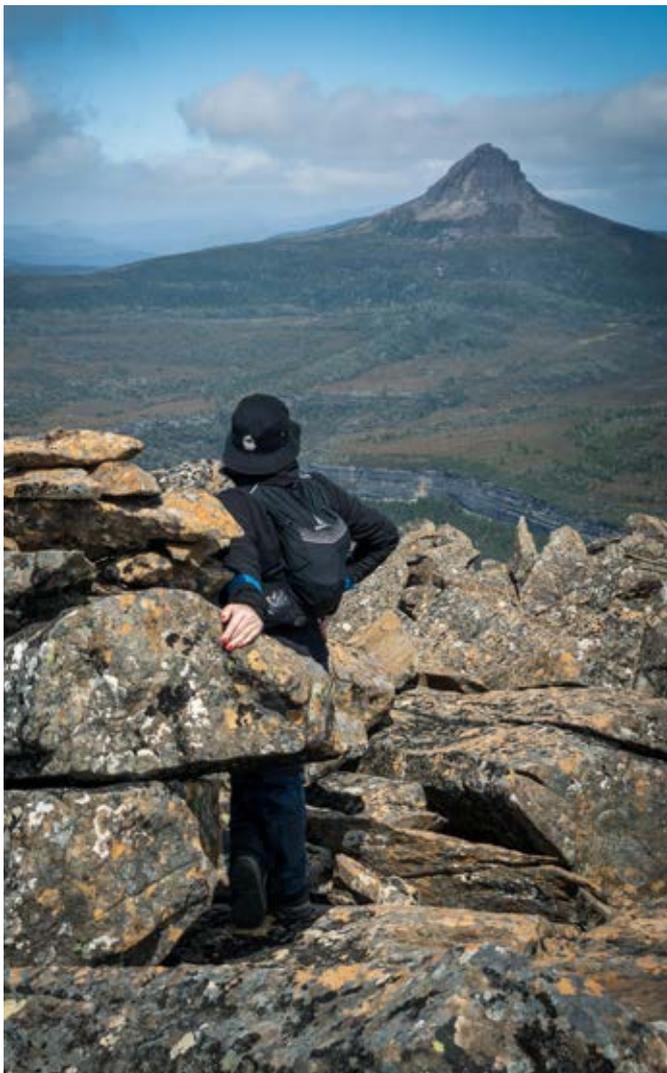


Mount Emmett fading in the background on our return journey

like bright blue jewels in the landscape. It was lovely to enjoy the sun on our face, the endless views, good company and a tasty snack. While enjoying everything the summit had to offer we decided as a group that instead of just heading off home, we would go to the second peak to check out the views from there.

About 20 minutes later we were soaking in yet more spectacular views but this time from the false summit cairn on Mount Emmett's north-western peak. It was well worth the short detour as we were now privy to views not able to be seen from the true summit. It was time to call our day to an end and begin the scree shuffle down off Mount Emmett. When we finally reached the base it was agreed that we had made the right decision sidling around Mount Emmett before climbing to the summit.

“... we were now privy to views not able to be seen from the true summit.”



Summit to Barn Bluff

An added bonus to viewing the false summit was that as we descended it we found multiple King Billy Pines thriving in the isolation. According to Steve the trees would be many, many hundreds of years old. From this elevated point the cliff band of Cradle Cirque looked beautiful. We were being thoroughly spoilt today!

“... we found multiple King Billy Pines thriving in the isolation.”

The return journey from the base of Mount Emmett was a simple matter of retracing our steps and we soon stood at the junction of the OLT and the Lake Rodway Track once more. A few of the LWC considered a quick climb of Barn Bluff given the day was so glorious but decided to return with us to their campsite to collect their big packs and have a good excuse to visit the area again in the future – not that one ever needs an excuse to visit one of the most beautiful parts of the world.



Tracey started in bushwalking in 2017 with a local walking group's trip up Mount Arthur. She quickly became an Abel addict and since has worked studiously on building her hiking skills, including navigation courses and overcoming her long-standing fear of heights. She, however, remains completely terrified of spiders. Ben is a keen hiker, trail runner and photographer. To date, they climbed over 75 Abels and counting. They live in Launceston, Tasmania and share a home with two teenage kids and eight spoilt cats. They share their adventures on their [Bender and xing blog](#).

South West Cape Circuit

March 2020

Rob Wildman



It's dark, cold and wet outside at Wilson Bight. Lying snugly in the sleeping bag, I reach over to see the faint hands on my watch: 4 am. In a little over an hour we will be stirring to get ready for the day ahead. The rain has been smashing on the fly most of the night. The guide book predicts a ten to twelve hour day for our intended walk from Wilson Bight to Window Pane, climbing over a 700 metre range, possibly with high winds and often covered in cloud – we had better be ready for this.

Up onto the range - view of Wilson Bight
Marc Breton

We had spent the previous day lounging, eating slowly, going for short walks along the beach (as there isn't much of it), getting to know our fellow campers and acquainting ourselves with the possible next day's route, the indistinct pad which leads up the mountain. We are now at Wilson Bight, which is the furthest bay west in a series of picturesque bays and beaches punctuating the coast along the South West Cape. The way out is either back along the coast or a big day over the range.

Eight years ago, in 2012, my walking partner and I attempted to do this circuit walk and had completely underestimated how much time was needed. We had then given ourselves one rest day at one of the beaches on the west coast but, after arriving in Hobart, we were grounded, as the "bottom corner", the south east of Tasmania, was blanketed and the Par Avion pilots have to fly on visual only. Having lost the rest day, we decided, like many before us, to simply stay and enjoy the beauty of the southern beaches and abandon the trek over the mountain.

On that trip we saw whales, dolphins and, on Ketchem Beach, we were kept company by an enormous elephant seal which we had mistaken as a rock for two days. The beaches are broad and always include a small fresh water stream trailing out from the hinterland. Often littered with jagged rocks, they are pounded by the relentless Southern Ocean waves which slide interminably towards the feet of the backing hills.

This time we had a real chance to do it, even though we had lost the first day to a cancelled flight, but we were not the gung-ho cavaliers we once were and vacillated all the previous day as to what we would do. The weather was going to be the real decider and the forecast was that the rain was clearing. We were lucky to have walkers Peter, Tom and Kate with us during the previous day as this group had done this same walk the other way only two years ago. Mind you, they had also done a 51 day walk down the West Coast from Strahan so we didn't know

“ This beach is simply glorious and one could spend days just enjoying its nothingness ...

if we were talking to Chapman disciples or ordinary people. Turned out they were as uncertain as us as to whether we would get through but were throwing caution to the wind on our behalf by announcing "you'll be right!".

We were also supposed to be three but our walking mate, Joan, had decided that she would walk in from Scotts Peak Dam along the Port Davey track, a four day slog along some pretty boggy plains, and meet us at the airstrip at Melaleuca. When we met on the day we flew in, we took one look at her bruised and blistered feet, and she didn't take much convincing that it wasn't her time.

After a delayed start from Melaleuca at about 4:30 pm, we arrived at the first beach, New Harbour, about fifteen minutes before sunset. Joining us in the camp area were these silent sentinels of six one-man tents, all quiet and still. Was anyone there? We didn't find out until the next morning when they emerged early and announced they were from the Coast and Mountain Walkers in NSW. A short conversation revealed they actually were all asleep the previous evening. The coordinated rise, shine, eat and pack of walking groups is problematic, almost militaristic for me, but at least they were out there. This beach is simply glorious and one could spend days just enjoying its nothingness, its noisy ocean and its serene forest at the back of the beach. In fact, a few days later we met two old guys (well, about my age) who spent four days just taking photographs on this beach.

This particular camp is also known for its cheeky quoll population who use the dark to sneak into packs and extract any food they can find. Which doesn't quite explain why, when we were here eight years ago, they stole our toilet paper and digger!

New Harbour to Wilson Bight

The track from New Harbour through to Wilson Bight leaves each of the beaches, heads through the scrub and very wet forests and emerges onto the clearer ranges over which it passes. The ups and downs are generally gentle and it is clear and graded. You always approach a new beach via some thick forest and burst out onto a beach, creek or lagoon, usually ringed with a grassy verge.

So when we were trying to find the exit on Hidden Bay, we had to laugh when we discovered a seal sitting squarely at the mouth of the forest track looking very soulfully at both of us, definitely not letting us get too near.



Seal on the track - Hidden Bay
Marc Breton

The track along these beaches climbs up onto some higher country as it attempts to circumnavigate the headlands. The day before we arrived, a woman was blown off the track, as we almost were, and on her

second fall, suffered a broken wrist. An EPIRB was set off and she was taken out by helicopter with her husband. Another woman, who had been staying at Hidden Bay and was suffering severe migraine pains also found space on the ride.

After a fairly strenuous six or so hour walk from New Harbour, we were about to round the last obstacle – the jutting rocks which divide the beach at Wilson Bight. This is usually not attempted at high tide but even at low tide it is treacherous. The rock knife spears right out into the surging surf but there is a break half way out. Here you need to time your run. I did, but running with a pack meant that I was unbalanced and came crashing down head first into the sand.

“ Here you need to time your run.

Over the Top

Now sitting in the tent at five in the morning, we decided to go. Climbing up through the forest on the more recently used route, we ascended a ridge directly behind the camp site in the middle of the main beach on the west side. The cloud had not cleared but we were hedging our bets that it would.



Top of the range ahead
Marc Breton

Once on the ridge the going is just up and further up until the pad peters out on the top of the range. This route is apparently not as spectacular as the old one up via Mount Karamu but we didn't care; we couldn't stop turning round and admiring the ever broadening view of the coast and the beach in particular. The heavy sky was also disappearing and we were enjoying some wonderful patches of sun. We took our time taking photos and just being awestruck at the wildness of this part of the world.

The pad which comes and goes along the top of the range always seemed to find the most vertical path up the intermediate knolls along the way and the ascent of the summit of the main range is quite intimidating from any distance. But as we got closer, the pad became clearer as it started to plough its way through head high scrub on the sides of the summit. At times it had become a creek after the massive downpour of the previous night and even on top of the range, there was so much water everywhere. We basically splashed our way up.

Once on top we were transfixed by the views to the north and the south. The enormous sand drifts of Noyhener Beach were clear on the distant horizon to the north as was the final tip of South West Tasmania to the south.

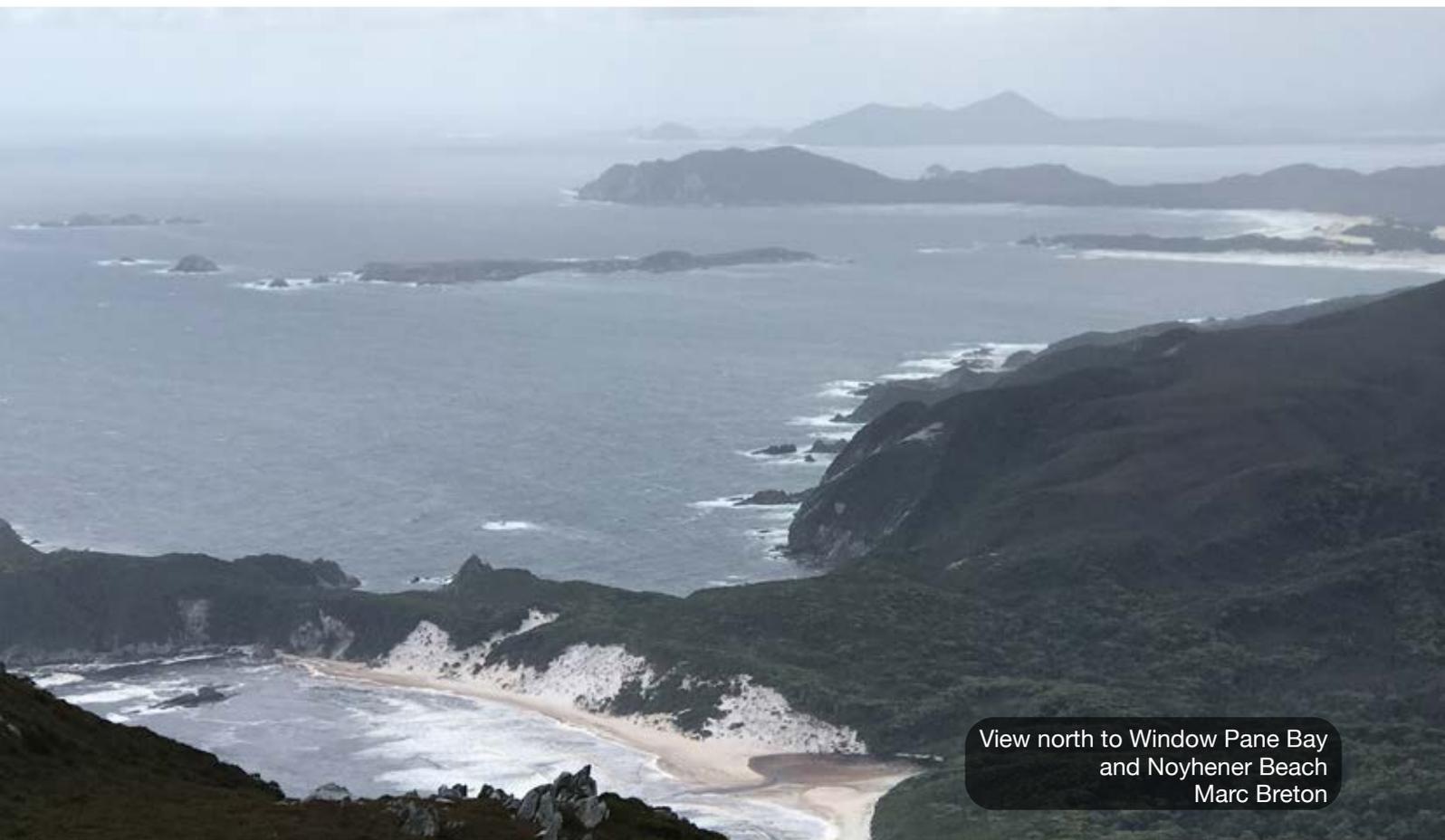
We really couldn't believe our luck with the weather but, of course, we noticed the wind had picked up and we still saw rain squalls out to the west heading our way.

At this point, it was time for some solemnity. I was carrying a small envelope which contained a small part of my son's ashes. He had died in Thailand only a few weeks prior to this trip, and I needed to pay my respects to his memory from this place which was as close to heaven as I would get for a long time.

With a few simple words of goodbye, I tore the end of the fung pau and held it up to the breeze. As the ashes streamed out, I crumpled in a fit of tears and grief. Marc stopped taking pictures and gave me a bear hug until the sobbing subsided.

The route down to Window Pane Bay involved following the ridge, with its sprawls of granite rocks dotting the crest, to a large flat area where the first of the rusting iron stakes still sits, pointing out the original 1966 realignment of the South Coast Track when it passed over Mount Melaleuca. There are several of these

“... pointing out the original 1966 realignment of the South Coast Track when it passed over Mount Melaleuca.



View north to Window Pane Bay and Noyhener Beach
Marc Breton

through this area and the pad follows them religiously to the end of a steep ridge which you need to follow until you reach the forest. The pad is generally easy to follow here but there are times when walkers have been in too much of a hurry and formed new pads leading nowhere in particular. Actually, in most of the forested areas along this coast, you need to be patient, and not rush ahead. The right track will be there.

And why would you want to rush through these forests? They are lush, moist and surprisingly quiet, making you want to linger and not break out to the cacophony of the surf. Because of the leaf litter floors

“... the forest track doesn't actually reach the beach until almost the last minute ...”

in the forest, it is easy to see why the track becomes indistinct and there is a tendency to head towards the beach too early. On both Window Pane Bay and Noyhener, the forest track doesn't actually reach the beach until almost the last minute, only a couple of hundred metres from the camp spots.

As we approached the outlet creek at Window Pane Bay, a secluded beach surrounded by wonderful tall sandhills topped with scrub, we noticed someone on the other side waving frantically at us to go around to our left. The creek was flooded and the route to the campsite now meant crossing through water up to our knees and flowing fast. We then met the waving man, Doug and his mate Dave, and we learned that they belonged to the party we had left at Wilson Bight. It wasn't long before we heard many of the stories worthy of bushwalking legend from Doug, a history teacher from Newcastle. Dave, his mate, spoke with the broadest of Yorkshire accents and was one of those “quiet achievers”. They had taken it upon themselves to carry sharp garden saws so that whenever they met any opposition from the vegetation along the way, they would swiftly whip them out like a flick knife and clear the path. It was truly an unselfish task they were doing and on the following day on the way to Noyhener, we saw evidence of much of their work and thank them for their efforts.

We settled in for the night after listening to both of them describe the howling cyclonic storm they experienced the night before, where they were both sitting in their tents pushing against the sides, trying to stop their tents from collapsing while the winds tore in from the open Southern Ocean in the west. On the night we arrived, we had a very pleasant and peaceful time in comparison.

Window Pane to Noyhener Beach

In the morning, they set off to the south to join their friends and partners and we sauntered north, up through the pleasant forest trail which led onto the high plateau. Breaking out of the beautiful forest after about an hour's walking, we again met the iron stakes! The placement of the stakes and the subsequent path joining them has all the hallmarks of a bureaucracy in its prime. The stakes basically form a straight line along the side of the hills and the trail attempts to follow them blindly, no matter what the terrain. We both had to laugh at how technology has

“We both had to laugh at how technology has changed so much ...”

changed so much in the intervening years and the need for such a rescue trail would be considered an unwanted expense on any government. However, we were grateful it was there, 30-odd years after it was built.

Once past the stakes and down into the forest before Noyhener, the same confusion with track finding returned. There were many attempts by previous walkers to head west to the beach but we always seemed to find yet another branch of the track which kept us in the forest. Doug and Dave's recently cut branches became our new route-finding tool, as well as the occasional pink ribbon. Mind you, it wasn't the “super highway” Doug promised. The real track finally finds the beach only a couple of hundred metres before Murgab Creek and the wonderful camp site in amongst the coastal scrub. The temptation to get our feet into the water and sand saw us slinging our boots around our necks and splashing up the creek to the sand ladder which leads up to the entrance of the camping area. The overcast sky had disappeared so we dumped our packs and just went walking in the surf and the sand with an afternoon sun dipping low in the sky.

Port Davey Track and Melaleuca

We originally had planned for two days here, but now with only one day available, we decided to just explore the beach, the sandhills and the headland. We also wanted to investigate two things: one was the route to Stephens Bay (and hence through to Spain Bay) and the other was our route out the next morning, as all I had read were reports on how confusing this section was going to be.

Halfway along the beach, a low sand blow channel went off from the beach and after following this for only one hundred metres, it hit the scrub. However, we found a few footprints which descended a small hill of sand into a pool. Just beyond the pool was the end of the very large sand blow extending from Stephens Bay to where we were. I was told later by my new acquaintance Doug, that this was a track they cut a couple of years ago. It is marked from the beach by ropes



hung around some debris. While we couldn't get around Chatfield Point (the other route to Stephens Bay), I was told that at low tide it is possible to negotiate this route.

At this stage in our walk we just wanted to mull around on the beach, explore the debris deposited on the sand from all the boats and kick up the kelp which was abundant. It was a spectacular day and we were on holiday, so walking to reach a destination was the furthest thing on our minds.

Having just completed our packing the next morning for the walk out to the Port Davey track, we heard the familiar sound of rain smacking the leaves above us. Our only real concern now was whether the clouds had descended low enough to cover the two mountain ranges we needed to cross. We had general directions set up in the GPS units but we were also expecting the pad to disappear a lot more. Just after the beach exit, the track heads up a ridge virtually east of the camp ground but then, once the crest is achieved, it appears to follow this ridge

to the north. Here is the first mistake made by many. The old track actually descends quickly via the first small gully down to the plain on the other side of the ridge, even though almost all traces of it have disappeared.

Finding it again, we looked ahead at the first major climb of the day – the South West Cape Range. While not that high, it does go straight up and we found ourselves stopping continuously to look back at the beach and the Jurassic-like valley we had just emerged from. With the rain deadening any sound, it was quite a pleasant but eerie place to be.

At the top of the range, the track hits the button grass and promptly disappears again but with a little scouting we finally found it going down the other side on a ridge further south than we expected. No matter, we headed down to Hannant Creek, had a quick bite before hitting the next major climb, up and over the Pasco Range.

Again, the button grass on the top of the



Horseshoe Inlet with approaching rain on the Pasco Range
Marc Breton

Pasco Range had us trudging around searching for the route. The wind had increased considerably and our faithful pad seemed even more elusive as we were thrown off balance trying to force our way through the long grass. After going in circles for some time, the cavalry came through and we found a large rock cairn indicating the way. Knowing how much further we still had to go, and having no relief from the rain, this was probably our low point.

The long ridge that leads to Horseshoe Inlet was a welcome relief after dealing with the high winds and rain of the Pasco Range. The track, after dealing with the scrub around the inlet, bursts out to the most serene scene. The edge of the inlet is covered with a rich, grassy cordon with a deep layer of black soil covered in super green grass, and the floor of the inlet is a fairly solid mix of rock and earth, easily navigated. We turned around to see where the track left us at the inlet and could not work it out. How would anyone find it going the other way, we wondered?

The last known obstacles before a welcome camp were the three creeks we needed to cross. Luckily, two of them could be waded after heading out into the inlet, but Horseshoe Creek itself was a swimming affair. We were shocked at how warm the creek was, after nearly becoming castratos in Murgrab Creek the day before. Picking up our packs, suddenly, our laughter killed the seriousness of the moment because our trousers, just above the gaiters, were full of trapped water forming huge marshmallow bulges.

After drying out at the superb camp spot and stuffing ourselves with some wonderful curry and dahl, we wandered back down to the water's edge as the rain had finally stopped and an incredible calm had descended. Only a calling water bird way down the other end of the inlet pierced the tranquillity of this scene. No one spoke. We felt very privileged to be able to just let this unusual moment wash over us.

The return along the Port Davey track is a quick four hour walk with some mud but generally a good track. Approaching the airstrip, we noticed two Par Avion planes

descending to pick up walkers. When we were almost within shouting distance of the planes, they quickly careened down the strip and disappeared into the sky over Cox Bight. We found out later that Joan, our walking partner was on board, as well as Doug, Dave and the other three from Wilson's Bight. There had been no flights in or out during the last two days so they all must have been keen to clear out from the stuffiness of the walker's huts.

With an hour of Wi-Fi available, courtesy of the airline, Marc posted a goofy selfie of the two of us to our loved ones just letting them know that we were alive. What it didn't say to them, and what you could never encapsulate in a photo, was all the experiences, the highs, the views, the tears, the food, the hugs, the wildness, the vastness and the memories of the last nine days. That was now deep inside our heads and our hearts.



Rob is 67 and is based in Sydney. He has been bushwalking since the age of twelve, when he was dragged up The Castle and into a casual love affair with the bush. For years his stomping grounds were the Budawangs, Blue Mountains and Kanangra but Tasmania and the Snowies have been poking their nose in for a while. He often tries out poor unsuspecting first timers on impossible routes but somehow always makes it back to safety. Well, there was that one time with the helicopter ... For Rob, going bush is where the rejuvenation of the senses and the intimacy with nature always happens.

Photo Gallery



BWA Photo Competition



Landscapes August 2019

WINNER



I was doing a house sit in the Dungog area and had to take dogs for a walk on a daily basis. The fields and forest used to be lovely first thing in the morning and after I captured this image I tweaked it a fraction to make the cobweb stand out, as it was when I viewed it in the surreal lighting conditions.

The cobweb
landsmith



Leaving the mist behind
MountainMadness



Last light
Brian Eglinton



Fatal attraction
John Walker



Bluebird day for a
run in Royal NP
Osik



Non-landscapes August 2019

WINNER



Wattle bird
landsmith

Often luck plays a part in getting bird shots if you don't do it full time. I noticed the grevillea moving and had my camera ready when he popped his head up. It was the only shot I took. Other days I've spend hours and shot nothing as good.



Looking for
a frozen feast
MountainMadness



A little bit of history
John Walker



Pencil Pine icicles
Son of a Beach



Reflecting pool
Brian Eglinton



First flowers of spring
Vagrom



Tasmania August 2019

WINNER



Icy summit
MountainMadness



Halls Buttress
Son of a Beach



A ramble
on the east coast
Osik



Other States August 2019

WINNER



Giles looms
Brian Eglinton

Having visited the West MacDonnell Ranges a few times before, the great Mount Giles was an unfulfilled destination.

It is the third highest peak in the Northern Territory and promised a grand outlook over a very wild country. So it was a great factor in accepting an invitation to a remote walk in the area with someone very familiar with the place. It was a very warm August day when we headed out, first through some burnt country and then off track across a typically rocky landscape.

The sight of Giles ahead caused two reactions - a thrill that I might actually get there, and the relief of knowing that there was water in them thar hills.

We were definitely getting away from it all.



Sunrise on the hill
landsmith



The Coast
never disappoints
John Walker



A afternoon
on Fortress ridge
Osik



Landscapes September 2019

WINNER

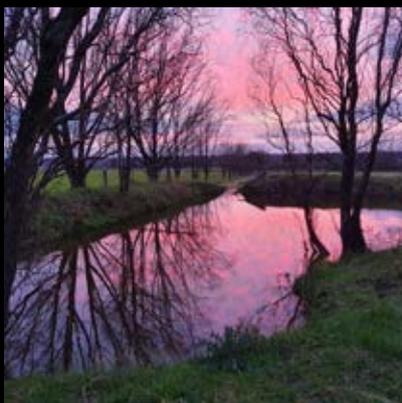


Yourambulla morning
North-north-west

Winter is arid lands or snow. Last year, it was back to the Centre and the Flinders Ranges; the latter to check out part of the long distance Heysen Trail. It covers everything from coast through forest and farm to high rocky ridges. The stretch across the Yourambulla Range is possibly the best of it, and there are few better places to watch the sunrise.



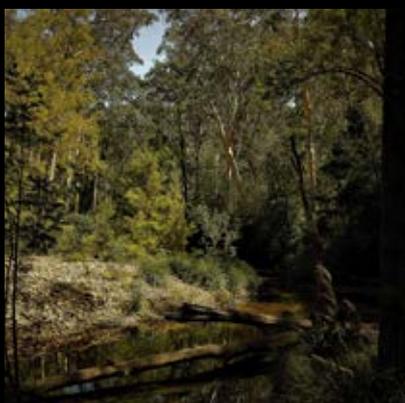
It is a good day to look
towards the sky
Ribuck



Thank goodness
I woke up
landsmith



Bowmans Gap
Brian Eglinton



Down in the valley
John Walker



Sunset on Mount
Jerusalem 14.09.2019
Orbita_Serenitatem



Non-landscapes September 2019

WINNER



Crimson chat
Brian Eglinton

At the back end of my wanderings in the Ormiston Pound area, I setup camp at the second waterhole in Bowmans Gap.

Enjoying the solitude, I was amazed to see a small vivid red bird walking along the creek bed intently looking for insects on the plants. It seemed quite oblivious to my nearby presence, giving me time to access my telephoto lens. (It's nice but rare for birds to do that.) I looked it up later: it's called a Crimson Chat, and unlike many small birds, it walks around rather than hopping.



Just good friends
North-north-west



Misty contrasts
John Walker



Four-leaf clovers and
inadvertent selfie
Ribuck



Tasmania

September 2019

WINNER



Sunset on Mount
Jerusalem 14.09.2019
Orbita_Serenitatem

It was my first time at The Walls of Jerusalem and this was my last night there. I almost missed the sunset, but had marked out a good panoramic spot earlier that day at the top of the saddle (Jaffa Gate) that looked north east down into the Valley of Hinom - where I was heading off to the following day.



Other States September 2019

WINNER



Perfect timing
North-north-west

Even old women can enjoy puerile humour. The Heysen Trail enters (or leaves) Wilpena Pound via Bridle Gap. Standing above the gap is a neat rocky lump with the delightful name of Dick Nob. Who could resist that? So the pack was dropped immediately upon arriving at the campsite, and up I went, getting there just in time for the sunset, which was a doozy.



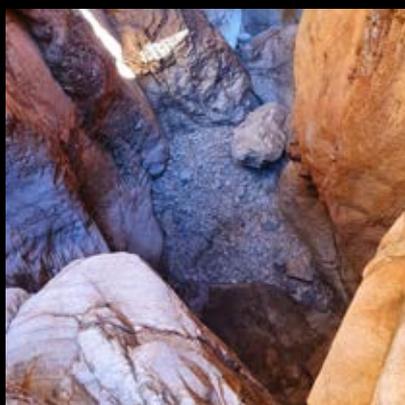
Carrington Falls
landsmith



Outback morning
Brian Eglinton



A welcome sight
John Walker



The Abyss
Ribuck



Australia's Lockdown - 2020

as seen by Yvonne Lollback



It's the year we'd best forget unless we learn from it. And remember lockdown.
 New words in our vocab. New words we did not have. Before lockdown.
 2020 was that year. We'll think of it with fear. AND lockdown.
 Its start was really bad. Drought, smoke, fires we'd had. Before even lockdown.
 Then floods and huge hail. Some people really did quail. Well before lockdown.
 Then came COVID-19, which few had foreseen. We hear the word lockdown.
 From China it came, a flu but not the same. There's talk of lockdown.

It went to Italy first but they weren't the last. They soon had lockdown.
 And so it spread. Every country's in dread. They all got lockdown.
 It's a virus we're told. Our lives are on hold. Now we're in lockdown.
 Social distancing's the norm. To this we'll conform. As well as lockdown.
 No eating out. No going about. Stay in lockdown.
 No picnics or parks. No gyms, pubs or larks. Stay in lockdown.
 No bushwalking groups. Just two doing loops. While in lockdown.
 No dancing in halls. Dance in your walls. Stay in lockdown.
 Churches all shut and so are the clubs. But we must have lockdown.
 No meetings are fine. It's all now on-line. While we're in lockdown.

But it's hard on the young. For our youth it's no fun. While we're in lockdown.
 Kids are home-schooled. The internet's the rule. While we're in lockdown.
 We had loo paper wars. Shops closed their doors. 'Cause of lockdown.
 Wash your hands they now say. Do it all day. As well as lockdown.
 So we rub and we scrub. Go soak in a tub. While we're in lockdown.
 The gardens look good. No weeds, sticks or wood. 'Cause we're in lockdown.
 We google and cook and read a long book. While we're in lockdown.
 The house is so clean. The windows, they gleam ... oops gleam ... While we're in lockdown.



Main Range from the Charlotte Pass lookout, Kosciuszko NP

The Big Issue went online. For a short while that's fine. During lockdown.
It's not safe to go out and no customers about. During lockdown.
But when vendors can't sell how will they stay well? During lockdown?
Vendors need that support and customer rapport. Even in lockdown.

The USA's gone mad but their leader's a cad. They won't stay in lockdown.
Trump's really insane. He makes that quite plain. He won't push lockdown.
Just twittering's his thing. No leadership he'll bring. Or order a lockdown.
The same in Brazil with numbers over the hill. And not much lockdown.
Their numbers have upped. Ours almost stopped. Stay in lockdown.
Our leaders are strong. We'll do no wrong. We're in lockdown.
For the medics it's hell to get people well. The rest stay in lockdown.
They're out in the front. They carry the brunt. As we stay in lockdown.
When the old get sick, they die pretty quick. Even with lockdown.
They die all alone. Their loved ones at home. 'Cause of lockdown.
In slums, camps and prisons the cases might be millions. When they have lockdown.
So many are sick. It really is quick. We need lockdown.
Official figures say millions but it could be trillions. Even with lockdown.
When the world thought it beat, the pandemic turned up the heat. Not enough lockdown.
Victoria, where cases were few, suddenly found they just grew. When they lifted lockdown.

The financial market has slumped. This is no mere bump. Caused by lockdown.
Many jobs are now gone. They must feel so alone. Caused by lockdown.
Mental health has gone down, people wearing a frown. 'Cause of lockdown.
Violence in the street. Innocent Chinese are beat. 'Cause of lockdown.
No room for blame, nor hate, it's a shame. Stay in lockdown.
But caring has grown to those on their own. Even in lockdown.
We all help each other. All sisters and brothers. Even in lockdown.



Oil use has dropped. Production 'most stopped. 'Cause of lockdown.
 Poor countries will suffer. They have no buffer. But we need lockdown.
 Refugees have it rough. Life's even more tough. 'Cause of lockdown.
 Tourism's done a dive. How will they survive? While we're in lockdown?
 Millions may starve. Our population may halve. While earth's in lockdown.
 Is this good? Is it bad? All I know it's so sad. 'Cause of lockdown.

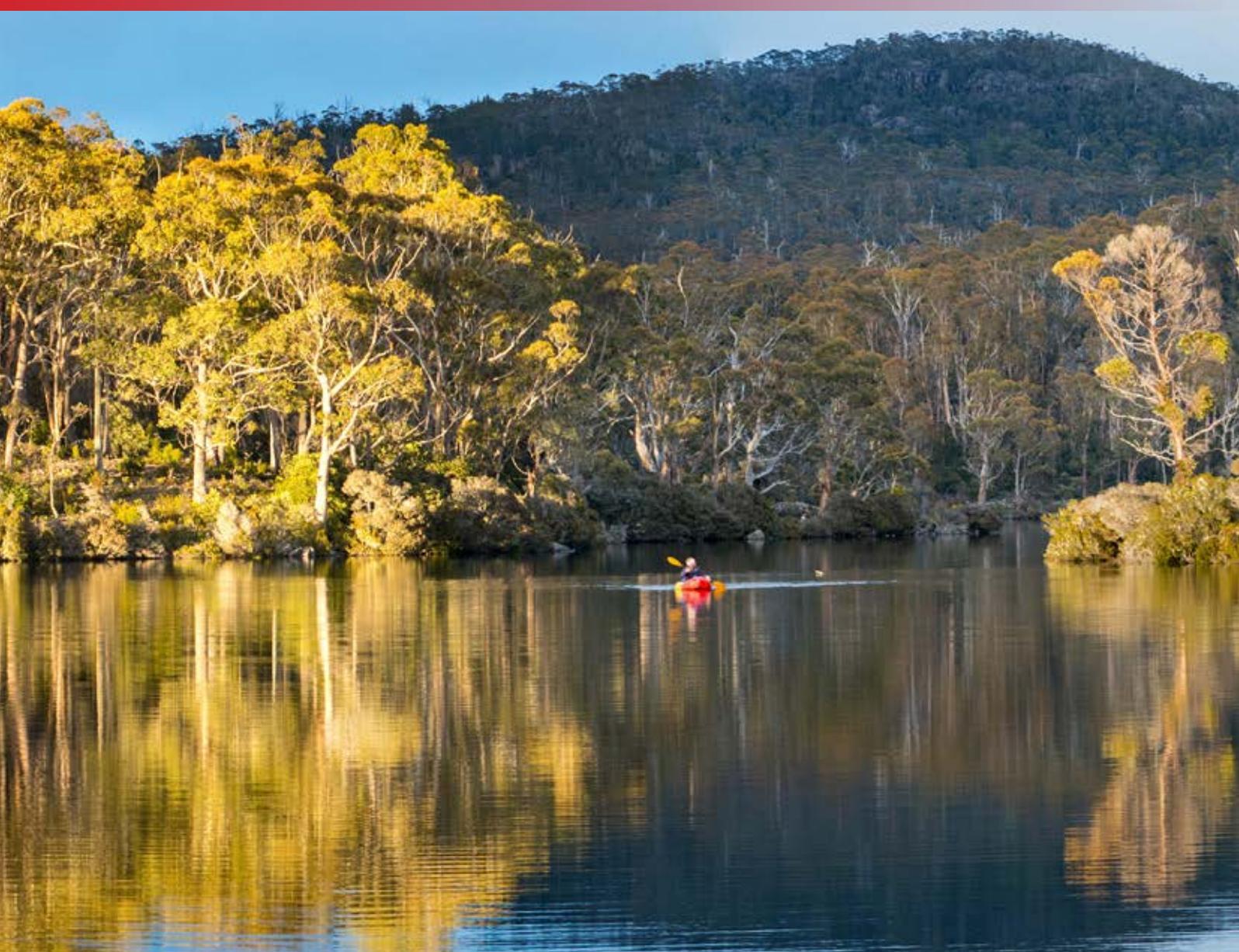
Climate change is ignored. That's just getting bored. It's all about lockdown.
 But our youth won't let go. It's their future they know. Even with lockdown.
 Secret deals made with coal, to dig another big hole. While we're in lockdown.
 Green energy's the go. We must keep it so. Even in lockdown.
 Support Greenpeace and GetUp. Don't let our government f-up. Under the cover of lockdown.
 Will this make us wake up? We must come from love. Even in lockdown.
 Don't put fear in your head. Put peace there instead. And stay in lockdown.
 Reach out in love to everyone above. While we're in lockdown.
 Phone all you know. Let your love flow. While we're in lockdown.

While people stay home, the animals can roam. 'Cause of lockdown.
 With streets empty of cars, children can see stars. 'Cause of lockdown.
 The earth's begun to heal. But will it stay for real? Even after lockdown?
 Let's make that our goal and keep the earth whole. Even after lockdown.



Malbena Update

Tasmanian National Parks Association



Halls Island is about 400 metres from east to west, and 250 metres north to south. It is almost entirely forested and located in Lake Malbena (above) on Tasmania's Central Plateau. The area is about as remote and isolated as anywhere on the plateau – there are no formal walking tracks in the vicinity and the easiest access route requires several hours of mostly cross-country walking from a former logging road and a packraft or similar to cross the lake.

In the early 1950s a Launceston lawyer named Reg Hall chose the island that now bears his name as the perfect location on which to build a tiny shack to serve as a base for exploring and enjoying some of the most remote parts of the Central Plateau. Being a lawyer, he chose to obtain a lease for his shack, something that few others would have bothered with in those days. Although a private hut, it was open to all comers and treated with respect.

Background

When the hut (right) was constructed in the 1950s the island was Unallocated Crown Land but it has subsequently progressed through various categories of reservation until it became part of the Walls of Jerusalem National Park and was incorporated into the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) in 1989.

Reg Hall died in 1981 but his daughter continued the lease until she transferred it to professional trout guide Daniel Hackett in 2016 with the intention of ensuring the long-term preservation of her father's now-historic hut. Mr Hackett has committed to maintaining the old hut but his company, Wild Drake, has applied for permission to construct helicopter-accessed tourist accommodation on the island. His proposal includes three twin-share accommodation buildings and a communal hut, each larger than the historic hut. Despite Mr Hackett's background as a trout guide the primary theme of this proposal is "cultural immersion", not fishing. Malbena is not considered to provide good fishing, unlike some of the nearby lakes.

Expression of interest and rezoning

Wild Drake's initial application was through the Tasmanian Government's Expressions of Interest process. In the 1999 Management Plan for the TWWHA Halls Island was zoned 'Wilderness', which effectively ruled out any possibility of development. However, it was changed to 'Self-Reliant Recreation' in the 2016 plan without the change being foreshadowed in the 2014 draft plan (i.e. there was no opportunity for the public to comment on the proposed change). This rezoning allows the consideration of 'standing camps' but not huts. Many objectors questioned the description of the proposed accommodation as a "standing camp".

The proposal has drawn outrage from a wide range of people for a range of reasons including the alienation of public land within a national park for the benefit of a private developer, but the most common theme is the impact of both the development itself and the helicopter access on the wilderness character of the area.



Halls Island hut built by Reg Hall

Approvals required

The proposal requires approval under both state and federal legislation, as well as the (Tasmanian) Parks and Wildlife Service's non-statutory Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA). As a Level 3 RAA, public comment was not required. The RAA was completed to Step 7 where it was signed off as "endorsed for external assessment" on 14 March 2018. It was not made public until July 2018 when it was included in the additional information provided for the Federal Government assessment.

The Federal Government had initially decided that approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999* was not required. This was successfully challenged by The Wilderness Society (TWS). The case was heard in the Federal Court on 26 March 2019 with the decision released on 12 November 2019. The key outcome of this challenge was that the original notice [decision] is to be set aside and reissued with conditions which are to be negotiated between the Commonwealth and TWS. At the time of writing (June 2020), these conditions were still to be finalised.

The other approval required before the development could proceed was from local government. When Central Highlands Council (CHC) advertised the Development Application (DA) it received 1346 submissions; only three supported the proposal!

At a public meeting attended by around 100 representatives on 26 February 2019 the CHC decided to refuse the DA. A common theme of comments by the mayor and councillors

was inadequacy of the RAA and the failure of process – the state and federal governments had shirked their responsibilities – a small rural council should never have been required to make key decisions about impacts on World Heritage values.

Appeals, up to the Supreme Court

As anticipated, the proponent, Wild Drake, appealed the council's decision to refuse a permit in the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal (RMPAT). The Tasmanian National Parks Association, The Wilderness Society (Tasmania) and two individuals with long connections to the area ([the joined parties](#)) made the expensive commitment of joining the appeal to defend Council's decision (the RMPAT hearing required the engagement of highly experienced lawyers and expert witnesses).

RMPAT heard this appeal from 24-28 June 2019, with an additional hearing on August 8-9 2019 to hear further evidence about wedge-tailed eagles and for the legal representatives to present closing submissions. [The decision](#) was released on 21 October 2019. RMPAT's key finding was that it isn't required to assess the proposal against the management plan; all that is required is for a Management Plan to exist and that a Reserve Activity Assessment has been completed by the Parks and Wildlife Service up to Step 7. [RMPAT's final decision](#) (18 December 2019) required that CHC's

refusal of a permit be set aside and replaced with an approval subject to conditions set out in RMPAT's final decision.

On 14 January 2020 the same appellants as previously [filed an appeal](#) to the Supreme Court of Tasmania against the RMPAT decision.

The appeal contended that RMPAT improperly delegated its assessment of the Lake Malbena proposal to Tasmania's Parks and Wildlife Service and did not undertake its own assessment of the proposal against the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan. Note that the appeal related entirely to this legal question, not the merits of the proposal itself.

The outcome that we had hoped for was an order from the Supreme Court that would require RMPAT to remake its decision in relation to the Lake Malbena proposal, including giving consideration to the substantial volume of evidence on the impacts of the proposal on wilderness and other values presented during the hearings in 2019.

The Supreme Court's decision was handed down on 6 July 2020. Neither of our grounds of appeal succeeded. Obviously, this was extremely disappointing. We made a media release with The Wilderness Society the following day which can be read [here](#).



Lake Malbena
Grant Dixon

After considering the merits of a further appeal, TWS and TNPA decided to challenge this decision and [filed an appeal](#) to the Full Court on 27 July. Our lawyers will be arguing that the Supreme Court made a number of legal errors in reaching its decision, including its agreement that RMPAT did not have the jurisdiction to assess the proposal against the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan 2016, and in its interpretation of the relevant provision of the Central Highlands Interim Planning Scheme.

If the appeal to the Full Court is upheld, it is expected that the Full Court will order that the RMPAT decision is set aside, and that the Tribunal make a fresh decision in consideration of the extensive evidence relating to the merits of the proposal, including its adverse impacts on the wilderness and ecological values of the area, that was presented by the parties.

The timeframe for the resolution of this appeal is uncertain and, if successful, it is unclear how long RMPAT might need to make a fresh decision. And, as noted previously, the (federal govt) permit conditions resulting from the Wilderness Society's Federal Court challenge to the Federal Minister's decision are yet to be finalised.

The cost of this further legal action may be substantial. TNPA would welcome further donations to the [Lake Malbena Appeal Fund](#).

These legal actions have not just been about a single tourism development. We anticipate that the outcome will have significant implications for the processes by which all tourism developments within our national parks and reserves gain approval, particularly the numerous proposals that are currently going through the Tasmanian Government's controversial Expressions of Interest process, many of which are likely to pose similar threats to Tasmania's wilderness and our reserve estate.

It will also set a national precedent. The supposed success of the Tasmanian government's policy of "unlocking our national parks" is often quoted by mainland State Governments and Parks Services seeking to follow suit. A final outcome in our favour may cause them to reconsider.

This article can be found on the [TNPA website](#).

Other links

- [Fishers & Walkers Against Helicopter Access Tasmania](#)
- [Flylife](#)
- [Forum discussion](#)
- [Petition](#)
- [Open letter](#) to Jason Jacobi of PWS



Good Signage in National Parks Can Save Lives

Pascal Scherrer and Betty Weiler



Every time we hear of the [tragic death of a visitor](#) in one of Australia's spectacular national parks, there is cause for reflection on how we communicate safety messages in nature.

Tourists blatantly ignoring a warning sign
davidmolloyphotography.com

Our study, published in the *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*, reviewed some of the signs in national parks in Queensland and Victoria; we also interviewed rangers and park managers.

Outdoor recreation inherently comes with risk but there are ways to reduce it without wrapping people up in cotton wool.

One of the simplest ways is to critically examine the way we design safety signs to ensure that visitors actually read them, connect with the message, and accept that this warning does really apply to them.

Our findings help to show why and how particular signs are effective at communicating safety messages – and what not to do.

To be effective a sign should, among other things:

- be easy to notice
- be easy to understand
- use colours that stand out from the background
- include languages other than English
- include graphics and the traditional “no” symbol of a red circle with a line through it
- avoid crowding too many messages into one spot.

Young men and international tourists at risk

Millions of visitors access and enjoy Australia’s vast network of protected areas safely every year.

Park managers want locals and tourists to visit natural areas

- it is good for health and well-being, the economy and society.

Visitors to parks are also more likely to support national parks. Effective communication of safety information for visitors to national parks is essential, particularly where the potential consequences of mishaps are severe.

We know from previous research that certain groups, such as young men and international tourists, are particularly at risk - too often with tragic and sometimes expensive consequences.

Some park agencies are actively targeting high-risk groups at specific sites, as this example shows.

The focus is to tell the story of past tragedies to get across the message that the risk is real and relevant to them.

“... young men and international tourists, are particularly at risk ...”



Warning sign, Kakadu National Park
Phil Whitehouse

Of course, risk is part of the attraction for some park-goers. But every visitor needs to know what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, and how to take responsibility for their own safety.

Thinking carefully about how we design signs to get safety messages across effectively is an important part of managing risk in national parks and natural areas generally.

Making signs noticeable and easy to comprehend

Based on our analysis of research findings both within and outside park settings, we developed checklists to help park managers assess how effectively their signs communicate risk to national park visitors.

We tested these “best practice principles” checklists at several sites with two Australian national parks agencies. The process proved valuable in strengthening current safety sign policy and practice.

For example, the following sign meets the criteria for being “noticeable” and “easy to comprehend”.

Limit the number of messages per sign

Park authorities often need to communicate a lot of information at once to park goers. However, this can be done by using clever graphics and limiting the number of messages per sign. It’s also important to put warning signs close to the risky site, not simply warning people when they enter the park.

The example below shows how having multiple signs grouped together can make it hard for users to get the key messages, even if they are driving at low speed. It is all too easy to drive past and ignore the signs altogether.

Our study also highlights that good safety signs can support and complement the dedication and personal responsibility of frontline park staff. Serious incidents can have a direct effect on staff personally, and on the reputation of certain sites, particularly in the eyes of local emergency service workers.

Safety signage will be more effective if embedded in a coordinated risk-management system.

DANGER

GEFAHR
危険

Climbing, jumping and diving from rocks in this area are dangerous

- People have been seriously injured and died here.
- Do not climb, jump or dive from the rock faces around the cascades.

Your safety is our concern, but your responsibility.



Activities in nature will always carry some risks and [some people will choose to engage in unsafe activities](#) despite knowing better. Accidents will continue to occur.

That said, our best practice principles for signage help park managers to do the best they can to make visitors fully aware of the risks while preserving the integrity of the natural site.

They also have direct applications to other nature-based visitor sites. Signs can help address issues such as the [recent incidents with kangaroos at Morisset Hospital near Sydney](#), where visitors were feeding the animals carrots to get a close-up picture.

What we still need to know

We have a poor understanding of what makes different types of people (such as those with different cultural backgrounds and experience levels, or people responding to peer pressure) misunderstand or ignore safety warnings.

Best practice signage is already in place at many high-risk park sites. As park visitation continues to increase and visitor profiles change, we need more research on what can help persuade at-risk visitors to read and act on safety messages.

It is time to invest in targeted research on this issue, including trialling and evaluating more innovative and persuasive communication techniques.



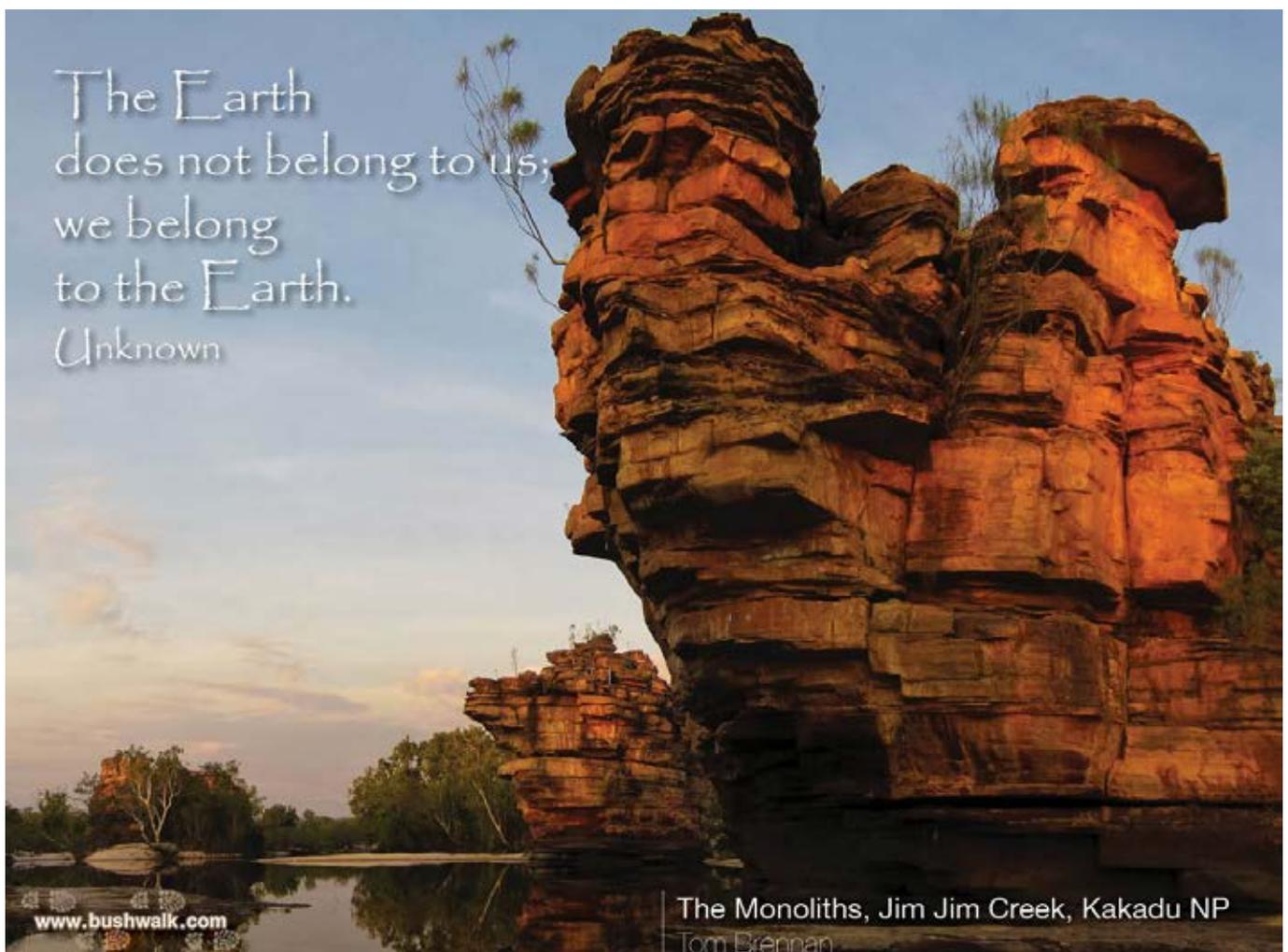
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This article first appeared in [The Conversation](#) on 10 May 2018.



Chocolate

Sonya Muhlsimmer



So it seems there is a day for everything. Did you know 7 June is World Chocolate Day? I know right, so exciting. It means I can have that block, oops I mean piece of chocolate without feeling a hint of remorse. Don't worry, it is good for you. It's a food group, you know. Really it isn't, but it should be ... Chocolate is one of the most popular sweet treats in the world, it also has a long and interesting history. So what is so good about chocolate anyway?

The cacao nibs are made into the three types of chocolate: dark, milk and white
All pictures by Sonya Muhlsimmer

Plant

The tree *Theobroma cacao* means Food of the Gods and it comes from the tropical regions of Mesoamerica, which is central Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador. The seeds from the tree are used to make chocolate. Wikipedia tells me that Researchers who analysed the genome of cultivated cacao trees concluded that the domesticated cacao tree all originated from a single domestication event that occurred about 3600 years ago somewhere in Central America.

The cacao tree bears fruit the size of a papaya and inside under the skin, there are up to about 50 pods, or seeds. The seeds are harvested by hand, fermented, dried, cleaned, roasted, hulls removed and the remaining nibs are ground and an addition of ingredients are added to make the chocolate as we know it into dark, milk or white chocolate. Apparently the dark chocolate process has not changed much since the Mayan time. Think of this next time you buy a block of chocolate.

History

Back in the days of around 1900-900 BC the good folk used to have celebrations and drink a lot of chocolate, about 30 cups a day, out of special round ceramic vessels. The vessels were specifically labelled and only to be used for chocolate consumption. This vessel was also a way to distinguish the class of the folk, it was mainly for the elite or very special occasions. Now if you were one of the lucky ones chosen for a sacrificial offering to the cacao god Ek Chuah, you would have possibly been given a nice cup of chocolate drink as a final treat. Cheers to that hey!

“ ... about 30 cups a day ... ”

Cacao beans were used as currency, and it was also believed the beans were magical, hence sacrificial deaths, but also births and marriages. Then only when chocolate found its way to Europe was when it was sweetened and by the 17th century it was a fashionable drink, an aphrodisiac according to Casanova. Chocolate was included in the American ration pack during the



Brad decides what chocolate to buy from the chocolate room, Bibina shop in Warners Bay, NSW

Revolutionary war, in fact sometimes it was given to soldiers as a payment, instead of money. Dutch cocoa powder was born in the mid-1800s and by the late 1800s Cadbury was launched in England. Then Nestle pioneered milk chocolate not long thereafter. Then finally chocolate is now a 4-billion-dollar industry in the US according to Smithsonian Magazine. Not bad for a humble little bean.

Nutrition

When I said chocolate is good for you, I mean it. The cacao beans are full of phytonutrients and flavanols, which is like antioxidants and are full of iron, copper, magnesium, zinc, phosphorus. But there is a catch. Dark chocolate is better for you as it contains a higher cocoa content – higher level of antioxidant - and less sugar and fat as in milk or white chocolate. Cacao can lower cholesterol, reduce cardiovascular problems, improve blood flow and according to The Journal of the International Society of Sports, a little dark chocolate might boost oxygen availability during fitness training. Another interesting fact from the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease found from a study of at over 400 people over the age of 65 that consuming chocolate, this was from one chocolate snack a week, lowered the risk of cognitive decline by 40% over two years. Now if that is not an excuse to eat at least a bar of chocolate week, I don't know what is. No excuse needed now for packing a range of chocolate in your pack. There are other health benefits too, but this is enough for now. There is more to talk about like what is the difference between dark, milk and white chocolate.

“Dark chocolate is better for you ...”

Types of chocolate

Dark chocolate is quite bitter due to the high cacao and low sugar content. It contains from 50-90% cocoa solids, cocoa butter and a bit of sugar. Caffeine is also present so the higher percent of cocoa solids the higher caffeine content. In a 70% dark chocolate block, in 60 grams there is about 60 milligrams of caffeine.



Milk chocolate is the most common chocolate that is eaten, and it contains 10-50% cocoa solids cocoa butter, milk, flavourings, and sugar. It has a more creamy, mellow and sweeter flavour than dark chocolate.

White chocolate does not contain any cocoa solids and is made up of cocoa butter, sugar and milk. However, it must contain at least 20% cocoa butter according to food standards. White chocolate has more kilojoules than dark chocolate.

Generally, chocolate has a high amount of kilojoules, due to the sugar content. So if you are health conscious and concerned about eating additional kilojoules and sugar, stick to the dark type and look at the nutritional panel on the pack to see how much sugar is present in the serving size or block and choose accordingly.

I was living in Germany and went to the Chocolate Museum in Cologne; it was so good. There was a working chocolate fountain on display and someone handing out wafer sticks. Well I visited it quite a few times. Just doing my quality check thing, like making sure it was still alright after 30 minutes. Someone must do it, and it may as well be me: I'm a qualified chef with a degree in food science, so I feel I am more than trained to do the job.

“Just doing my quality check thing, like making sure it was still alright after 30 minutes.”

Finally, there are so many interesting facts regarding chocolate, however that is beyond the scope of this article. I will leave it up to you to do your own research. I hope I have given you more than enough excuses to eat and pack chocolate for your next hiking adventure, whether it be a day, overnight or a multiday hike. I have just packed in two blocks of dark chocolate with rum and raisin for my eight day back country ski trip coming up. And I do hope you agree with me that food should be a food group, eaten in moderation as part of a well-balanced meal plan. It is good for you, in moderation. I might just go and contact my network in the Food Standards to add chocolate to the food group now ... Enjoy!

In the News

Hobart's Disappearing Tarn is back

The continuous rain in June 2020 made a special place on Mount Wellington *reappear*.

NSW's newest national park

Narriearra station has just become the largest block of private land *bought for a national park* in the state's history.

Are koalas facing extinction?

A *report* by a parliamentary committee says there's a chance *koalas might be extinct* in New South Wales within 30 years.

Bunnings is dumping Victorian native timber products

After the Federal Court ruled timber was felled illegally, Bunnings *stopped selling* their product.

Trail runner Piotr Babis ran the Overland Track

He ran from Lake St Clair to Cradle Mountain, and back again, in just *30 hours and 20 minutes*.

Overland Track's fee halved

Due to *coronavirus* limiting walker numbers, the fee has been halved to attract more visitors.

How nature helped after brain surgery

After a big bike accident, followed by a brain surgery, Sarah Allely discovered the *natural world* helped her heal.



Big Cuz and looking after Country

One morning while searching for the ABC news I found an enchanting Australian cartoon series, *Little J and Big Cuz*. The series is about two children, Little J aged five and Big Cuz aged nine, and their friends. Both children and most of their friends are Aboriginal Australians, as are most of the actors voicing the parts. This is a very watchable series, steeped in real life and well written.

A scene from an Australian Aboriginal aspect fits very well with contemporary bushwalking and conservation views. Big Cuz said to Nanna, "Home is more than a building. Home is in your heart, your spirit and all around you. Because home is in Country." I asked the producer Ned Lander if BWA could use the image and words, and he kindly agreed. The episode is called Finding Home, on ABC *Iview* for a few weeks.

Stephen Lake

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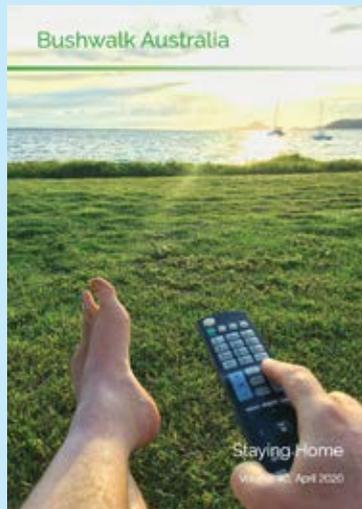


Bushwalk Australia



Bushwalking Anew

- > Three Capes
- > Spirit of place
- > The butterfly effect
- > First aid kit



Staying Home

- > Mount Giles
- > Southern Ranges and Du Cane Range
- > Bushwalking in a pandemic



Fire and Fury

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



Hills & Valleys

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



Alpine Adventures

- > Hannells Spur Loop, NSW
- > AAWT
- > MUMC – 75 Years Old



Awesome Adventures

- > McMillans Track, Victoria
- > Island Lagoon
- > Franklin River, Tasmania



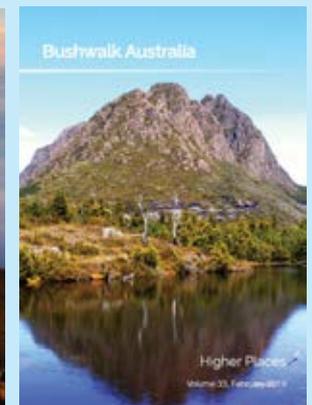
Wild & Rugged

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



Going the Distance

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



Higher Places

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



Peak Promenade

- > Pindars Peak
- > Cordilleras in Peru



Ridges & Valleys

- > Buffalo, The Bluff and Mt McDonald



Ambling Adventures

- > An Abel challenge
- > Pack hauling



Act Now

- > Viking Circuit
- > Overland Track



Meandering Mountains

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

