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Membership Fees

\$25 Per Person
Subs due July each year

Sunraysia Bushwalkers

November 2012

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Affiliated with:



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- ❖ **Report of the Billywing Gorge walk**
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- ❖ **Report of Euston Bushland Reserve Walk**
- ❖ **Calendar of upcoming events**

At the meeting:-

**A showing of photos of
the Billywing Gorge trip**

A Weekend Circuit in the Victoria Range, Grampians 19-21 October 2012

By Tony Creedy

In '08 I put my name down for the pack walk (Mount Langhi Ghiran) on the Fed Walk programme run at Beaufort that year. I was the only participant who was not a Sunraysia member or ex member and had a great time - see the Nov 08 newsletter. Since then Roger has sent me the Sunraysia newsletter with its interesting activities some of which I'd love to do, if only I didn't live in Melbourne! I have done small walks around the edge of the Victoria Range but never into the middle, as this walk promised to do, so I asked if I could go and leader Roger graciously said OK. The rest is the history below.

Evening 19th Oct found me driving north along the Henty Highway with the Grampians, Victoria Range, on my right. A beautiful calm sunny evening, no other cars on the road, and I started to wonder if anyone lived in this area. Eventually I arrived at the bush camp site near the start of our walk. Roger, Dick, Russell, Robert and Peter were setting up, having arrived from Mildura a few minutes earlier.



*Left to Right: Russell, Peter, Dick, Robert & Roger
Your scribe was holding the camera*

About to set off, Sat. 20th Oct

We were up and away by 8.20 the next morning, heading east along a track leading towards Billywing Gorge. Many orchids were showing in the flat sandy area before we got to the rocky slopes of the ranges. Avoiding the gorge itself, we started to climb its northern slopes while continuing to travel east, parallel to the gorge. As we went, the Grampians unfolded a prize example of its obstacle courses for walkers,

some hard bits with scrub bashing and rock hopping, some easy bits on smooth rock, and as an incentive, lovely viewpoints where we could see down into Billywing Gorge and up to the 'Fortress' (or Castle) rock formation 2-3 km to the south east. On our way to camp we covered about 6 km in a bit over 6 hours. We saw flowering bushes, a rock overhang protecting a thick moss carpet and a beautiful lightly wooded creek-side for lunch.



*The fortress starts to emerge from
early morning cloud. Spot the
walkers*

We progressed east towards the creeks that start on the tops and combine to form Deep creek flowing west through Billywing Gorge. We arrived at camp, at the base of a high rock tower next to one of the creeks, to find we'd been beaten to it, so to speak. The remains of a big billy goat lay at the foot of the tower. Fortunately decomposition was complete, but there was an impressive pile of bones, hair and a skull with huge horns and eye sockets expressing who knows what. A few of us were spooked by this and scattered to other camp sites nearby, including me. I got a lovely spot next to the creek, a few metres upstream. Roger and Robert were made of sterner stuff and stayed in the centre of town at the base of the tower. On returning here later I noticed the remains had gone, just a few wisps of hair remained on the ground. A nearby sink hole had made a convenient place to give Billy Goat a decent burial. But don't get me wrong, it was a delightful place to camp, and across the creek another rock tower was easy to climb for views and mobile reception. We sat after dinner exchanging yarns, with nibblies and port from Roger.



A view over Deep Creek valley towards the fortress.



Camp just visible at the base of the rock tower

Next day we had the option of crossing into the next main valley to the north, where Hut Creek flows west out of the range. Hut Creek track runs along the bottom of this valley near the creek (or so the map says...) and provides a nice easy exit to other tracks back to the cars. So off we went at 8.10, climbing northeast along the base of huge cliffs lining the northern side of the Deep Creek catchment. At the top of the climb we swung northwest into a wide gap in the cliffs and started our descent into Hut Creek valley. Overnight packs seem to take on a life of their own on descents and propel their owners in directions they don't want to go. I found that an improvised walking stick helped a lot with keeping falls at bay in these conditions and will certainly carry one on this type of walk in future. We went down a steep spur ending at a beautiful set of cascades in creek flowing steeply downhill to meet Hut Creek. This was a perfect spot for morning tea. Roger chose the spa seat and the rest of us sat on handy logs and rocks.



Roger takes morning tea in the creek



The rest of the party stayed dry around the edges

Morning tea was over all too quickly and we followed our creek downhill. This was hard in parts where we had to get past more cascades and falls, and easy in parts where the creek bed consisted of flat rock areas. Eventually we reached flatter ground where the creek was bushed up and soon we were having lunch on the banks of Hut Creek, within sight of a track.



Following the creek downstream to Hut Creek

After lunch we got onto the track and started heading west. Soon it became the great disappearing Hut Creek Track. Running close to the creek, the track petered out into impenetrable jungle. From here the creek was followed on the north bank, or the south bank, or in the middle, whichever offered the easiest way through. Everyone had a hand in finding suitable creek crossings and ways of maintaining progress westwards. Our maps suggested that Hut Creek Track would once again run close to the creek after a few hundred metres. The track was indeed there and we happily got on to it to complete our trip, beautiful though Hut Creek is in its increasingly wild state.



There were no other takers for these creek crossings



At last a track!

The day before I'd asked Roger what time he thought we'd be back at the cars – about 3 p. m. So I was quite impressed to walk up to my car at 14.55! We had travelled just 10km from last night's camp. Travelling with a group who know what they're doing in such terrain enhances safety. We were also being watched over by Sunraysia's 'SPOT' device which sent regular reports of our location to the Club contact in Mildura. The system provides a graphical report which gives a good indication of where we went:

The map displays a network of 48 sensor locations, numbered 1 through 48, distributed across a topographic landscape. The locations are connected by orange lines, forming a network topology. The map includes contour lines and a blue arrow pointing to 'RockTower Cam'.

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Next Meeting we will have the pleasure of a
trip through Turkey with Bernie.
So do keep the 5th December free
and come along for an enjoyable time.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

GRAMPIANS HIKE – THE UNAUTHORISED VERSION.



It came to pass in the third weekend in October that five Sunraysia Bushwalkers boarded the Rodeo Chariot and travelled to the place of a campground just beyond a spot called Buandik in the land of the Grampians. For it was here they encountered Antonio from the metropolis of Melbourne for a feast, heralding the start of two days and two nights in the wilderness.

In the morning, Roger, the Chief Seer said to his disciples, “I beseech you to follow me to the Mountain whose name is Thackeray – a peak we have yet to tread.” So they shouldered their burdens of some kilos and departed the green clearing and found the path that leads to the Fortress. And there were many flowers along that path until the junction where the track became narrower.

They traversed the trickling waters that were not long earlier the course of a mighty flood of mythical proportions. The path was no longer to be found, so yea they did walk up the side of the valley of Billywing to some higher points where they beheld the splendour of the Victoria Range. At the hour of the middle of the day there appeared the vision of a saddle formation on the forward horizon. So they travelled there through the saplings and up the inclines but their progress was that of walkers who had witnessed far too many seasons.

And lo, there before them was a monolith that held the promised campsite at its foundation. The small sandy clearing with a massive rock overhang ever so far above was a place of much beauty, but also the spot where many months earlier, one *William Capra Aegagru* had made the ultimate sacrifice. Fortuitously, there was a subsided depression in the sand sufficient for William’s interment and last rites. The earthly remains were sprinkled with much dust and then some stones on to which a small fire was set ablaze.

And two tents were set on this clearing beside the babbling waters, whilst the other tents were not much distance away. Here in the evening they did partake of their rations with great pleasure as behold – from two water bottles flowed a little wine from an excellent distant vintage! And the Seer did gaze into the burning flame and spake that the mountain of Thackeray was beyond the allotted time, so the next day they would cross over the heights to the valley of the creek called Hut.

In the early morning those who had reposed beneath the great overhanging rock spoke of the aromatic ghost of *William* that wafted through the night – for the ashes had joined the dust and become one.

Then the Seer led them to a place of six hundred and eighty metres above the oceans and downwards into the valley of the Hut Creek where the waters flowed across the stone slopes and ponds towards the lowlands. As they travelled they could see many of the grass trees had been stricken and perished from the pestilence, *phytopthera*.



They came to a low crossing where a track was found for a short distance but it became a false path as it ended mysteriously. But after more trekking beside the water course and a signal from the GPS of Antonio, they crossed the waters where behold, the bushes and reeds parted spectacularly. An old but clear roadway lead to the forest edge and our waiting vehicles that were never lost but nonetheless pleased to be found. And they did rejoice at the end of this two day journey on a rarely travelled road for it had been a marvellous adventure.

EUSTON BUSH RESERVE WALK 2ND November 2012



The afore mentioned walk was just a gently 1 klm evening stroll from the Cornell's to the Reserve and then a wander through the 10 acre area that Parks have fenced off from feral animals. The Reserve is a pristine area of natural mallee on a sandy ridge. The pressure of urbanisation, horticultural development and public activity has resulted in the decline and fragmentation of vegetation communities. Hence the need to try and save what little we have left particularly for the bird life that still remains.

Those who partook of the activity were Dick, Callum, Tom, Verna, Russell & Sandra, Michael & Joy (Club visitors), Barb & Roger. Fortunately the day had been a pleasant 25 degrees so we enjoyed very pleasant weather for our walk.

At the end of the walk it was decided that most of the group would continue on to the Cardross Store whilst a couple of us returned to get the cars and meet them at the store. The reason for the Store as our destination was the famous Cardy Burger. What a burger it turned out to be!



What a meal!



SUNRAYSIA BUSHWALKERS

PLANNED WALKS FOR 2012 & 2013

If you intend going on any of these trips please contact the Trip Leader by 8 pm the Thursdays beforehand so that arrangements may be finalized. Unless a minimum of 4 walkers (including the Trip Leader) have registered by Thursday evening walks may have to be cancelled.

| 2012 | Activity | Grade | Contact |
|--|---|--------------|---|
| November 7th | Meeting | | |
| November 17 - 18 | Canoeing the Murrumbidgee | ME | BarbCornell 50257325 |
| November 23-26 | Yea Tullerook to Mansfield High Country Rail/Trail bike ride 123 Kms Over 2 – 2.5 days. | | Michael Jobe 50238257 04005749988 |
| December 5th | Meeting | | |
| 2013 | | | |
| Feb. 2013 Either side of the Wooden Boat Show (8 – 11 th) | Western Arthurs – Tasmania 10 days | LH | Roger Cornell 50257325 |
| April 18 - 24 | Cradle Mountain - Waldheim Huts Day Walks 6 nights | | Roger Cornell 50257325 |

** For our grading system of activities refer to our website at <http://www.sunbushwalk.net.au/activities.html>

Next Meeting
Wednesday 7th November at 8.00 pm
at Drysdale's
2164 Fifteenth Street,
Irymple