

BUSH TELEGRAPH

2009 No. 1
AUTUMN



A Weekend on the South Coast by Sophie Weston

Inside this issue:

On the 1st to the 2nd of November 2008 a group from the club camped at Yadboro. We did two walks over the two days and I was very tired after it. On the way down to Nowra, where we met, it was pouring rain and we were all worried that we wouldn't be able to go on the walk but it cleared up by the time we got to Lake Conjola and we didn't get wet at all.

On Saturday afternoon we walked from Lake Conjola to Narrawallee. We walked along the coast line and it was really pretty. It was a very easy walk along a very flat trail. That night we drove to the camping grounds and set up our tents before we had dinner around the camp fire. Yadboro was a pretty camping area with streams to explore and cows to visit!

Early the next morning we were all up and ready to go. We packed up our tents and our bags and loaded them into the car before we had breakfast because we had all gotten up pretty early. Before we left, Thais found a tick on her leg but got it out quickly. We worked out later that the ticks may have come out of the tree she was camped under.

We set off at 9:30 for Pigeon House Mountain and were climbing the steep hill by 10:00. It was a long but great walk up and by the end we were climbing up steep stairs and ladders! The view up the top was great and we had lunch looking at all the surrounding mountains. We spotted lots of places including 'The Castle'.

On the drive home I discovered I had a tick on my leg. Mum and Dad tried to get it out but they were scared they would break the head off so we drove to Nowra hospital and a nurse got it out quickly there. I had a great weekend. Even though I was tired at the end of it, it was worth it.



Above: Pigeonhouse Mountain in Morton NP

Below: Sophie climbing the ladders at the top of Pigeonhouse Mountain



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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Mon 9TH MARCH 2009

We encourage all members to attend the Club's AGM.

This is where you get to have input into how the club runs and how it develops into the future.

Role descriptions will be available & great support is provided if you want to get involved.

Winter edition of the Program & Bush Telegraph also available this night! Come along!

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

BY BRUCE COCKROFT

Dangers in the Bush

It was a hot, sticky day in November last year. There were only 15 on Cheryl's walk. Four had pulled out at the last minute. (What's so good about Cheryl's walks? On most of my walks if four pulled out, I wouldn't have anyone left.)

It was a beautiful walk. Deserted beaches, heathland, forests, rugged cliffs and magnificent views over Broken Bay and Sydney's northern beaches. When I say there were only 15 on the walk, really there were thousands. The little bush flies thought it was a great day for an outing too. I heard someone choking and gagging behind me. They had made the mistake of opening their mouth and a little bush fly had flown straight down their throat. Yes, that could be one of the dangers of the bush.

For two of our group, this was their first walk with the club. I heard Gary warning one of them several times about the initiation rites we have for people doing their first walk. I suppose that is one of the dangers of the bush if you go bushwalking with Gary.

As we were nearing the end of the walk I was following Belinda. We were doing a good pace, well ahead of the others. I suddenly stopped, let out an exclamation and tried to get my feet to go backwards. Belinda had just stepped on a brown snake and it was squirming around everywhere and I thought if I stepped on it too, it might just bite me. Even though snakes normally get out of our way and don't normally bite unless they are threatened, it is a danger. However they are more frightened of us than we are of them, and with good cause. We are much more scary and dangerous. A lot more snakes get killed by people than people by snakes. (A few weeks later I was walking on my own in the Grampians in Victoria and stepped on a Red-bellied Black Snake. I made sure I was doing walks that had mobile phone reception while I was there, but walking on your own is a danger.)

It was after tea the night of Cheryl's walk that one of my nipples felt sore. When I lifted up my shirt to investigate I discovered I had another nipple above the one that felt sore. The one that was sore was actually my first bush tick. What do I do? How do I get this thing out that has buried its head in my nice soft flesh? I knew we had an expert in the Club on bush tick. Mike often gets bush tick. If you want to avoid getting bush tick, go on walks with Mike and stay close to him. They will always go for him instead of you. Even the bush tick know that he is much nicer than the rest of us.

Mike told me what to do. Don't put methylated spirits on him or it will kill him and make him harder to get out. Grip him with tweezers up near the head and give him a gentle twist and after a while he will come out. Careful not to pull his body off his head or it will be harder to get out. "You shouldn't have any trouble. He should come out okay."

However I still had a problem. Once I was flat-chested and would have

been able to see what I was doing. Half the population develop breasts when they are about 13. Mine developed when I was about 50 and I couldn't really see what I was doing under all that flesh. My middle son was home. He is great with computers but this is not a problem I would normally trust him with. My wife was home but it is not really her thing. My doctor daughter lives in Melbourne. My Sports Science son was in Kazakhstan. My youngest daughter was out, but that makes no difference. If she gets a splinter and I offer to get it out for her, she runs away screaming as soon as she sees the needle.

Andrew my computer son, kindly attempted to help me. In accordance with Mike's instructions he wrestled with it for about 10 minutes but couldn't get it to budge. Then Janet my wife agreed to see what she could do. She has multi-focal glasses and couldn't get the thing in focus. But she managed to remove quite a lot of it in bits and pieces. However I was still sure there was something in there so I decided to go to the Medical Centre. But I thought, "What if I get a doctor who doesn't even know what a bush tick is?"

The doctor knew what ticks were. He was used to them being on their household animals in India. He looked at it through the magnifying glass and said, "Yes there is still part of it in there. What you need is Kerosene. Do you have any Kerosene at home?" I said, "We have Methylated Spirits and Turpentine." He said, "No, it must be Kerosene. If you put Kerosene on it and hold it there for some time, it will draw it out. It will be like magic." I said, "Where would you get Kerosene at this time of night." He said, "Ring up one of your friends. Everyone has Kerosene." I thought, "I don't think they do in Australia these days."

Fortunately Woollies was still open, so I thought I would give them a try. The boy stacking the shelves didn't even know what Kerosene was. However I managed to find some. Sure enough, just as the doctor said, it worked

like magic. I soaked some paper towel and held it on my chest and the barbs came out.

Nobody got lost on Cheryl's walk. Pity! That would have been really good to include in my story about dangers in the bush. We didn't get any leeches either, but they are

not dangerous. We can all afford to donate a little bit of blood. Yes, bushwalking does have its dangers. But it is a lot of fun. Everything in life has its dangers, especially driving a car. We just need to be aware of the dangers and act wisely.

"What if I get a doctor who doesn't even know what a bush tick is?"

NEW MEMBERS

The following members are new to the Club. If you see them at meetings or on Club activities please say hello & make them feel welcome.

Safwan Barbour

Latha Maiya

Elizabeth Jones

Think Before You Trek

Think Before You Trek is a bush safety initiative between the NSW Police Force and the [National Parks and Wildlife Service](#). It aims to provide bushwalkers and adventurers in the Blue Mountains with a free loaned Personal Locator Beacon (PLB).

Every year around 130 bushwalkers get lost and/or require rescuing. Most walkers are found within 24hrs, but occasionally a weekend adventure can turn to tragedy. Between 2004 and 2007 nearly 400 people were reported missing in the Blue Mountains and surrounding area, which led to 200 search and rescue operations.

The Blue Mountains National Park covers over a quarter of a million hectares of land and has Australia's largest network of walking tracks covering over 250 kilometres. It is also NSW's busiest park with an estimated four million visitors a year. Much of the park is remote and difficult to access, except via foot, this makes it extremely attractive to bushwalkers from all over the world.

Think before you TREK promotes the benefits of planning ahead for your bushwalking trip by using an easy to remember acronym:

T - Take adequate supplies of food, water, navigation and first aid equipment.

R - Register your planned route and tell friends and family when you expect to return.

E - Emergency beacon (PLB's) are available free of charge from NSW Police Force and NPWS.

K - Keep to your planned route and follow the map and walking trails.

Personal Location Beacons (PLBs)

The PLBs donated by Benbro Electronics are available from November 2008 on loan from the NPWS Blue Mountains Heritage Centre at Blackheath, and after hours at the Katoomba or Springwood Police Stations.

The PLB units are part of the new digital system which sends more information when an emergency beacon is activated. This offers the advantage of precise location information

Every year around 130 bushwalkers get lost and/or require rescuing.

from the inbuilt GPS as well a unique identifying number so rescue authorities can send the appropriate resources more quickly.

Kosciusko National Park also hires out PLBs to bushwalkers for a small fee - contact the Tumut, Khancoban and Jindabyne NPWS offices for more information.

Personal satellite tracking devices or PLB's (Personal Location Beacons) are for emergency situations only.

BUSHWALKING TIPS

- [Contact the park office](#) or local visitor centre to ask about local conditions, tracks, creek or river water levels and fire danger. National parks offices and visitor centres throughout the Blue Mountains have experienced staff who have a wide knowledge of the local area.
- Leave full details of your planned walk with a relative or a responsible person. Include details about where you will be going, who is with you, what equipment you have, and when you expect to return. You can [download a trip intention form](#) to register your walk with the police or National Parks and Wildlife Services.
- Allow plenty of time to finish the activity in daylight, and pack extra food and water in case of unexpected delays.
- Weather can sometimes change quickly so walkers should be prepared for heat, rain and cold. Check the [Bureau of Meteorology](#) website for the latest weather forecast.
- At the very least, we advise that you carry:
 1. matches
 2. topographic map(s)
 3. a compass
 4. a space blanket
 5. a first aid kit
 6. raincoats for everyone in the group
 7. plenty of water
 - If possible try to have at least four people in your group. If there is an emergency, two can go for help, while the other stays with the injured or ill person.
 - Make sure there's at least one experienced person in the group who can guide and assist others.

EUROKA WEEKEND

BY THAÏS TURNER

On 6-7 December 2008 a camping weekend was held in Glenbrook NP. Initially planned for members new to overnight backpacking, there were none so we all drove, rather than walked, into the campsite. Very glad of having our cars and our supplies close by, we tried to keep in the shade while the temperature rose to about 39degrees. Several kookaburras were also trying to keep cool in the tree branches above us.

A lazy afternoon occurred on Saturday while people new to staying in tents learnt how to put up their new abodes. Once more people joined us towards the evening we went for a short walk to the Nepean River to test out Lynda's leg injury recovery level. In the evening we partook of gourmet food at our campsite in Euroka Clearing. The Bertrands were awarded a certificate at the Club Christmas Party for having provided us with the ultimate in gourmet food—quail! San Choy Bow and marinated chicken

wings were consumed as were various cheeses and delicious dips.

It rained overnight and was foggy in the morning but turned into another scorching hot day.

In the morning we drove to Mt Portal & Tunnel View Lookouts then to Pisgah Rock and Nepean Lookout and did short walks in each of these places to see the fantastic views of the Nepean River and down into Erskine Creek from the Jack Evans Track.

By early afternoon we were all glad to be heading home to cool houses after a relaxed & enjoyable weekend.



Above: 3 kookaburras trying to keep cool in the shade

Bushwalker Etiquette

Your walks and management committees

One of the joys of bushwalking is leaving the normal world behind. Bushwalkers tend to be one of the most easy-going, relaxed and accepting groups of people around. So the thought of bushwalkers having "etiquette" may come as a surprise.

If you think about it though, there is a generally agreed etiquette among any social group and bushwalkers aren't any different. Our etiquette may be relaxed and informal, but it's an important part of how people get on – sometimes in remote areas, and sometimes for extended periods of time. Following the guidelines below will help ensure that you don't cause offence.

Treating the Bush With Respect

Bushwalking is all about visiting places that are special because most people don't go there. So as the saying goes, "take nothing but photos, leave nothing but footprints". Take all litter out with you, even fruit and vegetable peels and seeds. These may not break down in a short time, or they may be eaten by animals who don't normally eat these foods which can have detrimental effects. The Bushwalkers Code has more guidelines on how to treat the bush.

Treating Your Leader with Respect

Leaders are volunteers. They spend time researching, planning and coordinating the trips and social activities you enjoy. Recognise this, and treat your leader with courtesy. Your leader will help with advice and travel arrangements, but they can't do it all for you. Everyone on a walk has to take responsibility for themselves and make sure they have enough fitness, the right gear and their transport arrangements sorted. And make sure you advise your leader that you will be on the trip before hand, and let them know if you can't make it so that the group doesn't waste time waiting for you. Follow any instructions in the program relating to contacting the leader with regards times to phone or which contact method they prefer.

Leaders know what's involved on the trip. If the leader asks some questions and they indicate that this trip isn't suitable for you please don't be offended or give them a hard time. They want you and the rest of the group to have an enjoyable, safe trip. If they have said "no" it's because they don't think you will enjoy it based on their knowledge of the trip and their experiences when they were new to walking too.

Take note of the information the leader provides about the walk too. If the leader tells you to carry certain food or clothing or other equipment make sure you do. If the description says rough terrain or stairs or some hundreds of metres of ascent and you don't enjoy these, please give this walk a miss and do one you will enjoy. Don't complain about the difficulty of the walk if these things have been made clear up front.

Once you are on the trip, make sure you keep the leader informed of any issues that arise for you and that you follow their instructions. And if you don't agree with the leader's judgment (especially with navigation) feel comfortable to politely question them and raise your concerns. Leaders can make mistakes, and won't mind if you question them, provided you are nice about it.

Treating the Group with Respect

Do your best to keep up with the group, and if you are having trouble with the pace discuss this with the leader so that they can factor your speed into their plans. If you like to stop frequently to take photos, check your phone for text messages or just take in the views, then please discuss this with the leader. There may be a good reason for not stopping frequently, like a desire to get back to the cars in daylight, or in time for an after walk coffee and chat. If the leader knows what your concerns are they can discuss alternate plans or let you know what the rationale is for the schedule they are following. Everyone on a walk wants to have a pleasant stress-free outing, and keeping together is one way to contribute to this. Whatever you do, don't just drop back and hope the group will wait for you. It is enormously stressful for the whole party if someone gets separated from the group.

Photographers please note. Not everyone likes having their photo taken, so be sensitive about shy people. And, once you have those photos of club activities make sure you share them with others via the club photo album.

Another issue relates to noise. If you take a mobile with you as a safety measure carry it in your pack, switched off. The other people on the walk aren't that interested in your personal phone conversations. Although conversation is one of the pleasures of walking, watch the volume. After all, how are you going to see all the wildlife around if you scare it off with loud noise?

A Final Word

Ultimately, we are all there for the enjoyment of the bush, the exercise, the opportunity to unwind and the company. So enjoy your walking, and the friends you will make along the way.

Bushwalking Code

Code of the Confederation of Bushwalkers NSW

Do not disturb our bushland

If you enjoy the pleasures of bushwalking and related self-reliant outdoor activities, you have a big responsibility to protect and preserve the natural landscape for the enjoyment of future generations. This guide will help you enjoy the bush without leaving your mark.

Be self reliant

Enjoy the natural landscape as it is, on nature's terms. Carry with you the things you need for your comfort and safety.

For shelter, carry a lightweight tent or flysheet, or use a cave or rock overhang. Avoid huts except when weather conditions are really bad, but be prepared to share the hut.

Do not camp in an overhang with Indigenous rock art, as the art can be damaged by dust, smoke and fumes (See 'Respect Indigenous heritage')

Tread softly

Keep walking parties small in number; four to six people is ideal.

Avoid popular areas in holiday periods when campsites are crowded.

Use existing tracks; don't create new ones. On zigzag paths, don't cut corners as this creates unsightly damage that leads to erosion.

In trackless country, spread your party out; don't walk in one another's footsteps. Avoid easily damaged places such as peat bogs, cushion moss, swamps and fragile rock formations.

Wade through waterlogged sections of tracks; don't create a skein of new tracks around them.

Except in really rough terrain, wear lightweight, soft-soled walking shoes or joggers rather than heavy boots.

Become proficient at bush navigation. If you need to build cairns, blaze trees, place tags, break off twigs, or tie knots in clumps of grass to mark your route, you are lacking in bush navigation skills. Placing signposts and permanent markers of any kind is the responsibility of the relevant land manager (such as the NPWS).

Watch your safety

Know what to do in emergencies. Rescue operations often cause serious damage, so take care to avoid the need for rescue.

Be properly trained in First Aid so you know how to handle illness and injuries.

Carry clothing and equipment to suit the worst possible conditions you are likely to encounter.

Carry a mobile phone if you want to, but use it only for summoning aid in an emergency. Keep it switched off until needed.

Pack it in, pack it out

Don't carry glass bottles and jars, cans, drink cartons lined with aluminium foil and excess packaging. If you can't resist carrying such things, don't leave them in the bush. Remember, if you can carry a full container in, you can easily carry the empty one out.

Remove all your rubbish including food scraps, paper, plastic, aluminium foil and empty containers. Don't burn or bury rubbish. Burning creates pollution and buried rubbish may be dug up and scattered by animals.

Digging also disturbs the soil, causing erosion and encouraging weeds. Carry a plastic bag for your rubbish. If you find litter left by irresponsible people along the track or around a campsite, please remove it.

Show you care for the environment, even if others don't.

When walking in scrubby country, do not strap closed-cell sleep mats or items in plastic bags outside your pack. The bush will be littered with pieces of foam and plastic.

Bushwalking Code

Continued from page 4:

Code of the Confederation of Bushwalkers NSW

Be hygienic

Ensure you are at least 50 metres from campsites, creeks and lakes, when going to the toilet. Wait until you get out of sensitive areas such as caves and canyons before defecating or urinating.

Bury all faeces and toilet paper at least 15cm deep. In snow, dig through the snow first, then dig a hole in the ground.

Carry out things that won't easily decompose, such as used tampons, sanitary pads and condoms.

Carry a lightweight plastic trowel or a large aluminium tent peg to make digging easier.

Keep water pure

Wash cooking and eating utensils well back from the edge of lakes and creeks so waste water falls on soil where it will be absorbed.

Prevent soap, detergent or toothpaste from getting into natural water systems. Similarly, when washing cooking utensils, don't use detergent and don't let oils and food scraps get into creeks or lakes.

Always swim downstream from where you get your drinking water.

Be VERY careful with fire

Have a fire only when you are absolutely certain you can light it with safety. A fuel stove is preferable for cooking and thermal clothing is better for warmth.

Always use a fuel stove in places where even a tiny fire may cause permanent damage. Places where fire lighting should be avoided include many rainforests, and all alpine regions.

Do not light fires: in hot, summer conditions

- in dry windy weather
- in declared 'fuel stove only' areas
- when there is a declared fire ban.



Always remember-

Fire doesn't destroy aluminium foil, and plastics release toxic gases when burnt. So carry foil and plastics out in your pack with all your other rubbish, including food scraps. Don't use your campfire as a rubbish incinerator.

If you light a campfire, follow these rules-

In popular campsites, light your fire on a bare patch left by previous fires. Don't light it on fresh ground.

Light your fire on bare soil or sand, well away from stumps, logs, living plants and river stones (which may explode when heated).

Definitely **don't** build a ring of stones as a fireplace. This is unnecessary and unsightly. Dismantle stone rings wherever you find them.

Sweep away all leaves, grass and other flammable material for at least two metres around your fireplace. (Major bushfires have been caused by careless campers who didn't take this precaution.)

Burn only dead wood that's fallen to the ground. Don't break limbs from trees or shrubs.

Keep your fire small - remember, the bigger the fool, the bigger the fire.

Before you leave-

Douse your fire thoroughly with water, even if it appears to be already out. Don't try to smother a fire by covering it with soil or sand as the coals will continue to smoulder for days. Only water kills a fire with total certainty.

Feel the ground under the coals. If it is too hot to touch, the fire is not out. Douse it some more.

Scatter the cold charcoal and ashes well clear of your campsite, then rake soil and leaves over the spot where your fire was. You should aim to remove all trace of it.

Choose campsites carefully

Think twice about using a popular campsite to avoid overuse. If possible, vary your route slightly so you can find an alternative site in a less frequented area.

Find an open space to erect your tent so it is unnecessary to clear vegetation. In difficult overgrown areas, trample undergrowth flat rather than pull plants out of the ground. A trampled spot soon recovers.

Use a waterproof groundsheet or tent with a sewn-in floor and you won't have to worry about surface runoff in wet weather. Avoid the temptation to dig drains around your tent. This practice damages the environment and is not acceptable

If you have to remove branches or rocks to create a tent site, replace them before you leave.

Leave your campsite pristine. After a few days it should be impossible to see where you were camped.

Protect Plants and Animals

Try not to disturb wildlife. Remember, you are the trespasser.

Give snakes a wide berth and leave them alone. They have more right to be there than you do.

Watch where you put your feet. Walk around delicate plants.

Don't feed birds and animals around campsites or they may become pests. Unnatural food can be harmful to many species.

Respect Indigenous heritage

Many places have spiritual or cultural significance for our Indigenous communities. Treat such places with consideration and respect.

Obtain permission from traditional landowners or the relevant land manager to visit sensitive areas.

Leave Indigenous relics as you find them. Don't touch paintings or rock engravings.

Be courteous to others

The sound of radios, CD players, mobile phones and similar devices is out of place in the natural environment. Leave the electronics at home. (See note under Safety concerning the acceptable use of mobile phones.)

Ensure your behaviour and activities don't disturb or offend others.

Camp as far away from other groups as conditions allow. Don't use another group's campfire without permission.

Leave gates and slip rails as you find them. When you open a gate, make sure the last person through knows it has to be closed.

Respect the rights of landholders and land managers. Don't enter private property without permission. In national parks, abide by plans of management and encourage others to do so too.

When in camp-

Do your share of getting firewood and water. When breaking camp, help to remove the remains of your fire (if you had one) and clean up the site.

Don't throw rubbish on a fire where people are cooking. In fact, don't throw rubbish on a fire at all; carry it out with you. (See section: Pack it in Pack it Out.)

Don't step over other people's uncovered food.

Offer what is required to help others in need. This could be your leader, who may be carrying group safety items, someone in the group who has injured themselves, or forgotten their billy, or another group who may not have communications to summon emergency medical aid. Recognise that some individuals may need your help but will never ask for it. Volunteer it.



CLUB MEETINGS EVERY MONTH

USUALLY HELD ON 2ND MONDAY OF MONTH—
EXCEPT JANUARY

**Arts & Craft Centre
Cnr Dale & Olympic Parades
Bankstown NSW 2200**

**Club email address:
bankstownbush@yahoo.com**

Contributions to this newsletter are always
welcome & can be emailed to Thais on
tmaturner@yahoo.com

Deadline for Winter issue is: Fri 17th April 2009

Meetings coming up in 2009:

March 9th Annual General Meeting
April 6th + Alaska slide night
May 11th + Caving info night

We're on the Web!
[www.geocities.com/
bankstownbush](http://www.geocities.com/bankstownbush)

Bicycle riding - Safety tips 1 to 10

Many club members are not only walkers but also keen cyclists so here are a few safety tips:

Sourced from Jan 2009 edition of Push On - Newsletter of Bicycle NSW

- **Protect your head.** Wear a helmet
- **Assure bicycle readiness.** Make sure your bicycle is adjusted properly.
- **Stop it.** Always check brakes before riding.
- **See and be seen.**
- **Avoid riding at night.**
- **Stay alert.** Always keep a look out for obstacles in your path.
- **Go with the flow.** Always ride on the left side of the road.
- **Check for traffic.** Always be aware of the traffic around you.
- **Learn the rules of the road.** Obey traffic laws.
- **Don't flip over your bicycle.** Wheels should be securely fastened.



Left: Jon & Thais participated in the November 2006 Sydney to Wollongong Bike Ride.

Watch out for bike rides in our club program as well as organised events run by BicycleNSW.

For further info look at: www.bicyclensw.org.au

Danger daisy on Alpine rampage - HAWKWEED ALERT IN KOSCIUSZKO NP

From 'The Land' newspaper 19/01/09

Danger daisy on Alpine rampage

RICHARD MACEY

Bushwalkers hiking in the Kosciuszko National Park have been urged to be on the alert for a dangerous escapee threatening havoc across the Snowy Mountains.

The villain is not a runaway convict, but an iridescent orange European daisy called hawkweed.

Keith McDougall, a Department of Environment and Climate Change botanist, said hawkweed's rapid spread could trigger an environmental disaster within our lifetime.

People making a sighting should keep their distance, but snap a digital photo and email it to the authorities, he said.

"It loves mountain landscapes and it has the frightening potential to change the appearance of the Australian Alps, smothering vegetation" and obliterating wildlife.

"This weed could even get into the bog systems and impact on the critically endan-

gered southern corroboree frog."

So named because the ancient Greeks thought hawks ate its sap to improve their eyesight, hawkweed may have been introduced into Tasmania early last century before being planted in Victorian gardens.

Despite intensive campaigns, the weed has infested 125 Victorian sites.

Now it has spread into Kosciuszko National Park.

Dr McDougall urged anyone coming across the weed to take a picture and email it, along with details of where it had been found, to him so it could be tracked down and eradicated.

"A map location would be good," he said, but "it's most important that they do not pick it".

Tiny barbs on the seeds cling to clothes, hair and even cars and trucks.

"Think of it as a common dandelion," he said, adding the seeds also blow great distances in the wind.

The weed grows so thick it carpets the ground, choking out native plants and animals.

Posters appealing for people to report sightings have been put up on Kosciuszko National Park walking trails and information centres.

Public help, Dr McDougall said, was vital.

"It only takes one seed to lodge in a remote rock within the park unnoticed and within a handful of years a small population grows, and then there are literally thousands and thousands of seeds being dispersed to other corners of the bush."

* Anyone finding hawkweed can email location details to

mcdougall.keith@environment.nsw.gov.au

Editor's note: Club members who have recently visited Kosciuszko NP report that there are signs everywhere about this weed, with pictures to help identify it.

SNIPPETS

- A big thank you to Linda Broschofsky for 3 years of editing this magazine during 2005 - 2008. A job well done!
- New Bushwalking Websites: Provision of free **downloadable maps**. Confederation has become aware of new websites relating to bushwalking. These websites provide free downloadable maps. Keith Maxwell, BWRS President, advises that caution should be exercised in using these maps and cited the 2007 death of a walker whose only map was found to be a sketch map. These type of maps do not provide the precise information that is contained in published copies of topographic maps.
- **First Aid** : The next St John Ambulance **Senior First Aid** will be held on May 23 / 24, 2009. Our weekend Senior First Aid courses are a great way to gain some basic first aid knowledge. There is some instruction on splinting and slinging of limbs which bushwalkers could find useful that is no longer commonly taught. The discounted fee of \$100 is a considerable saving to learn First Aid with fellow bushwalkers. Details of our first aid courses (including answers to all the common questions) are at the BWRS website - www.bwrs.org.au You must register on-line for any First Aid course. FULL payment is required to confirm your place in that course.
- Senior First Aid is worthwhile but **Remote Area First Aid** skills are even better. Please remember that the next Remote Area First Aid course will be May 2009 on 2 / 3 & 16 / 17. The course was designed by bushwalkers for bushwalkers with training that includes realistic scenarios held in a bush setting. This great course aims to answer the question – “what if medical care is hours away?” The discount cost of \$230 covers the TWO weekends training required and includes the necessary camping fees for the bush location (eg Camp Coutts, Waterfall). Successful trainees receive both a Senior and Remote Area First Aid Certificate.
- **Maps**: BWRS has become an accidental clearing house for unwanted maps via our **Map Sale**. There still are interesting map sheets that are worth adding to your collection. Many bushwalkers have expanded their library of maps at a great saving. For a list of maps see our website <http://www.bwrs.org.au/mapsale/index.html> The revived map sale has maps associated with many National Parks across NSW available at a great discount.
- BWRS is a long established community organisation that specialises in bush search and rescue. BWRS is an informal, friendly group that concentrates on doing not talking. PUT your bushwalking skills to good use. GET involved in BWRS! To join **Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad** contact our Secretary, John Tonitto on 9899 9463 / secretary@bwrs.org.au or visit our website at www.bwrs.org.au
- **Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)**: <http://www.amsa.gov.au/> Switch to digital 406 MHz prior to 1st February 2009 when the analogue 121.5 MHz beacons will no longer be detected. Your new 406 MHz PLB or other distress beacon must be registered with the AMSA otherwise your beacon is anonymous. Registration is FREE. Disposal of old beacons: <http://beacons.amsa.gov.au/index.asp>
- *Take A Walk in South-East Queensland* by John & Lyn Daly, has now been published. This is the ninth **book** in the **Take a Walk** series. All the new South-East Queensland Great Walks are included. There are also classic overnight walks in Lamington, Main Range, Mount Barney, Great Sandy and Girraween National Parks, and plenty of easy, moderate and hard day walks in all the popular parks. For more information, go to www.takeawalk.com.au
- **Navigation**: An interesting detail is that there are northern- and southern-hemisphere **compasses**. This has to do with the fact that the magnetic field lines, to which a compass needle aligns, point into the earth at the north and south magnetic poles. In the northern hemisphere the north end of the needle is pulled downwards, and the south end is counterweighted to balance the needle. When you use a northern hemisphere compass in, say, Australia, the south end of the magnet is pulled downwards by the magnetic field, and is also heavier than the north end - resulting in a needle that catches and drags on the bottom of the compass housing when the compass is held horizontal. This quote is taken from the web site: <http://www.williams.edu/Biology/Faculty...mpass.html>
- **Most compasses** are balanced for different zones ... Australia is Zone 5 and South America spans three zones, 2, 3 & 4 and yes it does make a difference. A compass balanced for Zone 2 will not be accurate in Zone 5 and vice versa. You can buy global compasses (such as a Silva Voyager 8010) and use it in any zone, but the construction of the compass is different. You can read more about this at <http://www.labsafety.com/refinfo/ezfacts/ezf313.htm> or <http://www.mapworld.co.nz/global.html> or Google 'compass zones' or 'global compasses' for a more detailed explanation and to see the zones.



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