Trip members: Bobby, Bruce, Ian, Lasso, Kshitij and myself.

We [the T/L's] had previously done a recce on this trip as I had seen a report by Tim Vollmer [http://fatcanyoners.org/] on an abseil that I wasn’t aware of, which goes from the ridge line above Devil’s Hole Track down onto the chockstone.

We had eventually found the easiest way to the top anchor and decided that we should put this on the programme, [which we did] BUT… the Gods were against us and the weather was atrocious, high winds and low temps made for a poor trip so we postponed, which brings us to this report…

We were going to run with just those that had missed out previously but Lynda thought that it would be fun to run a second group at the same time. This is easy to do as the Devil’s Hole area is full of options: Africa / Kilimanjaro, Devil’s Hole Chockstone [including the top option], Hoars Bed canyon, Skinnies [Moss Pit, Woolly Wombat], and not so far away is Boars Head.

So after putting it out there, we ended up with 2 groups, which strangely ended up as a group of guys and girls so it became a bit of a competition…well from our side at least!

We met up at the top of Devils Hole track, a wonderfully warm day with a gentle breeze. When we had arrived we found that Lynda had a ‘ring-in’ - Tyrone had joined the girls at a late stage to fill Thaïs’ spot. Game on…

The girls decided to do Hoars Bed canyon first, so we took Africa / Kilimanjaro, so we headed to the top anchor and Bobby did the honours and took off over the edge, [44mtr].

This was when Ric’s day started badly. I had forgotten my rack! I never take it off my harness [usually] but I had, and forgotten that I had, so I saw myself having to rap on something improvised.

Thankfully Kshitij had both a Hydrobot and a rack [which he loaned me]. So now fully kitted out again, we rapped Africa and proceeded to the top of Kilimanjaro, [48mtr]. Kili has a big overhang that takes you through the tree tops to the Devils Hole exit track, the views from here are fantastic and make the trip very worthwhile.

(Cont’d Page 3)
As I write this (mid October) the Walks Committee is in the process of finalising the Summer Program (i.e. Dec, Jan & Feb).

Many areas we regularly walk have been greatly affected by the terrible fires that have come with the hot start to Spring.

The Walks Committee have planned the Summer program around current National Park restrictions that apply for the affected areas.

But what members may not be aware of, is where Park closures/restrictions come from.

We all understand restrictions in burnt areas but what about unburnt areas?

Currently, if the RFS declares a Total Fire Ban in a particular area, National Parks close or place restrictions on all Parks in that area also.

For example there have been no fires in or near the Royal. But for each day a declared RFS Total Fire Ban applies, Park restrictions also apply. Usually all walking tracks close except Lady Carrington Drive. Roads and the Audley cafe remain open.

However, last week due to the ‘extreme’ forecast Lady Carrington was closed, as was access to Garie and Wottamolla.

Today, Sunday, is another Total Fire Ban and again all tracks are closed, including Lady Carrington.

It’s all for public safety.

Similar restrictions apply to other Sydney Parks as well.

To help its ‘customers’ National Parks have a new easy to find and read ‘Fires, floods and park closures’ section on their website.

Here you will find all the restrictions/closures in all NSW Parks, so please spend a couple of minutes checking the page.

Also to highlight the implications of these bans and closures, a new info box is found on the Club’s program front page, titled ‘Please Note: Fire Risk, Walks and Canyons’. Please read and take note of its requests. It is for the benefit of all members.

Oh, and be aware that the RFS fire bans are often declared less than 6 hours before they apply.

For a weekend, that may mean 6pm Friday evening for the Saturday. Activity plans may need to change at short notice.

And, this morning, the weather bureau’s guidance for the next 3 months was not looking good. Continued warm/hot temps with winds and below average rainfall. Overall, not what Sydney or the State needs.

So there is a distinct possibility of changes/postponements/cancellations to the Summer activities.

Keep up to date by reading any emails on googlegroups that advise of any changes.

This also includes the possibility of short notice activities. Perhaps suburban walks. There are lots of good ones around.

Hopefully, the rain we desperately need arrives soon. Not as a belting storm, but nice and steady so that it soaks into the soil and freshens up our lives, the bush and our yards.

And during the week would suit most people as well!

See you out there.

Mike Robinson

El Pres

**VALE RICK JAMIESON**

A memorial service for Rick Jamieson was held on Thursday 31 October 2013 at Bowen Mountain Park, Bunya Crescent, Bowen Mountain.

The family appreciated the deep respect many people in the outdoor fraternity had for Rick.

Tim Vollmer (canyoner) writes:

“I have just received news that Rick Jamieson passed away earlier today. Below is a short email from Adrian Cooper -- a close friend of Rick's -- with some details. It also provides a brief summary of Rick's contribution to outdoor activities around Sydney, especially through his involvement with the Scouts.

While Rick has long divided opinions in the canyoning community.......there can be no question that his guide books have played an extremely significant part in promoting and expanding canyoning in the Blue Mountains.

It would seem that the latest version, the fifth edition he produced, will be the final one we see.”

Adrian Cooper writes:

“Many of you will have known, or at least heard of, Rick: he passed away today at 1pm, after several bouts in hospital. He was suffering a massive heart problem.... It has been sad to see such a mighty man deteriorate so soon. I’ve been privileged to have been his friend since the fifties; he shared my early rock climbs and introduced me to caving at Bungonia.

He wrote the ‘bibles’ for Senior Scouts (now Venturers) and NSW Canyoneers. Until very recently he assisted on climbing courses for Venturers. I collaborated with him and others in producing the ‘Senior Scout Songbook’. Rick was also a bush poet and folk singer.

Vale RJ.”
We tracked around to the exit and headed up to turn off through the pagodas to the Hoars Bed canyon. The girls were going great guns and seemed to be well ahead of us guys. Bobby was really great and gave the boys some ‘well chosen words of encouragement’…..!

We made it to the first rap [10mtr] then headed under the chockstone and to the 8mtr rap which most of us did hand over hand except for me, who slipped and slid most of the way down to everyone’s enjoyment.

We proceeded through the short rainforest to the final rap, [30mtr]. We had a 60mtr rope which we halved and hoped would reach, so after setting the rope I had a look and was about to rap when I decided to make sure I had prussiks to ascend in case it didn’t reach…..DOH! No prussics…..

I pulled myself back up and let Bobby go first, shaking his head…and Yes the rope just touched the ground. We all rapped, and could hear the Girls on the Kili rap which is about 50 metres away.

We walked around to the landing area and watched the girls rap through the trees. Rosa had a novel way of doing this by ‘having a rest’ in the top branches and ‘exiting almost upside down’.

We all walked around to the exit track for the second time and headed for the small cave which leads to the Chockstone, for lunch.

After lunch we all headed up to the ridge line and proceeded to the drop off point that lead us to the climb up into the saddle between 2 pagodas.

It looked worse than it really is and all made short work of the climb, then we headed out to the edge of the cliffline and rapped down onto the chockstone, where the cliff face is strewn with small ironstone ledges that could make short work of our rope, but once on rope there are no rub points, so we rigged the chockstone using the rings on the same wall and moved everyone straight down to the track below.

Once everyone was down we headed the 3rd and final time back up the Devil’s Hole exit track and to the cars, which strangely also led us to Katoomba, for what was probably the most expensive coffee and cake I’ve ever had…..[note to self: get out earlier and go to Vee’s].

Despite the coffee and cake, the missing Prussiks, the face plant in the canyon, and the missing Rack, the day was a big success and one we can do again, and again, and always have a different abseil option to do.

Pics of this trip can be viewed here: [https://plus.google.com/photos/100287664285036662816/albums/5927500399664548577?authkey=CLi0q8GXmIgLgjwE](https://plus.google.com/photos/100287664285036662816/albums/5927500399664548577?authkey=CLi0q8GXmIgLgjwE)

My thanks to Kshitij for the pics and to Tim Vollmer for his assistance and input.

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**YARRANGOBILLY WEEKEND**

**BY LOUISE HARVEY**
Recently I was reading this interesting article by George Elliott who had read the book "The Ways of the Bushwalker: On Foot in Australia" by Melissa Harper (2007).

He refers to her account of an historic figure: George Bouchier Worgan, a surgeon on the First Fleet. From a letter written to his brother in May 1788 George tells his brother of packing his pack with salty meat, damper and spirits. He would throw it on his back, take a hatchet, a musket, and some pistols and off he and his comrades would go into the woods, sometimes camping overnight. He describes preparing his shelter, piling wood and lighting a fire. After eating and drinking heartily they would sleep well. He reveals to his brother Dick of his enjoyment of these "rambles"

Although Governor Arthur Phillip's duty was to explore the terrain and George Worgan took part in expeditions to the lower Hawkesbury / Broken Bay and the mid Nepean, it was clear that he enjoyed being in the bush. He often volunteered to search for people lost in the dense bush around Sydney Cove.

Elliott ponders as to whether George Worgan could be considered as Australia's first European bushwalker. He comments that the jury is still out. He names William Dawes and Watkin Tench who ventured into the Blue Mountains as explorers. He classifies Joseph Banks who roamed the Botany Bay area as a naturalist. Unlike Worgan who, it seems, walked solely for pleasure, these individuals had a purpose behind their trips.

At the conclusion of his essay George Elliott informs us that George Worgan died in 1838 at 81!

My final word is whether the book is available to go into the proposed library? (Ed.: Maybe soon)

Malaita Wall

By Ric Webber

Danny had put Malaita Point on the programme, and as it had been a number of years since I had done the Wall, I asked if I could put this on the same date, which he agreed on. So this report is on the Wall only.

The day was a typically beautiful Bluies day, gone were the wild winds and biting cold that we had experienced only a short while ago, so the day looked great.

We all met at Katoomba Scenic World car park and headed to the turn off for the Point, where we split and took our respective group onwards. [Our group consisted of Mike, Louise, Susan, Chris, Kshitij, Laslo and myself].

My memory of the track was vague but the track is well worn and distinct. When we reached the top anchor I was amazed at the construction, as there were more chains than I have ever seen at an abseil, and you could have airlifted half of Katoomba on them! Anyway, we set the rope [45mtr] and I went first. With the weight of the chains we thought that taking the chain under the rock was best, nope...going over was the way on, and everyone else had an easy first rap to the small pinnacle below. Interestingly, it used to be that you had to move to the right to land on the pinnacle, with the new chain setup you land just left of centre, which is much better.

The pull down [in the past] was also 'tricky', but again the new chains seemed to have fixed that also. Next rap was off the pinnacle [28mtr], and onwards we pressed, occasionally glimpsing the other group as they made their way down. The group was moving well, rap 3 has an overhang halfway down and lands on a narrow ledge, and to the right is rap 4 [31mtr]. We were quite close to the other group now and the calls were beginning to be mixed, add to that a couple who materialized lower and to the right of us, also calling out, and it became a little confusing!

We headed toward the final rap 5 and took the 45mtr option landing at the Federal Pass track. I can't remember what time we took, but met up with the Point group at the optional rap 7 for lunch, and swapped stories. After Bruce, Ian and Paul had set the sling we did the rap, only to find Ian had used the shortest rope he could find, that only just reached!

After the days adventures we had no other option but to stop off at 'Vees' for coffee and cake to top off a great day out.

[Pics of the trip can be seen at: https://plus.google.com/photos/100287664285036662816/albums/5918191658170896977?authkey=CPPr58v7C3JDmjAE. Many thanks to Kshitij for taking them]
I'm sure we are all saddened by the devastation of the fires in the Blue Mountains. Although we've not lost our houses many of us have lost a little of our other home in the bush. This is particularly true for the keen canyoneers among us, with the “State Mine” fire wiping out two major canyon areas.

At the time of writing (26 October) all of Blue Mountains NP was closed other than a couple of lookouts, and all of Wollemi NP was also closed.

After the parks reopen (and that isn't likely to be until after a good, soaking rain has extinguished the fires) then we will have to plan our walks and canyons carefully to avoid further damaging the fragile bush as it regenerates.

The maps show the burnt areas as at the evening of Friday, 24 October. At this time the fires were fairy stable, but were still burning, so if there have been strong winds since then the actual borders may be quite different.

**Newnes Plateau Canyons**

The canyons in the southern part of the Newnes Plateau have been burnt. This means that the canyons which join Bungleboorie Creek known as the “Hole in the Wall” or “Waratah Ridge” canyons will be off limits for quite a while. Dumbano Canyon (which I'd planned to explore this season) has also been burnt.

It looks like the canyons around Galah Mountain (Rocky Creek etc) will be fine. Pretty much anything north of Deep Pass should be OK. As will the canyons off Sunnyside Ridge Rd – but we’ve only just visited these. It is possible that the roads to this area will be closed for some time though. They will only be reopened once they have been cleared and the authorities are confident that falling trees won’t be a danger to vehicles using the roads. Details of relevant park and road closures should be published here [http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NationalParks/parkFireClosure.aspx?id=N0051](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NationalParks/parkFireClosure.aspx?id=N0051).

**Newnes Canyons**

The canyons that feed into the Wolgan River down in the valley haven't burnt. They are likely to be busy with so many other closures, which gives us the perfect opportunity to explore some of the less-visited ones provided the park reopens.

**Wollangambe Canyons and Canyons along the Bells Line of Road**

The Wollangambe and all of the canyons flowing into it have been burnt. It will be some years before we enjoy another Mt Wilson canyon weekend. I have received information that North and South Bowens creek canyons are unburnt, but it’s not confirmed. I certainly hope it’s true, but I had heard that the fire was heading for Range Hill at one point during the week so it may have simply passed over Bowens Creek, with the surrounding area burnt. There is a strong chance that park closures will be applied on a blanket basis and that all canyons north of the Bells Line of Road will be closed.

South of the Bells Line of Road the situation appears to be that most, if not all of the canyons west of Mt Banks have either been burnt or are likely to be closed. This means canyons like Yileen and Dalpura are likely to be burnt. So far the fire has not come near the Carmarthen canyons (Clastral, Thunder, Ranon) and there is a chance these will reopen this season.

**Canyons on the Katoomba Side**

Some canyons around Blackheath (Hat Hill, Crayfish Creek) have been burnt. Grand, Juggler (Pilchers), Fortress, Butter-box, and Empress currently look like they will be available once the parks reopen. I have some plans to explore some canyons off Kings Tableland and these are advertised on the Summer program.

**Other Canyon Areas**

Although we have lost a lot of prime canyon country there are still plenty of other areas. Kanangra and Bungonia offer a different style of canyon to the sandstone slot canyons of the Blue Mountains and Wollemi. Macquarie Rivulet is another option.

**A Final Comment**

This summer is likely to be an extreme fire danger season, and many walks and canyons may be cancelled or relocated at short notice due to park closures or the level of fire risk. Please make sure you check your email in the lead up to any trips you have booked in for, or make sure that you have made it easy for the coordinator to contact you so that you are informed of any last minute changes to plans.
CLUB MEETINGS EVERY MONTH
USUALLY HELD ON 2ND MONDAY OF MONTH—
EXCEPT JANUARY

Georges Hall Community Centre
188 Birdwood Road
Georges Hall NSW 2198
Club email address:
bankstownbush@gmail.com

Contributions to this newsletter are always
welcome & can be emailed to Thaïs on
tmaturner@yahoo.com
Deadline for Autumn issue is: Fri 31st Jan 2014

Meetings coming up in 2013-2014:
December  Christmas party on 9th
January    No meeting
February   10th

We’re on the Web!
http://
www.bankstownbushwalkingclub.org.au

NEW MEMBERS
The following new members have joined us in the last few months.
Please make them welcome when you meet them on an activity.
Malveena Hanley           Michael Beames
Jordan Ross               Laurence Nguyen
Wai Lin McCaul

BOTANICALS from Bronwyn
Answers:  (did you make the right matches?)
acacias                   wattles
actinotus minor           lesser flannel flower
banksias                  banksias
caladenia catenata        lady's fingers
dampiera stricta          no common name
dillwynia retorta          eggs and bacon
doryanthes excelsa        gymea lily
epacris                   fuchsia heath
grevilleas                grevilleas
hardenbergia violacea     false sarsaparilla
hibbertia scandens         climbing guinea flower
hybanthus monopetalus     slender violet
isopogon anemonifolius    drumsticks
kennedia rubicunda         coral pea
lomandra longifolia       spiny-headed mat rush
patersonia sericea        native iris
persoonia                 geebung
reteopea speciosissima    waratah
xanthorrhoea glauca       grass tree

The Blue Mountains ... we adore them,
Where mountain trails are oft traversed,
Each generation of bushwalkers,
Believes their experience is the first.

But what of those who went before us?
Mapped the rugged bush terrain,
And lobbied Government Officials,
So the mountains could remain.

Each succeeding generation,
Can thank each hardy soul,
Who pioneered the Wild Dog Ranges,
And found the Devil’s Hole.

Walked the Narrow Neck peninsular,
Found a way down from Clear Hill,
Helped Tarro build his ladder ...
A monument that’s with us still.
Climbed Mount Solitary, Ruined Castle,
Blazed the landslide trail of rocks,
Forged their way to far Kanangra,
Splendour Rock, Black Dog, the Cox ...

As well as saving mountains blue,
They lobbied Sutherland Shire ...
For Royal National Park and Heathcote too,
They endlessly did tire.

There walkers of the Twenties,
And of the Thirties too,
We have a lot to thank them for,
More than any of us knew.

Many of these pioneers,
Lost their lives in World War Two,
The plaque that stands on Splendour Rock,
Gives them an everlasting view.

Of their loved great Blue Mountains,
Their boots still echo on the track,
You can hear them if you listen,
All you who travel pack on back.

[This poem was written by Joan Morison. The poem has been copied, with her permission, from her book of poetry, “Poetic Licence”.]
Contributed by Lyn McMillan
Suggestions from Blue Mountains City Council Bushcare Officer—Peter C:

**Australian Native Plants For Fire Protection:** These plants have been found to provide some degree of protection during bushfires. Fire Resistant Plants ... plants that will not burn in the face of continued flame. Fire Retardant Plants ... plants that will not burn in the first wave of a bushfire, but may burn once dried out. Pittosporum undulatum Sweet Pittosporum

**PLANT SELECTION IN BUSH FIRE PRONE AREAS**

While the design of the garden is important, so too is the plant species selected. No plant is fireproof, however, many plants have features that minimise the extent to which they contribute to the spread of bushfires. Given the right conditions, all plants will burn. Low to moderate fires scorch or burn plants. Severe fires cause more damage and high-intensity fires incinerate plants. Fire Resistant Plants, which are hard to burn, have the following features:

- High moisture content
- High levels of salt
- Low volatile oil content of leaves.

**The following suggestions can reduce the threat of bush fire:**

Ensure vegetation does not provide a path for the transfer of fire to the house.

Spread the plants out so that they do not form a continuous canopy.

Do not plant species directly up against buildings.

Avoid plants that retain or accumulate dead leaves and twigs - These are very flammable, especially if this material is continuous from the ground to the crown. Trimmed cypress hedges, for example, are an extreme fire hazard.

Avoid Plants with high levels of volatile oils in leaves - Eucalypts, Callistemons and Melaleucas burst into flames on heating and increase fire intensity. In eucalypts, the amount of volatile oil in foliage can be over 4%, whereas conifers have up to 2% and Callistemons and Melaleucas up to 1%. Generally the figure is less than 1% for Acacias, Grevilleas and Hakeas. Introduced deciduous and evergreen hardwoods have the lowest amounts with less than 0.1% of volatile oils.

Avoid trees with loose, fibrous or stringy bark - This can easily ignite and encourage fire to spread through the crown of the trees. Wind can carry burning bark, especially loose, flaky or ribbon bark, away to start new fires. Use trees that have smooth bark.

Clear all fine fuels, namely grass, leaves, bark and twigs - These fuels will ignite and burn easily.

Fine fuels should be cleared from around the house and the lawn should be kept well watered and short. Clear all fuels from around the base of trees. This will decrease the likelihood of damage to the tree.

- **From the Harveys:** Ania, Louise, Ian and Paul B. all recently successfully completed the Remote Area First Aid Course run by David Sheppard. Shep loves BBC members so will give you a warm welcome if you have been thinking about it for next time around.

- **Bush Trackers:** The aim of the Bush Trackers Project is to show kids and their families how easy and fun it is to spend time in nature, especially close to home in the Blue Mountains National Park. The website contains maps of child friendly bush walks in the Blue Mountains which have been chosen by children and drawn by children. The project is an initiative of the Stronger Families Alliance. Bush Trackers is supported by the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service and Blue Mountains City Council. Find the maps at www.bushtrackers.com.au

- **Blue Mountains Festival of Walking:** This event occurred in mid-October, just before the fires. Next year let’s try to have some free walks led by bushwalking clubs. See it online at: www.festivalofwalking.com.au

- **Jamison Creek:** Jamison Creek at Wentworth Falls is not yet completely recovered, but is showing promising signs, after a 2012 chemical spill which saw 1000 crayfish killed. Stream health is being monitored by Blue Mountains City Council Aquatic systems officers. Some healthy populations of crayfish have returned. The pest control company has been prosecuted.

- **Environment and Conservation:** Conservation groups are concerned about the ramifications of the State Govt’s proposed NSW Planning System; approval plans & policy for mines; horse riders in the Kanangra-Boyden catchment areas; burning of NSW forests for electricity; and climate change impacts. See www.colongwilderness.org.au

- **Tracks & Renewals:** Point Pilcher Track into the Grand Canyon Track has been restored recently by NPWS & canyonoers. Lower Blue Mountains has had a new downhill Mountain biking track opened around Knapsack Reserve. Glenbrook NP ranger station entrance has been changed and landscaped & the railway station car park is soon to receive an upgrade as well. Scenic World’s iconic Scenic Railway is still the steepest in the world but now there are new carriage and other upgrades to the site. Blue Mountains Visitor Centre in Katoomba (part of the Cultural Centre) is highlighting the ‘bushwalk of the month’. It’s great to get the recognition this activity deserves.

- **Rescues:** Accidents continue to occur in the Blue Mountains environment. In Sept a man and his 7 yr old daughter fell while hiking on the Mt Solitary track and had to be winched to safety. Gary Tweedle, missing from the Fairmont in Leura in mid-July was found by a rescue helicopter on a training exercise 6 weeks later in a crevice and amongst trees near the rock climbing area known as Sweet Dreams, at Sublime Point.

- **International Camping Festival:** check out the pics at Mount Wugongshan in Jiangxi Province where 15,000 people pitched their tents. http://au.totaltravel.yahoo.com/travel-ideas/galleries
For specials, 
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