



## A RIGHT ROYAL RAMBLE

By Jon Gray

### Bundeena to Otford Backpack 31/1-1/2/09

The four of us met up on the train to Cronulla that fine Saturday morning for the start of our weekend backpack in Royal National Park. There was myself, Garry Dobie, and two first time backpackers, Lianne Barnes and Carol Weston – I was hoping it would be a good introduction to the joys of backpacking for them. Catching the cute little ferry across to Bundeena was a great way to start our mini adventure.

By 9 o'clock we had our packs on and were on our way proper and were soon enjoying the magnificent coastal scenery. It was however warming up towards a stinking hot day so we enjoyed the cooling coastal breeze when we got it, and our water bottles were soon getting a good workout. About midday we stopped at the kiosk at Wattamolla where we bought and swilled down some nice cold water. Now this might be considered sort of cheating by bushwalking purists so don't tell anybody, will you? The icy poles went down well too!

Shortly afterwards we arrived at the delightful freshwater pool on Curracurrang Creek for lunch and a much needed swim. I swear I heard the water sizzle as I plunged in. Ahhhh, heaven! Several large water dragons soon appeared, inspecting our belongings for any tasty morsels. Another swim after lunch, but all too soon we had to leave our little oasis and venture out into the hot open track again.

As we went on Carol began having a bit of trouble with a dicky knee and a twinging back. As leader, I naturally felt it my duty to help, which I attempted to do by tightening her waist strap to allow her to get more weight off her shoulders. So imagine my anguish when all I succeeded in doing was



*No shortage of great views here!*

to break the buckle! Now all the weight would be on her shoulders - well done Jon! She kindly tried to allay my guilt by assuring me her pack was an el-cheapo Aldi special and I shouldn't feel too responsible.

Anyway, she kept up a brave face as we pushed on in the hot sun for the rest of the afternoon. The closer we got to our proposed day's destination the more her, and all of our, spirits rose. Eventually, just before dusk we made it to our campsite at North Era, by which time I think we were all really enjoying the experience once again. A swim in the surprisingly chilly surf further helped to revive us all.

A pleasant evening was had with pre-dinner drinks and nibbles, then dinner around the warm and hypnotic glow of a small Coleman lamp (no fires allowed). Garry's upmarket cask wine went down very nicely. Then we all retired to the comfort of our tents, oh, except for Carol who didn't have one - she had to sleep under the stars (but for the record, I had offered her a place in mine if she should need it!).

*Continued Page 2*

### Inside this issue:

A Right Royal Ramble	1
President's Piece & award winners	2
A Right Royal Ramble (cont'd)	2
Walks Committee Report 2008-2009	3
Social Committee Report 2008-2009	3
Easter in Kosciuszko National Park	4
Adventure Before Dementia—NZ	5
New members	5
Snippets	6
A Wet Weekend at Mount Wilson	6
March Flies	7
Abseil Committee Report 2008-2009	7

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

Postal address:  
**P.O. Box 7061, Mt. Lewis NSW 2190**

Phone no.: (02)  
**97739141**

## PRESIDENT'S PIECE

BY BRUCE COCKROFT

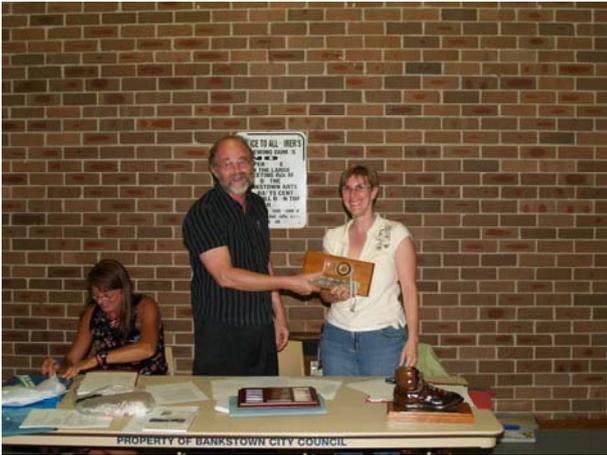
Annual Report – 2009

I think we have had a good year in the Club.

Our membership at 119 remains similar to last year. Of the 30 people who have taken out temporary membership this year approximately one third have converted to full membership, one third still continue as temporary members and the other third have not renewed.

The number of people on walks seems to be increasing. The average walk now seems to have about 8 to 10 people. Sometimes there are about 20 and one walk even had 30 people. Some of the leaders are now putting a limit on the number of people they will take.

I want to thank all who have served our club in their various capacities during the year. It is good to be part of a team of enthusiastic people who are very willing to play their part. Thanks to all those who have willingly taken on responsibilities. Thank you too to everyone who helps make our club a friendly and fun group to belong to.



*Belinda receives her Leader of the Year award.*



*Belinda receives The Boot!—as the most popular vote for Club Member of the Year.*



*Louise and Mike were the winners of the Ross Hamilton Shield for the Paddy Pallin Rogainers of the Year in 2008.*

### A Right Royal Ramble

by Jon Gray

*Cont'd from Page 1:*

We all surfaced bright and cheery the next morning, even Carol who had survived the night without being too disturbed by mozzies, snakes, wombats or any other wildlife. After venturing in for another refreshing swim we were off once again, ready to enjoy more grand coastal walking. We passed through more of the unique little huts of South Era and Burning Palms and agreed it would be rather nice to own one ourselves. But this won't happen, as the NPWS no longer allows them to be sold or transferred by the current owner. Hopefully a few of the nicer ones will be retained for their heritage value. The intriguing littoral rainforest around Burning Palms was another highlight of our walk.

The promise of some tasty fruit pie and ice cream and other treats at the Otford Café was a great temptation that spurred us on over the last few kilometres. So, pleasantly tired and in high spirits we made it to the café around 1 pm and were soon enjoying the delights that we had been salivating over.

An hour or so later we were whizzing back to Sydney on the train, looking back on what we all agreed had been a most enjoyable and satisfying walk. Even the two first timers, Carol and Lianne, had forgotten the occasional tough bits and were already talking about future backpacks – a sure sign the trip had been a success!



*We made it!*

### Walks Committee Report - 2009

Once again our club has been able to provide a range of walks and other activities to suit all levels of fitness and experience. One of the strengths of our club is the diversity of the activities on offer which varies from easy walks with lots of coffee shop opportunities through to canyons and harder exploratory walks with a large off-track component. And our leaders make this possible. The walks committee would like to extend its thanks to all of our leaders, be they "regulars" or those who can only fit a walk or two each year into their schedules.

It's also good to see that most programmed activities have had a strong attendance from members, with decent sized groups coming along. This encourages our leaders to organise even more walks. But it is disappointing to see that there is little interest in overnight walks. Members of the walks committee are keen to encourage new members to try overnight backpacks. The experience of carrying your gear into the bush and setting up camp to enjoy the bush in the evening and early morning, not to mention the night sky from around the camp fire, is one which we'd like to see more club members enjoy. It's not as hard as you think, and we will be putting an occasional easy overnight walk on future programs so people can experience the joys of backpacks. Why not give one of these a try? The club has equipment for hire to help you experience an overnight trip. Plus many of the experienced walkers are always keen to offer advice and assistance.

As well as our usual activity of putting the walks program together each quarter, this year the walks committee organised a navigation night, a first aid information night, and a 'what to take on a day walk' night. Although some members did turn up for these nights, it is obvious that the main way people learn about bush safety issues is by talking to other members on walks. We encourage all of our more experienced walkers to share their knowledge and advice with newer members and less experienced walkers so that everyone in the club learns what to carry, and the correct etiquette for bushwalking.

The issue of walker's etiquette and educating members on the Bushwalking Code published by the NSW Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs was the subject of an article in the latest Bush Telegraph. We encourage all members who haven't yet read this article to read it on pages 4 & 5 of the Autumn Bush Telegraph. You'll find a link to the Bush Telegraph on the club web site at <http://www.geocities.com/bankstownbush/index>.

Remember, our club would not exist without leaders willing to give their time to lead trips. We are always responsive when people volunteer to lead something and will fit it into the program on a date and time they prefer. Different leaders add variety. Even if you can only fit one trip into your schedule the Walks Committee will gladly find a spot for you.

See you in the bush.

The Walks Committee 5th March 2009

### SOCIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

APRIL 2008 – MARCH 2009

Once again, with the help of a number of members we managed to have a fairly full social calendar.

There was a good variety of outings and trips which included a Wine Makers Dinner; a social night at the Piano Bar; Yum Cha; weekends away, one to Erowal Bay (walking, kayaking and of course eating) another at Brooklyn (which included a walk and a trip to Mooney Mooney Markets); a Bollywood Night; Padstow TAFE & Thai dinner, the Annual Bush Dance, afternoon BBQ's, and the Illawarra Fly – tree top walk.

The two major events for the year were the Christmas in July and our annual Christmas Party in December.

Christmas in July was held at Trish Hamilton's, where a small number of Santa's helpers transformed her courtyard into a Winter Wonderland complete with fairy lights, Christmas tree and open fires. Approximately 25 revellers sipped on Mulled Wine and feasted on a winter Christmas Dinner, the Christmas spirit was definitely present.

The Annual Christmas party was once again a huge success; our numbers seem to be increasing each year. The food as usual was delicious with a great selection of seafood, hot and cold meats, salads and of course the desserts and wonderful door prizes. Once again Santa's helpers worked hard with the table decorations that put the finishing touches to the makings of a really enjoyable night.

Of course January just wouldn't be the same without the Symphony and we would like to thank Garry who once again gave up his whole day to ensure that everyone had a great spot to relax and enjoy the evening.

Music in the Overflow was changed to Saturday evenings this year but once again the entertainment each week was great.

As mentioned at the beginning of this report our social calendar would not be the success it is without the help of a number of people. We will not mention names for fear that we might forget somebody important, so we would just like to say thank you to everybody concerned for all of the support and help throughout the year.

The Social Committee  
Janelle, Judy, Louise & Trish



Enjoying a game of bocce - Easter weekend at Coleman Mountain campsite.

## Easter in Kosciuszko National Park

by Belinda Rothery

For the Easter long weekend a group of 17 members camped at Cooleman Mountain campsite in Kosciuszko National Park. The group began to gather on Thursday, with Danny and Peter arriving in time to scare away interlopers from our campsite. Apparently, the mere whisper of 'another dozen people turning up' is enough to make prospective neighbours quickly jump back into the car and move to the furthest part of the campsite possible. Myself, Joy, Bobby, Garry and Lianne all arrived later that afternoon and chose the best spots for our tents.

Friday morning saw the assembly of a shelter and tarp in the rain to make a kitchen and dining room. Of course, once they were up, the rain stopped for the rest of the day, but they were much appreciated during the evenings when it did rain. After all the hard work was done, Lynda, Jackson, Stef, Bruce, Mike and Louise all turned up in quick succession and we got to watch them wander around trying to find a good spot and put their tents up. A massive group effort saw the erection of Isabelle and John's enormous 3-years-old-but-never-been-used-before tent. Once all the tents were up and people had been fed and watered it was decided that we would check out Cave Creek and the pokey caves that are reportedly along there. The walk through the gorge was lovely and the caves were pokey. Murray Cave managed to impress us all with some fabulous features that were entirely unexpected due to the bad descriptions available in the book. Another reinforcement of the rule 'never believe what is written in the guidebook'.

When we arrived back at the cars, we found Ron and Helena looking for us. We directed them back to our campsite and then on the drive back to the camp we all went and looked at Coolamine Homestead which was lovely in the late afternoon sun. Back at camp, Ron and Helena set up their tent and Isabelle and John turned up and inspected the fabulous job we had all done on theirs. During our absence, a 4WD club had turned up and invaded our campsite. We made sure we walked repeatedly through theirs. Some in our group were concerned that the 4WDers would be loud and obnoxious that evening and it would be a bad night. Hah! Turned out we were the loud and obnoxious group and we had a great time that night! First thing Saturday morning they packed up the 4WDs and left in a hurry. We couldn't have been that bad though, as a couple who were there to ride their mountain bikes, and a family that were camping near us, came and joined us by the fire.



Saturday morning saw Bobby and Joy deciding to go on an overnight walk to check out a couple of huts. Peter, Isabelle and John decided to have a day relaxing around the camp and the rest of us decided to go on a daywalk taking in Cooleman Plain and stopping for lunch at Bill Jones' Hut. While at the hut we meet up with the family of Bill Jones, who were horse riding in the area. Our walk in the afternoon was slightly damp, much to Stef's dis-



pleasure, but we were able to see the promised brumbies run across the plain, which was magical. The walking was easy and picturesque and worth the long drive to get there.

The afternoon back in camp saw two games of Bushwalker Bocce, in which the girls won the first game and the second game was washed out. With the rain appearing to be set in, wet-weather plans were made that we would go and look at Yarrangobilly Caves and have a swim at the hot springs the next day. We were a bit envious that Joy and Bobby were in a nice dry hut for the evening while we were under the tarp.

*...we were able to see the promised brumbies run across the plain, which was magical.*

The morning saw the forecasted rain nowhere to be seen and the sun shining. The group split up for different activities: Ron and Helena packed up and went home, Mike and Louise went for a walk and the rest of us went out to the caves. At the caves we did the self-guided cave and the guided Jersey Cave. The self-guided cave was lovely, with lots of stunning features.

We were impressed but that turned out to merely be a warm up for Jersey Cave. This is a visually stunning cave overloaded with formations and features. Peter was in photographer's heaven and you can check out his photos on the website. After the caves Lynda, Jackson and Stef went off to find a drier place to spend the night and Garry, Lianne, Peter, Danny and I walked down to the hot springs and tried to soak off some of the dirt. The water was warmish and well worth the walk down (and back up) the steep hill. The drive back to the camp involved a detour to look at Currago Station. When Joy and Bobby got back to the camp they said that they didn't stay at the hut the previous night, but had walked past that and had instead spent the evening huddled in their little tent trying to stay dry. We were no longer envious and really appreciated our shelters.

Of course, Monday came all too soon which meant we had to go back to the real world. The morning was lovely, sunny and hot so that the tents were able to dry out before they were packed away. It's always sad leaving such lovely spots, so we all packed up slowly before saying goodbye and driving all the way home. In the rain. And the heavy traffic. Sigh. Home again.

There are lots of great photos in the clubs online photo albums which I recommend you all take a look at. Try not to be too jealous. If you are interested in exactly where we stayed and where we went, look at the Peppercorn and Rules Point maps. A huge thanks to Garry for bringing the BBQ and the dome shelter and to Bobby for bringing the big tarp. It just wouldn't have been as much fun if you hadn't brought those.

**ADVENTURE BEFORE DEMENTIA—PART II - FEB 2009—NEW ZEALAND**

by Margaret McQuillan

We met aboard the Dawn Princess, eight adventurers. Four of us had participated in the first "Adventure before Dementia" holiday travelling around Tasmania in Nov 2007.

The group consisted of members of the Bankstown and Campbelltown Bushwalkers, some were experienced cruisers others virgins. We all embraced the on board activities with gusto. The movies, free shows, bingo, bridge, trivia, blackjack, poker machines, swimming, the gym, massage, karaoke and many more exciting activities.

Each evening we all met at the dining table to compete in the eating competition and discuss the days events and swap stories.

The first port of call after two days on the water was Bay of Isles. We all had decided to select our own port tours. I chose the Glow Worm Cave and Kauri Forest. The caves were magic, little worms glowing like fairy lights. This was followed by a walk in the Kauri Forest, the magnificent trees take 800 years to reach maturity. Sadly due to harvesting only 3% now remain.

Tauranga was next. I travelled by coach to the Wai-O-Tapu thermal valley to view the Lady Knox Geyser erupt and spent several hours walking in the hot springs park. This is a must when visiting New Zealand. Next to Rainbow Springs Trout Hatchery which was great. Then on to lunch. A gondola ride to the Skyline Restaurant where we enjoyed an exquisite buffet lunch. During lunch we were entertained by a fabulous Maori cultural group as we looked out across the magnificent countryside. We all joined in a rendition of "The Maori Goodbye". Weary travellers returned to the ship that evening for the next round of shows and of course the eating competition.

*As I stood waiting for my bus, to return to the ship, I felt the earth move beneath my feet.....*

The next port visited was Auckland. The day was wet and windy. I decided to continue my plan and catch the ferry to Devonport (north shore) and climb Mt Victoria. The ferry ride was wild and the trek up the small mountain in the pouring rain was a challenge. The 360 degree view of Auckland city from the top was worth every moment of my journey. I later explored the city but while it is a big busy city, Mt Vic was the ultimate.

Next day found us at Napier. The city was levelled by an earthquake in 1931 and rebuilt in the Art Deco fashion of the time. It also features Spanish Mission and Classical Revival buildings which are worth a look and make this city quite unique. This is New Zealand's premier wine producing area, Hawkes Bay. On the advice of an ex-pat I did a tour of several wineries. They served ice cream not cheese at one vineyard but the wine made up for it, so there were no complaints.

Windy Wellington was the next port. A large city and the capital of NZ it has a very hilly terrain. Parliament House (the Beehive opened by the Queen 1977) is a striking structure. Not to be missed is a cable car ride to the Lady Norwood Gardens for a stroll around the this lovely area. Then on to Te Papa Museum for a comprehensive history of the islands and the people - a must see. As I stood waiting for my bus, to return to the ship, I felt the earth move beneath my feet. I will never forget the feeling, a first for me.

Christchurch, was next, the oldest established city in NZ.

We docked at Lyttelton and took a coach to the city where I spent may hours exploring and taking in the atmosphere of this very picturesque city. The Avon River flows through the centre of town and a punt ride is a great way to sight-see. Christchurch was chosen as the "Garden City of the World 1996" - a well deserved title.

**WINNERS OF THE EATING COMPETITION:**

Back I to r: *Margaret, Our Carer, Glenys, Andrew, Wendy*



Front I to r: *Judy, Sue, Pauline (behind), Pauline. Our Carer*

The last city visited was Dunedin. "The people here are Scots. They stopped here on their way to heaven, thinking they had arrived" - Mark Twain. This quote says it all. So much to see, not enough time. I travelled by free bus around the city, visiting Dunedin Botanic Gardens, The Octagon, Otago Settler Museum. A favourite stop off was Olverston House, a 43 room mansion of Edwardian splendour. This home owned by the one family was donated to the people on the death of the last family member and is in original condition.

Back at the boat. I had a rest while watching the movie, Dark Knight, then to dinner (more food) to catch up with the Aussie mob, off to a show, a bit of roulette and back to the cabin in time to see the end of Dark Knight. Just another typical fun-filled day.

Heading back to Sydney the ship spent a day cruising the Fiordland National Park. Surely one of the most beautiful places on earth. High cliffs, crisp clean air, natures bounty on display. New Zealand really is the land of the "Long White Cloud".

A fabulous holiday was had by all, fourteen days cruising the east coast of NZ. Adventure Before Dementia Part III is now in the planning stage.

***Welcome to these NEW MEMBERS of our Club***

- |                           |                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Gabriella Agoston         | Mary Greig                      |
| Keith Heyes               | Jan Hordern                     |
| Karen Knibbs              | Xue Wen Li                      |
| Vadim Linev               | Anna Vyrovshchikova             |
| Roman Migocki             | Natalina Nheu                   |
| Julie Nugent              | Yutta Jablonski                 |
| Jun Xu                    | Biljana Andric                  |
| Michelle & Lee Macfarlane | Shakila & Neil Currie           |
| Bruce Henderson           | Jackson Crisp                   |
| Stephan Quiblier          | <b>Rejoining:</b> Louis Fairlie |

**CLUB MEETINGS EVERY MONTH**

USUALLY HELD ON 2ND MONDAY OF MONTH—  
EXCEPT JANUARY

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

**Meetings coming up in 2009:**

<b>June</b>	<b>1st</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>13th</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>10th</b>

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

**Deadline for SPRING issue is: Fri 17th July**

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

**SNIPPETS**

- Our Club has been featured in a recent article in the local Bankstown-Canterbury Torch newspaper.
- Changes to the 000 emergency call centre operations will eventuate from the recent inquest into the death of 17y.o. David Iredale near Mt Solitary in Dec 2006.
- Good news for outdoor adventurers: in the search for a new transport route across the Blue Mountains—the Newnes option has been ruled out, as incompatible with Defence operations. Other routes will have to be considered in light of impacts on the World Heritage National Park environment.
- Accidents pepper the news headlines weekly, so: Do a First Aid course. Carry an emergency beacon. Learn survival techniques—these certainly helped save the life of an Aussie competing in the March 2009 Iditarod Trail Invitational in Alaska, when he became lost in the snow in the 563km bicycle race.
- The fight is still on from various quarters to keep any developments allowed within National Parks to a sustainable and nature-based level.
- Recently a documentary - *Solo* - was aired on ABC TV—about Andrew McAuley—the solo kayaker whose attempt to paddle from Aust to NZ ended in tragedy within sight of land in 2007.
- The Blue Mountains has been the site of various outdoor events in the past few months—Six Foot Track Marathon; WildEndurance; Kathmandu Adventure Race; North Face 100 Ultramarathon.
- Watch out for the 9th World Rogaining Championships—to be held in NZ, near Christchurch, on 20-21 November 2010.
- Jenolan Caves is this year celebrating the Centenary of some of their spectacular caves.
- Various track closures in the Blue Mountains may affect the Club walking program throughout this year. All Leaders please check the area you propose to walk, prior to the day.
- In this International Year of Astronomy don't forget to keep looking skyward. Watch out for upcoming astronomical events on the club program and in the community.
- Darwin's visit to the Blue Mountains in 1836 was recently made part of his 200th birthday & 150th anniversary of his book *The Origin of the Species*, celebrations at Blackheath in February 2009.

**A WET WEEKEND AT MT WILSON 21-22 FEBRUARY 2009**

by Thais Turner

A veritable army of people attended this weekend, some to walk, some to canyon, some to just socialise. And even some new folk came to Mt Wilson in the rain and fog to meet us and become new members of our club – now that is dedication!

We spent Saturday canyoning at North Bowen's Creek, near Mt Wilson. Someone had a lot of fun (not!) trying to get their wetsuit on. It was fun though, for the rest of us watching, helping & filming the scenes! It was sunny when we started and we thought it would remain a nice day, abseiling near waterfalls, wading and swimming through the scenic creek with its tall gorge walls and mossy vegetation.

However, on the second abseil to a pool at the base of a big waterfall it started hailing and raining on us. Aware of potential flash floods we moved as fast as possible through log jams and boulder fields to the exit gully where it thundered above us and unleashed another long-lasting torrent. Later we found out one member of the group had fallen into a potentially dangerous whirlpool. We are glad he was able to be extricated.

After lunch we climbed the gully track that was now full of waterfalls, and all survived the weekend, camping in the rain, being fogged in, and smoked out by a fire which

couldn't be enjoyed at close quarters.

I slept in my car so I didn't have a wet tent to pack away, like many others.

The ever-hopeful canyoneers went to bed Sat night after much imbibing of alcoholic beverages, vowing to wait until morning to decide if they'd do another canyon on Sunday. As it rained all night and was as fogged in overnight as the previous night, and both mornings were equally foggy and wet, it didn't take long for the decision to be made to just enjoy a leisurely breakfast, abandon all walks, canyons, garden visits plans and just head on home whenever and whichever way we felt appropriate.

I found the character of the fern-lined roads at Mt Wilson shrouded in fog, to be very photogenic, so stayed awhile taking photos. Surprise, surprise – me taking photos!

I decided to get back to Blaxland via Bilpin, Kurrajong, Richmond and Springwood, but also added in a side trip to places I'd never been to before - Grose Vale, Bowen Mountain, Kurrajong Village – and then onto Hawkesbury Lookout and home by mid-afternoon.

So ended another memorable base-camp weekend at Mt Wilson.

Join us on the next one – you will be guaranteed a good time - rain, hail or shine!



## MARCH FLIES by Mike Robinson

It's January and the air is full of flies. March flies actually, but it's not March! They're not due for a month or more yet, are they? And there are heaps of them. Plus it seems their only vocation is to torment the life out of everyone around.

They don't "march" either. They fly, they land, and they fly again. They don't even walk much. And they have a loud slow deep buzz that can be heard when they are 4-5 metres away so you know exactly where they are coming from. But they appear to think they are invisible, so they just buzz around in complete oblivion that they are bloody annoying.

It's not so much that they buzz constantly around your face or the fact they land on you. It's when they settle on your body somewhere, jiggle their legs around nonchalantly pretending they are just resting, and then think its great fun to stick their long sucking tube into your leg and take one huge bite which often draws blood. That's when they really tick you off.

Though, sometimes they are fun to watch. They like blue. My car is blue and to a march fly must be quite a large object but they continually bang into it anyway. Fly towards car; bang; shake head; buzzzz; fly away; return; bang; shake head; buzzzz; fly away; return; bang!! After doing this for a bit he calls to his friends "Hey, this is tops. Lets head butt the car." So they all join in and merrily bang away at my car. My esky is blue too. They don't bang into that but prefer to sit on it and use their proboscis to try to suck the colour out but aren't having much success. (Not like us). And having blue gaiters is not all that clever with these guys around!!

And why doesn't anything eat them? There are multitudes here. This big loud buzzy, rather dopey fly, just waiting to be munched. No birds swooping on them, no lizards stalking them, no dragon flies or mantises, nothing to cause them alarm. Hmmm, perhaps evolution has taught would be predators that they just don't taste any good!

But with those big multifaceted green eyes you'd think they would see something coming. You return from a walk and plan a nice quiet hour but they are straight at you. Nothing productive gets done as you constantly swat at them. So I needed something to blunt their enthusiasm. You know what I found works best? The 1:50000 Khancoban topo map. They don't see it whipping through the air to belt them. (My apologies to the next borrower of this club map!). Buzzzz; whoooosshh; foomp; bzz'z'eerr and down they go! Excellent! The annoying thing is, you swat one and a mate takes his place. It's like the next one sees the first get "foomped" by the map but thinks "That won't happen to me". So in he comes. Foomp, the map does its job again and another one goes down. Then another, then another, until there is a little fly pile at your feet. They are tough buggers too and only get a little shaken by the foomp so to finish them off a size 10 Volley does the trick.

The best way to get respite is to find somewhere cool as March Flies love the heat. Down by a creek in the shade is good. A few will decide to follow you so just take the map for protection. As the temperature cools they begin to leave for wherever they go at night and once the sun sits near the horizon they have all gone. Ah, bliss. Then the mozzies turn up.

### AGM March 2009—Abseil Committee report

The Club Abseil Committee held 4 practice days in the last 12 months. These attracted our regular abseilers, new members and existing "non-abseil" club members who wanted to try out this mysterious art. Beginner numbers were limited to ensure everyone got equipment and to allow sufficient supervision. All the training days were booked out quickly. We also ran 2 knot nights after club meetings so that people had the chance to work on their knot tying and rope handling skills.

It is great to see all the hard work paying off, with the skill level of club members clearly improving. Most of our regulars have the basic safety, abseil and self rescue skills they need for safe and enjoyable trips. A lot of people have commented favourably that they are starting to really appreciate having a larger skill-set in their minds through the practice days. This allows them to deal more confidently with different circumstances under sometimes testing real-life canyon conditions.

Through all this positive feedback, the committee would like to once again thank people for being supportive of the more disciplined approach we decided to take to abseil training. Although we are seeing the level of skill in the club gradually increase, we all need to continue to practice current and new methods, and familiarise ourselves with new devices, self belay methods and improvised techniques.

Of course it's not all about training and practice. A number of abseil and canyon trips were organised for the club program and were well attended: Wee Jasper caves, Mt. Wilson canyons, Malaita Point, Erskine Creek, Fortress Creek, etc. We held a "Canyons of 2007" video night to show those unlucky people in the club who aren't canyoners (yet) what they are missing out on.

We also have plans for showing Canyons Volume 4 video soon, which was produced with input from Lynda, a SCAT team and their friend the helicopter.

At our annual stock-take in April 2008 all the ropes were marked with length and centre point markers. All equipment (including 6 sets of beginner harnesses and helmets) was checked to make sure everything was in good condition. At last year's AGM the committee gained approval to purchase more ropes as some of the older ones were showing signs of wear. To date this has not happened but will be done this year after our next stocktake is completed.

We are happy to report that other than the odd compulsory scrape, cut or graze, we have had no serious incidents in the last 12 months (since the last AGM).

Remember as your abseil committee's says - "if it's not on the video, it didn't really happen!"

**Danny, Lynda, Mike & Peter**

**Your Friendly Abseil Committee**



Yellow Rock - Abseil Practice Day—22 Nov 2008



1045 Victoria Rd West Ryde NSW 2114 Tel **9858 5844**

Parking at rear of shop

- Tents
- Bushwalking Packs
- Travel Packs
- Travel ware
- Sleeping Bags
- Rainwear
- Icebreaker Merino
- Snow wear
- Bushwalking boots
- Sleeping mats
- Climbing Equipment
- Cookware
- Water filters
- GPS
- Books & DVD's



[alpsport@optusnet.com.au](mailto:alpsport@optusnet.com.au)