



TRACKS

BNT



NEWSLETTER OF THE
Bicentennial
NATIONAL TRAIL

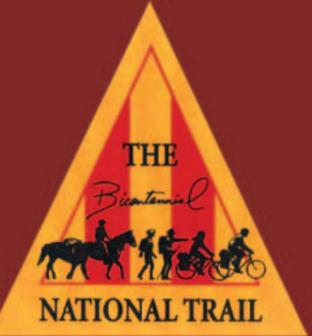
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State of the Trail

From the Board Want to help out?

THE BNT Board consists of seven directors. At the upcoming 2019 BNT AGM there will be up to four Board positions vacant.

Prospective Board members must be nominated and seconded by existing financial members of the BNT.

Board members are required to follow the BNT Constitution and decisions ensuring its governance for BNT members and 42 section coordinators.

Directors take on tasks or projects to improve the BNT and encourage membership. Duties include attending bi-monthly meetings via Skype; enforcing the Trekking Code when necessary; responding to feedback from section coordinators regarding trail changes, updates on trekkers and landowners or detours to avoid an unsafe situation; solving problems that cause a break in the Trail's continuity; responding to calls on the 1300 line and info@bicentennialnationaltrail.com.au.

A nomination form can be found on Page 19. For more information: info@bicentennialnationaltrail.com.au. Or phone 1300 138 724.

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Garry and his horse at the stables near Bath.

Thoughts of a Board member

WHEN I decided to attend the AGM at Tom Groggin Station in 2014, I was more interested in seeing the station than joining the BNT!

What a life-changing decision it was to start my association with the BNT by filling a position on the Board "just to give us the numbers".

Since then, I have travelled up and down the Trail; I have explored solo with my bicycle from Canberra to Jenolan Caves; with fellow Board members as support crew from Cooktown through four guidebooks; and in the Kosciusko National Park I joined a horse camp.

I was the only Victorian Board member when I took on the task of updating the Victorian Guidebook 12. I have inspected every inch of the Victorian section on Google Earth, many versions of maps and travelled various sections by vehicle.

I joined Eliza and Zadi of Donkey Dreaming to walk a few days from Omeo and have formed good partnerships with the three section coordinators in Victoria. When Clancy joined the board, the Victorian representation was doubled! We are a team, able to meet more frequently face to face and energise each other to promote the Victorian section.

Each year I have the opportunity to travel to an AGM along the Trail, meeting

the local trail supporters and catching up with my Board "family". I have learned so much – it is a whole world of variety and challenge: how to use a GPS, strategic planning, biosecurity, travelling stock reserves and lots of Australian history.

On a recent trip to the UK, I was able to stay with Garry Parker and his wife Tracy. I met Garry at the 2018 AGM and it was great to have BNT in common. An international family! I love the opportunity to experience and contribute to a truly Aussie way of life, in particular, the tradition of mateship.

I dream of a modern BNT, with a vibrant, active presence in the world. One where a Google search using one of the words "adventure, horse, bike, walk, Australian trails" will bring the BNT webpage to the front. A website and Facebook page that inspires and encourages, supports and informs people of any ability to have a go. A community of members who actively use, support and promote the trail. All Australians should know about the BNT!

I'm sticking around for a few more years because I have lots of ideas and hope that the next generation of Board members will have inspiring ideas and the energy to bring them to fruition.

LESLEY HAINE

News

Volunteer positions available

Chairman of the Board

THE Chairman of the Board's primary role is to chair regular Board meetings and ensure compliance with the Corporations Act. As well, this an active, hands-on role including oversight and coordination of the other management roles.

Advocacy at Federal, State and Local Government is an additional responsibility. Challenges: external funding; Federal and State heritage recognition.

Trail Coordinator

REPORTING to the Board Chairman, the Trail Coordinator has the day-to-day responsibility of keeping the Trail open and facilitating trekkers' safety and progress.

This entails liaison with and recruitment of section coordinators, private property owners and government agencies such as State Forests, National Parks and Travelling Stock Reserves.

It includes compilation and publication of Trail updates, lodgement of TSR camping permits and compliance with biodiversity requirements.

Communications Officer

RESPONSIBLE for internal and external communications including digital and paper publications: the website, Facebook pages, books and magazine, as well as promoting the Bicentennial National Trail with the general public, events and through the media.

The Communications Officer will support the Trail Coordinator and Board Chairman in their duties.

Please forward a submission to the BNT at: info@bicentennialnationaltrail.com.au.

For further information, please phone 1300 138 724.

Changing of the guard

AFTER 10 years at the helm, BNT Board Chairman Nick Jacomas is stepping down for a well-earned rest.

Karen Carter has resigned from the Board and her role as Treasurer to take up an important role as new BNT Administrator following the management restructure of RDAMNC.

Long-serving BNT supporter Sue Cumming has been trying to get away for some time but keeps being called back as acting Treasurer.

BNT TRACKS editor Rog Fryer has resigned from the Board for health reasons after dislocating his shoulder but will continue to offer his services of publisher to the BNT, including production of this magazine.

This means a regime change for the Bicentennial National Trail after a period of exceptional growth and consolidation of the Trail and its management, following a trend of effective management since 1988.

Membership in this period has nearly tripled; the Facebook page was started and has brought much-needed interest from younger people; a Facebook page especially for section coordinators has facilitated communication amongst them; and the new website is being used to digitise office procedures such as membership renewals bringing cost savings to management.

All this has increased the capacity of the BNT to effectively support trekkers as well as promoting interest in the Trail in Australia and overseas.

This was exemplified by the excellent Annual General Meeting last year at Kilkivan organised by Sue Cumming which had a huge turnout and an entertaining itinerary for supporters who came from all over Australia and some from overseas.

These vacancies provide an opportunity to bring fresh blood for renewed energy and fresh perspective to keep the BNT climbing to even greater heights.



New section coordinator

MANY thanks to outgoing Section Coordinator Alan Lanyon Guidebook 11 Providence to Khancoban.

Alan is now pursuing other interests and found difficulty living further away from his section.

Since early this year Mick Casnave has offered to assist with Warwick Garner. Mick lives at Gundagai and is a well-known good

horseman and regularly rides and packs in the area.

His experience in organising MS rides and involvement in ATHRA club rides is a credit to him and with his genuine country man's personality will be a great bonus for the BNT.

The Bicentennial National Trail welcomes his support.

Snaffle bits



Make your own Yukon pack

THE Yukon pack gets its name from the miners who travelled 600 miles up the Yukon River in Canada to the Klondike gold fields in the 1890s carrying up to a ton of supplies in stages over the Chilcott Pass. They needed a simple, comfortable way of carrying heavy loads.

It is basically a home-made H-frame from which you can hang any type of bag. Not too long ago you could buy one in Australia, and they have spawned a number of variations.

With a trip to Bunnings all you need is some pine rails about 3" by 1", some heavy dowel, Aquadhere, lock-tight bolts and a square of hemmed canvas with reinforced grommets, webbing straps and rope. The canvas can be cinched tight and is very comfortable with a heavy load.

A lightweight alternative is to use bamboo and a lighter material than canvas.



Miners trekking over the Chilcott Pass.



Searchers were forced to battle through deep snow looking for Michael Bowman.

Lost and found

IT'S BEEN a tough winter in the wilderness. A bushwalker believed he would die after spending more than a week huddled in a snowbound tent trapped in the Tasmanian wilderness.

Michael Bowman, 57, was plucked to safety by rescuers who found him in the remote Lake St Claire region. He was returning to his tent after taking some photos at sunset when he lost his day pack that held clothes, an EPIRB, cooking equipment and food.

A rescue helicopter spotted Mr Bowman waving from his tent on their last search pass for the day.

THE SEARCH for missing Melbourne man Jeremy Boyden ended in tragedy after police located his body near Dargo. He was last seen near the Bicentennial National Trail on July 19.

Jeremy went missing in the Wongungarra area and dozens of officers, SES crews and volunteers spent days searching the area, where the temperature dipped to below freezing. Mr Boyden's Jack Russell terrier Rocky was found alive.

A BUSHWALKER who died on a popular Tasmanian track in the middle of winter "tragically brought about his own demise by a series of poor decisions", a coroner found.

Trevor Tolputt, 55, was just 1.5km from a hut at the end of the Overland Track at Lake St Clair when he succumbed to hypothermia on July 14, 2016.

Mr Tolputt didn't have adequate clothes or equipment, failed to plan for delays and rejected help from other walkers that would

have likely ensured his safety, coroner Olivia McTaggart determined.

A SECOND hiker has died attempting to reach the "Magic Bus", an abandoned city bus made famous by Christopher McCandless in the movie *Into the Wild*.

In 1992, McCandless spent 118 days living in the bus after hiking into the wilderness, only to die there after the swollen Teklanika River blocked him from returning the way he had come.

Veramika Nikanava and husband Piotr Markielau, of Belarus, were attempting to ford the Teklanika River on their way to the bus in July when Nikanava lost her footing and was swept away by the current.

Search and rescue personnel responded to 15 calls involving the bus between 2009 and 2017. One, a 29-year-old Swiss visitor, died while crossing the river in 2010.

A WOMAN trapped under a huge boulder, estimated to weigh several hundred kilograms, for more than four hours was recovering in a Darwin hospital.

The 52-year-old woman was injured while walking with a group on the Jatbula Trail near Katherine in the Northern Territory. The 62km trail follows the Arnhem Land escarpment along the edge of Nitmiluk Gorge to Leliyn Falls. The trek normally takes five to six days.

The group was three days into the well-known walk when, while crossing a rocky path near Crystal Falls, a large boulder was dislodged and rolled onto the woman, trapping her by the leg.

- Apple News, 9 News and SMH

Best pack saddles



South Australian style pack saddle, with high arches for plain country packing.

ASTERISK Horse-collars & Harness manufactures and repairs all types of collars and harness on the premises in Henty, NSW, in the traditional Australian style.

They manufacture two traditional Australian styles of pack saddle: the South Australian style, with high arches for plain country packing and the Port Douglas style, with lower arches for packing in mountainous, heavily-timbered country.

The straw-packed, quilted panels are designed to carry the heaviest of loads with the minimum of discomfort.



Saddlery museum open

COPMANHURST is a picturesque rural village of 400 residents nestled on the banks of the mighty Clarence River, a short 30km drive from Grafton, NSW.

The history of this quaint village dates back to the early 1840s. Visitors can enjoy the Saddlery Museum on Prescott Street. The museum is open every fourth Sunday of the month between 1 and 3pm.

Phone Don Frame on 0478 239 274 for bookings other times.



Port Douglas style, with lower arches for packing in mountainous, heavily-timbered country.

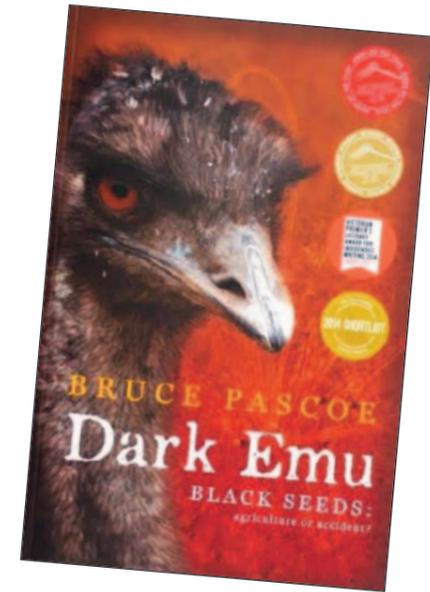


Mark Porter commenced his apprenticeship as a collar and harness-maker with Tim Peel in October 1981.

These pack saddles are works of art. Get ready for one to set you back more than \$6K.

Many BNT packers have used his products. He also makes camel pack saddles and collars, and donkey pack saddles.

Book review



AWARD-winning Indigenous writer Bruce Pascoe in *Dark Emu* provides ample evidence that pre-contact Aboriginal tribes showed examples of civilisation and agriculture, with fish traps, cultivated yam fields, extensive aqueducts and large earth-home villages.

Pascoe, however, risks being caught himself in a cultural cringe trap by assuming a pre-agriculture hunter-gatherer lifestyle was not sophisticated. In fact, archaeology has shown the first civilised agricultural people had poorer nutrition and health than their hunter-gathering predecessors.

That said, Pascoe's book follows on from Bill Gammage's *Biggest Estate on Earth*, reviewed on these pages previously, which argued Australia's park-like landscapes discovered by pioneers were the result of deliberate, systematic and sophisticated burning, with a touch of art.

Pascoe likewise pours over colonial literature to discover previously ignored recordings of Aboriginal people building dams and digging wells, planting, irrigating and harvesting seed, preserving the surplus and storing it in houses, sheds or secure vessels, creating elaborate cemeteries and building large mud houses in villages for several hundred inhabitants.

Prepare to have your preconceptions blown with a mass of information gleaned from historical records. Just remember that Pascoe, with Bunurong, Tasmanian and Yuin heritage himself, has an axe to grind.

Dark Emu
Bruce Pascoe
Magabala Books
Amazon Kindle \$10.88; paperback \$14.75



Section 4 Map 16 Kalpowar logging trail.

State of the Trail

WHAT'S the trail like?

The question most asked and most difficult to answer. Usually if we answer 'great' and 'fantastic' that is enough, however trekkers and adventurers who want to do that section or the whole trail would like to know more regarding trail surfaces.

Our comments are from the point of view of a cyclist and only relate to the Queensland sections of the Bicentennial National Trail.

The trail road surfaces vary greatly.

The slowest trekking was two kilometers in two hours which was steeply uphill through a road alignment overgrown with lantana.

All we could find was the animal trail at our feet. The front panniers on our bikes were used to protect our legs and bodies as much as possible from the scratching lantana.



Section 4 Map 10 Razorback 4WD track to Kroombit Tops, one bike waiting patiently at the bottom.

The fastest was my husband clocking over 75km/h on a beautiful sealed downhill road with little traffic.

Fire trails – these will go to the very top of every peak and along the ridge. As a fire trail, this is where the fire services need to go and can be steep and rough. The worst encountered so far has been the Razorback Fire Trail to Kroombit Tops where the bikes had to be pushed by both of us to get to the top. The surface was very steep, slippery with dust and marble-like rocks.

Logging Track – this road caters to large trucks so will be engineered and have less steep gradients. The trucks can be heard from a long way away so you can get off the trail before they get there.

Dry weather road only – this road surface does not suit driving in wet conditions. The bikes would cause ruts as well as also getting stuck.

A popular road like the Bloomfield Track has the steepest sections sealed.

Some sections of the trail use recreational trails such as the Bump Track near Port Douglas which are well signposted and do not have any vehicular traffic.

Some sections are not used frequently but do allow four wheel drive traffic

The presence of Department of Transport signage usually means the road will be better maintained.

Where the trail uses a disused road corridor, the road may no longer be maintained and trekkers will need to exercise caution as they traverse.

Highways connect the trail when alternate routes are not possible. Between St Lawrence and Marlborough the trail travels along the very busy Bruce Highway.

In section 6 the Cunningham Highway is traversed for a small section. The signs pictured are on the Dawson Highway. Motorists have signs advising them of the National Trail and usually there is a wide verge.

MARIANNE KRANENBERG

FRONT PAGE: Section 6 Lantana Trail (and he's well over 6 foot tall).

RIGHT: Section 1 Map 8 – Bump Track, steep but wide, no vehicular traffic.

FAR RIGHT: Section 1 Map 15 Stannary Hills Historic Track – used by 4WDs.

MORE PHOTOS Page 18



Section 1 Map 3 Bloomfield Track – sealed steep section.



Section 4 Map 7 Old Dawson Highway – we may not be able to use this in the future.





Happy Jacks River.

Man from Snowy River trek

By DENISE and MAL KEELEY

PETER Cochran has been running horse trekking in the Snowy Mountains for the past 20 years under the name of Cochran Horse Treks (CHT). The outfit consists of about 30 reliable horses and around six staff. Numbers vary according to the size of the trek.

The trek we had chosen is the longest of all the CHT routes and was 160km one way over eight days. All catering and camping was included and we all put on weight from the wonderful food.

The BNT was well represented on this trek and the best ever since Peter has been in business. Peter is the section coordinator for guidebook 11 Maps 1-3, a section through which we rode.

Genevieve Long, another section coordinator for guidebook 9 Maps 13-14 as well as guidebook 10 Maps 1-6, joined the trek as well. Genevieve shares her section with Martin and Hazel McCort.

Denise and I are section coordinators in guidebook 9 Maps 7-12.

We had a total of 14 trekkers and six staff to make sure we were well looked after.

Rex Schofield, a long time friend of both Peter and Genevieve, also joined us for the ride. We passed Schofield's Hut on the ride and this was built by Rex's family. What a nostalgic visit this was for Rex.

Typical daily routine was to get up, pack up the camp and enjoy a hot cooked breakfast before saddling up. We had the opportunity to pack our own lunch and snacks including fresh fruit before leaving camp. This was generally transported by the traditional pack horse as we rode. Most lunch spots had no facilities so we had to take our own with us. Riding mostly on formed trails or brumby pads we passed a number of high country huts such as Circuits, Schofield's and Bradleys. Each of these having their own history from when the high country was used for grazing of sheep and cattle.

We would brew a pot of tea or coffee at lunchtime and enjoy the pristine surroundings. On one particular day there was no water close by so we melted snow for the brew.

When we arrived at camp each afternoon the camp crew already had the tents set up, a hot brew ready and snacks. We would clean up and then enjoyed a

lovely evening meal and delicious desert. Bed was never far off in the evening as we were all fairly tired from the events of the day.

The weather gave us the typical high country display of four seasons in the one day and it would not be a Snowy ride without it. One afternoon we ended up with 50mm of snow on the tents. Fortunately we were already in camp before it started. Another day gave us squally showers but nothing that a drizabone could not handle. Mostly the weather was absolutely perfect.

One night at the Wares Yards campsite we were standing around a roaring fire whilst it was snowing, we got to catch up with Jackie Mann. Jackie rode the BNT in 2015 from Cooktown to Ebor, a total of 3,100km. She was camping nearby and riding around Tantangara reservoir with friends.

Our first night was at the Snow Goose Hotel in Adaminaby where we all met and were briefed on the trip. One of our hosts, Michelle, had her birthday and we all celebrated with a cake.

Tents were really good and kept us out of the weather whilst enroute. We passed

through Wares Yards, Providence Portal, Happy Jacks, Tooma River and Yellow Bob. The Tooma River campsite was on Barry Paton's property and set in a really lovely position beside the river. Some brave people went for a dip in the chilly water. At Yellow Bob campsite, Charlie Findlay, another section coordinator (guidebook 11 Maps 9 and 10), came to have dinner with us. That meant we had five section coordinators in the one location. Can't do better than that unless it's a BNT AGM.

Trekkers and crew came from Canada, WA, Victoria, NSW, Tasmania and Queensland.

The horses performed superbly and thanks to the incredible bush skills of Peter, we enjoyed the navigation through bush tracks with no worries about becoming lost in the wild. End of the horse ride was at Auntie Joan's place where we had a lovely barbecue lunch. Last night of the trek was at the Khancoban Motel and this was inclusive in the ride. Here we met the trekkers that were to return to Adaminaby after the festival. It was a great opportunity to have a hot shower and some creature comforts after camping.

Next day we relocated to the Corryong Showground to camp for the three days of the Man From Snowy River festival. Peter ensured we had prime position in the campground. The festival was really great and there were many thousands of people that visited over the three days. This is a festival not to be missed.

The Man From Snowy re-enactment was a special event and was held over two separate sessions. Two of our hosts, Peter and Ali, were stars of the show, participating in the re-enactment.

We also caught up with Sharon and Ken Roberts who were the first people to ride the entire length of the BNT back in the early 1990s. Sharon wrote a great book called *The Colour of Courage* about their trek. Sharon has also done a really professional job in the making of the BNT photo story for us which will shortly be available on the new BNT website.

It was truly a wonderful trip and one that certainly was inspiring. Thanks to all the staff and fellow trekkers, we followed the BNT for the majority of the route.

If you are interested, look up CHT on the internet or call Peter as his details are at the back of this magazine. We can thoroughly recommend such a professional outfit and would definitely do it again.



It's snowing at Wares Yards.



Bradleys Hut.



Early morning crossing of the Murrumbidgee River at Yaouk.



Rob 'n' BOB ride again

By ROBERT KLEI

FIFTEEN years ago I rode the whole length of the Bicentennial National Trail on my mountain bike and BOB trailer. It was a solo expedition, known as 'Rob 'n' BOB'.

To celebrate my 65th birthday I wanted to ride a good part of it again, but with less time available decided to start in Cairns and finish in Canberra. Also, I wanted to take it a bit more leisurely, with more rest days, and more detours more suitable for bicycles instead of following the trail verbatim.

On 12 November 2018 I flew from Vancouver, Canada, to Cairns where I had arranged accommodation in a caravan park for three days. I had pre-ordered freeze-dried ground beef and vegies from Settlers Foods so all I needed in addition was lots of spices to make the most marvelously

interesting meals. I had also ordered a new KTI beacon. Instead of mailing a number of food parcels ahead I prepared just one big box to be mailed on each time after taking from it what I needed. It worked quite well.

On 15 November I started out on a route to Mareeba via Lake Morris. I have never liked riding along highways and this looked like a good alternative, but it turned out quite challenging for my untrained legs. Ups and downs of up to 25% was not exactly easing into it! But I saw a young male cassowary and that made it all worth it. In Mutchilba I connected with the BNT.

The first day on the BNT started out very peaceful, along and through many mango orchards. Then the trail started to climb and get rough and then rougher. What I remembered as perfectly rideable 15 years earlier was now so rutted, eroded,

Rob Klei and his BOB trailer with Neil Rideout's ute at Kroombit.

loose and steep that I was just crawling along, mostly pushing.

It was close to getting dark and I had almost finished my six litres of water when yet another long, steep, eroded hill, the final climb to Stannery Hills Dam, presented itself.

I made an executive decision to abandon BOB on the side of the track and push only my bicycle up to the dam. That worked just fine, there was water in the dam, but all my gear was in the BOB bag, so I overnights covered in dry grasses and other weeds that I was able to cut. What a night!

Next day I rode down to Irvinebank hoping to find someone with an ATV willing and able to collect my trailer. A couple of blokes were prepared to do just that for a carton of beer. It was the hairiest of rides, holding on for dear life, with the



Steak dinner with Dave McLeod at Sandy Creek Camp.

quad often just teetering on two wheels, but I was reunited with all my gear.

After a rest day in Irvinebank the ride to Innot Hot Springs was tame in comparison, mostly all rideable and ending in a nice relaxing soak in the hot pools. Then on to Gunnawarra where I received permission to camp at the old dilapidated homestead beside a gorgeous dam, really a little lake. Leichhardt Creek was another beautiful spot, but the next few days, although scenic enough, were quite miserable because of the unending heat.

My odometer/altimeter/thermometer often showed 45° or more and even resting in the shade became almost too much work, let alone riding a bike with trailer in tow. Instead of continuing via Camel Creek and Kangaroo Hills I opted for a quick escape to Greenvale, but after crossing the Burdekin river and refilling my water bottles (I had already consumed six litres that morning), I became too exhausted and lethargic that I didn't quite make it to Greenvale.

Luckily there were a couple of young women who went swimming in the Burdekin and on their way back gave me lift into town for the last 10km. From there I hitched a ride to Charters Towers where I continued to peddle to my next camp at the Mingela Hotel.

Just past Ravenswood, after starting out at 3am, in order to beat the heat, things went sideways. Crossing a cattle grid in the road I managed to steer right into a gap in the rails wide enough to swallow my front

tire. I did a serious face plant. In the dark I could easily manage the road without any lights, but the gap I didn't see.

Broken tooth, broken derailleur hanger, mangled front brake rotor, but after managing to make my steed at least rollable again a mining crew drove by and offered me a ride back into Ravenswood. A nurse from the mining camp cleaned up my face and I was able to get a ride into Townsville the same day by Moana, who with her husband Ivan runs the Mingela Hotel.

After getting bike and self repaired in Townsville I decided to bus it to Mackay, hitch a ride into Nebo, and continue from there. The daytime temperatures were becoming a bit more manageable, still upper 30s, but no longer totally energy draining.

The following days were easy going along gravel roads, which seemed much busier with mining related traffic than I remembered from 2004. The Fitzroy River provided a couple of great camping spots two days in a row.

While approaching Biloela, one of my tires suddenly started to wobble and I couldn't continue. But Neil Rideout drove out to rescue me and luckily the bike shop in town had a cheap tire that should get me to Toowoomba where I had a new set waiting for me in my mailed-ahead box.

I spent almost a week over Christmas with the Rideouts, days filled with lots of fun activities. And to top it all up Neil drove me almost to the top of Kroombit Tops, another



Shelter at Gunnawarra old homestead.

very steep, rough track. A bit of cheating here and there was just fine by me!

I spent New Years at the Burnett River, not at the big caravan park, but quietly by myself on the other side of the river. Two days later, in Biggenden, Ashley Campbell joined me at the caravan park, and treated me to a delicious camp oven-cooked lamb stew, accompanied with beer and wine, a birthday dinner fit for a king!

At Sandy Creek Camp I met up with Dave McLeod, who also came prepared with steaks and drinks, all so very much more interesting than my, as it turned out, not-quite-so-marvellous dehydrated kibble.

In Kilkivan I opted to detour along the KKRT rail trail to Kingaroy and then the BVRT from Yarraman to Esk. It was a nice change of pace with the comfortable 1-2% grades. Then back onto the BNT to Murphy's Creek and another great visit with Lynne Anderson at Lazy Acres.

The track along the Timbarra River was memorable as I got stuck just past Horse Swamp Creek. The trail disappeared and there was so much deadfall to lift my bike and trailer over that I broke another derailleur hanger. I had to backtrack and detour via Tenterfield.

In Ebor I met up with Mushgang, another great visit. Then Nundle detour and when on Nullo Mountain I broke my fourth derailleur hanger I decided to forego any further rough tracks and stick to roads.

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Elvis lives!

How we didn't cycle the Australian Bicentennial National Trail, had a different adventure and an Elvis siting, December 2012-January 2013

by PAMELA OLSON

FOR ONE of our winter holidays, we decided to cycle part of the BNT and got our hands on a set of guidebooks. Our plan was to start in the state of Victoria, pedal as far as we could through the Great Dividing Range, then take public transportation to Queensland. We gave ourselves two months.

For the past two decades or so, during the winter, we have gone to Australia or New Zealand to bicycle tour for four to eight weeks in the Antipodean summer.

When we started this holiday regime, we were riding mountain bikes and later switched to hybrids with wide tires (700x48mm). We load up our panniers and racks with most of the usual items necessary for a multi-day hiking trip in the BC

mountains. When we are in the bush, we camp out and when we are in civilisation, we stay in modest accommodations.

Whenever possible, we avoid main roads because of the terrifying traffic. Australian traffic lanes are narrower than those in Canada, the speed limits are higher and often there is no shoulder. We've explored a number of back roads, fire access roads and walking tracks in all states of Australia except the Northern Territory.

After a long travel day, we arrived in Melbourne, put our bikes together, organised shipping our extra luggage including our bike transportation bags to Brisbane and purchased a SIM for our unlocked phone.

As the easiest way out of a big city is by rail, the first day on the road involved a ride on the commuter train to Traralgon where we could get on the East Gippsland Rail Trail to take us through to Heyfield and from there, connect with the BNT past Licola. Unfortunately the section of the rail trail from Traralgon to Glengarry was not complete and we had a scary ride on a secondary highway with a narrow shoulder. Leaving Glengarry, one of my front panniers fell off suddenly. This was to be the first of

problems with our new bikes. In spite of my insistence on using U-bolts, the bike store mechanic used hose clamps; he said U-bolts were overkill. Wire and cable ties did a temporary fix.

After Heyfield the route started to get more interesting. We followed the Heyfield-Jamieson road toward Licola. The road climbed steadily and past Lake Glenmaggie the grade became more steep. By early afternoon the temperature had risen into the low 30s Celsius. We were not used to the heat yet, were getting tired and began looking for a place to camp.

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Bikes waiting for the commuter train.





Queensland-New South Wales border walk.

From Page 13

The road was following the Macalister River but was separated from it by barbed wire fences. We located a place where we could get through the fence undetected and without too much trouble, and followed a cattle track toward the river. As the area was remote we felt that if the farmer happened to come along we could convince him we were not going to cause trouble or leave garbage.

Suddenly, Dave hit a patch of loose sand and his front wheel went sideways. He let the bike go and jumped clear. Despite my insistence that we wanted fork-mounted fenders, the bike technician installed fenders with stays. A protective cap on the end of one stay had fallen off, leaving the piece of stay wire sticking out which had, when the wheel turned, gouged his calf. We cleaned and bandaged the deep gash.

The gravel road that wound up through the hills toward Licola was in fairly good condition. There was virtually no traffic and the only delays we encountered were due to cattle on the road. By late afternoon, we reached Licola, a tiny village. Both the grocery store and adjoining campground were closed because the owners had decided to go away for the Christmas holidays. Across the road was a large Lions Club adventure and holiday camp and we went there to inquire about accommodations.

The caretaker told us that a group had booked the entire camp but he offered us the use of his empty, furnished house overnight as he and his family had moved to Heyfield.

As we had intended to replenish our meager food supplies at the Licola store, we were a bit short of food and knew we would have to get to Jamieson in a few days.

Christmas morning, we started out early along the Jamieson-Licola road. We rode uphill steadily with a few downhill sections for relief. For the first 15 or so kilometers, the road was paved, then it was packed gravel. The free range cattle grazing near the road had splattered some sections with manure making for slippery conditions. By the second day, we reached the junction with the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT) and Middle Ridge Road. Finally, we were on the BNT. Further along the Lazarini Spur we found the stream mentioned in the guidebook. The elevation was about 1200 meters.

The Lazarini Spur wound up, down and around through the forest until it came to a very steep downhill section that had been torn up by four wheel and ATV drivers.

The grade was so steep that we had to walk the bikes down. Part way down the hill we met an up-bound 4x4, the driver of which stopped to talk to us. It was a group

of four young locals out for a drive who told us it was not far to the river. From the bottom of the hill, the terrain levelled out for a while and we came to Snake Creek. We had descended to about 400 meters.

An early breakfast of cheese crackers and dried apricots the next morning pretty well depleted our food supply. With the bikes unloaded, we rock-hopped across Snake Creek, then went back for the panniers and loaded up the bikes. Then there was the Goldburn River where we repeated the procedure. Neither stream was deep nor fast-flowing. The terrain was relatively level and we made good time to the Mansfield-Woods Point Road which was the only road to Jamieson. That road was dusty and there was enough traffic to make us nervous. The historic Kelvington Hotel offered an interesting rest spot and after that the road was paved the rest of the way to Jamieson. The owners of the Jamieson General Store also had a cottage for rent which was available at a discount if booked for two nights or more. What a deal! Cleaned up and refreshed, we walked over to the service station to inquire about hardware to reattach our front carrier racks to the forks, as all clamps on both bikes had broken. The clamps for holding tailpipes to cars were not pretty but more solid than the original clamps. After two nights rest in Jamieson our plan was to follow the Jamieson-Licola



Macalister River near Licola.

Road up to the point where it crossed the BNT, then follow the BNT toward Omeo. Two days of continuous uphill riding brought us to the alpine meadows filled with colourful wild flowers. This area of the Wonnangatta-Moroka National Park had been ravaged by bushfires about a decade previously and ghostly gray trunks of the burned snow gums (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*) covered the hillsides. Unlike some other eucalyptus species which regenerate from the branches and trunks, snow gums regenerate from the roots and the new green foliage was only a few metres tall. The road continued to climb, finally reaching the highest point, 1570 meters, at Mt. Skene.

When cycle touring it is always a good idea to have a few optional routes in mind. The Barkley River jeep track leading down to Rumpf's Saddle looked like a steep rock staircase. Although we were well-equipped for biking and camping, had experience travelling in the Australian bush, we had to consider a tactical retreat. We did not have much food, water sources were uncertain and variable, the route was rough and slow-going, and the bushfire hazard was high. Bushfires at Mt. Terrible, Lake Eildon and Woods Point were not far from our location.

At the Mt Sunday Road junction, we took a detour to Wren's Flat to evaluate option 2, Mitchell's Track to Mansfield by way of Merrijig. We descended about 600

metres to the Jamieson River Valley where we found a few car-campers. We spoke to one of them about the route; he told us he had driven his 4X4 along Mitchell's Track a few years ago. It was very steep, he said, a feet-on-the-dashboard experience.

Time to consider plan C. Back in Jamieson, we pedalled 38 kilometers to Mansfield, along a fairly busy road which included a half-hour hill-climb out of Howqua. By the time we reached Mansfield, it had been almost two weeks since Dave's leg injury. The wound was looking red and infected. Mansfield was the largest town we had been to and the first one where we found a hospital. After examining the wound, the triage nurse sent us to the clinic next door where a doctor examined the wound and arranged for a nurse to clean and dress it. The doctor also wrote a prescription for an antibiotic. The cost for the treatment and medication was less than AUD\$100.

We were on the road again early Sunday morning heading toward Wangaratta. The temperatures were high, in the low 30s Celsius, a bit warm for bike touring. We pedalled uphill on a paved road out of Mansfield heading to Stringybark Creek where we had been told there were nice camping areas. Just as we reached the turnoff, a couple of vehicles roared out, kicking up huge clouds of dust which hung

in the still air. Not wishing to breath dust for the rest of the day, we continued along the main road. By luck we found a disused road leading to what appeared to be an abandoned homesite. There was a dam filled with water.

The temperature went to almost 40 Celsius. We lay in the tent with wet cloths on our heads and necks to keep cool and read novels on our Kindles.

The tiny village of Whitfield presented an interesting stopover on an extremely hot day. The shop was open but the pub was closed. Out the back of the pub, we found an open rack containing a number of unlabelled bottles of red wine, cleanskins probably. We helped ourselves to a bottle, leaving a couple of bank notes in payment.

Then it was on to Wangaratta where we caught a bicycle route along Byawatha Road. Just before Chiltern, we crossed the busy Hume Highway and followed a back road into the picturesque historic town.

By then our plan was to take public transportation from Albury-Wodonga to Queensland to visit friends then get back on another section of the BNT. There was a glitch. The trains were not running from Albury due to a problem with the rails or sleepers.

Elvis lives

From Page 15

The bus company that serviced the area required the bikes be boxed and we would have to take three bus rides to Sydney, Brisbane and Toowoomba.

We did not want to go to Sydney. We rented a car to drive to Parkes where we could catch another bus line that ran from Melbourne to Brisbane. We could disembark at Toowoomba and the bikes would not have to be boxed. The car rental agent gave us the address of the company's office in Parkes and assured us there was a key drop box. Sometimes you have to throw money at a situation.

Since the bus did not run every day and the next one was scheduled to leave Parkes the next morning at 05:20, we had to leave right away. We drove the 400 or so kilometers to Parkes, arriving around 7pm to be informed that all motels had been booked out for months because of the Elvis Festival. Elvis Festival?? Finally we found a motel that had a cancellation.

Dropping off the car turned out to be another interesting exercise. Unknown to the agent in Albury, the rental office had moved recently and was not at the address we were given. When we found it, there was a locked fence around it and the drop box was insecure. We called the number listed on the sign and reached voice mail. After some discussion, we parked the car in front of the office, locked the keys inside and left a detailed message at the contact number.

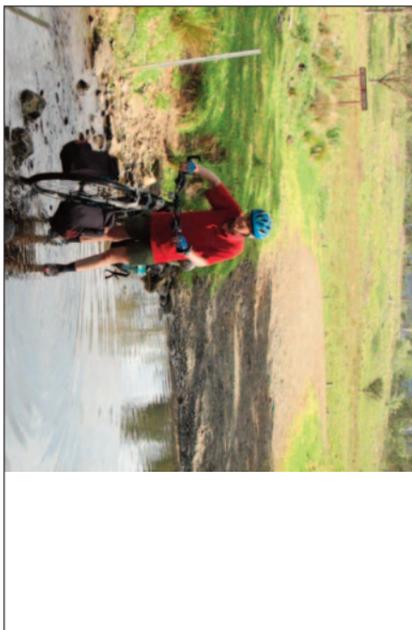
Across the street, Cooke Park was the scene of several stages, each featuring Elvis, singing and gyrating. Walking back to the motel, we passed several pubs and in each one The King was belting out his most popular songs. As many of the people wandering around the town were sporting colourful tropical print shirts and paper leis, we deduced that the festival's theme was Blue Hawaii.

We learned that the Parkes Elvis Festival, coinciding with his birth date, has been an annual happening since 1993. I was unaware that Elvis's birth date was 08 January 1935 but I was aware that his death date was 16 August 1977, the same day I fell on Bugaboo Spire, fracturing my pelvis.

Peddalling in darkness the next morning, we arrived at the service station where the bus was due to stop around 04:45. We helped the bus driver load the bikes. The bus route followed the Newell Highway through some very desolate and dry



Along the Mt Skene road, before the bushfires of 2006.



One of the shallow crossings of the Condamine.

countryside, not the kind of place one would really want to travel by bicycle.

When we returned the calls from car rental the next day, they were upset about where we had left the car. We tried to explain that we had not been advised that the office had been moved, we had an early bus to catch and there was no key drop. After a few heated telephone conversations with various people at the car rental company, we got the matter settled and there were no extra charges on subsequent credit card statements.

In retrospect, maybe we should have left the car at the motel, the keys with the owners and told the rental company to collect it there. It was one of those decisions you make when you are travelling, are tired and don't have complete information.

Our friends were on their way to their

farm near Stanthorpe and since they were taking both their vehicles, there was room in the ute for our bikes and panniers. After a few days of visiting and relaxing, we were ready to get on our bikes and ride off again.

By following Bald Rock Road out to the Mt. Lindesay Road, we were back on the Queensland-New South Wales border. Shortly after joining that road, the road surface turned from pavement to gravel. Traffic was light. According to the BNT guide, there was a camping place near the TSR at Wylie Creek. From there we continued on the Mt. Lindesay Road, then pedalled along Cullendore Road to the old tick station and rabbit-proof fence.

There we saw the first official looking BNT sign. Pleased that we were back on the BNT, we followed the NSW/QLD border fence for a while until we came to a locked gate. The instructions in the guidebook no longer matched the geography, possibly because a new road had been built. We headed off down a track in the direction of a road we identified using the GPS.

Suddenly we heard the sound of ATVs and two farmers loomed into view. Stopping in front of us, the older one asked "May I inquire as to what the f___ is going on here?" In unison, we said "We're lost."

He instructed us to follow the track for two or three kilometers until we came to a cottage and a pen with some cattle. We should wait for him there. Ten or fifteen minutes after we reached the cottage, the two farmers showed up. The older one said he would draw us a mud map and proceeded to scrape some lines in the dirt with his shoe, explaining which roads we should take. The other fellow said we should follow their vehicle tracks back to Barlow's

Gate Road, then go right to the Barlow's Gate-Killarney Road. Off we rode along a rough track, the surface of which got progressively worse with deep ruts and loose sand patches.

Eventually we reached the rabbit proof-border fence. The road improved and then turned to pavement. By this time, the temperature was into the low 30s Celsius and we had been riding a couple of hours longer than we had anticipated. About eight hours after leaving Wylie's Creek, we reached Killarney and found a motel. The cheerful owner said she would be happy to take us to the shop later for groceries.

We headed off toward Queen Mary Falls via the Warwick-Killarney Road and Spring Creek Road. Although the distance was less than 20 km, Spring Creek Road was steep and the weather was very hot. Along the way, we stopped to have a look at Dagg Falls, an impressive double cascade into a narrow gorge. After discussing the area with some locals, we decided to take the Condamine River Gorge Road back to Killarney.

We would be back on the BNT for a while. From Queen Mary Falls we continued uphill along the paved Spring Creek Road, then coasted down to the turnoff for the Condamine River Road. A very large sign warned that the road was rough with 14 river crossings and should not be undertaken in wet weather.

We tried to keep our feet dry at the first river crossing but gave up after that. There were just too many fords, most of which were not very deep and we could ride or walk the bikes across all of them without unloading the panniers. The gravel road was undulating for the rest of the way back to Killarney.

By this time in our trip, it was time to slowly start heading toward Brisbane. We were not too enthusiastic about continuing along the Mt. Lindesay Highway toward Woodenbong, but there were only a few roads we could take and that one might have less traffic.

The big trucks were considerate but the passenger vehicles did not give us much room. The weather was changing and after a few hours, we had to stop and put on the pannier covers as there were intermittent showers. We rode through forest which gave way to farms and fields near Woodenbong.

As we were packing the bikes after an overnight stay at the Woodenbong Hotel, my rear bike tire and tube blew off the rim. The Hotel's publican, seeing us working on the inverted bike, offered us a lift to



Lazarini Spur, the easy part.

INSET: Lazarini Spur, the steep part.



Crossing the Goulburn.

Beaudesert. He was driving there for supplies and had a trailer attached to his ute. We accepted.

A sporting goods store in Beaudesert had some bike parts and a floor pump we could use. A few minutes after setting off, my rear tire exploded. Back at the shop, I bought a tube and a folding bead tire. I replaced the ruined tire with the folding bead spare we had with us.

Meanwhile, a big storm was building off the east coast of Australia. Instead of heading toward the mountains and the BNT, we spent seven hours riding to Ipswich, a sprawling bedroom community of Brisbane.

The rain did not let up so we caught the commuter train to Brisbane. A tropical storm was stalled off the east coast and heavy rain was predicted. From past

experience in Australia, we knew that heavy rain meant flooding and possible road and railway closures.

Even though we were arriving earlier than our booked dates, the motel in Brisbane had a room. We ended our tour by spending the next few days watching the storm from the safety of our motel room and following the Australian Open Tennis Tournament on the TV. Before we packed up to leave we had a day to ride around Brisbane's excellent bike path system.

Over the more than two decades we have flown with bikes, the fees charged by the various airlines for bikes and other sports equipment have changed. Sometimes we've paid nothing. On this trip, the fees charged were inconsistent and it cost us about double the amount to fly the bikes home as it had cost to fly them to Australia.



Annual General Meeting itinerary

Saturday, October 12, midday, free sausage sizzle. Members and non-members all welcome.

2pm BNT AGM, followed by open forum.

Afternoon tea will be available.

6pm two-course dinner plus hors d'oeuvres with tea and coffee for \$60pp – bookings essential.

Accommodation

THERE is a variety of accommodation options at Yaraandoo Eco Lodge including double rooms from \$121 and queen rooms from \$132 per room, with twin share from \$66 and bunk-style accommodation from \$33 per person. Call Yaraandoo on 0455 347 600 to book. Yaraandoo adjoins New England National Park with the spectacular Point Lookout (photo left) just up the road.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
THE BICENTENNIAL NATIONAL TRAIL
2.00pm SATURDAY 12th OCTOBER 2019 Yaraandoo,
Point Lookout Road (off Waterfall Way) Ebor NSW 2453

Nominations for the Board of Directors
of The Bicentennial National Trail Ltd

Nominations for the Board of Directors to be submitted on this form and received by Monday 23rd September 2019.

250 Somersby Falls Road, SOMERSBY NSW 2250.
Alternatively scan and email to: info@bicentennialnationaltrail.com.au

Please provide and attach a brief profile of the nominee.

We/I (Nominator).....

(Second)

Being a current financial member/s of the
Bicentennial National Trail Ltd hereby nominate:

.....

For the position of

On the Board of Directors of Bicentennial National Trail Ltd.

Nominator's signature:.....

Date:

Second's signature:

Date:

Nominee name in full:

I accept this nomination:

Nominee's signature:

Date:

Proxy Form

The Bicentennial National Trail Ltd

Proxy Forms to be submitted on this form and received by
Monday 23rd September 2019.

Returning Officer, 250 Somersby Falls Road, SOMERSBY NSW 2250

Or scan and email info@bicentennialnationaltrail.com.au

I

of

Being a member of the above named company hereby appoint:

.....

of

Or failing him/her the Chairperson as my proxy to vote for me on my
behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the company to be held on
Saturday 12th October 2019 at Ebor and at any adjournment thereof.

SIGNED this day of

.....

* Strike out whichever is not desired. Note: In the event of the member
desiring to vote for or against any resolution, he shall instruct his proxy
accordingly. Unless otherwise instructed, the proxy may vote as he thinks fit.
Clubs have two delegates, therefore entitled to two votes.

State of the Trail

From Page 7



Section 1 Map 15 Stannary Hills Trail – used by 4WD's



Section 1 Map 16 Main Road near Irvinebank – newly graded.



Section 4 Map 7 Dawson Highway sign advising motorists that the
Bicentennial National Trail runs along the Highway for 8 kilometers.



Section 4 Map 7 Dawson Highway this was by far the best edge we had to
ride along.

Rob 'n' BOB



Leaving the Creed's mustering shed.

From Page 8

I arrived in Canberra the second week in March,
almost two weeks earlier than anticipated, and was able
to do a quick out-and-back to Horse Gully and
Oldfield's Huts, which was a fitting finale to my BNT
adventure.

With a great BIG THANK YOU to all the people
that have helped make this another unforgettable
experience. Trail coordinators, old and new friends who
hosted me, and all the many BNT volunteers and staff
who work diligently behind the scenes. Thank you all!

Rob Klei

For further reading please refer to my blog at
bit.ly/robnbob.

Section Coordinator profiles

Jenny Costin Guidebook 10

JOINING the Monaro Horse Trekkers I learnt the skills of trail riding and the BNT in Namadgi National Park and northern Kosciuszko remote riding areas with spectacular scenery and dedicated camping areas for horse riders were my favourite places.

I was asked to become a Section Coordinator and soon Col Roberts, former Trails Coordinator employed by NSW Dept. of Lands, was contacting me. He was checking the area for the new Guide Book 10.

I soon realised, when development of Canberra's suburbs started to invade the equestrian trails on which the BNT route is, how important it was not to lose the continuity of the trail through the ACT.

I was fortunate enough to have met Beth Stone in my riding club and long-time Secretary of the ACT Equestrian Association, and Christine Lawrence, who both have been in high positions in ACT government.

After some time we managed to get a triparty Memorandum of Understanding with ACT Government Equestrian Association and the BNT.



Jenny Costin with equestrian pal Greendale Marcus, 19-year-old Australian Stock Horse.

Because we are in a city with a large mountain bike population, which also uses parts of the BNT, it's important to keep the BNT equestrian corridor safe. Twice a year we have an Equestrian Forum with local government for any concerns. which I attend. ACT rangers are very supportive of the BNT.

I have met so many trekkers coming through over the years with their horses, camels, donkeys, bikes and walkers. I

have been able to assist with local knowledge.

I often think about them and wonder how they are. I am in the loop of knowledge with the ACT Equestrian Association and know every bit of the ACT trail and when it could change in-between the guide book updates.

It's incredibly important to contact me for this reason. I am just a phone call away and you are always welcome.

ATHRA AGM

CRIKEY, what a welcome invite I received to attend the March 2019 ATHRA AGM in Brisbane.

A short bit of history: the legendary R M Williams gathered horse groups from across Australia to attend the Australian Horse Congress in the 1970s.

At that gathering ATHRA and the National Horse Trail were formed. In 1988 a name change occurred of NHT to Bicentennial National Trail.

It is with pride and admiration that both are still attending to the needs of folk who are inspired by the great outdoors

I was welcomed by a competent group of executives who are committed



trail horse riders of Australia's premier representative body for trail horse riding.

What an action-packed few days of meetings and comradery – even a journey on the Brisbane, River Cat and a night out at the Outback Spectacular.

The essential matters of structure, membership, meetings, access and insurance were all discussed with the emphasis of safety and fun. ATHRA, which is similar to the BNT, has a national structure that

supports the needs of clubs and members in all states and territories.

Being part of a national body means our members have the opportunity to ride anywhere that permits horse access with any club Australia-wide.

This effectively opens up the whole of Australia to our members and wherever they travel with their horse. They are sure to be welcomed by the local club and enjoy the hospitality.

SUE CUMMING

Paul and Cherrie Jones Guidebook 7

THERE are three Paul Jones' in the vicinity of Grafton in North East NSW and two of them are known as "legends" of the bush. One of them, the BNT's Paul Jones, after growing up in Newcastle, became a contract stockman and farrier at some of the huge Clarence Valley cattle stations.

Now retired at his own property at Blaxlands Creek, Paul spends his time now "playing with tractors", battling weeds and watching over one of the BNT's toughest sections, from Grasstree on the Rocky River to Ebor. This takes in the notorious Guy Fawkes River with its 50plus river crossings, brumbies and some of the most spectacular scenic country, around 5,000 foot Point Lookout in New England National Park.

Paul, like many horse people, jockeys included, is diminutive in stature, but large in gentleness, and is known as much for his generosity as for his love of a campfire yarn.

Paul met Cherrie Davis through endurance competitions while he was a member of the Copmanhurst Endurance Club and she was in the North Coast club. Cherrie had moved with her mother to Maclean after growing up on a dairy farm in South Gippsland, Victoria.

It was the third marriage for both, and now their children are their five horses, a riding horse and packhorse each, and a spare. Their property "Jeramba" now has a big garden thanks to Cherrie, and they have recently finished painting their house made from two shipping containers.

Cherrie travelled on horseback with a group calling themselves "The Travelling

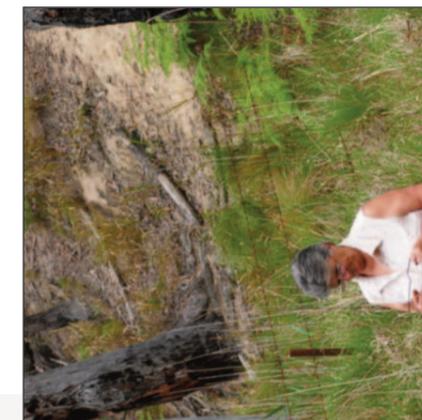


ABOVE: Paul Jones at Leamans Hut. BELOW: Cherrie divining lost horse shoes.

Grannies" – seven mature women making horse treks through North East NSW, raising more than \$50,000 for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter.

Cherrie is camp commandant and cook, preparing delicious camp oven meals for members of the Clarence Valley Trailriders and others, but her sideline is water divining.

"I needed to find a lost water line at our then home in Tucabia," Cherrie said. "My sister suggested we try to locate it with two sticks, and it worked. I have since found lost horseshoes and a watch."



Moffat Falls Cottage, Apartment & Cabins

Situated adjacent to the World Heritage-listed New England National Park in Northern NSW and overlooking spectacular mountain scenery & waterfalls. Guests can spend their day's fly fishing for the elusive rainbow trout in the crystal-clear mountain streams or bushwalking in 55,000 ha of remote wilderness. We have accommodation to suit every traveller, from fully self contained cabins to camping enthusiasts.

Moffat Falls Cottage - You won't find many bush cottages in this beautiful region, particularly one that makes such perfect fly fishing accommodation, with plenty of walking trails and private trout streams at your disposal. The 2 bedroom cottage is self-contained and fully appointed with all facilities & linen. Sleeping up to 6 people, with a kitchenette containing a microwave, hotplates & bar fridge. The veranda provides a delightful setting for relaxing whilst overlooking the therapeutic waterfalls.

Yaraandoo's fully self-contained Apartment overlooks tranquil bushland and provides access to the Serpentine river and 8km's of graded walks around Yaraandoo. It is fully equipped 1 bedroom apartment, containing a double bed and a fold out sofa bed in the lounge, its own ensuite, kitchen, lounge and BBQ area. Ideal for overnight travellers.

Little Styx River cabins offer rustic accommodation in the heart of New England's adventure wilderness. Once quarters for the old Point Lookout timber mill, the remaining cabins reflect some of the history of the rugged timbered ranges. Nestled beside the hurrying headwaters of the Little Styx River, the bush cabins are an ideal base from which to fish and walk the remote gorges or Tablelands forests. Each Cabin sleeps up to 12 visitors. Hot showers & wood heating provide for a comfortable & relaxing camping style stay. You do need to bring full camping gear including lighting & cooking, as there is no power. The showers are powered by Gas & the outside toilets are flushing toilets.

Located on Point Lookout Road, via Armidale, off Waterfall Way, NSW

For more information or bookings
P. 0455 347 600 E. info@moffatfalls.com.au
www.moffatfalls.com.au

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Contributions

BNT TRACKS welcomes contributions. Photos need to be 300 pixels per inch at size of publication, meaning the file size needs to be at least 500kb.

We are looking for photos, news items, snippets, poems, stories and particularly treks and other activities carried out on the Trail.

Photos should be emailed as JPGs, stories in MS Word if possible, but any format would do.

Contributions are cursorily edited but largely style and correct English is the responsibility of the writer – thus retaining the original flavour of the text as the author intends.

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The origins of 'bushwalking'

From Page 24

Women took the matter into their own hands in the 1920s, forming the Raggle-Taggle Gypsies club in Sydney, camping out and becoming the cover of *Women's Weekly* in July, 1934.

The Boy Scouts entered the scene in Australia in 1907, emulating the exploits of young scouts in the Boer War. Learning the arts of bushcraft was seen as groundwork for later soldiering.

In the 1930s, The dairy-farming O'Reilly family opened a hostel on the Lamington Plateau in the MacPherson Range of south-east Queensland, Bernard O'Reilly in 1937 became famous for locating the crashed Stinson aircraft in dense rainforest. At the same time Romeo Lahey established the famous Binna Burra Lodge as Australia's first ecotourism destination nearby.

Railway departments in all states in 1932 advertised Sunday "Mystery Walks" which became so popular that 12 trains were required to carry 8,000 Sydney participants to a walk along the Hawkesbury River.

Lack of modesty in women's walking attire sparked the interest of the Church and Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane objected



claiming that women participated "not to enjoy nature but to be admired".

In 1932 Sydney walker Myles Dunphy coined the term "bush walk" for the first time and put the two words together for the first utterance of "bushwalker".

Paddy Pallin coined the now well-known phrases "Count every ounce, as every ounce counts" and "If in doubt, leave it out". Bushwalking practice became more scientific with better-designed rucksacks, such as Swedish Bergen packs imported.

Then followed a war of words between bushwalkers and "hikers", an American term associated with mass consumerism culture, prompting the Sydney Hikers Club to change its name to the Rucksack Club. Paddy Pallin stopped selling "hiking gear" and changed it to "camp gear for walkers".

The Sydney Bushwalking Club claimed "It is hikers who get lost; it is bushwalkers who rescue them". Clubs began to limit memberships, requiring stringent fitness and experience levels.

Following the end of WWII and the rise in car ownership, bushwalking became less popular, generating a crisis in clubs' membership which were criticised for being too exclusive. A public membership drive was carried out and local councils and governments lobbied to produce guide books and maps.

A core of committed members remained however and the wilderness and nature conservation movements arose to add to interest, propping up the memberships, which steadily rose leading up to the recent history which most of us now remember.

ROGER FRYER

Ref: The ways of the Bushwalker - Melissa Harper



The origins of 'bushwalking'

PEOPLE have always walked. Our stick-like posture and long bipedal stride are perfect for stepping out across the grassland savannahs which are our natural habitat, at a moderate pace with the minimum of effort.

Our experience with the BNT shows that a person can walk 5,000km in less than a year. That is eight years to travel the 40,000km circumference of Earth, which puts an interesting perspective on paleontologists' claim that it took *Homo sapiens* 300,000 years to disperse after leaving Africa.

Like other bipeds such as the kangaroo, emu and T-rex, our hindquarters form the greatest proportion of our body mass. As nomadic hunter-gatherers we were on the move constantly and probably never thought to walk just for pleasure.

It is reasonable to assume that this began as soon as we settled down to a

sedentary civilised existence. Imagine an Egyptian stonemason, after a long day skinning knuckles, would take a stroll around the pyramids in the setting sun to stretch his legs and chill out.

Walking for pleasure, as a recreation or philosophical pursuit has scattered references through history and became idealised during the Romantic period in England in the 18th Century with the poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

*I wandered lonely as a Cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and Hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden Daffodils;
Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*

In Australian history, walking for pleasure began with the First Fleet. Surgeon George Wogan wrote to his brother in England:

*We sometimes put a bit of salt beef... a
bottle of O-be-Joyful in a napsack throw it*

*over our backs, take a hatchet, a brace of
pistols and a musket and away we go,
scouring the woods ... if night overtakes us
we light up a rousing fire, cut boughs and
make up a wig-wam ... I enjoy these little
rambles ...*

For the next 100 years, however, our little colony dealt with many problems and achievements, and organised walking for pleasure did not really take off until the end of the 19th Century when Alice Manfield, daughter of a gold miner in the Buckland Valley, Victoria, began guiding tours on Mt Buffalo which could be easily reached from Melbourne on the railway.

In the 1880s, the Bright Alpine Club was formed to promote the "Switzerland of Australia". Anyone who has seen the North East of Victoria would have to agree this is an apt description.

"Guide Alice", as she became known, caused a sensation by wearing a pants suit on her tours, rejecting modesty for freedom and convenience. The reputation of the Buffalo Plateau's scenery grew and a couple of hotels were built late in the century for accommodating walking tourists, followed by the government-sponsored Mt Buffalo Chalet in 1910, which is still there today.

At the same time in New South Wales, the Blue Mountains became to be seen as a tourist destination rather than a difficult barrier. When the railway was extended to Wentworth Falls, Sydney's elite began buying up land, building grand houses and grading walking tracks. Trees were removed at vantage points to expose the view.

By the 1900s there were several well-established clubs representing walkers in Sydney and Melbourne, the first of which was the Wallaby Club, formed in the early 1890s by Dr Louis Henry, a Melbourne surgeon, followed closely in Sydney by the Warragamba Walking Club in 1895.

Women were not welcome in these early walking clubs – physical activity was still seen as only a manly pursuit and a chance to get away from domestic drudgery. The Wallaby and Warragamba clubs both held annual "Ladies Days" as a concession. Admittedly, early walking equipment and provisions were rather heavy – bread, potatoes, rice, tinned meat, oatmeal, butter, tea and chops were typical.

It was in the 1920s and early '30s that recreational walking really took off, as it did overseas and in Hitler's German youth movement. Now women became involved as walking was seen as a suitable exercise for the independent woman after WWI.