

Townsville N.E.C. Bushwalkers



NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1976.

1.

TOWNSVILLE N.F.C. BUSHWALKERS CLUB
P.O. BOX 494, TOWNSVILLE Q.4810

Hon. Officers;

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Roland Gregory

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Andy Plunkett

EDITOR

Roy Williams

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Les Hyland

CONTACT OFFICER

Marion Darveniza,
22 Banksia Street,
KIRWAN. 4814.

Phone 79 9371

Meeting Place;

The National Fitness Centre, Cleveland
Terrace, side entrance, opposite the old
Supreme Court. 20.00 on alternate
Wednesdays.

Printed by:-

The Townsville Area National Fitness
Committee.

2.

**** TRIP PROGRAMME ****

SEPTEMBER - 1976

Sept. 4/5 WE Tully Gorge L. Darveniza

Sept. 19 D Mingela Caves L. McLeod.

The dates and trips shown are liable to change without notice; for latest information attend the meeting prior to the trip in which you are interested.

Trip times will be advised at the meeting when arrangements are completed.

GENERAL MEETINGS

SOCIAL MEETINGS

1 Sept. '76

15 Sept. '76

29 Sept. '76

13 Oct. '76

27 Oct. '76

10 Nov. '76

24 Nov. '76

8 Dec. '76.

....oOo....

3.

THE AYERS ROCK TRIP MAY, 1976
IMPRESSIONS. .. D. Edwards.

5.45. standing in front of Roland's in the cold dawn - Roland, Mark, Annette, Lee, Alex and myself - chatting, laughing. I thought back for a minute - Rick's original announcement; putting my name on the list immediately; meetings planning Itinerary, recipies, quantities of food, clothes to take, how many tents, cooking gear etc., hours comparing prices, more hours buying the food (huge quantities - trying to ignore the raised eyebrows and madly hoping our cheques would be accepted); a collection building up at Roland's; money in and straight out again; food parcelled; the packing into the coach; I was glad it was over.

I was brought back to the present by my growing excitement and some one called - "Are you sure the bus - Oops! Coach - was to be here at 06.00, or was it 07.00?" I remember the bus finally arriving, Mary at the wheel, piling in amongst the sleepy faces, leaving at 06.50. Ten minutes later a ringing crack - a blown fuse. Soon fixed by Rick and Mary and off again.

Fingers pointing, exclamations whenever kangaroos, emus, galahs, budgerigars, hawks, eagles, pigs appeared. Different plants being noted. Dead pigs on the road. Young steers being castrated and branded in a yard near a breakfast stop. Hoping those eagles would get their heavy bodies airborne before the coach hit them.

Endless straight narrow roads - flat almost treeless plains - small hills - red earth - masses of flowers - low ranges of mesas - the Devil's Marbles, a pile of rounded rocks out of nowhere. Here Andy and the Apprentices (Kiwi & Rock Wallaby) were out with ropes, crabs and harnesses abseiling from one of the boulders - Larry and Roland, too.

4.

Clear colours of sunsets, with the waxing moon and the first stars - cold nights and crisp mornings. Water in the Todd River and many beautiful white River Gums (*Eucalyptus Camaldulensis*). Dusty red dirt roads - layers of dust everywhere - a gritty feeling between your teeth - dust catching in nose and throat - Larry and Suzy with colourful face masks!

MORNINGS: "All right you lazy sods! Get out of bed! The sun's shining, it's a beautiful day!" The stentorian voice of our sadistic RSM Patterson, attempting to rouse us at ungodly hours! Sometimes showers and toilets, other times the nearest bush! Porridge and tea from the expert, Andy - toast with honey, vegemite, jam and peanut butter (sometimes all together). Rushing to wash up, pack bags, packs, tents, food and utensils and to be on the coach if not first, at least not last.

LUNCHES: By the Buckley River, at the Devil's Marbles; outside the garage at the Bus Depot in Alice Springs, at the bottom of the Rock, or at the top; in camp near the Rock; a hot meal near Olga gorge; in the Caravan park in Alice, Standley Chasm; the Frewena Roadhouse; by a creek near Karumba and another near Croydon; in a park in Charters Towers, (by then very sick of camp pie, dry biscuits, tea with powdered milk!).

CAMPS: A "No Camping" picnic area near Cloncurry; any spare patches of red, pebbly earth between the spinifex - when we got our third flat tyre; Alice Springs Caravan Parks (Freezing! In Central Australia! In the Red Heart? Yes! "What's the temperature this morning, Lynne?" "Minus 0.50!") 4 nights in the camp at the Rock, competing for showers with bus loads of school kids - oh, brother! Holly and Gay sharing a tent with Mark?; at Barrow Creek; behind a Cammoweal pub; Normanton Caravan Park with its bore-water swimming pool; beside the Lynd Development Road.

5.

Having a few drinks and games of pool in pubs at Three Ways; Camooweal; Barrow Creek; Normanton and Georgetown. A cabaret attracted some at the Inland Motel, Ayers Rock.

Looking down the coach - Mark asleep on the floor, John on his duffle coat; Lily leaning against the window; Darryl and Rick in animated conversation; others reading. The sound of Kate's Scottish burr; Fiona and Annette's faint one; the Canadian tones of Claudia - the American accents and the slightly varying Australian ones.

Round a blazing fire - "My girl's a corker" ... Neil singing his own song; Liz leading "My eyes are dim". Roland's song of Tom Payne losing his trousers to a pig; Kate and Elaine teaching us "The Wild Rover" - "Right up your Kilt"; Lee's many songs.

"How much have you got left?" "What are we running out of?" "Don't forget to buy some...." "No, we'll need more than that!" "They haven't got any" - "What'll we do?" "What sort of steak?" "Gee, we're getting through a lot of peanut butter!" "Better get some more!"

"Look at the price of milk!" The hustle and bustle of buying more food and managing to fit in one art gallery and one souvenir shop.

Out from Alice Springs, at 18.45 our first sight of "it" - a dark smooth silhouette against the gold of the sunset, the Olgas behind. Camping behind that awesome, looming bulk - walking round it, looking at the fantastic caves and marvellous paintings - though most of its significance was lost on us without guide or books

Agony in lungs and leg muscles ascending the Rock, but determined to make it - Mark and Roy two of the first up.

The flatness of the surrounding lands - the Olgas and other old Ranges curved blue in the hazy distance - all signing the book, including Mary, the most determined of all, who got a cheer when she arrived. Some had fun hopping and running (in a fashion) down. Jack being presented with a certificate that he had climbed the Rock and also walked $1\frac{1}{2}$ times round. He had got separated from the rest, kept going, and was eventually brought back by the Ranger, after dark, much to the relief of Janet and everyone else.

The fascinating Olgas - many unusual domes - climbing up and through Olga Gorge to find a wide valley, surprisingly green - some water - finches, pigeons, spinifex - a red 'roo - streaks of lichen on the conglomerate. Mark and Colleen sat in the grass and everyone passed without seeing them. Valley of the Winds - beautiful. A wedge-tail preening - a big red 'roo bounding down, stopping, listening, on again. Climbing a little hill for a good view, with Andy's abseilers at it again as we returned.

Beautiful Simpson's Gap - very cold water flowing - climbing up one side barefooted, a slip, "Ouch!" - a handful of spinifex prickles - the Apprentices' biggest abseil yet! Standley Chasm impressive - tall walls and a narrow gap with the red rock glowing in the sun - but too many tourists.

Pitchi Ritchi sanctuary - intriguing sculptures by Bill Ricketts, old camel and bullock wagons, mining gear, bore and well equipment. The Emily Gap camel farm - we were shown old camel gear and old cars by a character with a grey beard and a pigtail. An hilarious moment with Mark and Mary astride a camel, with all of us ganged up in front for a photo. Next Annette was adopted by a camel!

TOWNS: Mt. Isa was flat, dry, dominated by the ugly backdrop of the mines and smelters. Alice Springs attractive, fairly green, surrounded by hills. Camooweal, Tennant Creek - small, dusty. Normanton - attractive old Bank of N.S.W., Carpenteria Shire Council building, the first Burns Philp Store, a very old railmotor and the not-so-new-current one.

7.

Karumba - small dirty, huge barra skeletons on the beach. Croydon - a crooked butcher shop. Many had seen the Towers, but not the Venus Battery where gold once was crushed.

TROUBLES: First day, Wham! a blowout - filled the coach with firewood as we waited. Bought another in Cloncurry and put it on next day. Wham! once more a change - Mary injuring her hand and Nancy and Colleen tending to it. 22.35, the smell of rubber burning - third flat tyre - camped right there. Mary had to go to Three Ways and back for a second-hand one.

Repacked the coach next day - no more blow-outs. Clutch problems, battery problems, but thanks to Mary, Rick and Andy and a little luck we got there and back to tell the tale.

Our Fushwalkers are a real nice bunch - if I were asked to name the three nicest I'm not sure who the other two would be.

---oOo---

When rock-climbing always wear a safety helmet - it stops your hair standing on end.

---oOo---

Hear about the lady who went for a tramp in the woods - he got away.

...oOo...

"The wise take delight in water,
the good take delight in mountains"

Confucious Ca.5th.Cent.BC.

3.

ANDY'S ABSEIL

... Lee McBryde.

My first trip with the Townsville N.F.C. Bushwalkers was no farther afield than the old quarry in Sturt Street, but it was quite an education. Even in the middle of the city at a Safety and Training session the qualities of the true Bushwalker came to the fore.

It was also my first encounter with a new dimension in time. I was there at 10.00 sharp to learn the new skills of abseiling as arranged at last meeting. But it was Sunday. A little after 11.00 people started arriving (lesson one well-learned - it was Townsville time.)

Immediately people started discussions concerning crabs, new \$60 ropes, pink tapes, gloves, purple tapes, helmets, 3 abseil courses, graded difficulty, white tapes, all rather bewildering so early on a Sunday. Little did I realise that I, too, would say some of those words by the end of the day.

Leader Andy set up the beginner's course and called for volunteers. There are few exhibitionists in Bushwalkers, so he had to choose. My silent plea didn't work. Lesson No. 2 - no chickening out in this outfit. By this time this gentle slope had taken on the dimensions and angle of a treacherous cliff face. So it was only by nervous inching I made it to the bottom. What feelings of elation though at the end! Unfortunately they were falsely founded. The unwritten law of the abseiler was broken; one who abseils does not leave the crabs lying forgotten in the grass below.

After two or three descents on this slope we were supposed to have enough confidence to tackle the next one. It was definitely quite vertical with an overhang - stirred the butterflies inside. Now for lesson No. 3 - have confidence in your instructor.

Blind faith was closer to the truth as Andy had to talk each of us over the edge.

It was quite a tribute to his persuasive powers that we conquered sheer terror to lean back into nothingness. After the first drop you just feel surprised that you made it. Actually, the best part was dangling back in full costume beside the road delighting in the astonishment of the Pacific Festival tourists.

Some interesting observations emerged that day. Along with discoveries relating friction to new rope and the number of crabs, it was also noted that an underarm deodorant could not meet the extra demands of fright and panic when learning to Abseil. Room for some market research here.

The third course was the "advanced descent" - another test for nerves and will-power - much higher again. However, by this time people were starting to enjoy it and were actually lining up for more.

It was only when food was mentioned that they could be diverted. Some had not even had lunch so the prospect of a B.B.Q. at Pallarenda was most inviting. But the day's activities did not come to an end there. In spite of the cold and wind, these intrepid Bushwalkers paddled into the sunset, squeezing the last minutes of light from the day.

One last lesson to be learnt though, when Les suggests you write a report, you better do it, 'cause it gets worser and worser, the longer you leave it.'

Trip ReportMOUNT ELLIOTT 30TH. MAY '76.. Roland Gregory

It was 06.30 and the five of us hurried after Alan as he led our party towards Palm Creek - destination the summit of Mt. Elliott. Climbing Mt. Elliott was "old-hat" to Alan - he'd been up and down as many times as you or I climb the front stairs at home. Near Palm Creek, we met two more stalwards, who had camped there the night, having little faith in their alarm clocks to awaken them so early as home.

Soon a branch creek to the right was taken, and the climb began in cool overcast conditions - rock hopping up past pools, cascades and some splendid waterfalls. The view south-eastwards improved all the time. High up a cliff face confronted the party, but this obstacle was overcome by a climb up some useful tree roots.

Once the summit ridge was reached the grade was easier and the walk continued through open rain forest to the clearing on the summit. Here a tree afforded a view such as one might see in Antarctica in a blizzard! Alas, a white-out! We cursed the cloud and ate a hurried lunch, shivering there in a circle.

Then downwards again, but soon a dissenting voice complained that his compass was indicating the party were descending the wrong side of the ridge (fair dinkum!) and steps were retraced to find a route that satisfied everyone.

The party split into two groups, as three faster (just better at skating down the wet slippery rocks) members forged ahead. As darkness settled, the slower members found the others at the bottom with a roaring fire and a good brew. A very long day but enjoyable, apart from the white view and the Gympie encountered so intimately by two of the party.

For future generations of Mt. Elliott lovers, the Club horticulturalist planted a mango and a jackfruit tree on the bank of Palm Creek, near the "big rock". Find them if you can!

11. Trip Report.

WATERFALL CREEK - SHAY'S CLEARING - BAMBAROO TRACK 26/27 JUNE, '76 - Roland Gregory

Waterfall Creek must be one of the most picturesque in the near-Townsville area, and at 09.00 on a Saturday morning our small party of Lee, Jim and Roland started rock-hopping up its course. At one point there was a scramble up a seven metre rock-face via botanical handholds which were also the households of many green ants. Almost to the top, one of Roland's boots, which were tied to his pack fell back on to the irate green ants. Another nippy descent and he threw the offending leather-ware towards the top - unfortunately, it sailed over and into the creek beyond, much to the merriment of Lee and Jim who were watching this comic drama from above. Ah, well! He had the first swim to retrieve the floating boot.

Further on the first of a series of beautiful waterfalls, culminating in a 70 metre broken waterfall; lunch was had at the top of this. Shortly afterwards and upwards a magnificent deep pool appeared, with vertical rock cliffs and waterfall, the cool water was incredibly clear and emerald green and no time was lost in plunging in. Jim demonstrated his birdman talents from the highest cliff - J.L. Seagull would have been jealous.

At 17.00 Shay's Clearing was reached and a spot of horticulture indulged in as Roland planted the orchard of eight young fruit trees he had lugged up. Camp was set up in the clearing surrounded by rainforest and a comfortable night was spent in spite of drizzle.

A magnificent and vociferous bird chorus greeted dawn and its overcast misty outlook. Later with Roland's trusty compass in hand the party set a N.E. course into forests of wait-a-while and liana vines aiming to intercept the Bambaroo Track. And they found it too!

On the crest of a ridge they soon came on Lou's Lookout, which that day offered only a cloud-filled view of Bullocky Tom's Valley.

Ten minutes west of the Lookout, a blazed tree marked the turnoff down the Bambaroo Track. It was a delightful walk along the track through the rainforest, dripping wet though it was, but after lunch another compass course was set N.W. into the unknown to descend a ridge to the bottom.

Then the compass gave a wheeze and seized up - overworked and soaking wet. Disaster was averted as the ridge was near, (just beyond all that wait-a-while!) and the descent continued over Mt. Houston with fine views over the cane lands and coastal flats to the Palm Islands and Hinchinbrook.

At 17.00 the descent was over and the potential sugar harvest of the farm at the bottom went down somewhat as the sweet-toothed party replenished energy reserves.

It had been a good week-end and this walk can only have the highest recommendations, especially in a few years when those trees start dripping lush mangoes into Shay's Clearing.

.....oOo.....

When he talked they gathered round him,
All the sharp, the game, the anxious,
Anchored then his rope securely,
Anchored then his rope of nylon,
Explained the harness, Crabs, the handholes,
Calmed their fears and reassured them,
Convinced them of a bright tomorrow.

Roy "Hiawattha" Williams.

13.

"COME TO THE FELLS"

Lyrics; Scottish Students and Others.

Music; Vaughan Williams.

The sun is a shining on valley and hill
Heigh-ho! Come to the Fells
Of stewing in cities we've all had our fill
Heigh-ho! Come to the Fells
Let seaside frequenters recline at their ease
We've work for our hands and our feet and our knees,
So it's hey, come maidens and men,
We'll be out on the rocks in the morning.

There are classical courses with nail marks galore,
Heigh-ho! Come to the Fells
To crags which have never been conquered before
Heigh-ho! Come to the Fells
There are courses with handholds for thin men
and stout,
To the super-severes with the handholds left out
So it's hey, come maidens and men,
We'll be out on the rocks in the morning.

There are ledges up there where we'll dine and
we'll sup,
And many a good one is built wrong way up
So its hey, come maidens and men
Come and climb on the rocks in the morning.

As sung by H. Kershaw - Cockatoo Creek,
1976.

...oOo...

14. TRIP REPORT:

CAPE CLEVELAND 25th. Jul.'76 ... Graham Wells.

On a beautiful fine Sunday a group of 13 set out from Townsville for the new road to Turtle Bay - that is if you accept the nomenclature applied by A.I.M.S! Bushwalkers still remember it as Tickle Belly Bay; maybe that wouldn't pass in Canberra.

We parked the four vehicles just short of the A.M.I.S. gate (Australian Institute of Marine Science, that is) and diverged from the road 100 metres beyond to join an old track to the N.E. end of Tickle Belly Bay. Declining an invitation to swim, the group followed a creek bed in a vine forest through a "burr forest" to a saddle.

A rocky outcrop revealed views of the real Turtle Bay, to which they soon descended and by then needed no invitation for swimming in the clear deep water. Some did a beach sprint, but soon the whole group were hotly climbing the next saddle. A scramble on a lofty rock and there lay Paradise.

The descent (!) into Paradise was anything but heavenly through deciduous vine forest - and who said it was winter. Swimming was rapidly resorted to and after some sunbathing there was a general move towards lunch under a group of Casuarina. (C. equisetifolia).

While the majority lazed some "Mad Dogs" went out in the mid-day sun to climb the range behind (some 800 ft.). According to Roland, Mary, Mark and yours truly, like confused players casting for "Picnic at Hanging Rock" and "My Crowded Solitude", the group was tossed between pressing on to the climax of East and West and Paradise. Meantime back with the forbidden apple, the rest swam, ran, sat, knocked oysters, or cooed and argued the point before setting out for the return journey. A word of advice - stay clear of little men and wear a bash hat.
