

# Bushwalk Australia

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## Meandering Mountains

Volume 28, April 2018

Bushwalk Australia Magazine  
An electronic magazine for  
<http://bushwalk.com>  
Volume 28, April 2018

**We acknowledge the  
Traditional Owners of this  
vast land which we explore.  
We pay our respects to their  
Elders, past and present,  
and thank them for their  
stewardship of this great  
south land.**

Cover picture



The Loddon Range, Midwest  
Tasmania by ILUVSWTAS

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We would love you to be part  
of the magazine, here is how to  
contribute - [Writer's Guide](#).

The copy deadline for the  
June 2018 edition is  
30 April 2018.

**Warning**

Like all outdoor pursuits, the  
activities described in this  
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Undertaking them may result in  
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Please consider joining a walking  
club or undertaking formal training  
in other ways to ensure you are  
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are planning. Please report any  
errors or omissions to the editor or  
in the forum at BWA eMag.

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# From the Editor

Hi

There is something about bushwalking that refreshes the mind, energises the body and provides hope for the future. Perhaps this something is spending time conscious of the fact that we are part of nature, not just visiting. Perhaps it is the time with friends or the time alone. Perhaps it is the energy expended on a hill climb or the energy saved relaxing by a stream. Perhaps it is the broad vista from a cliff top or being held tight by an ancient forest. Whatever it is for you personally, I hope that this edition helps you find more of it.

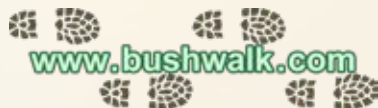
My hope with this magazine is that it helps inspire and equip you for your next adventure. In this edition, you will find three personal accounts of wonderful mountain trips, the ultimate guide to sleeping bags, a detailed jacket review, a guide to bird watching, yummy food, inspiring images and more.

A big thank you to the contributing authors and photographers who share a bit of their lives with us.

Happy walking  
Matt :)



Matt McClelland (aka Wildwalks)  
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## Declaration

The bushwalking community is a small world and paths often cross. To improve transparency I thought it would be helpful to list my associations within the outdoor community. In many cases I approached the authors of the articles included in this edition and suggested the topics. The opinions stated in articles are those of the authors and not of those involved in the production of this edition. The authors are mostly people I know through [Bushwalk.com](http://Bushwalk.com). I operate [Bushwalk.com](http://Bushwalk.com) and [Wildwalks.com](http://Wildwalks.com) and have written several walking guide books, published by Woodslane, I have also written for Great Walks. I contract part time to National Parks Association NSW on an ongoing basis to coordinate their activities program. I have had a partnership with NPWS NSW and have hosted advertising for *Wild* magazine. I have also partnered with a large number of other organisations in environmental campaigns and have a regular bushwalking segment on ABC regional radio. There is some commercial advertising through the magazine. I have probably forgotten something - if you are worried about transparency please either write to me or raise the issue on [Bushwalk.com](http://Bushwalk.com).

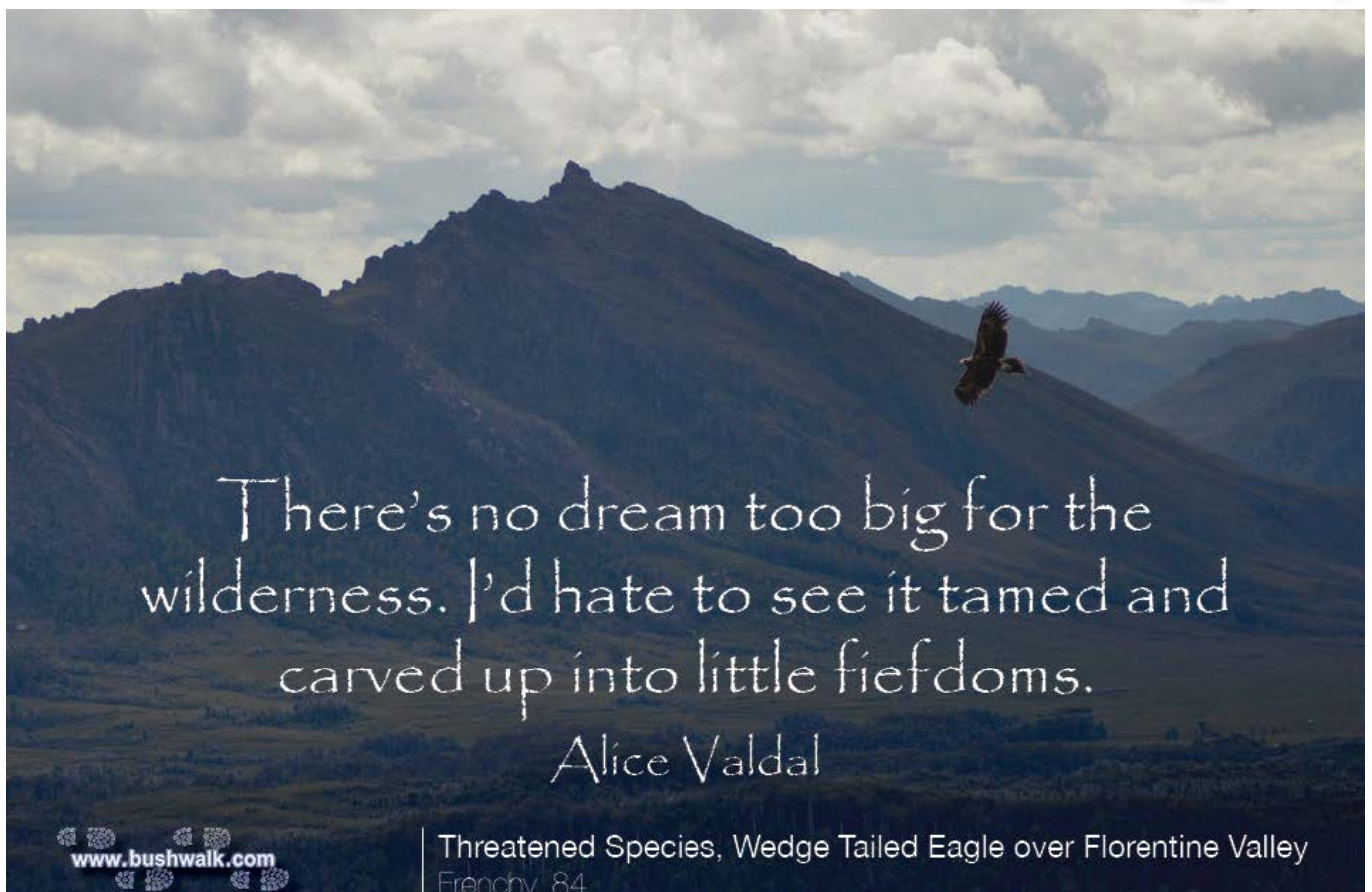
# Videos

## US national parks trails

Beautiful [examples](#) of trails in US national parks.



Autumn in Rocky Mountain National Park  
Ed Ogle



There's no dream too big for the  
wilderness. I'd hate to see it tamed and  
carved up into little fiefdoms.

Alice Valdal

# The Pennine Way

Digby Gotts



The Pennine Way is a 407 kilometre track in the United Kingdom running from Edale, just outside Manchester, to Kirk Yetholm just across the Scottish border. It had been in use for several decades before 1965 when it was established as an official path, and so is the oldest long-distance walk in the UK.

Looking back to Edale, day 1  
All photos by Digby and Alison Gotts

## Planning the hike

The through hike is regarded as difficult, although the walking itself is relatively easy with few steep sections and is well marked. The difficulties arise from the state of the track and the English weather. The track runs for many kilometres through wet peatbog, and has been much damaged and widened by generations of walkers and sheep, all trying to dodge the mud. Some of the worst sections have been paved with recycled stone slabs, but while these contribute to impact bruising, at least you can stay clean. Waterproof boots and knee high gaiters are essential, but are unlikely to keep your feet dry.

English autumn weather is the epitome of unreliable, with four seasons in one day the norm. We were often tempted by blue sunny skies in the morning to don shorts and t-shirts for walking, but by the time breakfast was completed, clouds had rolled in with a 30 km/h wind off an ice floe somewhere. We normally walked in long pants, a merino top and a windproof parka, with overpants in reserve for the afternoon showers. The walking is mostly at an altitude of 100-300 metres, with half a dozen climbs up onto the fells at 600-800 metres. Typically we would be in cloud on the high points, with restricted visibility leaving us reliant on occasional cairns, compass and a GPS.

We decided early on that we would do this walk slowly and in autumn, avoiding the crowds of summer, and cope with the weather by doing it as a slack pack, staying in B&B accommodation throughout. This meant we could enjoy the track, absorb home and village culture, and carry less than 10 kilograms for the duration so did not need a carry service. Most fit young hikers take around 17 days for the through hike, so we planned for 23 days, with a few zero (non-walking) days and a few nero (nearly zero) days, but otherwise averaging around 20 kilometres each day.

“English autumn weather is the epitome of unreliable, with four seasons in one day the norm.”

## Days 1-3, Edale to Hebden Bridge

Edale was our first of many stone villages, spread out along a river valley, where the water flow was used for running mills of various types. It is a hub for walking tracks heading off in all directions, including the start of the Pennine Way.

After five months of planning and dreaming, we finally started walking on Saturday 2 September 2017, with three days planned to reach Hebden Bridge for our first zero. We knew we would need the break as we were not track fit and these three days are all over 20 kilometres.



Looking down to Edale, day 1

Terry gave us an early breakfast and we were walking up the valley by 8am. An hour or so of gentle climbing has us at the foot of Jacob's ladder, a stone stairway climbing steeply 300 metres up to the main ridge and the high point of Kinder Low (I have no idea why it would be called that) at 633 metres.

Flagstones are laid for some of the boggy bits, but the dry areas are very rocky, so the walking is slow, stepping from rock to rock to the waterfall called Kinder Downfall and then Jacob's Ladder – the Reckoning, where the track drops steeply on stairs again, then flagstones for three kilometres to Snake Pass. Much of the track here had been eroded two metres down through the bog to the hard clay beneath.

As we came down off Bleaklow Head, the track was again rocky and difficult and Ali was tiring, taking several falls but without damage. We're both exhausted and very grateful to reach the road next to the Torside Reservoir, but now have to cope with traffic and no verge for the last kilometre or so up to The Old House. We tottered in to be greeted by another dozen walkers and a cup of tea almost before the boots come off. A bath was welcome, fortunately, as there was insufficient headroom to stand up for a shower.



Motocross food van with hot chocolate

The climb for the next morning is up and over Black Hill, no longer black thanks to a massive regeneration and recovery program. Tonne bags of lime fertiliser are scattered over the plateau and sheep have been fenced out. The track followed a sharp edge, and we were grateful for the wind blowing us away from it as it's a long way down. From near the top of Black Hill, we saw our lunch target, another major road across the moor where we have been assured that as it is a Sunday, there will be a hot food van parked in a layby. As we got closer, the tension rose as although we can see the food van, there is no movement and the sidewalls are shut. We've resigned ourselves to biscuits and



Alison at Stoodley Pike, day 3

cheese when we realise that because of the wind the van is operating out the back door. Several cups of tea with egg and bacon butties later, while we huddle up against a stone wall out of the wind, and we are revitalised for the afternoon.

Our feet were feeling the pain as it had been gravel tracks and flagstones for the entire way to Redbank Reservoir where we could see our hotel across the moor. It was very tempting to take a short cut across the southern edge of the dam, but we could see sedge and sphagnum, so we decided to stay on the safer track for the extra two kilometres despite our blisters.

By morning the weather had finally shut down after the last few days of cool and dry, and we were greeted by low cloud and drizzle for the kilometre back up the main road to the track. We were following Blackstone Edge, a famous climbing cliff,

“Some of the track had been cobbled with stones in Roman times ...”



Dropping into Hebden Bridge, day 3

but there was nothing to see from above except vague grey rocks and cloud. Some of the track had been cobbled with stones in Roman times, and for contrast we cross a six lane freeway on a bridge made for hikers.

Hebden Bridge is a town of weavers, originally with hand looms, then powered by water wheels then steam engines burning coal. Chimneys are everywhere. The black satanic mills could have been right here, and the town still looks the part. We spent our day off wandering quietly, doing coffee and lunch while Ali managed a few sketches.



Fingerboards near Tan Hill, day 9

### Days 4-8, Hebden Bridge to Pen Y Ghent

With our clothes washed and dried, dry clean boots and socks, our batteries were fully charged and we were raring to go the next morning. Especially as our host, Sharon, offered to drive us five kilometres up to Colden, neatly avoiding a 200 metre steep climb up out of the valley. The moorland was exposed and open to a freezing wind, gladly in our back. It was hats and gloves with parkas and long pants for the whole day, walking past another three reservoirs before a solid 150 metre climb to Top Withins and some ruins said to be the inspiration for *Wuthering Heights*. Whether it was or not, it was a spectacular location on the edge of high moorland and overlooking Haworth, the home of the Bronte sisters.

“... it was a spectacular location on the edge of high moorland and overlooking Haworth ...

The descent for the afternoon was to Ponden reservoir, with our B&B set on a peninsula overlooking the valley and the lake. We were met by Brenda with tea and pikelets with jam and cream ready by the time our boots were



Flagstones on the way to Top Withins, day 5

off. As we were the first arrival she gave us our choice of rooms, so we had to have the purple one! After some recovery time she drove us two kilometres down to the pub for dinner, but had forgotten to mention that we had to make our own way back until we were there. As we hadn't brought parkas or a torch we were a little miffed, but made it back okay before the rain and dark set in.

An early breakfast and we're off by 8am, fine by us as the day looked to be a hard one, with three climbs, each of 200 metres. A pub



Alison at Windy Gyle, day 21

after hill two looked promising for lunch until we arrived and discovered it to be under renovation, so we found shelter against a wall under some blackberries and settled down to our cheese and bikkies. The last hill was over before we expected and from there it is all downhill to Earby.

Our host was able to show us a disused railway line which led back to the main Way avoiding about five kilometres of busy road. Then we had wet paddocks and a canal crowded with boats and moorings. A couple even had “lounge rooms” built into their docks.

That saw us into Gargrave and The Dalesman a track café famed for coffee, cake and lollies. We followed the Aire River for several kilometres, admiring the continuous grade two water with timber screens and barbed wire fencing making life entertaining for the intrepid kayaker.

Another Saturday dawned, so we’ve been on the track a full week and seem to have arrived at a comfortable level of walking fitness. We certainly hoped so, as today is one of our hardest days on the Way. 450 metres of climbing to get out of the valley and up to Fountain Fell, then down 300 metres and back up again to get over Pen Y Ghent before the 500 metre drop to Horton in Ribblesdale.



Dry river valley above Malham Cove, day 8

The day started with climbing 420 steps up the side of Malham Cove, a limestone amphitheatre formed by a waterfall 50,000 years ago, then another four hours of steady climbing before we reached the double cairn marking the top of Fountain Fell. Mine shafts were scattered about, some with fences and some with dire warning signs. We didn’t leave the path. The afternoon light made Pen Y Ghent glow as if the grass was backlit. The stepped path wound through two cliffs before easing off for the gently rounded summit where there was a queue for shelter in the lee of a wall. The track down is hardened, with lots of steps to make it easy for track runners, for whom this is the first of three peaks in the aptly named Three Peak Challenge.



Stone way-marker, day 8

### Days 9-11, Pen Y Ghent to Bowes

Sunday greeted us with miserable weather, drizzling rain again with that biting wind. There was a 400 metre climb for the morning, but it was all on rough roads so route finding in the cloud wasn't a problem. As we got closer to the top, it became apparent that there was a serious mountain bike competition using our path. Bikes whizzed past in both directions, appearing out of the cloud with little to no warning, so we had to stay on full alert. We started across the summit plateau to find a motocross competition in full swing around us as well. This was at the end of a sealed road, so there were several hundred people with cars and trailers parked in all directions. We were boggling at all this activity, when two of the organisers pointed the hot food van out to us. Hamburgers and hot chocolate with marshmallow for lunch on the summit was a wonderful compensation for our invaded feeling. Motocross bikes and mountain bikes continued past us, very politely, for another kilometre until we turned off their path at Ten End and started down towards Hawes and Laburnum House.

The burst of foul weather was expected to continue for a few days, so with a major climb over Great Shunner Fell looming, we didn't hesitate to book a taxi to skip 10 kilometres and stay low down for the day.

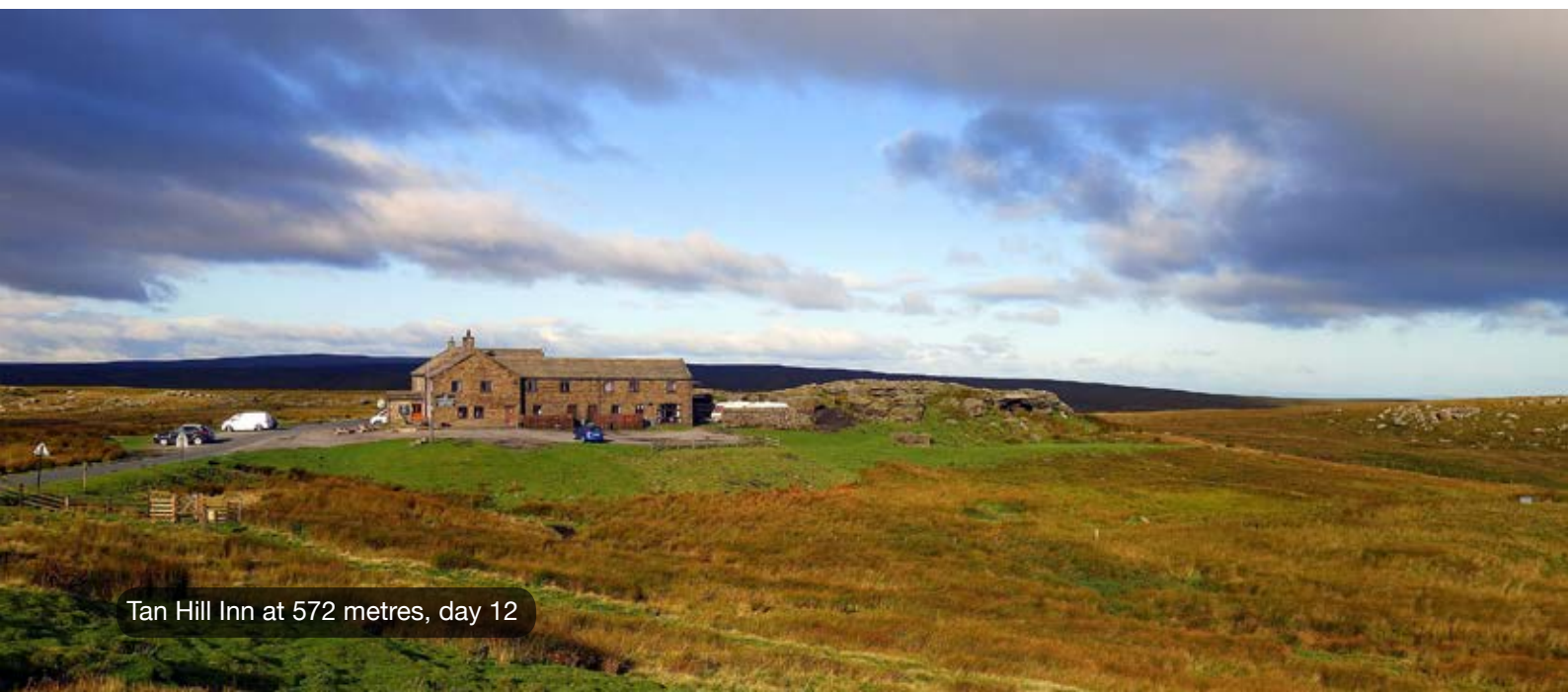
After the lift, we climbed gradually up a valley, with another obvious path at the same height on the other side, and we eventually realised that we are looking at Wainwright's Coast to Coast path where we walked 12



Bowes Castle still dominates the valley, even as a ruin, day 10

years ago. After saying hello and goodbye to the C2C, we climbed on through very wet and boggy moorland and even though I had wrapped my feet in Tesco bags inside the boots they still got wet. The pub for the night was the Tan Hill Inn, almost on top of all this moorland, and a major search and rescue centre as well as being the highest pub in the UK at 572 metres. The clouds were scudding by just over our head, and Shunner Fell a good 300 metres above that, so the decision to skip was a good one.

The five kilometres of track north from Tan Hill Inn had the worst reputation of any bog along the Way, so we opted to follow the road around it, covering six kilometres instead. This allowed us to complete the day's walk with dry socks, the only day where that occurred. Bowes Castle came into view from several kilometres away and it dominated the valley. It was built in 1170, replacing a Roman fort, and by the sixteenth century it was ruined.



Tan Hill Inn at 572 metres, day 12

### Days 12-16, Bowes to Garrigal

We were in Horton in Ribblesdale a few days ago and next we're on our way to Middleton In Teesdale. Even the locals use the whole name as there are several other Middletons in the area. Aussies get laughed at about the longish names we use, but I can't see any difference.

The lane we were following had a warning sign every 50 metres or so gently suggesting that we stay on the road as there was unexploded ordnance in the neighbouring fields. It seemed to be okay to go in there as long as you didn't touch or disturb anything. Up over another 200 metre ridge and the valley of the Tees is on display before us.

The next day the Way followed gently along the Tees River for the whole day, passing Low Force and High Force waterfalls where the river crashed over bluestone edges. A 150 year old suspension bridge crossed the river to some recommended tea rooms for a good coffee and poor cakes for morning tea. We learned that the word force for waterfall came from the old Nordic word foss.

Low Force is a series of one to two metre drops over a kilometre or so, probably canoeable but at about grade four with manoeuvring inside white water. High Force is a near vertical drop of about 10 metres, crashing off rocks on its way down.



Low Force, day 14

At Langdon Beck we woke to brilliant lighting on the range outside our window, with the hillsides glowing green and grey in the low sun. A bouquet of pheasants was running around in the paddock below us, but they disappeared as the pub started to wake up. They had apparently heard about the shooting party which had started to assemble at the pub as we left. We were back on the Way after about 30 minutes, again following up the river to where it emerged from a dam. This gave us an exposed and frightening climb up wet and slippery rock beside Cauldron Snout before reaching the dam wall and a farm track again.



Middleton in the valley of the Tees River, day 13

By then, gunfire was echoing around the valley, hopefully from gun butts a kilometre or so off to one side, while appropriately there are more warning signs of unexploded ordnance in the moors around us. We kept moving and appeared to get out of range of threats as we approached High Cup Nick, a spectacular glacial landform with a semicircle of cliffs around a closed valley.

We managed an early dinner of coffee and panini at a Dufton café before our host arrived to collect us, so we didn't have to go out again that night. The Hollies is very walker friendly and comfy with plenty of power points, Wi-Fi and a hard bed. Jan was also happy to give us a 7am breakfast and drive us back to Dufton to get us back on the track early for the 25 kilometres and a 600 metre climb over Cross Fell and its friends.

All went to plan and we're slipping and sliding up cow shit-covered lanes out of Dufton by 8am. It was a steady uphill grind for a few kilometres before a small bridge and the main climb started. This was steep with steps, then a plateau before steep again for about six steep bits before topping out on Knock Fell at 670 metres. The Way then bobs along, with 200 metres down and 200 metres up to Dun Fell and its radar station, then a repeat for Little Dun Fell before the final climb up onto Cross Fell at 900 metres, our highest point for the walk.

By then the cloud had rolled in, so visibility on the trackless main plateau was down to



Greg's Hut just off to one side of Cross Fell, day 15

25 metres and we had to use the GPS to find our way from cairn to cairn. The summit cairn is in the shape of a cross, with arms about 10 metres long providing some shelter regardless of the wind direction. We had a snack there but decided to press on down to Greg's Hut for lunch. With muddy tracks going in all directions the GPS was worth its weight in gold for this tricky bit of navigation. Greg's Hut dates from a lead mining era, so for several kilometres we're on a rough and rocky track in a wasteland of spoil heaps.

The road way improved, but it was still a long way down on a hard surface to reach Garrigal and the Post Office B&B. We received a warm welcome and were happy to hear that the pub next door had just reopened and would be able to cope with feeding us, even if just a cheese toastie. That went well with Guinness and cider before going back next door and crashing.



Alison at a trail marker near Cross Fell, day 15. The summit cairn was bigger.

Another couple of walkers arrived at 7:30pm, taking even longer than us for the crossing after being unable to start before 10am. We commiserated but patted ourselves on the back for coping well with the hardest day so far, and what would be the the hardest day of the entire walk.

This B&B was also memorable for all the signs and instructions posted on every available surface. I counted 10 in the shared bathroom, and several more in the bedrooms. She has obviously had problems with some people, but I boggled at the one which said "please take off your cycling shoes before entering the shower".

### Days 16-19, Garrigal to Twice Brewed Inn

Our first frost was making the grass glow white in the early morning as we breakfasted. From Alston the Way goes up and down through many farms and bogs, but there was an easier option for about six kilometres following the South Tyne railway to where it crosses the Pennine Way.

We were making five kilometres an hour along the rail-trail, so it was a bit sad to head back into the boggy ground and a climb over



Thirlwall Castle, day 19

another Black Hill. Bog was over the boot tops this time, so we were very grateful for more hard track for the last few kilometres to Greenhead pub and Hadrian's Wall.

Thirlwall Castle was our first stop, built from Roman stone taken from Hadrian's Wall, then a ruin itself by 1700. There was nothing to see of Hadrian's Wall, so we were feeling a bit let down, but as we gained some height it was possible to look down on Greenhead and see the double ditch where the wall had been, and along which we were actually walking.



Alston streetscape, day 17

As we walked on, it became more obvious that much of the wall is a natural landform, with north facing cliffs, that the Romans were able to develop and extend. After we passed Walltown quarry, sections of wall and remains of watchtowers became evident, with what's left of the wall being about 1.5 metre thick and 2 metres high in places, some mortared and some not, with an infill of rubble and soil.

The wall follows the top of the cliff, so it was constantly undulating, and we were on the lookout for sidling sections where we could skip the climbs. Today was another nero of 12 kilometres to give us time to explore the possibilities of Hadrian's Wall, so after arriving early at Twice Brewed, we were able to take a bus to Vindelandia, three kilometres away, to spend the afternoon.

Vindelandia is a Roman fort and an ongoing excavation that has been in progress for over 100 years, with 400 years of work left. The original fort, built of timber around 100 AD is about five metres below current ground level, but the fort is known to have been rebuilt at least nine times on top of that. As well as a town of exposed building structures and foundations, there is a museum collection of items recovered from the outside ditch and preserved by the anaerobic peat conditions.

### Days 20-23, Twice Brewed Inn to Kirk Yetholm

The next day it was back up to Hadrian's Wall and its undulations for another hour before reaching Rapishaw Gap and heading off north again away from Hadrian's Wall. The Way was composed of boggy pastures and hard roads through pine plantations and a climb over Shitlington Crags - I kid you not - but I do wonder how it is pronounced as we are headed for Bellingham, pronounced Bellingen.

For our last section of trail we had booked to stay in Byrness for two nights as they also offer a pick up and return service from half way through this last section of 36 kilometres to Kirk Yetholm and the end of the Pennine Way.

“... and made us reflect on the overall lack of maintenance we had seen and the amount of repair work needed to keep it as an iconic track ...

Next day, for the first couple of hundred metres out of Byrness, the track climbed out of the valley on the steepest and slipperiest path we'd encountered. This was really exhausting work and made us reflect on the overall lack of maintenance we had seen and the amount of repair work needed to keep it as an iconic track, particularly after seeing all the volunteer work put into the Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails.



Hadrian's natural on day 19. Big drop!

I must have been losing concentration on the path as I managed a knee-deep plunge into a bog I thought was dry, then a full face plant, fortunately onto sphagnum, not mud, when both feet lost traction. We topped out on Windy Gyle after 7½ hours, then took 45 minutes to drop 300 metres over two kilometres to the farm where we were to be collected at 4:30pm.

Our last day on the Way and we started walking from Trow's Farm at 9:30am with the climb back to Windy Gyle looming over us. It only took an hour to get back to the Way, then slabs and bogs in equal measure up onto West Cheviot. A detour out to the main peak didn't attract us, so

“... I managed a knee-deep plunge into a bog I thought was dry, then a full face plant, fortunately onto sphagnum, not mud, when both feet lost traction.

we continued onto a bothy for lunch. We climbed over The Shill, then started the eight kilometre descent to Kirk Yetholm. As it was a Sunday, there were people everywhere, dog walkers, fell runners, day hikers and a few like us just trying to finish. The path gently descended on farm tracks to a road and car park. Then there is a last ridge to cross on two kilometres of sealed road. Just as we started this bit, Ali stuck out her thumb and a lovely couple picked us up and took us to the front door of our B&B. That made for a great finish after a strenuous and foot pounding day. Claire at Mill House took us in, got our washing done and booked us for dinner at the Border Hotel where we can get our free pint and certificates signed.

We settled into the pub and WiFi to discover a reminder from Facebook that today, 24 September, is our anniversary for completion of the Appalachian Trail in 2010. So how's that for serendipity?

Follow Digby and Alison at [iamfootlooseandfree.com](http://iamfootlooseandfree.com)

Pennine Way information can be found at [nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way](http://nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way) [thepennineway.co.uk/](http://thepennineway.co.uk/) [pennineway.co/](http://pennineway.co/)



Digby Gotts and his hiking partner, Alison, are life-long walkers after becoming addicted while at Monash Bushwalking Club back in the 1960s. After a varied career in education they have now retired to Mossman, Queensland from their permaculture fruit farm at Cape Tribulation. They are spending their retirement either hiking or planning to hike where the hills are flat and the weather is perfect, catching up on all those trips where the career got in the way of the lifestyle.



# D'Alton Peaks, Grampians

James Falla



With Mount Rosea, 1009 metres, two kilometres to the north, at 1022 and 1009 metres respectively, North and South D'Alton Peaks are the highest peaks in the Grampians outside the Mount William Range. D'Alton Peaks stand in another world of tumble down boulders and off-track scrub. Rarely visited and hard to glimpse they lured Reinhold and I out for a quick overnighter in July 2017.

Looking south along the range

Setting off from Borough Huts, heading “backwards”, up a new section of the Grampians Peak Trail (GPT) that descends from Mount Rosea, the day was gently overcast and cool – perfect for uphill walking.

The new section of track, wide and smooth, cut by a Bobcat through the scrub a year or two ago, passes the remnants of the lovely Cathcart Chislett Memorial Track, winding interestingly through the bush. It seems a bit of a shame that the new track has displaced such an appealing and natural route, but I guess the fashion nowadays is to walk side by side, holding hands...

At Sanderson Gap saddle where the GPT descends from Rosea down a very impressive set of stone steps, we departed from the tracked world. Taking a bearing through thick young acacias and eucalypt regrowth we headed south across the head of the enticingly named Valley of Mystery to the north slope of D'Alton North, aiming at a break in the small cliff.

Climbing gently through tall eucalypts with evidence of very old logging activity, the vegetation gradually changed to the smaller pricklier community familiar in the dryer

rocky country in the Grampians. Everything seemed to be in full bloom and bursting with life in this wet winter.

We lucked out to find a series of boulders stacked atop one another giving a very pleasant low angle arête to scramble up through the cliffs for 50 or so metres, just enough to make it feel as if we were climbing a real mountain.

Both D'Altons are plateau-like on the crest of the ridge, gently sloping to the west and the Moora Moora Valley. The vegetation became lower and thicker and harder to push through, but large open rocky areas often allow for easy walking interrupted by short bushy sections. There must be snow here at times and the moss beds were impressive and moist to the point of saturation.

The summit is a small distinct jumble of rocks emerging from the tangle of vegetation, giving an unusual perspective to the north of the bulk of Mount Rosea, the Mount Difficult Range and Arapiles on the western horizon. Still early in the day, we descended into the knotted jungle so common on the south-facing slopes of the higher Grampians peaks, heading for D'Alton South and lunch. As the

“... the new track has displaced such an appealing and natural route ...

“Everything seemed to be in full bloom and bursting with life in this wet winter.



First view of D'Alton North from Grampians Peak Trail

crow flies it is less than a kilometre, but a band of cliffs required a bit of a dogleg to the west into the headwaters of the Moora Moora Creek. Ducking and weaving, rock hopping and crawling, it took three hours to get the 1200 or so metres distance onto the next small plateau.

Cresting the ridge, the view south along the Serra Range was simply superb. A gentle sun shone, warming and drying the rock as we picked our way along the ridge to the high point of D'Alton South. The entire Grampians is visible from here: north to Mount Zero, east to Mount William, south to the Serra Range, Napier beyond Hamilton, with the Victoria

“ I don't know if there is a better vantage point for viewing the entire Grampians ...

Range and Arapiles in the west. I don't know if there is a better vantage point for viewing the entire Grampians and it's made even better by the fact that so few people make it here.

Given how long all the scrub bashing had taken we decided to abandon our objective of traversing the range all the way down to



Mt Rosea from the south, Mt Difficult in the distance

Mount Lubra (naive or what!) and enjoy our perfect mountain top for the night. Reinhold, who can't pass up the chance to crest every high point possible, took the opportunity to climb to the top of the summit block, up a short wall of brittle sloping dinner plates. Certainly not a summit with hundreds of ascents; it is hard to imagine that more than a handful of people have ever climbed D'Alton South summit. I passed on this, enjoying a quick circuit over the low boulders and moss fields looking out over the Moora Valley. Despite the recent rain it was still a 30 minute job to collect water from a



Moss garden on the summit of D'Altons North

small trickle emerging from a moss bed for overnight drinking, but a very pleasant 30 minutes it was!

The forecast heavy rain visited along with strong gusty winds, but nicely the morning saw the rain ease off by about 10am, so there was the perfect reason to just lie about under the tarp and enjoy tea and porridge, reliving past glories at leisure. The wind even blew most of the dripping foliage dry so the jungle descent to Middleton Gap, while slippery under foot, was relatively dry. Low cloud (read fog) made visibility less than 100 metres so it was out with the compass again to keep our bearings amongst the looming boulders and scrub. It is a good thing Reinhold had the compass as at times our intuitive sense of where we should be headed was off by a good 90 degrees with all the ducking and swerving amongst the boulders and cliffs.

Interestingly, we came across a line of fairly recently placed tape markers and snapped twigs leading along the ridge and then eventually down an old 4WD track to Borough Huts. Someone has recently done a lot of work to mark a path here. Does anyone know whose work this is?

This is such a very nice part of the Grampians with amazing views and a different perspective on the range, being right in the middle, and surrounded by the highest peaks. It's certainly recommended for those who enjoy a good struggle in off track Grampians scrub and highly not recommended for those who don't want to go home bleeding!



Jim has been a bushwalker and climber for years. He lives in Western Victoria near the Grampians where he is often found in thick scrub in pursuit of an off-track summit.



Campsite on the summit of D'Alton South

# Confusion to the Enemy\*

Ron Fletcher

This poem was published in *Leaves From An Australian Forest Protest* by [Greenaissance](#)

Confusion to the enemy, whoever they might be,  
'Cos if there is confusion then perhaps I can be free,  
Free to walk the journey that my spirit so desires  
And stack the world's bureaucracies on top of funeral pyres,  
And burn the bloody lot of them to ashes pure and grey,  
And thereby let another phoenix rise to meet the day.  
For great big towers of bullshit these bureaucracies have piled  
Until they've ruined everything that once was free and wild,  
For freedom's just another word that's written every day  
On useless bits of paper they keep shoving in our way:  
It's meaning and its message buried underneath the crap,  
Devoid of any moral, it becomes a spirit trap.  
So confusion to the enemy: bureaucracies must die  
So we can all breathe easily beneath the clear blue sky.

*\*it was a term used in WWII*



## In the News

### Canberra bushwalking trails now on Google Trekker

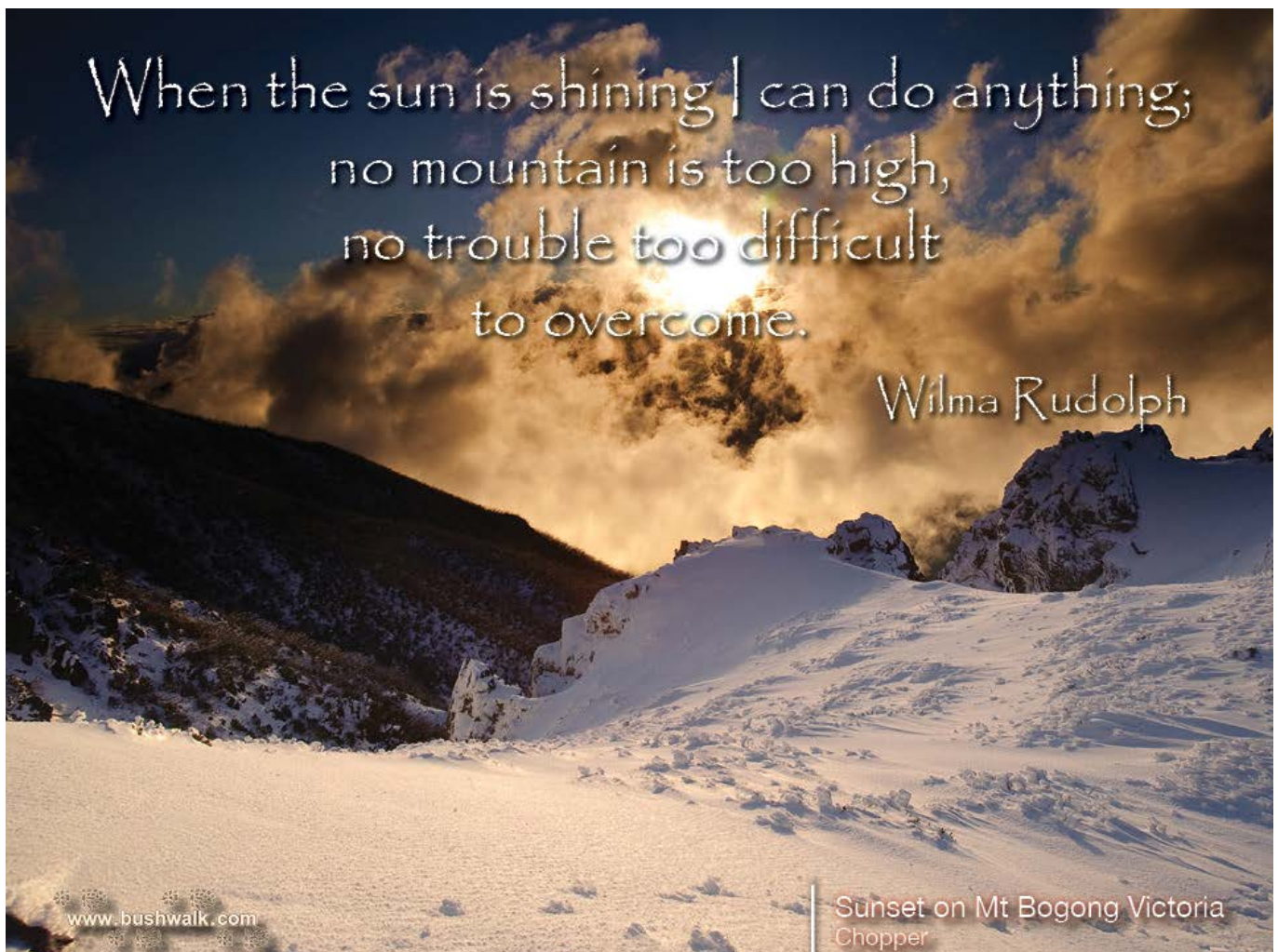
Google Trekker covered 350 kilometres of local tracks. Brett McNamara, the manager of ACT Parks and Conservation Service [spoke to ABC Radio Canberra's](#) Jolene Laverty about the 35 locations in Canberra covered by Google Trekker.

### New bushwalking huts in Tasmania



Photo: Adam Gibson

The [huts on the two-night walk](#) from Mt William (wukalina) to Eddystone Point (Iarapuna) are based on the shape of traditional Tasmanian Aboriginal shelters.



# Three mighty peaks Kosciuszko National Park

Sonya Muhlsimmer



Over the New Year's break my friends Steve, James and I decided to go for an eight day hike. We planned to start at the Mungah Power Station near Guthega and finish at Thredbo. Well, plans changed as they do sometimes, so we finished at Mungah. There are often no set plans with bushwalking as anything can happen along the way, and you have to be flexible and just go with it.

Looking down to Straight Creek near Smiths Lookout between Jagungal and Grey Mare Hut, day 5  
Unless otherwise stated, all pictures by Sonya Muhlsimmer

Kosciuszko National Park is a very special place for me. Nearly every year of my life I have spent some time in this park. It has been a big part of my life, and I have lost count of the times that I have walked to the top of Mount Kosciuszko. It seems it is getting busier up there on that summit every time I go ... Forty years ago my Dad built a row of townhouses in Jindabyne, and kept one for our family as a holiday house. So every, I mean nearly every summer and winter, and any other time in the year we could go, we would be down in Jindabyne either bushwalking or skiing, or just relaxing by the lake or even learning how to water ski. I believe this is where my love of bushwalking came from. For the last 10 years or so since the townhouse was sold, nearly every winter I have been going back-country skiing, spending about a week in the snow. It is a very special place for me indeed.



Family picnic near Sawpit Creek, close to Rennix Gap  
Sonya is on the right, five years old



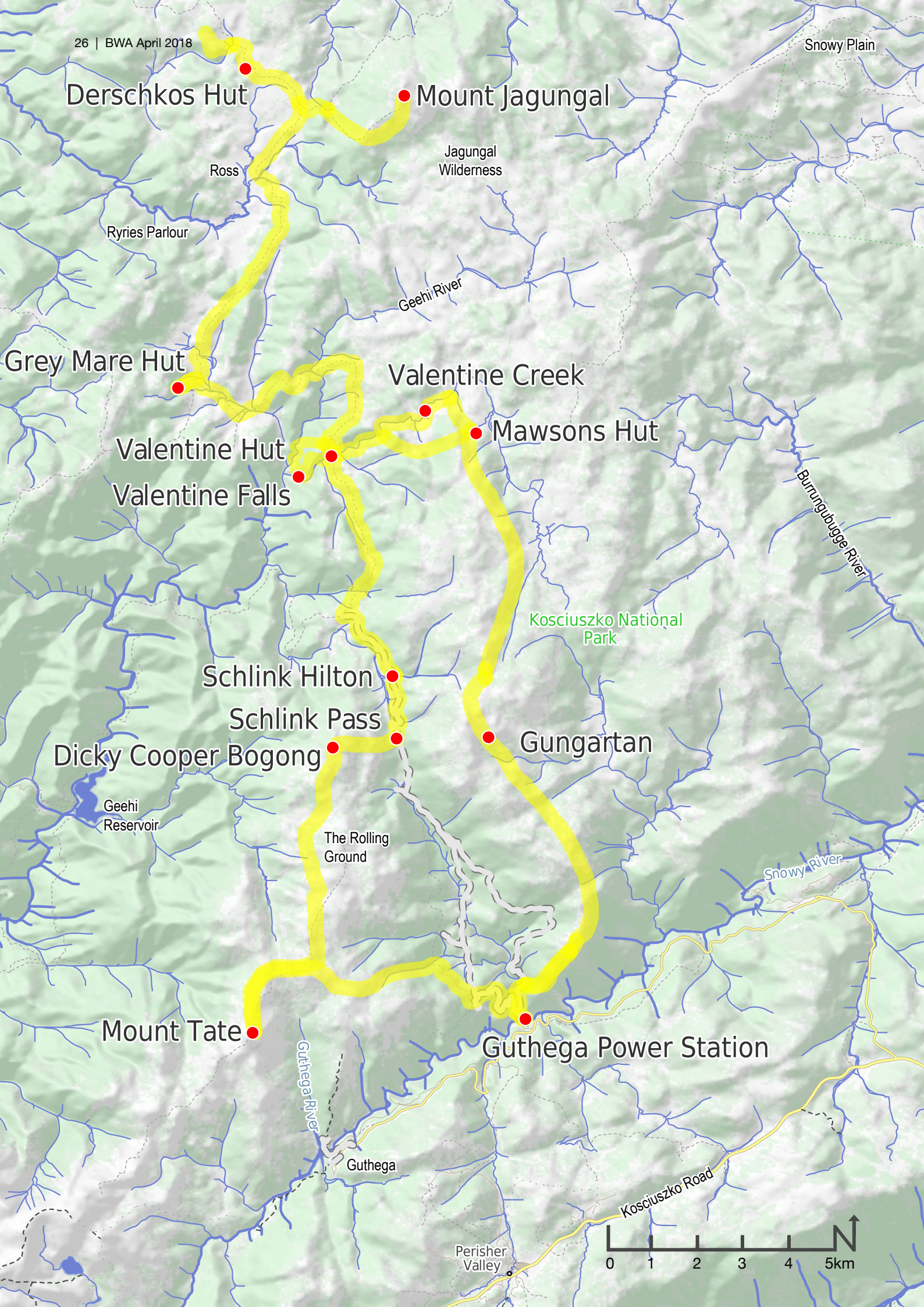
Starting the Summit walk, Charlottes Pass to  
Kosciuszko, Sonya seven years old



Sonya aged seven and her dad on top of Kosciuszko  
Adrian Muhlsimmer

### To Gungartan and Mawsons

The first day we walked up Disappointment Spur, but not by the usual route by the road. Disappointment Spur is hard at any time as it is so steep, but the way we went was so much harder. As the bridge was still closed our first challenge was to cross the Muncyang River, which we did near the broken bridge just above the power station. Fortunately, the river was low enough to do this safely. Alternatively, we could have followed Schlink Pass Trail until we crossed the river on a bridge and were able to access the spur. First challenge accomplished, and then the next challenge was to get to the ridge. Just under a kilometre along the fire trail we went north-east, off the track and up the steep slope of Disappointment Spur. It was a "short cut" through thick scrub that was over my head and it was tough. It was not so much a short cut to save time; it was to get to the ridge quicker but it was not a quick journey at all. With a heavy pack for eight days and probably not as fit as I should have been, I struggled a lot going through the scrub. It took its toll, but I kept going, very slowly. A year before this I hiked in Tassie's Western Arthur Ranges and that was tough too but the thick Kosciuszko scrub I went through this time was horrendous and I was not prepared for it. After walking (slowly) and pushing through the scrub for many hours, we made it to Gungartan at 2068 metres for the night and camped right near the summit. Wow, what a view, and after a dinner of gnocchi with tomato sauce, and snacking on a pomegranate watching the sun set, we were entertained by the thousands of Bogong moths flying around. Now that was something special.



Snowy Plain

Derschkos Hut

Mount Jagungal

Ross

Jagungal  
Wilderness

Ryries Parlour

Geehi River

Grey Mare Hut

Valentine Creek

Mawsons Hut

Valentine Hut

Valentine Falls

Burungubuge River

Kosciuszko National  
Park

Schlink Hilton

Schlink Pass

Gungartan

Dicky Cooper Bogong

Geehi  
Reservoir

The Rolling  
Ground

Snowy River

Mount Tate

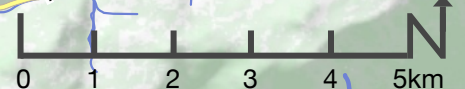
Guthega Power Station

Guthega River

Guthega

Kosciuszko Road

Perisher  
Valley



During the night there was a little wind gust, not that I was aware of it as I was snug in my tent, and the tarp that Steve and James were sleeping under nearly flew away, and the edges were ripped where they tied it down. I woke to find James wrapped around and inside his tarp and Steve out in the open. So I think that was the end of their idea to use the tarp as shelter, it might be light but it obviously doesn't provide much shelter. Perhaps Steve and James will have to sleep in the huts. First change of plan I guess. With heavy rain forecast and alpine exposure, maybe this was one reason not to aim for Thredbo.

The next day's destination was Mawsons Hut, a nice easy walking day compared to the day before. A few small brown snakes were sighted along the way, but not much other wildlife. Mawsons Hut is pretty popular by the looks of it, as when we got there we were greeted with quite a few people. I even knew someone there from my bushwalking club, Joanne. I guess many other people had the same idea we had, and besides, where else would you want to be? It's a beautiful place to explore. As it was only a few kilometres

“... where else would you want to be? It's a beautiful place to explore.”

walking we rested for the remainder of the day looking over our maps, and over my burnt and scratched knees ... Pesto pasta was on the menu for dinner with a snack afterwards of gingerbread biscuits.

### Valentine and Grey Mare

The weather forecast for the next two days was not that great - rain, and lots of it. We decided to stay another night at Mawsons and have a day trip to Valentine Falls, easy enough as Valentine Hut was only a few kilometres away. From Mawsons we went north-west till we reached Valentine Creek. A lot of time was spent just along this part of the creek exploring through the large boulders. They looked quite dramatic against the threatening grey sky. Then we followed Valentine Creek down to Valentine Hut. The weather was holding out, and it was thought that the rain might not come at all. A few hours later at Valentine Hut it seemed that everyone we met at Mawsons was here, so a quick break was had and then we went off to the falls.

Steve was leading this trip, and initially it looked like a foot pad that we were following to the falls, and there was a track marked on my map on the south side of the river, but he took us on the north side across the creek around GR 231899, and north-west up to the



Valentine Creek, where we spent a long time exploring, day 3

ridge and again through really thick scrub that was over my head, then down south-west on the side of the falls to the bottom where we had lunch, looking up at the falls. This was not an easy walk. The falls were great, but the scrub, well, was not so great. Lunch was enjoyed and then it started to rain so it was time to head back to Mawsons Hut. We walked along the Geehi River for nearly two kilometres till the river took a turn to the east at GR 225902 and then headed east, cutting through the thick scrub, again, to the ridge, and back to Mawsons Hut via the high point 1874 at GR 251895. About a kilometre from the hut, the fog came in which made it hard to navigate, and it was getting cold and the rain was starting to come down more. We had the hut to ourselves which was good as we put the fire on and could dry out our clothes. The other guests left a note to us saying a Tiger Snake paid a visit and was hanging around near the pit toilet but it was not seen by us. Mince and polenta was on the menu and it really warmed the soul. I even got to make some fresh bread for my lunch the next day. It was quite a nice night and having the hut to ourselves and we slept in the back room, out of the rain.

Grey Mare Hut was the next destination in just around nine kilometres away. The walking was pretty simple along the fire trail most of the way. But when it came to cross the Geehi River, due to all the rain from yesterday's storm it took a while to find a

reasonable spot to cross, and our feet got wet. Luckily it was a perfect day, the sun was out which meant that the boots and feet would get put in the sun to dry when camp was reached. Grey Mare Hut is a fascinating place

“ Grey Mare Hut is a fascinating place with all the mining relics strewn around.

with all the mining relics strewn around. You can just imagine what it was like living out here working of the land all those years ago; it would have been hard work, but what a view to enjoy with Jagungal in the distance. Pumpkin curry and rice was for dinner, and for dessert, a snack of popcorn was served.

### Derschkos Hut

The next day it was off to Derschkos Hut. Walking along the fire trail was easy, with only a few minor creeks to cross. The weather was perfect, and the views and alpine flowers along the way were something spectacular. Jagungal was getting bigger and bigger as we got closer and the anticipation was rising to get to the summit, the next peak to climb. Steve had not been this far north so it was new ground for him, and James has never been out this way before so it was all new to him. The walk from Grey Mare Hut to Derschkos Hut only took a few hours, so lunch was at Derschkos, then an afternoon nap was on the agenda. Only a little nap was had as there was some serious exploring to do around this area. During



Big Bird from Grey Mare Hut, day 6

the trip there was not much wildlife seen, apart from a few snakes so James was on a mission to go find some wildlife. The mission took us down to Pugilistic Creek then west over the plains and up to a clearing of stone, around GR 200995. Well, no wildlife apart from a few little birds that kept us entertained - they may have been little red robins but I am no expert. My thoughts were about how peaceful it is to sit back and watch the clouds roll by. Immersing yourself in the natural environment is so humbling. Anyway, some time had passed so we made our way back to Derschkos Hut for dinner, and I was hungry, Laksa was on the menu. After dinner I wandered up to the top of the hill behind the hut and watched the colours change with the setting sun over Jagungal. Tomorrow we will summit.

### Jagungal and Grey Mare

It was an early start on the Grey Mare Fire Trail on the west side of Jagungal to where the track crosses the Tumut River, and then the on-off track to the summit of Jagungal at 2062 metres, reached at around 8.30am. We had the peak to ourselves, and it was another perfect day where you could see for miles. Also, today is the first day of the year,

what a great way to start a new year I say. After a while of taking it all in we decided to head back to Grey Mare Hut for the night, Steve really liked this hut. On our way down we ran into a few of the people that we met at Derschkos Hut as they were heading up, I must say it was quite nice to have the summit to ourselves for a short period of time as it felt like our prize, reaching the summit before everyone else, it was ours. Going back to Grey Mare Hut meant we could take in the sights again of all the alpine flowers along the way; they are really spectacular out here at this time of year.

“... today is the first day of the year, what a great way to start a new year ...”

Back at Grey Mare it was time to wash out some clothes, relax and take in the view. In the distance it looked another storm was brewing over the Main Range as the cloud formation was fascinating. It was a unanimous vote that one of the clouds looked like Big Bird, think what you like however ... Honey soy and pork noodles was for dinner with some protein balls and chocolate for dessert.



Approaching Consett Stephen Pass, Tate in the background, day 8

### Schlink Hilton, Tate and home

The trip was coming to an end, only one more night and it was planned to be at the Schlink Hilton Hut. Recrossing the Geehi River was not that bad as the water had receded somewhat from a few days ago after the storm. We didn't get our feet wet this time. Luckily a log was found that we could cross over; this log was totally submerged a few days ago. It is amazing how quickly the weather and conditions can change out here. Grey Mare to Schlink Hilton was around 12 kilometres, reached by mid afternoon, in time for an afternoon nap. James and I were starting to feel tired after seven days; the walk was starting to take its toll on our bodies and legs I think. One more day and the last day will be a big one with a lot of distance to cover of around 15 kilometres, and a final peak to summit - Mount Tate.

In the early morning we walked to Schlink Pass, and started climbing up towards Dicky Cooper Bogong. This area is one of my favourite parts of the park with the mighty views and surroundings of the Granite Peaks, The Rolling Ground and Consett Stephen

Pass, oh and did I mention about the alpine flowers out at this time of year, and still there were patches of snow about. Mount Tate was reached and it was lunch time. The last lunch is pretty good as I find I always have a bit of food left over, and not having to ration anything, lunch time is a feast. Mount Tate stands at 2068 metres high and it is stunning up here. The views just go forever looking over colourful alpine flowers, granite boulders, mountain ranges and even granite boulders that look like jaws, don't you

“The views just go forever looking over colourful alpine flowers, granite boulders, mountain ranges and even granite boulders that look like jaws ...

think! Well that is what James and I thought.. Perhaps that comment should stay on the trail right ... So after lunch and taking it in, it was time to come off the range and head back home. I wanted to stay out for longer and keep walking, but I guess all holidays must come to an end at some time. From Tate we headed back to Consett Stephen



Between Tate and Consett Stephen Pass, heading towards the Rolling Ground, day 8

Pass then as we reach the high point 1993 we headed off south-east and down the spur towards the power station. We were going to take one of those "short cuts" through the thick scrub again, and I can say I was not looking forward to that part. Over the open plain at GR 245768 before it got really steep, and into the thick scrub we passed a section of dead gum trees that were wiped out by the 2003 fires. It looked eerie in a sense as they just looked like mangled sun bleached skeletons, they were so white and there was so many. I spent quite some time taking photos and exploring around. Perhaps that also entailed procrastination, not wanting to go through the scrub or not wanting to go home and relish what little time I have left up here, but it really was quite something to see. Looking at the undergrowth, the mangled skeleton trees would have been pretty old considering the scrub is about 15 years old; the scrub has a long way to grow till they get to the size of what the trees were before the fire. To see the damage and destruction of what a fire can do, and to consider the amount of time nature takes to recover is quite disturbing.

Down the spur and through the thick scrub we finally reached the surge tank, gee that tank is big, and then a steep walk down the side of the penstocks to the power station. You don't realise how big this structure is, and how long the pipes are until you are up against it, and how steep the track is to walk down. I was zigzagging all the way down to ease the pressure on my knees. We got to the car and then we were on our way home. Another trip done, but I will be back in this park in winter for my annual pilgrimage to the snow. So long Kosciuszko, till next time we meet.



Sonya's two favourite things in life are spending as much time outdoors as possible, and food. From a very early age her father had her out skiing (literally as soon as she could walk), camping, caving, and bushwalking. Sonya is a member of a bushwalking, adventure and canyon group. She has a BSc in Food Science, is also a qualified chef and has written a [cook book](#) with lots of nutritional advice designed especially for bushwalking. Her website is [xtremegourmet.com](http://xtremegourmet.com).



Coming off the ridge to the surge tank, day 8

# Photo Gallery

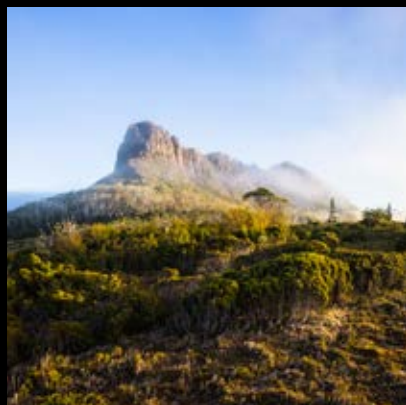


# BWA Photo Competition



# Landscapes April 2017

## WINNER



The Acropolis at dawn  
Cameron Semple



On top of the world: The  
Pool of Icarus, Mt Ossa  
Peter Grant



Takayna white-out  
North-north-west



The hanging gardens  
Tom Brennan



Monday morning misery  
Gayet



Among the mangroves  
John Walker



Wangi Wangi Reserve  
sunset  
Lorraine Parker



# Non-landscapes

## April 2017

### WINNER



What's up?  
Brian Eglinton

The home state of South Australia has some great offerings for walks, particularly in the Flinders Ranges.

One of the lesser known but well featured places in the more accessible southern Flinders is Telowie Gorge.

Amongst the array of rock walls, waterholes and constricted sections we found this colourful fellow sunning himself on the rocks.

He gave us this sort of "not amused" look as we passed him by.

Do we call that a stiff upper lip?



Chewed  
Gayet



Nestled in  
Lorraine Parker



The bubble bath  
Tom Brennan



Pelion phew!  
Peter Grant



Maiden, mother, crone  
North-north-west



Overland fagus  
Bushwalker Zane



# Tasmania April 2017

## WINNER



Morning light,  
Norfolk Range  
North-north-west

Part of my extended Tarkine in Motion trip this year was a traverse of most of the northern Norfolk Range. A real test with a mix of delightfully easy, open walking, beautiful forests and sheer hell (aka over-the-head scrub).

The second last night I was camped on a knoll below Mabel, looking back at the ground I'd already covered and wondering where the next water would be. But when you wake up to something like this, things like that just don't matter.



The clouds part  
Cameron Semple



Improving light  
Gayet



Evening over  
the Du Cane Range  
Peter Grant



Framed by Fagus  
Geevesy



# Other States

## April 2017

### WINNER



Sunrise at Splendour  
Rock, Anzac Day  
Tom Brennan

It's always a moving Dawn Service at Splendour Rock on Anzac Day. We had walked in there, starting at 1am and arriving at 5am, just as the crowd started to assemble. At the conclusion of the service, we were greeted by a spectacular sunrise. An appropriate commemoration.



Suspended tree  
Brian Eglinton



The weather turns  
John Walker



# Landscapes

## May 2017

### WINNER



Like glass  
Geevesy

This image was taken on a short trip to Mt Olympus to see the fagus this year.



Autumn colour  
in the Tyndalls  
North-north-west



Precarious  
Tom Brennan



Solitary sunset  
John Walker



Dawn  
Snowzone



Autumn slush  
Cameron Semple

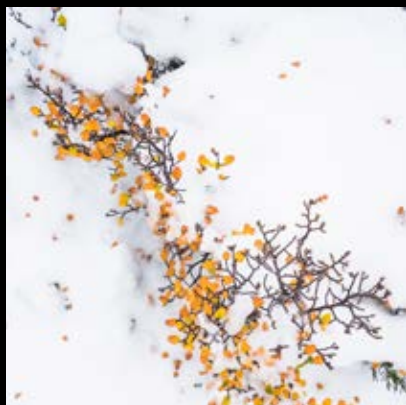


The (lake) seal of approval  
Peter Grant



# Non-landscapes May 2017

WINNER



Frosty fagus  
Cameron Semple



Possum play in autumn  
Snowzone



Oh how the mighty have  
fallen!  
Peter Grant



Fagus highlights  
North-north-west



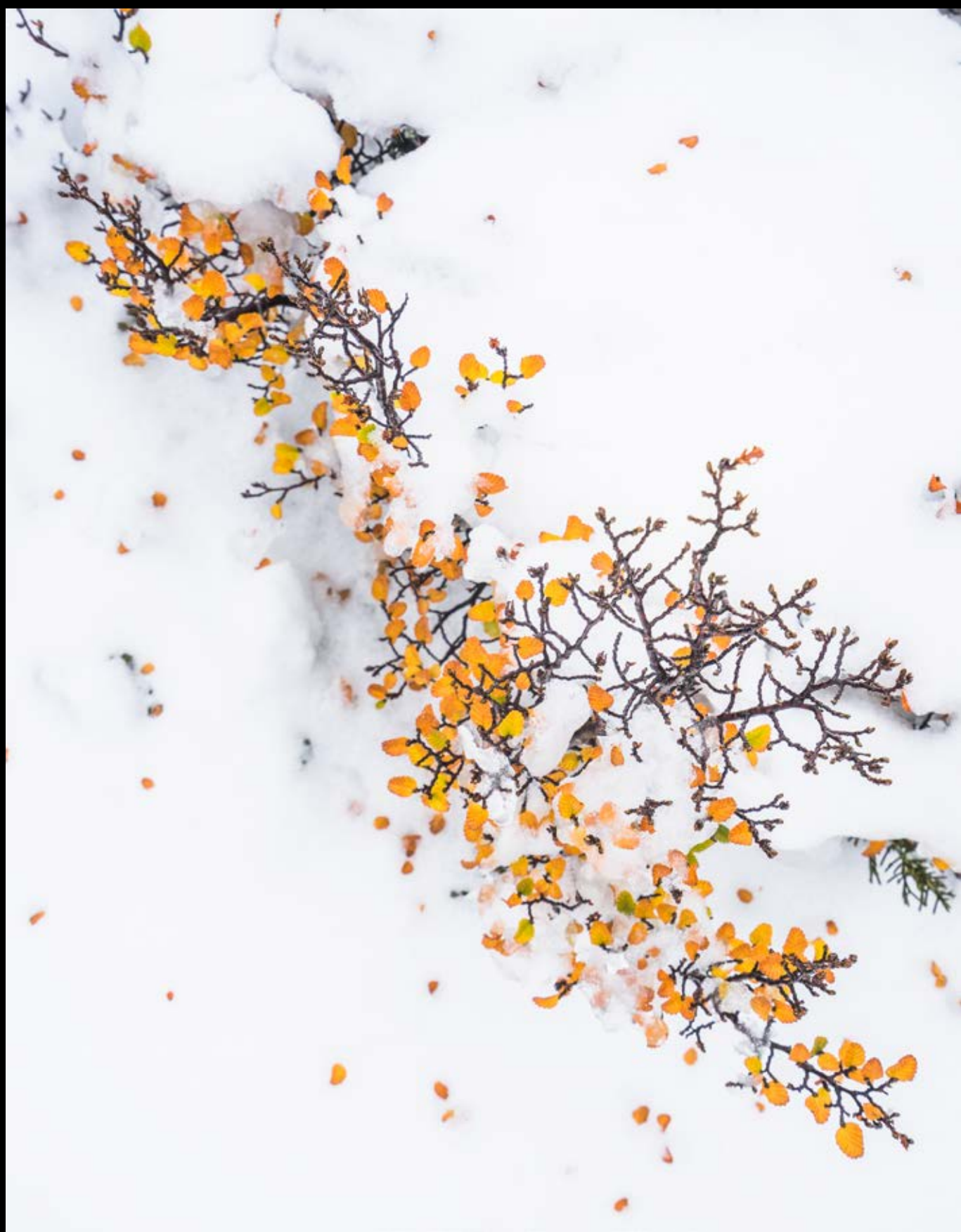
Red wattle bird  
Brian Eglinton



Suspended  
Bronwyn Hall



Oh well  
John Walker



# Tasmania

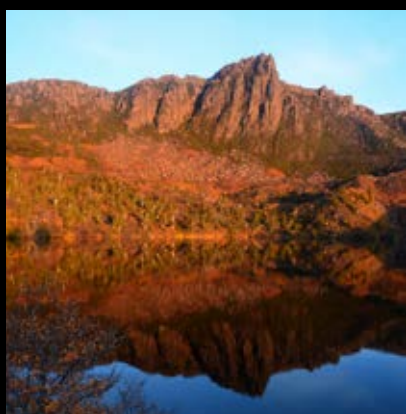
## May 2017

### WINNER



The other side of Lyell  
North-north-west

One more ticked off the "peaks to be revisited to see what the view is like" list, with a loop past Lake Tyndall and out to Sedgwick returning via Lake Margaret. Sleet caught up with me between Sedgwick and Adam, so an unplanned camp had me doing the traverse across to Sedgwick Bluff the next morning when the weather decided to be co-operative for once.



Dawn at Oenone  
Geevesy



Late afternoon slabs  
Cameron Semple



# Other States

## May 2017

### WINNER



Above the falls  
John Walker

It was very late afternoon approaching winter and I was returning from a day of volunteer field work in the bush in the upper Blue Mountains. It was just early enough to fit in a short walk around dusk on the way home. Valley of the Waters is a favourite location and I decided to quickly drop down one of the shorter tracks to an overlook of the always impressive amphitheatre of Wentworth Falls. It was freezing as the sun dropped over the horizon, but I stayed long enough to capture this view over the massive sandstone walls before losing all useful light.



Autumn in the forest  
Brian Eglinton



Worth a look  
Snowzone



# Everything You Need to Know About Sleeping Bags

Helen Smith and Matt McClelland



A sleeping bag is a fundamental piece of gear for warmth and comfort on overnight trips in most climates. The type and quality of a sleeping bag that suits you depends mainly on the variety of trips you are doing, night air temperatures, the sort of shelter, how exposed your campsites will be, and if you sleep warm or cold.

In this article we cover four main sleeping bag areas: choosing, packing, using and maintenance. We will explore the different designs, types of bags, insulation and lots more. In researching this article we learned more about sleeping bags than we ever wished to know. We trust that you will learn a few things and it will help make your next night out just that bit more snuggly.

## Choosing the best bag

When selecting a sleeping bag, the key considerations are temperature rating, shape, insulation type, aspects such as hoods and zippers, and the price. Another option, especially for ultra-lightweight bushwalkers, is a quilt or integrated sleeping bag and sleeping mat system.

The lowest winter temperatures recorded by the Bureau of Meteorology for each state range from -7.2°C to -13°C, with an extreme -23°C in NSW in 1994.

## Temperature rating

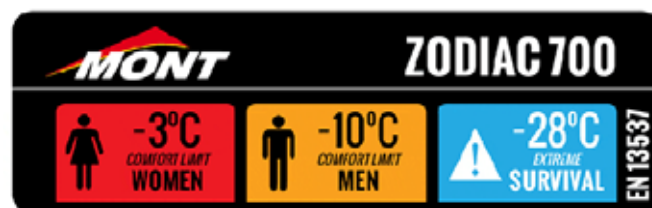
Most sleeping bags come with a temperature rating that is a guideline for what conditions the bag is most suitable for. However, everyone is different, and some people feel heat and/or cold more than others, so make an allowance for this to find something that best suits your needs. If possible, before buying use a few sleeping bags in a variety of temperatures to see how you feel the cold.

The temperature rating is a guide for manufacturers assessment of temperatures where the bag can be used. Manufacturers generally do in-house evaluations to find the "R-value" that represents the insulative properties of the bag. Some manufacturers such as Mont™ have a clear label showing the temperature rating.

EN 13537 is an [European standard](#) for sleeping bags manufactured and sold in Europe. No such standard exists in Australia, but many sleeping bags sold in Australia follow EN 13587.

The EN 13537 standard rating system tests sleeping bags using a manikin dressed in thermal underwear and resting on a sleeping mat. Heat loss by the manikin determines the extreme and comfort limits of the bag. There is a surprising amount of detail that goes into ensuring accurate thermal measurements, everything from arm positions, through to the weight of the manikin.

Sleeping bags often visually depict their thermal limits. Examples include Columbus™, Mont™ and Sea to Summit™.



EN13537 Temperature Rating



The three ratings<sup>1</sup> are:

1. **Comfort:** Defined as the lowest temperature that a standard woman can get a comfortable night's sleep.
2. **Lower limit temperature:** Defined as the lowest temperature that a standard man can still sleep throughout the night in a curled position.
3. **Extreme limit temperature:** Defined as the lowest temperature that a standard woman can still survive for six hours without risk of death (but with a risk of hypothermia and frostbite). This is intended to be an extreme scenario where you will most likely survive, but it will be a very ugly night.

Sometimes a fourth temperature rating is also given, maximum temperature, the hottest conditions that the bag can be used in.

Men can generally get a comfortable night's sleep at lower temperatures than women, so the comfort rating is based on a more conservative rating for women (unless explicitly stated as "men's comfort" or "women's comfort").

“... before buying use a few sleeping bags in a variety of temperatures to see how you feel the cold.”

For the thermal testing process, a standard man is defined as 25 years-of-age weighing

<sup>1</sup> European Committee for Standardization (CEN). Requirements for sleeping bags (Standard No. EN 13537:2002). Brussels, Belgium: CEN; 2002

73 kg and 173 cm tall. A standard woman is defined as 25 years-of-age weighing 60 kg, and 160 cm tall<sup>2</sup>. However, none of us are standard! Temperature is a very personal thing, and it's important to take into account personal factors that might affect how warm or cool you sleep.

The sleeping bag rating and your general fitness level can affect how warm you sleep, but more subtle changes such as how tired you are at the end of the day or whether you've eaten well on a trip can change your sleep pattern. As your metabolism is a significant source of heat production overnight, going to bed hungry may leave you colder than if you've eaten well.

“Men can generally get a comfortable night's sleep at lower temperatures than women ...”

In Australian temperate zones, bushwalkers who go on trips all year tend to have two sleeping bags: a summer bag and a winter bag - although this will vary greatly depending on the location of the walk and the forecast. This gives them the option to use the one that is most appropriate for the conditions.

Sleeping bag	Approximate Months	Comments
Summer	October-March, or warmer places such as closer to the tropics.	On cooler summer days, autumn and spring, consider carrying additional layers.
Winter	April-September, or for cooler places such as at higher altitudes or more larger latitudes	On hotter winter days, use a liner only and put your sleeping bag on top of you as a throw over (rather than wrapped tightly).

A good rule of thumb is to select a bag with a comfort rating that is **10 degrees below the ambient temperature** you expect on the trip.

## Caution

Weather patterns can bring unpredictable cold spells, so it's important to check weather conditions relative to where you plan to walk before deciding on the appropriate sleeping bag. If unsure, take a warmer sleeping bag, additional warm layers, or both.

At altitude and southern latitudes, conditions are cooler and can change rapidly. Remnant snow patches from winter can be seen on the Main Range at Kosciuszko National Park during summer, and cold windy weather patterns can persist in Tassie. Snow has fallen in alpine Australia and Tassie at all times of the year, so be ready for cold nights. Take into account these highly variable and cold temperatures when selecting a suitable sleeping bag for an alpine trip.

A last word of warning: cheaper bags may not have undergone laboratory testing, and ratings may not be accurate.

## ANATOMY OF A SLEEPING BAG

### Length

#### Regular and long

Sleeping bags generally come in two lengths, regular and long. It's worth getting the right length as a bag that's too short will leave you cold at the shoulders and neck, and a bag that is too big will leave your feet cold.

Check the specifications to decide on the right size by matching your height to the bag length.

Some bags are designed to fit women better than the standard mummy or barrel sleeping bag shapes. Don't be shy about asking in the store to climb into a sleeping bag and testing it out.

### Half-bags

For ultra-lightweight camping, half-bags are coming back into fashion (e.g. [Hispar Half Bag](#)). The logic is that the user already has enough clothing such as a down jacket and thermals to keep their upper half warm, so the sleeping bag only needs to be long enough to cover the legs. However, there's often a gap between the two parts of the sleeping arrangement, which lets cold air in and warm air out.

<sup>2</sup> European Committee for Standardization (CEN). Requirements for sleeping bags (Standard No. EN 13537:2002). Brussels, Belgium: CEN; 2002



Half-bag

Source: [phdesigns.co.uk](http://phdesigns.co.uk)

### Kid's sleeping bags

For people with a small build, it may be suitable to use a children's sized sleeping bag (e.g. [Coleman Kid's Firefly Sleeping Bag](#)). However, take care to examine temperature ratings and bag weights carefully as materials used in children's sleeping bags are generally of a lower quality compared to adult bags, and hence may be heavier and less insulating.

### Alternative designs

The sleeping bag, sleeping bag liner and sleeping mat system has been around for a long time with little change to the core principles: create a comfortable sleeping environment with ground insulation that is soft and a sleeping bag that keeps the cold out and warmth in.

Recently, new, lighter sleep systems have been designed.

### Top quilt

A top quilt is like an unzipped sleeping bag, keeping users warm by covering the top, and with a pocket for you feet. The reason that it does not go underneath is because this is compressed, reducing insulation. Top quilts are often used by ultralight bushwalkers or by people using a hammock. Top quilts are often referred to as quilts.

“... children's sleeping bags are generally of a lower quality compared to adult bags ...”

Top quilts are lightweight and versatile, enabling the user to [adapt the top quilt](#) to best suit conditions and some users report

to use them exclusively instead of a sleeping bag. Take care when selecting a top quilt to match it to your needs, checking that there is enough insulation around the neck and head.

### Integrated sleeping bag and mat

Another design is to integrate the sleeping mat into the sleeping bag system, creating [one unit](#). This saves weight and material of the bottom of the sleeping bag that [gets compressed and insulates poorly](#). Since the sleeping mat is doing most of the insulating anyway, this design does away with the bottom of the sleeping bag altogether.



Quenda Quilt. The opening goes underneath.  
Source: [tieregear.com.au](http://tieregear.com.au)

## Baffles

These provide depth for the insulation and stop the insulation from moving around. There are a number of different sorts of baffles. The simplest is a box, with baffles set at right angles to the extremal fabric. V baffles mean that insulation can overlap. Trapezoid baffles are another sort, part way between straight and V. Baffles may be across the width of a sleeping bag or along the length. Some bags have a combination. Baffles are generally lighter than the visible fabric, which is why extreme care is needed when washing sleeping bags.



Horizontal baffles on a sleeping bag

## Shape

Like sleeping bag liners, sleeping bags come in a few different shapes. There is no systematic description of bag. Semi-rectangular may be described as semi-rectangular, tapered rectangular and mummy. Mummy bags may be described as semi-rectangular and mummy.

## Insulation




Sleeping bag insulation traps the heat your body produces while you sleep and keeps you warm. It also keeps the cold out.

## Materials

Synthetic material and down are the **two main types of insulation** used. For down insulation, duck or goose down (or a mix) are most common, although pure duck down is most abundant because more ducks than geese are bred and sold as meat, and so **duck feathers are cheaper** and more plentiful.

Down is generally treated to become somewhat water resistant to some moisture, but is not effective if fully immersed or soaked. That is, down is **water resistant not waterproof**.

Some companies are moving towards **ethically sourcing down** in response to ethic issues including **live plucking**. A few companies such as **North Face** have policies to ethically source down insulation. They have responsible auditing of all manufacturing steps including production and collection of feathers to ensure humane treatment of animals. Price alone does not tell you if the material is ethically sourced or if the workers are treated well.

Shape	Pros	Cons
<b>Rectangular</b> 	Low cost. Lots of room to move around.	Works best in warmer conditions because of loose material. Generally heavier and bulkier due to of more material so less suited for pack carrying bushwalking.
<b>Tapered rectangular</b>  Rectangular with a straight taper. Still quite rectangular. The foot may be square or curved.	Quite roomy with less air pockets to heat so it's warmer than rectangular. Comfortable, lots of room for shoulders and hips.	Bulkier than a mummy bag. Not as warm as a mummy bag.
<b>Mummy</b>  A tapered rectangular with curves and a more pronounced cut as one gets lower.	Warm, body-hugging. Very effective at insulating. Light and a small volume due to less material.	Some people find them very restrictive and uncomfortable to sleep in. Generally expensive.

Pros and cons of different sleeping bag shapes

## Fill power

The **fill power** describes the insulation properties of the bag, or the down's ability to loft, which is related to how well the down traps heat. Loft is a measure of how much air the insulating down can trap (i.e. its fluffiness), and generally speaking the higher the fill power, the better the insulation. The fill power is a factor of how many cubic inches the insulation takes for each ounce: a 300 rating is at the low-end, whereas a 900 grade is high-end down.

Sleeping bags with a higher fill power rating are more fluffy and better insulators than lower fill power bags.

For instance, the insulation in a 600 fill power sleeping bag is more fluffy and effective at trapping air than the insulation in a 400 fill power sleeping bag. Since high-power insulation is a more efficient insulator, manufacturers need to use less fill volume and thus can create **lighter weight bags**, including ultralight gear.

Fill power reduces over time as the bag ages and gets dirty. That's why it pays to look after your sleeping bag to keep it as effective as possible.

“ Fill power reduces over time as the bag ages and gets dirty.”



## Features

At its most basic, a sleeping bag has insulation in pockets separated by baffles between two layers of material. The baffles may be one of several kinds and the material is usually a synthetic, similar to nylon. One side usually has a zip with a draft tube to stop heat escaping.

## Hood

Hoods provide additional warmth and comfort. However, in warmer conditions, a hood may be overkill. Some sleeping bags come with a detachable hood (e.g. [Black Wolf Zambezie King 50c sleeping bag](#))



Insulation	Pros	Cons
Synthetic 	Dries quickly. Can insulate when wet. Cheaper than down. Non-allergenic.	Generally larger volume and heavier than down. Not as good at insulating per weight and volume as down.
Down 	Very effective insulator. Packs to a small volume. Light. Loft retains form over a long time and hence is a long lasting insulator.	Dries slowly. Cannot insulate when wet. Expensive.
Hybrid synthetic and down	Hybrid bags have a blend of synthetic and down, with pros and cons from both materials. Sometimes they are blended. In others, they are layered with synthetic materials on the bottom and down feathers on top.	

giving users the option to carry it in cooler conditions or remove it for warmer trips. Check that the detachable hood or sleeping bag has a draft tube to eliminate drafts to maintain comfort and warmth. Some ultralight bags do not have a hood at all (e.g. [feathered friends vireo ultralight sleeping bag review](#)).

Some hoods have a [pillow pocket](#) where you can put your pillow securely inside. Some come with drawstrings or other methods of allowing users to enclose their head thoroughly in cold weather, or around the entire pillow.

### Zippers

Most sleeping bags have one side with a zipper to provide easy access into and out of the bag. Some bags have zippers on either side, making it easier to exit on the side you prefer, e.g. [ATK2-R500](#). That is, the sleeping bag may have a left or a right zipper, but not both on one bag.

For couples, it's possible to zip up compatible bags to create a double bag. For rectangular sleeping bags, unzip the bags, lay them together with the inside of the bags facing each other and zip the bags together. See [this video](#) on youtube. For joining mummy sleeping bags, you must join a right-hand zipper sleeping bag with a [left-hand zipper sleeping bag](#).

“For couples, it's possible to zip up compatible bags to create a double bag.”

### Pockets

Some sleeping bags have pockets for valuables such as money, passports or phones. Internal pockets are preferable so that you can grab items without opening the bag and losing all the nice trapped warm air.

### Loops

Some sleeping bags have loops that can be used to connect the sleeping bag to a sleeping mat. The loops are also handy for hanging up the sleeping bag to air.

### Neck draft tube

A neck-shoulder draft tube keeps warm air in. Unless you are a cold sleeper and/or camp in cold places, a neck-shoulder draft tube is probably unnecessary.

### Detachable hood draft tube

This is a thin insulated tube on the inside and adjacent to the zip or detachable hood to prevent warm air escaping through the zip or hood gap.

### Foot box

A foot box adds additional space around the feet for more natural comfort during the night, particularly for people that sleep on their back. Also, for taller people, all other things being equal, for two sleeping bags the



Image source: [bivouac.co.nz](http://bivouac.co.nz)



Sunrise from a rock bivouac  
Brent Hall

same length, the bag with a foot box has more room as the user can go to the end of bag and not have the feet cramped.

### Stuff sack

A stuff sack comes with the sleeping bag. If you want to be more certain of keeping the bag dry in wet conditions, a driesack may be useful. A dry sack is designed for this, and has a folding top. Push the bag into the dry sack as far as possible, exclude the air, fold the top and do up the buckle. Most people seem to not use a plastic bag inside a driesack.

“... sleeping bags made with down compress into a smaller volume than synthetic bags.

Although a [plastic bag](#) is a bit fiddly it is a cheap, light and effective solution.

### Compression straps

Compression straps may make a significant difference to reduce the packed volume of a sleeping bag. They work by compressing evenly around the stuff sack by drawing the straps downward and in some cases may reduce the volume by more than 50%.

## CHECKING AND PACKING

Sleeping bags are relatively quick to check and pack. First, make sure that your sleeping bag is clean and dry and doesn't have any [damage to the material](#). Check by running your hands over the material and doing a visual inspection. Also, check that the zippers open and close smoothly, and toggles or clips are working.

Check that the sleeping bag rating is suitable for your trip.

Next, find a clean open area at home to pack your sleeping bag. Some people find sitting or kneeling is a comfortable position to pack the bag, but the most important thing is to be relaxed and not straining shoulders or arms.

Some sleeping bags have a stuff sack or compression sack that makes it easy to reduce the sleeping bag volume with drawcords on the side. Generally, sleeping bags made with down compress into a smaller volume than synthetic bags. However, sleeping bag technology has been steadily improving with new materials on the market each year, so it's worth keeping an eye out for new products.



Compression straps may halve the size of your packed sleeping bag

It's really important to pack your sleeping bag to minimise the chance of it getting wet. Your sleeping bag is your primary source of warmth at night and will not effectively insulate when wet<sup>3</sup>. Even though some sleeping bag stuff sacks may be water resistant, they can let water in, particularly in prolonged heavy rain or if the pack is submerged. It's better to pack the compression sack into an additional dry bag, or double bag it with a plastic bag, ensuring to twist and tie the tops to prevent water getting in. Lining the stuff sack with a large plastic bag, before stuffing the sleeping bag - then twisting the plastic bag closed before sealing the stuff sack is a good way of adding an extra layer of protection from water.

“It's better to pack the compression sack into an additional dry bag ...”

There are two ways to pack a sleeping bag: rolling or stuffing. Generally, stuffing is a good option if you have a compression bag and you want to get the sleeping bag as compact as possible. Rolling is very straightforward, but results in a larger volume bag so is generally used in situations where volume doesn't matter, such as car camping.

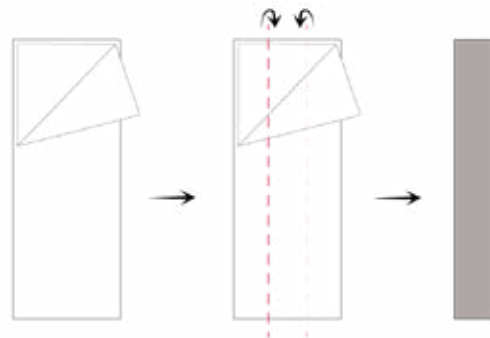
### Option 1: Stuffing (generally for down sleeping bags)

Start at the foot end of the sleeping bag and place it into the bottom of the stuff sack, letting the air escape through the top of the bag. Then gradually add small wads of material into the stuff sack without folding or rolling the bag. The aim is to stuff the material in a random (and different) way each time you stuff the sack. This keeps the insulation in the sleeping bag evenly distributed and performing better over time. It also reduces lumps in the fabric and likelihood of tears on the material.

Tighten the cord at the top of the sack. If there are compression straps the volume may be reduced. Tighten the straps little by little, keeping the compression even across the sack.

### Option 2: Rolling, generally for synthetic sleeping bags and when volume is not an issue

Lay the sleeping bag out on the floor and fold the sides in to create the desired roll width. For some sleeping bags, this will be thirds, others halves. Decide based on what width you need the final roll to be.



Then begin to roll up the bag from the foot end, keeping the roll as tight as possible. For extra pressure, you can place a knee on the roll. Once entirely rolled, tie up the straps, or use tape to prevent the bag from unrolling. Sometimes it can help to grab another person to give you a hand attaching the straps.



### Use and troubleshooting in the field

Sleeping bag insulation works best when it is all fluffed up and fully expanded. Once your shelter is set up, unpack your sleeping bag and give it a few shakes to get the expanding started. If you have not done so that day and the weather is suitable, air the sleeping bag outside.

Sleeping bags work best and last longest when kept clean and dry, so in the field, try to minimise the amount of dirt, sweat and

<sup>3</sup> Hawks, Leona K., "Care of Down and Synthetic Sleeping Bags" (1990). All Archived Publications. Paper 210

dust that [gets onto the bag](#). Air your bag out after each use, in the morning or when you get into camp in the afternoon. Avoid direct exposure with UV light for extended periods of time, but an hour of sunlight can help kill smell [causing bacterial and fungal growth](#).

Treat your sleeping bag gently! Bags that are well cared for will [stay warm for longer](#). Do not use a good sleeping bag near the fire. All it takes is a single glowing ember from the fire to create a hole and damage the bag, with dirt, dusk and smoky smell that the bag will pick up. If you like having something to wrap around you at the fire, consider a lightweight fireproof thermal shawl or throw-over instead.

“Avoid sleeping in your bushwalking clothes. ... This minimises body odour, oils and sweat transferring to the sleeping bag.

A sleeping bag liner is a very worthwhile investment. Not only does it keep your sleeping bag clean and dry, but it provides [extra warmth](#). Avoid sleeping in your bushwalking clothes. Instead, change into night camp clothes. This minimises body odour, oils and sweat transferring to the sleeping bag.

### A few extra tips

- Give your bag a chance to fluff up especially on colder nights.
- If you are too hot in the bag, try unzipping it part way, take your head out of the hood or shake the bag to force out the warmer air.
- If sleeping in the open, use a groundsheet to protect the sleeping mat and bag. Avoid direct contact with the sleeping mat with the ground, which can have small sharps that may puncture the sleeping mat.
- When airing out your sleeping bag, hang it high off the ground, to reduce the chance of the bag getting dirty.
- Never force any zippers or buckles if they get stuck. Instead, be gentle and slowly undo any caught fabric.
- If using a sleeping bag without a hood, wear a hat or hoodie to keep warm and reduce the chance of being bitten by mozzies. This applies if the shelter does not have a flyscreen. A head covering keeps hair oil from the hood.
- Wear clean clothes and be clean when getting into your sleeping bag.



### Tips and tricks if you are feeling cold in your sleeping bag

If you are feeling cold then here are some tips to help:

- Fully zip up your bag and use the hood.
- Ensure your insulation in your bag is inflated and evenly spread over the top of you.
- If rolling around, go slow and try to keep the bag from moving.
- Reduce airflow around the bag - block any drafts.
- If you feel cold from the ground, another thin sleeping mat may be needed. Wearing more non-constrictive clothing often assists.
- If you have a short sleeping mat, you may wish to put a pack under your feet.
- Use a [sleeping bag liner](#) as this can increase temperature by up to 5°C.
- Wear a beanie to keep the head warm and loose-fitting layer of warm clothes.
- Place your head inside your sleeping bag and breathe inside the bag for about half a minute to warm up the air. Be mindful that your breathe is also humid, so avoid doing this for long stretches as condensation inside your sleeping bag can be counterproductive.
- In an emergency you can use a foil wrap from your first aid kit for warmth. Be mindful of condensation and water collecting on the foil and wetting your bag.

### Sleeping with or without clothes

There's a lot of debate around whether or not wearing additional layers of clothing adds more warmth to the sleep system or detracts, with [strong advocates on both sides](#) and surprisingly little research on the topic.

Frustrated by the lack of information, a blogger called

onlinecaveman carried out his own [DIY experiment](#) to test the difference between heat loss wearing a layer of clothing versus not wearing a layer of clothing. He found that the system with a layer of clothing lost less heat than the one with no clothing.

The main purpose of a sleeping bag is to create a layer of warm air around the body by trapping body heat, so any additional layers may enhance this effect. Sleep

systems work best when the insulation is allowed to do its job, that is, the insulation in the bag isn't overly compressed by too many clothes).

It seems the clothing layering method used during the day also works in the sleeping bag. However, avoid tight-fitting clothes (these can restrict circulation), and ensure that night clothing is clean and dry. Also, stay away from clothes with zippers or other hard or patterned sections that may cause pressure sores.

“There's a lot of debate around whether or not wearing additional layers of clothing adds more warmth to the sleep system ...

“... the clothing layering method used during the day also works in the sleeping bag.



Washing sleeping bag in a bathtub seems to be the most gentle and easy option

## SLEEPING BAG CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Sleeping bags can be used for several years before they need a wash. Washing tends to add wear and tear to the bag and reduces the loft (i.e. insulation), so if you can delay the need for washing by caring for the bag, this is the [best long-term option](#).

Check your sleeping bag regularly to make sure that the zippers are working and the seams are intact. Check that the insulation is evenly distributed as over time the insulation can clump unevenly, suggesting that a wash might be advisable.

Carry out small spot-cleaning jobs on areas such as the hood that are likely to accumulate sweat and dirt. Mix a little water with non-detergent soap to create a paste. Hold the shell away from the filling and use a toothbrush to clean and rinse the shell. By keeping the shell away from the filling you can clean the area without getting the inside wet.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions when washing. As most sleeping bags are similar, washing instructions from a similar manufacturer should suffice.

If possible, follow specific manufacturer's instructions. In general, the process for washing a sleeping bag is as follows.

Do up all zippers before washing to protect them. Most manufacturers suggest [zipping the bag closed for washing](#). This seems to be to give a stronger bag, especially with newer materials.

If hand washing, fill up a wash trough or bathtub with warm water. Add a small amount of pure soap. Gently massage material and leave to soak (but no more than one hour). Gently squeeze the sleeping bag to remove any water and let the water drain. Refill with clean water, massage the material to remove suds, and let the bag sit for 15 minutes. Repeat until all suds are gone.

“Many sleeping bags can be machine washed in a front-loader or a top-loader without an agitator.”

Many sleeping bags can be machine washed in a front-loader or a top-loader without an agitator. Add a small amount of appropriate soap (to ensure that no suds are left over, do not over-soap). Consider adding a few additional wet garments to [balance out the spin](#) of the machine (e.g. T-shirt). Consider running a rinse cycle with no soap to remove all soap residue).

Take care when handling your wet sleeping bag so as not to damage the baffles and visible fabric. When the down is wet and heavy, it is particularly vulnerable to

Insulation	Hand wash	Machine wash	Dry clean
Down	Best method - wash using soap and water softener. Don't use detergent - it will strip natural oils from feathers. Machine dry on low heat or no heat. Heat can burn off the natural oils.	Use only if recommended by manufacturer. Wash with soap and water. Don't use detergent - it will strip natural oils. Machine dry on low heat or no heat. Heat can burn off the natural oils.	Not recommended. Dry cleaning chemicals residue toxic when inhaled. Attacks down's natural oils.
Synthetic	<i>Gentlest method</i> Use detergent or soap and water softener. Washing or drying should not be above 60°C.	<i>Fastest and easiest method</i> Use detergent or soap and water softener. Washing or drying should not be above 60°C.	<i>Not recommended.</i> Dry cleaning chemicals dissolve resin and silicone finishes used to stabilise fibers. Fibers lose crimp above 60°C.

stretching and tearing. Take time to squeeze out as much water as possible from the bag, and lift the bag from below to support the material. One option is to put the bag on a clean sheet and use this to carry the bag to where it will dry. If hand washing, the sheet can be most easily put under the sleeping bag while it is in the final rinse.

Once most of the water is out of your bag place it in the dryer and use a low heat to ensure that synthetic materials do not melt. As the bag dries, the insulation tends to clump together. This can be avoided by placing objects (tennis balls or other soft but firm objects) into the dryer during the final stages of drying **to displace the clumps**. Once dry, air the bag out overnight to make sure there is no residual moisture before storing.

Another way is to place the sleeping bag on a clean surface outside in partial shade as UV rays can degrade synthetic materials. A clothes line is ideal. Peg a sheet between

two adjacent lines and place the sleeping bag on top, with the carrying sheet underneath. Drape a sheet over the top to protect the sleeping bag from direct sunlight. As the bag dries, the insulation tends to clump together, so check the bag periodically and manually break up the clumps. It will take several days to dry on a clothes line.

### **CAUTION - What not to do!**

**Never** dry-clean your bag. The chemicals used in the dry-cleaning process can damage the bag fabric.

Avoid using fabric softeners or bleaching chemicals on your bag. Follow manufacturer's instructions for what soap to use (usually a non-detergent soap).

“ When the down is wet and heavy, it is particularly vulnerable to stretching and tearing.

“ **Never** dry-clean your bag.



Do **NOT** try this! Using a top loading washing with a central agitator may rip your sleeping bag

## Other maintenance jobs

**Rips to fabric:** If the outer layer of fabric is damaged in the field, to prevent loss of insulation, consider doing a small repair job by sewing or using an adhesive dressing from your first aid kit. At home, remove stitching and do a more thorough job using a [gear repair tape](#).

**Leaking down feathers:** Over time, a few down feathers may work their way through the outer shell fabric and poke out. Work the feathers back into the insulation layer by gently massaging the surface and pushing the feather back in.

**Waterproofing:** Some sleeping bags have a water-resistant outer layer which helps protect the bag from water damage and dirt, but eventually wears off. Consider reapplying the durable water repellent using a suitable product (check with your manufacturer).

## Storage

Store your sleeping bag in a cool dry area away from direct sunlight. The bag is best stored fluffed up. Many sleeping bags come with a large breathable storage bag as this otherwise a cloth bag like a pillow case or larger is ideal.

For more information and other articles on bushwalking checkout the [NPA Bushwalking101.org](#) website.

Have fun and stay warm out there.



Helen is a passionate conservationist who is always planning her next escape into the bush. In early 2015 she completed a PhD at The University of Sydney studying the impacts of exotic and native rodents in Australia and New Zealand. Helen works at the National Parks Association NSW developing information to help bushwalkers build their confidence and bushcraft skills.

Matt is a father to two primary school kids and developed a love for nature when bushwalking with Scouts. Matt is a Queen's Scout, the author of a series of bushwalking Guide books and runs two bushwalking websites, [Bushwalk.com](#) and [Wildwalks.com](#). These websites have about 5000 visitors every day.



Dry your bag in a flat open area, on a warm dry day

# Mont Austral Jacket Review

Stephen Lake



Mont™ is a long-established Australian company making bushwalking and related gear. In mid-2017 I bought a Mont™ Austral blizzard jacket. The following is a review of that jacket.

The Austral jacket is from the [Mont™ website](#) and shows a colour called [ochre](#)

## Background

First, some terminology. I use the form of words "blizzard jacket" to describe garments designed to be worn outdoors as protection from bad weather. This term was adopted 20-30 years ago to avoid confusion with a jacket that keeps the wearer warm. In a bushwalking context where the use is understood, abbreviating this to "jacket" make sense, and this has been done below.

Many years ago there was only one sort of jacket – oiled japara. The basics of this garment remain in today's jackets: a hood, wrist cuffs, and patch pockets on the front. Over time, refinements have been added: wire in the hood, drawstrings at the hood and waist, a map pocket, two way zips, and more.

One relatively recent development has been the jacket length. Where once all jackets went to the mid-thigh or knee, now the vast majority of jackets end at the waist or a little lower. There's a thread discussing [jacket length](#).

## Some extracts from the thread

"Depends on how the "clothing system" is configured. We now have convenient and comfortable waterproof and quick dry pants, waterproof packs etc, the requirements on the jacket are very different now than those years when rain and weather protection were largely dependent on the sole jacket."

*GPS Guided*

"At least below the bum would be nice. Women's jackets tend to be shorter than men's from many manufacturers ... apparently we think looking fashionable and showing off our waistline is more important than staying warm and dry."

*Eremophila*

"(I prefer) long. Mid-thigh at least. I do have a short OR jacket but only use it for fairly gentle rainforest type walking. The length is even more important with the current fashion for hipster style rainpants. Even without a pack you get a draft up the back whenever you move, especially bending over."

*NNW*

"In reality a lot of customers are only using the gear to walk in the park or around town because its now fashionable to wear those designs in the city. They aren't cut for fit people but for the average well endowed westerner. If there's decent rain those people are less likely to be outside".

*Wayno*

In the above thread there's a preference for longer jackets, and I subscribe to that view. I rarely carry or wear overpants; a long jacket usually suffices. So it seems that short jackets are made more than long jackets due to fashion as perceived by the manufacturers and the possibility of wearing overpants.

There's not many long jackets in the shops. When I bought my jacket Mont™ had two jackets, Tempest and Austral, quite similar. Apart from the more expensive fabric in Tempest, the differences are slight and I could not see value in the more expensive Tempest. I decided on an Austral. There's four colours and I bought blue, mainly due to the shop only having blue.

The Austral material is [Hydronaute](#), which seems to be like Gore-Tex. Manufacturers love to have proprietary brands for items or designs that are very similar to other well known items or brands.

## 1 Flap

The Austral double studded flap covering the zip does not appeal; pressing studs in poor weather while wearing gloves could be hard. One option is to remove the studs and sew hook and pile (often referred to as [Velcro®](#)) to the two flaps. The studs do not make the flaps very water resistant – there are big gaps. Hook and pile is better and easier to secure. I'm considering removing the studs and sewing hook and pile as a trade-off, but the hook and pile stitching would leak. Maybe put hook and pile between the studs. A glue-backed hook and pile would be good.

**Mont™ said:** "Studs were used after significant feedback indicating Mont™ Austral users would prefer studs. Studs do not attract grass, seeds, fluff etc like hook-and-loop does."



A Cats and Dogs jacket showing the cord gripper hard against a knot with a second knot at the end, in the red circle, making it easy to grab and use. The map pocket zip in the middle is under the deep storm flap folded back on the right. The flap has never jammed.

I was slightly amused to see quite different current Mont™ designs for garments that do the same job. If a design is good then it should be used in all garments that are for the same purpose. Tempest has been discontinued and there's a new model, [Odyssey](#). The main variations to the Austral are that the fabric is said to be better than that of the Austral, there are no flaps over the main zip, and there are zips under the armpits. It is unclear if the Odyssey fabric makes much difference. Interestingly, the flap behind the Odyssey zip does not jam like in the Austral. I would rather have flaps over the zip than behind. The Odyssey costs \$600. I'm not persuaded that paying \$200 more than the Austral is indicated.

## 2 Internal zip flap design

One aspect I noticed before buying was that the Austral had a flap behind the zip, apparently to stop water coming in. This is a poor design: the flap catches on the zip, and the flap is probably unnecessary as there's two flaps with studs on the outside. I asked Mont™ if they could have a special jacket made for me with no flap. Not possible. I then said that I would think about removing the flap.

**Mont™ said:** *"Care must be taken when doing up the zip to ensure inner storm flap is not caught."*

True, but the flap is pushed onto the zip, making it very hard to avoid the zip catching the flap.

With difficulty I removed the flap and zip; the stitching is very tight, and the taped seams made it quite hard to unpick the zip and flap. Once the first few stitches were unpicked the rest was relatively easy. The zip was sewn back. When I was doing this I realised that the flap was pointless. The flap is not enclosed, and once water is past the zip it spreads inside. A better design is to stop water going into the zip.

**Mont™ said that the internal flap prevents "extensive water from reaching the inside of the garment if it wicks down the zip" and that this is "extremely rare".**

This advice accepts that the outer flaps do not work. I tested this as follows. The jacket was dry, zip done up, outer flaps open, vertical. I used a hand-action spray to put water on the zip. After four pumps water was detected inside the zip. If the internal flap was present the water would simply escape to the side.

Without the flap the zip did not catch, and I'm quite happy with the result. The pictures (below and on the next page) show why the zip caught on the flap before I removed it, and how it's much better after the repair.



Zip catching on the inside flap before it was removed



After the internal flap was removed there were no jams

One major cause of the jam was the seam taping. The tape is quite stiff and pushes the fabric so that it catches on the zip. Ultimately though the cause is poor design. I've had many jackets over 50 years of bushwalking and none jammed like the Austral. I've seen flaps next to zips with a light stiff tape, which do not catch in the zip.

The J&H Cats and Dogs zip flap design is simpler and easier to use.

### 3 The zip

I prefer a zip that's bigger than the Austral's YKK 5. A YKK 8 is on other brands; easier to start, runs a bit smoother, less likely to jam. My Cats and Dogs has a YKK 10, nice and chunky, always worked, even after over 20 years of use. Mating the two halves of the Austral zip at the bottom was tricky. About half the time this did not work. When the zip worked it was fine.

**Mont™ explained** how to operate a zip, and said that "The zip will work when engaged correctly."

Problem is that mating the two halves was tricky. I know how to use zips, and the lack of zip functionality is unique to this jacket.



The Mont™ dry japara and Austral jackets showing the placement of the patch pockets, marked by white paper on three sides. The Austral pocket starts at the zip. Both zips are on the left of the picture.

### 4 Patch pockets

The patch pockets are badly sited in that they are immediately adjacent to the zip, which makes it somewhat hard to put the hands in the pockets. Either the pockets should be 80-120 mm further from the zip, wider, or the top should be at an angle. My Mont™ dry japara jacket is perhaps 20 years old, with pockets that are a similar size to those on the Austral, but are further from the zip, much better. A Cagjac perhaps, 30 years old, has patch pockets starting at the zip, 320 mm wide, very easy to access, easily holds a map. I'm attempting to work out what to do about the Austral patch pockets. Moving them involves major surgery, and as I cannot easily use the pockets I may just cut them off, save a bit of weight.

**Mont™ said** that "They are positioned based on extensive field testing and first hand experience of Mont™ designers."

It is an ergonomic fact that patch pockets are better better placed more to the side and/or have angled entries.

## 5 Drawstrings

The waist drawstring is very badly designed. The ends are inside the patch pockets, so to adjust the cord grippers the pockets must be opened, letting in water when it's wet. Being in a corner of a pocket does not assist. The awkward access to the pockets means that it's a little hard to find the ends of the cords, which become tangled with pocket contents. Wearing gloves compounds the problem. Further, the cord goes through 90 degrees at the ends, and jams badly. This sharp turn puts a lot of pressure on the last stitch and the fabric near this. Good garment design shares the load over several points. With the higher pressure there's a much higher chance of a stitch creating a hole here. I like to have a partial elastic waist cord. The jacket does not have this and it's impossible to replace the cord, so if the cord breaks (unlikely) there's no easy way to replace it. Not good.

**Mont™ said** that *"Positioning the cords inside the garment reduces snag points. Market demands also required a "cleaner" look for the jacket."*

The points I made were not denied. I've had no problems with snag points on other jackets. Functionality has been sacrificed for fashion.

The Mont™ dry japara jacket has a much better arrangement where a simple tube is sewn inside the jacket. This would be faster and easier to make than the Austral setup, and it's very easy to thread a new cord in the dry japara jacket. My Cats and Dogs has a good design, with cord grippers on the outside. This jacket is 22 years old, and the eyelets are intact. Note the double knots, allowing the cord grippers to stop at one knot while the wearer grabs the other one. I'm attempting to find a way to fix the Austral waist drawstring design. One option is to unpick the ends of the Austral cord sleeve and put in eyelets at each end, with the cord on the inside or outside of the jacket. There's never been a problem with the Cats and Dogs flapping cords. Or the ends of the Austral cord sleeves could be unpicked with stitching to narrow the gap and reinforcing to make it wear better, cords on the outside.

The Austral hood drawstring has cord grippers that are flush with the material due to a short sleeve. It seems that the sleeve is designed to stop the cord flapping, and this works. However, in cold weather, grabbing the cord and cord gripper would be hard. This was fixed by removing the small plastic grips at the ends, pulling cords out of the sleeve, and knotting cords. This worked well.

**Mont™ said:** *"User feedback indicated customers would prefer lighter weight and more compact hardware on jackets."*

This does not comment on the point I made. The gripper is fine but the flap adds weight and compromises functionality in that the gripper and end are hard to grab.



The hood gripper arrangement. The white cord shows where the hood cord was, under the flap. Note the gripper was in a very tight place, hard to grab. The gripper cord had to be taped to keep it in frame.

## 6 Map pocket

The map pocket is on the outside and does not work very well. A comparison between the Cats and Dogs and the Austral is set out next.

Jacket	Zip length	Pocket width	Pocket depth	Area
Cats & Dogs	290 mm	270 mm	325 mm	870 sq cm
Austral	175 mm	210 mm	305 mm	640 sq cm

The Cats and Dogs has a much better map pocket design than the Austral. In particular, the Austral zip is far too short for anything except a map that is folded to a small size. The Cats and Dogs will take bigger maps and it's easy to put maps in and take them out, much better.

**Mont™ said:** *"This pocket is a generous size chest pocket and can be used for many things ... Perhaps for maps it is a little small, but we would suggest using a map case."*

The word "generous" is interesting. I want a pocket big enough for maps, and the Austral size is much smaller than the Cats and Dogs. With gloves a bigger person would struggle to use the map pocket – the zip is simply too small.

## 7 Cuffs

The Austral cuffs and hood have hook and pile flaps extending to the very end of the flap. When I make these sort of flaps I have the hook or pile stop about 15 mm from the end of the flap, and at the end sew a small roll of fabric, making it easier to grab the flap while wearing gloves.

**Mont™ said:** *"Recessed tab seams are not appropriate in laminated construction as it interferes with the adhesion of the lamination."*

The sleeves are rather long, which I like as this means that in bad weather the hands can retreat under cover.

## Summary

The Mont™ Austral has several major design flaws. The designs of the Mont™ dry japara jacket and the J&H Cats and Dogs of about 20 years ago are much better. The Austral design could easily be improved, which would make the jacket a little lighter, much better, and cost less. If there was another long jacket for a reasonable price, I'd buy it. However, the Australian range is very limited, another victim to fashion at the expense of many bushwalkers' needs. Mont™ should consider a smaller range with one design, which would assist in keeping costs down at all levels of the supply chain and for inventory. This would also make the price lower. I bought the jacket because it was the only one I could find that seemed to work. I don't mind removing the zip flap and accept a few other minor flaws. The zip is still hard to use, too small in my view. I did not realise that the patch pockets were so badly placed or that the map pocket was so small. I would not buy this jacket again – it lacks basic functionality. I'll keep using it but if I can find a better one I'll buy that, and regretfully write off the \$400 I paid for the Austral to experience. Anybody want to buy a modified Austral?

**Mont™ said that** *"The Austral jacket is one of our most successful garments and has been a key part of our bushwalking range for more than two decades. ... Continual product improvement is the ethos that underpins all design work at Mont™. We consider all aspects of product performance, utilising decades of design experience, a robust field testing regime, and, as mentioned, a strong regard for customer feedback."*

Stephen has worked in textiles, including quality control and writing clothing specifications. He has been designing, making and repairing bushwalking gear for many years. A pack he made in 1976 is still in use. One sewing expert commented on his sewing skills along the lines of "I have never seen anything like that before." Quite.



# The Bushwalkers' Guide to Birdwatching

## North-north-west



A lot of bushwalkers get interested in the flora and fauna they see when out walking, and this will often lead into another hobby: that of the amateur geologist, botanist, ornithologist. But some find making the transition confusing, so here's a brief "How To" on one of the more popular offshoots of our beloved pastime.

Male Great Bowerbird doin' its thing building a bower  
North-north-west

### Know thine enemy

The more you know about birds, the more likely you are to not only see them, but to understand what you're seeing. "A little round grey/brown thing" is a long way from "Tasmanian Thornbill, male, giving breeding display".

And, as any twitcher knows, it's all about ticking them off the list, right? Well, you can't do that unless you have a positive identification. Get a good field guide (there are books and apps aplenty, even some that include recordings of the birds' calls) and start studying.

### Location, location, location

Go where the birds are.

Sounds simplistic, but think about it. Different birds inhabit different regions and different habitats, and some ecosystems have very few birds. If there's a particular type of bird you want to see, you have to go to the right place at the right time. If you merely want to see a lot of different birds, choose areas that have just that; wetlands, for instance, harbour many different species, as do most forests. Grasslands are wonderful for both raptors and small species like finches, emu wrens, fairy wrens and the like.

### Softly, softly catchee monkey

Birds are nervous critters. They have few defences from predators other than their incessant awareness, so you have to be

careful to avoid disturbing them or you'll be lucky to see more than a rare fleeting flutter. Move smoothly and quietly as possible. Stop and wait in likely spots and see who comes to check you out — many small birds are also inveterately curious and will turn up to inspect any new addition to their territory.

### You'll never walk alone

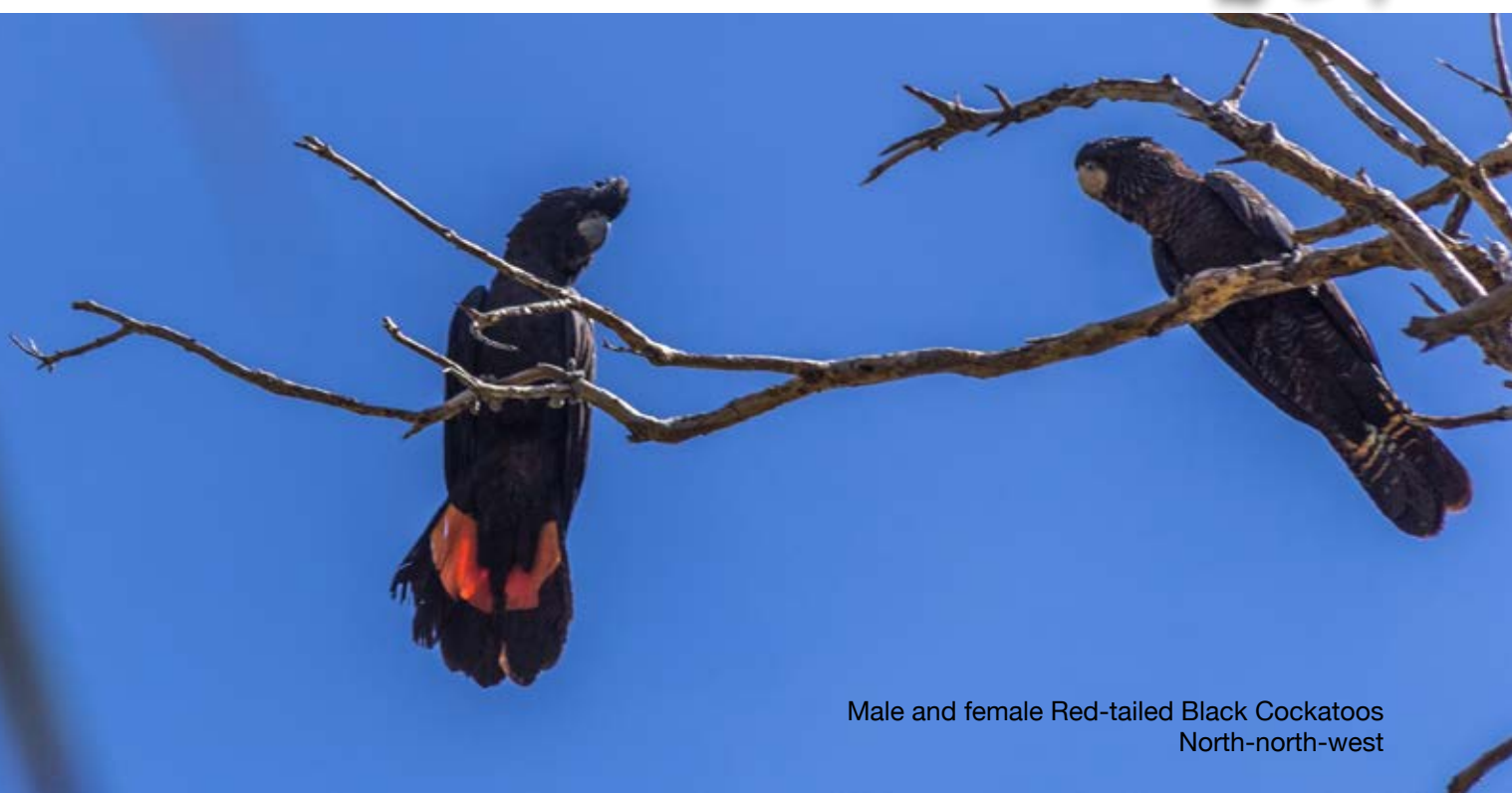
...then you'll never see as many birds as you should. It's hard enough for one person to move around without disturbing resident fauna. The more people in the party there are - no matter how cautious - the more disturbance there will be, so the birdwatcher will often be better off solo.

### Be alert, not alarmed

Keep aware at all times. Don't look for anything in particular but keep eyes and ears and mind open to all movement. A lot of things drop from trees to the ground, but something that goes up, or across when there's no breeze, is probably alive. When you see that flicker of movement in the corner of your eye, once again it's time to stop, wait and watch.

### Patience, young padawan

Like everything worthwhile, it takes time to learn and practice until the processes are automatic. And some days, no matter how much time you give it, the birds aren't going to co-operate. They're not here for your pleasure, but have their own lives to get on with. Learn to live with that.



Male and female Red-tailed Black Cockatoos  
North-north-west

# Our Forests Are Worth More Standing, We Need to Rethink RFAs

David Lindenmayer

For almost two decades, the management of forests in parts of Western Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales has been underpinned by state and federal [Regional Forest Agreements](#) (RFAs), defined as “20-year plans for the conservation and sustainable management of Australia’s native forests”.

Log dump in the central highlands of Victoria  
Peter Halasz

The broad aim of RFAs is to “provide certainty for forest-based industries, forest-dependent communities and conservation”. RFAs are now up for renewal, and it would certainly be in industry advocates’ interest for them to be simply “ticked off”, without the critical scrutiny that is clearly warranted.

The RFAs need to be fully reviewed, not just renewed, because they have had highly perverse outcomes – rather than helping to ease environmental problems, the agreements have actually worsened them in some cases.

### Forestry flaws

The flawed Victorian Central Highlands RFA is a classic case that highlights why simply rolling over the existing RFAs would amount to mismanagement of publicly owned native forests.

The Victorian Central Highlands RFA was signed with much fanfare on March 27, 1998 by then Prime Minister John Howard and then Premier Jeff Kennett. In a media release, Howard’s environment minister Robert Hill declared:

*The RFA will result in more effective management of endangered species by protecting areas of high quality habitat, by making programs more focused, and by setting priorities for specific plans to protect threatened species... [The RFA] ensures that the whole forest will be sustainably managed for future generations ... [and] provides the certainty needed for jobs and opportunities in the regional and State economy.*

“The RFAs need to be fully reviewed, not just renewed ...

I have distinct personal recollections of events leading to the signing of that agreement, because I guided Hill and local MP Fran Bailey around the montane ash forests of Victoria. I warned Hill of the dangers of “locking in” over-harvesting, and gave him a copy of a [scientific paper indicating that this was likely to happen](#).

Time has proved me right. Over-harvesting has now demonstrably occurred, but this is just one of a slew of problems in the area covered by the Central Highlands RFA.

These include:

- Leadbeater’s Possums are now critically endangered, and their reserve system is totally inadequate. [Victorian government modelling](#) suggests that almost the entire montane ash forest estate needs to be protected to conserve the possums, yet this unique ecosystem is [critically endangered](#).
- Populations of large, old trees necessary for the survival of Leadbeater’s Possum (and many other vertebrates) are crashing to historically low levels. Unburned and unlogged old-growth forest now [covers just 1.16% of the mountain ash forest estate](#) – probably the most limited extent in the evolutionary history of this tree species.
- Regenerating forests recovering from clearfell logging have a [higher risk of burning at significantly higher severity](#).
- Levels of direct employment in the native forest logging industry are in freefall. There are fewer than 75 direct jobs in the Yarra Ranges Council area and fewer than 55 in the Shire of Murrundindi. The native forest logging industry continues to cost the Victorian taxpayer millions of dollars each year through direct and indirect subsidies.
- The Victorian government’s inadequate reviews of forest management plans and zoning over the past 15 years mean that the management of state forests has [not been as responsive as it was supposed to be](#). For instance, despite more than [70,000 hectares of montane ash forest](#) having been burned in the 2009 Black Saturday fires, there has been almost no reduction in sustained yield (from an already overcut forest estate). Some reduction in yield is [set to begin in 2017](#) – eight years after the fires.
- Continued rates of overcutting will see the extinction of the sawlog industry within a few decades; thereby locking in a woodchip and pulp industry that [currently consumes more than 80% of production](#) from montane ash forest.

### Disappointing reality

These problems (and many others) show that the reality of how the Central Highlands forests have been managed over these past 18 years is a far cry from the optimism on show back in 1998.

The RFA has locked in unsustainable (clearfell) logging practices that have significant impacts on environmental and conservation values. It has fuelled a forestry industry driven by paper pulp (not sawlogs) that survives only with taxpayer subsidies, threatens the viability of plantations, and has seen a plunge in direct employment within the native logging sector.

Meanwhile, the RFA provides no flexibility to deal with the loss of timber resources through natural disturbances like fire, thereby [resulting in overcutting](#). As a result, the agreement could potentially “lock in” the extinction of endangered species like Leadbeater’s Possum. What’s more, the RFA takes legal precedence over [state](#) and [federal](#) endangered species legislation.

### Not an isolated case

The Central Highlands RFA is far from an isolated example; another is the [recently exposed logging of Swift parrot breeding habitat in Tasmania](#), and all of the existing RFAs have deep-seated problems. Simply rolling them over as if nothing has changed in the past 20 years is inappropriate and irresponsible.

In the Central Highlands alone, my research team has published more than 150 new scientific studies and five books since the RFA was signed in 1998. And even before then, the assessment process arguably ignored critical information like that on the risks of overcutting. Archival documents show that the Kennett government had no intention of enforcing sustainable rates of logging.

“... the agreement could potentially “lock in” the extinction of endangered species like Leadbeater’s Possum.



Since the 1998 Regional Forest Agreement was put in place, Leadbeater’s Possum habitat has declined in Victoria’s Central Highlands

[Tirin](#)

A complete overhaul of the RFA process is clearly warranted. But this must go well beyond a review of the new science, extensive though it is. We need a truly forensic analysis of the economics of (and social mandate for) native forest logging. This would include independent audits of government logging agencies like VicForests.

We also need to reverse the perverse situation that means that an RFA can trump endangered species conservation.

Driving species to extinction and increasing the [risk of ecological collapse of entire forest ecosystems](#) clearly undermines the stated purpose of RFAs.

RFAs are entrenching native forest logging as a loss-making enterprise that degrades important values such as water availability,

carbon storage, wildlife conservation, and the [tourism value of forested areas](#). They are not giving Australians a sound return on their publicly owned natural assets. The agreements are ideological, not logical. It's time for a rethink.

“The agreements are ideological, not logical. It's time for a rethink.”

“We need a truly forensic analysis of the economics of (and social mandate for) native forest logging.”

### David Lindenmayer

Professor, The Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University

The article was first published in [The conversation](#) (an independent source of news and views, sourced from the academic and research community and delivered direct to the public) on 31 March 2015.



A typical Tasmanian creek scene  
Tasadam

# Food Review - Bethel Farm Mills

Sonya Muhlsimmer



This will not be like my normal article I write as I have something special for you this edition - I have been introduced to an amazing couple. Ralph and Jo Waters are from an Australian company called [Bethel Farm Mill](#), and I want you to visit their website as soon as you have read this.

If you know me a little, you know that I love the outdoors and I love my food, and healthy food that is. My meal plan must have variety, the meals have to be easy to prepare, nutritious to keep me going and taste great. Well, Ralph and Jo have created their mill with quality, taste and nutrition in mind. And they know their stuff. They have created a fine selection of gluten free and organic flours, cake mixes, falafels, hummus mix, pancake mix, veggie burger mix, herbs and spices. They have a good range of healthy food options which are also high in protein, oh and they are Australian owned and operated. As I said, they know their stuff, check out the blog section.

Some of the Bethel Farm Mill's products

# Bethel Farm Mill's Hummus

Ralph writes articles on the health benefits of the food, and there are two I want you to take notice of. Read the articles: [Nine surprising things about hummus](#), and [Is powdered hummus the ideal hiking and trekking food?](#) Yes you read correctly, the ideal hiking and trekking food. I am still experimenting as I have just made a big batch of hummus (without the olive oil as I want to dehydrate it) and shared it with my other hiking friends. I dehydrated the leftovers with success, so far so good. Well, pretty good actually, the hummus was so tasty. I added to the mix a few extra ingredients, and it really was delicious. The best part is, I have a big batch dehydrated ready for my next trip. Go on get some for yourself, and don't forget to try their falafels with the hummus as well. What a treat!

## At home preparation

Follow the packet instructions and add optional ingredients as you wish.

## Ingredients to make one litre, as per pack instructions

Hummus powder	150 grams
Crushed garlic (optional)	3 tsp
Lemon juice (optional)	1 lemon
Ground coriander (optional)	2 tsp
Water	825 ml
Tahini paste	1/3 cup
Olive oil	3 Tbsp



## Hint

The 150 gram packet mix to 825 ml water mix makes about one litre of hummus, so if you don't want that much, just halve the mix and water. Serve with falafels.

## Bethel Farm Mill's Mousse

Now, who likes to end their day with a little treat, especially out on the trails? I certainly do. This mousse is easy to prepare. It is gluten free, legume based and vegan friendly. The mousse is bittersweet and so rich in flavour, and great to share with friends. Now one thing I will say is that the instructions say to refrigerate, which I didn't do the first time I tried it as when I am hiking I have no way to refrigerate it, unless I am out on one of my back country skiing trips, so I just left it on my bench for a while to let it cool down to room temperature. I used a mix of half milk powder and half coconut milk powder. The second time I tried it I added too much water so I refrigerated this, however it was quite runny, and a bit lumpy as I didn't mix the powder in properly – I should know better - but the flavour was good. I used coconut milk powder for this mix. The flavour is there, but you could add some roasted almonds or cashews for crunch and texture, or if you want to you can even have them with biscotti. Guess what my dessert will be on my next trip! It is worth buying a couple of packs and experimenting with the milk/coconut milk powder and water ratios. Get the consistency and flavour you like right before you hit the trails. I am going to try this few more times, well you know, I have to get it right, for the texture only, right ... Next time I am going to add a little chilli powder, just to see what it is like.



### At home preparation

Follow the packet instructions and add milk powder or coconut powder as you wish.

### Ingredients to make one litre, as per pack instructions

Chocolate mousse powder	250 grams
Powdered milk	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
Water	500 ml

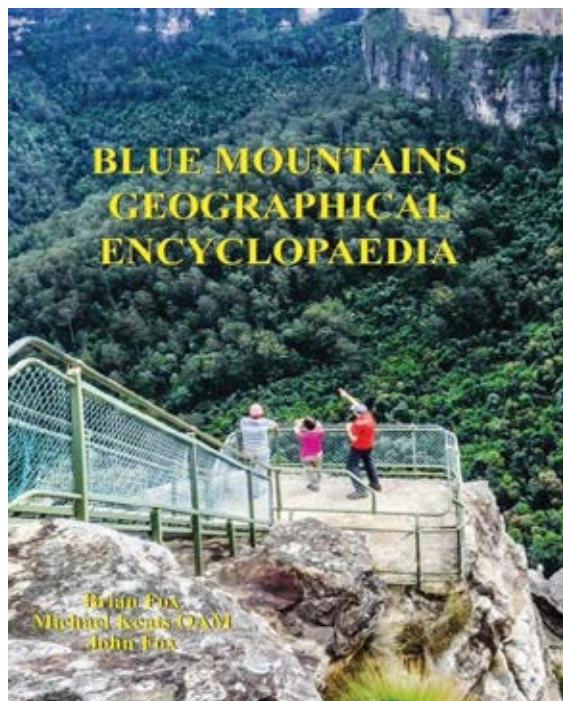
### Hint

Again the packet makes up to one litre, so depends on how many you want to feed. Halve the pack and other ingredients if you don't want so much.



To read more about the author or find more delicious recipes check [xtremegourmet.com](http://xtremegourmet.com)

## In the News



### Blue Mountains Geographic Encyclopaedia

Michael Keats, Brian Fox and John Fox have just published a new 544-page reference book that has the origins and locations of 2700 place names, including towns, waterfalls, caves, pools, lookouts, walking tracks and much more. The book costs \$50, and can be purchased via their [website](#).

### Mountainfilm on Tour's Australian season started in March 2018



The 2018 Tour features 10 of the best short films from the annual Mountainfilm festival in Telluride, Colorado. One word sets Mountainfilm apart from other tours - HEART. Join us for a celebration of adventure, environment and the human spirit. Check out more details at [mountainfilmausnz.com](http://mountainfilmausnz.com)

### Uluru trespassers fined more than \$4800 each

Three Australian tourists were [rescued from Uluru](#) after being stranded there for 16 hours. They were fined by Darwin Local Court for \$4877 each under the Environmental Protection and Conservation Act for trespassing on a Commonwealth reserve.

### GST on low-value imports

From 1 July 2018 GST will apply to low value imports of goods imported by consumers. This will affect bushwalkers who buy from overseas, and make importing less attractive.



# Bushwalk Australia



## Wandering the World

- > 10 reasons to Hike The PCT
- > The Spires via Holley Basin
- > From hiker to Globewalker
- > Should they be stopped?



## Bushwalking Heritage

- > Kidmans Hut Walk
- > Conquering the Giant
- > Dam Madness
- > Five benefits of silent bushwalking



## Wonderful Walking

- > Aussie 10
- > Bushwalking Adventure Activity Standard
- > Forests for all



## Discover & Explore

- > The Great River Walk
- > Mount Triglav, Slovenia
- > First aid kit
- > Firestorms



## Wandering the World

- > 10 reasons to Hike The PCT
- > The Spires via Holley Basin
- > From hiker to Globewalker



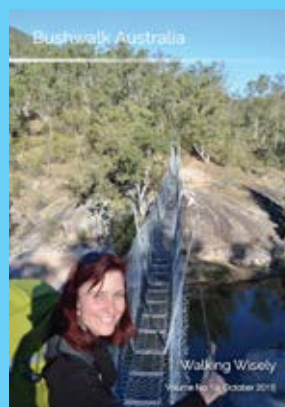
## Longer and Wilder

- > The Western Arthurs
- > Bibbulmun Track
- > Skinners



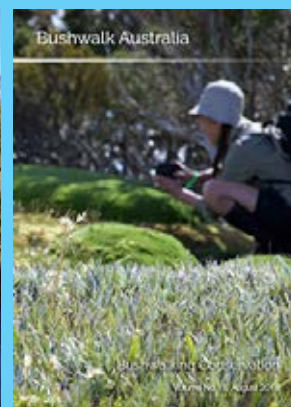
## Summer Swelter

- > Desert Discovery Walk
- > Rewilding
- > Sun clothing



## Walking Wisely

- > Six Foot Track
- > Choosing a GPS
- > Water requirements



## Bushwalking Conservation

- > AAWT
- > High horses
- > Another shot at the GNW



## Winter Walking

- > Gear freak - footwear
- > 10 tips for snowshoeing



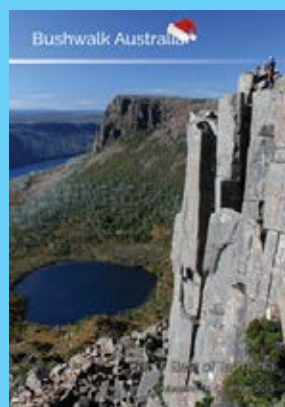
## Best of NSW

- > Best walks of NSW
- > Wolgan Gorge adventure



## Best of VIC

- > Best walks of Victoria
- > Wilsons Prom



## Best of TAS

- > Best walks of Tasmania
- > Rescue at Cradle



## Best of SA

- > Best walks of SA
- > Bungy Pump poles

