

Armidale Bushwalkers



www.bushwalking.org.au/~armidale phone 6775-2026

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Labour Day weekend 30th September - 2nd October, 2006. Washpool National Park. Leader; Paul McCann.

by Peter Rodger.



The landscape of this park is of steep gorges, clear waters and

the Washpool Fire Trail.

The decision was made to access Pi Pi Creek by descending to the valley via a



branch creek. This proved to be slow going, but was nevertheless rewarding, with several waterfalls and relatively open rainforest being enjoyed. However, progress was not fast enough to get us to Pi Pi Flat, which had been our first night's objective. Notwithstanding, an agreeable campsite was found approximately 3 kms short of the Flat, and we continued on the next morning. Sunday saw us arriving a little before lunch, and a welcome choice of campsites and the promise of a large surrounding pool in the offing. The



Pi Pi Creek Washpool NP photo Don Hitchcock

expansive World Heritage rainforest. It protects some of the most diverse and least disturbed forest in NSW, including the world's largest stand of Coachwood trees. The scope for wilderness walking is excellent. The park is mid-way between Glen Innes and Grafton.

The weather forecast was for fine and warm weather and this proved true for the participants in what was to be a 3-day walk in the Pi Pi Creek area of Washpool National Park. Five club members, together with a visitor/prospective member from Bellingen, met at the National Park Visitors Centre early on the Saturday morning, and after a short car shuttle, started off along the Moogem Road northwards and continued on by

afternoon was spent in two ways, with half the party choosing to relax and socialise at camp, while three of us explored downstream to the confluence of Eaglehawk Creek. We then followed that creek upstream to a waterfall which Paul had been to some years previous. The ridge on the northern side of Eaglehawk Creek is an accepted exit route and at the same time enables a viewing of the waterfalls from a higher point. After an early night, we left at a prearranged earlier time on Monday, to ascend the ridge which runs south from a point approximately 1 km upstream on Washpool Creek. This ridge had been accessed on previous trips in the area by both Paul and Jack.

Alas! The ridge which had been previously traversed without significant difficulty had been subjected to bushfires and subsequent prolific regrowth in the intermediate years. The consequences were difficult and slow progress with constant clambering over fallen timber, and pushing through thick vegetation. By late afternoon and with 2 ½ kms to go, we realised we would not be back at the cars by nightfall, and so a decision was made to set up our enforced camp on the ridge. A small rainforest gully yielded some water, as most of us were either out of or low on water. Remnants of food were shared around, and a relatively comfortable night passed. Fortunately, Don's mobile phone was useable, so we were able to advise those at home of our situation. Tuesday morning saw an early start with a pleasant surprise to discover that the Coombadja Road we had been following was not as overgrown as what we'd previously experienced. A little over 2 hours had us back at the National Park camping area, from where we headed homewards without delay.

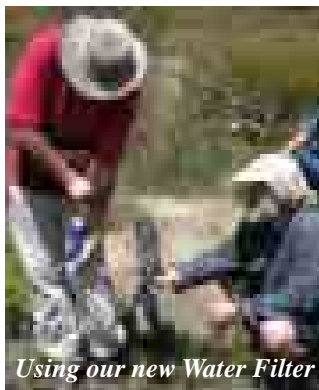
An interesting trip with the obvious pluses of clean water and a pristine environment, along with the downside of negotiating the vegetation overgrowth and, of course, not forgetting the ticks which were out in force. Needless to say, the metho and tweezers got plenty of use.

For any wanting to join our club go to www.bushwalking.org.au/~armidale

“The ABC would like to thank Jock Coventry of Armidale Outdoors

for selling the club a water filter at cost price. We christened it on the weekend Walk on the Edge of Wilderness in Gibraltar and Washpool National Parks. We had several warm days and the water filter came in handy

at the creeks we passed in the afternoon when we had run out of water. Just place the



bulb in the water, the float keeps the bulb off the muck in the creek bed and pump away. We were surprised at the pressure we had to exert but realised that we were pushing the water

through a filter with tiny pores. We got the knack in the end. It helps to hold the end of the filter against your knee - or hand over to the next person in the queue. Not only does it purify water, but builds muscles as well! Another advantage of the filter was that you could drink the water immediately. No more waiting for pills to do their work or for the billy to boil and the water to cool before drinking.”
Kathy King

Salisbury Exit Mihi Trip

Dangars Falls is 21 km from Armidale on the Dangarsleigh Road. Paul McCann planned to take the park track down to Salisbury Waters, follow it down to Mihi Junction, walk up 2 ½ km up Mihi Creek, and climb out by a spur on the southern side. That would make the total day's distance about 17 km, with descent and ascent of 515 metres each way.

Unfortunately, Paul developed a nagging pain in his foot, so he withdrew, and David Lawrence lead Jack Patton, Neal Lake, Jim Palmer and John Keech out on 29th October. We made good time along the tops, taking the opportunity to suss out the planned ascent ridge from where the NPWS track parallels Mihi Gorge. After the first part of the descent,

we took the 200-metres track to Salisbury Lookout to gaze down the nearly-straight valley to Long Point barring the eastern horizon about 16 km away, just above the Heart of New England. We then did the knee-trembling part of the track descent. Near the bottom, we met 3 backpackers from Tamworth who had camped on the Salisbury the night before. They reported very little water flow, but lots of Brushtailed Rock Wallabies.

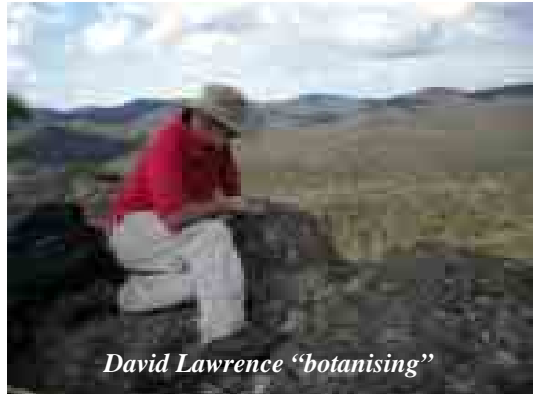
The most testing part of the day's walk is the stretch from the NPWS track end to Mihi Junction. Firstly you cross the Salisbury, then scramble over jumbled boulders 30 cm to 3 metres in diameter for about 400 metres. Then you reach a seemingly impassable point where a spur coming down from the North drops directly into a deep pool. Knowing that a previous party had some dramas here, we carefully edged for 15 metres through the little cleft about 5 metres above the surface of the pool, and clung onto the cracks in the shaly rock to lower ourselves the 3 metres back to firm footing beyond the ridge. Neal, who had been in the previous party, thought they had gone a little too high. Having done both routes, he is now the official keeper of the Keys to Salisbury Pass.

A few minutes more rockhopping took us to the junction by 10.30, where we sat under one of the many River Oaks for a nibble and a drink. Fortified, we headed up the Mihi. We found that the walking was quite easy provided if you looked well ahead when planning your route around the many rockfalls. We were interested to find the most common eucalypt on the gorge side, looking rather like a miniature Forest Red Gum, was an unnamed species. Another pleasant surprise was the large number of Sweet Pittosporum giving a bright green understorey

in places. We saw several Lyrebirds and a pleasing number of Brushtailed Rock Wallabies in this part of the gorge.

We stopped about two and a half kms up the Mihi at the base of the Escape Ridge for a reasonably early lunch. Jack kindly brewed up plenty of coffee, and we chatted about recent trips- Jack to Scandinavia, John and David to Europe- and gave useless advice to Neal on his upcoming fatherhood.

Jack and David had taken this route out a few- was it 12?- years ago, so they lead the way up the shattered metamorphosed



David Lawrence "botanising"

sediments at the base of the ridge.

The narrowness and steepness made navigating simple and we quickly gained height. In the New England there are seldom cliff lines to bar your way out of the gorges, but this ridge is an exception. We hazily recalled the need to bear left as we approached the top. Gradually the valley of the Mihi and Salisbury was revealed, and we could again see the long stretch down to Long Point. With several photo and viewing stops, we reached the cliff base. On this shaded southern side, we found many Dendrobium orchids hanging from the rock, and a dense growth of Lomandra clothing the steep slope falling away to our left. Cautiously hugging the cliff, we edged around till we found a

possible escape cleft. On scrambling up, the crest lead us to another saddle and more cliffs, but we soon found another break and climbed on the tableland at 2.45 pm.

A short stroll across Mihi Creek- amazing that such an insignificant watercourse could cut such a deep gorge- a pants-tearing scramble over the dingo fence, and another imposing view from the head of the gorge. Shortly we met the Mihi Falls View track, but we had another 4 kms walk before we reached the carpark at 4 pm. The legs were a bit shaky by then, but I think Paul was right in saying this trip, with its clear track to the bottom, its short distance from Armidale and its interesting climb out, is an ideal introduction to gorge walking in the New England.

The Demon Fault

by Kathy King

You've probably passed over it many times, as we did the weekend of our Gibraltar



Jack Patton, Paul Mccann, David Lawrence, Eric Gibson looking down to Timbarra River

Waratah Walk recently; a large gully on the Gwydir Highway on the way to Gibraltar and Washpool National Parks, just after the turn-offs to Boundary Creek Falls and Raspberry Lookout. Here the road dips down into the gully then rises steeply around a left hand

bend, heavily fortified with roadside barriers. I'd passed across it for many years without noting anything of interest until one day a friend said "That's the Demon Fault". My ears perked up. Not only did the name capture my imagination, but the idea that I could similarly impress other people with such a great throw-away line about a seemingly innocuous part of the road, grabbed my interest. It subsequently inspired us to do a 6 day walk down the Demon Fault in August 2001 from east of Tenterfield to the Gwydir Highway east of Glen Innes.

About 222 million years ago, when cycads and conifers were king and dinosaurs roamed the land, a slippage in the Earth's crust created the Demon Fault. On geology maps, the Demon Fault runs pretty well directly north-south for 150 km from the headwaters of Demon Creek (near the Timbarra Road branching off the Bruxner Highway) to Ebor where it becomes hidden under basalt flows of smaller faults, one ending near Werrikimbe

National Park at Mooraback. It can be seen from various vantage points in Gibraltar and Guy Fawkes River National Parks.

But let's return to where we found the Demon Fault crossing the Gwydir Highway. Here, to the left of the road, are the headwaters of Boundary Creek which flows down the Demon Fault into Clarence River catchment. Boundary Creek flows north to meet the Timbarra River which

continues north along the faultline until it meets the Demon Creek flowing directly south along the same fault. At this junction at Billyrimba, the waters then leave the fault to flow east as the Timbarra (or Rocky) River and



Maepac Alley bottom of Haystack

000 hectares, include the largest unbroken stand of rainforest in Australia. These rainforests are recognised as being one of the most significant tracts of temperate rainforest on earth.

The basalt soils of North-West Tasmania provide prime conditions for luxuriant rainforest growth, and the rainforests of the Tarkine make up the largest tract of tall rainforest in Tasmania. In tall (*Callidendrous*) rainforest, Myrtle trees can grow up to 40m tall and 4m in diameter, providing a dense canopy and understorey, and are typically carpeted by a vast array of mosses, lichens and ferns, resembling well tended botanical gardens.

The Tarkine and its rainforests, having survived unchanged for many millennia before white man arrived to Tasmania, are a global treasure.

Landscape and Natural Beauty

A number of the Tarkine's landscapes are exemplary and include:

- The largest tract of temperate rainforest in Australia. Located in the Tarkine's north-east in the upper reaches of the Rapid, Keith, Donaldson and Savage Rivers, the vastness of this rainforest is impressive. The densely rain forested upper Savage River is exceptional due to its deeply incised gorge system.

- The Meredith Range - an undulating granite plateau comprising the Meredith Batholith, the largest exposed area of granite in western Tasmania.

- The Norfolk Range - a feature of the Western Coastal Platform characterised by an undulating to flat topography. This region is blanketed in a tapestry of heath and button grass (*Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus*) moorland, pockets of a variety of forest types at differing stages of succession, and gorge-like drainage lines.

ultimately meet the Clarence River.

From the top of the Haystack that we climbed on our Gibraltar Waratah walk, we could clearly see the Demon Fault to the north with the Timbarra River flowing along it. The Demon Fault also featured on another of our sidetracks when we visited Duffer Creek Falls. Heavy rain the week before had swollen Duffer Creek and the water plunging over the eastern edge of the faultline into Boundary Creek below, was quite spectacular.

Trying to trace the course of the Demon Fault south from Boundary Creek is difficult as looking south from Raspberry Lookout, the faultline is not so obvious. However, another vantage point further south where you can easily make it out is looking north from Lucifer's Thumb near Chaelindi where the Guy Fawkes River runs through it.

The Tarkine Wilderness

is located in the north-west of Australia's Tasmania. The region encompasses 447,000 hectares of wilderness including the Southern Hemispheres largest temperate rainforest, a wild coastline with an extraordinary wealth of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage sites, and habitat for over 50 threatened species. There are groves of the tallest hardwood trees on the planet, numerous wild rivers, and spectacular mountain ranges.

Rainforests

The Rainforests of the Tarkine, some 177

Armidale Bushwalkers Program, 2007

This program takes us up to Easter. Ring Peter Rodger 67720464 if you are interested in leading walks later in the year, or for expressions of interest where the leader is not indicated for the proposed extended walks .

Summer

January 14th Day Walk, Cascades area, New England National Park *Classification* DW S 2 B Leader Paul McCann 67726156

January 26th – 28th Car Camp in Styx River area, with day walks to various sites. *Classification* CC 2d2n S 3B Leader David Lawrence 67753164

February 4th Coombadjha Falls, Washpool National Park . *Classification* DW M 3C Leader Paul McCann 67726156

February 25th Long Point, Oxley Wild Rivers National Park Leader *Classification* DW S 1 A Leader David Lawrence 67753164

Autumn

March 18th Gibraltar Range "Dandahra Delights" walk contact Robyn Bartlett (02) 67728587 *Classification* Med-long 2- b 12-15 klm

March 25th Cathedral Rock National Park Leader Colin Wood 67752026 *Classification* DW - M - 1 - B two scrambles optional.

April 6th-9th (Easter) Macleay & Apsley Rivers ("Two Rivers Walk"). *Classification* BP 4d3n M 4 D. Leader Paul McCann 67726156 -(please contact before 18th February or after 4th April)

Proposed Extended Walks

Expressions of interest invited for the following walks- ring Peter Rodger except where indicated:

1A February/March (Exact dates to be determined). Victorian Alps- Walhalla – Mansfield, thence Bogong High Plains. Further Details contact Jim Palmer 67758281

1B. Mid February to end of March 2007. New Zealand. A series of walks planned for the northern end of the Southern Island including Arthur's Pass area and Nelson Lakes. In the North Island - Tongariro area. Opportunity to join for all or part of the programme. Contact Paul McCann for detailed schedule 6772-6156

2. Mid-March Kosciusko National Park Approximately 8 days walk- Main Range and possibly Mt Jagungal.

3. Late Summer/Early Autumn . Guy Fawkes River National Park. 4/5 day walk. Exact Route to be determined.

4. May. Blue Mountains /Kanangra Boyd/ Nattai National Parks

5. Late Winter/Early Spring . Guy Fawkes River National Park. 4/5 day walk from

Chaelundi to the Old Grafton Road.

6. September/October. Walcha to Newcastle via the Barrington Tops and Hawkes Nest. Walk in stages with opportunity to join and depart for a single or several stages. Notional at present with planning yet to follow.

7B MultiWalk Gradings August 2006

The grading system is divided into trip type, approximate daily distance, type of terrain, fitness level required. All walk participants should check the grading to ensure they have suitable fitness level before undertaking a walk.

Walk Type.

DW-One Day Walk

BP (3d2n) Backpack, 3 Days, 2 Nights CC (2d2n) = Car Camp, 2Days, 2 nights

Approximate distance

S-Short-Less than (10km) M-Medium (10-15 km) L-Long- (15-20 km) XL - Extra Long - (over 20 km)

Terrain

GRADED TRACK WALKING - These walks are on formed and maintained tracks for walking or for vehicles.

OFF-TRACK WALKING -These walks are over territory where there are no formed or maintained tracks.

- 1 - Graded track, some incline
- 2 - Graded track, hills, creek crossings
- 3 - Rough track, steep sections, and creek crossings
- 4 - Off track, moderate terrain
- 5 - Off track, thick terrain
- 6 - Off track, rock climbing and exposure

Fitness

- A - Low-fitness
- B - Moderate fitness
- C - Good fitness
- D - Good fitness with agility
- E - High fitness level
- F - Strenuous - experienced walkers only!

Armidale Bushwalking Club – Annual General Meeting Summary

Sunday November 26th, Blue Hole

Present: Dave Lawrence, Kathy King, Moya Tomlinson, Jim Palmer, Paul McCann,
Jane Growns, Zac Growns, Peter Rodger.

1. Apologies: Andrew Pearson, Col Wood, Lorraine Hecker, Neal Lake, Jock
Conventry, Peter van Haeff, David and Julie Kennelly, Sandi Smolders, Jack
Patton, Alan Went

2. Minutes of previous AGM were read and accepted.

3. President's report - a pattern of 4 meetings a year and fortnightly walks. New walk leaders welcome, check our website <http://www.bushwalking.org.au/~armidale>, thanks to outgoing office-bearers, Merry Xmas, see you on the track in 2007. Accepted.

4. Treasurer's report . We have a balance of about \$320 after paying all outstanding bills. Accepted
Office Bearers 2007

President/Public officer: Dave Lawrence

Vice President: Newsletter/Website Colin Wood

Treasurer: Kathy King

Secretary: none

Committee Memb 1: Walks Coordinator Peter Rodger

Committee Memb 2: Mailouts Neal Lake

It was noted that it may be necessary to merge the Secretary with another
position due to the difficulty in getting people to stand for positions.

Other matters

1. 2007 walks program was discussed, to be finalised by Peter assisted by Dave.

2. Membership fees are \$25, due 1st January

3. KOMP report – NPWS want to charge us \$3000 for venue hire. We decided to cancel
the event.

Action: The 'Secretary' (i.e. Dave) will write a letter declining their offer.

Page 9

4. The new water filter for the Walk Leader's Pack was displayed. Dave foreshadowed
that further equipment would continue to be added to the pack.

5. The New Member's Info booklet is being developed and will contain a copy of the
Minimal Impact Bushwalking Code.

Action: Col to include a part of the MI Code in each newsletter.

6. Other business

(a) Peter raised the issue of attracting young walkers. Discussed the possibility of offering
our services to schools/scouts etc. **Action: The 'Secretary' (i.e. Dave) will email all members to see if anyone
is interested in pushing this idea.**

(b) **Action: Dave will send hardcopies of the trip report from Dangars to Georges Junction to Peter and
Paul.**

(c) Kathy had investigated cost for obtaining club stamp - \$50. No motion was tabled.

Meeting closed 2.10 pm.

Excerpts from “The Bushwalkers Code”

Do not disturb our bushland

If you enjoy the pleasures of bushwalking and related self-reliant outdoor activities, you have a big responsibility to protect and preserve the natural landscape for the enjoyment of future generations. This guide will help you enjoy the bush without leaving your mark.

Be self reliant

Enjoy the natural landscape as it is, on nature’s terms. Carry with you the things you need for your comfort and safety.

For shelter, carry a lightweight tent or flysheet, or use a cave or rock overhang. Avoid huts except when weather conditions are really bad, but be prepared to share the hut.

Do not camp in an overhang with Indigenous rock art, as the art can be damaged by dust, smoke and fumes (See also ‘Respect Indigenous Heritage’)

Tread softly

Keep walking parties small in number; four to six people is ideal.

Avoid popular areas in holiday periods when campsites are crowded.

Use existing tracks; don’t create new ones. On zigzag paths, don’t cut corners as this creates unsightly damage that leads to erosion.

In trackless country, spread your party out; don’t walk in one another’s footsteps. Avoid easily damaged places such as peat bogs, cushion moss, swamps and fragile rock formations.

Don’t Wade through waterlogged sections of tracks; don’t create a skein of new tracks around them. Except in really rough terrain, wear lightweight, soft-soled walking shoes or joggers rather than heavy boots.

Become proficient at bush navigation. If you need to build cairns, blaze trees, place tags, break off twigs, or tie knots in clumps of grass to mark your route, you are lacking in bush navigation skills. Placing signposts and permanent markers of any kind is the responsibility of the relevant land manager (such as the NPWS).

Watch your safety

Know what to do in emergencies. Rescue operations often cause serious damage, so take care to avoid the need for rescue.

Be properly trained in First Aid so you know how to handle illness and injuries.