



L-R: Waratah, looking out towards the Wollongambe, Tisha & Celine emerging from deep scrub

Wollongambe / Newnes Forest Walk

Anthony Knittel

Participants: David W, Anat, Anthony, Tisha, Celine (apologies if any misspelt)

Saturday of Boree Log usually involves people running off on all sorts of activities, this time there was a group off climbing and abseiling at Mt Boyce, a group out sport climbing at Bowen's Creek, and a few holding the fort at the camp site & doing noble tasks like preparing tasty stews and portugese-chilli flavoured roast chickens that would be well appreciated at the end of the day. It was too cold for canyoning and threatening to rain so we headed out for a day walk in the Newnes Forest area.

I grabbed a spot in the car just in time as it was bumping down the road out of the campsite & quickly grabbed a few things, thinking "what could you really need to go walking..", but of course didn't spend long enough on that question to think of the rain jacket sitting on the back seat of my car. But not to worry, "tourist walking" it was to be sandshoes, cotton shorts & t-shirt and a mobile phone to take pictures on, instead of the walking boots, gaiters, nylon shorts & rain jacket being

kept safe from harm back at the camp site. A nice warm fleece & a quick stop at the kiosk on platform 9 3/4 at the Zig Zag railway for a pastie, kitkats and a sandwich and everything was under control.

Following Dave's expert directions through the maze of dusty dirt roads we went as far as we dared before abandoning the car at the bottom of a particularly nasty looking hill & carried on on foot. Waratahs were about the place, a vivid contrast with the grey air and open gum forest. We picked what we figured was close enough to where the trail should start (a good way to ensure the rest of the way will be full of map poking and head scratching) and headed off in the general direction of Gooche's crater.

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L-R: Canyon formation, bark with natural white powder, top of pagodas

Rocky pagodas dotted the landscape, and from the top of a prominent one we could see down in to the valley and the network of small escarpments and outcrops.

The open forest was fairly easy going, and some head-high scrub at the bottom of a gully gave a bit of “variety” to the terrain, although when we crossed back through it a second time to the side we started from I couldn't help thinking if some gaiter-toting people with water-proof boots were enjoying themselves a bit, but no harm done, we all made it through in one piece.

Further along the escarpments closed in and we followed a creek through a maze of gulleys, with the walls towering more than 40m above on either

side. Eventually we made it to our target and spot for lunch, a wide open bowl with the unusual trait of being a natural sink of the creek flowing into it, gradually collecting sediment over time and creating an unusual open sink of mosses and marsh grasses, closed in by the encircling walls.

After lunch we did some exploring around the area, down into the deep canyon-like gullies and up along the narrow, exposed outcrops in a very featured and varied landscape. Although it was overcast the rain held off & the cool weather was quite pleasant for walking and exploring around in.

Eventually the smell of the food cooking at the campsite (even if just imagined) started to lure us back, not to mention a cold beer or two and comfortable chair waiting by the fire. *AK*



Gooche's crater

Quick News

- **Upcoming trips:** (see the website for details)

11 Nov	Canyoning <i>Mark Smith</i>
25 Nov	Advanced Rope Skills Course <i>David Evans</i>
2 Dec	Festival of the Canyon

- Trips can also be organised by posting ideas on the discussion mailing list, see the web site for details.



Grose Valley 26-27/09/05

Stewart Johnston

Participants: Dan Howe, Justin Della Bosca, Stewart Johnston, Brent Emerson (non club member)

This is a trip report that I wrote nearly a year ago shortly after the trip. It had to be published eventually, and besides, the trees and the yabbies still look the same...

In the beginning there were seven. The rain and other circumstances came along to mess with the plans, and then there were four. This was unfortunate, as between us we had four stoves, three tents (with room to sleep eight), a deck of cards, several racing spoons and a stray calculator. Some of these would be useful later on...

We started the walk at Mount Victoria Station, and headed out of town along the Victoria Falls road. This meant a few k's of gravel road bashing but we covered it pretty quickly, arriving at the Victoria falls lookout in time for lunch. As we ate, we watched the mist swirling down in the valley. Tumbled around by the wind, the little opaque wisps of cloud disappeared and reappeared randomly. Towards the end of lunch Justin discovered that his scientific calculator had hitched a free ride in his backpack. Apparently he had forgotten to take it out when he was packing for the trip. I would like to know why anyone would lug an overnight pack around campus.

It only took us until Silver Cascades, above Victoria Falls, to get sidetracked again, when someone spotted some yabbies in the river. Now, Blue Mountains yabbies must be seen to be believed. They are a bright orange-red colour, which couldn't possibly stand out more against the clear water. They obviously don't have much predation, as there were LOTS of them. The more we looked, the more we found. Shy underwater

creatures don't make easy subjects for photos, but with patience and a lot of fiddling with camera settings we got some respectable shots. The yabbies alone would be good reason for a visit to this area.

After setting up camp and doing a typically excessive cook up, it was time for cards. There exists no better lightweight card tent than Dan's megamid. It's a big spacious tarp tent which sleeps four, so four card players fit comfortably. Unfortunately, by the time everyone was up to speed with the rules of 500, it was getting pretty late. So we settled for a game of 250 instead...

The Blue Gum forest is another must see in the area. The trees are big. Go check it out.

We came back up Perry's track to Perry's lookdown, stopped briefly, then walked back into Blackheath via the Hat Hill road. Walking on gravel and blacktop is never fun, but walking fast helps to limit the boredom. In the end we were glad we did leg it quickly to Blackheath, as it allowed us to get picked up by a bunch of schoolgirls. Well, not quite. We had missed the train by half an hour, and with a two hour wait for the next we went to the fish and chip shop to kill some time. By massive coincidence, we ran into a couple of club members at the fish shop. It turned out that they had also been supervising a Duke of Ed trip, and even better, there were spare seats on their bus. So by luck and the generosity of the supervisors, we got a free ride home, and landed back in Sydney before the train had even left Blackheath. *sj*



The Lightweight Chef- Food Dehydration for that expedition's gourmet feast.

Mark Smith

Let's face it, one of the reasons why we go to the outdoors is to eat good food in beautiful places. Now while it's true that after a long hard day on the trail, chewing on your scarpas seems like an attractive proposition; a tasty, nutritious, and very affordable meal that you've made yourself is one of the best things you can tuck into for the evening meal.

Food dehydration is a fun and useful method of preserving food and making it a lot lighter, so your pack doesn't end up weighing a ton. Freeze dried meals from outdoors shops cost the earth, and contain no home-cooked love, so I prefer to go for the home dehydrated option.

First you need a dehydrator: Have a look on ebay and you'll find one for not much over \$100, something which will last for a lifetime of culinary wonders. They are just basically a set of trays with a heater and a fan underneath, that dry the food.

After that, the possibilities are endless, but to get everyone started I'll supply couple of tips and tried and proven recipes.

- If you're using meat, use mince, or otherwise cut it into very thin strips. Beef and lamb (probably roo) dry better than pork and chicken. You have to be careful drying chicken, because of the increased risk of salmonella.
- Stews, soups, and spicy curries make great dishes to dry.

The very best recipe that I have tried from a food drier is the old faithful spag bog (spaghetti bolognese).

It's just a standard spaghetti bolognese recipe. I like to use real ingredients, and no pre-prepared muck. Beef or roo mince, onion, heaps of garlic, some carrot if you like, canned or cheap fresh tomatoes, some stock and red wine, and heaps of oregano and basil, preferably fresh. Don't forget the salt, and some sugar, to soften up the acidity of the tomatoes.

The trick is- simmer and reduce it until it is drier than normal, so that it will not flow through the trays. If it's still too wet, or you are running the risk of burning it to the bottom of the pot, then take it off, lay baking paper (not foil) over the trays of the dehydrator, and spread your bog thinly over the trays. Leave it to dry out until it is suitably dry to not fall through the trays, then remove it from the baking paper. If you leave the baking paper there, it will take longer to dry and you will also end up with your bolognese firmly stuck to the baking paper (extra carbohydrates)....

When it's dry to the point of being crumbly, you can let it cool and pack it into ziploc bags in meal-size portions (be warned, you will ALWAYS put too much in!)

To rehydrate, I find the best way is to put the portion in your pot with some water. Bring it to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes (adding more water if necessary). Let it sit, covered, while you cook your pasta, then whack the sauce back onto the stove to simmer for another couple of minutes before serving.

Yum.

Stay tuned for more culinary delights.

Smithy



Yosemite National Park Half Dome Ascent

Hugh Chaffey-Millar

What follows is an almost verbatim copy of the last of a string of emails I wrote to family and friends during a four month round the world trip at the end of my undergraduate studies.

After going through a 9 hour time zone change, I finally landed in San Francisco, but didn't stay here long before jumping on several buses out to Yosemite National Park.

This bus trip, after leaving San Francisco through enormous spaghetti junctions went out through the flat, dry expanse of inner California passing many trailer parks, wind generator farms stretching to the horizon and ridiculously long trains hauled by clusters of no less than three enormous diesel locomotives.

Yosemite National Park is truly awesome, and even before reaching the valley proper I had my face pressed to the bus window and was staring at the impressive cliffs that towered up on either side. The park consists of a valley, the floor of which is about half a kilometre wide and almost completely flat, surrounded on both sides by rugged granite slabs stretching about 1 km directly upwards, and in the case of the Yosemite Valley trade mark - the mountain known as Half Dome, exactly 1.5 km up from the valley floor. These enormous cliffs are adorned intermittently by waterfalls that trickle down from these lofty heights to rivers, meadows and lakes at altitudes closer to the valley floor.

The park is home to the black bear (which as far as I could tell is strangely only ever brown in colour). People who drive to the park are warned not to leave food in their cars, as the bears can smell this and bend open the doors of cars to get to it. The bears have even learned what an esky looks like, so

these must be covered in a rug to prevent one's car being added to the US\$500,000 worth of damage that bears cause each year.



Randy black bear gets some from the Corolla

Given this problem, it is considered unwise to leave food, shampoo, flavoured condoms or anything vaguely yummy smelling in your tent, if you plan to avoid wrestling bears for them in the middle of the night. Needless to say, whilst wrestling bears, humans normally come out second best.

The Camp 4 camping ground, inhabited mostly by rockclimbers, feature ablation wall graffiti bragging not about penis length, but rather times for ascents of classic climbs (not sure about the ladies' though). Apart from the climbers and slackliners, the park caters for several million yanks per year on "vacation", frequently arriving in enormous "trailers", towed by (or sometimes towing) 6L global warmers.

I did several rock climbs and other things in Yosemite, but I'll focus on the ascent of Half Dome: a large granite, truncated-dome shaped mountain, which at 2800m, stands 1.5 km in altitude above the valley floor. Its position at one end of the valley, dominates the view from many



L-R: two different views of half dome; the face of half dome which was climbed from afar.

vantage points. This expedition I did with two others.

We began with a 10 km walk to the start of the climb. Then it was a 7 pitch rock climb of around 300 m up a granite slope. The climbing was fairly easy (about grades 10-14 after conversion from the Yosemite Decimal system), but was unbelievably run-out: towards the top only a single bolt per 30 m pitch, and almost nothing in the way of gear placements! Being a slab, falls would have been particularly nasty. Given the easiness of the grades there was nothing approaching a slip, but it was mildly nerve wracking never the less.



The start of the climb

One of the classics of Yosemite, the route is known as Snake Dyke, since its main feature is a protruding igneous intrusion of a different colour and texture to the otherwise grey granitic slab. The dyke snakes most of the way up the rock face that is climbed.

We finally reached the summit after about 6 hours of walking straight uphill and 6 hours of rockclimbing/belaying in direct sunlight on the face of a big piece of granite. The top was like the surface of the moon: completely devoid of life, all glacially scarred and sculpted granite.

We had taken much longer than we anticipated to reach the summit. It was sunset and we now had to walk 20 km back to our campsite, descending 1500m over the first 10km, most of which would be in the dark. Admittedly it was along the path that most walkers use to get to the top, but was made slightly more interesting by the fact that the forest we were going to be walking through had bears in it, it was dark, and we only had one torch between the three of us.

We started off ok, making lots of noise to scare away any bears that might have tried to challenge us for our scroggin. The bears are naturally scared of humans, but can become aggressive if they are after your food.



The Log

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Several times we completely lost the path - its amazing how hard it can be to see a partially worn trail when there are pine needles everywhere and the batteries in your only torch are going flat. We had a GPS, but it was having difficulty finding three satellites for triangulation through the pine tree canopy.

A few times we heard footsteps in the bush. Out of concern that these might have been from a bear, we all picked up rocks and proceeded with some caution, making lots of noise (apparently, if attacked by a bear, you can smash it's skull with a rock and then the game's over). Whatever they were, they ran off before any close encounters materialised. The only animal we SAW on the whole walk was a timid, wide eyed deer.

Once again, about 15km after the summit and still with 5km to go before reaching the campsite, we had to find a bridge to cross a river to get back into Yosemite Valley, but in the dark, just couldn't seem to find it. By now it was about 1 am and at this

point we were quite close to civilisation. In the middle of the bush, we came across a bonfire surrounded by about ten totally drunk American kids who, when hearing our decription of where we'd been and were trying to get to, apart from making remarks such as wow dude, that so like totally full on, were well beyond providing useful information.

Anyway, after significant backtracking and faffing about, we finally found the bridge and made it back to our campsite at 2.30am, with near-dead torch batteries, feeling pretty dehydrated, body all achin' and racked wid pain. By this time we'd been rockclimbing or walking for 18.5 hours straight and had covered 30km in walking alone, not including back-tracking. I think this is officially the most strenuous day of my life.

Next time must remember: more torches, more batteries, and more intensive preparative training for climbing partners ;-) *HCM*



The author and A.M. topping out on another climb (not half dome)