

Member Profile: Marilyn Browne, Honorary Life Member



I joined ABW in August 1971 at the age of 23. I had just returned from a trip to the Flinders with family friends and a young bushwalker from Victoria. He thought there would be a walking club in SA so I asked around at work – the Adelaide

Botanic Garden. Eric Jackson was on the staff and offered to introduce me at the next meeting. I received a warm and friendly welcome from members, many of whom were also in their 20s.

I soon invested in a Flinders Ranges H-frame pack and practised carrying it along the route of the South Eastern Freeway which was still under construction. Mum complained when the big bags of sugar I had borrowed from her pantry got damp and went solid.

My first overnight walk was an October long weekend in Aroona Valley. We went north to Tea Cosy Gorge and out to the plains, intending to return via Bathtub Gorge. Somehow we missed the entrance and came back through the next gorge south, so the walk and its leader, Colin Little, became known for 'losing Bathtub Gorge'.

Colin was also the leader of my first and very memorable walk in Tasmania, the South Coast Track. Colin became hypothermic as we crossed

the Ironbonds and spent the night in a cave up on top. On New Year's Day I shared around my somewhat alcoholic chocolate scroggin and another walker offered us coffee in return. We accepted so he ground up the last of his coffee beans for us! Since then I have led or participated in more than 20 trips to Tassie.

It didn't take long for me to become thoroughly addicted to bushwalking. I qualified as a full member in November 1971 and was invited to join the committee as it was short of officers. I think they saw me coming. Over the years I served in all positions except Treasurer, Social, Gear Hire and Librarian.

I'm immensely grateful that I discovered ABW when I did. It introduced me to a lot of wonderful people as well as a whole range of activities and interests – walking, cycling, caving, canoeing, rogaining and photography. It was also the start of my current major interest in birding.

What of the future? Many tracks and trails have been established over the last 30 years, but access to other places has become more restricted. Work patterns have changed so not everyone has the weekend free to go walking. Equipment has improved out of sight and there is a lot more choice available. Something that doesn't change is the effort needed to haul oneself and one's pack up a hill, and the enjoyment and sense of achievement once there.

I think ABW will always reflect the skills, resources and enthusiasm of its members at the time. I can only hope that current and future members continue to have the same sort of welcome that I received, the good companionship of fellow walkers that I still enjoy, and the sense of fulfilment that comes from tackling something that stretches you physically and mentally – long walks in wilderness areas.

Flying to your next Bushwalk?

The Autumn 2007 issue of *Wild* contains an interesting letter from a reader, with a web reference for anyone who anticipates carrying a fuel stove on a plane and who does not want an argument with airline officials. ABW members have debated this point on walks and may be interested in the real deal.

The following website: <http://casa.gov.au/dg/luggage/dgtable.htm> is the official page of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA). The section

'methods to nullify the hazard with camping stoves and fuel tanks' is particularly relevant to Trangia users, but there is also information covering all types of camping stoves.

The CASA safety requirements are not particularly onerous; however, the letter author recommends printing out a copy of the regulations to avoid arguments, as it is possible not all airline officials are cognisant of the minutiae of the regulations.