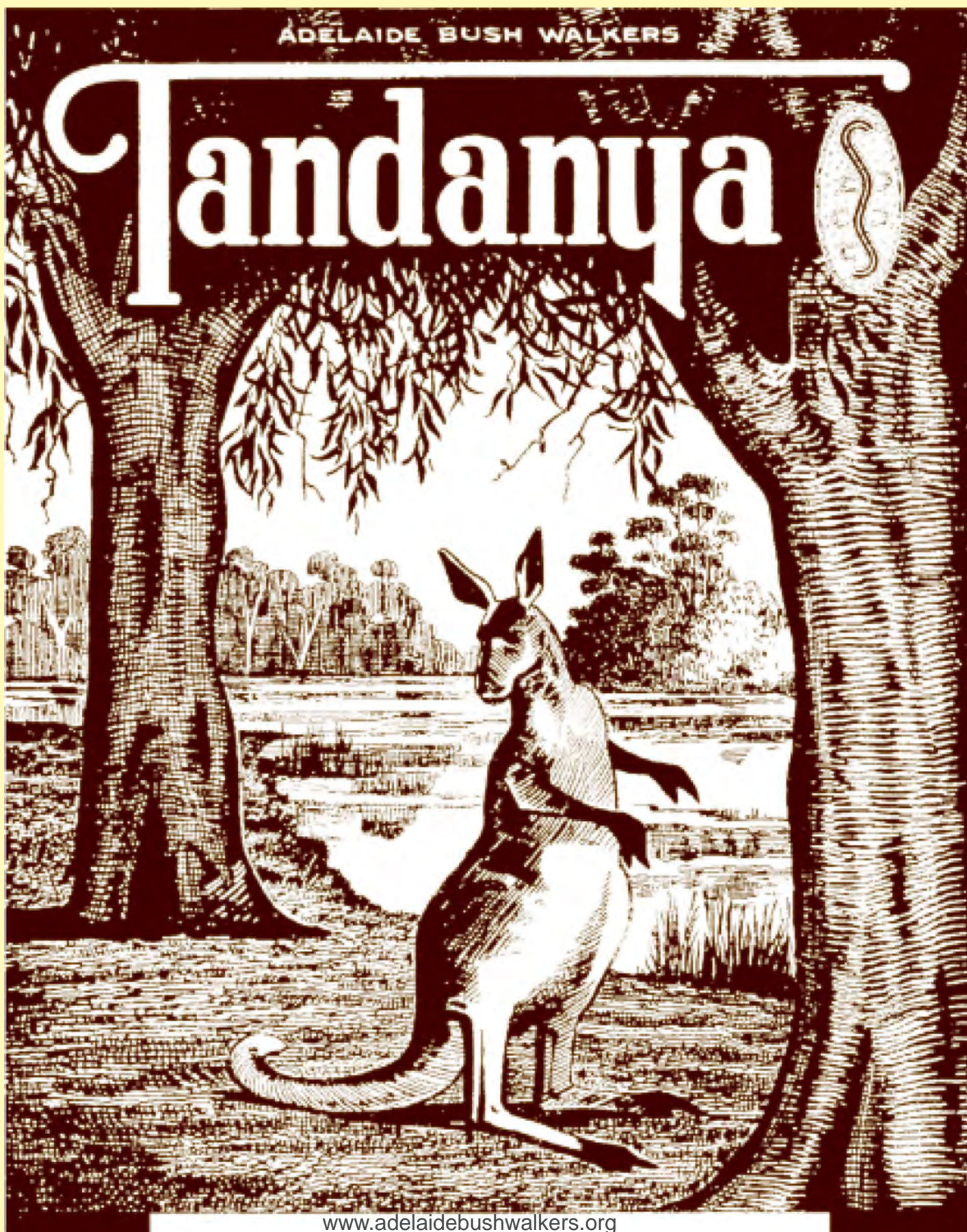


ADELAIDE BUSH WALKERS

Tandanya



www.adelaidebushwalkers.org

The Magazine Of The Adelaide Bushwalkers
Volume 48 Number 4 Summer 2018

Walking in the Western Gammon Ranges
Three British Peaks

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The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity.
-Amelia Earhart

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Adelaide Bushwalkers



ABW Club information

The club meets at the North Adelaide Community Centre, 176 Tynte Street, North Adelaide on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm (February to November)

Annual subscription fees

Category	Normal	Student
Prospective Membership	\$60	\$30
Full Membership	\$60	\$30
Associate Membership	\$10	\$10

Family membership is no longer available for new members

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Walking in the Central Pyrenees

by Lee Marling

This ten day loop walk was based in and around the Parc National des Pyrenees in France and the Parque Nacional de Ordesa y Monte Perdido in Spain. The loop combined sections of the three main trans Pyrenees walking trails: Le Sentier des Pyrenees GR10 (France), La Senda Pirenaica GR11(Spain) and the Pyrenean Haute Route. I used the Cicerone guides for these routes as well as some maps I had acquired through book depository and some web blogs for route planning.

This was my first trip to the Pyrenees and it turned out to be a beautiful region of mountain passes and small glaciers. The lower areas were dense forest, alpine lakes and meadows. Cattle and goats were often in the meadows and we saw marmots and vultures or eagles most days.

The trails were largely well maintained and marked and were typical rocky mountain trails for the most part. Trails crossing the

border between Spain and France were less well marked and used. We used the network of refuges that are run by the French and Spanish alpine clubs for accommodation. These accommodated between 60-80 people and were very well organised. They catered for dinner, breakfast and picnic lunches and served beer and wine! Walkers sleep in bunk beds and most provide hot showers, a pleasant surprise! On the GR10 and 11 you regularly came across other walkers.

I hadn't been there before so we needed to make some tweaks to the original plan which turned out to be somewhat ambitious for a couple of the days. This was quite easily done as there are many alternate trails. We had some long days of 25-29km and a few days of steep ascents and descents of over a thousand metres. Luckily there was dinner and wine waiting for us at the end of the day!

Thank you to Pam, David, Zoe and Ben for taking the risk of signing up for this walk!



The walk began at about 1600m in dense forest



Bonjour!



Hola!

The Pyrennes are the border between Spain and France



We walked up through the Valle de Gaube



123RF.com



We saw Marmots most days



Our first night was at Refuge de Bayscellance



Our first sight of Vignemale, the highest mountain in the French Pyrennes

We went over the Col de Mulets, the border with Spain at 2500m

New Member Reflections

by Hannah Wang



Flinders June long weekend walk 2018

In 2015, I had almost finished my studies at the University of Adelaide. What I was going to do after my study was a bit daunting for me, as I had to make a decision about whether I should stay in Australia or go back to China. The future at the time was uncertain for me, therefore scary. Although there were uncertainties, I knew that I love to be fit and I wanted to make friends. So I joined three clubs - Adelaide bushwalkers, Bike SA and Adelaide Triathlon Club with hopes to enjoy life outside of uncertainties and study, and to make more friends.

My first trip was led by Trevor Jones, who ended up being my leader for all the walks I have done so far with the club. I still remember that my first overnight walk was the June long weekend walk at the Flinders Ranges a couple of years ago. I told my friend (who is also a club member) that I signed up for Trevor's walk for my first one and he was very concerned about me going with Trevor. I found out why later during my walks. Trevor likes walking off track and picking routes that require a lot of scrambling. Because of my friend's warning, it made me even more excited about taking on this challenge. I took

it seriously and trained with 10 kg backpack 2-3 times per week on the Waterfall Gully track in the month leading up to the trip. I ended up having a wonderful time at Flinders Ranges! I remember one time when we were out, there was a member who had just had a knee replacement not long ago. She could not join the walk on the last day as her legs were too sore from the first couple of days walking. I think it might be the last walk she will ever do with Trevor (Joking). The walk was not easy! But I loved it! I love Trevor's style - adventurous and challenging. I am also very grateful to have a leader who is so generous and kind! That is why I became one of his loyal fans after my first walk. We explored a few walks together after that - to the Grampians one time, the Flinders a couple more times, and also the Great South West Walk.

I love hiking for a number of reasons. I get to meet interesting people from different backgrounds. On my last walk in the Flinders in June this year, I was so fascinated listening to Mark's experiences as a Navy Captain. It was just lovely to relax in front of the fire with beautiful shining stars smiling at us and



Flinders June long weekend walk 2017

sharing our stories after a fulfilling walk. I also enjoy the tranquillity of nature and the amazing scenery during these walks far from the technologies and buildings of everyday life. Walking makes me forget my worries and stress. At that moment when I first step out, it is just between me and nature. Doing these walks not only keeps me fit but also cleanses my soul. It allows me to have a physical break from city life. I feel great every time after my hikes.

It is been almost 3 years since I joined the club, a lot of the uncertainties and scariness I was facing at the time have been resolved. In the end I chose to stay in Adelaide, found a good job and bought my first house last year. It was definitely not an easy journey to settle my life here. However, I am so grateful that I have chosen one of the best things I could do, which was going out, meeting wonderful people and doing wonderful things together! My experience with the club is not only just about having fun, it allowed me to come out of the circumstances I was trapped in, and to embrace the splendour of nature. The journey with the club has given me company as I mature and get closer and closer to building a life of which I dream.



Great South West Walk Oct 2017

Why JB Started Bushwalking When He Was 11

by John Bartlett

Walking in the bush was commonly known as hiking when I started. In 1941, my brother Gordon was killed aged 21. I was seven at the time. He was my inspiration. Gordon was in the Boy Scouts, 1st Unley Park Troop, was a Kings Scout, and was a Rover at the time he enlisted in the RAAF in 1939.

I have Gordon's ONE INCH TO THE MILE map of Adelaide which shows the hikes he did in 1938 and 1939, aged 17/18, part of which is reproduced here. Gordon was very good at drawing, a talent we both were born with, as well as a love of the bush and hiking. So it was big brother's love of Scouts and hiking that drove me to join the 1st Torrens Park Cubs in about 1943, going on to Scouts in 1945.

It is interesting to note that I was in this troop in the war years, and our Cub and Scout Master was none other than Margaret Arnott Rogers who was a foundation member of ABW. I remember the night Margaret was a Guest Speaker at an ABW meeting some time in the 1990s wearing a bright yellow caftan. She vaguely remembered me from 1st. Torrens Park. Margaret must have been involved in Scouting for a long time because my mother recalled Gordon talking about "Biscuit" Rogers as she was known because of her middle name.

The first Scout long day hike I can recall was in the Brownhill Creek area, and my first overnight hike was from Aldgate to Mylor and return, both sometime mid 1945 when I was 11.

It sticks in my mind that while waiting for the train at Aldgate to return to Mitcham, one of the group said something like "Well, the war is nearly over so we will soon be able to get Violet Crumble Bars again". Hoadleys made

them in Adelaide at that time. We now know the making of Violet Crumble Bars has very recently returned to Adelaide - good news!

My parents and I moved to Hobart in September 1945 because my father was transferred there by his employer, The War Service Homes Commission. I very quickly joined 1st Hobart YMCA Troop and soon there were hikes galore, including weekend hikes to such places as Hartz Mountains, the area behind Mt Wellington, Great Lake, East Coast and Bruny Island.

I had taken over Gordon's 1936 vintage A-frame rucksack when I joined the Scouts. It proved to be too small for extended walks, and all the leather parts had perished. On joining ABW, I bought a larger pack.

I have always been a peak-bagger at heart, and the very first one while on a Scout hike was when I was thirteen was Mt Wellington, that magnificent backdrop to Hobart.

Not long before leaving Hobart in March 1952 with my mother to return to Adelaide (my father died in 1950 when I was 16), two of my Scouting friends and I completed the Overland Track - I was 17 at the time.

In September 1980, with some urging from my wife, following some disappointing attempts to plan and go on longer walks, studying, building a house, raising a family and so on, I joined ABW - one of the best things I have ever done in my life. The satisfaction I have had from ABW is enormous!

Hiking in Australia gradually became known as bushwalking and I have been doing just that since I was 11, although age has caught up with me to some extent, and walking distances are somewhat shorter than they used to be, and my rucksack has gone into retirement.



On Cradle Mountain the second time



Heading for Cradle Mountain 1951 the first time



Off on a scout walk 1946



Using Gordon's rucksack 1949

ABW on Aussie Summits

by Arthur Ward

Many of us like to compare our experiences of memorable trips to those others who preceded or followed on similar trips. Often these trips have involved peak-bagging.

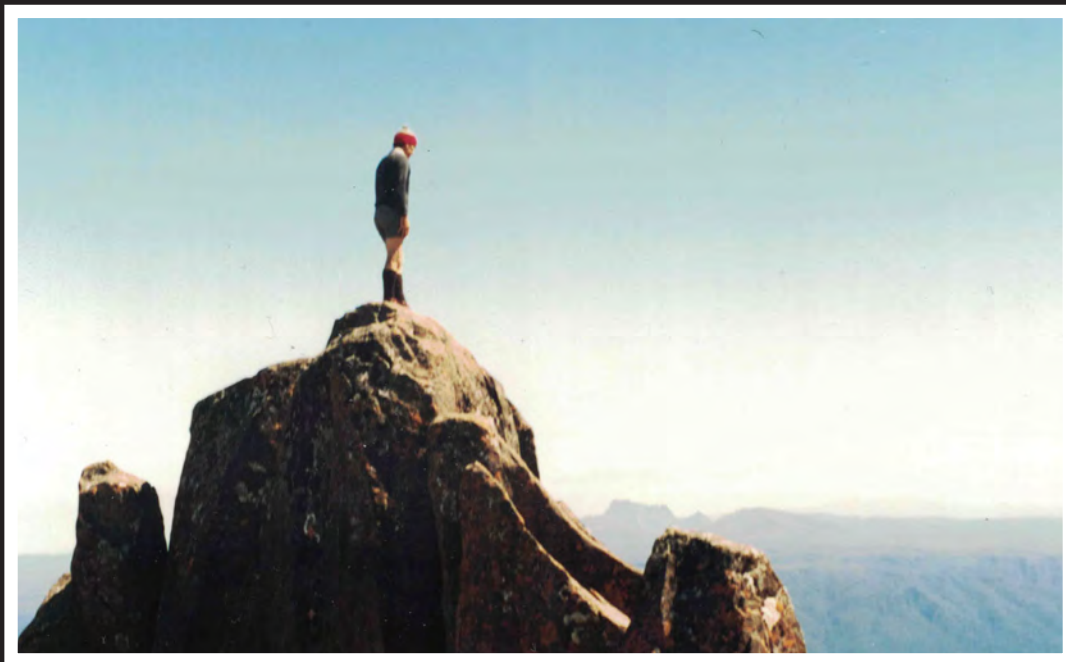
Ten years ago in Tandanya, Mike Round pointed out that the biggest one-day climbs in the Flinders are not necessarily to the summit of the highest peaks. Mt Brown from the Gulf would be the most practicable in one day. In the same way, Mt Bartle Frere near Cairns was the biggest climb in our group's challenge to climb the highest peak in each State and the NT in Australia's Bicentennial Year. We started near sea-level whereas Kosciusko had been started from Dead Horse Gap! (We descended much more from the Big K to Geehi after viewing the Australia Day sunrise in the company of others who had climbed that morning).

Earlier that month (January 1988), I had

climbed Mt Ossa as the first of the challenge. Mindful of then-active ABW peak-baggers John Bartlett and Frank Hall reminding us that turning back short of the highest point does not count, I posed on the highest boulder as shown.

In recent years guided ascents and the advent of trails such as the Larapinta Trail in the NT don't necessarily take you to the true summits. This could be for safety reasons or because of the summits being recognised as sacred sites. I can understand this for summits like the beautiful Mt Sonder. Our ABW party of twelve is/are pictured at the true summit in 1992.

In a Central Australia trip in the same year, some of us combined with the Alice Springs Bushwalkers to climb Central Mt Stuart. Ann and I posed on the summit cairn. Whilst the climb was easy, access was not.



Solo on Mt Ossa, Tasmania 1988



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ABW Mt Sonder Northern Territory, 1992



Central Mt Stuart Northern Territory, 1992

Three British Peaks

by Alex Donald



Mt Snowden

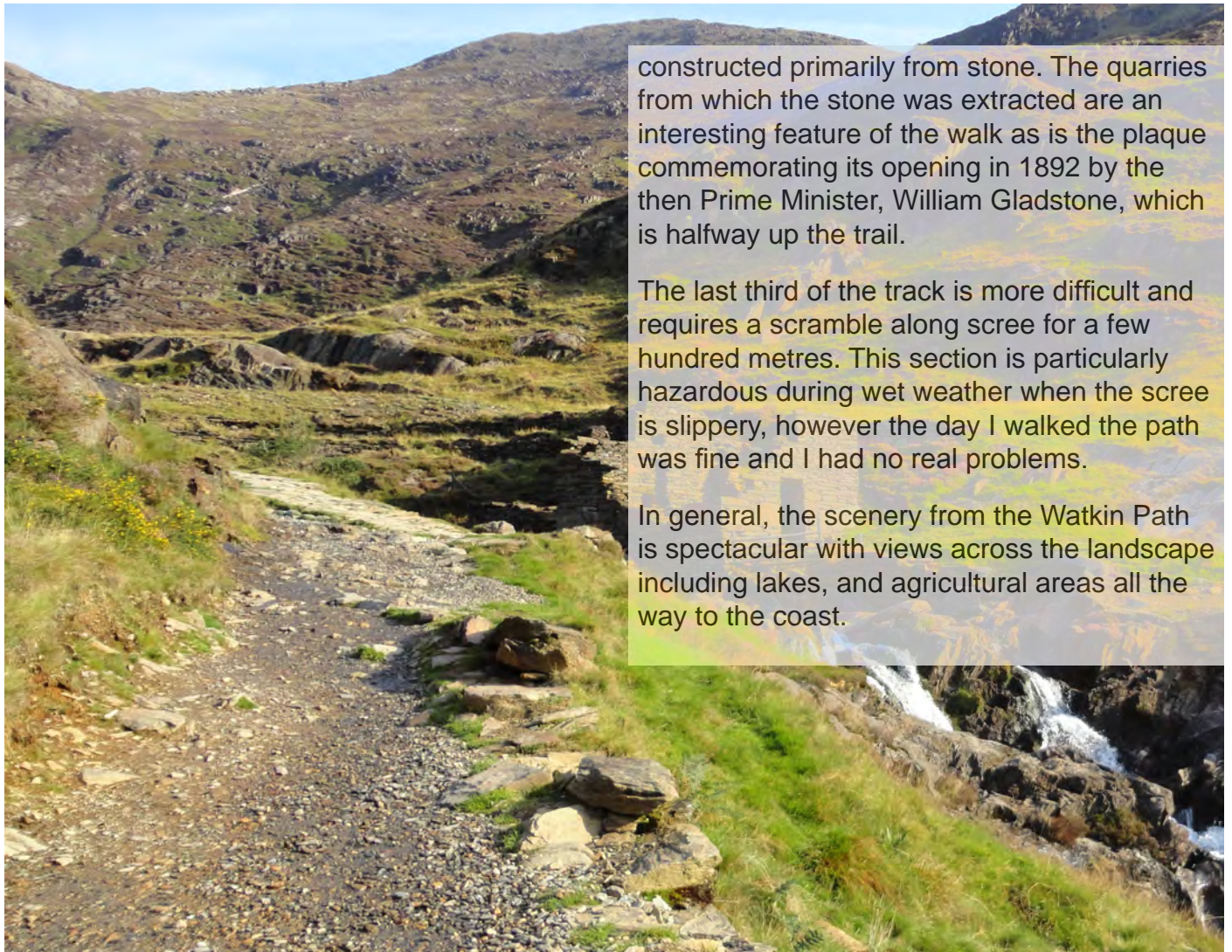
In August and September 2018, my wife and I travelled to the United Kingdom and visited the three countries that make up the island of Great Britain, that is, England, Wales and Scotland. We flew into London and from there, hired a car to travel around and explore these three countries over a five-week period.

As part of the trip, I thought it would be worthwhile walking up the highest peak in each country. These include Snowden (Wales), Scafell Pike (England) and Ben Nevis (Scotland). In doing my research it was clear that all three peaks are climbed regularly and there are various well-established walking paths. Each peak can be done fairly easily as a day walk during the non-winter months. As weather conditions can change suddenly and there is potential for snow in summer (on Ben Nevis at least), I made sure I was prepared

with adequate gear including full wet weather gear (rain coat and overpants), down jacket, gloves, beanie and gaiters, compass and map.

Snowden

The peak of Snowden sits within the Snowdonia National Park in northern Wales and is 1085m above sea level. There are numerous routes up Snowden from various starting points, but I chose the Watkin Path on the southern side of Snowden primarily because it was close to our accommodation. The walk up is approximately 7km one way with an ascent of 1000m and for any experienced walker is for the most part quite easy. The Watkin Path was built by Sir Edward Watkins and opened in 1892. The first two thirds of the path are very easy to follow and



constructed primarily from stone. The quarries from which the stone was extracted are an interesting feature of the walk as is the plaque commemorating its opening in 1892 by the then Prime Minister, William Gladstone, which is halfway up the trail.

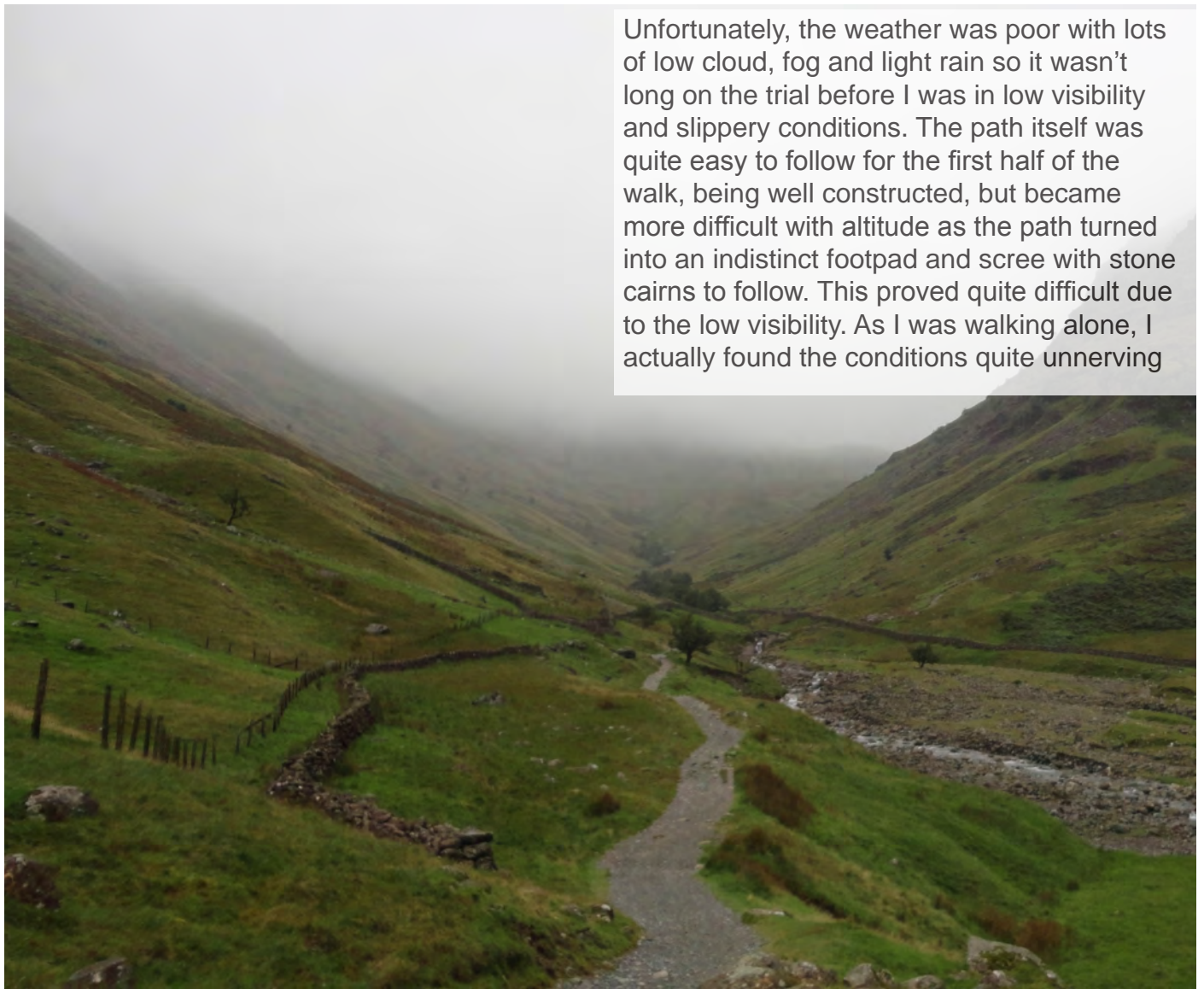
The last third of the track is more difficult and requires a scramble along scree for a few hundred metres. This section is particularly hazardous during wet weather when the scree is slippery, however the day I walked the path was fine and I had no real problems.

In general, the scenery from the Watkin Path is spectacular with views across the landscape including lakes, and agricultural areas all the way to the coast.

The Watkin Path to the summit of Mt Snowden



View from Mt Snowden



Unfortunately, the weather was poor with lots of low cloud, fog and light rain so it wasn't long on the trail before I was in low visibility and slippery conditions. The path itself was quite easy to follow for the first half of the walk, being well constructed, but became more difficult with altitude as the path turned into an indistinct footpad and scree with stone cairns to follow. This proved quite difficult due to the low visibility. As I was walking alone, I actually found the conditions quite unnerving

The start of the Scafell Pike Trail

Interestingly, the northern approach to Snowden is much less steep and a mountain railway has been constructed to take tourists to the summit. There is a café near the summit and you can enjoy a cup of coffee before your descent.

Scafell Pike

The highest peak in England is Scafell Pike which is in the Lakes District in Cumbria. This peak stands at 978m above sea level. There are numerous trails that lead to Scafell Pike and I chose one which starts at a farm just outside the small village of Seathwaite. I chose this starting point primarily because it was easiest to access, from where I was staying.

and felt I could easily become disoriented (because of the poor visibility) and take a wrong turn. I was thankful for my compass and map in these conditions. After a bit of a struggle I finally reached the summit and was surprised when two other parties who had walked on different paths arrived at the top a few minutes after I did. We had a bit of a chat but I was keen to get off the mountain. I descended via the same path and this was still treacherous because of the low visibility. I was a tad disappointed not to have experienced the amazing scenery, but occasionally got a glimpse when the cloud lifted. Despite this I did enjoy the walk and would love to do it again, but on a sunny day.

Ben Nevis

Ben Nevis is not only the highest mountain in Scotland, but also the highest mountain in the British Isles. It stands at 1345m above sea level in the Grampian Mountain Range of the Scottish Highlands. There are a few paths up Ben Nevis, but I chose the most common one, traditionally known as 'the Tourist Path' from the village of Achintee. More recently the path name has been changed to 'The Mountain Track' because the path is not at all suitable for people who are unfit or do not have the appropriate gear.

The weather was poor for this walk, with low cloud and rain. For the most part the path was quite easy to follow, with a well-constructed stone path. Half way up, there is a fairly significant 'waterfall' crossing which was a bit dangerous because of the unusually high-water. This deterred many walkers who turned back at this point. The path zig zagged its way upward, however the Ben Nevis summit

is actually a plateau and the last kilometre or so is not steep at all. As you approach the plateau and on the plateau itself, the path turns into scree and becomes a bit difficult to follow, however there are cairns. The summit offered no views because of the cloud.

I was again disappointed in not experiencing the views, but on the descent the cloud lifted for a few moments I managed to see a bit of the scenery. I enjoyed this walk but found it the coldest walking I have experienced to date and was glad I was suitably prepared for the conditions.

All in all, the three walks were enjoyable despite the poor weather for Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis. Considering this was Great Britain and I had fine weather on Snowden, you could easily conclude that luck was on my side... one out of three ain't bad.



Descending Ben Nevis



Waterfall on 'Tourist Path' to Ben Nevis



Snake Gully Bore Walking in the Western Wild Ass Waterhole North Tusk Hill Gammons by Ray Hickman Anzac Bore Yankaninna Gammon Waterfall

Most walking in the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park (V-GRNP) is done on the eastern side with vehicles left near Grindell's Hut, Loch Ness Well, Italowie camp ground or Weetootla camp ground. This item provides information about walking possibilities on V-GRNP's western side.

The road approach from Adelaide

This is via the bitumen road through Hawker, Leigh Creek and Copley, a distance of about 550 km. From Copley the drive is on a good quality dirt road running east to Arkaroola. About 44 km along this road, and just before reaching Angepena station, take the turn-off to Mt Serle. From here it is about 20 km to Owieandana on a dirt road which is considered to be drivable by conventional vehicles. **But this road can vary considerably in its condition.** In recent years I have driven it at 60-70 km/hr without a problem but in November 2018 it was in poor condition with extensive stretches of corrugations and potholes filled with bulldust. My vehicle speed then was reduced to 40 km/h or less.

Places to camp

Arcoona creek campground: the turn-off to this campground is about 2 km past Owieandana where a dirt track runs south east for about 2 km to the camp ground. There

is plenty of room to camp but the only facility is a water tank and interpretive sign.

Snake Gully Bore: this is located on Yankaninna station, a property now run by Operation Flinders, and so, if you decide that you want to camp at this location, you need to contact the on-site manager, Ian Roberts and get his agreement.

His phone number at Owieandana is 08 86484817, mobile 0417046684, e-mail

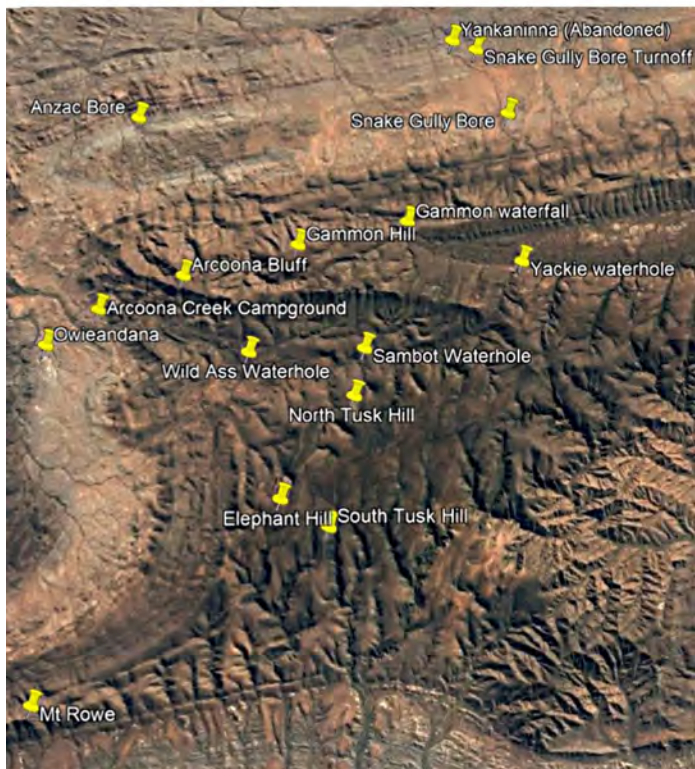
iroberts@operationflinders.org

Another potentially useful piece of information is that, when Operation Flinders has people on site at Owieandana, they monitor UHF radio channel 1. They may be able to help in the event of vehicle breakdown or other difficulty.

Operation Flinders will not permit people to camp if they are conducting one of their operations. The timing of these operations is published early each year on the Operation Flinders website.

<https://operationflinders.org.au/>

There are no facilities at Snake Gully Bore. To get there you continue driving past Owieandana for about 15 km where there is a turn off to Arkaroola. The turn-off is a few hundred metres before Yankaninna. From the Yankaninna turn-off you drive about 2



Location of water sources mentioned in the article

km to cross a creek and, soon after the creek crossing, there is a track on the right that will take you to Snake Gully Bore. You may have to get out of the vehicle and walk a bit to locate this track.

Owieandana: there are shearers quarters, showers and toilets at Owieandana. There is also a large roofed deck where you can sit in the evenings to do your cooking and socialising. These facilities may not be available and if they are there will be a cost. Their availability, and the cost, can be obtained from Ian Roberts. If the facilities are available I would recommend people use them.

Maps: Serle, 1:50,000; Ilinawortina, 1:50,000; Angepena, 1:50,000

Nature of the terrain: more open, less steep than the eastern part of the park.

Walking program

5+ day walks: many possibilities including these walks to marked locations:

- Arcoona creek campground to Wild Ass waterhole and then along Wild Ass Creek

- Arcoona creek campground to Wild Ass waterhole and then along Arcoona Creek to Sambot waterhole
- Arcoona creek campground to Arcoona Bluff
- Anzac Bore south east along Gammon Creek towards Gammon waterfall
- Leave cars near the sign-posted boundary Operation Flinders land and the Mt Serle Property and walk to Mt Rowe
- Snake Gully Bore to Gammon waterfall
- Snake Gully Bore to Yackie waterhole

Overnight walks 2-6 days: three possibilities are:

- Walk from Arcoona creek campground to camp near Wild Ass or Sambot waterholes if one of them has water in it. From a base camp do day walks to North Tusk Hill, South Tusk Hill, Elephant Hill, Arcoona Saddle, Gammon Hill
- Walk from Anzac Bore to Gammon waterfall to camp and do day walks to Yackie waterhole and Gammon Hill
- Walk from Snake Gully Bore to Yackie waterhole to camp and then do day walks to Gammon waterfall, Dog Leg Creek waterhole. Shift camp to near Dog Leg Creek waterhole and do a day walk to Benbonyathe Hill

Availability of water: most likely locations are Sambot, Wild Ass and Yackie waterholes, Gammon waterfall. Of these Yackie is the best bet. For overnight walks start out well hydrated and carry enough water (4-5 litres) to camp overnight and return to the car next day if water is not found. Have plenty of water in your car.

An odd experience- I walked one day from a base camp near Yackie waterhole to Gammon waterfall with two companions. While sitting at the top of the waterfall, just before heading back to Yackie, I went to set my compass for the return walk and found it telling me to go in the opposite direction to the one I knew I had to take. The compass needle had changed its polarity! I still have the compass and it is the one on the left in the image below.



Additional walks information- Adrian Heard's Book entitled '*Gammon Ranges National Park and Arkaroola Sanctuary A Walking Guide to the Northern Flinders Ranges*' provides detailed information about walking

between Gammon Hill and points to the east mentioned above

Bibliographic information

Title
Gammon Ranges National Park and Arkaroola Sanctuary: A Walking Guide to the Northern Flinders Ranges
Author Adrian Heard
Edition illustrated
Publisher State Publishing, 1990
ISBN 0724365745, 9780724365746
Length 80 pages

ABW's Mainwater Well water tank

The tank is located just east of the region described in Ray's article. It was installed in August 2016 by ABW members.

The tank supports two bench seats and a small shelter. The tank has a capacity of 1000 Litres.

Location:

GR: 283 399

Latitude: 30° 21' 36"

Longitude: 139° 12' 48"

It is 280 meters south of the disused Mainwater Well windmill.

A nearby campsite is at GR: 282 402





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The changing popularity of bushwalking in the Gammon Ranges

by Michael Round



A dry Rover Rockhole in the Gammon Ranges

Adrian Heard wrote (Tandanya, Autumn 2018) that, while it was once common to encounter other walkers in the Gammons, he nowadays rarely meets anyone and this made him wonder if fewer people are now walking there. (Adrian is the author of the now out-of-print 1990 guidebook “Walking in the northern Flinders Ranges”.) A good indication of what is happening in this regard is surely to be found in the logbook located at Rover Rockhole (RRH) as it is centrally located and has the longest record of walkers recording their presence in the Ranges. A recent visit to RRH gave me the opportunity to follow this up.

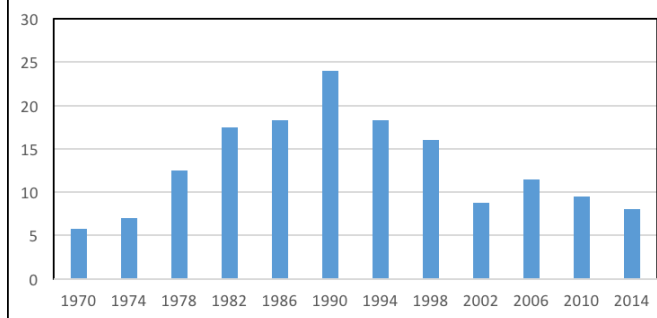
Information on visitors who recorded their presence at RRH are contained in two log books and these are:

1. 18 May 1970 to 11 May 1998 (microfilm D7431(L), State Library of S.A.). The logbook was placed at RRH in August 1970 and pasted in it are the notes of 15 earlier parties with the oldest dated 1954 and the last being of an earlier visit in 1970. The pre-1970 record of visitors is almost certainly not complete and is ignored here.
2. September 1998 to current (logbook in situ). There is the potential for unrecorded visits from 19 May –Sept 1998 when there was no logbook at RRH. I recorded the annual number of visits on 18 August when we were the 5th party this year and because it is an incomplete year, 2018 is not further considered here.

In what follows, ‘Gammons’ as used here refers to the gorges and ranges of the central Gammons as distinct from the more readily accessible south eastern part of the of Vulkathunha Gammon Ranges National Park (VGRNP) around Grindells Hut and blessed with good walking paths. Also, the number of parties is considered and not the total number of walkers (and which I haven’t recorded) because it is more relevant in the current context. In addition, the occasional very large parties of ‘Us Hiker’ school and scout groups (with 42 members in the biggest of them) may bias the data. Of course, the tallies given here don’t include the unknown number of visitors to the central Gammons who either didn’t visit RRH or visited but didn’t record their presence there for whatever reason, e.g. didn’t know about or couldn’t find the book or a pencil etc. The term ‘visits’ is used below to mean walking parties.

In the 48 years from 1970 to 2017, 628 parties recorded their presence in the RRH. (That is according to my count. Some of the records are confusing - e.g. deciding for a particular day if it is the same party or two. Where the same party has twice written in the book a few days apart, then the second entry was ignored.) This record shows that there have been two major changes in visit numbers over that time, initially rising from the early 1970s to peak in 1990 when 29 parties recorded their presence at RRH and from then, falling almost ever since with the rise and fall in numbers being remarkably symmetrical (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Average number of parties over successive four-year intervals starting at the year shown.



Taken as three consecutive 16 year periods, viz 1970-85, 1986-2001 and 2002-17, the average annual number of walking parties were 10.7, 19.1 and 9.4 and the number of years recording more than 20 parties were 2, 6 and 1 respectively.

The initial build-up of parties in the Gammons from the 1970s is readily explained by the Gammons becoming more widely recognised as a great place to walk, improved road access and the release of the 1:50,000 Illinawortina map, but what can possibly explain the fall in numbers over the last two decades? The generally low visit numbers in 2002-05 might initially have been dismissed as an outcome of the drought, yet while 2006 was a comparatively wet year, the Gammons remained quiet with just seven visits. Curiously enough, the following year 2007 was one of three very dry years that had high visit numbers (81 mm, 23 visits). Despite that, the numbers have been low ever since despite at least four of those years, most recently 2016-May 2017, having well above average rainfall and it would be interesting to know why this is.

Despite these large differences, there are often large yearly fluctuations in visit numbers and one can't help but wonder if it is in some way related to differences in annual rainfall. To investigate this, rainfall records from nearby Arkaroola were obtained. For each year, we used the eight months from the previous December up to and including July as this seemed the period most likely to influence walkers deciding whether or not to visit the Gammons during autumn to spring.



The top of the waterfall that fills Rover Rockhole, July 2015

The region has more rain in summer than in winter. Rainfall is being automatically recorded in the Gammons at the Plateau (from Sept 1988), Sambot (from 1991 but now apparently closed earlier this year) and Arcoona Bluff (since 2003) by Scientific Expeditions Group, but these records don't go back far enough.

The annual pattern of rainfall and visit numbers is shown in Figure 2 and Kathy Haskard analysed the relationship between the two. (Kathy is a former member of the club who recently returned to Adelaide and re-joined the club after years working overseas and interstate in statistical analysis! I happened to see her name mentioned in the latest club minutes and got in touch though the Membership Secretary.)

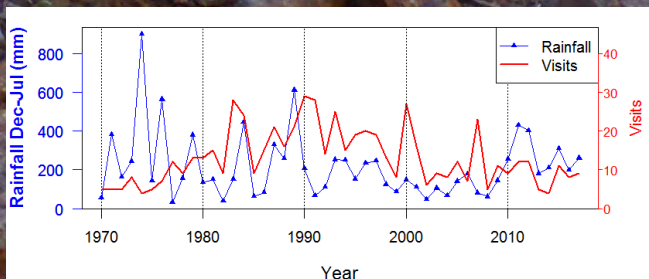


Figure 2. Rainfall and number of parties recording visits to Rover Rockhole, overlaid.

It has been suggested that visits to the Gammon Ranges might be related to rainfall in the area and this was investigated, using the terms “visits” and “rainfall” as defined above. Both rainfall and number of visits show considerable variability from year to year (Figure 2) and indeed the eye is drawn to instances of larger numbers of visits coinciding with higher rainfall, and smaller numbers with lower rainfall.

Plotting number of visits against rainfall (Figure 3) indicates no overall relationship. However, three distinct periods can be identified with different characteristics of rainfall and visit numbers:

1. *Early: 1970-1989* – Rainfall data was highly variable, and numbers of visits were gradually increasing, possibly due to improvements in both accessibility and knowledge of the area;
2. *Middle: 1990-2009* – Rainfall data stabilised and numbers of visits had peaked;
3. *Recent: 2010 to 2017* – December to July rainfall appeared to step up, varying around a higher level, while numbers of visits continued their downward trend.

Scatterplots for the three periods, identified by different colours in Figure 3, show moderate correlation in the Early (after removing the three unusually large rainfall years) and Middle periods, and a large correlation in the Recent period.

Comparing the smooth trends for Rainfall

and Visits in Figure 4, there is no apparent relationship between rainfall and the number of visits on the broad scale. Visits and rainfall decrease together over the years 1990 to around 2005, but move in opposite directions in earlier and later periods.

An alternative approach to examine year-to-year variations considered the deviations from the smoothed trends shown in Figure 4. The 48 years were categorised separately as in the Lower, Middle or Higher third of rainfall deviations, and into three equal groups with More, Medium or Fewer visits, relative to the smooth trend, and cross-tabulated in Table 1.

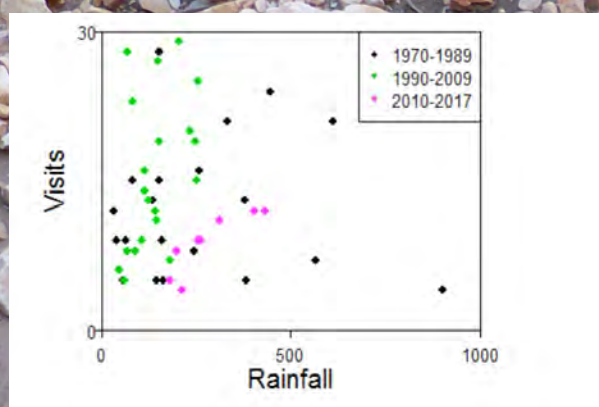


Figure 3. Scatter plot of Visits vs Rainfall, 1970 to 2017

Number of visits	Rainfall: Lower	Middle	Higher
More	3	5	8
Medium	6	5	5
Fewer	7	6	3

Table 1. Annual number of visits and rainfall (December to July), relative to broad trends over

This clearly shows an excess of Higher rainfall years with More visits (8), and an excess of Lower rainfall years with Fewer visits (7), and correspondingly smaller numbers (3) in the top left and bottom right cells. This demonstrates a tendency for more visits in wetter years and fewer visits in drier years, supporting the notion that rainfall influences the decision of walking parties to visit the Gammon Ranges.

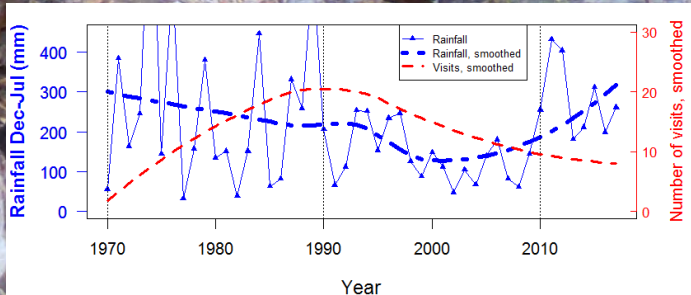


Figure 4. Rainfall (December to July) each year, and smooth trends for rainfall and visits each year.

Why the recent drop in visit numbers?

What can explain the drop in numbers of walkers going to the central Gammons over the last two decades? Personally, I think that the fall in numbers may be due to changes in people's aspirations and expectations when it comes to bushwalking and two walkers to whom I recently spoke and without prompting, backed this up. Walking appears to have changed! The days of rough and ready walking with rough company (well roughly dressed anyway), rough food and rough gear appear to have been replaced by something much smarter. The huts of Tasmania's Overland Track is only one example. You only have to compare the content of Wild from four decades ago with the current crop of outdoors magazines including Wild. Walking in untracked places over rough ground has been largely replaced by trail walking both at home and abroad and often in situations far different to traditional bushwalking where everything you needed, especially with regards to food and accommodation, had to be carried. Guided walking companies virtually didn't exist back then, the Himalayas excepted. These changes would seem to rule out the Gammons for an increasing number of walkers. (A contemporary bushwalking magazine with glorious photos of dinner time meals that you'd be hard pressed to prepare at home even assuming that you had the sometimes exotic ingredients on hand. Give me a break! The high point of campfire cuisine forty years ago was someone making a decent damper - not too doughy nor too burnt!)

The drop in the numbers of walkers described here supports Adrian Heard's view and one

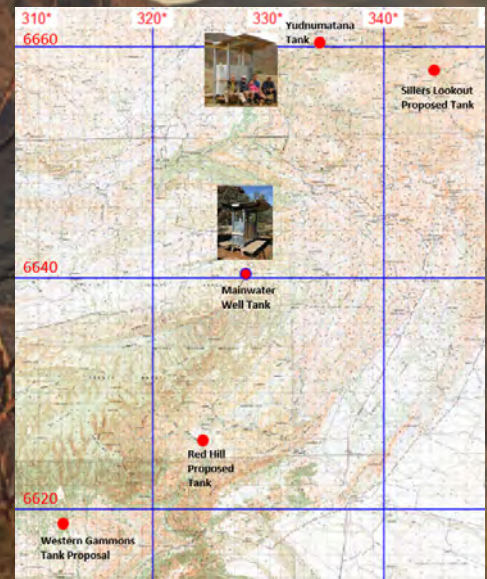
The climb up to Rover Rockhole



wonders if this applies more widely to the Flinders Ranges and not just the Gammons. The drop in numbers is in sharp contrast to the almost tripling of visitors to the car-based campsites of the VGRNP over a similar period (Draft Management Plan for VGRNP (2005)). Visitor numbers to the wilder Gammons may currently be low but maybe that will change. Does it matter? I don't know but extended walking in the Gammons is certainly something that the club has great experience in and makes the club the right destination for people new to bushwalking but keen to walk in untracked, rugged terrain. In the meantime, I am happy to think that, despite the thousands of people who have walked and camped in the Gammons over the last fifty years, the area and its common campsites appear to me to remain pretty much unspoilt as far as direct human inputs are concerned. The publication of Adrian's guidebook would have certainly encouraged more interest in the Gammons by bushwalkers. Maybe it's time for a reprint!

ABW Water Tanks Project

By Mark Proctor



The water tanks project was inaugurated in 2016 with a view to providing rain-fed water tanks in the northern Flinders Ranges so that walks in these areas would have more reliable access to water.

The project was to be funded by a bequest from our long-time patron Warren Bonython who was famous for his exploration on foot of northern areas of South Australia and his book *Walking the Flinders Ranges* which inspired the creation of the Heysen Trail.

Yet when it came to government funding to create the trail, the government pockets were not as deep as it was hoped. So the Heysen Trail ends at Parachilna Gorge Road instead of Mt Hopeless which was the destination of Warren's walk and is acknowledged as the northern most point of the Flinders Ranges.

The ABW Committee asked explorer and current club patron Duncan Chessell to head the project to create a network of water tanks to assist with more distant walking. His knowledge of the Flinders ranges was invaluable and it might have also helped that he was a close neighbour and friend of Warren Bonython.

In August 2016 two tanks were built and installed by a team comprising Duncan Chessell, Mal Kirkham, Dean Johnson, Mark Proctor and Duncan's 9-year-old daughter Zara. The first was installed at Mainwater Well (GR 280 404) in the Vulkathunha - Gammon National Park and the second tank at the abandoned Yudnamutana mine site (GR 344 603) on Mt Freeland Station (just north of the Gammons). These tanks served areas which needed water resources but they were not positioned to link up with specific walking routes.

A third tanks was to be placed at Goat Ridge (GR 150 040) and an installation trip was made in October 2017. This was also led by Duncan Chessell and included Mal Kirkham, Michael Dzintarnieks and Greg Wiggins. The siting of the tank on Aboriginal lands within the Nantawirrina Indigenous Protected Area was approved by the Aboriginal Land Trustees at Nepabunna. Unfortunately, as the working party approached the proposed site they discovered two very large water tanks within 2 km of the proposed ABW water tank site. So the installation was abandoned. The pre-



View from Grindell's Hut
<https://timbo.id.au/Vulkathunha-Gammon%20Ranges>

fabricated tank was stored in a shed in Arkaroola Village to await the selection of a new site.

Three new site proposals were received by mid-2018 which pointed towards sites in the Gammon Ranges. This led to questions on the basis for the water tank sites which had been to support groups following the path of Warren Bonython towards Mount Hopeless. A reappraisal was made in September 2018 to support walking in the Gammon Ranges and to allow a group to reach the reasonably reliable water resources on the Mawson Plateau.

Mark Darter who led a walk to Mt Hopeless in 2001 had joined the group and he questioned whether there were many walkers who would endeavour to walk all the way to Mt Hopeless. (It was after all fairly hopeless.)

So, attention turned to tank locations which aided walking in the Gammon Ranges and Arkaroola areas. Sites under current investigation are Sillers Outlook (GR 445 578) in the Arkaroola Protected Area and Red Hill (GR 244 265) in the Gammons. Both of these would be sited away from car-tourist routes so

that the water would not be poached by them.

The proposed water tank near Sillers Lookout would be half way between Arkaroola and Tee Junction Water Hole so the tank site would be useful for walkers making the journey to the Mawson Plateau. It was also close to some other features such as The Armchair, Mt Gee and other walks that could provide days of entertainment. This tank could also assist walkers who wished to walk from Arkaroola to Mt Hopeless.

But this is where we found a problem. Sillers Lookout is located in the Arkaroola Protected Area which is governed by legislation to protect its pristine wilderness status. The legislation recognises bushwalking as a legitimate activity within the wilderness area but the SA Government Act doesn't explicitly say what can be built within the area. So, this will have to be investigated with the Government before a water tank can be installed.

As we get closer to summer, the weather is getting warmer. Since we did not get a go-ahead from the SA Government before the

end of November, the installation of the 3rd tank, now sitting in a garage at Arkaroola Village, will have to wait until next year.

We are still considering some more sites that we think would be good for walkers in the Gammons and Mawson Plateau areas. These include on a tributary of Mt McKinley Creek, V-GRMP GR 122 187. (bottom left of map)

However, the ABW funding that we have left will not stretch beyond the installation of the tank at Arkaroola. So, we are looking for additional sources of funding and would be happy to speak to other people or organisations that might be able to help us out. Each tank costs around \$3,000 to build and install.

The exact location of each of the installed water tanks is on the ABW website under Activities>Water Tanks Project.



Water is the scarce resource that limits ABW walks in the arid north

Wilderness Qualities Of Federation Peak At Risk

by Bruce Marquis

A proposal has been put forward by Huon Valley councillor Ken Studley as a way of providing an attraction south of Hobart similar to the Overland Track or Three Capes walk. The proposal is for a new tourist walking track from Farmhouse Creek to Lake Geeves

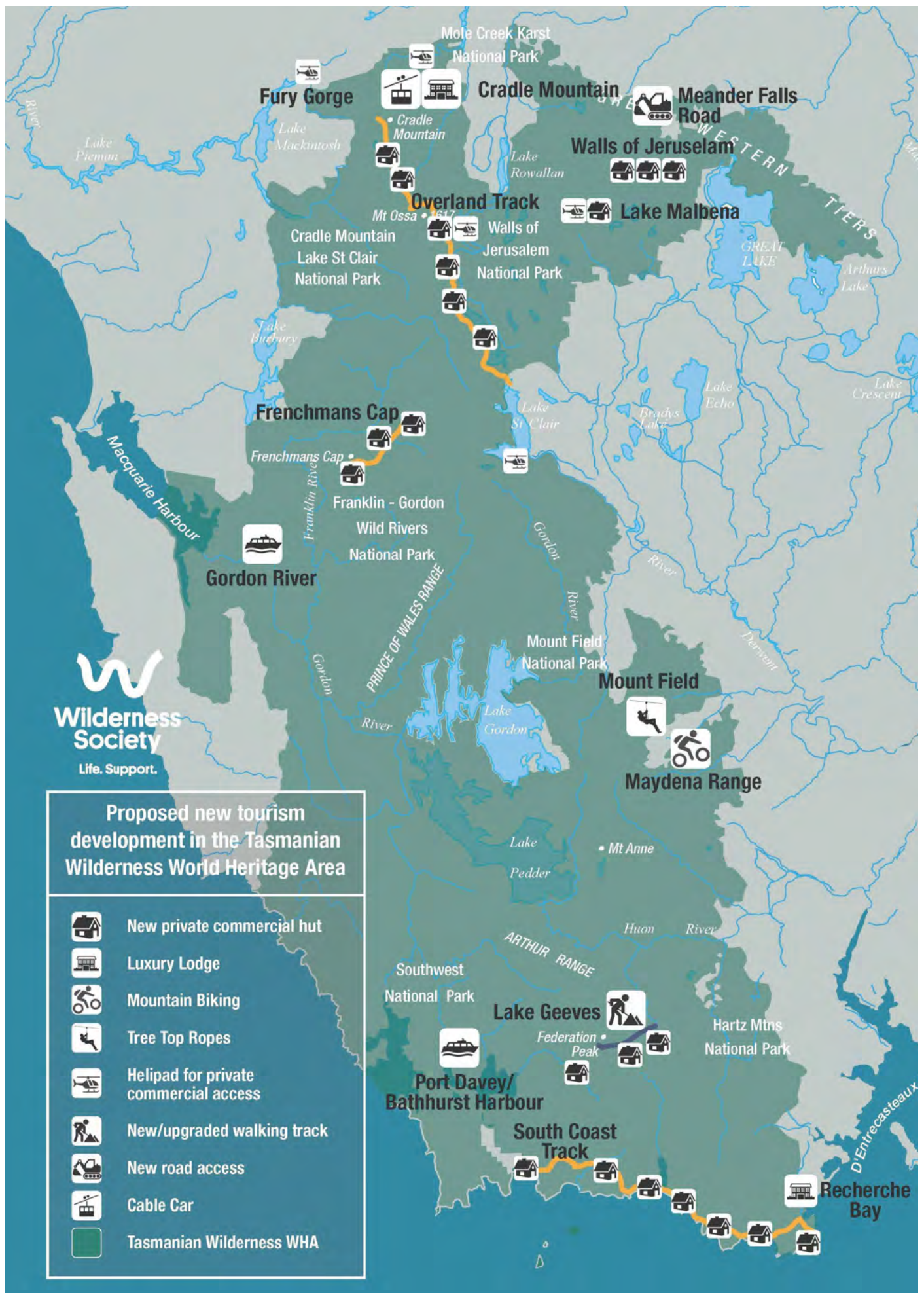


The Wilderness Society believes that the proposed development would destroy some of the highest quality temperate wilderness in Australia.

Federation Peak has been a place for self-reliant recreation and adventure for more than 60 years. The rough means of access, together with its weather and rugged landscape, help guarantee its seclusion and ecological integrity. Wilderness Society members believe some places should remain undeveloped. Lake Geeves – currently trackless and rarely visited – is one of them.

There are plenty of settings outside the World Heritage Area's wildest country that can provide opportunities for the sort of activities and facilities envisaged by the developers. The link below has details of the proposal.

<http://www.geeveseffect.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/20170204-Geeves-Track-CBA-Final-Report-20170929.pdf>



BUSTED!



Great Southwest Walk 25th to 29th of April at Patterson's Campground, Nelson, Victoria

A greedy possum infiltrated camp and gouged a hole in Ellen's tent whilst she stepped away. The gluttonous fellow took a particular liking to the peanut butter jar and proceeded to eat the contents. Didn't seem too bothered when asked to leave and even stopped for a photo! Continued to munch on any food he could get his hands on through the night, eating holes through a few tough dry bags. Left before morning with a full belly and no doubt content with being well fed.