

NORTH WEST WALKING CLUB

Guide to Bushwalking for Prospective members



*Information notes: Part B
Revision 3 11/10/08*

INTRODUCTION

Walking is perhaps the greatest enjoyment that can be had in the open air. We hope that within these pages you will find the information that will enable you to avoid many of the mistakes made by the average beginner.

This booklet has been prepared as a guide for those who have had little or no experience in bushwalking and is not intended as a complete guide to the activity. There are many excellent publications available in the Club library

As a *Prospective Member* of the NWWC you are able to attend but not vote at meetings and fully participate in all programmed activities upon completion of a registration form which is valid for 6 months. This form is also used by coordinators to comment on your ability during these initial walks. During this six month period you are expected to take the necessary steps to become a full member. Before your first walk there is a fee of \$5.00 payable (see the Membership Officer or Coordinator of the walk). If you are not able to complete the membership requirements and wish to extend your prospective membership you must contact the Membership Officer and advise reasons and length of extension required.

The Club usually meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month (or as programmed) at the Ulverstone High School on the corner of Leven and Walker Streets. Proceedings get underway at 7.45pm. Club activities include general meetings (finances, walks reports and Club general business); guest speakers on subjects allied to bushwalking and conservation; slide and film presentations. These meetings offer a great chance to extend your contact with Club members and meet new friends.

Bushwalking can be a strenuous pastime. You are expected to have a reasonable level of health and fitness before undertaking any walk. Please read the walks grading notes and follow the advice to select easier walks for your introduction to the Club. Good bush walking to you all.

OUTLINE OF THE CLUB

The North West Walking Club was formed in April 1960 with an initial membership of 20. It has now grown to about 150 people. In addition to bushwalking, the Club organises activities which feature other outdoor pursuits. The activities are detailed in the Club *Magazine* and *Walks Programme*.

The Club aims to establish a regard for the welfare and preservation of the natural flora, fauna and scenic beauty of this country through a regular programme of walks and allied activities. The Club has maintained throughout its history a personal, friendly and social atmosphere through varied and regular social functions.

CONSTITUTION

Copies of the *Constitution* are available from the Secretary or online in *Members area*. (www.nwwc.org.au).

MEMBERSHIP

Full details regarding membership are given in the Constitution, but an outline of the three main classes of membership is as follows-

- Senior Membership: Three day walks (or two day walks and one overnight walk) to the satisfaction of the relevant *Coordinator* and attend a training session. Qualification to be completed preferably within a period of six months
- Junior Membership: Three day walks (or two day walks and one overnight walk) to the satisfaction of the relevant *Coordinator* and attend a training session. Qualification to be completed preferably within a period of six months.
- Associate Membership: As approved by the Executive Committee.

On acceptance as a member by the Executive Committee, the new member receives relevant membership information, *Membership Card* and a Club badge.

CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence should be addressed to:

The Secretary, North West Walking Club Inc.,
PO Box 107, ULVERSTONE. 7315.

WALKS PROGRAMME

This programme is drawn up by the Walks Secretary and issued quarterly. If you have any suggestions for walks, you are invited to submit details or track notes to the Walks Secretary.

CLUB MAGAZINE

The 'North West Walker' is published quarterly to keep members up to date on walks information and other activities of the Club. Articles for inclusion should be passed to the Editor. Members are encouraged to contribute articles for the magazine.

ASSOCIATION WITH OTHER CLUBS

The NWWC is one of the founding members of the Federation of Tasmania Bushwalking Clubs, *which is now known as Bushwalking Tasmania*. We have delegates on the Weindorfer Memorial Service Committee and Friends of Cradle Valley.

LIBRARY

Copies of magazines, books and booklets of interest to walkers can be borrowed by financial members at each General Meeting from the Librarian. Many copies have been donated or loaned to the Club by its members. The Club welcomes further donations.

WALK GRADING:

NWWC walks are graded from 1 to 6 *with Grade 1* being the easiest. Prospective *Members* may find their first walk quite hard and easy walks are recommended as a start. Intending participants should fully inform the walks coordinator of their level of experience and any factor that may impair their walking ability. The grading descriptions shown below are indicative of conditions that may be encountered on walks. Please check with the

Coordinator about specific descriptions of conditions to be encountered on programmed walks.

There are many factors to be considered in walk grading and they are a combination of time, distance and terrain. As a very general rule the following may apply.

Grade 1: Relatively easy terrain with mainly on track or beach walking.

Grade 2: Relatively easy terrain with mainly on track walking at mid level altitude.

Grade 3: Mid level altitude and may involve some time spent through trackless open bushland. Reasonable level of fitness required.

Grade 4: Mountain track and may include scrub, steep uphill walking and / or rock hopping. Good level of fitness required.

Grade 5: Mountain off track, similar to Grade 4 with longer distances, or steeper uphill walking, or other conditions adding to walking difficulty. Suitable for fit people with extensive walking experience.

Grade 6: Strenuous walking covering longer distances and /or very difficult terrain. Suitable only for very fit walkers with extensive experience.

Walks may also be described as “exploratory”. These are walks in areas unfamiliar to the *Coordinator*; therefore difficulties and delays may be encountered. Exploratory walks are intended only for fit and experienced walkers.

Some walks may be “through walks” and as such all members must be fit enough to complete the distance. Generally with higher grades the breaks become shorter and the walking speed increases.

You may apply to participate in any walk shown on the Walks Programme. Do not be too ambitious or overestimate your ability. Select an easy graded walk at first and progress to harder walks later. The *Coordinator* may ask you for details regarding your level of fitness, gear and walking experience. They may or may not accept you as a participant depending on the numbers already booked for the walk, the nature of the walk, perception of your experience or other reasons. If you are not allowed to participate on a walk, don't be too disappointed, as the safety and well being of you and others in the party are of prime concern. The Membership Officer can address any issues you may have.

SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS

You may return home later than planned due to accident, bad weather or unforeseen circumstances. Please ensure that relatives and friends are aware of this possibility. Should they have concerns about late returns, please contact the Club S&R Officer, as noted on the Walks Programme or others on the list. If the Club contacts are unavailable please contact any *Coordinator* on the *Walks Programme* or the police.

SAFETY IN THE BUSH

We strongly recommend that a copy of the Hobart Walking Club's excellent book 'Safety in the Bush' be obtained and thoroughly studied prior to undertaking a walking trip in Tasmania. There are copies in the Club library and are available to prospective members.

Let someone know before you go

MAP AND COMPASS

All of our walking areas are covered by Tasmaphs in the scale 1:100,000 and many in 1:25,000 scale. Try to procure a map of each area in which you walk, as it is only by following each walk closely on the map that proficiency in map reading is obtained. The Club organizes map/compass/navigation exercises, but practice is the only real way to learn.

The safest way of carrying your map is folded in a plastic bag. The bag protects the map from the weather and sticky fingers. To protect a frequently used map more fully, it may be laminated or covered with a clear self-adhesive vinyl covering.

Every walker should carry a compass and know how to use it. For most purposes a simple orienteering type compass such as the 'Silva' is sufficient and relatively cheap.

Learn to follow your route on the map even though you may not be *coordinating*. You should know your approximate whereabouts, route and destination, thus avoiding being bushed should you become separated from the party. Make an effort to observe significant landmarks and features such as ridges, rocky outcrops and unusual trees. Look back frequently.

Note: If you become separated from the party, don't panic, STAY PUT and the others will find you.

CLUB ETHICS

If interested in a trip, you can register on the Walks Register, which is circulated during the General Meeting immediately prior to the trip. Contact the *Coordinator* on or before the Wednesday prior to the trip to register, confirm or cancel.

Those attending a walk should not depart from the party or in any way become separated without first advising the *Coordinator* of their intentions. Please advise the *Coordinator* of any significant problems you are experiencing before the safety and/or progress of the whole party is threatened (even by blisters). Don't suffer in silence.

Only *Members* and *Prospective Members* can attend Club walks (minor exceptions can apply). No child may attend a walk unless accompanied by a capable adult who is willing to take full responsibility for the child's welfare and behaviour during the trip. Honour your obligations with regard to travelling expenses.

BUSH ETHICS

What's nice and what's not.

The increased use of Tasmania's wild places, particularly National Parks, has put some of them in danger of being 'loved to death'. The Minimal Impact Bushwalking ethic is now being adopted by bushwalkers as being essential for preserving our wilderness. Bushwalkers and Club members have a responsibility to lead others by example.

MINIMAL IMPACT BUSHWALKING

Stay on established tracks. This confines any damage to existing tracks, giving sensitive alpine vegetation a fair go. Stay off alpine bogs, cushion plants and soft vegetation, as your boots will damage them. The group should spread out when off-track in some alpine areas to reduce damage. Carry out all your rubbish including the often left-behind items like foil wrappings, plastic and orange peel (which degrades extremely slowly). If you carried it in you can carry it out. Toilet and washing duties should be done in a sensible way and at least 100 metres from water courses.

WHAT GEAR & EQUIPMENT TO TAKE ON A WALK

It isn't necessary to purchase all of your equipment at once as you won't need everything immediately. There is the possibility of sharing cooker and tent with others, reducing weight as well as cost. Take some time to discover what type of walking you like, observe other walkers' gear on trips and consult experienced walkers. You'll find that gear is a favourite subject.

When purchasing gear, you will be confronted with a bewildering variety of shapes, models, designs and prices. Ask yourself "what am I going to use it for, exactly?". This will help you to get what you need.

Suggested check list

General:

first aid kit	trowel	watch
water bottle	sleeping bag, liner, pillow	air bed
tent	space blanket	foam seat
lge. plastic rubbish bag	toilet gear	ear plugs
plastic foot bags	pack towel	camera
cooker & utensils	food	map & compass
note book & pencil	matches & fire lighter	pocket knife, whistle, string
torch & batteries	baby wipes	sunglasses
sun cream, repellent etc.	spare plastic bags	pack liner

Clothing:

boots	gaiters	sun shirt
thermal longjohns	thermal tops	shorts
thermal jacket	sun hat & glasses	thermal hat
thermal gloves (1 pr min.)	spare top & longjohns	spare socks
good quality raincoat	waterproof pants	waterproof gloves

Cooking gear:

trangia & fuel bottle	matches in container	water container or bladder
mug & utensils		

Food:

breakfast cookies	tea, coffee etc.	scrogen
water	bread, buns, biscuits	cheese, jams & fillings
fruit (fresh & dry)	health bars	soup, bread
dry meals & rice	dessert (fruit or fruit cake)	emergency supplies

Gear for day walks

- Day Pack - a light, sturdy nylon or canvas pack big enough to carry all your gear required for a day walk.
- Clothing - for staying warm, several layers of clothing are better than a single heavy garment. The air trapped between each layer adds to the insulation effect. It is also easier to control your temperature - donning an extra layer during a rest or removing a layer when climbing steeply.
- Thermal underwear - body hugging and made of wool or synthetic fibres (polypropylene or chlorofibre). These garments trap a layer of air next to the skin and retain their insulating properties when wet.
- Shirt - a light cotton or quick drying fabric shirt with long sleeves and a collar for protection from the sun on hot days. A woollen shirt or thermal skivvy for winter.

- Jumper or jacket - a light but warm woollen jumper, polar fleece or similar jacket is your final layer of insulation.
- Rain jacket - perhaps the most important piece of gear. This is your defence against the wet, the wind and the cold. It must be waterproof (not just shower-proof), windproof, loose fitting almost to knees, and long in the arms (reaching beyond the wrists) with storm cuffs to protect the face and a flap over the front zip. Another consideration is its breathability. A bright colour makes you easy to see in bad weather. You have a choice in fabrics - japara, proofed nylon, polyester or 'gore-tex'. Tasmanian walkers spend a lot of time in their rain jackets, so get the best you can afford.
- Trousers - loose woollen slacks or thermal long johns for warmth. Trousers etc. provide protection against scrub, snake bite and sunburn. Cotton jeans are cold, heavy and dangerous when wet (they are definitely not suitable for any Tasmanian bushwalker).
- Over-trousers - proofed nylon or gore-tex pants are necessary for protection in the very worst conditions of strong wind, rain and scrub bashing. They should be loose fitting and wide enough to be put on without removing your boots (many have zips part way up the leg to facilitate this).
- Shorts - For warm weather. Select quick drying shorts rather than cotton. These are available at hiking or sport goods stores.
- Boots - these must be comfortable and able to withstand Tasmania's wet and muddy conditions. In the shop, try the boots on with the same number and type of socks that you will use on walks. Boots can be most easily broken in by pre-soaking them in water and wearing them until dry. Leather boots should be preserved and waterproofed by the application of appropriate preparations. Sandshoes are not suitable for most walks as they provide inadequate support and protection.
- Socks - One or two pairs can be worn, depending on your preference and your boots. Wool/nylon blend and/or thermal are the warmest and hardest wearing material.
- Hat - for protection from the sun. Remember your ears when selecting a suitable hat.
- Balaclava - an essential item for staying warm since most heat is lost from the head and neck area. Can double as a beanie.
- Gloves - many members recommend thermal gloves, which can be worn underneath mittens. Wool gloves are excellent but heavier when wet.
- Mittens - necessary in adverse conditions. Mittens are warmer than gloves. Wool or fibre pile is best. A pair of waterproof over-mittens *will* keep your hands drier in rain or snow.
- Gaiters - essential for protection of the lower legs and for keeping mud, crud, snow and leeches out of your boots. The best closure is velcro/press studs. Avoid zips, as they tend not to work when filled with mud.
- Spare clothing - a complete change of clothes should be left in the car just in case wet weather is experienced on the walk. Remember to bring a plastic bag for muddy gaiters and boots.
- First aid kit - Because bushwalkers are frequently many hours away from medical attention, every member should know how to administer first aid. You are expected to always carry a first aid kit and any personal medication you require. Commercial first aid kits are not recommended *as* they are usually very expensive, bulky and include items not tailored to bushwalkers' needs. An accident report form is recommended.
- Sundries - a length of cord can be useful, sunscreen and insect repellent is essential. A role of Slick Tape or similar, for boot or body repair. If in doubt about what to bring, ask an experienced Club *Member*.

Gear for overnight walks

This gear is required in addition to that for day walks.

- Spare clothing - keep this to a minimum (e.g. spare socks, thermal long-john and top). You will want to change out of wet socks and damp clothing after making camp. Keep the spare clothing (for changing into at day's end) dry by storing it in a waterproof bag. Common

practice is to wear the same clothes for walking each day, regardless if they are wet and/or dirty.

- Stove - It is recommended to use fuel stoves and many areas, including National Parks, require the use of these stoves. These areas are particularly fire-sensitive. Shellite is the most efficient fuel but such stoves are pressurized and more hazardous than methylated spirit stoves. LP gas canister type stoves are very convenient for overnight trips but are inefficient in very cold conditions. It is recommended that stoves not be used inside tents. Consider what cooking utensils may be required for the food you are taking.
- Backpack - single compartment, internal frame packs made of good canvas have proven most suitable for Tasmanian conditions. A hip belt is essential to spread the load between hips and shoulders. Get a pack big enough for all your gear. If too small you will have to tie gear on the outside and this is not recommended in the rough Tasmanian bush. If too large you will tend to fill it with unnecessary gear. Again, see what other walkers are using before buying.
- Pack liner - a tough plastic bag or special liner - to keep your gear dry in addition to individual gear bags (e.g. for sleeping bag, clothes, and food).
- Torch - a reliable lightweight torch with fresh batteries is essential. Reverse one battery when not in use in order to prevent the torch switching itself on in the pack.
- Sleeping bag - down is still the best filling. The range of bags is extensive but your selection must have a hood, box wall construction (allows a constant thickness of insulation without breaks) and zip (with draught tube covering) for temperature control. Tapered designs are most efficient. Be wary of temperature ratings, they are a guide only but useful in comparing one bag against another. Synthetic bags such as Holo-fill and Fibre-fill retain their insulation properties when wet but are bulky and heavy. A warm bag is something to look forward to at the end of the day so buy the best you can afford. Use a lightweight liner to keep the bag clean and increase the warmth.
- Sleeping mat - a close cell foam pad or a self-inflating mattress to insulate you from the cold, damp ground is essential.
- Tent - an expensive item of equipment, the tent must be rainproof and able to withstand strong winds. Tunnel designs are most popular due to their stability, large internal volume, but compact base. A plastic groundsheet will protect the floor of the tent and adds to the insulation factor. You will be able to share with a tent owner on Club walks until you decide to buy your own.

Navigation and emergency equipment

You should have a relevant map and know where the party is going. The orienteering type compass is the easiest to use for navigating by map. Carry it and a whistle on a cord around your neck. A mirror can be used for signaling. A space blanket or bivvy bag can provide emergency shelter. Carry some spare food, a torch, paper and pencil, a sharp knife and some firelighters. Matches in a separate waterproof container should be carried (be careful as many of the strikers for waterproof matches are not waterproof). A cigarette lighter is a convenient alternative.

Helpful hints

- Suitable large pack to store all your possessions in (if it's not in, it's not going).
- Pack as light as you can (your pack should be one third of your body weight maximum)
- Large sturdy plastic bag to keep your gear dry.
- Clothing and bedding, especially a sleeping bag *which will give* additional protection.
- Change of clothes and a towel for end of trip clean up.
- Plan your meals to be light, nourishing and take little time and fuel to prepare (in extremes, you may have to dine in a tent and may not be able to use a cooker).
- The same things are taken for 2 or 10 days, only the food, fuel and some clothes (socks, jocks, and spare thermal top) will be extra.

This is only an indication, you will soon refine your list to suit - happy camping!

PACKING YOUR EQUIPMENT

All items should be packed inside the backpack to reduce the possibility of loss or damage. Usually the sleeping bag, wrapped in a tough plastic bag, goes at the bottom of the pack, as it will be the last item required. The sleeping mat can be stored inside, rolled tight, or as an expanded coil with the other gear packed inside it. The mat then protects the pack and contents. From here on, place dense heavy items i.e. tent, stove and fuel close to your back and lighter items ie spare clothing further away. This is to reduce the backward drag on your shoulders. Lunch and items frequently used ie camera, sun cream and your rain jacket can be placed in outside pockets or close to the top of the pack.

Crushable items such as biscuits can be packed inside a billy. Wrap billies and frying pans in cloth to prevent soot getting on other items. The use of plastic bags and small plastic or aluminum containers is the lightest way of packing food. Potentially messy foods like honey and butter need a little care and an extra bag around their container is recommended. Make sure your fuel container is leak-proof and well separated from your food.

Finally, weigh the filled pack. Remember the recommended maximum weight is one third of your own body weight. It should be much less than this for a weekend walk. Try the pack on, if it feels too heavy you're not likely to enjoy the walk. Take out what you can do without until the burden is tolerable. Pair with another walker and you can reduce the weight in your backpack by sharing the tent, groundsheet, stove, cooking utensils etc.

DRINKING WATER

The majority of creeks contain good drinking water but avoid drinking water which is still, especially in grazing areas. Avoid large gulps, as they do not quench the thirst. The effects of dehydration are unpleasant, so drink plenty of water, particularly when the weather is very hot and dry. Water taken before a meal is fully absorbed by the body. Do not swim or use soap in drinking water holes. A narrow plastic (yabbi) tube can be used to suck up water from soaks if water is scarce. Cases of diarrhoea and vomiting have been increasing in high use wilderness areas, particularly near popular huts.

Exposed faecal waste is thought to be the major cause of these outbreaks. In areas without toilets bury waste at least 100 metres from campsites and watercourses. In suspect areas it is advisable to boil drinking water for a full three minutes. Water filters in high use areas should be considered.

FOOD

Food for day walks

It is usually only necessary to carry a cut lunch and some extra food in case the walk is delayed. If a hot drink is required, you will need to take a stove, fuel and matches or a vacuum flask.

Food for overnight and extended walks

Plan your complete menu before the trip - start with a pen and paper. Collect together as many reference books to assist you with designing an interesting and varied menu. To pack your food, you'll need kitchen measures, scales, resealable plastic bags, screw-top containers and a felt pen to write labels and possibly cooking instructions on the containers.

- Bulk and weight - recommended maximum weight per day is about one kilogram. Experience will reduce this. To keep the weight to this limit, you will need to make extensive use of dehydrated foods.

- Food value - your food should be selected to provide you with maximum energy and warmth. For general walking, a suggested dietary breakdown is 40% complex carbohydrates (eg. biscuits, rice, cereals, dried corn, potato), 30% sugars (eg. dried fruits, sweets, chocolates) 20% proteins (eg. lean meat, cheese, powdered milk, nuts, dried beans, TVP) 10% fats (eg margarine, peanut butter, nuts). Complex carbohydrates are extremely important in that they can provide continuous energy for sustained activities such as bushwalking. In this respect they are more useful than simple sugars.
- Convenience - the group will probably want to move early in the morning and may not have a lot of time for lunch. To help, keep breakfasts simple and don't plan to cook for lunch.
- Variety -food adds significantly to morale on a trip, so make sure that you choose food that is interesting and varied.
- Cost - prepared food packs are convenient but are overly expensive. It is often better to mix your own. Another benefit of this is that your own preparations will generally taste better. Recipes are sometimes in the *Club Magazine* and members can offer suggestions.
- Litter - all metal containers, foil-lined packs and plastics **MUST BE CARRIED OUT**.
- Emergencies - pack spare meals in case you are delayed.

CARE OF EQUIPMENT

Bushwalking equipment is expensive and worth a good deal of care. Damp tents and sleeping bags should be dried out as soon as possible to prevent mildew. Sleeping bags should be aired each day during a walk (and after the walk at home) and both they and self -inflating sleeping mates should be stored loosely, not in a stuff bag.

Boots should be proofed with a waterproofing agent before a walk. this also preserves the leather. Drying boots by a fire damages the leather, causing cracking (socks etc also tend to get burnt in this way). Small holes, tears in gear should be dealt with immediately, before they develop into major problems. Look after your gear and it will look after you.