



**BAYSIDE
BUSHWALKING
CLUB**

PACKS UP!

February 2024

Volume 40 Number 4



Wilsons Promontory - Squeaky Beach

Photo by Louise O'Connor (Dec 2023)

If you enjoy reading this magazine or would like to know more about walking with the Bayside Bushwalking Club, visit our website www.baysidebush.org.au

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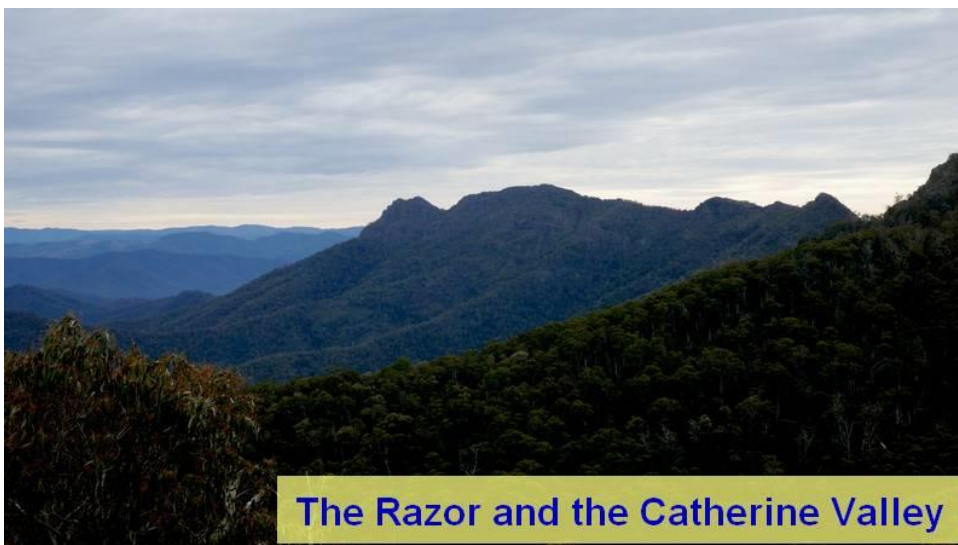


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Speculation - Catherine - Cobbler

This epic 32 km walk took four intrepid BBC members from the Speculation Road, near the King Hut, through to Mount Speculation, down to the Catherine River, past Mount Cobbler arriving back at the start three days later.

The first challenge, as we trudged up the King Spur, was to stay on a faint and steep track, like, very steep, very hot and very never ending. Eventually, after expending much perspiration, we arrived at the top of Mount Koonika which provided a cooling breeze to go with the relief of finally reaching the summit. From Koonika we traversed a broad gently sloping ridge up to Mount Speculation to complete day one, camping in the saddle below the summit, always an enjoyable site to visit.



A red sunrise greeted us next morning, but the forecast of rain in the mid-afternoon was not so welcome. *"Red sky in the morning etc"*. Again, we followed Speculation Road for a short distance before heading down a steep (refer para 2, line 2, for superlatives) scrubby ridge to the Catherine River way down below. Fortunately, we reached our grassy campsite downstream before the rain arrived.

Three of our number managed a swim in a large pool in the river before the rain commenced and then it was all into the tents until morning.

Downhill for day two meant uphill for day three. Not an absolute rule, but generally it seems to happen that way. Onwards and upwards, actually, upwards and upwards on another steep scrubby spur leading



to the road on Mount Cobbler. More rain in the form of thunderstorms made the decision not to go to the summit easy and unanimous. Instead, we continued on the road to the Muesli Track and followed it back down to the car on the Speculation Road.



Some of the party had walked more or less the same route in November 2017 and agreed it was not getting any easier. The reason for the increased difficulty is a question best left unanswered – Thicker scrub? Steeper hills? or Advancing age?

The trip's highlights and challenges:

- great camping spots on Mount Speculation and Catherine River,
- abundance of different wildflowers along the whole route,
- very steep climbs and descents,
- scrambling up rocky ridges, and,
- navigating around piles of fallen trees and avoiding pockets of thick bush.

22nd to 26th November 2023

Author: Rob Whalan

Leader: Andrew Piddington

Photos: Bernie Quirke

Minister Without Portfolio and Chief

Whip: Anthony Kurth

❖ Visit the BBC website to see more photos from this trip.



Mount St Gwinear to Walhalla

They say that practice makes perfect, and this was definitely the case for the recent BBC walk from Mount St Gwinear to Walhalla. Our leader Peter Holland has led this walk three times. The first time he turned back due to bad weather and the second time in December 2022 it snowed. This time Peter perfected his weather selection with warm days and pleasant evenings for camping.

After a lengthy car shuffle, the group of eight set off from the St Gwinear Carpark to the summit of Mount St Gwinear. Here we enjoyed a panoramic view of the mountains to the north.



Mount St Gwinear
(Photos by Peter Holland)



A short walk brought us to the Australian Alps Walking Track at Camp Saddle on the plateau. After lunch at this track junction with its large sheltering boulders, we followed the AAWT south to the Talbot Hut ruins where we made our camp for the night. Our conditions were in stark contrast to last year's walk, also in December, when we went to bed in rain and woke to about 125mm of snow. This year, our campsite among the snow gums was idyllic with a lovely creek close by.



**Our Idyllic Camp with the Chimney the Only Remains of the Talbot Hut.
(Photo by Bronwen Robinson)**



**The Talbot Hut Campsite Under Snow in December 2022
(Photo by Di Hebard)**

Early next day we passed the summit of Mt Erica and followed the AAWT downhill off the southern end of the Baw Baw Plateau to Mushroom Rocks, a collection of huge granite boulders. Most are as big as a



two-story house, some bigger, some leaning against their neighbour and some balanced on top of others forming overhangs and caves. Some of the caves are large enough to shelter or camp in. One particularly large cave was used in the 1940s as a ski shelter, enhanced by a canvas roof and wall that were hung off the rock on three sides. The line of bitumen used to seal the canvas to the rock can still be seen.



Cave at Mushroom Rocks

(Note the line of bitumen used to seal the canvas to the rock at the top left-hand corner)

(Photo by Bronwen Robinson)

Further down on the AAWT at the Mt Erica Carpark an informative notice board gives the history of the “Yarra Track” from Warburton to Walhalla and of bushwalking on the Baw Baw Plateau in the early 1900s. The Yarra Track, the first long distance track built in Victoria for recreation, was constructed by the Public Works Department in 1906. In 1907 several huts were added including Talbot Hut and Mt Whitelaw Hut, each now evidenced only by a slab of concrete and the remains of a large concrete chimney. The track ran from Warburton for 82 km over the Baw Baw Plateau to Walhalla. For over 30 years this was the only long-distance recreational walking track in Australia and was most popular with walkers.



Three bushwalkers outside McVeigh's Hotel, Upper Yarra, near Warburton.

They are about to leave for a bushwalk to Walhalla, via the Baw Baw Track in 1919ⁱ

Walkers would travel by train to Warburton and then by motor vehicle to McVeigh's Hotel at Upper Yarra near Warburton, where they started their walk through to Walhalla. The photo below shows walkers setting off in 1919. (Bushwalker dress standards have obviously slipped since then, no more ties or waistcoats and jackets! Our lightweight stoves are an improvement on carrying an axe.)



After a short walk down the road from the Erica Carpark we turned on to Firebreak Track, a very steep downhill track that should be renamed Leech Alley. Slippery in parts from wet leaves and bark on the ground and bristling with leeches waiting for some passing warm blooded bushwalker. Fortunately for us, the track had been visited by BTAC and the Friends of the Baw Baws volunteers during 2023, so the fallen trees that impeded our walk in 2022, when the snow fell, had been cleared. The track becomes less steep as it descends and looks as if its lower path may once have been a timber tramway that would have taken felled trees to the mill once located at our night's campsite. Eventually we reached the East Tyers River which we forded without mishap to be at our second campsite, at the former location of O'Shea's Mill, beside the river, where a low waterfall provides the background music.

Day three saw us climb out of the East Tyers River valley, cross the Thomson Valley Road and then descend the Fingerboard Spur to Thomson River to follow the former tramway.

track that follows the river valley. As we descended the forest changed to areas with large mountain ash, myrtle beech and tree ferns.

A feature of this track, as you approach the old Poverty Point Tramway Bridge, is a stone table and seats where lunch or just a rest could be taken with a river view (and a visit from a resident snake in 2022). Sadly, the flat stone tabletop which sat securely on a stone column, has been tipped off. Not an easy task as it all looks quite heavy.



**Dense Vegetation Along the Thomson River
(Photo by Bronwen Robinson)**

After crossing the Thomson River, we followed the route of the old tramway track back to Walhalla, passing quite close to the Thomson River terminus of the Walhalla Goldfields Tourist Railway. The old tramway was used in the mining days to bring tonnes of timber to Walhalla to be used in the furnaces and also for mine props. The tramway track provides a scenic entry into the historic town of Walhalla.

Thanks to Peter and fellow walkers for a great walk.



¹ Museums Victoria Collections <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/773898>

Accessed 09 December 2023

6 – 8 December 2023

Leader: Peter Holland

Author: Christine Dawes

Photos: Peter Holland, Bronwen Robinson and Di Hebard

❖ Visit the BBC website to see more photos from this trip.

HOW CAN A CEMETERY MANAGEMENT INCREASE THEIR FEES AND BLAME IT ON THE COST OF LIVING?

BBC Social Event

Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing - A Musical Adaptation

Melbourne Shakespeare Company is putting on "Much Ado About Nothing" during February and March in Central Park, Burke Road, Malvern East. This won't be Shakespeare as you remember it from school.

The performance on Sunday 25th February at 7pm has been listed as a social event on the BBC website. Paul and Louise will be attending this performance and invite BBC members to join them from 5:30pm for a picnic dinner in the park prior to the performance.

Bring picnic blanket or low chairs to watch the performance. Blankets and low chairs can be used towards the front of the audience, higher chairs have to sit towards the back. Seating locations are on a "first in best dressed" basis.

Tickets can be obtained from the website "melbourneshakespeare.com".

The price is \$35 ordinary and \$30 concession etc.

If you would like to join us, please purchase a ticket from the above website, and let Louise know so that a suitable meeting place can be arranged.



President's Column

Welcome back after the big break and we hope you are ready for lots of walking in 2024.

It is wonderful to see new leaders adding walks to the trip program as well as our regulars leading the way with fabulous walks for us all to enjoy.

February is when BBC gains many new members, so it is timely to remind everyone to be inclusive and make our new members welcome, also for members to encourage our new leaders and assist them wherever possible. The next point is to be respectful to all leaders and make their job easier.

Leading is a volunteer role so you can minimise the administration by being clear with your intention. When booking a walk make it a priority to go. If you are unable to attend let the leader know early to minimise the administration of the walk. Be punctual and respectful. Make sure you are fit enough for the walk you signed up for. Following these points makes our leaders job easier.

February is also the hottest and driest month so be prepared while walking and take enough water and suitable clothing for the proposed activity. It is also bushfire season and a time when snakes are active. Take a first aid kit and your completed medical form. Self-reliance is the first step.

According to a national survey by All Trails just one in three Australians know how to deal with getting lost, while two in three Australians are deterred from trail walks due to safety concerns. Also, only 38% of respondents felt confident with basic first aid when hiking. You can read more about walking safely on the Bushwalking Victoria News page.

We are fortunate to have expertise in our club to reduce risk, build resilience and gain confidence while enjoying walking in the bush. We do this by offering leader training and first aid training for emergency situations and setting members up with best possible preparation.

The 2024 AGM is planned for the 6th of May. Several committee positions will become vacant this year, and we would like **you** to consider taking a role in the running of our club.

If you have any interest in the secretary role or the overnight walks coordinator role, please contact me directly. Volunteering is an important community activity.

Enjoy your walking.

Lyn Curtis

(President)



Next Member's Meeting

Monday 5th February 2024, 7:30 for 8:00.

Our speaker for the February meeting will be Peter Cook, who will present a new board game with a strong conservation message.

Peter created this travel quiz and board game, titled "OnyaWallaby", with base campers and Australian travellers in mind.

A founding member of the Maroondah Bushwalking Club and the lead author of 'Walking the Wilderness Coast', a guide to outdoor activities on the Wilderness Coastline in Eastern Victoria and Southern New South Wales, Peter is a keen bushwalker.

Up to four people or four teams can play. Each player or team assumes the name of an endangered species of Rock Wallaby. The aim is to get the player's Rock Wallaby to the safety of the rocks on the top of the hill, avoiding hazards along the way.

Dice are not used. Movement on the board is achieved by correctly answering a travel quiz question read by a Quiz Master from the Question Book supplied. The Question Book contains 30 Quizzes each of 12 questions, with each quiz having a theme. The game comes with an answer book to resolve arguments.

The children's playground at Riddells Creek was popular during morning tea on Paul Smith's Thursday walk on 30th November 2023



Julia

(Photo – Di Cooke)

**Brian**

(Photo – Paul Redmond)

**Paul**

(Photo – Di Cooke)

Christmas Walk

The Christmas Walk for 2023 was held at Seawinds Gardens, Arthur's Seat. We were blessed with a beautiful day and perfect conditions for walking.

We joined the Two Bays track, which gave us beautiful views over Bass Strait. The walkers were relaxed, and the conversation was freely flowing. Unfortunately, due to our sharing the track with a lot of trail runners, we soon tired of our conversation being interrupted with the cry of "Runner"! Our gallant leader changed our course, and we headed to Kings Falls, where we had the track to ourselves, more or less.

Morning tea was at the top of the falls, overlooking the gushing torrent, in full flow due to recent rains. After completing the falls circuit, we headed back to Seawinds Gardens. Luckily the runners had completed this portion of the track, and we enjoyed a peaceful walk back for lunch.



Lunch was held in the picnic area at Seawinds and proved a sumptuous affair with delicious cheeses, nibbles, homemade sweets and a fruit platter; certainly, enjoyed by all.

Following lunch, walkers completed the Arthurs Seat circuit walk, enjoying another aspect of the Mornington Peninsula.

Port Philip Bay provided magnificent views of crystal blue waters, the glistening sails of yachts as well as the Melbourne skyline.

Two satisfying walks, morning tea and lunch and there was still plenty of time to return to Melbourne before the Mornington Peninsula Sunday afternoon peak traffic commenced, allowing for a smooth trip home.



17th December 2023

Gallant Leader: Nadia Ballarin

Author: Louise O'Connor

Lunch at Seawinds

(Photo - Louise O'Connor)

❖ Visit the BBC website to see more photos from this trip.

This year's 4 Peaks Challenge to be held on Sunday April 21st.

Full details are in the advertisement attached to the email which brought you this edition of Packs Up! The start and finish are in Camperdown. It is not every day you get the chance to climb Mount Elephant.



FedWalks 2024

Fed Walks 2024 will be held at Wilsons Promontory National Park from Friday 11th till Sunday 13th October 2024. Victoria bushwalkers will come together to walk on this pristine land while celebrating Bush Walking Victoria's 90th anniversary.

In the weekend package there will be a choice of around 20 walks, accommodation, and a casual evening meal on the Saturday night.

Keep the dates free and bookings will open Monday 3rd June 2024. Check out www.fedwalks.org.au for updates.

Choices of accommodation include roofed accommodation – lodges, cabins, huts as well as camping on powered and unpowered sites.

Accommodation has been secured for the Friday and Saturday night at Tidal River as part of the weekend package and there may be an option to also book for the Sunday night depending on the type of accommodation chosen and the number of people booking.

Check out the link and think about where you and your friends would like to stay.

<https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/wilsons-promontory-national-park/where-to-stay/tidal-river-accommodation>

Everyone is invited to a casual evening meal and entertainment on Saturday night under a generous marquee under the stars.

Join your friends and other Victorian bushwalkers for the Federation Walks and the 90th Anniversary of Bushwalking Victoria.

Fancy a walking Trip in Türkiye This Year?

Interested in joining five fellow BBC walkers on a self-guided 14-day walking holiday in Mediterranean Türkiye on May 1, 2024?

The walk covers the highlights of the famous Lycian Way and it begins in Fethiye and ends in Antalya.

We will carry day packs only and our luggage will be moved from village to village where we will stay in small guesthouses.

Breakfast and dinners are included in the cost.

For further information,

contact Kate.



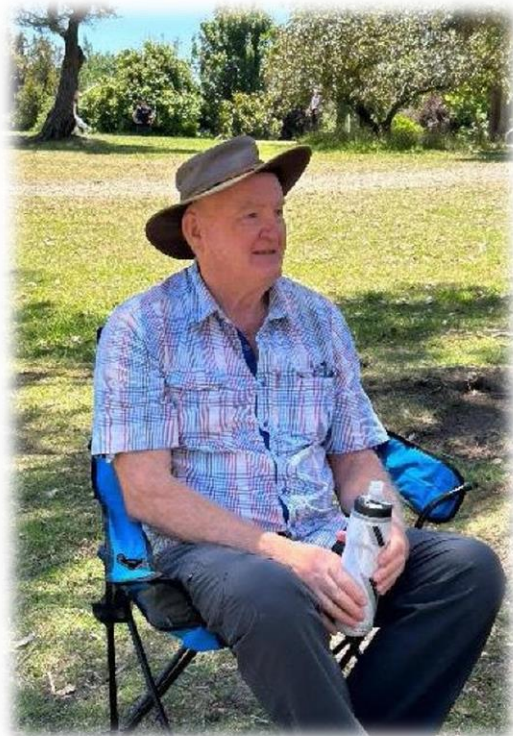
This Month's Photo Riddle



Can you name these two waterfalls - Answers on page 22

No mystery here

Jeff McDonnell relaxing at Seawinds during
the Club's Christmas Walk





BTAC Activity
Alpine National Park - AAWT Knobs to Square Top
23-25 February 2024

Check out [BTAC - Bushwalking Victoria](#) to see what other activities are coming up.

When:	Friday 23 - Sunday 25 February 2024
Track:	Australian Alps Walking Track From The Knobs to Square Top
Area/Park:	Alpine National Park
Project Leader:	Patrick Platt Phone: 0428 580 008 Email: platt@ozemail.com.au
Where to meet:	PV Depot at Blackbird Flat (Near Sheeppyard Flat)
Working hours:	Track maintenance activities will occur on Saturday and Sunday starting at 8am.
Skills needed:	Good level of fitness. Brush cutting, hedge trimming, use of chainsaw, use of hand tools, manual lifting. There is a wide range of tasks. No previous track maintenance experience is required.
Transport:	Provide your own transport to the PV Depot at Blackbird Flat or arrange to share a ride. Our campsite at the Knobs Helipad is only 4WD accessible. It is approximately 1 hour from Blackbird Flat. The Knobs Track is a steep climb needing a capable low range, high clearance 4WD. Volunteers with a capable 4WD will be asked to help carry passengers and equipment up to the Helipad.
Accommodation:	Camping at the Knobs Track Helipad.
We will provide:	Parks Victoria and BTAC will provide all track maintenance equipment and PPE. Parks Victoria will provide a BBQ dinner on Saturday evening.
Please bring:	Camping gear and provisions for all meals apart from Saturday evening BBQ. A day backpack to carry lunch, energy snacks, water, raincoat, warm top, emergency contact, and medical information form, small first aid kit, hand sanitiser, etc. Sturdy work footwear. This activity is in the high country where the weather can change rapidly. Come prepared for all seasons.
Scope of work:	We will be working as volunteers to Parks Victoria to do track maintenance work. Maintenance work will involve brush cutting, hedge trimmer operation, chain saw operation, erecting markers and the use of hand tools for vegetation trimming and clean up.
Meeting time:	3pm Friday 23 February

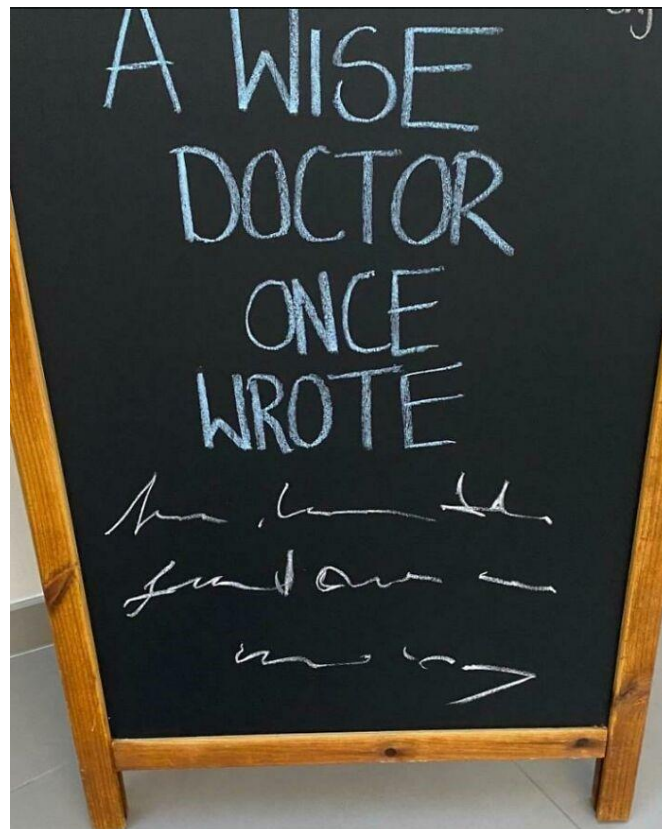


Finish time:	Sunday 3pm (option to stay Sunday evening and drive back on Monday)			
WWCC:	It is a requirement of Parks Victoria that all volunteers after their first volunteering activity have a Working With Children Check and load it up on ParkConnect as evidence.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must register on ParkConnect to attend this activity. Please also register on the BBC web site so that Bob Edwards (BBC's Conservation Coordinator) has a record of members attending. 				
BTAC Planning List - March to May 2024				
8-11 March	Alpine National Park	AAWT Johnnies	John Green	1
29-31	Baw Baw	AAWT	Peter	2
25-28	Croaiingolong	Resched	Mike	2
May	Alpine National	Howqua	Bob	3
			1 – in Planning 2 – Proposed 3 –	
Go to BTAC - Bushwalking Victoria for further details and for updates				



The latest issue of the Bushwalking Victoria Bulletin is available through the link on the BBC Website under the Packs Up! tab. It is also available direct at BWV by clicking [HERE](#)





Jack Jumpers Are a Risk to Human Safety.

ABC Radio Hobart - By Georgie Burgess

Posted Wed 17 Jan 2024

Jack jumpers are a fact of life in many south-eastern Australian backyards, and a sting is almost inevitable for anyone who goes outdoors.

The black and orange ants, also known as hopper ants and jumping jacks, have a venomous sting that is designed to kill prey and allows it to defend itself from predators.

Author and entomologist Simon Grove said jack jumpers liked to nest in areas where there had been clearing and landscaping, which is when they clashed with humans.

"They like a bit of disturbance, so we create ideal habitats for them," Dr Grove said.

Dr Grove said nests could contain up to 1,000 ants but generally had 200 to 300.



A jack jumper hunting a bee. (Supplied: Claire Clements)

He said nests were often near sunny, cleared ground close to food sources like insects, nectar and flowers.

The queen can live for 10 years, and some nests have multiple queens rearing their own brood.

"The queen doesn't have complete control of the nest," Dr Grove said.

Worker ants, which are all female, live for about a year and male ants grow wings and leave the nest when they reach adulthood.

It is only female ants that sting, which they do by grasping a victim with jaws and injecting venom from its tail end.



The ants attack when disturbed and can jump seven to 10 centimetres repeatedly when defending themselves.

Jack jumpers like cleared, dry areas to make nests. *(ABC News: Daniel Miller)*

Removing nests

Dr Grove said when people were out in the bush or living on bushy acreage, they had to learn to live with jack jumpers.

But he said it was understandable that the ants were not tolerated in suburbia.

"If they are in your backyard, personally, I would choose not to live with them," Dr Grove said.



A large jack jumper nest out in the bush. *(Supplied: Jack Jumper Allergy Program)*

"[But] don't do anything silly like putting petrol down [a nest] and setting fire to it."

Dr Grove said that method was a risk to safety and contaminated groundwater.

He said while reputable entities like botanical gardens used chemicals to kill jack jumper ants, boiling water was a less risky alternative. Simon Grove says boiling water is better than using chemicals to kill jack jumper ants. *(ABC News: Luke Bowden)*

"My preference is to try boiling water or very hot water in the first instance," Dr Grove said.

He said to wait until dusk or a cold day when there was no obvious activity in the nests, making sure to wear good footwear and gloves and tip a kettle full of boiling water over the mound.

"When they go to bed, they retreat down to the underground nest," Dr Grove said.



"After an initial scalding of the nest mound, you could carefully scrape away the nest mound and that should expose the holes where the ants would be coming in and out, and you can pour hot water more directly down those.

"You'd probably have to repeat that over several nights for effectiveness."

Dr Grove said while some people did not believe in killing the ants, there were risks to human safety by having the ants around.

"I don't think jack jumpers belong in suburbia. They belong in the bush," he said.

A nasty sting

Jack jumpers are found in most Australian states, but Tasmania has the highest density of the ants.

About 3 per cent of Tasmanians have a severe allergy to the sting, and the state's health department has run the successful [Jack Jumper Allergy Program](#) since 2001.

The program exposes patients to the venom in order to desensitise them to it.

In a public warning about jack jumpers last month, the health department said people should 'not underestimate' the sting of a jack jumper.

"If you think you are experiencing an anaphylactic reaction following a jack jumper sting, seek urgent medical attention by phoning Triple-0," the department said.

"Prior to the introduction of the jack jumper venom immunotherapy treatment, there were four deaths attributed to jack jumper ant anaphylaxis.

"Since then, no deaths have been recorded."

Tasmanians can access the jack jumper ant venom immunotherapy program through a referral from their GP, emergency department or other specialist.

Victoria established a similar program in 2016.

Most people will only experience mild symptoms from a sting, and it is advised to wash the area of the sting and apply a cold pack to reduce swelling.

Nature living with jack jumpers

One creature that does not seem perturbed by jack jumper stings is the echidna, who find the ants quite tasty despite the venom.

"Echidnas seem to be pretty immune to it," Dr Grove said. "I've not seen any studies that look at reactions to the stings, but when they are foraging, they don't seem to give a damn."

This article is an abridged version of a news item produced by ABC Hobart.

The full version can be accessed [here](#) .

Photo Riddle Answer

(1) – Rob Falls on the Beeripmo Track (Jan 2024)

(2) - Hartnett Falls – Mersey River – Overland Track (March 2017)

December's mystery photo was the trig point beacon (or what is left of it) on the summit of Mount Jaithmathang.



Upcoming Walks and Activities

The current listing of BBC activities can be found on the club's website.

Leaders who would like their activity detailed and promoted here should contact the editor at newsletter@baysidebush.org.au.

Currently BBC has 341 members.

If you enjoyed reading this magazine or would like to know more about walking with the Bayside Bushwalking Club, visit our website www.baysidebush.org.au.

The Club is welcoming to new members. If you are unsure about a first walk with BBC, we can provide a 'buddy' to assist and prepare you for an enjoyable day in the bush or on an urban walk. Places are held for new members on the popular walks that quickly book out.

Identifying details of members have been removed from this 'public' edition of the magazine. Some of the formatting may have suffered from this action.

Packs Up! is the newsletter of the Bayside Bushwalking Club (BBC).

Editor – Paul Redmond

Contributions can be sent to the editor at newsletter@baysidebush.org.au.

Text must be in Microsoft Word format and photos for inclusion in jpg format.

Deadline for contributions is the close of business on the third Monday of the month.

The contributor is responsible for ensuring that all authors and photographers have agreed to publication in *Packs Up!* and that persons depicted in photographs have given their consent for their image to be published in *Packs Up!* and appear on the BBC Website.

Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Bayside Bushwalking Club Inc., its office bearers, or members.

Advertisements may be accepted from members relating to Club activities, sale of second-hand equipment or seeking expressions of interest in club or private trips. Advertisements submitted must comply with Club policy as set out in Appendix 2 to the "ABC of the BBC".

Publication of all submissions will be subject to limits of time, space and the editor's discretion, especially the editor's discretion.

Find us on Facebook

The Bayside Bushwalking Club's Facebook page is attracting lots of "likes" every week. If you're on Facebook and want to find us, search Bayside Bushwalking Club in the Search box at the top of the Facebook screen. There is also a link on the BBC website that will take you straight there. And if you "Like" the page or one of the posts, you will get any new BBC posts on your Facebook feed.



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