



The Message Stick

October 2014

Mackay Bushwalkers' Club Inc. PO Box 1313, Mackay, 4740

Web: <http://www.mackay.bwq.org.au>

Email: mackaybushwalkers@dodo.com.au

Future Events

Elephant Rock Camp.....	4 th – 6 th October
Corybas Cliffs.....	12 th October
General Meeting	15 th October
West Hill Island.....	19 th October
The Junction.....	26 th October
Club Birthday Dinner.....	15 th November
Christmas Break up Camp.....	6 th & 7 th December



Mackay Bushwalkers Club is turning 40 on November 20th so of course we need a party to celebrate!
Full details in the newsletter

Club Officers

President	Kathy Cant	49590762	Contact Officer	Coral Morgan	49578474
Vice President	Garry Hendicott	49440236	Walks Coordinator	Frances Eiteneuer	49576028
Secretary	Kerry Morgan	49540037	Assist Walks Coordinator	Coral Morgan	49578474
Treasurer	Dan McKinlay	49534249	Newsletter Editor	Jenny Wooding	49440236
Safety Officer	Kevin Smith	49696068	Publicity Officer	Kevin Smith	49696068
Equipment Officer	Garry Hendicott	49440236			

From the Editor

A casual Friday night BBQ at the river was very well attended. It was a relaxed and friendly evening and it was good to catch up with Vaughn and Maureen recently returned from their overseas travels. Saturday 15th November will be the club's 40th birthday celebration. If you have any old photos or other club memorabilia you would like to share on the night, please contact Kathy. Don't forget to keep sending me photos and write ups. Have a great month everyone.

Our Publicity Officer is Kevin Smith
kevnjans@bigpond.net.au
Please email Kevin any photos you think would look good in the newspaper.

Items for the next newsletter should be sent to
jennywooding@dodo.com.au
prior to 25th October

Key to Walks Grading System

Distance	Terrain	Terrain
S = short – under 5km	1-3 = Graded or open terrain, no scrub	1-3 = Easy, suitable for beginners
M = medium – 5-10km	4-7 = Bush, minor scrub, rainforest, Rocks, creeks, rockhopping, scrambling	4-7 = Medium, reasonable fitness required
L = long – over 10km	8-10 = Bush as above + thick scrub, major rock Scrambling using hands, technical	8-10 = Hard, strenuous, fit walkers only

Future Events

All trip leaders please ensure you collect the club gear bag from Garry before undertaking your walk.

Please contact the leader to nominate for all walks

Elephant Rock - Bowen Sat 4 Oct – Mon 6 Oct

Leader: Kevin Smith Ph 4969 6068

Mob 0417 326634

Depart: 2pm Sat

Journey: 465km \$46.00

Grade: M65

Estimated walking time: 5-6 hours

This walk involves car based camping beside Elephant Rock and Bald Rock on private property near Bowen. Bald and Elephant Rocks are large granite monoliths. This spectacular area is a favourite of many bushwalkers and access has been granted to us under very strict conditions. These conditions are that we be

very diligent not to introduce weeds, especially Parthenium. We must ensure all vehicles are clean, including front grilles and underneath. Also ensure packs, boots, tents and clothes etc are weed free.

We drive up Saturday afternoon in convoy and set up camp. Farm road is suitable for compact 4wd vehicles. Sunday will be a day walk exploring Bald Rock, Elephant Rock, Victory Rock and if time permits, Sixpenny Hill which is a rocky out-crop. Coral says we should see a Great Bower Bird bower on top of Sixpenny Hill. Monday morning we plan to walk to another monolith and explore around it then return to camp along Ida Creek and pack up dry tents. We will then leave the property at 3pm to return

to Mackay. Bring food and water for duration.
Gas cooking only.

**Corybas Cliffs- Cape Hillsborough
Sunday 12th October**

Leader: Penny McMahon 49 514287,
penny_mackay@msn.com

Depart: 7am

Journey: 80km, \$8.00

Map Ref: Cumberland Islands 117857

Grade: M55

Estimated walking time: 4 hours **Total of all uphill sections:** 200m **Pace:** Average
Terrain: very uneven **Vegetation:** Open forest
Expect: some steep slopes, scrambles, great views

From the Cape Hillsborough parking area we will walk back along the road a short distance and then head up a reasonably steep slope to the base of the cliffs. It may be too late in the season to see any of the small Corybas orchids that flourish in this area mid-year. We then head left around the base of the cliff before reaching the Fern Overhang and continue on to the Cathedral Cave. We will continue around the cliff base and eventually reach the first lookout. Depending on our progress we may have lunch here. The plan is to then continue along the marked (I think) trail to the second lookout and eventually down to Smalleys Beach.

We will need to have a car shuffle to collect the cars left at Cape Hillsborough.

**Induction 6.45pm/ General Meeting 7.30pm
Wednesday 15th October**

Downstairs room, Mackay Family Care and Community Support Association Centre 60 Wellington Street, Mackay. Newcomers and visitors welcome. Induction by Kathy and Dan

**West Hill Islands
Sunday 19th October**

Leader: Peter Bennett 4954 3428

Journey: \$18

Depart: 7am

This walk involves walking across a salt pan but the tide will make it easy. Crossing the spit to the island will involve walking in water no more than knee deep and across oyster beds. It is approximately 8-9kms around the island. More

than half the distance will be over rocks and parts will involve a scramble. By crossing the creek early and on an outgoing tide, walkers should easily make it back in time. There is a remote possibility of being caught by the tide. There will be good views to Mt Funnel and Bulls Head Bluff.

**The Junction
Sunday 26th October**

Leader: Jenny Wooding 49440236
0447091532

Depart: 7am

Journey: 140km \$14

Map Ref: Mirani 695708

Grade: M87

Walking Time: 6 hours **Total of uphill:** 550m
Terrain: Rugged Rainforest **Expect:** Steep climbs and scrambles, serious rockhopping and creek crossings, wait-a-while, leeches and good swimming holes.

We refer to the spot above the Wheel of Fire on Finch Hatton Creek where the "left hand branch" comes in as "the Junction". A steep climb up the hill off track is necessary to access this impressive spot. We will spend some time swimming/exploring before rockhopping on to Dooloomai Falls. From here we will decide whether to return via the same route or along the old track.

**40th Birthday Celebration
Saturday 15th November**

Contact Person: Kathy Cant 4959 0762

Mackay Bushwalkers held their first meeting on November 20th, 40 years ago and the first ever club walk was held on the following Sunday.

To mark this auspicious occasion the club is holding a celebration dinner and get together at Mackay Aeroclub. More details will be sent out later but the club will hire the venue and subsidize the cost of the meal for club members. Anyone wishing to attend will be asked to contribute \$20 towards the cost of the 2 course meal and this will need to be paid when booking to confirm numbers.

If anyone has old photos of club activities or other memorabilia and would like to share them

on the night, please contact Kathy. Photos can be scanned and we will have a large screen show them on.

**Christmas Camp
Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th December**

Full details will be in November Newsletter but this is just to let you know the dates to put into diaries.

This year the club will be camping at the Eungella Caravan Park and we will walk to the Chalet for dinner. If anyone would prefer not to camp the park does have some cabins available for hire.

Previous Activities

Through the Spikes Sunday 7th September



This walk had been cancelled the previous month due to heavy rain in the Homevale area but this time a fine sunny day was put on for us. It did prove to be a hang on to your hat type day as it was extremely windy.

13 people set out eagerly in the morning along the creek bed. Most pools in the creek looked most uninviting for swimming in but as it wasn't hot no one cared. This time we traversed the creek for a longer distance before cutting across to the

first spike. Once we began the ascent the views steadily improved and soon we were all oohing and aahing and cameras were frantically clicking. We had some ground to cover where having one leg shorter than the other would have been a definite advantage. Still we scrambled along as best we could with most people displaying their own unique style.

We reached and partially climbed the first spike and had a photo shoot where nearly everyone sat on a large rock for their photo to be taken. With very strong winds blowing we descended using our individual styles, although a lot of bottom sliding was resorted to. We made our way across to the saddle which is a place where I just love to sit and soak up the views. From here half the group opted to sit and enjoy a long lunch while the rest headed to the middle spike. Within half an hour Garry was calling out on the



radio they had reached the pinnacle and we could see his hat waving above the trees. Ever resourceful Elaine and Roger chose to flash him with their mirrors.



While we were enjoying lunch and a chat Roger (being a hoon) picked up a rock and threw it down the hill, making a clatter and disturbing the wildlife. He woke up a 1.5m long snake which had been minding its own business and soaking up the sun just in front of us. It was dark in colour and Francis

was convinced it was a brown and extremely dangerous but it slithered off into the rocks for some peace and quiet. On their return the others would not believe our close encounter with a deadly reptile. Mind you pit stops tended to be very rushed from then on.



From here we descended down and around the first spike until we reached the creek which we followed back to the cars. This was a really pleasant walk which everyone enjoyed.

Thanks Garry.

Bulls Head Bluff Sunday 21 Sept 2014

We left the library car park at 07.00h sharp with three vehicles and stopped in Sarina and picked up two more vehicles. We drove south of Koumala and then turned south-west towards the range. The sky was overcast with windows of sun breaking through. Temperature of 24C and a welcome breeze. The land was nice and green as we headed into private property cattle country. Through a locked gate that Kevin (walk leader) had the key to, five cars and 18 people pulled up to tackle the day's climb to Bulls Head Bluff. We formed the usual morning circle to go over the rules, say our names, and hear the briefing from Kevin. Words like short walk, easy walk, and wanting to get home early. Words that he would rue later in the day.

Oh yes, there were two rent-a-crowd tagalong bushwalkers from Townsville. We all thought we would show those Townsvillers how real bushwalking was done down here in rugged tough Central Queensland. We started off at 08.50h and headed uphill for an hour, following a newly strung up shiny barbed wire fence. The way had been bulldozed for us. Not real bushwalking but welcome by everyone. We couldn't make it too hard for the Townsvillers for the beginning of the walk could we? What would they say to our brethren in Townsville if we threw our worst at them in the beginning and left them in the dust? Much to our dismay and chagrin, the Townsvillers ploughed on ahead of us for the whole first hour. Kevin rushed to the head of the queue of the intrepid bushwalkers and quietly asked the Townsvillers to slow down or otherwise we would have to show them up. However, they were deaf to his beckonings and to our non-verbal messages or 'get back in your place or we'll put you in your place you Townsvillers'.

There was soon to be a 'take them by the backpacks and toss them down the hill', when suddenly a circuit breaker happened Brian came to the rescue and took the attention off the Townsvillers. There was one stretch along the barbed wire fence, where there was very little edge to stand on. The alternative was to grab the barbed wire fence, but Brian broke step and lunged into a spectacular forward role and landed in some discarded tree branches cast aside from the bulldozing. If the branches had not broken his fall, I daren't think what would have happened to him, as he would have rolled kilometres down the rock-strewn cliffs into the dark smoky abyss never to be seen again. Brian could have been a Hollywood stuntman, but he credits it all to a teacher in primary school who always said in phys ed class to do a forward roll, do a forward roll. Bless your soul Miss Whoever You Are. You saved Brian's life. Even the Townsvillers were impressed. We were all friends again. The Townsvillers were forgiven. Soon after, we pulled up for morning tea as we gazed down upon the beautiful valley of where we had been and looked up as to where we were going. One hour and 1.8 km going uphill. Not bad. We were pleased.

We then headed around the base of Bulls Head Bluff looking for an accessible way up. We pushed through lantana, over boulders, and scrambled up stony rock faces. Probably we could have used ropes for several small sections or the vertical parts. We summited Bulls Head Bluff about 11.40h, 400m in elevation. We walked around and admired the views for a few minutes. Then Kevin set up the tripod and camera and took some happy snaps of the entourage. We then settled down for lunch, but it was hard

to see all the others because of the all the grass trees. I could see heads or tops of heads. It reminded me of a scene from the movie Gorillas in the Mist. 12.30h lunch was over and time to think about descending. Kevin's GPS still worked but refused to show contours, so all the bushwalkers with GPSs got together to decide the best descent, rather than the way we summited because it would take too long and was too dangerous.

As we descended the summit, there was lots of marching up and down as we travelled towards the spot where we had morning tea. We tried to stay on the contours at the same elevation. We decided that if we went to the bottom of the Bluff that we would end up tangled in lantana as it tended to coagulate at the bottom of gullies. At a couple of spots, Kevin brought out the rope and we had to abseil down the cliff face. This walk was starting to test the mettle of all those on the walk, but after all it was an exploratory walk and we were Central Queensland bushwalkers, renowned for stamina and endurance.

We were puffing out our chests and marching with pride, when all of a sudden tragedy struck Kevin had a brush with every bushwalker's nightmare – moonlighter. Within seconds his hand puffed out. He screamed in agony for something. We barely managed to understand the words he was uttering as the toxins were spreading through his body and he was starting to hallucinate. Duct tape. What? Duct tape. The word was passed up the queue as fast as gossip on the old telephone party line. Someone found duct tape and within seconds it was lashed over Kevin's hand pulling out the offending barbs. He was brought back from the brink. Kevin slowly returned to some sense of normalcy. He was still in a lot of pain but was comprehensible and could walk under his own steam. I don't know who the unsung hero of the Mackay Bushwalkers Club was that day, who had duct tape, but on behalf of the club, we thank you.

We started our march again. Every time we thought we were facing the last gully, there was another one ahead of us. The bushwalking gods were teasing us. Finally, we arrived at the morning tea site, water almost drunk and food almost all eaten, in the nick of time. 15.30h. We stopped for a minute and then headed down the hill along the barbed wire fence as our guide. By 16.30h we were all in the cars and headed home.

Thank you Kevin for your perseverance in the face of the insurmountable.

While some of the events of the day have been polished up a bit to make the story more readable, there is a serious note I wish to put forward. The bush is unforgiving and it is easy for people to become separated and lose their way. We need to stay together as a group. That means people can't scoot ahead and that means when people are way behind, we have to wait. Yes that slows everything down, but safety comes first.

See you on the next bushwalk.

Roger Van Der Veen

Note from the Editor: Sorry I didn't have any photos to add to Roger's very entertaining write up.