



The Message Stick

April 2017

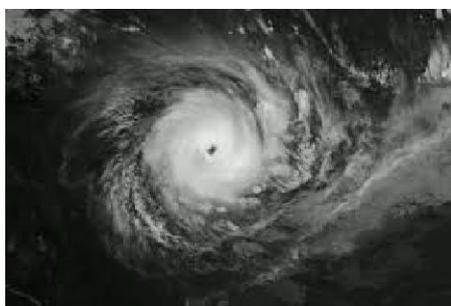
Mackay Bushwalkers' Club Inc. PO Box 1313, Mackay, 4740

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Future Events

Gorge Creek.....	2nd April
Slade Point Reserve.....	9th April
St Helens Easter Camp.....	14th -17th April
General Meeting.....	19th April
Dalrymple Creek.....	23rd April
Mt Britton Camp.....	29th April – 1st May
Avoid Island.....	4th – 10th May



Cyclone Debbie who came to wreak havoc upon us

If only we could all fly away as Kate's fellow walkers to Paradise Falls seem capable of doing.



Club Officers

President	Clive Goodson	4954 9338	Contact Officer	Coral Morgan	49578474
Vice President	Carole Weekes	4954 6108	Walks Coordinator	Coral Morgan	49578474
Secretary	Bryan Marshall	4954 3209	Assist Walks Coordinator	Frances Eiteneur	49576028
Treasurer	Julie Vella	4955 3093	Newsletter Editor	Jenny Wooding	49440236
Safety Officer	Charles Hamlet	0478772418	Publicity Officer	Charles Hamlet	0478772418
Equipment Officer	Garry Hendicott	49440236			

From the Editor

April's newsletter is a little late due to a nasty weather system called Cyclone Debbie. I hope all bushwalkers and their family and friends have come through unscathed. I know most of us have battered yards and a lot of you still won't have power back on. I think it is fair to say though that we are extremely fortunate when we look at the devastation just a little further north of us. Kate has a proposed camp for over Easter but please be aware it may not be possible to contact her for some time until power is restored to where she lives.

Prior to Debbie, wet weather played havoc with March's walks – West Hill Island and Rawson's creek both had to be cancelled due to weather concerns. This weekend's planned walk to Netherdale Gorge has been cancelled for obvious reasons and I'm sure it will be rescheduled when conditions improve.

Our Safety Officer has advised that eye protection should be carried on all walks.

I have included in the walks calendar a trip to Avoid Island. This is NOT a club walk – it is a Wild Mob trip. Wild Mob is an environmental organisation and many of our club members have participated in their trips. More details are included in the Future Events section but for more information contact the organisation.

Happy mopping up everyone!

Items for the next newsletter should
be sent to
jennywooding@dodo.com.au
prior to 23rd April

Key to Walks Grading System

Distance

S = short – under 5km
M = medium – 5-10km
L = long – over 10km

Terrain

1-3 = Graded or open terrain, no scrub
4-7 = Bush, minor scrub, rainforest,
Rocks, creeks, rockhopping, scrambling
8-10 = Bush as above + thick scrub, major rock
Scrambling using hands, technical

Terrain

1-3 = Easy, suitable for beginners
4-7 = Medium, reasonable fitness required
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

**Lambert's Beach and Slade Point Reserve
Sunday 9th April**

Leader : Carole Weekes (49546108)
Departure: 8 am!!!!!!
Journey : N/A

Grade : M34

Assembly : Lambert's Lookout car park (see map 21 in phone book)!!!!!!!!!!!!

Estimated walking time: 6 hrs **Total of all uphill sections** : 50 m **Pace:** comfortable **Terrain and**

vegetation: sand, formed tracks, grassy sections, open forest and scrub Expect: variety of bird life, reptiles, insects and botanical specimens, wetlands, and both shady and exposed area.

This will be an easy walk but quite a bit of distance will be covered, unless it is still insufferably hot, in which case we may skip some sections. The plan is to commence with a climb up Lambert's Lookout, followed by a stretch along Lambert's Beach to the Harbour. We will then return to Pacific Esplanade to access the Slade Point Reserve tracks which will take us to the amphitheatre, the wetlands, and Fern Valley. At the end of the day there will be an optional activity at the Kommo Toera boardwalk off Keeley's Road on the way home.

PLEASE NOTE THE DIFFERENT STARTING TIME AND ASSEMBLY POINT.

St Helens Creek Camp - Walk Easter, 14th -17th of April

Leader: Kate Brunner, katcalen@hotmail.com or 49588436

Details to be announced or discussed.

The coming up Easter camp is still on the drawing board. This means you are welcome to, help with ideas and planning!

At this stage, I suggest:

Day 1 (Saturday or Friday): Backpack walk up St Helens creek to a sandy bank near a nice waterhole that we find as we go. Set up camp.

Day 2 (Friday or Sunday): Explore further up the creek, return to camp..

Day3 (Sunday or Monday): either, pack up and return home, - or explore perhaps a tributary or search for a good passage to eastern ridge.

Day 4: Return.

Depending on the people who are interested, we could have a team setting out a day before the other or even, some just joining for one night??? There would probably be a camping charge to National Parks of about \$4.00 per night per person and shared car cost to St Helens Creek, Cameron's Pocket.

Contact me as soon as possible if you are interested or we can discuss possibilities in closed Facebook group "slipsliding bushcrashing photosnappers".

Induction 6.45pm/ General Meeting 7.30pm Wednesday 19th April

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

Dalrymple Creek Sunday 23rd April

Leader: Peter Bennett

Depart: 7:00am

Journey: 120km \$12.00

Map Ref: Mirani 773728

Grade: M75

Estimated walking time: 5 hours **Total of all uphill sections:** 120m **Pace:** average **Terrain:**

very uneven terrain **Vegetation:** rain forest

Expect: mostly rock hopping, swimming holes, difficult creek crossings.

The starting point for this walk is at the end of Argents Road, Mt Charlton. The creek flows through rain forest. The main waterfall should be reached by lunch time. The best spots to swim will be at morning smoko and lunch spot again on the way back just before reaching the cars. Medium rock hopping is the order of the day. Wet weather shoes should be considered.

Bring spare clothes to change into after the walk, food and water for the day. To register for the walk please **ring** me (don't text) no later than 12.00 noon Saturday.

Homevale (Mt Britton) Camp Saturday 29th April – Monday 1st May

Leader: Jenny Wooding 49440236, 0447091532

Depart: 10am

Journey: 240kms \$24

Map Ref: Mirani 8655 603 325

Grade: Varied

This camp will take place over 3 days and we will be camping at the old Mt Britton Township. Walkers may come out for the entire camp or just part of it. There is a lot of spear grass in this area and the wearing of gaiters is recommended for each of the walks.

Saturday: We will drive out to Mt Britton in time for lunch and to set up camp. For the afternoon we will

walk up the western ridge behind the town and it will be a spectacular place for photographers to capture the changing late afternoon colours on Sydney Heads and the Marling Spikes. We will return to camp via an old road.

Sunday: Spike 723 via Sabbath Calm

This walk will be led by Garry

Grade: M67

Estimated walking time: 7 hours. **Total of all uphill:** 450m. Elevation gain 300m.

Pace: average **Terrain:** very uneven underfoot, a rocky section. **Vegetation:** open grassy scrub.

Expect: some very steep slopes (up and down), long grass, spear grass, spectacular views.

This will be a loop walk from and to the “camping” area at Mt Britton Township. Our 8.5km journey will take us first to the Sabbath Calm Battery site and from there up a well defined but snaking ridge to the base of Marling Spike 723. Some very steep sections will be encountered on this ridge (might need your hands) but they are of short duration. We will not climb 723 (too dangerous) but will eventually circumnavigate it in an anticlockwise direction. Time will be available to explore the saddle between Spikes 723 and 690 for lunch. After traversing the rocky but interesting Northern slope of 723 there will be a very steep descent and a beeline bash back to the Township.

Gaiters are highly recommended, knee braces optional.

Monday: Spikelet No 1 and Pinnacle Rock

From the campsite we will walk to the first “spikelet” and then across to “Pinnacle Rock” to soak up some awesome views before making our way back to the campground by lunch time or early afternoon, giving us plenty of time to pack up and return to Mackay. This will be an easier walk.

On the Sunday there will be an easier alternative for those not wishing to undertake the Spike 723 walk. Possibilities include walking via the dirt road to Moonlight Dam or some local creek exploring. Please contact the leader by 26th April if you intend to participate for all or part of the camp.

Avoid Island

4th – 10th May

Avoid Island is home to one of Queensland’s largest Flatback turtle rookeries as well as critically endangered beach scrub rainforest, that with a little help, could be free of invasive vegetation and thrive again.

As well as removing and treating invasive vegetation we’ll also be targeting marine plastics accumulating on the islands beaches. Plastics circulating in our oceans are having devastating impacts on a wide range of marine species. Avoid Island is one of the biggest rookeries for Flatback turtles on the Queensland coast. QTFN, WildMob and Reef Catchments are all working together to ensure the island is in the best possible shape for Australia’s endemic Flatback Turtles.

The cost of this trip is \$695 and includes all meals and boat travel. There is a toilet and shower on the island.

Any club members who have participated in a Wild Mob trip will vouch for how well run they are and how the trips are a worthwhile experience.

For more details go to:

<https://wildmob.org/event/avoid-island-restoration/>

Previous Activities

Eungella Lookouts Sunday 26th February

I was picked up by a small group of walkers and we headed up the Valley for Broken River. It was a splendid day to be out and about, especially after recent hot weather. The altitude and breezes at the top of the Eungella Escarpment made for a pleasant day. We headed out from the car park to witness a small platypus and some turtles swimming about in the river under the road bridge.



We made our way along the Great Walking Trail, East for a short way then headed off into the rainforest to locate the trees that Penny showed us with the Pseudo vanilla Vines growing upon them. This time I didn't see any flowers but observed they had long beans hanging down from the tree trunks. There are no less than four examples in this cluster and some were dying off. The blooms are usually very spectacular.

We pushed on from here, along a trail marked on my GPS map as an old road. This was the original access from Netherdale up and along the escarpment to make its way to The Diggings. No trace of any road today but we did witness some coloured tape on trees from previous expeditions. We later came upon a clearing on the escarpment; a grassed area with fewer trees where we had a grand view of the Pioneer Valley all the way to Eungella Chalet and clear patches to the North which Peter suggested was Fredricksen's farm. We were at Catherine's Lookout. Spent a short while here taking in the view and cool breezes.



Our next objective was to Palms Lookout but we had to push through dense bush at times which slowed progress. Consequently our lunch spot wasn't reached at The Palms but we did settle for an equally good viewing point under clumps of these palm trees. They seemed to be along the top of the rim for some distance which at times allowed easier traversing over their carpet of fronds on the forest floor. Our lookout here was hence named 'Coles lookout' as it was just Down, Down, from there but Penny ruled it should be known as Palms Grove.

Our group decided to return from this point, making our journey in half the time as a few shortcuts were easily found with the aid of satellite technology. The leeches made their presence, as usual, and succumbed to the swift action of the Roll on RID application. At the river crossing a welcomed swim was appreciated. Adequate facilities at Broken River made for a change of clothes and a spruce up, a brief chat to reminisce about the day's activity and then 'home James' via the range descent.



Thanks to our newer members Donna and Ian, Carol, Rosie, and to our seasoned walkers, Wendy and Peter, Carole, Daphne, Penny and Bryan. An enjoyable day, a new destination ticked off and great company.

Bryan

Scawfell Island 4th, 5th & 6th March 2017

10 members of the Mackay Bushwalking Club joined with 2 Wildmob members for an exciting and adventurous 3 day trip to Scawfell Island, approximately 30 nautical miles north-east of Mackay in the south Cumberland Island Group, on Wildmob's "Wild Cat" catamaran. Saturday morning being wet and windy and the seas rough, our trip did not start off well for some members who succumbed to sea sickness. However once we reached our destination – Refuge Bay (aptly named) - sea-sickness disappeared and the fun began. We set up our tents under shady casuarina trees on the beachfront, with million dollar views and the sound of waves lapping gently on the shore.



Our first adventure was a trip in the tender exploring close to the rocky coastline, checking out the reef and investigating a small sandy bay with much evidence of recent turtle activity. Although late in the turtle nesting season there were many turtle tracks still visible. We ate all our meals on the "Wild Cat", and after dinners lazed on the deck chatting, watching turtles and admiring the sunsets. Boobook owls called to each other throughout the night.

Steve and Kerensa from Wildmob, had long had on their "bucket list" a walk from Refuge Bay over the saddle and down to the southern side of the island, and with the assistance of the Bushwalkers, this was their opportunity. None of us knew anyone who had previously walked it, so it was unknown territory to all of us. Looking at the proposed walk over the saddle from the catamaran, it appeared it could be an arduous expedition as the vegetation appeared thick and difficult to penetrate. However even with a few misgivings we were all keen to "give it a go".

We set out early on Saturday morning. Once we were past the beach scrub, we headed up a steep, rocky gully, and were surprised and delighted to find that under the thick tree coverage the undergrowth was not at all as bad as we had expected. There were many tall Hoop Pines which provided good shade, but we had to be wary of tripping on the many vines. 2 Children's Pythons provided some excitement, and we enjoyed the company of many butterflies. Once



over the saddle we continued down another steep rocky gully and eventually reached the small sandy unnamed bay which had been our hoped-for destination. We were very hot and although the tide was out we were keen to have a wallow in the water. Unfortunately for Vaughan he had to "sit it out" as his boot had come unglued on the journey and we had taped his boot to his foot.

After a leisurely lunch, rest and a bit of exploring we did our bit for "Clean Up Australia" Day, collecting mainly plastic, including crates & a buoy from the beach and surrounding rocks. Jason took the prize, finding an extremely heavy battery. We filled several large bags with rubbish.



After returning to camp from our visit to the "other side" it was definitely time for a swim before Steve instructed us on the correct use of our snorkelling equipment. The evening was spent exploring the beach by torchlight with

small fish swimming in the shallow water, and spiders' eyes gleaming on the sand. A gentle breeze and moonlight added to the ambience of the evening.

Monday morning saw us practicing our snorkelling around Refuge Bay. After dismantling camp we sailed around to the bay we had visited the day before. While Steve & Carole went ashore to collect the rubbish, the rest of the group snorkelled over the nearby reef. Wow, we were all enthralled by the beauty of the reef. Although there was evidence of coral bleaching, there were still many beautiful coloured corals – pink, blue, mauve. Giant clam shells and tropical reef fish of all shapes & sizes with incredible colours, turtles & some small reef sharks, we really didn't want to leave.

In sharp contrast to our trip over, the ocean was calm on the way home with no one being sea sick.

Penny McMahon

Co-ordinator

The participants on this trip were

Bushwalkers – Penny McMahon, Agie Smith, Elaine Nicolson, Carole Weekes, Vaughan Munro, Donna Burgess, Ian Burgess, Sian Owen, Jason Ferris and Alan Chalmers

Wild Mob – Steve Fisher & Kerensa McCallie

The Gooseponds Saturday 4th March



Eight people had booked for the day, right on cue, the heavens opened as we assembled at the Willets Rd Park. After waiting for the rain to ease a bit, Dale, Therese, Wendy and myself decided to brave the conditions and go walking, paddling anyway. Within an hour or so the rain had gone. However the downpour had caused local flooding, covering the track in places and flooding the Windmill Crossing. Here we turned back. Along the way, Jenny appeared on her two wheels and joined us. She had to see if anyone was crazy enough to go walking in the rain. We had an early smoko back at the cars before heading off in the other direction towards the actual Gooseponds circuit. It was

literally good weather for ducks, and chooks, and their feathered friends of all shapes and sizes. We were back at the cars again by 11am after what turned out to be a pleasant jaunt. Wendy and Therese had not tested the area before and were favourably impressed.

Creek Walk Sunday 12th March



The Diggings-Broken River, Buck Creek. Sunday 19th March

We mustered nineteen starters and four Fourbys to bring our group to the campground at "The Diggings" alongside Broken River. Some large groups recently which is encouraging, possibly Charles' recent publicity is paying off.

We were reminded that thunderstorms were a possibility today, and some extra notes in the briefing about high water levels due to recent weather so tracking along the river bank was difficult so high bank traversing was the option. We encountered quite a bit of Lantana at times so rerouting became necessary. But have secateurs will travel.

We wondered what type of bird call that was, only to realise Julie had let forth with an exclamation when she saw a snake disappearing under a log. It was funny really, but just as frightening when I later encountered a brown lizard staring me the face. Looked like a snake to me too, until he took off in opposite direction. I don't know who received the greater fright.

Relatively good progress downstream to the Washpool, however we missed some regular landmarks due to the high water and different route. Washpool had a stick protruding and when pulled upwards, it revealed the tub was well over eight feet deep. Rather amazing that the swirling action of rocks over the years had carved out a neat feature. We moved onto our next stop on the river course proper below the waterfalls. Our water babies took the opportunity to have a refreshing swim in the pools and all of us to take a smoko break. Water was slightly muddied but didn't deter the faithful.

Our turn off up Buck Creek was reached soon after but since we had made it here early, we decided to press on further downstream to Frances' regular Lunch spot under the Pine trees. This is where we had an early lunch as an impending storm cloud gave us the feeling our stop was going to be brief. Well a short shower did eventuate so it was out with the broly and raincoats and backtrack to Buck Creek, our lunch break cut short. Buck Creek is a short stream with relatively good access and the small water fall upstream was our direction to head bush, uphill! It was encouraging to hear fellow walkers remarking how heading uphill is preferable to descending. Maybe they don't like sewing up the seats in their trousers... Once at the top of the spur, we came across the road again and it was time to explore the old diggings.

We located the pits where old time gold miners sought their fortune. One pit was prominent with its deep shaft and cross trench. Half our group persevered on to find more pits while others ventured the short distance to the cars. Well it was not to be, thinking we had escaped the usual onslaught of bugs and leeches, we got attacked in the last 100 metres return through some rainforest to the cars. Geez.. You can be unlucky.

Hey, thanks everyone for coming and enjoying the day, although slightly wet. Thanks also to Garry for the GPS files which made locations easier to find. Nice to meet new faces and hope to see you all again soon.

Bryan