



# The Message Stick

## February 2013

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

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### Future Events

Mt Blackwood Exploratory .....	3 <sup>rd</sup> February
Pigeon Creek .....	10 <sup>th</sup> February
Urannah Creek Camp .....	16 <sup>th</sup> & 17 <sup>th</sup> February
General Meeting .....	20 <sup>th</sup> February
Navigation Training .....	21 <sup>st</sup> February
The Junction .....	24 <sup>th</sup> February
Navigation Training .....	28 <sup>th</sup> February
Teemdeavour Loop .....	3 <sup>rd</sup> March



**Group 1**  
**At the beginning and end of the**  
**80km Heaphy Track**  
**We Did It!**

### Club Officers

President	Dan McKinlay	49534249	Contact Officer	Cheryl Brodie	49552895
Vice President	Garry Hendicott	49440236	Walks Coordinator	Frances Eiteneuer	49576028
Secretary	Kathy Cant	49522269	Assist Walks Coordinator	Coral Morgan	49578474
Treasurer	Cheryl Brodie	49552895	Newsletter Editor	Jenny Wooding	49440236
Safety Officer	KevinSmith	49696068	Publicity Officer	Rob Kollin	49512490
Equipment Officer	Garry Hendicott	49440236	Social Coordinator	Dan McKinlay	49534249

### *From the Editor*

Happy New Year to everyone! It's a very full and newsy newsletter this month so happy reading!  
Firstly Kevin is doing a great job in his role of safety officer. He has been to visit the people at CQ Rescue helicopter and has put together some very useful information which will be included in this newsletter. He is also very generously donating his time to run another map reading course. All those who attended the last one found it to be very beneficial.

The trip to New Zealand was a huge success and Dan did a mighty job of organising and getting us all through. **Dan we can't thank you enough!** Penny has done a great job on the write ups for both walks but I am holding over the Kaikoura Coast Track write up until next month as there is so much for this newsletter already. Both walks were wonderful and both very different to each other. I would like to say thanks to everyone who helped me out on the first day of the Heaphy when I had a vomiting virus to deal with, especially Jeanette for running back to take my pack at the end of the day and Garry for having to put up with me!

I'm looking forward to catching up with those who went on to further travels in New Zealand.  
Fingers crossed not too many walks will need to be cancelled due to wet weather!

Our Publicity Officer is Rob Kollin  
[robertskool@gld.chariot.net.au](mailto:robertskool@gld.chariot.net.au)

Please email Rob any photos you think would look good in the newspaper.

Items for the next newsletter  
should be sent to  
[jennywooding@dodo.com.au](mailto:jennywooding@dodo.com.au)  
prior to 21<sup>st</sup> February

### **Key to Walks Grading System**

<b>Distance</b>	<b>Terrain</b>	<b>Terrain</b>
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

### ***Safety Officer Segment***

Whenever walkers are required to provide co-ordinates to CQ Rescue staff or helicopter, please be aware of different co-ordinate formats. They only accept two formats. Preferred is "Degrees, Minutes, Decimal Minutes" (DD:MM.MMM) They will also accept "Degrees, Minutes, Seconds". (DD:MM:SS) both formats based on WGS 84 Datum. They need to know which format is given.

Note that they are not able to accept UTM/UPS (Zone, Eastings, Northings)  
They are definitely not able to accept the abbreviated Co-Ords often used by bushwalkers.

It is important leaders are familiar with how to obtain the correct format from GPS or map.

Also with regards communications with the helicopter crew, their primary aircraft "Rescue 412" (VHNVS) is fitted with a UHF radio as well as the rescue winch. Their secondary aircraft is not fitted with UHF. Channel 5 is the legally set aside emergency channel under the Class Licence. (note from equipment officer – Our radios can operate on channel 5 in both simplex and duplex modes, if you don't know what this means please ask).

Don't forget, in the event of any evacuation or medical incident, any medication and/or treatment administered to a casualty is to be documented and this should go with the patient.

# 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**

**Please keep in mind walks may have to be cancelled this time of the year due to rain.**

## Map Reading and Navigation Training Course

**Leader:** KevinSmith 49696068

### Dates

Thurs 21 Feb 2013	7:30pm – 9:15pm	Map Theory
Thurs 28 Feb 2013	7:30pm – 9:15pm	Compass Theory
Wed 6 March 2103	7:30pm – 9:15pm	G.P.S. Theory
Sun 10 March 2013	07:00 am – 5pm	Practical Day

**Limited numbers.**

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### Mt Blackwood Exploratory Sunday 3 February

**Leader:** Kathy Cant 49522269 / 0423 046187

**Depart:** 7am

**Journey:** 60km \$6

**Grade:** Exploratory

**Estimated walking time:** 6 hours

**Pace:** average **Terrain:** potentially rough underfoot, creek bed. **Vegetation:** rainforest,

This will be to an area of Mt Blackwood not visited by the club before so actual amount of uphill is unknown as well as the state of vegetation we will encounter. We will commence by following a small creek bed off the access road.

### Pigeon Creek Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> February

**Leader:** Coral Morgan 49578474

**Depart:** 7am

**Journey:** 130km \$13

**Map Ref:** Mirani 780733 to 759738

**Grade:** M75

**Estimated walking time:** 5 hours **Total of uphill sections:** 250m **Terrain:** Rainforest. **Expect:** rockhopping and steep scramble, some small swimming holes.

This stream dubbed Pigeon creek, is a tributary of Dalrymple Creek in the Mt Charlton area. It is a small pretty stream that culminates in a delicate waterfall. If we can get up past the falls and cross the creek we could return part of the way via a ridge. Be prepared for swimming.

### Urannah Creek Camp

#### Saturday and Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> February

**Leader:** Steven Morgan  
(4954 0037, 0418 882 817)

**Depart:** 7:00am

**Journey:** 200km \$20.00

**Grade:** M87

**Camping Fee:** \$5.45 per person.

**Map Ref:** Mirani 696766 (all grid refs for this walk are AGD 66)

**Day 1:**

**Estimated walking time:** 5 hours **Total of all uphill sections:** 450m **Pace:** average **Terrain:** very uneven terrain **Vegetation:** rain forest **Expect:** some steep slopes, leeches possible.

## Day 2:

**Estimated walking time:** 7 hours **Total of all uphill sections:** 320m **Pace:** average **Terrain:** very uneven terrain **Vegetation:** rain forest **Expect:** some steep slopes, mostly rockhopping, very steep scrambles, swimming holes, difficult creek crossings.

**What to bring:** Adequate backpack, water proof sleeping shelter, sleeping bag, wet weather gear, food for 2 days, cooking stove (NO OPEN FIRES ARE ALLOWED) and cooking and eating equipment, reliable torch, personal first aid equipment.

We will follow the Western Trail towards Mt Dalrymple and then head into the head waters of Urrannah Creek for our camp about 2 km downstream from the source. On Sunday, without the weight of our camping gear, we will walk further downstream past several waterfalls and swimming holes to the main Urannah Creek Falls. These falls are descended by a steep route at the side of the falls. Back to our campsite by lunch and then the walk back out the Western Trail. This top section of Urannah Creek is excellent value and well worth a visit. You will need to be reasonably fit for this walk. Water will be available throughout most of the walk. **PLEASE BOOK WITH THE LEADER ASAP IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THIS CAMP.**

### **Induction 6.45pm/ General Meeting 7.30pm Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February**

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

### **The Junction Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> February**

**Leader:** Coral Morgan 49578474

**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. After some rockhopping and another steep climb we can make it to the top of Doolamai then back to the cars by way of overgrown track. There will be great opportunities for swimming. You will need to be prepared to complete the entire walk as this is a round trip.

### **Teemdeavour Loop Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March**

**Leader:** Garry Hendicott 49440236

**Depart:** 6am

**Journey:** 160km \$16

**Map Ref:** Mirani 749 517

**Grade:** L56

**Walking Time:** 7 hours **Total of uphill:** 300m

**Terrain:** Creek banks, rocks, long grass

**Expect:** Cow pads, fairly easy creek bank walking, some rock hopping, short steep scrambles, bush bashing, swimming.

Although this is a familiar area, this is a new walk, a variation/combination of Teemburra and Endeavour Creek walks covering some new sections. We will start at Captain's Crossing and head upstream towards Teemburra Dam (instead of the usual downstream). A fairly leisurely stroll up Teemburra will bring us to the junction with Endeavour Creek (3.3km). We will then divert into Endeavour Creek and follow it upstream to a small waterhole (2.2km). From here we will "scramble" (hands and knees) up a short but steep grassy gully to pick up the road (300m). Once on the road we will travel north (2.2km). Leaving the road we will bush bash on a compass bearing (106.8°) to pick up a ridge and eventually reach Teemburra Creek atop a small waterfall leading down to the "Big Waterhole" (1.4km). There will be another "scramble" down to the waterhole. The aim is to be at the waterhole for a slightly late but extended lunch with copious swimming and frolicking. The final leg will be north up Teemburra back to the cars (2.7km). All up we will be covering around 13km's so although not overly difficult, it is a long day, hence the early 6am start, you will be glad of the swim at the big waterhole by the time you get there.

## **Bungle Bungle and Kakadu 2013**

**Dates** Approx 22 June 2013 8 July 2013.

**Part 1** Bungle Bungle Range. Dates :- 23 June to 28 June

Spend 6 days at Bungle Bungles, 2 days of day walks and tourist camping. Explore the Domes, Cathedral Gorge, Echidna Chasm, Mini Palms Gorge and hopefully Whipsnake Gorge.

4 day 3 night walk in Piccaninny Gorge.

**Part 2** Kakadu Arnhem Land Plateau Dates :- 1 July to 7 July

7 day 6 night 72 km through-walk from Twin Falls, up Twin Falls Creek and back down Jim Jim Creek to exit at Jim Jim Falls. This is a somewhat exploratory through walk off track. Limited to experienced multi-day walkers though pace will be easy with not much elevation change.

Travel details yet to be finalised. Some walkers may choose to only do the Kakadu section. Limited to 8 walkers.

Those interested contact Kevin Smith 4969 6068.

## *Previous Activities*

### **Black's Creek 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2012**

On a hot early summer day, a group of 10, led by Frances, walked up Black's Creek. As there had been virtually no rain since July, the creek water was very low and we commenced walking over a wide, hot, dry, sand and pebble/rock creek bed before reaching the far bank. At times the going was easy along shady, grassed areas and sometimes we needed to push through lantana. Many cicada cases were found clinging to tree trunks. Morning tea was taken at the usual spot under the huge tree – 10 of us were just able to encircle the trunk of it. What a fabulous shady tree & what stories it could tell!

On a side section of bank we encountered strange depressions with what appeared to be scratch marks and smooth lick areas. No scats or dung or footprints of any sort were found to enlighten us as to what may have caused these marks and depressions. This engendered much speculation but no solution.

The high route and the low route came just before our lunch break. The low route – which had looked easier to some – became an obstacle course of trying to scramble over tangled tree roots and not fall in the water whilst trying to ignore green ant bites.

We had a leisurely lunch and some rested while others of us wallowed in the water – it could hardly be classed as a swim but it was welcome and refreshing. Paul, under the illusion of being chivalrous, and somehow saving Coral if the water was too deep, wandered off along the far bank and did not catch up with us for some time. What was he thinking!

We retraced our route back and on the way Kevin fished unsuccessfully for some sooty grunter and I took the opportunity for a fully clothed swim in a reasonable pool of water.

Penny



## Heaphy Track, Kahurangi National Park, New Zealand

### Group 1

2012/2013

Organisation for this walk began much earlier in the year and Dan had done a meticulous, mammoth job of organisation, re-organisation and more re-organisation before the trip began. So many of us were eager to go that it necessitated there being two groups, Dan leading the first group of 14 and Eric leading the second group (eventually only of 3) on the following day. He once reported along the lines "if he still had any hair it would all have been pulled out by now".

Our first "event" occurred at Brisbane airport before we even left Australia – the names on Paul's passport and ticket were not the same, and only by some deft negotiation on Dan's part was he allowed to board the airplane, and subsequently some more negotiation with a different airline so that he could come back. Jenny also had major stress (and on her birthday) with the extremely slow airline check-in staff, and was ready to pull her hair out. Never-the-less 12 of us from the first group and Hank from the second group all eventually arrived at our accommodation in Nelson (after a fair delay at Auckland airport) and managed to get to bed close to midnight. Margaret also joined the group in Nelson.

Our priority next morning was shopping for food and gas, which had to be done before we vacated our accommodation. I for one opted for the easy and light option of Back Country Cuisine, muesli, cheese & crackers, nuts and dried fruit. Others dined far more elaborately. I have vividly in my mind a picture of Paul and Coral sitting on the floor surrounded by food working out how to "divvy" it all up. How Jeanette managed not to break any of her dozen eggs is a miracle. After packing and leaving our bags at the hostel, we had time to walk back into Nelson city and have a lovely alfresco lunch in the delightful Trafalgar Square.

Later in the afternoon, the bus collected us, and after picking up Kiwi Fran at Motueke, drove us to Brown River. Rain had been intermittent on the bus trip and we all made a dash for shelter on arrival. However, after dinner, it cleared and some of us took the opportunity to walk up to the bridge, down to the river and the scenic lookout (not fantastically scenic at that point of time).

#### DAY 1 – BROWN HUT TO PERRY SADDLE HUT (17.5km)



A fine morning and we got underway at 8.30am. Most of us set off eagerly; keen to finally be on our walk. Unfortunately Jenny had a stomach upset, felt lousy, and she & Garry made their way slowly along behind the rest of us. The track climbed steadily upwards all day. How beautiful were the rushing streams and waterfalls, water dripping along the high side of the track, water soaked moss, moss covered trees and mist through the trees. Kiwi Fran told us the beautiful red flowers were Rata tree flowers and pointed out the honeydew that forms on Black Beech trees. We reached Aorere

Shelter for lunch, just before the rain started. It rained/showered for most of the afternoon walk, and we arrived at Perry Saddle Hut very wet. Our extra fit Jeanette arrived at the hut first and then went back to help with Jenny's pack. Perry Saddle Hut is quite new, with quite a spacious kitchen area & drying racks near the fire. But why are the toilets outside, up an incline that becomes a watercourse when it rains and with stepping stones set so far apart! Although we had arrived about 4pm, and had had dinner early, it was too wet to go exploring – so some resorted to playing cards.

#### DAY 2 - PERRY SADDLE HUT TO SAXON HUT (12.4km)

It had rained on and off all night, so we started out all decked out in our wet weather gear, which we eventually shed as it did not rain and we became too hot. Once again, we crossed many creeks & little streams. The track led down through the beech forest before opening out into alpine terrain with tussock grass and many beautiful alpine flowers. At Cave Brook we were fortunate to get a good view of a pair of rare and endangered Whio ducks (aka Blue ducks). Morning tea was enjoyed in the sunshine outside the Goulard Downs Hut situated amidst the tussock grass with good mountain views surrounding us. Not long afterwards we came across the first of our swing bridges at Shiner Book and later the second one at Big River. After that another uphill section,



with more moss forest before opening out again into tussock grass. We reached the rather cramped Saxon Hut about 2pm where we had a late lunch. The rain came in again, which unfortunately curtailed any exploring around this area. There was a fairly unsuccessful attempt at playing games, so the cards came out again.

#### DAY 3 – SAXON HUT TO JAMES MACKAY HUT (11.8km)



A fine start to the day and we followed the track close to the Saxon River for some time, the track was very boggy at times, and boardwalks had been constructed to enable easier walking across some areas skirting the Mackay Downs. The vegetation was mainly tussock and some small beech forests, once again with an incredible variety of mosses and lichens. We were fortunate to encounter a live rare, endangered land snail – apparently another casualty from the introduction of the Australian possum. The streams

and creeks began to take on a brown tannin stained appearance. We reached James Mackay Hut in time for lunch. After lunch 7 of us walked down the steep slippery track to the small creek where it was reported it was possible to bathe. It was not particularly easy gaining access to the creek and the water temperature did not induce any of us to try bathing. We walked along the main track towards Lewis Hut for a few kilometres amusing ourselves by creating “faces” on some of the moss-covered logs. From James Mackay Hut it was possible to see the mouth of the Heaphy River and the coast far off into the distance – it looked a long way off. It was New Year’s Eve, but no one felt able to stay up until midnight, especially knowing we had a long walk ahead of us the next day.

#### DAY 4 – JAMES MACKAY HUT TO HEAPHY HUT (20.5km)

We got off to an early 7.20am start and commenced a gradual descent to the Heaphy River through moss and fern forest. As we descended lower, the red flowers of the Rata trees put on a splendid display with large patches of red being observed throughout the forest. Paul had been having trouble with his backpack for a few days, listing from one side to another and was looking decidedly uncomfortable, but to-day his list had become so pronounced that it appeared he was in danger of toppling over. We arrived at Lewis Hut, at the junction of the Heaphy and Lewis rivers, at lunchtime. Clive and I walked to the new, lengthy and very impressive Heaphy River Swing Bridge to take some photos. During our absence some conversations had occurred – one being that Paul should offload all his pack, the contents of which were divided up between us all. Over subsequent days Paul was the recipient of many back massages, (I think he enjoyed them all although he did state that Margaret had a much more gentle hand than Dan!). We crossed three swing bridges and followed alongside the Heaphy River. From here the terrain was mainly flat all the way to Heaphy Hut at the river mouth. Along this section of track we encountered fabulous giant trees, and also the nikau palms (the only indigenous New Zealand palms) – these palms became more common along the coast. We reached Heaphy Hut about 4pm and it was a joy to have finally reached the coast. Some of us enjoyed a walk along the sand to the river mouth and along the beach where giant logs had been washed ashore. Jeanette – the bravest of us all – opted for a swim.



#### DAY 5 – HEAPHY HUT TO KOHAIHAI SHELTER (16.2km)

Once again we got off to an early start. It was again decided that Paul’s gear should be “divvied out” between us to allow his back to recover. At first we walked through low forest and then the track followed the coast. The West Coast is renowned for its wild seas, and the waves roared and pounded on the beach and rocks beside us, and in many places there were large piles of driftwood (sorry Kate we couldn’t bring any with us). The sky was grey and threatening (fortunately we only encountered light showers) and the wind was strong, all making for very impressive scenery. There were also several small tricky creeks to cross. We shared morning tea with a friendly weka at Katipo Creek Shelter before tackling the beach and rocks at Koura Point. Fran B injured her foot in this area, and

although a long way to hobble with a sore foot, we were fortunate that we were not far from the end of the track. The final assault over the Kohaihai Saddle led us over the Kohaihai River to the Shelter. We timed it just nicely to catch the bus to Karamea and our accommodation at The Last Resort. What joy – hot showers, shampoo, washing machines, cuppacinos & beds. Dan, who had suffered a nasty blister on his heel almost all the walk and Fran B took themselves off to the doctor, who patched them up and ordered Fran B off her feet for a few days. Some of us walked down to the few shops and Information Centre for a look around. Dave, a very friendly bus driver, drove us down to the Karamea Village Hotel for dinner, everyone agreed that the main meal was great.....the dessert.....well...different. The rain poured down all night, but I didn't care, I was happy snuggling up in a warm bed.



## KARAMEA

Just as well we had planned to spend the day around Karamea (waiting for Group 2 to arrive) as the storm that had raged last night had cut roads and caused much flooding. We had arranged with Dave, our friendly/informative/talkative bus driver to drive us up to visit some caves, but the road was closed so we had to go into Plan B – which was a drive around the Karamea/Little Wanganui area. At 10am 10 of joined his bus trip – which included a visit to the beach at Flagstaff for a short beach walk, various points of interest around Karamea, about a 45 minute track walk up to the Big Rimu (a huge Rimu tree which apparently had been spared by earlier loggers due to its circumference being bigger than their saws). We did a short walk at the beginning of the Wangapeka Track to a wide stony section of the scenic Little Wanganui River, ate lunch in the bus near wetlands and enjoyed coffee at the Little Wanganui Hotel, arriving back at The Last Resort at 4pm. Meanwhile, Eric, Pam and Hank from Group 2 had arrived at The Last Resort and it was time to catch up on their news. We all enjoyed a final dinner together, and Clive and Margaret entertained us with a song about each one of us to the tune of “The Quartermaster’s Store”.



The next morning was free to do whatever pleased us. Some went to the shops, some rested and others walked to the Karamea River estuary, checking out Flagstaff Tidal Lagoon and the area which had been the harbour before the Murchison earthquake in 1929 silted up the harbour and made it useless. After lunch the bus took us to various destinations, Eric and Pam to Murchison, where they were going to undertake a kayak course. Kiwi Fran left us and went home to Motueke. The rest of us went to Nelson – 10 of us later went on to walk the Kaikoura Coast Track and 4 hired cars and went touring.

I enjoyed this walk so much. Dan did a sterling job of planning and organisation. The weather was generally kind to us. Thank you all so much for your company along the track.

Penny McMahon



*Our Fearless Leader  
In the Bush  
Can You Pick the Gorilla?*