

A CENTURY OF CONSERVATION

1914-2014

DUNPHYS KOWMUNG ADVENTURE 2014

SEPTEMBER 26TH TO OCTOBER 6TH

KATOOMBA TO PICTON



DUNPHY'S KOWMUNG ADVENTURE 2014
ADVICE AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR WALKERS

1914 LOG
YOUR LOG
WORDS
EQUIPMENT AND PROVISIONS

General Instructions for filming this adventure.

Keep a daily diary or log.

- Take photos where indicated so they match those taken by Myles
- Note when the country changes e.g. land use be it forestry plantation, clearing for farms, etc.
- Note when you have a meal similar to Dunphy's e.g. damper.
- Ask yourself why Myles mistook his position.
- What is it that makes you have a sense of wonder?
- Follow directions for good still photos and videos especially close up shots, and use a tripod to steady the shots.
- We need footage at campfires, at lunch, river crossings, and when discussing navigation. Imagine as if you were there in 1914.
- Carry scales to weigh your packs.

TRACK NOTES 1914 : SPEAKING AS MYLES

G'DAY WALKERS MYLES DUNPHY HERE. IT'S 1914 AND WE IN

AUSTRALIA ARE A LONG WAY FROM THE WAR. DUE TO CHILDHOOD ILLNESS I HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED FROM ENLISTING IN THE ARMED FORCES. I SUPPOSE THAT WALKING THROUGH THE BUSH IS AN ACTIVITY THAT REQUIRES LESS FITNESS THAN FIGHTING; WELL WE WILL SEE, EH? IN MY TIME BUSHWALKING WAS KNOWN AS "TRAILING" DERIVED FROM OUR CLUB THE "MOUNTAIN TRAILS CLUB" BUT THAT IS ANOTHER STORY, FOR LATER AROUND THE CAMPFIRE.

I'VE BEEN WALKING THE BUSH FOR MANY YEARS NOW, THOUGH I'M STILL A "YOUNG · UN" AT 22. I'VE GOT A GOOD JOB THAT GIVES ME TIME OFF TO TAKE PART IN LONG WALKS LIKE THE ONE YOU ARE ABOUT TO EMBARK ON. I'LL TELL YOU A FEW THINGS THAT HAPPENED TO US ALONG THE WAY.

MY FRIEND BERT GALLOP AND I SET OUT FROM KATOOMBA TO EXPLORE THE KOWMUNG RIVER. ORIGINALLY WE HAD HOPED TO MAKE IT TO PENRITH BUT THIS WAS TO BE TOO FAR. WE HAVE JOBS TO GET BACK TO IN SYDNEY (ALTHOUGH BERT HAS SPENT THE LAST FEW WEEKS PAINTING BESIDE THE NEPEAN RIVER. WE WERE REALLY LUCKY TO BE GIVEN TWO WEEKS OFF TO DISAPPEAR INTO THE WILDS OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS. AS EVER WE MAKE THE MOST OF IT.

WE BOUGHT A RETURN TRAIN TICKET, SINCE IT WAS ENTIRELY LIKELY WE WOULD END IN KATOOMBA BACK WHERE WE STARTED, AND IN ANY CASE PENRITH IS ON THE SAME LINE.

SO WE ARE HERE AT KATOOMBA FOR THE FIRST LEG OF OUR LONG JOURNEY. I WAS EXCITED BY MY LAST VISIT TO THIS AREA FROM THE PICTON SIDE AND HAD GLIMPSES INTO THE MYSTERIOUS VALLEYS AND RANGES OF THE KOWMUNG. THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF PLANNING FOR THIS ADVENTURE: FOOD, EQUIPMENT AND ESTIMATING TIMES AND DISTANCES. I DID NOT WANT TO DO IT ALONE AND BERT AND I HAD TO MAKE A QUICK DECISION TO GO ON SHORT NOTICE. OUR OTHER MATE WHO MAY HAVE COME WENT OFF TO THE WAR.

ALL OF YOU ARE VERY LUCKY; DOING OUR PIONEERING JOURNEY IN SHORTER STAGES. PAY ATTENTION TO THE TRACK NOTES I HAVE COMPILED TO HELP YOU ON YOUR BUSH TRAILING. GOOD LUCK AND ENJOY THE BUSH; OH! AND THIS TIME YOU CAN'T LIVE OFF THE LAND.

"ANTICIPATION IS HALF THE PLEASURE OF A TRIP." BERT SYMONS. AND IN REPLY.....

"I KNOW IT, BUT UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS NOTHING TANGIBLE ABOUT ANTICIPATION." MYLES DUNPHY. OCT, 1914.

STAGE 1 KATOOMBA TO JENOLAN CAVES

Day 1 Katoomba Station to Megalong Ford

- From the Cultural Centre after much formality and speeches you will proceed with your Adventure Guides to the Great Western Highway. (*Strictly speaking this should start at Katoomba Railway Station at 9:50 PM. Myles' train left Central at 7:00 P.M. pulled by a steam locomotive.*) This of course is the line of Coxs Road built in 1815. Imagine the ghosts of horse drawn carts and much more bush close by. Is it any different now?
- Along the Highway to the "Explorer's Marked Tree". There were no street lights, so in the dark, cloudy night Myles and Bert "assumed the sight of owls" to find the turn-off to Nellies Glen and the Six Foot Track.

Question for you: Was it really Blaxland Lawson and Wentworth who marked the tree?

- "NEAR THE MARKED TREE WE WERE CONFRONTED BY A BEAST IN THE DARK AND WOULD HAVE GIVEN IT A LEADEN LESSON BUT WE WEREN'T READY. MUST HAVE BEEN A DINGO".

Walkers, do you think a dingo would live here now? And what would you do if you were so confronted by one? Myles and Bert continued on into Nellies Glen which was steep and winding but the track was still in good condition. The Six Foot Track constructed in 1884 was only known as such from 1937 and had been used for foot and cart traffic from the Megalong Valley.

At the head of Nellies Glen in deep darkness Myles and Bert lit a candle to see their way. I suppose you would use an LED head torch, (you wimps!). Myles Advice when walking the Glen in the dark was;

"DON'T STEP ON YOUR SHADOW, OTHERWISE YOU MIGHT BE LET DOWN NICELY (i.e. fall)."

"REST SEVERAL TIMES TO AVOID 'WOBBLY LEG' SYNDROME AS IT IS VERY STEEP, AND THE STEEPEST IS ABOUT HALF WAY DOWN WHERE IT JIGS AND TWISTS ABOUT IN A DEWILDERING FASHION."

- As you pass down Nellies Glen imagine the miners using this track in the 19th Century. I wonder if Myles was aware of this history?
- You will pass by the spot at the bottom of Nellies Glen where Myles and Bert made their first camp at midnight, but you Centenarians will continue on to Megalong Ford. Where

do you think this camp was? It was near the creek and was level ground.

Clue: Myles managed to spill all the tea leaves in the sand and forest litter. Next day he got a pound of tea from a homestead and paid one shilling and three pence; 1s.3d.

N.B. Nellies Glen and the Upper Valleys are the site of many rare plants including the endangered species *Microstrobos fitzgeraldii* and *Leionema lachnaeoides*. Although Myles would have seen these in the daytime there is no indication he was aware of these or any other rare species of flora and fauna.

DAY 2 Megalong Ford to Black Range

On this day you must eat raisins as Bert and Myles did when they came to the first creek from Narrow Neck. Where do you think that is? Or was it yesterday where the fire road from Dicksons Ladders joins the Six Foot Track?

After leaving Megalong Ford via the Track you will “top a rise and the Coxs River ridges come into view”. Where the track reaches the Coxs River gorge and turns south there is a place showing “*the prospect down the gorge from the track, the dark mass of Minni Minni Range and . . . beyond that the Black Range.*”

N.B. Minni Minni is also called Gibraltar Rocks.

Note that in 1914 , “*the opposite side of the gorge still in its natural state is particularly rough and very steep in places. On our*

side where the track is, the timber has been ringbarked and burnt off and presents a dismal spectacle.”

At this point you should find the approximate location of the first photo and view the route forward.



Photo from Diary Page 7 Along the Six Foot Track

Here is a clearer photo



By the way, how's the weather at the moment walkers? Bert and Myles were looking at ominous clouds which nearly hid the Black Range and you might want to get a move on in case the Coxs River is up. But I forgot, there's a swing bridge where once was a ford.

I'll bet those 50 pound swags were getting heavy and a bit of rain on them would only increase their weight. That's why you carry a set of scales. The intrepid pair reported that this area had 25 inches of rain in 3 weeks in October 1913. They were interested in changes in the country as a result, such as erosion and “granite detritus brought down” from “the Minni Minni range to form ridges near the base.

Across the Coxs River the Adventure party moves on and others return by the same route back across the bridge to the Megalong Ford.

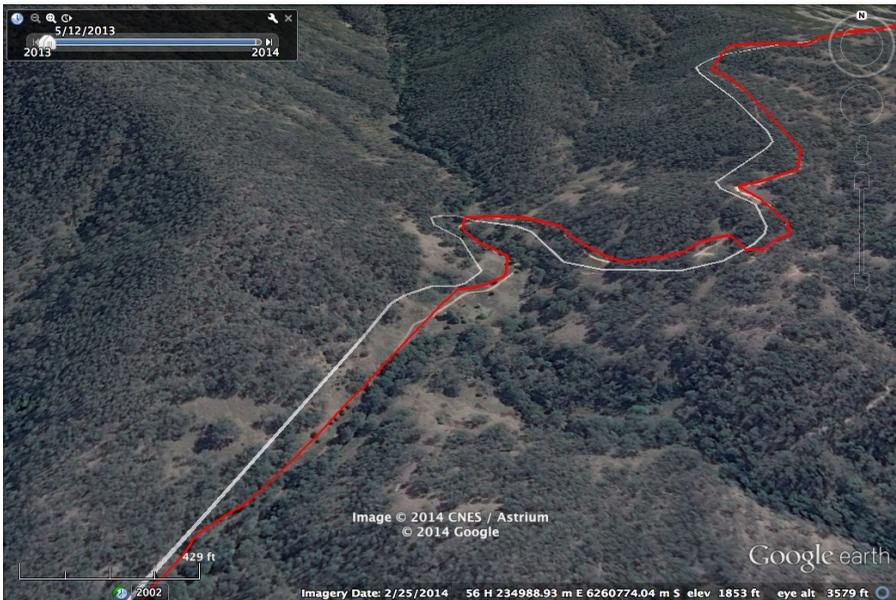
You now ascend the Minni Minni range, but after a rest I hope. Myles always advised to rest after a good lunch, a point of contention between him and some others in the Mountain Trails Club.

Do you notice any depositional areas on these lower slopes even though you are on a track? And don't forget to eat the

raisins to power you up the steep slopes.

Advice for unwary climbers who hurry in haste: **"WE FIND IT BEST, NO MATTER WHAT THE GRADE IS, TO STICK TO A CERTAIN SPEED WHICH ALLOWS OF THE MOST SPEED WITH THE LEAST EFFORT."**

And take time out to take in the views. Now for the descent to the Little River. Are there many rabbits here? There were in 1914 and at many other places along the way and in the Kowmung wilderness. Here it's also worth looking carefully at the 1:25K topo map and seeing how many creeks are actually named in the Little River catchment.



Is this perhaps where Myles and Bert met the shepherd and

where might the hut have been? This was Camp 2 (1864ft) for the pair and it was cold and wet. But they had the new, specially made light weight Japara tent that was to be the future of “trailing”, later known as bushwalking.

PHOTOS REQUIRED AT THIS SITE. Do you think you located a possible hut site and the river flat where Myles camped?

Now you have the pleasure of continuing on up the Black Range and making camp on high. In 1914 when the lads made an early start they were delayed for an hour chatting to the shepherd. For years bushwalkers have had a relationship with the people living in the bush.

Finally they *“hit the track again at 8:45”* climbing the range in fog. It's a long climb but the whole bush atmosphere got hold of Myles at this point: *“the spirit of the bush, the hour and the surroundings got hold of me. I simply let myself go, yelled a song or two and cooed loud and long.”* He did a bit of fancy cursing later as his energies dropped with the cold and fog and the load of the swag. Half way up they noticed a grey kangaroo and tried to shoot it as young folks did in those days. But the climb had to be done.

Do you notice the condition of the track which he described

as rough and steep? Eating lots of raisins of course. Make sure you tuck in yourselves.

After reaching the top of Black Harry the track must have been quite narrow since he remarks: *“The bushes and any amount of yearling saplings leaned over the track. It was “some wet”.* And he says they got *“a glorified shower bath”* as a result.

And now for some food at this stage (5896S: 23048E) since here they had lunch which consisted of black sausage (or pudding) bread and Dundee Marmalade Jam.

After this they continued on Black Range and it was very wet and cold. Myles was weary since he had left home feeling unwell.

It was so wet they sought shelter under two big partly hollow trees. This was about 2.5 miles from the Jenolan Caves Road at 228748E: 625875S. Two drovers came by with a few bullocks taking them down to Bulls Camp on the Jenolan River.

After this YOU will proceed to your Camp 2. And you must have the new fangled American Heinz Baked Beans which Myles claimed were *“..an eye opener. Never before in camp had we tasted anything as good.”*

DAY 3 Black Range Camp to Jenolan Caves

Reaching the Jenolan Road they were passed by the only people they met on the road, a man on a motorcycle with a woman in the sidecar.

You will pass the Binda Bush Cottages which have been renamed Jenolan Cottages A pity as the name Binda is Gundungarra language meaning deep water. This may be the site for the Kia-ora Boarding House mentioned by Myles. They then turned off the road to head down the ridge track which was originally a pack horse route.

It is now a straightforward walk to Jenolan Caves, but pause to look through Carlotta Arch and the Devil's Coachhouse, features which truly amazed Myles.

END STAGE 1 - Jenolan Caves car park.

N.B. to the new crew for Stage 2! Have you picked up your supplies for the walk over Kanangra Walls road to the Hollanders River?

You should have 14lbs of flower and 4lb Jam as well as other items.

If it is too much, follow Myles' decision to leave some behind near a tent at Jenolan Caves.

Eucalyptus and other plants of note along the way.

Day 1: Katoomba to Nellies Glen *Eucalyptus oreades*, *E. sieberi*.

Nellies Glen bottom of cliffs to Megalong Ford *Eucalyptus mannifera*,
Angophora costata.

Day 2: Megalong Ford to Coxs River *Eucalyptus crebra*. *Casuarina*
cunninghamiana River She-oak)

Black Range *Eucalyptus fastigata*, *E. pauciflora* Snow Gum.

Day 3: Jenolan Caves *Eucalyptus bicostata*.

Fauna of Note

Grey Kangaroos

Mountain Lowrys or Crimson Rosella

Wombats



Dunphy's Kowmung Adventure

Photo of the Walk Map that was used at all the camp sites. Walkers and supporters signed this map along the borders at the camps. The vinyl map is unique and will be deposited in the archives for future generations to reference.

The map was compiled by Wyn Jones from the maps of Myles Dunphy, the walk badge by Jenni Gormley and art work of Wyn Jones.

