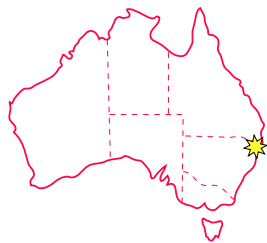


BUSHWALKING

in the
Rainbow Region



Michael Smith





This **Bushwalking Guide** describes 59 day-walks in the area between Tweed Heads, Yamba and Woodenbong, in the Northern Rivers of NSW.





DAY WALK GRADINGS (used in this book).

Grade 1 (Easy). Opportunity for a large number of walkers, including those with reduced walking ability to walk on well marked and even tracks. Tracks are man made and may have a few steps. Should not be steep. Suitable for beginners. Distance should not exceed about 10km.

Grade 2 (Easy-medium). Easy walk, mostly on tracks of low gradient Opportunity to walk easily in natural environments on well marked tracks. Tracks should not be steep. Distance should not exceed about 15km. Suitable for beginners.

Grade 3 (Medium). Medium walk with some hilly sections &/or rougher terrain. Opportunity to walk on defined & distinct tracks with some steep sections requiring a moderate level of fitness. Suitable for beginners. Distance should not exceed about 20 km.

Grade 4 (Medium-Hard). Steeper, rougher terrain & may have off-track sections (no more than one quarter of the walk), or a longer distance track walk. Opportunity to explore and discover relatively undisturbed natural environments mostly along defined & distinct tracks. Tracks can be steep. There may be short sections of rock scrambling involved. Leaders should have map reading abilities and/or ability to use a compass. Distance depending on circumstances. Not suitable for most beginners.

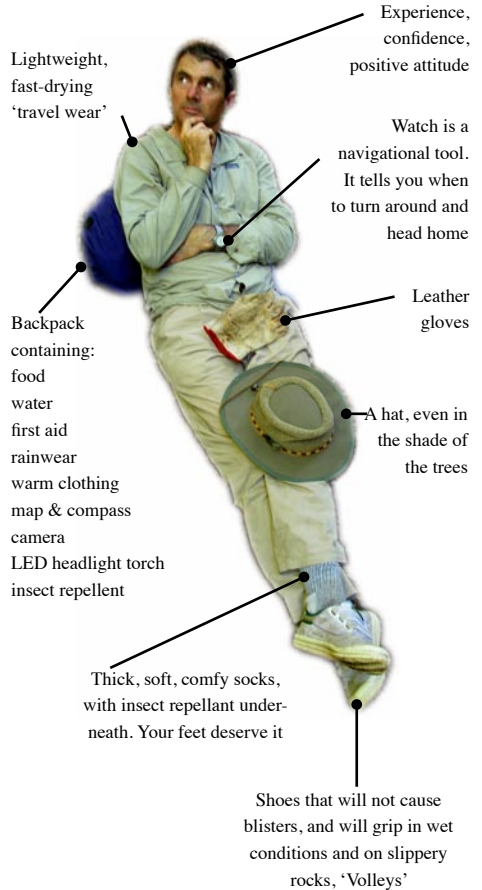
Grade 5 (Hard). Off-track or difficult terrain. Opportunity for walkers with advanced outdoor knowledge and skills to find their own way along often indistinct tracks or off track in remote locations. May include steep sections of unmodified surfaces. There may be rock scrambling, creek walking & crossing involved. Distance should not exceed 30 km, but may be short & difficult. Not suitable for beginners.

Grade 6 (Very hard). Strenuous off-track

walk or very long distance. Opportunity for highly experienced walkers to explore remote and challenging natural areas without reliance on managed tracks. Terrain may be steep, uneven and no track. There may be rock scrambling, creek walking & crossing involved. Distance covered is unlimited, but may be short & difficult. Only for experienced walkers and not suitable for beginners.

Dressed for the toughest walk in this book, Sphinx Rock.

(For easier walks omit the gloves and wear lighter clothing).



Lightweight, fast-drying 'travel wear'

Experience, confidence, positive attitude

Watch is a navigational tool. It tells you when to turn around and head home

Backpack containing: food water first aid rainwear warm clothing map & compass camera LED headlight torch insect repellent

Leather gloves

A hat, even in the shade of the trees

Thick, soft, comfy socks, with insect repellent underneath. Your feet deserve it

Shoes that will not cause blisters, and will grip in wet conditions and on slippery rocks, 'Volleys'



Mount Warning and The Sisters as seen from The Pinnacle Lookout

Before heading out read the safety suggestions on page 45.

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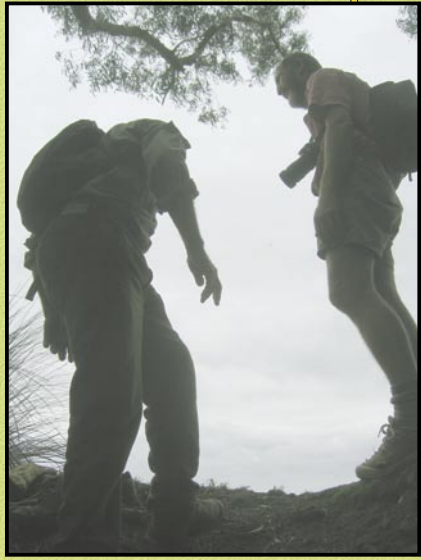
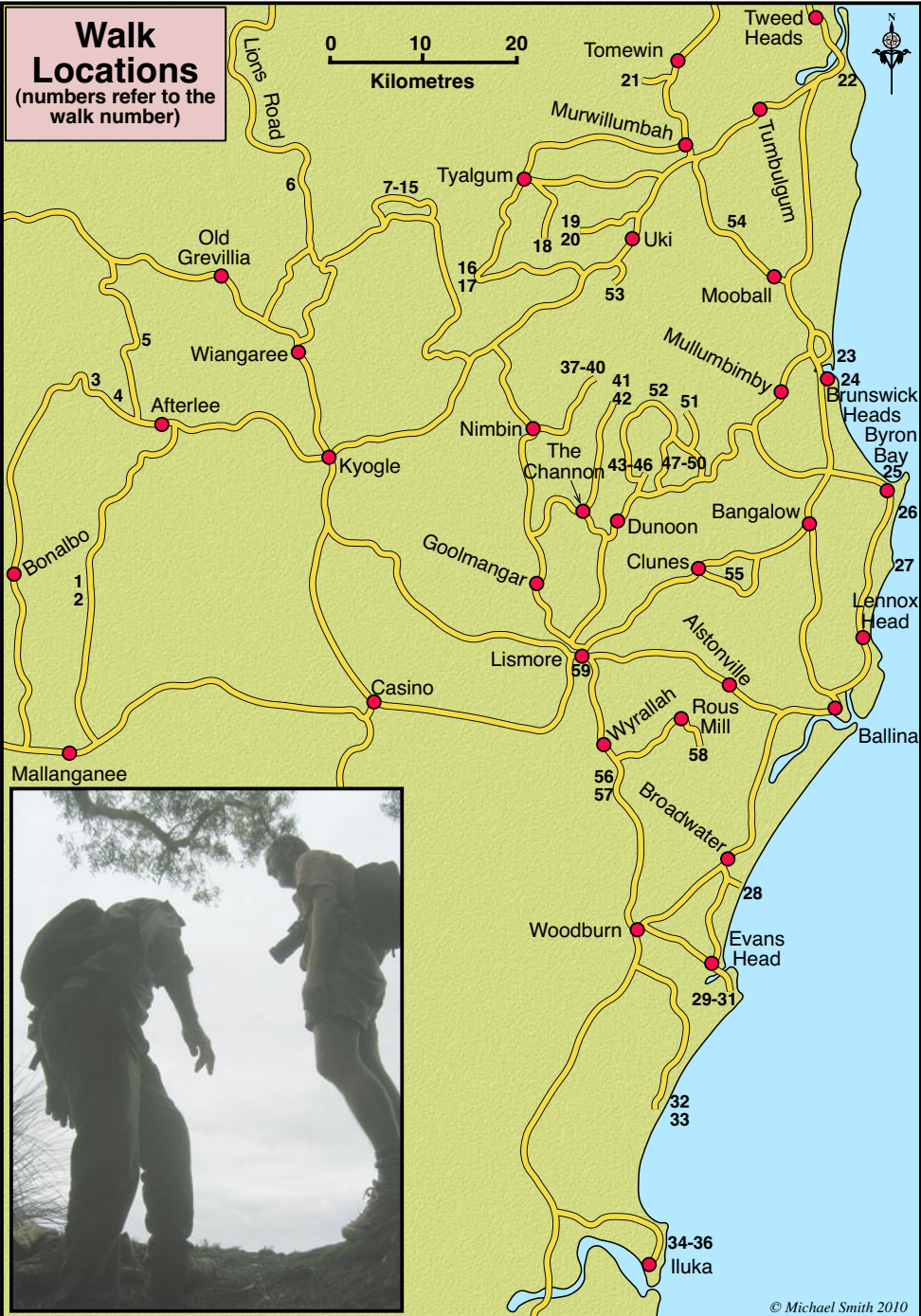
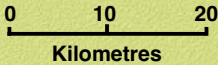
Rugged wild walks; 12 18 20 21 27 37 40
42.

The best; 7 10 18 21 27 41 42 49.



A wild walk in Terania Creek Basin, page 33

Walk Locations
(numbers refer to the walk number)



1

The Loop Track

Time: 10 minutes.

Grade 2: An easy, short, walk on a formed track, 500m.

Map: Culmaran Valley, page 4.

Features: The walk passes through a forest of tall blue gums and brush box.

Directions: The Cambridge Plateau Scenic Drive is suitable for two wheeled drive vehicles in dry weather. It is much easier to reach the Cambridge Plateau Rest Area from the Mallanganees end of the road. Continuing on north from the lookout to Afterlee will generally require a four wheel drive vehicle, and will be impossible in wet weather.

Both of the walks at the Cambridge Plateau Rest Area start at A, shown on the map. After 200 metres keep an eye out for the turn-off on the right, where the loop walk departs from the longer walk. The route is sign posted and easy to follow.

2

Culmaran Valley Track

Time: One hour.

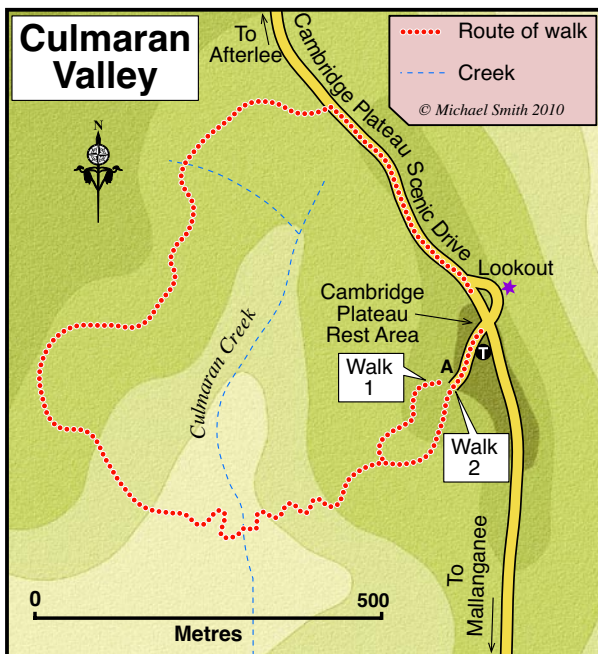
Grade 3: Some steep sections, (there are 147 steps down to the creek), and some tree roots to step over in the forest. An aerobic work-out, 2.5 km.

Map: Culmaran Valley, page 4.

Features: The walk passes through a subtropical rainforest with more than 200 plant species, including booyongs, rosewood, pigeon berry ash, giant stinging trees, hoop pine and strangler fig. There are plant identification signs along the track.

Directions: See access notes from the walk above.

From point A on the map, walk downhill to the bridge over Culmaran Creek. Head uphill



through the forest until the track meets with Cambridge Plateau Scenic Drive. Turn right on to the road and follow it 500 metres back to the start.

Culmaran Creek is from the Gidjhal (dialect of Bundjalung) *galma:ra:n* for bracken fern.

Mallanganees is from the Aboriginal word *Mellen-Ganee* meaning 'Place of Tall Pines.'

3

Iron Pot Loop

Time: 10 minutes.

Grade 1: An easy, sign posted walk in the bush between Ironpot Creek Rest Area and Ironpot Creek, 750m.

Map: Iron Pot Loop, page 5.

Features: A mixture of wet sclerophyll and rainforest species featuring Flooded Gum, Brushbox, Bangalow Palm and Red Cedar. Many of the trees are named and there are some leeches. Keep an eye out for the Pink-Tongued Lizard. It looks like a Blue-Tongued

Lizard but with a slender, grasping tail.

Directions: Ironpot Creek Rest Area is off Murray Scrub Road, which is off Toonumbar Forest Drive, 25 km west of Kyogle via the Afterlee Road. All these unsealed roads are for dry weather use only.

If you are staying in the camping area, then the logical place to start the walk is at B. If you are just driving in, then park at the locked gate at the picnic area on the bank of Ironpot Creek, point A on the map.

4

The Murray Scrub Walking Track

Time: 2 hours return.

Grade 3: An easy walk on a formed track.

Some trees are named. Watch out for the Giant Stinging Tree which is common. There may be ankle-high seedlings growing on the track. 5.5 km return.

Map: Murray Scrub, page 6.

Features: The walk starts in a eucalypt forest featuring bellbirds and black cockatoos. The remains of an old logging track take you into a lowland subtropical rainforest dominated by

White Booyong, and passes through a magnificent stand of red cedars. Along the way are all the plants, birds, and animals of the rainforest, including leeches.

Directions: Access to the walk is at the end of a short road, off Murray Scrub Road, (which is the road to Ironpot Creek Rest Area). Toonumbar Forest Drive is an unsealed road and should not be used in wet weather. The walk starts at a car park and is well sign posted.

Poor Bullock Range is said to have been so named because a team of bullocks, used to haul timber on this range, was struck by lightning.

Toonumbar is from Danamba, meaning “people used to live in there sometimes”.

Kyogle is from the Aboriginal word ‘Kaiou-Gal’ meaning native companion (also Plains Turkey or Bustard). The Plains Turkey or Bustard is a bird of the inland and unlikely to have inhabited this area before forestation. But there are many scrub or bush turkeys there.

Woodenbong is Aboriginal for ‘a lagoon’.

5

Eden Creek Falls

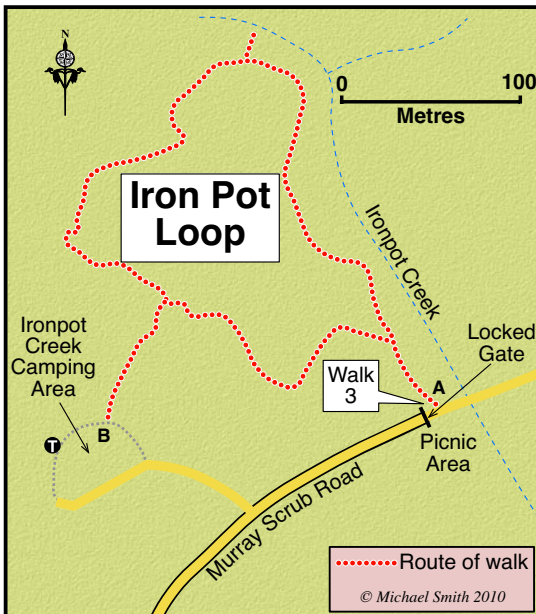
Time: 1.5 - 2.5 hours return.

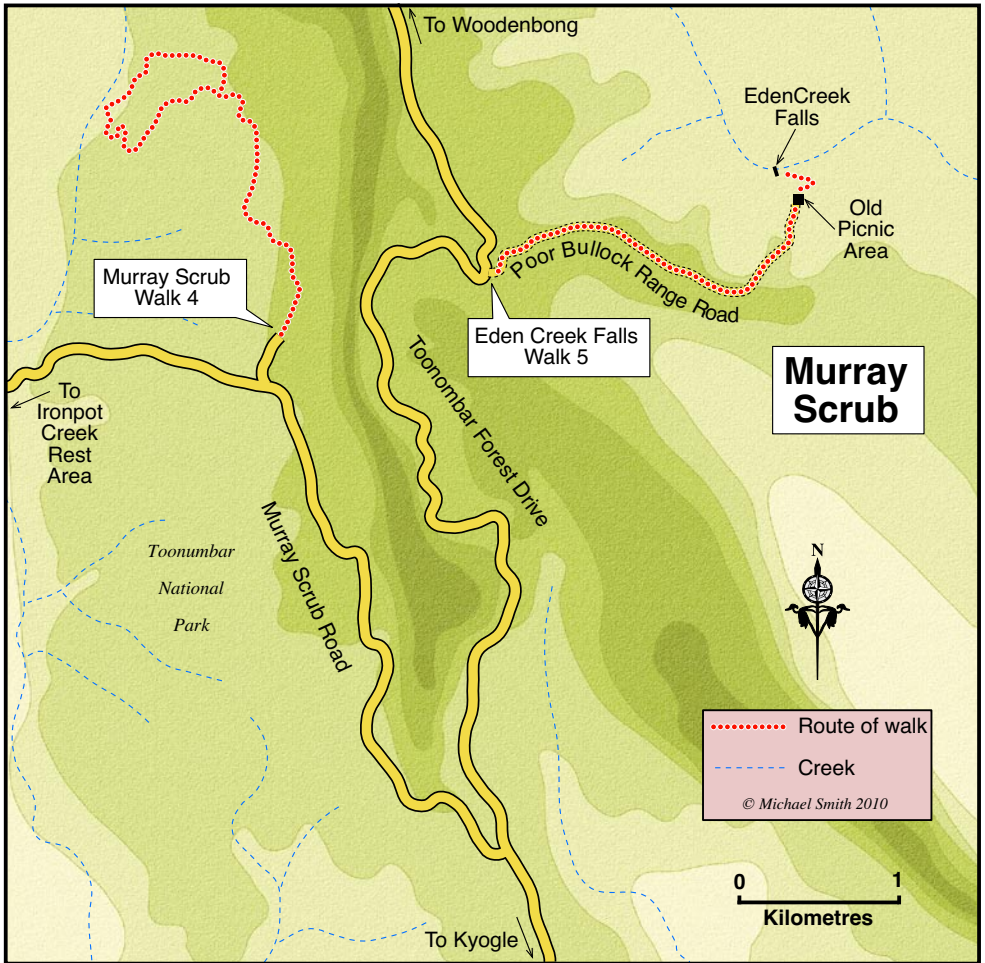
Grade 4: A steep walk on an old track. Some optional rock hopping in the creek is necessary to visit the upper falls. If you choose not to drive down the fire trail there is an easy walk on an old forestry track to the picnic area. 0.5 - 5.5 km return.

Map: Murray Scrub, page 6.

Features: A mixture of eucalypts and rainforest species (including the Giant Stinging Tree). Two waterfalls and stimulating creek landscapes.

Directions: This area was a State Forest before it became Toonumbar National Park. The walk has not yet been upgraded to the standard preferred by the NPWS. What you will find are run-down facilities and a general discour-





agement to attempt the walk. Nevertheless this is a popular walk with the local Bushwalking Clubs. Do not set out if the weather is wet. The intersection of Toonumbar Forest Drive and Poor Bullock Range Road is not sign posted. You will have to look for the distinctive sharp, looping bend in the road shown on maps of the area. This turn-off is marked by a gate which is usually locked. If locked, park here and walk the 2 km to the picnic area above the falls. If unlocked you can drive a four-wheel-drive vehicle to the start of the walk. This track is well graded, overgrown and easy (but only in dry weather). About 1.5 km down Poor Bullock Range Road turn left to Eden Creek Falls,

(there is a signpost at this intersection). From the picnic area head downhill on the track to Eden Creek (about 45 minutes return). The track intersects the creek just above the top of the lower falls, 32.4m high. Not much of the falls can be seen from the top but the rock shelf provides a dramatic break in the vegetation for admiring the surrounding forest. Walk upstream 100m to the bottom of the upper falls, which drop 67 m into a 10 metre deep plunge pool. Return along the same route.

6

Border Loop Walk

Time: 30 minutes.

Grade 1: An easy walk on a well-graded, lightly-gravelled track, 1.2 km.

Map: Walks in The Border Ranges National Park, page 8 (inset).

Features: This short loop walk starts next to an interesting lookout, and passes through a eucalypt forest (watch for koalas), and then through a subtropical rainforest. Bellbirds can be heard above in the forest trees, and there are information signs identifying many of the trees.

Directions: Take the side road, off The Lions Road, down to the Border Loop Picnic Area (three kilometres south of the Tick Gate on the Queensland border). The track starts next to the toilet and eventually loops back onto itself.

7

The Pinnacle Lookout

Time: 10 minutes return.

Grade 2: An easy walk on a formed track with some steps, 200m return.

Map: Walks in The Border Ranges National Park, page 8.

Features: A short walk through the forest to one of the most spectacular lookouts in Australia. 'The Pinnacle' itself is actually below the lookout and not visible. The view is dominated by Mount Warning and the surrounding caldera, see photo page 1. Breath taking.

Directions: The walk is well sign posted and starts at a parking area on the Tweed Range Scenic Drive.



View to the south from The Pinnacle Lookout

8

Falcorostrum Loop

Time: 30 minutes return.

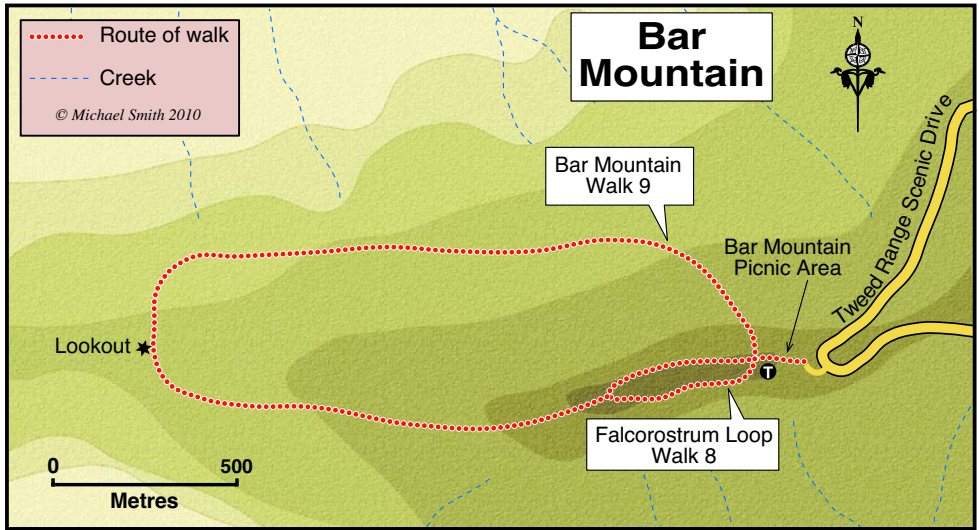
Grade 2: An easy walk on a good track, 750m return.

Map: Bar Mountain, page 9.

Features: This walk celebrates the Falcorostrum Orchids, (look for white and purple blossoms in early spring), which cling to the gnarled trunks and branches of the ancient Antarctic Beech trees found here. Keep a look out also for the 'beech orange', a fungus which grows on the branches of the beech trees. Albert's Lyre bird can sometimes be seen in this cool temperate forest.

Bar Mountain is the highest point on the caldera (1,140 metres above sea level), and was once a log dump when the area was part of Wiangaree State Forest (until 1983). The forest is often shrouded in fog and mist, and snow occasionally falls.

Directions: The walk starts at the Bar Mountain Picnic Area.



9

Bar Mountain Circuit

Time: 3 hours return.

Grade 3: Medium difficulty. A well marked track that drops 200 metres in elevation to a lookout, 3.5 km return.

Map: Bar Mountain, page 9.

Features: This walk starts in a cool temperate forest, passes through a warm temperate forest and ends at a lookout in a wet eucalypt forest, before returning to the picnic area. There is a lookout with views west to Mount Lindesay and Mount Barney.

Directions: The walk starts at the Bar Mountain Picnic Area and shares the first few hundred metres with the Falcorostrum Loop. After 2 kilometres of downhill walking you will come to the lookout. Return, uphill, on the remainder of the loop.

10

Helmholtzia Loop

Time: 30 minutes.

Grade 2: Easy, 1.2km return.

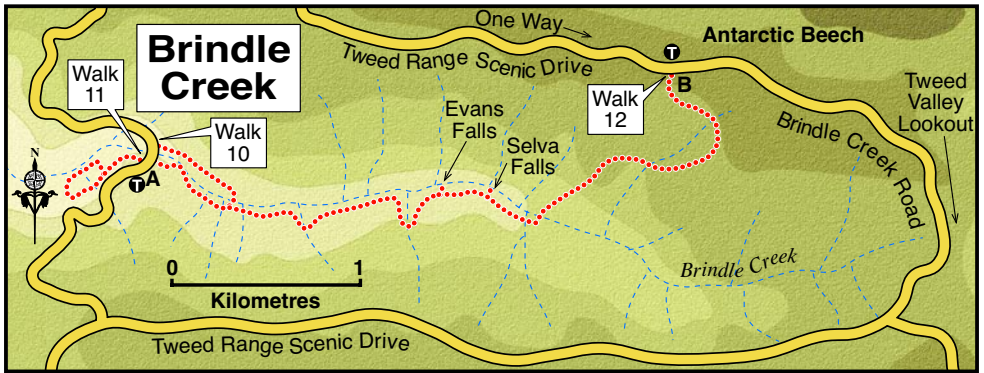
Map: Brindle Creek, page 10.

Features: If you only have time for one quick rainforest walk in the Border Ranges National

Park then this is the one to do. Expect to see luxuriant rainforest, orchids, Hoop Pine and Antarctic Beech. The *Helmholtzia Lily*, which is a feature of this walk, is only found in the north east of NSW and south east Queensland.

Directions: Half of this walk is shared with the much longer Brindle Creek Walk. You are less likely to miss the turnoff if you start on the northern side of Brindle Creek, across the bridge from point A on the map. The track from here follows Brindle Creek upstream. The bank is undercut and dangerous to approach, so keep to the track. After crossing the creek turn right on to the Brindle Creek Walk and continue on to Brindle Creek Picnic Area, point A on the map.





11

Red Cedar Loop

Time: 30 minutes.

Grade 1: Easy, 750m return.

Map: Brindle Creek, page 10.

Features: A walk through an interesting subtropical rainforest, to a 1000 year old Red Cedar tree 48 metres high, that escaped the axe. Board walks have been constructed to protect the habitat of the endangered Fleay's barred frog.

Directions: The walk commences up the road a little from the Brindle Creek Picnic Area and runs parallel to Brindle Creek on the southern bank, looping around the Cedar Tree and returning to the picnic area.

12

Brindle Creek

Time: 3 hours one way.

Grade 3: Easy grades on a well-marked track, 5km one way.

Map: Brindle Creek, page 10.

Features: Moss-covered, 2000 year old Antarctic Beech trees in an unspoilt rainforest. Waterfalls, lichen, climbers, orchids, fungi, snails, crayfish, bird life, frogs and ferns. This is a big, magnificent walk that will not disappoint.

Directions: Choose one of the following alternatives:

You can walk the length (**A** to **B**), turn around and walk back (10 km, 6 hours). You may be

forced to choose this option if you are unable to organise a vehicle to return you to the start after walking one way. If you choose to walk both ways, start at **A**, that way it will be all downhill on the return trip. It is, of course, possible to return along the road but this far less interesting.

My recommended (short) option is to start at **A**, walk as far as Selva Falls, visiting Evans Falls on the way, turn around, and return to **A**. This eliminates the need for a car-shuffle and you get to see the best part of the walk, 6km, 3.5 hours.

The 'official' walk, is one way, from **B** to **A**. This is all downhill and you get to see everything. Commence the walk at the Antarctic Beech Picnic Area, **B** on the map. The track starts on the opposite side of the road to the Picnic Area and leads downhill through an Antarctic Beech forest. The track winds through the forest on the southern bank of Brindle Creek. Keep an eye out, on the right, for the short side tracks first to Selva Falls and then to Evans Falls. Don't swim in the creek as it is home to a number of endangered frogs. The track ends at **A**, the Brindle Creek Picnic Area.



Warrazambil, from the Bundjalung *warjam/war-dam* for shark in coastal dialects. Also: *Gidabal* for eel, also for spirit being that dwells in water rivers or swamps, (-bil being the plural suffix).

Wiangaree Aboriginal *wongarie* for camping place, pine ridge or a hut.

Boorabee is from *'burbi'* for koala. It is common for the Aboriginal trilled *'r'* to sound to European ears as *'rra'* thus making an extra syllable. *Gidhabal* and *Yugambeh* *'burbi'* for koala.

The story of the **Cat bird djurebil** (increase site) started at a place now called **Jiggi**. A great battle was fought in the dream time where the man who was to become the ancestor of the cat-bird (**Jiggi**) was mortally wounded. He asked to be buried at Mount Lion. All the way there the ancestor of the cat-bird called out "*jig-giae- jiggi-giae*".

Jiggi, after being mortally wounded, was first carried to Mt. Boorabee (meaning koala), 6km east of Kyogle, but refused to be buried there because it was the *djurebil* for koalas.

Black Hand Mountain (*Wathumbil*) at the head of Warrazambil Creek was another place that the wounded **Jiggi** was taken, but he refused to be buried there because it was the *djurebil* of *Warrajam* the rainbow serpent.

The ancestors of the *Walungmira* live in **Mount Lion**, the burial place of **Jiggi**, the ancestor of the cat bird. His tomb is a cleared space with stones all around. The cat bird has a call like a cat meowing, or a baby crying.

Selva and Evans Falls are said to be named after members of an Army jungle training unit that used this area for training when it was still part of the *Wiangaree State Forest*. The *Antarctic Beech Picnic Area* was formerly a helicopter pad where troops from the *Canungra Jungle Training Camp* were flown in for exercises (until 1973).



13

Palm Forest Walk

Time: 1 hour.

Grade 2: An easy and popular walk, 2 km.

Map: Booyong walk, page 12.

Features: A walk through subtropical rainforest and drier eucalypt forest, ending at Brushbox Falls. Above the falls is a forest of Bangalow and Piccabehn palms. The track follows the line of an old logging and bullock trail. You can see where early cedar getters carved their names on a moss-covered sandstone rockface.

Directions: The walk starts from near the lowest part of Sheepstation Creek Camping Area. The route is sign posted and easy to follow. Return along the same route.

14

Rosewood Loop Walk

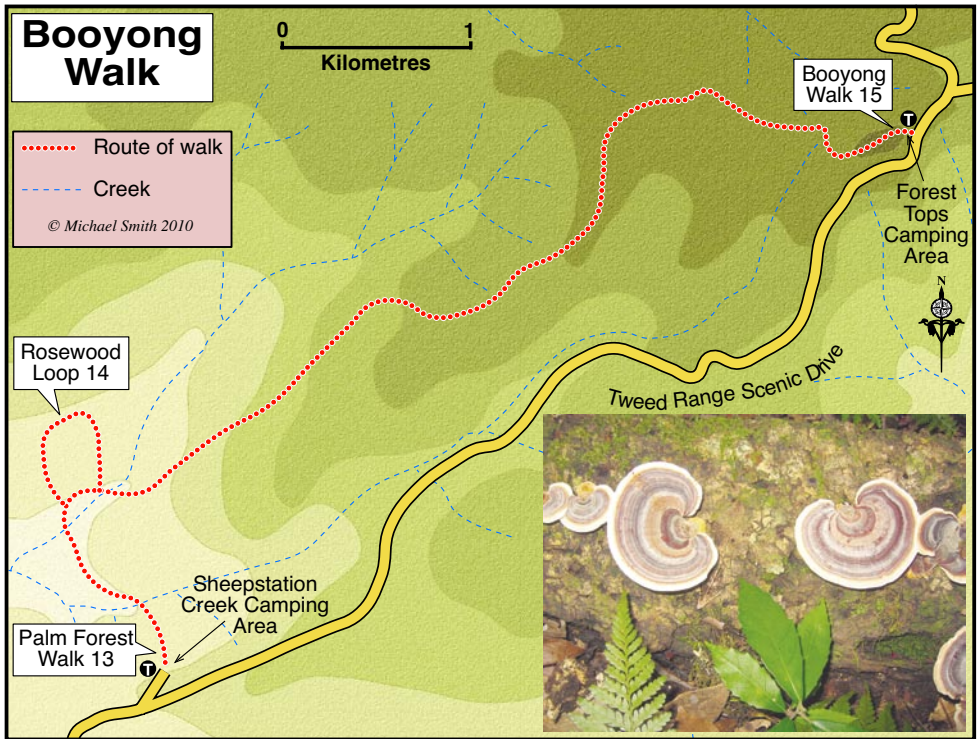
Time: 3 hours, starting from Sheepstation Creek Camping Area.

Grade 3: Medium difficulty with many slopes to walk up and down (100m of elevation), 6 km return.

Map: Booyong walk, page 12.

Features: This walk is along the same route as the Palm Forest Walk and part of the Booyong Walk. The loop, a side track, passes through forests of old growth Rosewood, Flooded Gum and White Beech. With more than 23 fruiting varieties of rainforest trees the bird life is prolific. A swim in the creek is possible but the water is always cold.

Directions: The walk commences at the Sheepstation Creek Camping Area and for the first kilometre follows the same route as the Booyong and Palm Forest walks. Keep an eye out, on the left, for the turnoff to the Rosewood Loop. This is an out-and-back walk, so after completing the loop return along the same route back to the camping area.



15

Booyong Walk

Time: 5 hours, one way.

Grade 3: A medium difficulty walk on a well-marked track involving a long walk down a ridge between two creeks descending 310 metres of elevation, 10.5 km one way.

Map: Booyong walk, page 12.

Features: A good introduction to the rainforest, featuring the tall, straight and majestic booyong tree, as well as all the fungi and ferns of the forest.

Directions: It is best to start this walk from the Forest Tops Camping Area to avoid a long uphill walk. If you are doing this walk one way, you will have to arrange transport at the other end (Sheepstation Creek Camping Area). The track starts at the back of the camping area at Forest Tops and plunges straight into the rainforest. The track runs gradually downhill where it meets with the Rosewood Loop Walk, which is an

optional side trip. From this point on, the walk incorporates the Palm Forest Walk, finishing at Sheepstation Creek Camping Area.

16

Byrrill Creek

Time: 30 minutes return.

Grade 2: Easy walking on a formed track, some uphill gradients, 900m return.

Map: Mebbin, page 13.

Features: A quick, rewarding, return walk through subtropical rainforest down to Byrrill Creek. The track passes some huge fig trees.

Directions: The walk starts on the southern side of Mebbin Camping Area, near an information board. Follow the track down to the Creek and return along the same route.



Ironbark Tree Reserve

Time: 1.5 hours return.

Grade 2: Easy walking on a road through Mebbin National Park, 5km return.

Map: Mebbin, page 13.

Features: A walk down a forest road to the remains of a 400-year-old Ironbark tree. Along the route, beside the road, are plenty of interesting trees, orchids and vines.

Directions: The walk starts at the intersection of Cadell Road and Lemon Tree Road. Here you will find a locked gate. Walk 2.5 km down Lemon Tree Road. After a while the gradient is generally uphill. Just past the crest of the hill, where the road finally heads downhill, an old car parking area and a track can be seen on the left. The signpost indicating the short walk to the Giant Ironbark (50 metres) is now missing. Walk down the track to the old tree, which you will find has died. Huge branches have fallen down crushing the information sign and the surrounding fencing. Keep well back because all the branches have not yet fallen. Return to the road and continue on for 200 metres where you can see more large, living, ironbark trees. Return along the same route.

Byrrill Creek, Aboriginal, probably derived from 'burrul' meaning wallaby.

Mebbin is from the Bundjalung word 'mibin' meaning hawk.

Cadell was a local forester whose ashes were spread around the Ironbark Tree in 1961.

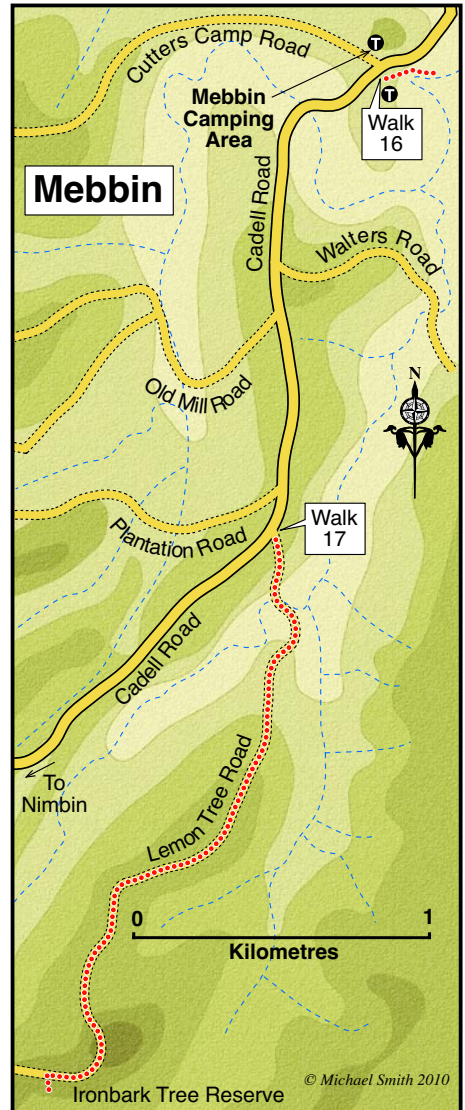
Brummies Lookout

Time: 40 minutes return.

Grade 3: A rough, rocky, track with steep sections. Some danger from falling, at the lookout, due to steep, slippery sides, 900m return.

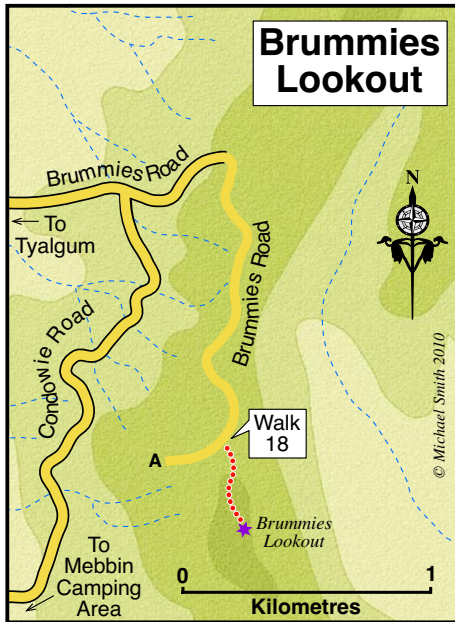
Map: Brummies Lookout, page 14.

Features: The walk starts in a wet sclerophyll forest and finishes in a drier forest featuring grass trees and wallaby grass. The views are spectacular and special, Mount Warning being



only 4 km away. Be warned that there is a significant risk of falling off this mountain if you go too near the edge of the cliffs. At this point you are 600 metres above sea level. Views extend all the way to the Byron Bay Lighthouse. Magic flora.

Directions: The road to Brummies Lookout is sign posted as four-wheel-drive. Do not attempt this road in the wet. The main obstacle to vehicles are the drainage 'speed bumps' that cross the road, requiring high ground clear-



ance. From Tyalgum drive up Swifts Road, then Tyalgum Ridge Road to Brummies Road. Continue to the end of this road (A), turn around and drive 250 metres downhill to the start of the walk. Brummies road can also be accessed via Condowie Road which is convenient if you are coming from the Mebbin camping area. National Parks have removed the sign indicating the start of the walk, to discourage use. Look for steps up the embankment on the right hand side of the road. The track is rough and narrow but easy to follow. Don't take any risks.



19

The Lyrebird Lookout

Time: 15 minutes return.
Grade 2: An easy walk on a good track, 300m return.
Map: Mount Warning, page 15.
Features: Huge forest trees, interpretative signs and a pleasant creek.
Directions: Commence the walk from the Breakfast Creek Picnic Area. Turn right and cross the creek. Follow the steps up to the lookout. Return along the same route.

20

Mount Warning

Time: 4-5 hours return.
Grade 4: A steep walk on a good track. The last few hundred metres are steep and rocky, assisted by a chain (which some people find 'scary'). Start the walk well before noon in the winter months to avoid finishing in the dark. Physically demanding, 8.8 km return.
Map: Mount Warning, page 15.
Features: Giant subtropical and temperate rainforest trees. Occasional glimpses of The Sisters, The Pinnacle and Clarrie Hall Dam on the way up. There are extensive, 360° views from the summit of Mount Warning, the central plug of an ancient volcano. Pick a clear day with high clouds if you want to enjoy the view. Thousands of people each year climb this mountain in the pre-dawn darkness to

watch the sunrise. Mount Warning is reputed to be the first place on mainland Australia to catch the rays of the sun. Out of respect for Bundjalung law and culture the Bundjalung ask that you consider choosing not to climb Mount Warning.

One of the many views from the top of Mount Warning

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