



# Rat Tales

May 2007

Web: [www.ballarat.com/bushwalking.htm](http://www.ballarat.com/bushwalking.htm)

E-Mail: [ballaratbwc@yahoo.com](mailto:ballaratbwc@yahoo.com) (General correspondence)  
[rat\\_tales@hotmail.com](mailto:rat_tales@hotmail.com) (Newsletter articles)

*Ballarat Bushwalking and Outdoor Club*

---

## FRENCHMAN'S CAP TO PINE VALLEY: FEB 22 TO MAR 4

---

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> February, Craig, John, David, George, Brian and Max, set off from Ballarat to Tasmania on an 11 day walk of Frenchman's Cap and Pine Valley, capably organized and led by Vicki Rickard. After traveling by bus to our starting point, off the Lyall Highway, it didn't take long for Tassie to let us know where we were, with the skies opening up and drenching us. By the time we completed the 6km walk to the Loddon River, the weather had cleared up and we were able to set up camp for the first night in much more favourable conditions.

We set off on Friday dreading the thought of having to cross the usually "Sodden Loddon", however no-one was disappointed to see it was more like the "Loddon Desert", except Brian who managed to find about the one and only knee high mud puddle. Whilst walking across Phillip's Lead, our track notes indicated we had one small incline into a low saddle to walk, they should have read, long steep incline into high saddle (don't trust track notes). After setting up camp at the picturesque Lake Vera, surrounded by mountains, it was time for a swim. Track notes should also read, whilst swimming in surrounding waters, watch out for female group member/s with cameras.

On Saturday, Vicki appointed Max as the whip so that some of us could make an early start to Lake Tahune with the others following later. The track was a long steep incline into Barron Pass. Misty rain allowed us limited views along the way. We set up for the night at Lake Tahune, while waiting and hoping for a break in the weather to complete our walk to Frenchman's Cap. With the mist lifting a little, we made a dash to the top, but unfortunately the cloud didn't lift.

Sunday saw us break into three groups to explore and walk to different areas. Craig and I went to Irenabyss, John and George spent the day around the Lake Tahune area, with everyone else going to Frenchman's Cap. The walk to Irenabyss was stunning as the mountains peeked through the clouds as we walked above them. Walking down through the clouds we arrived at the Franklin River with Craig braving the freezing water for a swim between the cliffs. After admiring the views for an hour it was time to go back up. With the clouds lifting, we could see the views we missed in the morning. Making good time we went to the Frenchman's Cap summit where we were reduced to drinking out of puddles as we underestimated our water supply. We met up with the rest of the party descending Frenchman's Cap and we were very pleased that Max had a good supply of water to replenish us with.

It was a shame to leave Lake Tahune on Monday as it was

such a perfect day. We headed along Artichoke Valley to Barron Pass and we were able to appreciate the views we were unable to see coming in. That night we camped beside Phillip's Creek.

Due to the lack of phone reception on Tuesday, Vicki and I hitched a ride to Derwent Bridge to organize an early pick up to Lake St.Clair. Our group was very appreciative of the liquid refreshments we returned with, as were two hikers we met along the way. Arriving back at Lake St.Clair we met up with Jan who was joining us for the Pine Valley part of the walk. She demonstrated great bravery when she collected our six day old hiking clothes to wash! (Thankyou Jan).

Wednesday was a chance to have a bit of a relax and unwind. We caught the ferry across Lake St.Clair and then walked through the beautiful ancient rainforest to Pine Valley.

After raining all night, we head off to the Acropolis on Thursday in fog. Upon reaching the top we had lunch and waited in hope for the clouds to lift, which they did in patches allowing us occasional views in different directions. Of course the cloud lifted two hours later after we had headed back towards Pine Valley.

Our plan for Friday was to walk to the Labyrinth. Craig was interested in going to Mt Geryon and I was happy to accompany him. With an early start we made it to what we thought was the top of the mountain in fairly good time, only to have the fog lift, which revealed we had more climbing to do. Upon reaching the top we were able to enjoy the incredible views, Frenchman's Cap was even visible. We were unable, however, to see the rest of the party in the Labyrinth but we gave them a wave just in case they could see us! We had a pleasant walk back to camp via the many lakes in the Labyrinth.

On Saturday we had an easy stroll back to Lake St.Clair, where we were able to enjoy some luxuries such as non-dehydrated food and showers.

We spent much of Sunday waiting for buses and the plane for our return trip to Ballarat. Thankyou to David's wife, for picking us up from the airport.

A big thankyou to Vicki for her diligent planning and leadership on this walk, which allowed us all to experience such a variety of terrain in such a beautiful part of Tasmania.

Ian Longmire.