

BUSHWALKERS



SEARCH & RESCUE

Behind the Log

Issue No. 27

May 2008

A0002548Y

Bushwalkers Search And Rescue, P O Box 1007, Templestowe Vic 3106

www.bsar.org

In this issue:

| | |
|--|-------|
| Dom Dom Saddle Search Reports | 1 |
| Thank you from the Meyer Family and Police | 2 & 3 |
| Donation from Melbourne Bushwalkers | 2 |
| Advanced Snow and Ice Training 2008 | 4 |
| BSAR GPS Upgrade and Training with New Units | 4 |
| Search Practice Weekend – 6-7 September | 5 |
| BSAR Annual Report 2007-08 | 6 |
| Alert frenzy at PLO and FO Training Day | 8 |
| Longer Legs and Labels on Searches | 9 |
| Rapid Response and Cold Case Callouts | 9 |
| Northcote Rendezvous & New UHF CB Radios | 10 |



BSAR appreciates the annual funding from the Department for Victorian Communities to Bushwalking Victoria, a component of which is put towards BSAR administration and training activities.

Editor of Behind the Log – Ren Millsom
Next issue October 2008 - deadline 10th Oct

BSAR RESPONDS TO EXTENSIVE BUSH SEARCH AT DOM DOM SADDLE

During the last week of March, BSAR joined Police, VicSES, CFA, SAR Dogs Australia, Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water in the large-scale search for 57yo Warren Meyer who went missing from a four-hour bushwalk on the morning of Sunday 23 March 2008 in the Dom Dom saddle area, NE of Melbourne. Mr Meyer, an experienced bushwalker, was equipped with a GPS, mobile phone, water and some snack bars. Telstra and Optus assisted with checking if Mr Meyer's mobile phone was still on.

Forty-four BSAR members, from various clubs, responded to three callouts over the four days of BSAR's commitment. Members searched the often dense, damp understorey of the tall forests. All areas within a 1.5km radius of Dom Dom Saddle were line searched and tracks checked, many several times. In the later days of the search BSAR leaders managed joint BSAR/SES or BSAR/CFA line-search groups.

Search Group Leader Frank Zgoznic commented that the conditions were at times equal to the most difficult he had ever experienced on a search. After five days of strenuous searching and with no sign of Mr Meyer the search was scaled down.

Rik Head, Field Organiser

BSAR FOLLOWS UP THE DOM DOM SADDLE SEARCH: "COLD CASE" CALLOUT, 26-27APRIL

Following BSAR's involvement in the unsuccessful, large-scale search for Warren Meyer, just after Easter at Dom Dom Saddle, Police again requested BSAR's assistance, this time to search for Mr Meyer's body.

As a result, nine BSAR members, together with Police from the Search and Rescue Squad, Dog Squad and Marysville, carried out further searching, in particular around the Cleft Rock walking track.

Searchers were organised in pairs, which was found to be very effective for feature searching. Again, no trace of Mr Meyer was found.

Members may have been surprised at this "cold case" callout, as it is not something BSAR has done previously. As it happened, Police had raised the possibility of such callouts earlier this year with the BSAR Committee, and there was in-principle agreement for it to occur.

Our procedures for cold case callouts will be fine tuned as a result of this callout.

Duncan Brookes, Field Organiser

[See page 3 for search photos.]

THANK YOU FROM THE MEYER FAMILY

Despite searching difficult terrain in adverse conditions and not having found any signs of Warren Meyer, the efforts of the 44 searchers in March and 9 in April are still very much appreciated as can be seen in these letters recently received from Mr Meyer's family and reproduced below for all, but particularly those directly involved in the searches.

I am appreciative of the very kind words and overwhelmed by the generous donations accompanying them.

Monica Chapman, Convener

Photo: D Brookes



29/04/08

Dear Monica

I do not personally know you, but your name has been put forward by Greg Paul as the Convener of Bushwalkers SAR. On behalf of Renee, Julien and myself, I would like to thank the Bushwalkers SAR for its dedication to the task of trying to find Warren who was a loving husband and father and who has been tragically taken from us whilst bushwalking.

We have discovered that Bushwalkers SAR is an amazing group of dedicated people who put themselves through such physical exertion in their bid to find someone missing, giving up their time selflessly and often travelling large distances to get to the search base.

I slept in the car the first 2 nights at Dom Dom Saddle and when the Bushwalkers SAR bus turned up the second night still in the dark and everyone busy with Rik Head at the helm it really gave me strength. The fact that Warren has not been found is no reflection on the incredible dedication and effort made by these people. The fact that they are prepared to pitch tents and put up with such discomfort as part of the process is truly amazing.

Could you please pass on our personal thanks to all these people, names that we don't even know, but people who will be remembered forever.

We understand that Bushwalkers SAR receives no government funding. I am enclosing three cheques - \$862 which is part of proceeds raised on the day of Warren's celebration which we held on 24th April 2008, a co. cheque for \$5,000 and a personal cheque for \$2,138 all totaling \$8,000. This seems such a small thing to do but if it can be of benefit to these wonderful people we will be pleased.

Yours sincerely

Zee Meyer

30/04/08

Dear Sirs

As Warren's parents we want to thank you all for the searching and labour you did for us in trying to locate Warren. From the reports we got, you went the extra mile in your search work. No one could have done more! We are thankful our daughters and cousins could be with the family for the memorial service, and we hope he yet may be found.

We hope for the best. Our thanks again.

Yours truly

Glenn and Mary Meyer

[a donation of \$3,000 Canadian was enclosed]

MELBOURNE BUSHWALKERS DONATION

8th April

Dear Monica

Please find enclosed a small donation [\$500] from Melbourne Bushwalkers to assist with the purchase of vital equipment for the wonderful work you do. Appreciation and best wishes to all at BSAR.

Lynda Larkin, President, MBW Inc.

Letters of Appreciation from Police Search and Rescue

6th May

Dear Monica

Recently we utilised numerous members from BSAR during a recent search for a missing 57 year old male, Warren Meyer, in the Mt Dom Dom area. He became lost after leaving his vehicle in the Dom Dom Saddle Carpark on Sunday 23rd March 2008.

The search area was based in a steep, heavily treed environment and was conducted over a 5 day period. The weather over the days of the search ranged from sunny to heavy rain. It was cool temperatures with a daily maximum of approx. 17 C. The terrain made searching for the missing man difficult but your members attended and searched without hesitation. They also camped out one night in poor conditions.

Although we did not locate Warren we did everything possible to find him alive. Warren's family are very appreciative of the effort put in by everyone.

Your members also returned to the area for a further weekend with the Search and Rescue Squad members. This helped us eliminate areas not checked during the initial search.

A memorial service to celebrate the life of Warren Meyer was conducted at the Beaumaris Life Saving Club on the 27th April, 2008. Warren's family requested donations from the attendees to help support the volunteer rescue groups involved.

Zee Meyer, Warren's wife, has asked that I forward these on to you as a mark of appreciation for the efforts of your members.

I am sure that this money will greatly assist BSAR purchase some much needed equipment.

Please thank all your members involved for their assistance.

Ian Veitch

Acting Sergeant 26988

In a separate letter that was sent to all agencies involved Ian Veitch writes:

From the various agencies we had over 100 search personnel on each day. The largest day involved 165, most of these volunteers. Overall there was more than 300km of tracks searched and approx. 6 sq km of thick bush line searched.

BSAR members are thanked on the professional way they performed in this challenging task.

I appreciate the personal sacrifices that your volunteers have made to assist us. Without the assistance of volunteers we would not be able to operate so effectively.

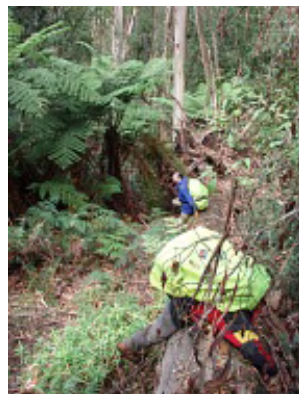
As search coordinator it was great to see their dedication and it was an excellent example of how multiple agencies can work together.

Other personnel and agencies involved were listed in the letter as follows:

Police SAR Squad, Special Solos, Field Catering, Mounted Branch, Dog Squad, Communications and Local Units together with SES, CFA, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, Telstra and Optus Phone Tracking, SAR Dogs Australia and local residents on horseback.



Searchers at Dom Dom – March
Photo: P Campbell



Looking Behind the Log
Photo: P Campbell



Searchers at Dom Dom – April
Photo: D Brookes

ADVANCED SNOW AND ICE TRAINING 2008

This year two snow-based training trips will be taking place for interested BSAR members. Members intending to be considered or involved in SSI searches are expected to attend both trips. A dry-land half-day rope and ice skills training exercise, run by the Police, may also be scheduled prior to winter.

Snow Skills Winter Journey

This trip is for eligible members to consolidate their snow skills and provide insight into participants' suitability to attend the Steep Snow and Ice (SSI) experience.

The Snow Skills Winter Journey training trip is organised by alpineSAR and is for members who have had a reasonable to high level of experience camping and travelling in alpine environments. This trip aims to challenge and extend abilities whilst covering a range of topics considered useful for difficult searches in higher Australian altitudes. The trip focus will be on fundamental skills of travel in difficult alpine conditions and terrain rather than on technical rope work and rescue hauling.

Dates: Evening of Thursday 10th to Sunday 13th July

Location: Falls Creek (Bogong High Plains)

Who should attend: Members interested in future steep, snow and ice (SSI) searches as well as non-SSI alpineSAR members who wish to improve their on-snow skills

Steep Snow & Ice Training

The annual Steep Snow and Ice training with the Police S&R is returning to Buller this year, but with a new format. This year SSI participants will ascend the West Ridge with packs early on Saturday morning then set up camp and work on technical skills high up on the ridge. Sunday morning the group will meet Police S&R for a training session with BSAR members. After the practice we will descend West Ridge.

Date: Saturday 19th to Sunday 20th July

Location: Mt Buller (via West Ridge)

Who should attend: Members with Grade 1 or 2 ice skills, and those who have attended the Snow Skills Winter Journey

Flyer to be circulated via Delegates and website soon.

Peter Campbell, Field Organiser

BSAR GPS UPGRADE

After considerable research BSAR is currently upgrading its fleet of GPS units to the Garmin Vista HCx. Six new units have been purchased and it is hoped that another eight will be purchased in the not too distant future through recent funding submissions. The new GPS units will have superior reception in dense foliage, narrow valleys and under wet, heavily treed canopies. They will also be loaded with digital mapping software that displays 10 metre contours for all of Australia as well as most roads, rivers and many walking tracks.

A number of Vista HCx's were trialled at the recent Dom Dom search where they proved to be an excellent choice displaying strong satellite fixes under the difficult conditions. Another improved feature is the addition of a toggle switch which allows for quicker scrolling through menu options and data entry. Other buttons are similar in function to the old eTrex's.

Some members have expressed interest in purchasing a Garmin Vista HCx for themselves. Ray Malins from AlpineSAR has negotiated a good deal with Autobahn in Bayswater that sees BSAR members getting the Garmin Vista HCx for \$399 and the OZtopo V2 software preloaded onto a 2GB card for \$240 for a total of \$639.

Contact Craig at Bayswater Autobahn, 183-225 Canterbury Rd, Bayswater North 3153. Phone: 9729 2310 Email: sales@bayswater.autobahn.com.au

Other software mapping options include Garmin Mapsource MetroGuide or City Navigator and TopoPLUS 10m contours. BSAR has opted to purchase the MetroGuide and TopoPLUS.

Mark Oates, Delegate, Alpine SAR

TRAINING WITH NEW GPS UNITS

In a recent grant application, BSAR has requested funding to undertake training in navigation using new GPS units with mapping software. If successful (we find out in July), BSAR will purchase additional GPS units as mentioned above. Special training sessions will be run by Frank Zgoznic in the future – they will provide a great opportunity to get acquainted with the new model and mapping software (and the new CB radios!). In time, as the older units are phased out, members will need to know how to use the new ones.

Check the BSAR website www.bsar.org in mid-June for initial dates and details and avail yourselves of these opportunities.

Monica Chapman, Convener

2008 SEARCH PRACTICE WEEKEND – 6-7 SEPTEMBER

Purpose and Activities

This weekend provides BSAR members with training in the essential skills of bush searching, through participation in a VRA Rogaine on Saturday, and BSAR specific training on Sunday.

Rogaining is the ideal training for BSAR members as it is such a close match to what is expected of us during a search; accurate off track bush navigation in small groups. This event is a 12 hour rogaine so it includes night navigation, a particularly necessary skill, given the advent of the Rapid Response Callout of BSAR by Police. Our members can now expect to search at night on occasions.

Following Saturday's rogaine, Sunday will include training in some technical aspects, in particular use of the new generation GPS units that BSAR is purchasing and the use of Police radios, through a mock search scenario.

Venue

Yet to be announced. Keep an eye on the Victorian Rogaining Association website: <http://vra.rogaine.asn.au/>.

Who should attend

BSAR members and potential members who meet the BSAR requirements for searchers.

Transport & Parking

Bus provided by Police Transport Branch. Seats allocated on receipt of application. Pick up point and parking is at the Police Bands Compound, Green Street, NORTHCOTE at 0700 hrs Saturday morning. The bus will return to the pick up point at approximately 1800 hrs on Sunday.

What to bring

Bring normal equipment for an overnight camp on Saturday night. Maps for the rogaine and Sunday's activities will be supplied. Bring your copy of the Search & Rescue manual.

Dinner on Saturday night, and possibly breakfast Sunday (tbc) will be provided by the Victorian Rogaining Association. Bring your remaining meals; Saturday and Sunday lunches.

Saturday's Rogaine: (The Event entry cost will be paid by BSAR)

- On arrival at practice location – briefing, and set up camp
- 10:00 am – collect Rogaine maps and plan route
- 12 Noon – the 12 hour Rogaine begins
- 12 Midnight – Rogaine finishes
- Evening Meal provided by VRA from 7 pm onward

The 12 hour rogaine will be done in groups of two or three. BSAR members should form their own club teams if possible.

A team can return to the base (hash house) during the event. Teams may finish at any time before midnight, but BSAR members are expected to practice their night navigation.

For more information on how the rogaine operates please see the VRA website

<http://vra.rogaine.asn.au/resources/whichwaysnorth.pdf>

Participants are expected to be actively involved in both the Saturday and Sunday activities, and to travel on the Police transport provided.

Any Questions?

If you have any questions about the weekend, please don't hesitate to ring or email Merv, Duncan or Rod.

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Merv Trease</i> | <i>Home 9873 1281</i> | <i>bmtrease@melbpc.org.au</i> |
| <i>Duncan Brookes</i> | <i>Home 9379 6163</i> | <i>dbro7100@bigpond.net.au</i> |
| <i>Rod Costigan</i> | <i>Home 9853 0343</i> | <i>rod@greenstock.com.au</i> |

Attendance Confirmation

- Club members should register with their BSAR Delegates.
- Delegates, please email Duncan with the name, email address and mobile phone number of each of the participants from your Club before **Wednesday 20 August**.
- Individual members, please notify Duncan Brookes directly.

BUSHWALKERS SEARCH AND RESCUE ~ ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008

A retirement and new initiative, new appointments, relocation, four searches and three practices filled the Bushwalkers Search and Rescue (BSAR) year and keep members busy.

In May 2007, Neil Weatherill retired from BSAR after 18 years of service. Neil was Police Liaison Officer (PLO) and Minute Secretary for the duration of his involvement for which BSAR is very grateful. A presentation from BSAR and Police SAR was made on 27th July.

Also in May BSAR appointed two new PLOs and a new Field Organiser (FO). Chris Jarvis left his FO role to take up a PLO position. Also appointed as a PLO and making a return to BSAR was Neville Byrne. John Baillie was appointed to fill the FO vacancy. John, a regular contributor at meetings and training, was also appointed Assistant Equipment Officer earlier in the year.

The Police SAR Squad had regular representation at Committee meetings and the November meeting was held at the Squad's premises in Williamstown. Meeting attendance by a member of the Squad and their involvement in training contributes significantly to maintaining good working relationships between the organisations.

At the request of Police SAR, the BSAR Committee agreed try to provide small numbers of searchers rapidly to assist with initial reconnaissance searching. Only small numbers would be required at this early stage, as Police SAR would still be gathering information. Such a callout would be conducted using SMS and email with a PLO coordinating responses.

An initial draft **Rapid Response Policy** for this new initiative was discussed at the July meeting and a Working Group established to refine it and make a recommendation to the September meeting. The Gwinear search however provided an unexpected trial of the draft policy and raised numerous issues, not the least of which related to searcher safety and logistics. The policy was further clarified and approved in November. Since then, the King River search has opened discussion on a "**limited numbers**" call-out and the Rapid Response Policy is being reviewed in light of this option.

Sixteen BSAR members responded to the search for a 19yo Scottish tourist, William Bliss, who became lost on 3rd April 2007 in the **Sabine Falls** area north of Apollo Bay. A search by more than 40 Police, SES, Parks and other volunteers was organised on 4th April, but he was not found and BSAR was called out that evening. BSAR groups were tasked to search

rough terrain along Smythe Creek. The lost tourist was found within 30 minutes of BSAR deployment, having walked out onto a road.

On 21st August 2007 Police SAR made a request, acknowledging it was outside established guidelines, for a small group of searchers at short notice to find 15yo Sam Fink at **Mt St Gwinear**. He became separated from his school group and despite teachers, Parks staff and local Police conducting an immediate search, wasn't found. The weather was windy and drizzly, and the boy was also known to be asthmatic. The Police Dog Squad, SES and Red Cross also attended. Twelve BSAR members were deploying just after midnight when a Police search party found the boy. He was hypothermic, but otherwise unhurt. A BSAR group was redirected to assist and some two hours later, after rewarming, the boy walked out with his rescuers. Most BSAR members returned home later that day after a few hours sleep. The Police had initiated a further full callout for later that day for up to 40 searchers with ski or snowshoe experience. This was cancelled at 0130 hrs, but twenty-five members had committed to attend.

A 33yo man disappeared near Whitfield in the **King River** on 7th December 2007 after his 4WD broke down on Wild Horse Gap road. Fourteen BSAR members joined the search on 9th December. Police SAR requested a limited number of searchers as all had to be transported to the search area by 4WD. The missing man was attempting to follow the King River in steep and rugged terrain down to Lake William Hovell. Two BSAR teams prepared for overnight searching with a third group held in reserve. The first BSAR group was en route to the search start point when the man was spotted from the helicopter. Fortunately he could be winched out otherwise it would have been a very tough, two-day bush slog for the BSAR members to assist with the rescue.

A BSAR member from Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club, being the only member available, was teamed up with three local Parks Victoria staff to assist in the search for a 54yo woman on the **Bogong High Plains**. Penny Craig was attempting a multi-day, solo walk starting 11th February at Brandy Creek Track, Mt Hotham. It is believed she became disoriented near the top of Paling Spur and phoned for help. By the time the limited callout came it had been raining overnight and the Police Air-Wing was unable to access the area. She eventually made contact with a Bright SES group coming up Paling Spur.

Some 51 BSAR and Police personnel participated in the very successful **Dryland Training Day** at the Police Academy on 2nd June. This training specifically targeted new members and provided more advanced training for experienced members. There was very positive feedback on the sessions.

On 21st and 22nd July, 23 BSAR members, three from Police SAR and four members of Warrigal SES completed the **Winter Weekend Practice** at Mt St Gwinear. Conditions were cold, clear with no wind, but plenty of snow. The weekend gave new members insight into how an actual search evolves and how physically fit one has to be. The more experienced members had the challenge of looking after a "patient" overnight and an evacuation the next day.

The **Steep Snow & Ice/Backcountry Ski Skills Practice** was held at Mount Hotham on 15th and 16th September. Ten BSAR members and five Police SAR members attended. The practice included roped travel, load testing of a snow stake belay anchor and a ski deadman anchor, and an introduction to using avalanche beacons. Bill Barker from Mt Hotham Ski Patrol briefed the group on recent rescues and spoke about avalanche hazard control and risk areas. Members then practiced hauling in a steep, gully system. On Sunday, groups were provided with ski instruction. The hospitality and assistance of the Mount Hotham Ski Patrol and the support of Mount Hotham Skiing Company and Mount Hotham Resort Management were important contributions to the success of this practice.

Only three BSAR members updated or upgraded their first aid qualifications during the year. Subsidies are provided to encourage members to obtain, update or upgrade first aid qualifications.

For around thirty years BSAR had the privilege of utilising the facilities at Police Transport Division in **Dawson Street, Brunswick**. This support included the provision of transport and most importantly, drivers, to search areas, and secure parking during call-outs. Since around 1999, equipment storage facilities were also provided, making loading the bus in the early hours of the morning very efficient. The staff at Dawson Street are thanked for the many years of support. On 24th November Dawson Street formally ceased to be BSAR's prime rendezvous point, being replaced by the Police Bands Complex in **Green Street, Northcote**. A shipping container was made available for equipment. The new venue worked very well during its first use in early December for the King River search and staff at the new site have been most welcoming.

Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) continued to provide funds to Bushwalking Victoria for BSAR

administration and training. The department's financial support is greatly appreciated.

Behind the Log (BTL) remains the key means by which information is provided to each BSAR member and to clubs. Ren Millsom capably produced and edited the two issues during the year. Distribution of the newsletter was a joint effort between Rik Head, Cheryl Walker and Jenny Sykes. Thanks to Ren, Rik, Cheryl and Jenny for their part in ensuring that BTL kept members informed.

Cheryl Walker, from the VNPA Bushwalking and Activities Group, was appointed as **Membership Secretary** in September 2007. Cheryl has settled into the role and managed the task of coordinating and updating the list very well. She has also made changes to formatting to improve the list's effectiveness for PLOs. Thanks to Rik Head who was Interim Membership Secretary from November 2006 and assisted Cheryl to get started.

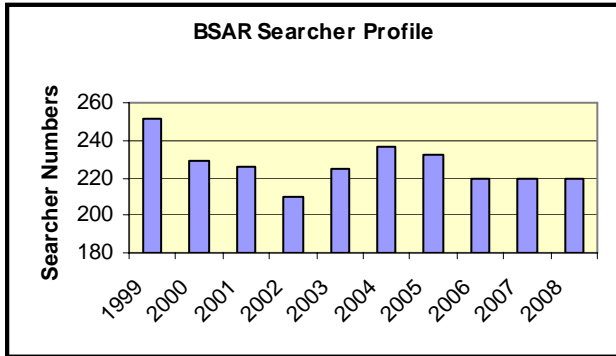
Various members of the BSAR Committee took **minutes** until July 2007 when Cheryl Walker offered to also take on this responsibility. Thanks to all who undertook this task during the year.

Rik Head ably managed and regularly updated the **BSAR website**. Thanks Rik for a job well done.

The 2006 **equipment** review recommendations were revisited in light of the move to Northcote. BSAR Equipment Officer, Chris Jarvis, together with newly appointed Assistant Equipment Officer, John Baillie, assessed all BSAR equipment and storage requirements. The BSAR Committee approved further recommendations for equipment disposal, purchase and storage and implementation is underway. The old snowshoes were well received by Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club (BNSC) for display in its clubrooms. BSAR also received safety glasses and scrub gloves courtesy of the Police SAR Squad. New CB radios, complete with storage case, were purchased during the year to supplement Police communications. Thanks to Chris and John for all their hard work on the equipment front.

The 274* dedicated people involved in BSAR are what make it unique. Twenty-four clubs contributed 220 searchers and 61 club contacts to help maintain this specialised, volunteer community service and are to be congratulated. Estimated volunteer hours contributed to the running of BSAR totalled 3,180 for the year, significantly higher than last year due to the number of searches, an additional training activity, equipment reviews and relocation, new policy development and significant administration activity. This highlights BSAR's substantial contribution to the Victorian community.

During the past ten years BSAR has witnessed fluctuations in searcher numbers. The last three years have been stable, but how will BSAR maintain its momentum in the future? With an aging membership profile, BSAR needs to recruit new, younger members. The individual membership option now available with Bushwalking Victoria will hopefully see a rise in numbers.



BSAR also intends to lift its profile and has applied for a substantial grant from Emergency Management Australia to assist with recruitment and retention of members.

I'd especially like to thank the BSAR Team, particularly the Committee, for providing such wonderful support, not just during the past year, but for the past decade. I would not have managed this long without their generously given time and contributions.

I also take this opportunity to thank members of Police SAR and look forward to ongoing, close collaboration and mutual support.

As always, Bushwalkers Search and Rescue benefits from the efforts of many who enable the provision of this essential community service. I look forward to celebrating BSAR's 60th year commencing in August 2008.

Monica Chapman

Convener, Bushwalkers Search and Rescue

** Note: Figure is a little lower than previous years due to a calculation error. This did not impact on searcher numbers.*

ALERT FRENZY AT PLO AND FO TRAINING DAY

The phones were running hot at the PLO and FO Training Day held on 10th May as seventeen PLOs and FOs from Melbourne, Healesville and North East Victoria came for the workshop. During the course of the day attendees practiced sending SMS and email alerts and becoming familiar with some of the newer technology and processes that form the operational duties of our PLOs and FOs.

Merv Trease and Rod Costigan provided an operational insight and hands-on practice in the role of our Police Liaison Officers, Duncan Brookes gave a most interesting presentation on the role and history of BSAR and Monica Chapman presented us with a wonderful reflection of BSAR at some of our annual practices from recent years. Peter Campbell also gave us a quick tour of the upcoming BSAR website management tools while Frank Zgoznic chaired a discussion session on a number of PLO and FO operational topics. A number of issues were tackled and there will be plenty for the BSAR Committee to review and implement as policy at a future date.

It was a most worthwhile day and hopefully it was a forerunner to more such workshops occurring on a regular basis. Our thanks to Parks Victoria for the use of their facilities in Westerfolds Park on the day.

Frank Zgoznic, Field Organiser



BSAR's PLOs and FOs at the Training Day



and we were even given homework!

Photos: F Zgoznic

LONGER LEGS ON SEARCHES

There were some very scratched legs emerging from the scrub on the Mt Dom Dom search. Searchers need to ensure they are able to move in a consistent and reliable manner in very thick scrub that ensures thorough coverage of the search area.

It is for good reason that the BSAR Manual (*page 24*) lists **long trousers as mandatory** items of personal search equipment that should be brought with you when attending a search.

The fact that some searchers turned up a little “short” in this respect highlights the need for a reminder on this requirement to ensure the wellbeing of members.

It is well to remember that BSAR searchers are generally tasked to search scrubby gullies and thick undergrowth on steep hillsides with light relief provided by overgrown tracks!



Remember to wear, or carry and wear when appropriate, your longer leg coverings.

Photo: F Zgoznik

LABELLING OF PERSONAL GEAR

All gear taken on a search **must be clearly labelled** with the searcher's name, club, home address and phone number (refer Manual *page 23*).

There are a number of reasons for this requirement, but the main one is to ensure BSAR members' gear is not mixed up with that of other organisations during a large or multi-day search involving changing personnel.

Special BSAR tags for searchers' gear are being investigated.

Monica Chapman, Convener

RAPID RESPONSE / LIMITED NUMBERS CALLOUTS

A **Rapid Response Callout** provides searchers in four hours or less of notification to assist Police SAR with initial searching. Searchers may be deployed into the field late in the day and into the night. A callout can happen at any time.

A **Limited Numbers Callout** is one where the limiting factor is the number of searchers able to be transported to a search due to the size of bus transport available, rather than the timeframe in which searchers are asked to reach the departure point.

The finalised procedure for Rapid Response/Limited Numbers Callouts will be placed on the BSAR website soon after the next Committee meeting on 21st July. Members should refer to the website www.bsar.org after that time for further information.

COLD CASE CALLOUTS

At the February meeting BSAR gave “in principle” agreement to assist the Police SAR Squad in searches which are unresolved. These searches will involve looking for a body. Such callouts are referred to as Cold Case Callouts and a procedure is in the process of being finalised after the initial cold case callout to Dom Dom Saddle in April (*see report page 1*).

Such callouts will be arranged with ample notice of the date and location, and will preferably be held over a weekend. A Field Organiser will be appointed in the usual way and searchers will be contacted directly by SMS and email. The longer lead time means it is not necessary to impose on Club Contacts. It also allows planning beforehand by Police SAR and the FO with the added advantage that searchers can be provided with useful information in advance.

SEARCHING FOR NEW PEER SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS

The recent large search stretched the resources of our Peer Support Team somewhat, so we are in search of members or past members who would be interested in joining the team. If you are interested or know of someone who would be suitable for such a role and would like further information about what is involved, contact:

Shirley McInnes (kmcinnes@alphalink.com.au)
Margaret Maxwell (rfrancis@melbpc.org.au) or
Rik Head (rik@c3plus.com.au)

NORTHCOTE RENDEZVOUS POINT

New Parking Arrangements for Call-outs

For around thirty years BSAR was privileged to be able to use the facilities at the Dawson Street Police Complex for logistics support to its call-outs, including provision of transport, secure parking and equipment storage. The relationship will continue even though the location for departure and equipment storage has changed.

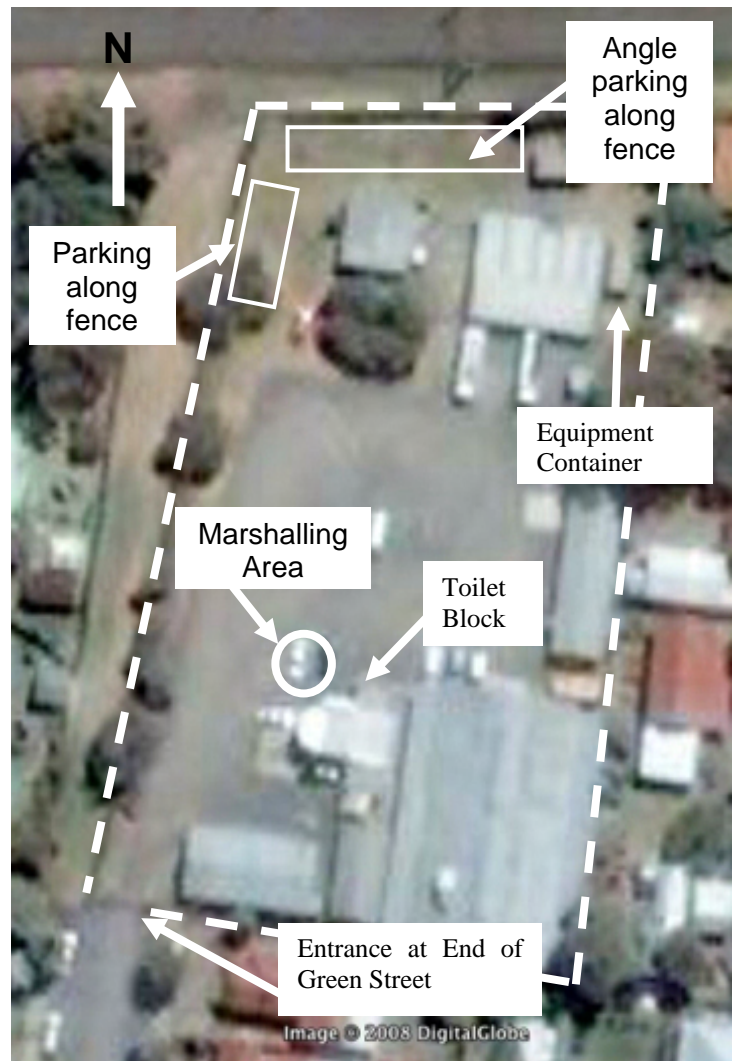
In November BSAR's prime rendezvous point moved to the Police Bands Complex in Green Street, Northcote (off Westgarth Street). A shipping container has been made available for storing BSAR's equipment.

During the multiple call outs for the Mt Dom Dom search a few issues arose which need to be addressed. These issues were caused by a combination of unfamiliarity, the lack of lighting and numbers of searchers' cars.

The site has off-street parking for up to thirty vehicles on the grassed area at the north end of the site, adjacent to the railway line. The site is surrounded by a wire fence, and is locked after-hours. Searchers will need to wait until an FO arrives with the key.

The site has a couple of 'negatives' of which members should be aware. There is a possibility of rocks being thrown over the fence from the adjacent railway reserve – it's happened once or twice over many years, and there is very limited shelter (3-5 persons) while assembling on a cold, wet, windy night.

Glen Waverley will be retained as a rendezvous point for searches in the SE, and to take overflow from Northcote during a very large or multiple call-outs.



USING NORTHCOTE DURING A CALL-OUT

(Also referred to as 'Green Street' and 'the site')

- Police have allocated to BSAR six copies of the key required to access the site and shipping container. These keys have attached to them keys to our equipment cabinets within the container. The four highest ranked FO's each have a set of keys, while the remaining two sets are kept at Dawson Street.
- The PLO managing the call-out designates a person to open the site, either by using their own set of keys (if they are an FO ranked 1-4), or designates an FO or other member to collect a set of keys from Dawson Street. *(Allow about fifteen minutes travelling time from Dawson Street to Northcote).*
- A key to the toilet block hangs on a hook on the side of the first cupboard inside the equipment container. Ensure this is returned before leaving.
- The recommended **marshalling point** is near the front of the site, opposite the toilet block. A small shelter and picnic table is nearby. Leave your packs in this area.
- Early arrivals may find the site open, but nobody to be seen. The FO may be at the equipment container, which cannot be seen from the entrance area. Unload your pack from your car then drive to the rear of the site and park your car as described below.

- The first cars to arrive should **park along the rear (north) fence**, adjacent to the railway reserve, at a forty-five degree angle. This will optimize available space and ensure non-sequential access. Once this area is full, right-angle parking is available along the west fence, from the railway reserve back, and also adjacent to buildings at the rear of the site. The main car park is off limits to BSAR personnel.
- If a very large attendance occurs, the PLO's may direct some searchers to Glen Waverley, regardless of where the search is located. Extra travelling time needs to be factored into planning where large groups are involved. This may involve extra calls by PLO's to inform attendees of a modified RV plan.
- In most cases, groups return together, so there are no problems with site access. When all personnel have departed the site is locked and keys, if borrowed from Dawson Street, returned to Dawson Street.
- During a prolonged search some searchers may return early. If an FO 1-4 is not part of the returning group then the driver will be directed to return to Northcote via Dawson Street to collect keys. One member from that group must return the keys to Dawson Street.
- In some circumstances the driver may have a key to Northcote without requiring keys allocated to BSAR. Check with the driver before leaving search base.
- On departure, some members may need to wait for a lift to arrive, such as a spouse or taxi. Ideally they should wait outside the complex, with the site being secured by the FO at departure. However, in inclement weather those few remaining members waiting to be picked up may wish to wait under the limited shelter near the marshalling point. The FO must ensure that those staying clearly understand the responsibility of the last person leaving for locking the gate. Otherwise the FO must wait until all members have left before locking the site.
- For multiple call-outs PLO's could request that Glen Waverley be used as the main rendezvous point, whilst designating a small group to be picked up from Northcote, along with equipment.

Chris Jarvis, PLO and Equipment Officer



Photos: C Jarvis

BSAR'S NEW UHF CB RADIOS

Hand held UHF radios are now standard equipment used by BSAR search groups. BSAR purchased an initial 12 hand held UHF radios a few months ago. These radios do not replace the Police issue radios that are used on searches. The primary source of radio communications will still be provided by Victoria Police.

The UHF radios will commonly be used for communication between 1. FO and Group Leaders around base and 2. Intra and inter-group communications whilst searching. The radios can also be used as a back up to the Police radios for general communications with the FO if in range. Remember these radios only have line-of-sight coverage and have limited range of 1-2km in the bush.

Operating the radios is very simple 1. Turn on, 2. Select the nominated channel that will be provided by the FO, 3. Push the talk key to transmit. It is very important to remember that these radios use public frequencies that anyone can listen in; they are not secure channels like the Victoria Police radios. Think before you transmit.

If BSAR members are considering purchasing a UHF radio we recommend the following features: minimum 2 watt power output, AA battery and a key lock function. BSAR purchased the Uniden UH044 2Watt radio. (There is a detailed description available on the BSAR website.)

John Baillie, FO and Assistant Equipment Officer

Bushwalking Victoria Acknowledges Searchers' Efforts at Dom Dom

18 April 2008

Dear Monica

At its last meeting, the Board of Bushwalking Victoria noted the special efforts of BSAR members who participated in the Dom Dom search, particularly those who were involved for the full duration of several days.

The fact that the callout was so well supported was a wonderful response at a time when many were away for Easter and school holidays.

The ongoing professionalism and enormous commitment of effort by BSAR members to train and be ready is a credit to the whole bushwalking community.

Please convey our sincere appreciation to BSAR members for their continuing commitment to this important volunteer community service.

Yours sincerely

David Reid, President

If undeliverable, please return to:
Bushwalkers Search and Rescue
Bushwalking Victoria
P O Box 1007
Templestowe Vic 3106

Behind the Log
