



Behind the Log

Issue No. 32

November 2010

A0002548Y

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www.bsar.org

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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 May 2011 - deadline 30 April

Search for Danyanti Bilimoria at Lake Mountain, 12 July 2010

On Sunday 11/07/10 48-year-old Danyanti Bilimoria walked with her family to Alps Lookout along the walking track from the Lake Mountain Alpine Resort carpark. At about 3pm her family returned to the carpark. Danyanti stayed behind to meditate on a rock, however she did not return and could not be found on the track. During an overnight search Police SAR found tracks on the south side of the mountain 400-500m SW of Alps Lookout.

At first light on Monday 12/07/10 twenty BSAR searchers arrived at search base and six groups of three were searching by 9:20am.

The weather was fine, clear and sunny after a mild night for July. Most of the area had been burnt in the bushfires of Feb 09 so it was much easier to see through than in the past. However, partially burnt scrub and fallen timber made travel dirty and difficult. There were also patches of snow.

Police SAR, SES, Parks staff, the police dog squad and mounted police were involved. Helicopters from the four main TV channels and the police airwing were also present.

Danyanti was found at 11:30am by Simon Ranik of the Police SAR together with the police dog squad approximately 400m south of Alps Lookout where she went missing, close to where tracks had been seen during the night search. She was fit and well, and able to walk back unassisted to the walking track, where a police 4WD transported her to the carpark.

Danyanti had moved around which made locating her more difficult. She had heard helicopters and had moved to try to contact them.

Danyanti said she became lost when she branched off the main track onto a loop track following arrow markers without taking note of the direction. She was found on a rock in an open area so it was surprising she was not seen from a helicopter. Police heard Danyanti's shouts and were able to locate her.

All BSAR members returned to Melbourne by 4:30pm safe and well, although quite tired.

Lance Rowley, Field Organiser

Winter Training Weekend at Mt Hotham July 2010

A very successful winter weekend was held at Mt Hotham on 24/25 July with participants gaining new skills or reinforcing existing skills. A total of 51 participants attended, with 21 being new to BSAR.

On the Saturday there were three streams of training: Steep Snow and Ice (SSI), Winter Search for experienced BSAR personnel and Winter Training for those new to BSAR. Each stream completed training relevant to their expertise and experience.

On the Sunday four S&R teams, each consisting of several search groups, were coordinated by their own training Field Organiser to search for, find and evacuate a lost person.

It was noted that a number of people had difficulty in the use of GPS. All BSAR members must take the time to train and be competent in their use.

The winter training program confirmed the effectiveness of a prior Dryland Day for SSI participants and this should be incorporated as a standard requirement for future SSI training events.

Feedback from the event revealed the desirability of scheduling a Dryland Day/Evening for members new to BSAR to allow them to better understand BSAR expectations. A 'How does BSAR work' session should also be included. It would also be an opportunity to hand out Manuals and complete GPS initial training.

Overall, it was a successful training weekend with new members gaining a good understanding of what is required of them at a search, existing experienced members enhancing their skills and SSI participants focusing on specific skills required in steep, icy terrain.

Rik Head, Field Organiser



The BSAR Field Organiser - meet Duncan Brookes, one of our FOs.

The BTL editor put some questions to Duncan.

What was your introduction to bushwalking?

I grew up in an environment of bushwalkers as both my parents were keen bushwalkers. I can recall going on VMTC family base camps from a very young age. My first VMTC day walk was when I was about 8yo, up Mt Riddell.

How did you get involved in BSAR?

My father Stuart was a founding member of “The Search and Rescue Section”, as it was then called, and he was an FO. As a youngster I recall him going off to practice weekends and searches so I always knew of “search and rescue”. I joined when I was 18 in 1972. My first search was in 1974 at Stevensons Falls. Stuart was my group leader. Peter Dunbar the FO presumably thought that was a good idea at the time.

Before being appointed as an FO, what other roles have you had in BSAR?

I was the VMTC Delegate to the Committee for several years and an active participant in “practices” (now called training) and searches prior to being appointed to the FO list in 1978.

What would be your most notable search?

A couple of searches come to mind. In August 1982 I was a group leader on a search for an elderly chap from Wandiligong, missing off the Ti Tree Range (he had ridden his bike across the mountains in winter, by accident!). My group located his shoe tracks and followed them for some time down Little Running Creek, until we found him alive and well after being missing for 7 days.

In August 1985 I was the search FO for the first time, called to locate two missing teenagers at Mt St Gwinear. They were quickly found. Rather than go home, the Police Inspector asked us if we would mind going to Mt Stirling to assist with the search for 2 missing young men, cross country skiers, that was already underway. An earlier callout of BSAR members was already involved in that tragic search. When we reached Mansfield Police Station later that day, we were asked to continue straight on to Mt Feathertop, following reports that a snow walker had fallen down the steep side when the cornice collapsed earlier that day. While en-route we learned that the victim was one of our members, Tom Kneen, who was leading a BMLC snow walk. We then spent two days on Mt Feathertop in a demanding but sadly unsuccessful search for Tom.



Duncan Brookes

How has the search organization changed with time?

At one level, yes, there is now so much more of everything. The Police command post was once a policeman sitting in the front seat of a 4WD with a map on his knee. Now it can be a fleet of vehicles and trailers, well developed and finely tuned processes and very sophisticated resources. But the basics haven't changed. Experienced walkers searching the scrubby gullies.

Having dispatched the searchers into the field, you then relax and have a sleep?

No. I can't recall ever sleeping during the day on a search. There is a search in progress and our members are involved. There is plenty to think about and plenty to do.

What is involved in handling the media?

Caution and circumspection are required. A search is a Police operation and we must respect that. The main lesson to learn is not to say too much, if anything at all. I have never regretted saying too little but once or twice I have regretted saying too much. The media have an important job to do, and need to be able to do it, but they feed on an angle and the more controversial the better. We don't want BSAR to provide that controversy, either in relation the search, or the missing person. BSAR's involvement in a search should be reported, but one needs to be careful not to get carried away while doing so. The Police now do a good job of highlighting BSAR's participation.

What is the hardest aspect of being an FO in your view?

The challenging time is that period immediately after arriving at the search base. It is critical that our members are well briefed on the circumstances of the search and missing person, on what their job is, and how that fits in to the overall search plan, and are fed and properly equipped. This has to be achieved without members spending excessive and frustrating amounts of time waiting around for something to happen.

New Callout Process – Automated Telephony

Over the last six months, BSAR has been designing and testing a system of automated telephony to supplement existing callout media.

Using this service a PLO will be able to send a recorded message or an electronic voice message to the entire membership list. The phone will ring at almost three hundred homes simultaneously - you answer; a recording tells you that a callout is happening and how to respond. Voila, you know about the callout up to two hours earlier than you

might have. SMS already does this but for a variety of reasons it does not achieve the coverage we want.

In mid October, we tested the service on BSAR members. Reception was variable, but the purpose of the recorded message was understood by all.

At <http://www.bsar.org/aot> , you will find our reasons for wanting to introduce automated telephony and how it will fit into our systems.

Rod Costigan, Police Liaison Officer

Discounts for BSAR Members at Macpac Hampton East.

The Macpac outdoor gear store at Hampton East is offering a 25% discount off all Macpac products and 20% discount off non Macpac branded products (items on special sale price excepted). To obtain this discount, BSAR members must show ID (a copy of BTL, Handbook, etc) and also be a member of the Macpac Wilderness Club (join for free at the store).

Macpac Hampton East is at 894 Nepean Highway, telephone 03 9553 6820, email hamptoneast@macpac.com.au.

The Macpac Team is looking forward to seeing you.

No Barbeque this year

Please note that a barbeque planned for November will not proceed. We hope to arrange a similar event at a later time.

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

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