

The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs NSW Inc.

Minutes of General Meeting

Tuesday, 17th October 2006 at 7.30 p.m.
at the Ashfield R.S.L. Club

Tracks and Access - Wilf Hilder

Blue Mountains N.P. Narrowneck Peninsula is an ongoing embarrassment to me – Jim Smith's new book "The Last of the Cox's River Men – Ben Esgate" – corrects my long promoted name Dixons Ladders (recently destroyed). This applied to the steel ladders erected by the Public Works Department mid 1964 on the site of the original Dicksons Ladder erected by legendary miner William Dickson in the 1890's and destroyed in 1924 (see Brian Fox's Blue Mountains Geographical Dictionary). On the other hand Jim Barrett has reminded me that the miner's ladders at Castle Head once existed in spite of my denials and that a cut stone step was found by a Catholic Bushwalkers Club party many years ago on the cliff edge – my sincere apologies Jim. Local legend claimed that Katoomba tradesmen used to take miners food orders out to Castle Head and lower these provisions on ropes to the miners below. The stone chimneys of the camp (men only) can still be seen along the tramway tracks and in the nearby bush at Ruined Castle. The married men's camp was at the foot of the present Scenic Railway.

The information on the internet about the Katoomba – Ruined Castle and Glen Shale mines tramways is seriously flawed. It is a rehashed version of Giff Eardley's writings in "The Shale Railways of NSW". Giff got it wrong too. Quite a few field trips later I think I have finally got it right. The horse tramway never ran around the Mount Solitary end of the Ruined Castle. Graham Holbeach (Sutherland Bushwalking Club) found the tramway on the southern side of Ruined Castle and I found the ruins of the connecting tramway tunnel under the saddle on the Castle Head side of Ruined Castle. Please go and check it out if you don't believe me.

I note that Ninian Melville's 1934 map, a redrawing of Myles Dunphy's 1930 Megalong Valley, Cox River and Narrowneck Peninsula map shows TARRO'S LADDER but does not mark or name DUNPHY PASS under Glenraphael Head (then unnamed) despite Myles's claim of having discovered the pass in January 1914.