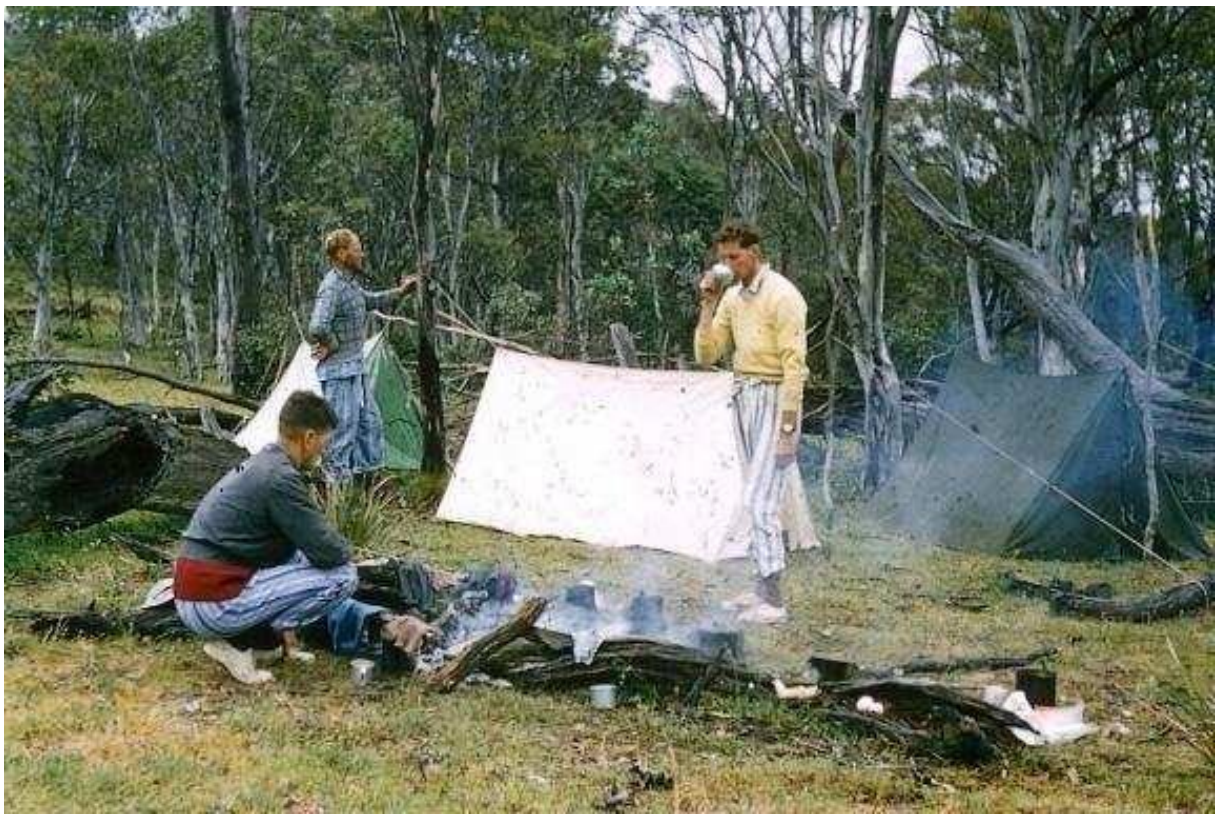
Bushwalking Victoria

Bushwalking News Victoria

August 2010



Nostalgia: Overnight camp, early 1950s (photo by Eric Skewes)
Benalla Bushwalking Club newsletter, July-September 2010

Contributions

The statements and opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views or position of Bushwalking Victoria.

Editor: Joslin Guest

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BUSHWALKING TIPS

Setopress Bandages for Snakebite and Sprains

As Australian snake venom is carried in the lymphatic system, the relevant first aid treatment is to use a pressure bandage to wrap the bitten limb from fingers to armpit or toes to groin, immobilise the limb and transport the patient to care. Do not allow the snake-bite victim to walk out.

Many of us carry a crepe bandage, or even better, an elastic Ace bandage to wrap the limb. However on the BSAR Training Weekend, many members were a little surprised when they attempted to use these to apply first aid. The crepe bandages were essentially useless. Even with two of the heavier elastic bandages, it was impossible to wrap higher than just above the knee.

The bandage sometimes started to slip off straight away, and if it stayed up there was no way to tell if it was firm enough or too tight. Blue toes or decreased venous return indicate that it is too tight. But it is then necessary to unwrap the bandage and start again, which allows a surge of venom into the body.)

A bandage that is designed to regulate venous drainage was much more effective. The Setopress Bandage which was demonstrated has a number of advantages. Primarily it is wider (10cm) and longer (3.5m) than most crepe or elastic bandages. This will allow a single bandage to reach the knee or armpit, and two to reach the groin.

To regulate the tightness (and, therefore, effective pressure) the bandage has a continuous series of green and brown rectangles printed along its length. As the bandage is stretched, the green rectangles become squares. Increase the tension, and the brown rectangles become squares. At this tension lymphatic return is minimised, controlling flow of venom to the body.

The squares are printed off centre to assist in providing a controlled wrap of half width overlap at each turn by covering the visible squares at each wrap. This half width overlap is required to provide correct pressure, and also to prevent the bandage causing a tourniquet effect. Also, the bandage is textured, which helps to prevent it slipping down a conical thigh or calf, which would immediately reduce the pressure and effectiveness of the bandage.

For gram counters, the weight is 59g.

This technology doesn't come cheap; the bandages cost about $19.00 each. However they are designed to be washed and reused. They are at least as effective for other injuries such as a sprained ankle or twisted knee, and can be used over a pad to control bleeding or alleviate something like a cracked rib. So they can replace crepe and elastic bandages in your first aid kit.

My rationale is that if someone is bandaging me for a snakebite, I'll consider it money well spent. (And if I'm bandaging someone else who only has a crepe bandage with them, I'll send them the bill!!)

The bandages are often difficult and/or more expensive to get at your local pharmacy, so there are two online suppliers who I have purchased from.

- Independence Australia have a website at
  http://www.independenceaustralia.com
  or phone 1300788855.
  Their product code is 23290110. Service and supply has been consistently excellent. Shipping is included in the price.
- Home Pharmacy have a website at
  http://www.homepharmacy.com.au/home
  or phone 1800 333 878.
  Their product code is 387959. Their prices are lower, but don't include postage unless the value of the order is more than $150, which may be viable for a club. Supply has been a little inconsistent, but service is good and they have backordered in the past.

Rod Lawlor
alpineSAR Victoria
from Behind the Log, Issue 31 June 2010 (the BSAR newsletter)

Blisters

Some people are more prone to blisters than others, but blisters are very likely to develop on a walking trip if:

- Your boots haven't been adequately broken in
- Your boots have been fastened too tightly
- Your socks have dirt or sand in the weave
- You get a fold in your sock
- The inside of your boot is damaged.

Check your feet after your training walks or when breaking in new boots. Look for any red or pink areas where your boots might be starting to rub. If left unchecked, these could form blisters. Cover any sore areas with bandaids/plasters or surgical tape before you wear your boots again.

If you get a stone in your boot or you can feel a fold in your sock while walking, stop immediately and take out the stone or straighten the sock before the friction starts to rub up a blister.

If you think you are getting a blister, stop as soon as you can and treat the blister or the sore area before it gets any worse. If the skin is just beginning to rub or even if a blister has already developed, put a moleskin patch on it. This provides a padding to take the pressure off the area as you walk. Some people prefer to drain the fluid out of the blister before covering it with moleskin. If you do this then hygiene is essential – you'll need antibacterial wipes for the blister area and a needle sterilised with a lighted match. Wipe the blister area, then poke a small hole in the blister (towards the side) to allow the fluid to drain out, and then cover it with clean plaster or moleskin, and refit your

sock and boot. If you don't want to drain the blister, cut a small hole in the patch before fitting it over the blister and then refit your sock and boot. The idea is to stop the blister bubble from bursting and causing more damage to the area.

After the walk, wash your feet and change the dressing. If wearing boots again (eg, the next day) ensure that the blister is well padded before you put on your socks and boots.

There are a range of blister related products you can purchase from a number of companies—eg, from www.elastoplast.com.au and www.scholl.com.au

Here are some other techniques for avoiding blisters. Some people wear two pairs of socks to reduce blisters. However, some people find this creates problems for them. Some people change their socks every few hours (to keep their feet drier). Some people harden their feet for weeks beforehand by (daily) rubbing in metho or Friars Balsam. Some people wash and/or put on a clean pair of socks every day of the walk. Don't mend socks as the mends can cause friction.

Reference (in part): *The complete practical guide to camping and hiking and wilderness skills* by Peter G Drake.

Lothar
The Warrnambool Bushwalker, July 2010

More tips about feet from an opinionated editor:

Its best to have tired feet when being fitted for a new boots—to replicate what your feet will be like on a walk. If possible try on the boots wearing the number and type of socks you would wear on a bushwalk. If the boots are uncomfortable in any way in the shop, don't buy them. You will probably get blisters before you 'break them in', assuming that they do eventually break in.

Get the right size. The right size is probably a size bigger than your normal city shoe. A good test is to put the boot on (while wearing the appropriate socks) and leave them unlaced. Slide your foot forward so that your toe touches the toe of the boot. If you can get a finger and thumb between your heel and the back of the boot, the boot is probably the right size Another good test before you buy is to test the laced-up boot by standing on a steeply inclined ramp. If you can feel your toe, your boot is too small.

Your foot should not be allowed to slide forward in the boot when going down hill. Nor should your heel rise and fall within the boot at any time. So you need to lace your boots to avoid both of these things. Appropriate lacing rather than tight lacing is the aim. Here are a couple websites showing different ways of lacing boots:

http://www.hitthetrail.com/boot_lacing.php
http://www.fieggen.com/shoelace/hikingbikinglacing.htm

The inner can make a difference to the comfort of a boot and whether you get blisters. Good sports footwear retailers sell a variety of inners. They may have an inner that adjusts the way your foot rests in the boot, and this may reduce the incidence of blisters and other foot problems. Don't walk on worn inners—get replacements.

If your wear two pairs of socks, think about wearing a liner sock as the inner sock rather than an ordinary sock or a second bushwalking sock. In my experience, the liner socks purchased at the better quality bushwalking shops are more comfortable than those purchased elsewhere. Good bushwalking socks are worth the extra you pay for them: they are more comfortable; they last longer too.

If you are prone to blisters, tape the susceptible area before you start the walk. I find two products particularly beneficial. First I use Elastoplast Sports Elastowrap, an underwrap—this is a very soft tape. On a long walk I might put several layers on sensitive areas. I then cover this with Leuco Sportstape Premium, which I mould to the shape of my feet. This can be cut/torn without scissors. When taping our feet make sure there are no ridges or bubbles in the tape. Don't use sports tapes that cannot be moulded to your feet without forming ridges. There is another excellent product called 2nd Skin. I found the product itself very good when someone else put the gel and then the covering tape on for me, but having 10 thumbs I can't do it satisfactorily for myself.

A simply wonderful product is Foot Fleece, the Trampers' Friend. Unfortunately you have to order it from NZ. The website is
http://www.footfleece.co.nz/?gclid=CLeGvpG57KICFQazbwodnzXfew

And finally, wear short toenails. Check your toenails the night before the walk and clip them short.

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(Waverley Bushwalking Club)