

THE THINGS YOU SEE!

with (TRUTHFUL) PHIL BIANCHI



Vets, Bones and the Scan Man

Last year out on the Connie Sue near Point Lilian, I was scrambling up a breakaway heading for an art site. The climb was steep, much like the climb up to Canning's Cairn on the CSR. Wearing my size 15 Flash Harry hiking boots I made a steady pace puffing my way to the top. Suddenly my 'million dollar hi-tech hiking boots' locked together.

The laces of the right boot had locked up with the speed lace hooks on the left boot. I was leg cuffed and trapped and no matter what I tried I couldn't separate the boots. In an escape bid I tried flinging my right leg outward seeking to snap the lace, no luck. This would have been the only time when cheap laces would have been appreciated. I couldn't do a thing; I fell backwards and skidded head first down the slope among the rocks. My mates saw me fall but were too far away to 'catch me'.

I waited a few moments for the 'sawdust' to settle before attempting to get up. My initially concerned but now grinning mates were at hand. One of them muttered, "At least you saved your camera". I had apparently shot my camera holding arm in the air to save it, instead of worrying about my head. Don't all photographers do that?

Walking down the slope was murder, it had me wishing humans came with diff locks. Once at ground level I started an inspection and discovered I had lost a fair bit of bark

and was losing a bit of 'red radiator fluid' here and there. Thankfully no tyre plugs needed, just surface patches.

The pain in my 'right ball joint' was grimacing stuff. Thankfully the 4W driving part of the trip had ended and we headed for home. Once home the fun began. First I saw the 'Vet', then the 'Physioterrorist' who after a few treatments, and me still walking like a one legged crab, said; "You need to see a 'Bone carpenter'". Bones wanted scans with contrast, so next stop was the Scan Man. Have you ever had needles injected deeply into your knee's cartilage area four times? After a few injections and me squirming around like a snake in death throes, he says, "Sorry but you need two

more injections to spread the contrast." Lucky for him he was out of reach.

Armed with a fist full of scans, I went back to Bones, "You've got a torn MCL (Medial Collateral Ligament); it's outside the knee joint and not the ACL." "Didn't Nick Nat have an ACL go?" I replied. "Yes but they hurt heaps more," he said, leaving me feeling like I was a sook. He then says, "We can sort you out with an arthroscopy. Oh a couple of bits of 'rust' have shown up around the patella, which is normal for a person of your birth date." Cheeky bugger: "... normal for a person of my birth date".

Bones did his thing and after some physio and exercises, I'm on the road to recovery. But not before another visit to the Scan Man for cortisone injections and more squirming and cursing his ancestry.

"I fell backwards and skidded head first down the slope among the rocks."



Truthful Phil's boot with speed hooks squashed. ▲



▲ Goodie's boot with speed hooks cut off.

Wondering if this was a rare incident, I did some research online. I also spoke to an Australian sales manager of a reputable brand of footwear. I found that almost every major brand has speed lace hooks. The manager went through with me what I was doing before the laces locked up.

We agreed that most people don't walk with both ankles almost rubbing, but there was a risk. I fell while I was trying to pick a walking line when the laces made contact.

Just to reinforce this problem is not a rare occurrence, Goodie, a mate of mine, while collecting firewood on a recent 4WD trip had his boots lock up the same way. Over he went, landing in a prickly bush. Many prickles were picked out, but many more were too small to see; he suffered for days.

While exploring the internet I found, websites, blogs and Facebook pages devoted to accidents and the dangers of speed lace hooks. Folks it doesn't matter how expensive or hi-tech your hiking boots are, if they have speed lace hooks, cut the hooks off or crush them with pliers.

I feel that in many ways I was fortunate that my injuries weren't far worse. Can you imagine what dramas would have unfolded if I had sustained broken bones or a head injury? The nearest medical help by driving out was a day away; even RFDS help was problematic with the nearest airstrip being Warburton.

Take care folks, remove these dangerous hooks if you have them or better still don't buy boots with them. Or I can get you in touch with Bones, the Physioterrorist or the Scan Man.

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