



all nations
BUSHWALKERS INC



Summer Newsletter
December 2007

PO Box Q23 Queen Victoria Building,
NSW 1230
www.bushwalking.org.au/~allnations



NEWSLETTER OF ALL NATIONS BUSHWALKERS INC • FORMERLY ANC BUSHWALKERS INC & ALL NATIONS CLUB WALKABOUT GROUP • FOUNDED 1962 • INCORPORATED 1992

WALK REPORT

Historic Crossings Walk, Mt York & Hartley Vale

Sunday 5 August 2007

Leader: Charles Bowden

Thirteen – unlucky for some but not the group of walkers of that number who met on top of Mt York, one chilly but mostly sunny day in winter. Mt York is the logical start for completing the three historic crossings in one continuous N-shaped trek, before looping back to Mt York via an historic cemetery for good measure.

The three crossings are roads built in the early 19th century as potential routes down the escarpment to access the lands to the west. In the end, a fourth road, through Victoria Pass (1832) became the preferred option and the earlier threesome went into disuse.

We set off down Coxs Road, the earliest built (1815). It's initially a steep winding track with splendid views near the summit of Mt York, looking out over Hartley Vale and the plains surrounding equally historic Collits Inn. The escarpment here is popular with abseilers and rock climbers of which we saw a few as we made our way down.

Unfortunately, after a little over 1 km, the original Coxs Road disappears into private property and instead we follow a nature trail between farmlands. Some of the group amused themselves balancing across the spaced stumps along a section of the track which evidently is prone to flooding. After pausing for morning tea in a shady nook near the end of the nature trail, we rounded a spur and turned onto Lockyers Road.

Built in 1929 but never completed (being superseded by Victoria Pass), Lockyers Road follows the eastern

flank of the spur. A considerable amount of the original sandstone block roadworks still remain, each block hewn by hand by the convict work force. Just before reaching the top of the spur, the road peters out and a track continues past some rocky outcrops offering views east across Kerosene Creek towards Mt Victoria. One of these outcrops proved to be an ideal lunch spot.

Just before reaching Mt York road, we take a nature trail to the east which dips into a ferny gully and then up onto a denuded ridge, following powerlines until it reaches the start of Lawsons Long Alley (1825). At 4 km, it is the longest of the three roads, leading all the way to Hartley Vale village.

At one point when the track becomes a wide dirt road, a herd of cattle had gathered by the gate which we intended to use, the track having been fenced off by a local farmer. The placid beasts proved to be quite benign, assuaging the nervousness of some of our group, and allowed us to pass without stampeding.

Continued next page



Stepping out

Continued from page 1

After reading the signs in Hartley Vale which recounted the glory years of the shale oil industry that existed in the area, we followed a footpath bordering the road, eventually reaching a parking area in the woods below Lockyers Road.

As it had a windy loo, this proved to be a popular spot for a tea break before rejoining the nature trail we had come down that morning.

We soon left the trail to head west using a series of faint tracks to reach a local historic cemetery. It had recently been fenced off from the surrounding bush for some reason, but others before us had found a way in and so did we. There was some discussion of the ancient headstones which revealed that, while sadly many of the local community had died very young, there were also some surprisingly long-lived folk given the harsh conditions that probably existed 150 years ago.

We then retraced our steps back up Coxs Road to the summit of Mt York and some late afternoon views before heading to an historic watering hole in Mt Victoria for a well-earned meal.



The Group

Thank you to Liam Heery, Jacqui Joseph, Brian Goodwin, Alison Lyon, Nick Collins, Faye Xu, Helena Lang, Moon Yong, Peter Bonner, Edna Pang, Len Sharp and visitor Colm O'Murchu for taking part .

BUSHFIRE SAFETY FOR WALKERS

Presented by The Rural Fire Service NSW
Tuesday 6 November 2007



The idea for this presentation came about when I approached The Rural Fire Service for 100 copies of the leaflet "Two Dozen Points For Bush fire Survival".

Megan Jones - Librarian kindly printed us 20 copies from their archival file as it was currently being revised due to changes in bushfire safety recommendations.

Kate Surrey - Senior Education Officer at my request then arranged

for Kristine Wendtman to present an update talk and discussion at Woodstock.

I booked for 20 members hoping to get 12 including most of the walk leaders and the committee but only 7 members attended, a disappointing turnout.

After delaying the meeting for 10 minutes we got underway with re-jigged seating to have a roundtable Q & A session instead that carried on to 8pm when it was time for dinner.

Handouts included the case study of a fire in the Blue Gum Forest where 4 boys died and 5 escaped, *Protective Clothing*, and *Camping During the Bushfire Period*, plus several others. These will be available at the next committee meeting in January.

The whole evening was very worthwhile and many interesting facts emerged from the Q & A discussion.

Special thanks to Kristine Wendtman and The Rural Fire Service and the 7 stalwarts who turned up. Special praise to Judy Dervin who came all the way from Mt Victoria and also to David Cunningham who gamely hobbled up and down Burwood Road for the dinner with his still swollen knee from the Wangat Weekend accident.

Just think!

You are camping in the Blue Gum Forest and a bushfire is approaching. Your tent, ground sheet, sleeping bag, clothes, hat and backpack are all made from synthetic fibre - what do you do?

Where do you go? Your car?

Peter Bonner

ANB Xmas Party
Sunday 23 December 2007
From 12noon
Brays Bay Reserve,
Rhodes Park

See separate flyer for details

WALK REPORT

Hazelbrook to Lawson via Bedford Pool

Blue Mountains National Park

Sunday 12 August 2007 Leader: Charles Bowden

Thirteen again, my lucky number, and the good fortune rubbed off on the other 12 walkers as we had a stunning day. I felt doubly sorry for Ruby who had surveyed and originally intended to lead this walk. Not only was she sidelined unexpectedly through injury but we had perfect weather and all seven waterfalls we encountered had water gushing through.

After gathering at Hazelbrook we followed Terrace Falls Road watching it transform from sealed road into fire trail. After about 2 km, we branched off east along an unmarked track that leads to the top of a nearby hill with great views over the Terrace Falls Reserve and National Park out towards Lawson. After pausing for morning tea, we took another unmarked track down the far side of the wooded hill and which linked up with Lake Road fire trail before joining the lower section of Terrace Falls Road.



Morning tea

Here a junction showed us the track to Bedford Pool and our first waterfall, James Falls, appeared shortly afterwards, a short distance off the track, before Bedford Pool emerged from the gloom of the valley at the bottom of the slope. After pausing to admire the pool and surrounds, we headed west along the track that skirts Bedford Creek, crossing Terrace Falls Creek, to reach Willawong Pool. This marks the junction of Bedford and Lawson Creeks and has notably sheer cliffs rising from the water's edge.

We retraced our steps for 500 metres before turning north along the track to Terrace Falls, a series of cascades, and then onto Victor Falls, where we stopped for lunch in the amphitheatre below the waterfall. Shortly after leaving Victor Falls, we linked up to a fire trail leading up a ridge towards Baths Road before turning off to Cataract Falls, a 3-stage sequence of waterfalls. The track bordering Cataract Creek then heads downhill to Federal Falls before



Willawong pool

rounding a spur to reach Junction Falls. These are actually two separate waterfalls where Ridge and Lawson Creeks spill over a long rocky ledge to merge into one stream below.

The track then heads steadily uphill towards Adelina Falls, situated immediately below the derelict Blue Mountains Golf Course. After admiring this final water feature, we walked along the edges of the course, past Lawson Oval and the BMX track to reach the town itself where we adjourned for refreshments before taking the train back to Hazelbrook and beyond.



Junction Falls - Lawson Creek

Thank you to John Rich, Brian Goodwin, Alison Lyon, Moon Yong, Len Sharp, Terry Redmond and Bob Seibrigh, new members Hugh Redmond, Kerry Taylor and Jasmin Tan, and visitors Karen Houssenloge and David Fidge, for an enjoyable outing.

Please note our new address

All Nations Bushwalkers

**PO Box Q23 Queen Victoria Building
Sydney NSW 1230**



From your President

Thank you for participating in the events on our last programme. I'm sure that you enjoyed the varied activities as much as I did, from day walks to weekends away to social nights out.

The club continues to grow with new members joining all of the time. For those of us who have been around a while, please make our newer members welcome and introduce them to our varied activities and show them what a great social bunch of people we are. This is a great club and it is incumbent on all of us to make everyone feel welcome. With this programme running over the holiday period, I wish that all of you have a great festive season (enjoying it in whatever way you choose), and that anyone who drives anywhere, gets back safely and without any loss of points!!

As some of you know I will be sailing across the Atlantic in December and then spending some time in Cuba with Jacqui after she has completed her adventures touring Egypt and Barbados. We will be thinking of you on your varied walks during this period and look forward to catching up with you when we get home in the New Year.

Happy Christmas and New Year.

Thanks,

Liam Heery 



The Group - note Len with his 'find' - photos by Charles

A hard climb out of the creek and back up Fagan Ridge following previous GPS way points put us spot on the fire trail back to the cars and home. Thanks to Len, Charles, David, Alison and Chris for joining me on a challenging walk close to Sydney.

WALK REPORT

Marramarra Creek, Marramarra NP:

2 September 2007

Leader: Liam Heery

This walk was a repeat of an earlier walk about a year ago, but in the reverse direction. It's amazing when you reverse a walk, how different everything is and how it feels completely new, yet on the other hand a sense of déjà vu prevails.

We kicked off from Hornsby and drove to the start point at the head of the Smugglers track, a foot track used to smuggle rum into the colony during the rum rebellion!

Unfortunately on this occasion, no rum was to be found, although we did come across evidence of the "early" settlers in the form of rock carvings.



The Cascades

The walk down to Marramarra Creek was relatively easy and we had a welcome morning tea break at the picnic spot. Then it was off to do the hard work of making our way up Marramarra Creek. A look at the creek caused a bit of consternation when we realised that the tide was not only in but continuing to rise!

Alison was getting worried at this stage about "another" river crossing, especially when we couldn't find the fallen tree that had acted as a bridge last time around.

Luckily after bush bashing up the southern shore we came to the tidal head water and were able to make a simple crossing (note for future walks).

After this we had a welcome break for lunch sitting in what shade we could find in the steep gorge we had now entered.

Following lunch it was back to the hard work of Marramarra Creek, however the going was much easier than anticipated as a lot of the undergrowth that was there last time has been washed away in the recent rain storms.

Afternoon tea was taken at the rock pools where Len found a boogie board, although he did not take up our offer of him going over the waterfall on it.

Notice board

Alpsport Pty Ltd are offering **ANB club members** a 10% discount off the recommended retail price on any product in store (excepting items already on "special") on presentation of their ANB membership card. Alpsport are located at 1045 Victoria Road, West Ryde, NSW 2114 and can also be contacted by e-mail at - alpsport@optusnet.com.au or by phone on 9858 5844. Please visit their website - www.alpsport.com.au - to check out the extensive product ranges and brands available as well as opening times (7 days).



"The waratah kings and queens: Liam, Jacqui, Michael and Annette pose among a magic waratah patch on Nick's 9 September walk in the Patonga area. Photo: Nick Collins"

FREE MAPS AND INFORMATION

"Guide to Sydney"

(Holiday on the Harbour) July 2007

This pocket sized brochure unfolds to a 690 x 420mm map of ferry routes and locality points of interest from North and South Heads to Rydalmere in the West.

On the back are 13 panels of walks and interesting facts... **The best 'freebie' for ages.**

Free from Sydney Ferries Corp or your local library

2007 Guide to National Parks

Covers over 200 parks and reserves

Free from NPWS offices or country libraries

SKIN CANCER QUIZ

1. Did you experience a severe blistering sunburn before the age of 18?
2. Does your job require frequent sun-exposure?
3. Do you sunbathe outside?
4. Do you have outdoor recreational activities?
5. Is your natural hair colour blond, red or light brown?
6. Is your natural eye colour green, hazel, grey or blue?
7. Is your skin freckled and/or fair?
8. Do you sunburn easily?
9. Have you or members of your immediate family had skin cancer in the past?
10. Were you born with a birth mark larger than 20cm?
11. Do you wear sunscreen less than half the time when outdoors?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, you may be at increased risk of skin cancer. Go to a Skin Cancer Clinic for an expert skin assessment. All active Bushwalkers are advised to have an annual checkup.



"Nick's walk to Rocky Ponds and Mt Wondabyne on 28 October took in the picturesque pools of the Rocky Ponds area, fabulous views over the Hawkesbury River, and an interesting excursion along a little known historic tramway track. Pictured here are Liam, Jacqui, Fanny, Len, Ken, Nick, Moon, and Jasmin. Photo: Alex Loo."

BIKE RIDE

Meadowbank Return

Sunday 26 August 2007 Leader: Carol Cox

I continue to be very lucky with the weather, and with the great folks who join these bike rides.

Eight of us – Len, Peter, Richard, Barry (visitor), Bob, Zvonko, his 7yo daughter Eva and I - gathered at the Meadowbank Station carpark and at 10.30am headed west along the Parramatta River to the Silverwater bridge. The section of the bike path on the river's edge below the old Naval Stores site is close to completion, but a small detour around this was no deterrent to our intrepid bunch. We crossed the river and enjoyed a leisurely morning tea in Silverwater Park before heading off on the riverside bike path to Newington Armoury. Eva had done very well to ride this far, and at this point she and Zvonko left the group to make their way slowly home.



Zvonko and Eva

I had no set route in mind as there are so many alternatives in the precinct, so the remaining six of us took the long way round via the path through Newington, past the Narawang Wetland and the Bay Marker at Wentworth Common (where we took the spiral ride to the top of the mound), then the straight run back to the river for lunch

on the pier at the Olympic Park ferry wharf. Here we discovered Bob's talent for juggling – and I was intrigued by the fact that two other members confessed to me their wish that they had mastered this particular skill!

It was a day of little discoveries - for Len, a "back way" around the archery field which cuts out the need to negotiate the nasty Bennelong and Hill Roads intersection; for me, the pleasant ride along the waters edge on the Rhodes Peninsula rather than among the traffic around the shopping centre, and for Peter, a boat ramp at the bottom of Wharf Road where he can launch his canoe onto the Parramatta River.



The remaining six riders

There was some very pleasant bird watching along the way – from a regal white heron near the shipwrecks, to wonderful pelicans, stilts and a black swan at the Water Bird Refuge. It is so good to see the tidal "flushing" of this area has improved the water quality a great deal and the large algae blooms no longer seem to be a problem.

As we were on the homeward leg, Bob left us in Bicentennial Park to ride south. The "final five" crossed the river at Rhodes via the bike path on the rail bridge and ended up back at the Meadowbank Station carpark at 3.45pm.

Thanks to all for coming along, for your great company and suggestions on sights to see – it made for a great day.



Bob demonstrating his juggling skills

What is 'A Total Fire Ban'?

During a Total Fire Ban, no fire may be lit in the open. Fire permits are suspended during a Total Fire Ban. The ban applies to incinerators and barbecues which burn solid fuel, such as wood and charcoal. You may use a gas or electric barbecue, but only if...

- * It is on a residential property within 20m of the house or dwelling
- * It is a picnic area and the appliance and area are approved by council, National Parks or State Forests
- * It is under the direct control of an adult
- * The ground within 2m of the barbecue is cleared of all materials which could burn
- * You have an immediate and continuous supply of water available

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Source - www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

WALK REPORT

Jelly Bean Pool and Red Hands Cave Blue Mountains NP

Sunday 23 Sept 2007 Leader: Charles Bowden

A large group of 18 walkers turned up for this event, obviously inspired by the glorious weather. Indeed Len was so eager to get going that he left his backpack behind in Strathfield Square! Fortunately a sharp-eyed walker spotted it and it was a 4-car convoy that wended its way to Glenbrook. Leaving the cars in the carpark next to the ranger's hut at the entrance, we descended the many steps leading down to Jelly Bean pool.



Morning tea at the Jelly Bean Pool

Here the first challenge was to cross over Glenbrook Creek. There were some unevenly spaced and partially submerged stepping stones for the spry, while the stoic removed shoes and socks to wade across to the large sandbar on the far side. Here we paused for morning tea which allowed feet to be dried before taking a short but steep zigzag climb up the hill to reach the start of Euroka Track. We emerged amidst a group of startled teenagers with 2 adult leaders who had been intending to follow the sealed road back to the carpark. After discussing its merits, they decided to follow our route instead: ah, the influence!

After walking along the Euroka track for few hundred metres, we took a side track up to the top of ridge, crossing the park entry road to take a faint trail that meets up with a prominent track favoured by mountain bikers heading towards the Oaks fire trail. Here we turned northeast to reach the steps leading down to the start of Red Hands trail.

The track was festooned with yellow, blue and pink wildflowers and we shortly reached the junction with the Campfire Creek trail (marked as "Link Track" on the new park signs). A little way along this new trail, at a junction with a small creek, the flat stones showed unmistakable signs of the previous aboriginal residents with sharpening grooves scoring the surface. After pausing to admire the area and the discovery of a fingernail-sized frog, we kept to the left of Campfire Creek for another kilometre before crossing it and heading steadily up the ridge leading to Red Hands fire trail.

Near the summit, we moved off the track to a shady spot in the woods for lunch before continuing to the carparking area at the end of the fire trail where a windy loo proved a welcome distraction for many in the group.

We then climbed down to Red Hands cave and its distinctive stencilled ochre handprints. Protected by wire and smudged Perspex, it was difficult to make out some of the features and photographers had to resort to unusual contortions to get a decent shot. We then continued down Red Hands Gully to the Glenbrook Causeway, overtaken near the end by a group of mountain bikers illegally using the track.

Crossing the causeway, we then headed along Glenbrook Creek upstream back to Jelly Bean Pool before the final trudge uphill following the series of steps back to the cars. A recovery was later held in a popular café in Glenbrook.



Sharpening grooves, Campfire Creek

Thank you to Mark Rea, Catharina Muller, Karen Askew, Alison Lyon, Moon Yong, Len Sharp, Jasmin Tan, Suseela Durvasula, Richard Barnett, Julie Armstrong, Anthony Milanoli, Nick Collins, Fenella Walter, Leigh Brown, Brian Goodwin, Margaret Weiss and new member Katherine McNevin for making it such a pleasant outing.

Total Fire Bans in NSW

Bushfires are more likely to spread and cause damage on days when the weather is very hot, dry and windy. These are very high to extreme fire days. Total Fire Bans are declared on these days to reduce the risk of fires damaging or destroying life, property and the environment.

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Source - www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

FEATURE

PAWPRINTS IN THE SAND IN WA

by Beth Rohrlach

Are you looking for some adventure with a difference and an opportunity to contribute to conservation at the same time? Then why not volunteer on a conservation project to help scientists collect very important field information in conservation projects in many parts of the world.

That's what I did in July of this year when I was a field volunteer on a conservation project for the Western Australian Department of Conservation (DEC) in Manjimup in the South West corner of WA near the Karri Forest country of Pemberton and also not far from Margaret River. The project concerned a little animal called the Woylie (the aboriginal name for the brush tailed bettong, a small marsupial) which has had a 90% decline in the last 5 years in the area, for reasons currently unknown but being researched from every angle.



**The Woylie*

I spent the week assisting the technical officer in the scientific team to do predator surveys using the sandpad method, particularly looking at the number of predators that are around. Although they don't

know the reason for the sudden decline in the woylies, the possibility of predators contributing to the problem is one of the areas they are researching. We had to set and check 75 sandpads each day which are laid out every 500 metres throughout the study area. A sandpad is a very large amount of sand which has been dumped onto a bush track and then smoothed over to make a sandpad and is about 2 metres by about 4 metres. The sandpad needs to be specially swept and feathered each day so that the footprints/pawprints of any animal/bird/reptile walking onto the pad can be clearly identified when they are checked again the next morning to see who has walked onto them overnight. Predators of the woylie such as feral cats and foxes like walking down roads so the sandpads are placed there - they are not bush-bashers.

It was interesting to check the sandpads each day to see who had been there overnight. There were lots of animals that left their pawprints on the pads - woylies, roos, wallabies, chuditch, possums, bandicoots, cats, dogs, foxes, lots of birds including emus, tiny marsupials such as dunnarts, and reptile slithers.

It does need the trained and experienced eye of the technical officer to make the final decision as to whose pawprint it is as sometimes animals walk in each others prints so it can be

really difficult to decide whose print it is and sometimes the sand gets crusty or damp and that also makes them hard to read. Sometimes there were lots of different footprints on the sand and sometimes very few or none. You hoped that the animals didn't meet at the same time especially in incidences where there were cat prints, 3 sets of fox prints, brush tailed possum and a chuditch (quoll), all on the same sandpad!

We imagined all sorts of interesting things that animals must get up to at night on those sandpads - there was one brush tailed possum who looked like he/she had held a dancing party in the middle of the pad. Some of the foxes we think had worked out that something was up with those sandpads and either deliberately tried to leap over them (they are quite wide) or quickly jumped on and then off again. As the other volunteer said they could imagine a fox saying "there is something weird about this sand; I don't know what it is but I am getting off". There were lots of fox prints on the pads unfortunately which was a concern for the research team.

The people in the science team were a great bunch. Free accommodation was provided in a very comfortable house set aside for volunteers and visiting researchers, and DEC contributed towards food costs.

THE BENEFITS

I have been a field volunteer on quite a few conservation field trips around Australia and; although I do have a background in biology which is where my interest has come from, to be a field volunteer you do not usually need to have any background in the area. You do need a reasonable level of fitness and the project team will tell you how fit they need you to be - which shouldn't be a worry for people in bush-walking clubs. The benefits are many - you are contributing to much needed field information - scientists do need the support of volunteers to be able to collect all the information they need and be able to plan management strategies in the future which will help to protect species for the future. You learn a lot about animal species, often animals you may never have previously heard of. You meet great people on these projects - the science teams are a great bunch of people and the other volunteers have interesting backgrounds. I have participated as a volunteer on projects where the other volunteers have come from overseas for the project and from as many as 9 different countries and are all ages. Great conversations are had on field trips with interesting people. You get to see great parts of Australia (and other parts of the world) which often only conservationists get to go to.

BE PREPARED

Being a field volunteer is not a holiday - you are working and often quite hard and sometimes at odd times of day, (thanks to those nocturnal animals!) and you need to be prepared for that. But it is different from what most people do in their daily lives and it is often in great locations with great people so in that way it does give you a good break. I returned from this trip having had a great trip and quite relaxed. Remember also that **in science a no result is a result and you aren't just there to see an animal, so don't go on a project if you just want to see the animal** - it may hide

from you! You are there to help contribute to that animal's future survival.

SO HOW CAN I GO ABOUT IT ?

There are many ways to be a field volunteer both within Australia and overseas. A few suggestions of websites to look up for volunteers experiences are Australian Conservation volunteers, the NSW National Park and Wildlife Service or equivalents in other states, DEC WA, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), National Parks Associations (NPA), Nature-keepers.

I have a nice legacy from being involved in the woylie project. I now notice every muddy doggy and other animal/bird/reptile footprint on city streets and no doubt when I go bush walking as well! I also learnt that the name of almost every town in the SW of WA ends in "up".

*Woylie image retrieved 16/11/07 from <http://www.australiassouthwest.com>

dragons of varying sizes went scurrying off the path as we trudged by. Some however thought they were invisible if they stood stock still so we had a good look at quite a few. But the highlight was an echidna right beside the track. Again he (she?) thought if he stuck his nose under a stick we couldn't see him !!



Waterdragon

WALK REPORT

Delhi Rd to De Burghs Bridge & return, Lane Cove National Park

Sunday 21 October 2007 Leader: Carol Cox

Starting at the Delhi Road entrance in West Chatswood, we headed up the north side of the Lane Cove River to De Burghs Bridge, crossed the bridge and headed back to our starting point via the south bank of the river.

I had surveyed this walk a few weeks earlier with Len, when we took our time, stopped and looked at lots of things, took a diversion ... and the round trip took us 5 hours !! As 21 October was forecast to be a 30+ degrees day, I said to the group: "Let's keep up a steady pace and forge on as we don't want to be out in the worst heat of the day" ... but it still took us 5 hours with short meal and water breaks!! Luckily the track is mostly shaded and a welcome breeze seemed to come when we needed it.

There was not much variety of wildflowers in evidence but lots of flannel flowers in some spots. There's been considerable lantana clearance on the southern bank but there was a great deal of flowering privet along both banks with its pleasant aroma. There were a number of people out in their canoes and kayaks which looked like a lovely way to enjoy the river.

Bird life could be heard all around. On the water were ducks with their ducklings, waterhen, and cormorants. A few "giant" koi were seen feeding on the underwater vegetation (someone has let their pet fish go in the river!) A pair of kookaburras observed us at lunch and appreciated the treats Julie was providing. Large blue and red parrots were disturbed by our passing and lots and lots of water

This is a really nice walk with lots of variations in the vegetation, track conditions, and rock formations. The end of the walk took us through the Lane Cove picnic areas with some welcome flat grass and smooth tracks for our weary feet.



Interesting rock formation on northern side of river

Thank you so much to Peter, Jan, Leigh, Karen and Julie for your great company which made it a very good day.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

1 Feb 2008

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO

jcsteven@unwired.com.au

Pictures submitted—

At least 300DPI resolution preferred
to achieve good reproduction quality

KAYAK/CANOEING

Illawong Bay, Coal & Candle Creek

Sunday 30 Sept 2007 Leader: Peter Bonner

I got up at 6:00am to load the Club's double and my own single kayak on to my Nissan 4WD. After a quick breakfast I drove to Waitara Station to pick up Faye and her husband Pan, the latter just arrived from China. They had arrived early and had wandered the environs, and Richard Milne was eventually located on the other side of the station. With all the paper work signed and monies collected we were on our way.

Arriving at Akuna bay Richard dashed off to pick up his hired open 'sit on' kayak whilst the rest of us unloaded the other kayaks. As there was some congestion on the concrete ramp, I decided to launch from the pontoon as it was high tide. The double got away ok but I found I had lost the magic touch and capsized - no problem - two arm strokes and I was on the pontoon, a quick empty of my kayak and I was back in the water again! Nothing for it but to launch from the concrete ramp. As we were all pulling away I noticed that the control cord to the left hand side of the rudder on the double kayak had come off. Attempting to fix this on the water, I was distracted by frantic yells from the shore; a very very large luxury cruiser was silently bearing down on us. A few quick paddle strokes put us out of harm's way. Finally we were on our way out of the moorings.



It was a lovely warm day with light breezes so I elected to paddle east to the end of Coal & Candle Creek and find a good landing spot for an early lunch. But despite paddling into every little bay, because of the high water level, all the sandy spots were underwater. Eventually, with Richard's help, we made landing on some rocks with a small waterfall at one side. A long lunch was taken basking in the sun, sheltering from the wind which was now blowing strongly at times.

Lunch over, I led the way over to the northern shoreline which had some interesting rock formations to go on to Illawong Bay. However, at a point about half way, as the wind was now blowing much stronger, I decided that I could get blown over and capsized and the oyster covered

rocks were no place for a landing. Crossing over to the southern shore we made our way back to Akuna Bay and the concrete ramp by 3:30pm. The double kayak is very stable, the 'sit on' is easily righted, but my kayak is a different proposition in strong gusty wind conditions so caution prevailed. By 4:30pm we were back at my house. After stowing the kayaks we sat in my garden under a shady Box Elder tree drinking coffee & eating biscuits until train time.



Thanks to Faye, Pan and Richard. Pity we had to leave the 'GNU' behind as Richard had to pay quite a high hire fee for the 'sit on' but I can only carry two kayaks at a time. So please someone come with a car with roof racks next time.

Weather: good, windy at times

Distance paddled: 4.5 kms approx.

All in all a good day for our first time paddlers - most of the time we had the water to ourselves.

Photos by Richard Milnes

Put Your Best Foot Foremost

O stricken maid,
Seek not the aid
Of corn pad, salve or plaster
Of any sort;
You'll simply court
The worst kind of disaster.

Bushwalker, (male),
Shun knife and file,
Of razor blades beware!
Be sure to treat
Your precious feet
With kindness and with care.

Feet, believe me,
Are VIP,
To treat 'em rough forebear,
For sure as eggs
Your suffering legs
Won't grow another pair.



Kath McKay
"The Sydney Bushwalker"

WALK REPORT

Griffiths Trail, Barren Grounds NP

Sunday 14 October 2007 Leader: Charles Bowden

Perhaps it was the 2 hours travelling time but a relatively small group of seven turned up for this walk in an area not often frequented by the Club. This was a pity as we had ideal sunny weather, the wildflowers were out in force, as was the wildlife, and the views were splendid.

Barren Grounds is an unusual place, a plateau with distinctive range of heath and sedge plants unlike the rest of the Illawarra range. Bob told us that it harbours two rare species of bird, the Bristle Bird and the Ground Parrot, and it also features unusual insectivorous plants such as the sundew.



Sundews

From the carpark near the reserve entrance, the Griffiths Trail is a broad fire trail skirting the north-eastern edge of Barren Grounds. Occasional narrow tracks lead to the edge of the escarpment with views out to Kiama and the coast. At one vantage point we admired an eagle soaring effortlessly in the thermals rising near the cliffs. Early on a small brown snake with a truncated tail hurried across the track, possibly a lucky escapee from kookaburras that we encountered a bit later.

At a lonely crossroads marked by a trig point, the trail swings sharply to the west and towards a rocky feature called the Natural Stone Bridge which crosses Lamont Creek. If it once contained an arch, the bridge has long since collapsed into a series of rocky platforms but it is a pleasant spot with a deep pool, ideal for our lunch break.

We had barely settled and opened our containers when a large group of assorted children and parents invaded the tranquility. As the children loudly dared each other into jumping into the chilly waters of the pool, we hastily consumed our provisions and continued on our way towards Cooks Nose, one of the western extremities of the plateau.



View from Cooks Nose

The trail is fairly exposed here and we found plentiful examples of the sundew, a reddish insectivorous plant which seemed to relish the sandy soil. Cooks Nose by contrast is a shady forested outcrop overlooking the Broger and Kangaroo valleys and out to the coast.

After a lengthy afternoon tea to compensate for the interrupted lunch, we headed back along the trail, towards the carpark. Just before reaching it we turned down a service track which leads to Redbank Gully and the heart of the plateau. Every bush and shrub was festooned with flowers and the creek had carved a narrow channel that wended its way through the heath.



Illawarra Lookout

Arriving back at the car, a final surprise awaited me when a bandicoot flashed across the fire trail into the undergrowth near the picnic area. Moments later it dashed back again when I tried to approach its hiding place and disappeared into the scrub.

Such an exhilarating day deserved a rewarding recovery at the usual establishment in Mittagong which now also serves tapas!

Thank you to Bob Seibrigh, Julie Armstrong, Karen Askew, Leigh Brown, Margaret Weiss, and William Meats for sharing the day.

Sydney Harbour Fort Denison Heritage Tour

Saturday 6 October 2007

Leader: Peter Bonner

Welcome to New Members

Richard Barnett
Pascale Cornut
Mark Leslie
Katherine McNevin
Wen Jun Pan
Mark Rea
Hugh Redmond
Katrina Swindles
Margaret Szokalai
Jasmine Tan
Kerry Taylor
Ranuka Sane



See you in the bush

This was, as it happens now and again, an eventful day. Tracking down a new member, who was at the 'Orient Hotel' George St near Cadmans Cottage our meeting place, took some time as she was actually round the corner in Argyle St. Thank God for mobile phones!

Finally we were all together, the Club Waiver Form duly signed, monies collected and brochures distributed. I led the way over to Berth No 6, Circular Quay to board the catamaran fast ferry The 'Alice Rocket', which, living up to its name, took all of 5 minutes to land us at the Fort Denison wharf. Here we were greeted by the Ranger Tour Guide who wanted us to pay her \$5 as we did not have a little white sticker on our fronts. Some discussion took place until Beth came forward with a roll of the stickers which she thought were just receipts.

Having put on our white stickers we joined the Ranger for the early tour of the island and Fort Denison. This was very informative. In 1857 the island, formerly known as 'Pinchgut', was a place of punishment and isolation for unruly convicts who were left there with a minimal ration of bread & water, causing a rapid loss in weight - hence the name. It was re-named Fort Denison upon the completion of the Martello Tower fortifications and the installation of 12, 10 & 8-inch 32-pound cannons, and was manned by the British Royal Artillery until 1869 when the NSW Naval Brigade took over these duties. The cannons were never fired in anger.

Interestingly there was an outer sea wall built, which is still visible, to prevent boats and ships from coming along side to attack the Garrison.

After the tour and lunch/coffee break at the Café we thoroughly inspected the rest of the Island, watched the audio visual presentation and posed for photo shots with cannons and sections of the 'keyed' stone walls and, along with a horde of school boys on a birthday outing,



'Keyed' stone wall

watched as the birthday boy got to fire the One O'clock Gun. Several of our members made an early escape from the island on the "long way round" ferry to Circular Quay. However myself and a band of devoted history buffs decided to wait for the next ferry and in doing so experienced the full force of the Southerly Buster wind storm which sent glasses, tables, rubbish bins etc all tumbling and crashing before the wind in front of the Café. Whilst sheltering from the storm we missed the next ferry, but caught the round harbour trip which not only gave us a commentary on the local features but also a view of the rescue of the Heritage fleet of 'Flying 18 Footers' open skiffs which were swamped and overcome by the storm. We saw two helicopters flying back and forth with rescued crewmen, dropping some of them on the beach whilst other boats took the water-logged skiffs in tow. Some other boats, mainly sailing craft, were also assisted, so the early birds missed a bonus treat of the excitement of a very rough day on the Harbour, great value at \$22 adult /\$18 concession tickets.



The circular Martello Tower and cannon



Lunch - before the storm broke

Thanks to those who came along and to the stalwarts who stayed to enjoy the storm. Finally, welcome to new member Ranuka Sane who liked us so much she joined on the spot.

Weather: Warm, sunny and breezy with a mid afternoon storm.
Attendance: 10

A big 'Thank you' to all who contributed to this newsletter - Editor