



all nations
BUSHWALKERS INC



Winter Newsletter
June 2009

PO Box Q23 Queen Victoria Building,
Sydney 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

Crawfords Lookout to Wollemi Creek, Colo River and return via Boorai Ridge

Wollemi National Park

7 - 8 February 2009

Leader: Liam Heery

In the lead up to this challenging walk the weather forecast for the weekend kept getting hotter and hotter. So to avoid any misunderstanding I let everyone know that we could expect 42 - 45 degree heat in very exposed and tricky terrain.

I also suggested that weight be kept to a minimum by bringing as little gear as possible ie no sleeping bags, no fly sheets, no luxury foods and no spare clothes.

Unbelievably everyone took heed of what I said and we all had the lightest overnight packs we ever had, almost no heavier than our normal day packs. My pack was only 11 kilos, including water!!

We also started early to take account of longer walk times that would include many breaks (in fact our average was only 1 kilometre an hour!).

Our first real break was at Crawfords lookout where we had morning tea and surveyed the rest of the days trek down into the Wollemi and along the Colo.



Wollemi - Colo Junction

The descent to the Wollemi is challenging at any time, but with temperatures rising into the 40s the radiant heat was beginning to take its toll. A fallen tree two thirds of the way down led to a newly marked trail which some of the party wanted to take. But as I wasn't sure of where it would lead to, I preferred the safe option of staying on the track I knew. The heat was now beginning to get to everyone and even though the creek was within sight the heat was too much and we had to take time out before the final descent.

As soon as we reached the creek, it was straight into the water and a well earned cooling swim. After a long break and lunch we then headed off down the western bank of the Wollemi, where the going is pretty tough as heavy bush and large rocks have to be negotiated. Some natural spa / waterfalls made for irresistible cooling breaks along the way.

Continued over page

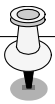


All Nations Bushwalkers Inc Annual General Meeting

All Members are invited to attend Sunday 12 July 2009

**Your invitation/nomination/proxy form
is inside this Newsletter**

**Come at 10:30am for morning tea and hear the presentation
from the Rural Fire Service**



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As we leave spring and enter into another winter season we will see more activities closer to home and hopefully a few winter camp fires to keep the chill away.

This will be my last report as President, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your assistance and support. Especially to all of you who have served on the committee during my tenure. Without you, my job would be very difficult, but you have all made it easy and extremely interesting for me.

Hopefully I will be handing over to the next president a club that is in good shape, vibrant and healthy.

I am happy to be a part of this club and hope to contribute for a long time to come. With that in mind, please remember to attend our AGM and to put your name forward for a committee position.

The AGM this year will also have a presenter from the Rural Fire Service who will provide advice and comment on how we should look after ourselves when out in the bush during the fire season. This will be a presentation that should not be missed, as your survival may depend upon it!!

Take care everyone, and I hope to see you in the bush.

Liam Heery



The only place to be - photos by Andrew McRae

from previous page

We made the junction of the Wollemi and Colo and had our first sight of the large sandbanks that were to be the main feature of the next section of the walk. Another cooling break and we changed from walking shoes to river / sand footwear. Personal choices ranged from runners to crocs to sandals to self draining runners, and after two days, the self drainers were the winners for appropriate footwear. Sandals were a bit flimsy and, without socks, grating. Runners filled up with too much sand, and the crocs (mine) got lost in the quicksand!

Walking in the Colo is an experience: you can be on solid sand one minute and then without notice when you take your next step you're waist deep in quicksand!! Luckily that's as far as you sink, however if you're unlucky like me you can lose your footwear and not be able to find it again as it is engulfed by the sand.

The views are spectacular with the gorge wall sheer on either side and reaching up 300 metres. Our camp site for the night was on a sand bank with a deep and long pool nearby for more swimming.

The next morning we were up early to get away for what was going to be another long and hot day. The Colo at this point changed into long sections of deep pools and then long sand banks in between. This meant a combination of rock hopping and bank walking and long sandy stretches.



Colo Quicksand

We reached Boorai Creek, our exit point for lunch and after another swim found a shady spot to keep out of the sun. The more enthusiastic stretched out on the edge of the Colo fully clothed and made a pillow in the sand for their heads. All that was needed was a cold cocktail!

After filling every container we had between us with water we then headed up the steep climb to Boorai Ridge that was to take us back to the cars. At this point it became very hot indeed and there were lots of breaks, with water been shared around.

We emerged from the bush and eagerly changed out of our sweaty clothes before getting into the welcoming air conditioned cars.

Not long after we were back in civilisation (having only then heard of the Victorian bush fires) and were downing welcoming ales and food at the Jolly Frog in Windsor.

Thanks to Jacqui, Alison, Andrew, Faye, Pam, Bob and Charles for joining me on one of the best walks I have ever done, notwithstanding the heat!!

WALK

Bundeena to Wattamolla, Royal National Park

Sunday 22 February 2009 Leader: Terry Redmond

Eight lucky souls were blessed with a sunny, warm, summer's day, graced by a constant cool breeze off the ocean all day. Aboard for the walk were Bob Seibrigh, Helen Hindin, Nadia Djordjevic, Peter West, Nerylin Cheeseman, William Meats, Hugh Redmond and Terry Redmond.

While waiting for the car shuffle at Jibbon Beach we were pleased to have William unexpectedly join us and so we then set out to find the aboriginal carvings near the 'point' with Peter being 'last man' and Lin looking after him as 'last woman'.

All were impressed by the size, number and intricacy of the engravings. They featured a ceremonial male figure (with the appropriate appendage), a big shark and an even bigger whale. Of notable interest was a hammerhead shark, which when viewed from the west instead of the east end, also looked remarkably like a wallaby. Very adept these artists, to create a bipolar figure.



We had hoped to spot the pod of dolphins that lurk around Jibbon Head but instead had to settle for the great views of the Cronulla beaches with Kurnell and the city skyline in the distance. Also evident was the construction site on the peninsula where the desalination plant is being built.

From the 'point' we leisurely wound our way along the coast, despite a rudimentary track at times. It was a warm day in the mid 20s but no one minded since as soon as a bead of perspiration appeared it seemed to be whisked away by the cool, flinty breeze off the sea.

Another reward of trekking along the coast was to see two incredible sea eagles circling above in the thermals. They seemed to shadow us for a mile or more. Less pleasing was an encounter with a brown snake which yours truly stepped over without seeing. This promptly woke up said snake, which quickly disappeared into the heath. Not having seen it at all, I am relying on the first hand reports from those who were lucky enough to be closely following me at the time.

The other boon was to come across a sparkling expanse of snowy white sandstone. A photo of this outcrop recently won the club 'water scenes' award for Fei Xu.

Calling a halt, we lunched on a grassy knoll beside a small creek, just where it cascaded over the cliff and into the sea. Serenaded by waterfall and surf we dined on our sandwiches.

Continuing on, we got to Marley and admired the panoramic view of the lagoon, sand dunes and bush that seemed to go on forever. We were just a few kilometres south of a city of four million people and yet could only count six people on the entire beach. We took a break at Little Marley where a roo bolted for the trees but the swamp wallaby was not disturbed by us and gave all a 'photo op'. Nadia found a friendly magpie and shortly after had her feathered friend literally eating out of her hand.

The final leg had us veer inland a bit and when we rejoined the coast we were at Wattamolla. Most went for a dip in the freshwater lagoon and Bob encouraged us to take a swimming shower under the falls. Then it was onto the beach for another refreshing dip, this time in the surf. After all this exercise Helen settled on the beach, pulled out her book and got in a spot of reading and tanning.

It was a great little walk made even better by fine weather and good company. A mix of old hands like Bob and myself and two new, young members enjoying their second club walk (Helen and Nadia). Thanks to all for a great day and look forward to walking with you all again soon.

Picture Quiz

Can you guess who's taking the photo?



See the Spring issue for the answer



Answer to the last photo quiz -
Andrew McRae

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

4 August 2009

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO.....

jcsteven@unwired.com.au

Pictures submitted - 300DPI resolution
preferred to achieve good reproduction quality

SNORKELLING

IS IT A FISH? IS IT A SHARK? NO, IT'S A SPEARFISHER!

Saturday 21 March Leader: Charles Bowden

The plethora of media reports about recent shark attacks around Sydney seemed to have had an adverse affect on the club's community of snorkellers. On a gloriously warm sunny day with water temperature at a balmy 23 degrees C, only 4 members turned up to Bare Island at La Perouse to join me in the water. What a shame as it was the best day we've had at Bare Island.

Having located a shady spot among the boulders to the right (or west) of the footbridge linking the mainland to the island, our first snorkel was a leisurely affair, patrolling the shoreline of weed-covered boulders. There was some fish life, especially inquisitive toadfish, but visibility was somewhat reduced due to high levels of planktonic matter. Jacqui enlivened the scene by doing her impression of a runaway motor boat, brutally awaking Richard and myself from our contemplative reveries.

After lunch, the boys headed across the channel to check out the Bare Island shoreline. Visibility was vastly improved and plenty of interesting marine life could be found among the offshore boulders and grottoes including a Moorish Idol and juvenile cuttlefish. The local spearfishers were out in force, however, and we had to keep a wary eye out for them: more startling than sharks!

We rounded off the day with seriously yummy light refreshments at the nearby beachside café.

GREY SKIES AND BIG BLUES

Saturday 4 April 2009 Leader: Charles Bowden

The cool overcast conditions ultimately proved too much of a deterrent for the club's snorkelling community so when I arrived (late) at Shelly Beach, only Bob and Chris were there, waiting patiently. A wedding reception had taken over the nearby restaurant, the guests in formal attire providing a curious contrast to the large gathering of scuba divers behind



Blue Grouper

The intrepid snorkellers were Karin Erdmann, Richard Milnes, Liam Heery and Jacqui Joseph.



Red starfish



Weeping toad



Juvenile cuttlefish

the neighbouring palm trees.

The sand was freshly groomed and, in the absence of the usual gaggle of sunbathers (and sun), we had it to ourselves. Bob donned his new 'steamer' wetsuit while I helped Chris adjust his new mask and snorkel. The tide was at its lowest ebb so the walk to the water was a little further than usual and several large rocks, usually well immersed, nudged the surface.

Chris was new to snorkelling but took to it like an otter, duck-diving and using breath control from the get-go. We were soon among the fish in clear water with plenty to see. There were three large eastern blue groupers patrolling the shallows including a huge one the size of a car tyre. As long as we were floating they allowed us to approach quite closely but as soon as we started using our fins and arms they swam away... only to return, inquisitive creatures that they are.

Another unusual find was a splendidly patterned Eastern Fiddler Ray feeding in a sandy alcove between the clumps of algae. The usual wrasse, goatfish, silver bream and leather-jackets were in abundance and Bob found a large plate-sized jellyfish. As we were about to leave the water, a couple of minute boxfish beguiled us in their territorial fashion, swimming to and fro in just 6 inches of water.

Although the water was reasonably warm, the external conditions were still cool so we decided to call it a day and had a pleasant lunch at the beachside café before heading off.

Thank you to Bob Seibrigt and Chris Bailey for sharing their finds.

WALK REPORT

FORGET THE POOL – ENJOY THE SPA! Sunday 22 March 2009 Leader: Charles Bowden

Ten members turned up for the walk, the first time it has appeared on the club's program or so I am led to believe. This walk links a series of tracks which follow a section of the Bargo River that runs through former mining country near Tahmoor, about 75 minutes drive from Sydney. The area consists of a small local reserve encompassing a mine subsidence zone through which the river has etched a narrow gorge.

After positioning our cars at the starting and finishing points, we set off under the Rockford Bridge and took the Naked Way, a track which gradually rises along the cliff line above the river to join up with the Matilda Track on top of the ridge. Here spectacular lookouts (or lookdowns really), suicidally named after aspects of the Waltzing Matilda ballad (Jumbuck's Leap, Swagman's Leap, Troopers' Leap, Squatter's Leap etc) offered spectacular views across and into the Tahmoor Canyon.

We stopped for morning tea at The Ghost's Leap which features a jutting claw-like formation where water had eroded a large hole in the sandstone and the tip had then broken off. Looking through the gap we could see the Bargo river bed-rock where we would later be walking, gazing up at the same formation.



Bargo River

Access to the river was via Sugarloaf Pass where a creek had eroded the cliff face to allow a steep descent into the gorge. The river bed itself was pockmarked with water-induced potholes and punctuated with monolithic boulders. Crossing over the river at the attractive cascade of water near Weeping Falls (which didn't seem at all disconsolate: nary a teardrop of moisture to be seen), we soon found ourselves making the short climb up Jack's Pass before descending to a spot above Mermaid's Pool for lunch.

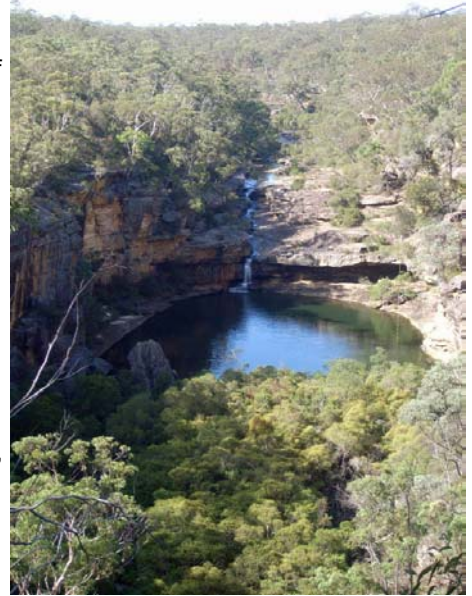
Mermaid's Pool is a huge depression worn into the river bed and surrounding cliffs. It proved to be virtually inaccessible from the upstream end; a pair of ropes were found placed alongside the channel where the river plunged into the pool but the rocky slope was too wet and slippery to be confident of descending/ascending safely.

Instead, a few metres upstream, we found a large hole gouged into the sandstone into which a cataract poured, creating a foaming spa bath, much to the delight of those that

had been hoping for a dip on a hot day. Getting out of the hole proved a little tricky, however, when it was discovered that the sides had a slick coating in which lived myriads of tiny wriggles!

After lunch, we headed further upstream, going down Diesel Pass, named for an old water pump engine bolted to the rocks, and then along the Pot-holes Track back to Rockford Bridge. From here, the walk takes on a different aspect, wending its way along the Bridging Track which traverses sclerophyll forest on undulating slopes, crossing small dry gullies and the occasional 4WD trail.

The track eventually emerges at the railway line in Tahmoor and follows a dusty service road for 250 metres or so, under a 1915 brick viaduct, itself overshadowed by the neighbouring freeway overpass, before finishing at the lushly green Explorers Ford Crossing Reserve.



Mermaid Pool



The spa



Spa wriggles

After rounding up the cars, we adjourned to the Tahmoor Tavern (another 'first') for a well-earned and tasty 'recovery' meal.

Thank you to Liam Heery, Jacqui Joseph, Alison Lyon, Terry Redmond, Hugh Redmond, Sue Ives, Grace Hadiwijaya, Faye Xu and Nick Collins for not leaping!

FEATURE

Buen Camino

By Fiona Bachmann

The Camino de Santiago de Compostela, or in English, The Way of St James, is a collection of old pilgrimage routes which cover all Europe. All culminate in Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain. For over 1000 years pilgrims have been walking along the Camino de Santiago.

I completed my Camino in October 2008. I travelled with my cousin Peter, from my home of Adelaide. He set a schedule for each day's walking, and trained and planned for this undertaking for the year prior to the Adventure. I on the other hand with little lead time and preparation, and not even being previously aware of this pilgrimage, thought it seemed like a good idea at the time. I thought: I can walk all day, I can carry a full pack. Thirty times over; I must have done that already at least that many times in my life. This didn't account for fatigue, blisters, and carrying way too much weight, sore shoulders, swollen knees, feet with raw skin and more blisters.

Peter left Adelaide for London September 11th, a date that left me feeling uneasy about flying. So I left Sydney on September 13th! I arrived at Heathrow about 6am and was greeted by my cousin, and caught the tube into the city. Another of my Adelaide cousins, Kathryn, who is working in Harpenden, England, joined us. We travelled to Oxford and were kindly given a tour by another friend and local. Oxford is the location of so many things, obviously the University, original production of MG cars, current Mini Coopers, some filming of Harry Potter, the Eagle and Child pub reportedly where Lewis Carroll penned and Tolkien worked on Lord of The Rings.

The next day I went by myself via train to Gatwick. A secondary, but still incredibly large and busy airport, and mega duty-free shopping complex. In a couple of hours I was in Barcelona, Spain. I met up again with Peter in the Customs queue. I filled in the brief form and apprehensively anticipated questioning with Spanish phrase book ready in hand. Instead I got a literal rubber stamp and I was in. European Customs is incredibly casual.



Burgos Cathedral

We spent two days sightseeing Gaudi architecture, the beach, cable car and Cathedral. We then travelled to Pamplona via a four-hour train trip, and an hour bus trip to Roncesvalles to start the Camino proper.

This is just inside the French border at the edge of the Pyrenees. From then on we stayed in Albergues (pilgrim hostels) of varying standards. These ranged from mats on the floor of monasteries to many hundred-bed dormitories with crammed bunks to small rooms with only four people. From then on good sleep was a luxury. Some Albergues had communal cooking facilities and some none, but offered a pilgrim menu. The meals were simple, generally salad often including tuna, a main meal of meat and vegetables, or pasta, and maybe yoghurt or fruit, or nearer the west a Santiago tart. One tumbler



Estella Fountain

glass is issued for water and wine, because if you have wine why would you need to drink water also! Wine was incredibly cheap from 3 -10 Euros per bottle. Fortunately it was not very strong, and easy to recover from to walk on the next day. A noted feature is the wine fountain at Estella. There is literally red wine and fresh water on tap. It was lucky I had a spare water bottle!

The first few days were hilly and the scenery like a picture book. It seemed like one couldn't walk for more than half an hour without seeing a cross or religious symbol. Coming from Australia with around 16kg proved to be too much weight. On passing back through Pamplona, rather than race with the bulls I raced for the Correos (Post Office) and sent myself 5kg of unwanted gear to Santiago. I had over-planned as if going on a remote bush trip. I took first aid kit, with bandages, water bottles, warm weather gear, cold weather gear, diary, notepaper, and even a calculator so as not to get lost in foreign currency conversions. I progressively threw out each of these as not needed to lighten the load. Although carrying full pack and walking an average of 28 kilometres per day, we were mostly not too far from water, food and basic facilities. So we only carried one day's food supply at the most. Regardless of the type of walk one does the amount of weight being carried is important and becomes more so the longer it has to be carried.

We walked from around 8 or 9 am in the morning until 3pm on a short day or until 8pm on harder days. Leaving earlier would have meant walking in the dark, as sunrise was only at 7am - 8am. In the West of Spain there was lots of fresh crusty French stick bread and cheese. In smaller towns or hamlets there are quaint small stores that sell everything from gumdrops to grappa.

Most cafés doubled as bars. Most shops close between 12-2 pm and then trade into the evening. Dinner is never served before 7.30pm, and generally later.

The scenery varied from recently harvested wheat fields, sunflowers, grape growing regions, ruins, churches, bell towers with stork nests, industrial regions, small hamlets with the smell of silage and cowpats, and back to mountains. Almost all regions have wild blackberries, which we picked and ate until sick of fruit. As we passed through local villages other pilgrims or locals would always say Buenas Dias, or Buen Camino, meaning good walking. They were proud to have the Camino pass through their area.

The highest point on the Camino at 1505 metres is Cruz de Ferro. At the base of a cross many discard things they wish to leave behind, or leave symbols or photographs of loved ones no longer present. I left my Vegemite label, and braced for the weeks ahead without my beloved spread.



Monte de Goza

On the last day in a group of four Australians I walked into Santiago in the rain. We all presented our 'passport' or pilgrim's papers. These are a booklet full of stamps from each location visited that verify one's pilgrimage. I was issued with a certificate written in Latin that I can't read, but believe says I walked a lot. Following this, as is customary, we all attended the Pilgrim's mass to hear announced that four Australians had today reached Santiago from Roncesvalles.

Following on from Santiago we walked a further ninety kilometres in four days to Fisterra, the western most point of Spain and supposed End of the Earth. In this fishing town we collected more stamps and another Latin inscribed certificate and saw the most spectacular sunset. After another day here in the rain we bussed north to Muxia, another small fishing town, and watched the ferocious waves of the North Atlantic Ocean. Finally back in Santiago for paella, empanada (fish pie) and octopus, a favourite amongst the seafoods.

I flew home via Rome, Helsinki, and Bangkok, with temperatures between six to thirty-six degrees, and each another separate adventure.

Was it a good idea when it came to the time? I am glad I completed the Camino and really did feel like I had achieved something. Many pilgrims choose to cycle, take a bus for less scenic sections, or have a courier carry their gear. My cousin Peter and I walked every step of the way carrying our own weight and felt this was the only way to complete the pilgrimage within the true spirit of the Camino.

WALK

Lane Cove River Ramble

Lane Cove National Park

Sunday 22 March 2009 Leader: Carol Cox

What beautiful weather it was on Sunday 22 March, and a large group of 23 club members and visitors enjoyed the Lane Cove River Ramble. It is a popular activity with its easily accessible starting point at the Delhi Road entrance to the Lane Cove National Park. Due to the tall trees all along the route, almost the entire walk is in dappled shade and there are picturesque views along the river of thick vegetation and interesting rock formations. The walk is well sign-posted and, although there is a small amount of rock scrambling, the majority of the walk is along tracks which at times run right along the water's edge. The variety of vegetation and environs make this an interesting and pleasant walk and it's good to see the work done to maintain the track. At various points there was evidence of recent fires although the area covered by these did not appear too extensive. Some lantana clearance has taken place on the southern river bank near the car-accessible picnic spots and more appropriate plants and grasses planted to replace this invader. In other areas of the park the volume of lantana seems insurmountable. At the half way point, after crossing de Burgh's bridge, the luxuries of toilet facilities and taps to refill water bottles are available.

Thank you to Peter and Meiha for serenading us with mouth organs while we lunched under shady trees. Wildlife seen on the day included water dragons, an unidentified 40cm pencil-thick black snake, and a fully grown red-bellied black snake. Unfortunately, with such a large group, only the few walkers at the head of the line were able to see these before they scurried off into the leaf litter.

Walkers were (alphabetically) Bob, Caroline, Catherine, Chris, Dianne, Fatemah, Fiona, Jan, Julie, Leigh, Linda, Mai, Margaret, Meiha, Narelle, Natalie, Nathan, Peter B., Peter C., Peter M., Richard, Sharyn.

Thanks from Carol to all for attending, with special thanks to Sharyn for "co-managing" the large group, to Peter for acting as last man throughout, and to Leigh for pointing our noses in the right direction at the start.



The Group - photo by Peter Bonner



Notice board

Congratulations !

halfmarathon09

Amongst 8399 finishers were ANB members

Alison Lyon and Nick Collins

They could boast they were running with an Olympic gold medallist, Kenyan Reuben Kosgei, who flashed home to win in just over 64 minutes.

Rumour has it that Alison was the first ANB runner to finish.

Musk Duck =
Biziura lobata
47-72 cm



Image from John Gould (1804-81)
The Birds of Australia 1840-48

Large low-slung freckled diving duck with large head and wedge-shaped bill

Male: large lobe under bill; in display, lobe inflated, tail cocked, kicks out jets of water

Female: lobe absent or rudimentary, seldom flies by day, usually seen well out from shore in small groups or singly.

Voice: male, loud whistle, deep 'plonk'

Nesting: flimsy cup in reeds, etc, sometimes with canopy; 1-3 pale green eggs, often resting in water, become stained.

Range: common resident in deep permanent swamps in south-west and south-east, nomadic elsewhere on swamps, estuaries occasionally open sea.

From: The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds. 1986

TWO VALLEY TRAIL WALK

Leader: Jan Steven

On Saturday 28 February I led my first walk for All Nations Bushwalkers on a recently opened combination walk along the Cooks River and Wollie Creek tracks. With 14 keen walkers I started at Campsie Station walking down the Cooks River, across Steel Park into the Wollie Creek area and followed the newly sign-posted track along Wollie Creek to Bexley North Station.

The highlight of the day was an impromptu history talk about the Wollie Valley given to our group by Judy Finlason, author and campaigner for the Wollie Creek Preservation Society Inc., who lives in one of the heritage listed Jackson stone cottages on the track.

In Spring I hope to arrange a BBQ breakfast at Steel Park with a return walk up Wollie Creek afterwards. This will be a good walk for beginners as well as a social event.



Photographic Competition

to be held at the next AGM
Sunday July 12th 2009

Prizes as well as a certificate will be your reward. The winning photos will be published in the Spring issue of Keeping Track.

There's still over 4 weeks left to snap that special photo at one of the Club activities.

Photos must have been taken since the previous AGM.

Categories are:

PEOPLE

WATER SCENES

FLORA

FAUNA

NATURE'S WONDERS

CAMPING

We need 4 entries per category to run a viable competition, so encourage your fellow members to enter with you.

(Sorry, only one entry per category)

How to Enter

Each photograph should be displayed on a sheet of A4 size paper.

If you don't have a (decent) colour printer, email the photos to Charles Bowden, who will arrange printing for you at no cost.

On the reverse side write your name, category, the date and place where your picture was taken.

On arrival at the AGM, hand your entry to **the organiser Len Sharp.**

The organiser's decision is final as to eligibility in accordance with the rules.



Aboriginal paintings in Yengo NP

Aboriginal paintings (a man, woman and various Australian animals) around 800 years old.

photo by Alison Lyon

CAR CAMP

Dunn's Swamp Wollemi National Park

27 - 29 March 2009

Leader: Peter Bonner

Located on the Cudgegong River 30 km East of Rylestone, Dunn's Swamp was a great spot for our car camp, especially for first timers, where for \$110 each 'Wollemi Afloat' kitted us out for the weekend, providing all our needs except food and sleeping bags. The tents, inflated sleeping mattresses, shade canopies, tables, chairs and all cooking utensils, cutlery, gas stoves and BBQs plus a huge ice chest, drinking water, a shower tent, night time lighting and fire wood for the camp fire were all supplied. We even had free use of the hire canoes. Any doubts I might have had were dispelled when I saw the quality of the gear supplied, much of it brand new.



Sharyn and Julie exploring the waterways

My 4WD Nissan with campers Richard Milne, Catharina and Kavita as passengers was the first to arrive at 5:00pm. I had planned to get to the site at 3:00pm but events conspired to delay us including a search for diesel fuel as the Lithgow Shell Service station had been struck by lightning the day before putting all the pumps, cash registers and everything else out of action.

On arrival several tasks were tackled straight away - tents already erected were selected, Richard brought his own tent as "he was a light sleeper" (I think some one had told him I snored), gas stoves lit, the billy on for our first camp cuppa and the camp fire was lit. The small small hand axe I brought with me was useful to reduce the logs to a size that was ignitable. Last but not least, Catharina helped me to string up the Club banner.

The billy was on the boil when the second car arrived with Sharyn and the three J's - Julie, Jan and Judy, who had taken a leisurely route with coffee, food shopping, and lunch on the way. Later Richard Barnett and Suseela arrived making up the group of ten.

After teas and cake all round Richard M and I called at Wollemi Afloat to claim our promised canoe and we paddled it around to the swimming beach near our campsite. Jan and Kavita had a short practice paddle with Richard Milne instructing - it was 40 years since Jan had paddled a canoe down the Waikato River in NZ. Our other campers were content to wait until Saturday to claim their canoes and enjoy the tranquillity of the waterway.

There followed two days of warm sunny weather with fluffy white clouds so loved by photographers, and cold nights. The large air mattresses proved better at conducting body heat away from sleepers rather than helping to keep us warm. A blanket under the mattress helped to insulate it from the cold ground. When not canoeing, swimming or lazing around the campsite gossiping, walks were taken to Kandos Weir Dam, Platypus Point - not a platypus to be seen so I took a group photo instead.



The Group on Platypus Point

The Long Cave and Pagoda Trail, Campsite Rocks, and the Waterside Circuit were also explored at various times where many photos were taken. The tracks were well defined and rated easy or easy medium by myself.

Saturday late afternoon as part of the package deal we went on the 2 hour 'Cruise of the Waterways' with an excellent commentary on the history, flora and fauna and early aboriginal tribal birthing caves of the Dunn's Swamp greater area. A highlight of the cruise was watching the rare Musk Duck diving for food. It is the only duck known to eat its food underwater.

Scenery included pagoda rock formations abounding throughout the area including the camping ground (the kids loved them) and native Cyprus pines (*Callitris*) reaching high above the bush canopy throughout the region. There was also good swimming.



*Suseela, Richard B, Catharina and Peter
on the top pagoda*

No flies, mosquitoes, leeches or ticks, with one snake sighted which immediately disappeared into the bush.

But possums were a nuisance. All food had to be secured after nightfall. I was awakened by a persistent possum that tried to enter my tent to reach my food supply. I had to get up to shoo it away. It was an opportunity to gaze at the wonderful clear starlit sky until the cold got to me and my warm sleeping bag beckoned.

Kookaburras, parrots and a very pretty red robin were also sighted around the campsite.

The round trip in my 4WD was 528km and car pool cost \$33 per person.

To conclude, my thanks to my fellow campers and to the 'Wollemi Afloat' personnel who all helped to make this a memorable introduction to car camping in the great Wollemi National Park.

Watch this space as 'Wollemi Afloat' have plans for an overnight orienteering weekend.

CYCLING

Hunter Valley Vineyards

Saturday 10 - 12 April 2009 Leader: Alison Lyon

Well, what to do for the Easter long weekend? Nothing too strenuous, just some fun and relaxation with like minded people! The idea of cycling in the Hunter Valley came about from a general discussion on one of the All Nations activities that I participated in. A few said they were keen so I investigated the possibility.

There aren't too many inexpensive places to stay in the Hunter Valley over a Public Holiday weekend and only one place to camp. A number of options were therefore offered; camping for 2 nights, staying in a local hotel/resort (the luxury option!) and just coming along for a one day cycle.



The vines

The Campers stayed at the Valley Vineyards Tourist Park on Mount View road, Cessnock. Some of us were new to caravan/tourist park accommodation but I think by the end of the weekend were quietly impressed. We arrived around Good Friday lunchtime and pitched our tents admiring the water views from our front doors (we had sites overlooking the 2 pools and spa).

Six of our group had arrived by this stage and decided to do a short cycle circuit around the Mount View/Bimbadeen Road area, west of Cessnock. Unfortunately (or fortunately...for if some had known, we may not have attempted it!) I did not have access to a map showing contour lines. I should have realised by the names of some vineyards and the 'Mount' in Mount View Road that there would be a number of hills to negotiate on our bikes!

The first Vineyard that we came across was within a 10 minute cycle of our base along an easy flat road, I think we were therefore lulled into a false sense of security that this afternoon's cycle was easy. Savannah Estate Vineyard offered numerous tipples to tempt our palates, however I reminded everyone that we could be breathalysed on our bicycles and be fined and issued points on our driver's licences...so all of course were sensible.

We then began to climb up towards Mount Bright, stopping at various vineyards along the route for further tastings and to

regain our breath. At the second vineyard (Mount View Estate), we were joined by Andrew and Sherrilyn who had decided to take up the luxury option of the weekend, staying in a local resort and driving around the vineyards. If planning a weekend like this again it would be worth noting that a wine portering service can come in very handy, as cycling with bottles clinking away in the daypack, or panniers can become increasingly heavy, particularly when attempting the mountains of Western Cessnock! So many thanks from the cyclists go to Andrew and Sherrilyn for making our ride a lot easier and enabling us to purchase a few more bottles!

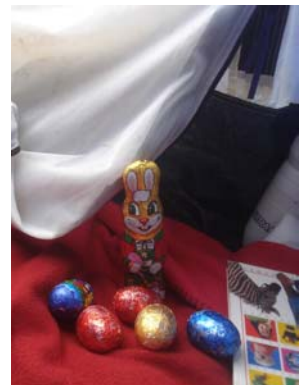
The last vineyard we visited that day offered us some great views of the area, being our highest point. We enjoyed some tastings from the verandah of Tallavera Grove Estate and contemplated the route back to base. All done and purchases made, we were back at the campsite in no time, downhill all the way with very little traffic, just before darkness hit. Not bad, having covered just over 20km.

When we got back, we discovered that the remainder of our camping group had arrived and we therefore made plans for dinner after cooling off in the pool/spa followed by the luxury of hot showers. Weary from our afternoons cycle the majority of us decided to eat in the park's Thai Restaurant, with the option of being able to roll into our tents afterwards if it all got a bit too much!

Saturday we awoke to the screeches of lorikeets in the trees above our camp, and with plenty of time before the day cyclists arrived and the vineyards opened, we were able to enjoy a leisurely breakfast, swim and a spa.

After arrival of the day cyclists (Nick and Fenella), accompanied by our drivers and their passengers (Fei and Pan) we set off towards our first targeted vineyard, Draytons Estate. After about 10 minutes the idea I had had that the Hunter Valley was basically flat and easy cycling soon disappeared...what on earth had given me that idea? Fortunately the route did not seem as mountainous as the previous day's cycle. After Draytons we followed the road towards the main centre of the Hunter Valley vineyards, stopping at vineyards and places of interest along the route, enjoying the scenery and breaks that they offered. The Hunter Valley Olive Centre certainly provided welcome snacks, two vineyards before our lunch spot. Because it was a long weekend we had to share the roads with at times what seemed like heavy traffic. Fortunately we were able to use cycle ways in some areas. Lunch was in the area of Hunter Valley Gardens, where a number of options were available for food and everyone was happy.

A few more vineyards and we were soon gasping for cups of coffee/tea and a piece of cake. A visit to the Small Winemakers Centre just before 5pm satisfied that desire. A few slipped away quietly just to sample and purchase a few more wines, before we left. Again we enjoyed a mainly downhill route back to camp before darkness fell. What bliss to have a warmish shower awaiting us on our return! Most were in bed by 9pm, exhausted by the day's 45km worth of efforts and having learnt a little more about the grapes grown in the area.



Overnight the Easter Bunny paid a visit! I awoke a little concerned by heavy breathing outside my tent in the early hours...

WALK REPORT

A Bushwalk in the Bushland Shire Nick's Easter Monday walk to points west of Hornsby

Monday 12 April 2009 Leader: Nick Collins

Hornsby Council proudly uses the slogan *The Bushland Shire*. And the bushwalking opportunities are indeed considerable. You can stroll out of Hornsby station, and spend the day happily exploring a host of really nice bush tracks.

On Easter Monday I led a group along on the route I'd explored, on a whim, a few months earlier, to the Fishponds, Tunks Ridge, a lookout over Galston Gorge, and then back along the Great North Walk and up the big steep steps to Hornsby again. It all worked out well. The rain held off, and the new member and the visitor seemed to have a good time and fitted in well.



Ten members and visitor Rapee having morning tea at The Fishponds

Highlights included (a) dodging the bullets from the rifle range above (not really - I think they'd have a hard time hitting us even if they tried), (b) proving that you can walk in no time from Hornsby to Dural if you take the short cut through the bush, and (c) crossing the historic *Steele Bridge Over The River Berowra*. Must check out what's so historic about it, and who Steele was. We also passed Old Man's Valley, site of one of the world's early radio astronomy research field stations.



An unusual Siamese twin gophora



John, Elizabeth, and Helen descending from the end of Tunks Ridge



Bridge Over the River Berowra. Or Creek Berowra anyway. Heading back to Hornsby along the Great North Walk.

I assume that the 'Easter Bunny' was lacking in fitness as the years caught up with him and the number of eggs to deliver increased! Then again, we enjoyed a leisurely breakfast, this time including chocolate, and for some again a swim and a spa.

Well, I thought, just one more quick visit to Savannah Estate Vineyard to make final purchases and then we could set off for the bushwalk that Liam had agreed to lead. About one hour later, after going through the menu of wines and Port on offer and lightening our wallets, six of our group left for a bushwalk in the Yengo National Park, via the Wollembi pub of course! An easy walk led us down to a cave where we were promised and found some ancient Aboriginal paintings (see page 8). Off we then went to have a look at a convict built bridge, part of the old Great North Road.

It was a great way to spend the Easter long weekend, however a little work now needs to be done to reinforce the wine rack in order to take the strain of the new additions and maybe a little detox wouldn't go amiss! Many thanks to Jacqui, Liam, Len, Fiona, Bob, Fei, Pan, Jan, Andrew, Sherrilyn, Nick, Fenella and the Easter Bunny!



Enjoying a few wines - photos by Fei Xu

Welcome 20 New Members

Jamie Thomson
Nathan McKenzie
Chris Bailey
Chyanne Ali
Mai Wang
Allison Delany
Meiha Cheung
Dorit Herrmann
Grace Hadiwijaya
Caroline Shabdin
Dianne Fairbrother
Linda Pensabene
Darren Xiao
Diane Meynell
Andrew Meynell
Jo Rhodes
Peter Lok
Michael Heffernan
Sue Yap
Leila Walker



See you in the bush

CHANGE OF DETAILS

Don't forget to notify Treasurer

Tom Whitehead of any

- *change in address,*
- *email address*
- *phone numbers.*

Phone: 9587 4420

or email us at -

anbcomm@hotmail.com

10 Tips to Stay Safe When Participating in Water Based Activities.

Alison Lyon

Although essentially a Bushwalking club, there are times when All Nations participants venture near water.

NSW has many walks along the coastline, along rivers and streams. There may be a stream we come across in the bush where we may wish to have a refreshing dip. Water based activities are also popular in the club, such as kayaking or snorkelling.

It is important to remember, however, everyone has a role to play in maintaining safety when near, in, or on the water, ensuring that no matter where you are someone is looking out for you. It is definitely not the leaders' sole responsibility to ensure all are being sensible and safe.

So there are a number of things that you could consider:

Never swim alone, remember 'safety in numbers'.

Read and obey safety signs, ask someone who knows about local conditions.

If unsure about water conditions such as depth, currents and so on, take extreme caution or don't enter the water. Remember water conditions could change at any time and river currents can be stronger than they appear.

Don't swim under the influence of alcohol, drugs or straight after a meal.

Don't run and dive in the water, enter the water carefully (feet first), watch out for submerged objects such as rocks and logs. Be careful when walking near river banks, they may be slippery or crumble away resulting in somebody falling in.

Cold water can be dangerous and can lead to reduced mobility, then shock. If you feel cold get out of the water straight away. When kayaking always wear a life jacket (it is a requirement for the club insurance).

Know your capabilities in water and don't try to rescue someone if you are a poor swimmer: call for help!

Don't forget sun protection, you can still burn even when immersed in water.

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

BURRALOW CREEK EXPLORATORY WALK
BOWEN MOUNTAIN AREA

Four Sundays from 13th May and 7th October, 2007, 2nd March, 2008 and 5th April, 2009

Leader: Len Sharp.

This exploratory one day walk was originally advertised on the program as a 13km day walk.

Such was the nature of the terrain that we took another three Sundays to complete it.

The inspiration for this walk came from a walk Nick Collins did where he went a small distance up Buralow Creek from Cabbage Tree Creek for morning tea..

The floor of Buralow Creek was smooth, open rock with a trickle of water flowing over it. This was easy walking and deserved to be further explored.

A look at the map showed a possible end point upstream was a bridge or ford and the fire trail leading up to Bowen Mountain.

Easy, just put a car at either end and walk the creek to the second car at the crossing point.

Day 1:

Liam Heery, Jacqui Joseph, Alison Lyon, Annette Sudan and Charles Bowden came for the first attempt. (I may be wrong about some of the participants and rely on a faulty memory, as the attendance form was left at home.)

The first obstacle on day one revealed that there was a locked gate at the top of the hill at Bowen Mountain! Such is the nature of exploratory walks, they are not surveyed beforehand.. This increased the distance to be walked by 4km. No matter, we pressed on and negotiated Cabbage Tree Creek to Buralow Creek, having morning tea in a sunny clearing just past the creek intersection.

It was easy walking for awhile, either in the bed of the creek or on the rocky ledges on the left-hand side. This eventually changed with large boulders in the creek and vegetation and trees to be negotiated among them.. Also a small waterfall with attendant boulders had to be conquered, but was not too difficult and is part of the challenge of exploratory walks.

At one stage there was evidence of a three girl-power challenge to find the best route through the rocks and vegetation and get ahead of the group. The challenge was met and fizzled out to subsequent complaints by the serial complainer of "wait, you didn't wait!"

We had a late lunch on a flat boulder in the middle of the creek. The sides were now covered in springy water gums, making progress slow. Opposite our lunch spot was a high cliff on the right-hand bank, the side for getting back to the cars.

It was decided to pull out of the creek now as we needed to allow enough time to find a way out before dark. We obviously were not going to complete this day walk today!

To the left of the cliff was a small gully ending in a waterfall. Luckily for us I found a way via a boulder at the creek level

allowing a step up onto a ledge sloping up from the left and then to a small ledge higher up and a tree to the right of the waterfall.

We knew where we were from following the bends in the creek on the map.

The map showed a narrow ridge to our right but with cliff lines on the end and downstream side. However a gentler slope led up from the waterfall.

We tried this and it worked for most of the way, but still ended in small cliffs.

Liam eventually found a way through and we reached the top to be rewarded for our days work with superb views overlooking Vale Lookout from the point of the ridge. Charles took many photos of the scenery and the group, but worried the leader with his apparent lack of fear near exposed cliffs.

My initial confidence in thinking this walk could be done in a day then meant a 6.5km walk back to the second car at the locked gate on Bowen Mountain which we reached at dusk. Our recovery was, firstly a drink at the historic Windsor Arms Hotel and then an al fresco meal at the up-market fish café opposite.

Day 2:

Our exploring party had expanded for this next attempt with the addition of Tu Tran and a visitor, his boss in the fire brigade, Andrew Connon, although Liam could not be here this time.

Part of the challenge of this extended exploratory walk was to find the fire trail to the previous exit point. The map does not show all of them and branches from the main trail confuse things.

This proved the case here and I made a mistake and followed the wrong fire trail, costing us time. Thanks to Andrew Connon who accompanied me while I scouted around for the correct trail while the rest of the group had morning tea. We then walked back to the locked gate at the start of the fire trails and started again on the correct one, very embarrassing in full view of the urbanites.

The plan was to drop off the fire trail and into the side creek higher up to avoid the cliff lines at the end of the ridge. It took a short while to find a way down and then we discovered tapes marking a route which we hoped would lead us down to Buralow Creek.

The tapes may have provided a route for rock climbers but we encountered a massive waterfall overlooking Buralow Creek which even Tu could not negotiate.

I then moved up the slope to the left and out of the side creek, looking for our way from last time. There it was below us, the small gully and the familiar negotiable waterfall!

Mill Creek, Dharug NP 19 April 2009. Leader Liam Heery

The Mill Creek area is a favourite of mine as there are many variations that can be used to link a number of tracks together and have an interesting and different walk experience each time we go there.

This walk was not to prove an exception to that rule!!

After meeting most people at Pennant Hills station we headed off for Wisemans Ferry and then met up with our last two walkers at Mill Creek itself. Unfortunately I had been experiencing some bad back pain over the past couple of weeks so was unsure of how far I was going to be able to go. In explaining our planned routes I pointed out to everyone, potential "get out" points if I had to curtail the walk in any way. Thankfully everyone understood my dilemma and were very supportive in whatever decision I would have to make.

It was a wettish day in that showers were forecast, and it had rained the day before, so the ground and scrub was fairly wet.

This meant that it wasn't long before we encountered our first leach attack! And attack us they did!! It became a screeching competition as to who had the most leaches on them!

Luckily the members of the ANB are tough and were not going to let a blood sucking slug interfere with their enjoyment of the bush.

Although the lyre birds in the area may now have a completely new vocabulary to mimic and sing.

As with any off track expedition (and this was one) we navigated through an area unplanned for and approached our lunch spot (an extensive aboriginal carving site) from a completely new direction.

The going was tough and a medium walk quickly turned into a hard one!

The hard terrain was a good antidote to the leaches who now became a secondary consideration. We eventually reached our lunch spot, just as a torrential downpour open upon us.

Unbelievably this was to be the highlight of the day as, as soon as it ended we were left with the most amazing aboriginal carvings that hitherto were unrecognisable. There were people, dream time figures, kangaroos, emus, foot prints, shields, and much more jumping from the rock platform all around us, for all to see.

After lunch we headed off in a new direction and again found a new track that led us out and back to the Mill Creek circuit, which after some discussion we decided to finish and take the circular route back to our cars.

After de-leaching (although not too successfully for some) we headed back to Carlingford Bowling Club where we had a great recovery meal.

Thanks to Jacqui, Bob, Alison, Charles, Faye, Diane, Andy and Len for putting up with my slightly off navigation on a wet day, but one that proved to be very rewarding.

Thanks,

Liam