

**Winter Newsletter**
June 2011PO Box Q23 Queen Victoria Building,
Sydney NSW 1230
www.bushwalking.org.au/~allnations

Keeping Track

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

METROGAINE 2011

20 February 2011

Co-ordinator: Charles Bowden

Grade 2-4

This year's Metrogaine was held in the Parramatta area with an historical theme to underscore the event's title: "The Rest is History". The club entered two teams: the ANB Hares featuring Suseela Durvasula, David Cunningham and Alex Cuestas, and the ANB Tortoises containing David Perkins, Wayne Croker, Rosa Carpio and myself.

The conditions on the day were hot and oppressive, the temperature at 6:00am being 26°C, and we were all perspiring just in planning our routes

before the event was underway. Both teams decided to tackle the main historical component of the course – and then promptly set off in different directions!

The Tortoises headed straight for Parramatta and the A-Z of

historical questions which took us through the older sections of the city. After about 1 ½ hours we stopped off for a soothing ice-cream before resuming a seemingly endless trail. Shortly before lunch we encountered the Hares going in the opposite direction and exchanged light hearted banter while declining inducements to swap answers obtained so far.

The heat after a mostly liquid lunch was if anything even more in-

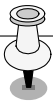
**ANB Hares & Tortoises**

All Nations Bushwalkers Inc Annual General Meeting

All Members are invited to attend Sunday 17 July 2011

Your invitation/nomination/proxy form
was mailed with your Winter Programme.

Come at 10:00am for morning tea and hear the presentation
by Oscar De Lellis on lighting and composition
for nature/landscape photographs.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the first fully online edition of *Keeping Track*. This quarter we are trialling an online version of the newsletter and we would welcome your feedback. Publishing online is not only more environmentally friendly and cost effective, it allows you to view the wonderful photos in colour. Of course, if you would prefer a printed black & white copy of the newsletter you can still get one by contacting our newsletter editor.

The Club's Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday 17 July 2011 at 10:00am at Burwood. I encourage you to come along. It's a good opportunity to see how the Club works and to have your say. The AGM is also an enjoyable social event with a delicious morning tea, guest speaker, photo competition and walk afterwards.

We encourage nominations for committee positions at the AGM. There are a variety of positions available to suit most interests. Being on the committee is a good way of 'giving back' to the Club, having your say and gaining experience in working for a not-for-profit organisation. New blood is always welcome. If you are interested in nominating for a committee position, please contact any of the committee members before the AGM.

If you are not able to attend the AGM and would still like to make your vote count, don't forget to complete the proxy voting form included in the program mail out.

See you at the AGM or in the bush.

Suseela Durvasula

President

tense with concomitant effects on our mental faculties. At least that's where I lay the blame for the Tortoises' first error of judgement. Searching for a clue within the large hospital complex which encompasses Westmead, The Children's and Cumberland Hospitals, we wandered around a maze of buildings like hypochondriacs searching for a palliative, only to emerge bewildered and frustrated after an hour of fruitless searching, boxed in by miles of fencing.

To cheer ourselves up we decided on a slightly different route to make up for lost time and emerged next to Parramatta Gaol and its imposing walls. Time eventually ran out on us later in Lake Parramatta Reserve as we sought to garner additional points when we again had to escape encircling fences to make our way back to the finish, arriving 4 minutes late – penalty 80 points: ouch!



Rivercat - Parramatta

The Hares had returned before us – on time – and hovered around anxiously as I totted up the scores for the Tortoises. They needn't have worried: once again the fable holds true and the Tortoises beat the Hares 1490 points to 1460, a very close result.

Final placings were: Tortoises 67th and Hares 70th overall (out of 114 teams) and 36th and 39th respectively in the Mixed category (out of 62 teams).

Thank you to everyone for persevering to the end in spite of the hot conditions and physical pain (several feet needed attention during the day).

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

3 August 2011

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO.....

jcsteven@unwired.com.au

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

WALK

Club 42

Hornsby to Brooklyn

27 March 2011

Grade: 5+

Leader: Nick Collins

Club 42 is expanding its membership! There are six of us now. We're the elite squad of All Nations Bushwalkers troopers who are brave enough (foolhardy enough?) to take on the marathon-length 42.2 km bushwalks I put on.

Last year we did a relatively flat course, from Berowra to Eastwood, and Bob, Fiona, Jacqui, Alison and I became the founding members, awarding ourselves appropriate certificates of merit and earning the people's fame and acclamation forever (or whatever it is that the Iron Chefs are always earning). This time we headed north from Hornsby, again primarily along the Great North Walk, finishing at Hawkesbury River Station at Brooklyn. As well as Bob and Fiona, I was accompanied also by Club 42 newbie, Alex.

There were more and bigger ups and downs this year. I calculated a total of 1300m of ascents and 1500m of descents, and we felt them. We finished after 14 hours, in the dark and by torchlight.



One of the big 'ups'

It was rather pleasant walking by then, and as usual I felt that I'd just got into my stride. When I checked the GPS gadget thingo it unexpectedly showed 43.6km, and we debated whether we had to walk backwards for 1.4km to correct for this overshoot.

Can't wait for this time next year and the next one!

Photos courtesy Bob Seibrigh & Alex Cuestas



Nick, Fiona and Bob



Nick, Alex and Fiona



Fiona, waiting for the train



Change of Details

Don't forget to notify Treasurer Helen Hindin of any of the following

- change in address,
- email address
- Phone numbers.

Phone: 02 9331 1921

email us at -

anbcomm@hotmail.com

SNORKELLING

Forty Baskets Beach

12 February 2011

Grade 2

Organiser: Charles Bowden

It's all about timing. Although the temperature was quite warm, there was light drizzle early in the morning which deterred some snorkellers but five of us still turned up on a cloudy day, hoping for some respite.

The drizzle had ceased by mid-morning but I surmised that we would probably only be going in once due to further showers predicted for later in the day so, after donning our gear, we trooped off down the track to Reef Beach for the swim along the shoreline back to 40 Baskets.

The water was a lovely 23°C and we soon started to see some action, Sarah spotting firstly a Common Stingaree (species of small dark stingray) followed by a Flounder over which it swam.

Small fry such as the colourful Mado, Stripeys and Hula fish were everywhere, as well as less numerous fish such as Old Wives, Black-spot Goatfish and green Senator Wrasse. Silvery fish such as Bream, Silver Bellies and Tarwhine were also seen as well as large dark specimens of Morwong and Rock Cale. A species of dark coloured Surgeonfish and a juvenile Blue Grouper were also spotted.

A pair of small Mourning Cuttlefish waving their tentacles at us in agitation as we approached was a highlight while later a pair of skittish Squid enticed me to swim in circles while pursuing an elusive photo. Another Stingaree was spotted resting under a rock ledge to complete the day's finds except for Sarah who spent another 20 minutes cruising for seahorses near the pool netting but finding large colourful crabs instead.



Mourning cuttlefish

Many thanks to Sarah, John, Stan and new member, Ann, for entering the water with me. I had barely returned home when the heavens opened and the forecast downpour began, ideal for rinsing out the saltwater from the gear: it's all about timing.

Malabar Beach, Long Bay,

12 March 2011

Grade 2

Organiser: Charles Bowden

So few snorkellers on such a nice day: what a pity just five turned up for what was a glorious warm sunny morning with water temperature at 23°C to top it off.

After meeting at our usual spot under the lifeguard tower, we headed for the southern side of the bay. The sea was calm and the water beautifully clear so that we spent around 1½ hours swimming up and down the bay before calling it a day.

Highlights for me were nudibranchs, the white *Glossodoris atromarginata* and a fist-sized specimen of the Rose Petal Bubble (*Hydatina physis*), examples of which we had seen previously at Bundeena. The usual piscatorial denizens (stripeys, mados, bullseyes, morwongs and goatfish) were in evidence but we also found a juvenile Rough Flutemouth (*Fistularia petimba*) mingling with the seagrass. Other notable sightings

included a Pygmy Leatherjacket, a couple of Old Wives, a Flounder and a school of juvenile Striped Catfish.

Thank you to Stan, John, Karin and visitor Kathy for joining in and the prolonged and relaxed lunchtime conversation that followed.



Nudibranch - *Glossodoris atromarginata*

Collins Beach, Spring Cove, Manly

5 March 2011

Grade 1

Organiser: Charles Bowden

For a while there I thought it would be another cancellation but late on Friday evening I had a quorum of 4 snorkellers to trial this new location, the second this summer.

Parking was going to be a problem, I thought, but I was lucky enough to grab one of the few legitimate spots adjacent to the Australian Institute of Police Management at the end of Collins Beach Road. Evidently this is not a road on which to take chances with illegal parking! One of the group parked as far away as Fairlight Beach to avoid the time-limited parking that bedevils most of Manly but the beach is an easy walk from the ferry terminal.

Collins Beach at the apex of Spring Cove is a pleasant and wide sandy beach with a small rivulet entering on the southern side. Spring Cove itself is shallow and offers great shelter from the swells just around the corner of North Head so the water was calm and placid. Unfortunately the weather was quite overcast (we experienced light showers during our visit) which meant that visibility wasn't great.



Stripeys & black-spotted goatfish & juvenile snapper

There was still plenty to see on both sides of the beach with lots of smaller fish present such as Stripeys, Sergeants, Goatfish and Old Wives. Larger fish included Luderick, Bream and Sand Whiting. A small school of large dark Mulloway (I think) were seen sheltering under an overhang and a larger school of sizeable Snapper wandered the sandy shallows. The most unusual find was a pair of Spotted Pipefish, almost indistinguishable from the surrounding seagrass stalks.

The weather having deteriorated to the point of discomfort, ie colder out than in, we decided to call it a day and adjourn for an Adriano Zumbo indulgence from his

newly-opened Manly outlet. Many thanks to Sharyn, Karin and Stan for venturing out in spite of the weather to check out this new location which is definitely worth revisiting, hopefully on a sunnier day.



Stigmatopora argus-spotted pipefish



Spotted pipefish pair

FREE MAPS

NRMA has a NEW free map guide - **SYDNEY & SURROUNDS**

SRA - **YOUR GUIDE TO THE CITY RAIL NETWORK 2010** includes an A3 size city rail map as well as a Sydney City map of the same size complete with a street guide and places of interest.

A very useful guide if you live in the outer suburbs and visit the city infrequently.

WALKING IN WILLOUGHBY MAP
NORTHERN SYDNEY CYCLING MAP

are 2 other maps available from North Shore councils and libraries.

Peter Bonner

SNORKELLING

Shelly Beach, Manly

9 April 2011

Grade 2

Organiser: Charles Bowden

(With apologies to Van Morrison) GLOOO[~]ORIOUS, G_L_O_R_I_O_U_S, GLOOO[~]ORIOUS... was the weather on this final snorkel outing of the season. The sun shone brightly, the temperature outside was around 27°C and only a few degrees lower in the water. The conditions enticed 11 snorkellers to enjoy the sun, sand and sea, the best turnout in 4 months. But most of all, there was plenty to see.

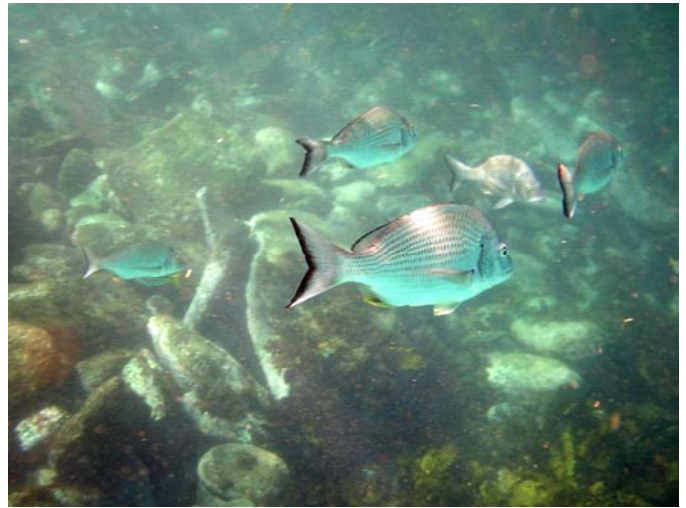


Sergeant Baker



Eastern blue groper

The fish were huge, and I mean enormous, and in large schools. There was a male eastern blue groper the size of a fat Labrador and as blue as the sky who contentedly sidled up to snorkellers for a sniff. Smaller darker terrier-sized females and juveniles could also be seen in the vicinity. Schools of luderick, also known as blackfish, and a related species, black drummers, munched determinedly on patches of seaweed, while some of the largest leatherjackets I have seen, easily dinner plate size, were pairing off with the males raising their crests protectively whenever a snorkeller got too close.



Tarwhine

Some in the group swam almost to Manly (it seemed) but at least as far as the rock pool at Fairy Bower and spotted a large ray. Others stayed closer to the beach where a fisherman's dream of sizeable bream and snapper made them salivate.

After relaxing over a light repast on the beach (no fish, only chips), most of us entered the water a second time to have a look at the action near the breakwater on the eastern side. Here the fish seemed to lose most of their inhibitions and a large mixed school of bream, snapper and the occasional luderick would circle in the eddies created by the swell crossing the breakwater, coming to within touching distance. Even the skittish cale, those rock-hugging fish that a look a bit like large lizards, seemed unperturbed by our presence.

Here we also encountered some more intriguing specimens including thin greenish looking Grass Whiting and even a couple of jewel-like hinge-back shrimp near their crevice home.

We all spent a goodly amount of time afterwards relaxing and chatting in the unaccustomed sunshine on the sand before reluctantly heading off to other destinations. Thank you to everyone who ventured out and bad luck to the rest who weren't able to make it on this G_L_O_R_I_O_U_S day.



Turbo snail

○ Notices Notices Notices Notices

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

Paddy Pallin stores are offering free membership to All Nations members.

This entitles you to discounts and optional inclusion on their mailing list for catalogues.

Present your current ANB membership card as proof. This offer is available at Sydney, Chatswood and Miranda stores.

Congratulations to Mark and Moon



Born 16/5/11 weighing 3.1kg a baby boy named Matthew. Moon and baby are well

and little Max is just delightful - friendly and curious about Matthew.



Kind Regards

*Mark, Moon, Max and Matthew.....
the MMM family*

A Date for your diaries

The ANB Annual Christmas Picnic will be held Saturday 17 December:

Site 22 - Tunks Hill

Lane Cove River Park

BBQ, shelter, bathroom facilities etc.

Parking in the park is available - \$7 vehicle entry - we may need to pool cars.

This site is also a short walk from Lane Cove Road where bus stops are available.



Photographic Competition

to be held at the next AGM
Sunday July 17th 2011

Prizes as well as a certificate will be your reward. The winning photos will be published in the Spring issue of Keeping Track and on our website. There's still over 4 weeks left to snap that special photo at one of the ANB Club activities.

Photos must have been taken since the previous AGM.

Categories are:

- **PEOPLE • WATER SCENES**
- **FLORA • FAUNA • CAMPING**
- **NATURE'S WONDERS**

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 person 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, provide the photos (the larger the size the better) to Charles Bowden, who will arrange printing for you at no cost.

The person's name, the activity where the photo was taken and the category in which it is entered MUST BE ON THE BACK OF THE PHOTO, otherwise it is not eligible.

Entrants must be at the presentation, no substitutes either, for them to be eligible for a prize.

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.

*Congratulations to one of our
long time members - Sharyn Mattern*

Multi-talented singer, dancer, bushwalker, Sharyn was recently elected President of the Sydney Bush Music Club at their AGM in March.

Australia's oldest folk club.

FEATURE STORY

Surviving Kokoda (or Avoiding being a Headline)

By Andrew McRae

About two years ago I trekked the Kokoda Track. This has become somewhat a rite of passage with many Australians, with a growing awareness of the importance of the New Guinea campaign in the Second World War. It was for me personally meaningful since my father had fought in PNG at the Battle of Shaggy Ridge in the Finisterre Ranges in 1944.

The Kokoda Track had been in the headlines around 2009 because of some well publicised fatalities of trekkers due to heat exhaustion and other conditions. This prompted trekking companies to require a physical and psychological medical certificate before accepting trekkers, so I was curious just how hard this track was. Having spoken about this trip to other walkers, I thought it was worthwhile to actually set down in writing some notes and experiences, appropriated subtitled "How to Avoid being a Headline".

For a start, few people know the exact details of the track. It is approximately 96kms in length, and runs from a starting point about 30kms north of Port Moresby (past the Bomana War Cemetery) from a landmark called Owers Corner on the foothills of the Owen Stanley Range, to the town of Kokoda, situated on the northern edge of the ranges. The track is the only navigable route across the ranges and there is a total of 7500 metres ascent and 7000 metres descent across some 13 ridges. A typical trek takes 9 days. The track passes through several villages along the way, so there is an opportunity to interact with the locals (and photograph the two remaining living Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels). The walk is not known as a scenic walk (and it isn't, in reality), but more for being of significant cultural and historical importance. I was very impressed with the amount of war heritage and cultural value that was present on this trek.



Bomana war cemetery near the start of the track

The Kokoda Track Authority oversees all operations on the track, which means a trekking company is the only practical way of joining the walk. Selecting a reputable and experienced trekking company is important, since they typically will have maintained good relations with the villages on the track, and be able to purchase fresh fruit and other goods. I trekked with Kokoda Spirit, whom I can recommend, though other trekking companies would undoubtedly be as professional and well organised.

Because it is mostly a self-sustained walk, a number of group porters are used to carry equipment and food. Walkers also have the

opportunity to hire a personal porter, who can carry your main backpack each day. I decided against a personal porter, mainly because I saw this as a physical challenge I wanted to take up, and also because I focused on a very minimal and lightweight gear list. Of the 16 total trekkers (including guides) of the group, 10 had personal porters. There were also 13 group porters, so our total party came to 39 walkers - quite a big difference compared to some of our club's overnight walks with 4 people!

Each night's camp was at a designated location, with thatched open huts that were used by porters for sleeping and eating, whilst the trekkers stayed in tents. Every site had some close-by source of running water that could be used for showering or washing, and for rinsing walking clothes in readiness for the next day.

Imagine my surprise when I found that the personal porters do more



A typical camp site

than just carry your backpack - they also put your tent up, wash your boots, and when you are walking up or down steep sections, they will hold onto your day-pack while helping you down the hard bits, and generally look after your every need! I wish I had known this beforehand, it may have influenced my decision not to hire a personal porter.



Mountain gun shells in a Japanese gun emplacement

The track is technically quite challenging, both from the viewpoint of the skills necessary to successfully negotiate it, and also due to the fact that it is 9 days of continuous walking. The terrain is mostly steep to very steep, with many creeks either forded directly, or crossed over using tree bridges. The track can be very narrow in places, and is mostly heavy red clay, which becomes quite slippery when wet (and being in the tropics, it can get very wet). Trekking poles are essential, as well as excellent quality well broken-in boots.

The tropical weather can vary, and it is absolutely vital to personally manage yourself in terms of dehydration and heat. To this end, it pays to be much more than just gym-fit, ie by undergoing a consistent regime of multi-day walks in a range of conditions, especially in the summer. Several trekkers I talked to had not experienced many (or even any) multi-day walks, but had expected to manage with just an average level of high fitness, and so suffered with blisters, exhaustion, coming close to their limits at times. I found it a hard walk, but I was able to enjoy it greatly because I felt well prepared and equipped. The weather conditions can vary hugely - I was fortunate to get mostly good weather, even though it was at the tail end of the wet season. I heard stories where it had rained continually for 9 days and the walking was a nightmare.

Also because of the length of the walk, personal hygiene is vital. Any kind of sickness would be very debilitating on such a walk, causing a rapid spiral of dehydration and exhaustion. Anti-bacterial hand wash before each meal is key, as well as strict cleanliness, washing at the end of each day (Wilderness Wash recommended), and rinsing walking clothes. It is also important to immediately treat any scratches or wounds with disinfectant or antibiotic cream.



Some of the villagers we came across

I was also quite paranoid about drinking water. The trek guides will show you safe streams for filling water bottles, but I carried a water filter and filtered all my drinking water.

Mental tiredness is also a factor, with 9 days of continuous walking, especially when the track can be quite tricky to negotiate in many places. It is easy to let your guard down, which I indeed did on the 8th day on a flat section, twisting my ankle. Fortunately the end was close enough so that with the aid of painkillers I was able to walk out. Another (very experienced) trekker broke a wrist when he tried to arrest a fall in a swampy section.

So, my top tips for Surviving Kokoda are:

- Select a recognised trekking company
- Get fit. Very fit. Do lots of overnight full pack walks in summer.
- Learn to manage yourself when walking, especially with dehydration.
- Go very lightweight with your own gear, or use a personal porter.
- Personal hygiene is critical.
- Use 1/2 cup of white vinegar in your washing machine to remove the smell of the jungle from your clothes.

Essentials to take are:

- * Your own lightweight 1- man tent if you are not hiring a porter. The trekking company will loan you one, but it will be a big 3kg job.
- * Isotonic powder such as Powerade or Cytomax, enough for 9 days.
- * One set of walking clothes, one set of night clothes. You get to rinse your walking clothes at the end of each day.
- * No cotton; instead, synthetics like polypropylene.
- * Temperatures never get that low, no need for fleeces - maybe a

light one if you feel the cool.

- * Good quality hiking boots that are well broken in
- * Good first aid kit, but avoid taking the whole clinic.
- * Trekking pole(s).
- * A great attitude.

In summary, the Kokoda Track can be a wonderful experience if you take the time to properly train and equip yourself, but like any trek of this nature, the ill-prepared can find themselves in serious trouble.

More photos of the walk can be seen on my web site at <http://mcrae.homeunix.net>.



Crossing Goldie River



A tree bridge crossing mountain stream



I survived Kokoda!

FULL PACK WALK

Mountain Lagoon to Colo River, Mt Townsend Bend

Wollemi National Park

10 April 2011

Leader: Liam Heery

Grade: 5

In the lead up to this walk I had previously attempted to get to the Mt Townsend bend of the Colo River from both the T3 track on an overnight full pack expedition and from Mt Townsend itself on a day walk.

In both cases we were unsuccessful due to a variety of factors including the river being too high and in flood to being beaten by available daylight.

On this attempt I was taking the Gaspers Ridge fire trail from Mountain Lagoon and then heading bush down a previously unexplored spur to the Colo River. The plan being then to walk upriver to the T3 track and exit there back to Mountain Lagoon.

Being cautious after the previous failed attempts, I planned an early start and was also wary of the weather as it had been raining fairly continuously in the week leading up to the walk. The weather I think kept people from booking as until late on Saturday there were only 3 takers.

The weather forecast was favourable so we headed off from Mountain Lagoon by 9.30am. The first couple of kms were easy along the fire trail where we met a couple who had intended to camp overnight at the Meroo camping ground but found the going too hard and camped on the fire trail instead! By the looks of them, camping with full packs was not their forte.

Not long after we reached the point in the track where my GPS told us we had to enter the bush. After a break for morning tea we commenced our exploration, finding the going very heavy and overgrown. Luckily this did not last for long and as we continued on a noticeable ridge line the undergrowth became easier to traverse. It didn't take long before we reached



Where are we?

the point where we commenced our drop down to the Colo. Again the planned route proved to be excellent, and while steep, the going was relatively easy. At noon we had reached the elusive Mt Townsend bend on the Colo River.



Colo River panorama

First things first and Charles and myself took advantage of the sunshine and flowing Colo to have a cool and refreshing swim.

Immediately we realised that to cross the Colo (which we needed to do) meant that we would have to wade in water up to our necks for those of us vertically challenged, with packs held high to keep them dry.

Shane was not sure that he wanted to do that, so we headed off looking for a shallower spot to cross and found such a spot not too far away where the water was only nipple high!

After a relaxing lunch, we made the wade across river without incident and decided to walk in the river as much as possible from there. The Colo is notorious for quicksand but luckily we didn't encounter any.



Colo River rapids

Charles however was not so lucky when later on he noticed one of his walking boots had gone on their own journey and he was left to finish the walk including the tough climb uphill on the T3 in one of my neoprene water booties!

Mainly walking on the river sand flats and shallow water (against the current) we made good progress, until we reached a point where I knew we could pick up a faint trail on the river bank. From here it didn't take us long to reach the T3 junction.

It was astonishing to see the effect of the previous floods when the river level was 3 feet higher, and a sand bank that had been there for years was completely washed away.

By 3pm we were on the move again and making our way up the steep T3 exit when the forecasted showers moved in. By the time we reached the top we were all completely drenched.

The effects of the hard day and slog of walking in the river against the current was taking its toll on us all and the last hour on the fire trail back to Mountain Lagoon seemed to go on forever.

We reached the car just on 6pm when it got dark and hurriedly changed into dry gear for the drive to the Kurrajong pub where we enjoyed a welcome drink and dinner.

Thanks to Bob, Charles and Shane for joining me on this adventure, the memories of which were still being felt in sore leg muscles for a week!

SOCIAL

Chester Street Theatre

6 May 2011

Peter Bonner

Six seasoned theatre goers gathered at Nero's Cafe Bar in Epping for pre-show dinner 'drinky poos' and gossip. Traffic and parking were a little difficult. Sharyn arrived rather frazzled after a 1½ hour drive in hideous traffic that should have taken 30 minutes max from her house, where as Kavita, who was my chauffeuse for the evening, came off best by parking right outside our dinner spot. Our table for six, just inside, gave the early birds the opportunity to wave down late arrivals in the non-stop traffic. Lan, clever girl that she is, used her car's Sat Nav unit to park outside the theatre and then walk back to join us. Two bottles of moderately good wine washed down our moderately priced meal.



Lan, Terry, Sue, Sharyn and Peter

Having wine and dined we set off at a brisk pace to the theatre to be greeted with the news that the play of "The God Of Carnage" "would go straight through" with the coffee/tea break at the end of the performance.

Translated from French, this comedy of manners, without the manners, happens when two married couples get together to sit down in a calm and sensible way to discuss how to deal with their sons, after Ferdinand whacked Bruno with a stick and broke two of his teeth, as "After all, nothing can be gained by behaving like two children, can it?" Chuckles, then roars of laughter from the audience as the behaviour of the four stage parents of Ferdinand and Bruno hits rock bottom.

Superb acting gave us a wonderful night of entertainment and great value at \$48 for 3 plays in the 2011 subscription series. The next play is "The Blond, The Brunette & the Vengeful Redhead," Fri 29 July at 8:00pm.

Thanks to my team of theatregoers, Terry, Sue, Kavita, Lan & Sharyn, who helped me by enjoying all the laughter, gossip and general chatter.

Storm's Wrath

Supernatural in its power,
Like the Gods are making war.
In fury, slashed the dark black sky,
Fired daggers to Earth's core.

Hear the mighty bellow,
That rolls heavy round the sky,
Rattling soles down here on Earth
Hold tight, may it pass by.

Like a supernatural being,
In rage all reason drowned,
Too powerful to be controlled,
It tears the whole place down.

Thunder peals through the night,
It shows the world its wrath,
Ripping trees down to the ground,
For standing in its path.

Like the devil's own fleet of bombers
Flying low, through the dark night pass.
Raining hell on sullen landscape,
Feel the onslaught through the glass.

The land's turmoil raging round us,
Over every acre, near and far,
Reminds how small and mortal,
On this untamed earth, we are.

In its time, it does move on,
Storm passing through the night,
Steady rain now left to ease,
Having proved to us, its might.

Rosie Swartz

Notice to ANB members who wish to place commercial advertising for goods & services in 'Keeping Track'

You may contact the editor for very reasonably priced advertising rates.

Advertising content is at the Editor's discretion.

Please note: Artwork must be supplied.

Flinders Island - An island full of surprises

January 2011

by Beth Rohrlach
with in-put from Chris Webber

In January this year, Ann McGovern, Chris Webber, Peter Bonner and I headed off to Flinders Island in Bass Strait for a week of adventure not knowing what to expect. What we found was a beautiful remote island full of surprises. I had previously heard of Flinders Island from a conservation biologist that I know who had been there and I had always wanted to go there.

We found a large, beautiful island with not many people living there and not many tourists either and a really relaxed pace of life. Flinders Island is the largest of 52 islands in Bass Strait called the Furneaux group. There are only about 800 people living on the island in an area approximately 70km long by 40km wide. Many live in quite isolated but really picturesque places, which have great views over the island and Bass Strait.

There is hardly any traffic on the roads and you hardly see any people either except in the 3 tiny towns, Whitemark (tiny, tiny capital city), Lady Barron, and Killecrankie (famous for Killecrankie diamonds which are actually topaz if you can find them !) and everyone waves to each other from their car - we perfected the wave well during our stay down there.

There are 100 beaches on Flinders Island and when you walk along them you may not find any other people on them. The beaches have beautiful crystal clear water and very large granite boulders with red lichen on them. We did some beach and boulder walks including Trousers Point (the most famous of the beaches) to Fothergate Bay which had great views of some of the other islands. We also did a walk called Blue Rocks, which went past large granite boulders, which have been previously named in the diaries of Bass and Flinders. A highlight of this walk were the 15 wobbegong (angel) sharks who swam past one by one so close in that you could have touched them. There



Trousers Point Beach

were houses in very secluded places along the beaches. We sang "We're all going on a Summer holiday" in a lighter moment whilst sitting on Trousers Point beach whilst Peter took a dip in the coolish water.

As well as the beaches, Flinders Island is well known for its granite mountain ranges: Mt Strezlecki which we climbed almost to the top of (late start that day prevented us reaching the summit) and Killecrankie. The Mt Strezlecki walk meandered along a path of varied vegetation before a rock scramble nearer to the top and great views from the top of both sides of the island and out to sea. We also did a walk along a track from Furneaux Lookout towards Walkers Lookout past a very rickety wind turbine and a hidden farmhouse that had great seaviews. Again we had great views of all sides of the island, the sea and the outer islands from lookout points despite the high winds in some places. Mt Strezlecki is part of the 3 Peaks Race for any members of All Nations who may consider doing this sailing and mountain running teams event.



Mudflats to Mt Strezlecki

Over near Lady Barron we walked up Vinegar Hill with Faith, our Border Collie tour escort from Lady Barron Store who left us when we got to the top. (Luckily Faith the dog had taken



Faith, our tour guide, with Ann

herself back down to the store and wasn't lost in the bush which we were a bit worried about). Vinegar Hill had a great view over the inner islands and Cape Barron Island and we could see the variable weather conditions really clearly - calm water near the island with big seas rolling in from out in Bass Strait as bad weather approached. Bass Strait is well known for extremely rapidly changing weather conditions - calm one minute, high winds and rain 30 minutes later and then calm again. We experienced all of this during our week on the island. Generally, though, the temperature was between 21 - 28 degrees when we were there and mostly sunny but we did have some sudden heavy rain and high wind at times.

The conservation on the island was fantastic and key community people have made sure it is well looked after. The Patriarchs wildlife sanctuary and Camerons Inlet, which is an estuary linking to the Tasman Sea, being significant places to visit which we did although it was raining heavily on those days. The animals including pademelons, potoroos and wallabies still wanted food which is there for you to feed them. There were really big seas near Cameron's Inlet that day.



Patriarch wildlife

The bird life on the island is significant in number and types, especially the shore birds some of which migrate from the Northern Hemisphere to nest on the island each year. Everyone was very patient when walking on the mudflats near Whitemark airport to see the shore birds who were feeding there - and field glasses are very helpful to have. You need to watch the tide if you do this. There is a great photo opportunity of Mt Strezlecki from this spot as well. They were also extremely patient with Beth (thank you Peter, Chris and Ann) in waiting up until dusk/almost dark (between 9 pm and 9.30pm) to see the Short-tailed Shearwaters (mutton birds) fly back in from out at sea to their nesting colony at Port Davies. Shearwaters are migratory birds and only fly well at sea so they crash landed at their rookery and hurried to their chicks who are 1 metre underground in a burrow. There was a great viewing platform just above the rookery. On the way home in the car there were night animals everywhere on the road and road edges so we had to drive very slowly. On another day we saw a Golden Wombat: Flinders Island wombats are a different species to the mainland ones, more golden in colour and longer fur, and they look more like a koala.

There are almost 300 species of birds on Flinders Island. I recorded the ones that I observed using a bird field guide which I took with me and this is what I found: Short-tailed Shearwaters - lots flying into the rookery on the island. In the fields, flocks of Cape Barren Geese, lots of White-backed Magpies and Australian Ravens, Nankeen Kestrel, Wild Turkeys, Common Pheasant. On mudflats & lagoons, Pied Oystercatchers, Sooty Oystercatchers, lots of Masked Lapwings, Red-necked Stints, Red-capped Plovers, Black Swans, Australian Pelicans, Musk Ducks, White-faced Herons. On beach & rocks, Little Pied Cormorant, lots of Pacific Gulls, (also lots around cows & sheep in the fields), Crested Tern. In the scrub, Superb Fairy-wrens, White-browed Scrubwren. On mountain, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo.

We even learnt the bird attracting technique outlined in a walks leaflet called pisching where you suck on the back of your hand and make squeaking or buzzing noises and it attracts the birds.

We tried it and it works but when we tried it on Mt Strezlecki some people came around some boulders right at that moment and wondered what we were doing and were very amused!

Flinders Island has a great museum down the Killecrankie end which has a great environment display and where you can pick up the Flinders Island seasonal timeline calendar of flora and fauna changes during the year and walks leaflets to help you identify the flora and fauna on walks of different habitats on the island and contribute to ongoing conservation monitoring on the island. The museum also has a lot of history about the island including the aboriginal history. Wybalene cemetery, which we visited on the last morning, also shows the history of the island.

One evening we did a night walk just near to where we were staying to see the stars - it was a great night for star viewing as it is a remote area and not affected by city lights. We saw many satellites as well - a walk like this is well worth doing.

Meeting the people who live on the island and hearing their life stories was a special thing. There isn't a night life on the island other than the pub at Whitemark and 'Vistas' at Trousers Point, so on Peter's suggestion we headed off to a Scottish Country dancing class he had seen a flyer for in a shop window. It was in a community hall in Whitemark and we met the locals as well as learning to dance which was a lot of fun. The dancing was led by Lady Mary McAteer, 97 years old or young! The dances were 1) 'The Linton Ploughman' a two couple jig in a 3-4 set ending with a poucette 2) 'The Braes of Balquhider' an 18th century reel. The teacher was very good and a very good 97 as well.

Some of the locals we met were writers from overseas who live on the island but their publishers are overseas. Another person I spoke to who had been living on the island for 33 years told me about her husband being an abalone diver. On one beach walk we met a fellow who had grown up on the island and gone to school there but was now living in Launceston. He told of when he was about 10 years old and being dropped off by the abalone divers with his friends to play all day on an outer island and then being picked up again at the end of the day. What fun & adventure that would have been! If now, though, it might seem a little scary to some Mums and Dads and he reflected on this about his own kids! The islanders were very friendly people who offered to show us different parts of the island or get us to walks starting points if needed. There were not many tourists on the island but there was a really nice camaraderie between everyone when we bumped into each other around the island. One family from Tasmania whom we had met on the island very kindly gave us a lift in their car from the charter plane terminal to the main airport terminal on the way home as it is quite a long walk with luggage. We all smiled about the young 4 year old on the small plane who liked the bumps when we hit some turbulence.

At the pub in Whitemark on the last night we met a fellow who was kayaking Bass Strait. He was island hopping from Wilsons Promontory to the top of Tasmania. He had some interesting tales to tell of being washed off his kayak and getting back on it again, and of the albatross eyeballing him out at sea. On his rest day we had met him climbing up Mt Strezlecki. His kayak sent out some type of computer signal every 10 minutes so his wife and family knew where he was.

Ann bought a Flinders Island CWA cookbook and for fun Chris, Ann and I all helped cook a meal from it and it tasted just fine. Our last view of the beautiful water was at Allports Beach on Australia Day looking to Castle Rock where we had our lunch

Welcome to 20 New Members

Ann Goeth
Rosa Carplo
Joyce Nip
David Man
Tony Sedgwick
Elizabeth Sedgwick
Tracy Huynh
Kristan To
Alexandra Lazar
Denise O'Keeffe
Christine Stanway
Mary Thompson
Vera Fernandes
Alex Elser
Evan Brandes
Kathy Stanley
Stephen Bamford
Stephen Dolphin
Roger Flowers
Pamela Flowers

See you in the bush



Would we go again. Absolutely we would. One week wasn't enough time to see it all and there are a lot of walks to do. Kayaking and cycling next time would be great fun to do down there as well as walking. We all had a great trip. Many, many thanks to Peter, Chris and Ann for coming along and making it such a fun time and for your help in organizing as well. Now for the rest of you in the club, head off down there before the rest of the world discovers it! For Chris, Ann, Peter and myself it was very hard to come back to the noise and hustle and bustle of Sydney after being in such a remote and special place.

before very sadly heading off to catch our plane home.

Now some facts for you if you are thinking of going there at another time.

Most travel agents have not heard of Flinders Island so finding out how to get there and where to stay was hard. We flew to Launceston and caught a Sharp Airlines charter flight across to the island. The charter flight is expensive but it is cheaper to fly to the island from Launceston than from Melbourne as it is less time in the air. The plane flies into the town of Whitemark. It is a 16-seater plane with a weight limit of 15kgs per person. You get a great view of all of the islands in Bass Strait from the plane.

You can catch a boat to Flinders Island but it only goes once per week, takes 8 hours and is subject to weather. The boat brings food supplies to the island and does also take passengers. There are not many places to eat on the island so we cooked most nights.

There is a small supermarket in Whitemark but the food is more expensive than elsewhere. We did eat out at the Pub in Whitemark and at Vistas near Trousers Point Beach and tried several coffee shops in Whitemark and a nice one with a great view at Killecrankie.

If booking accommodation, go directly through the accommodation place itself. We booked through a travel agent but it would have been cheaper to go directly through the accommodation place itself. We stayed at the Cabin Park near Whitemark airport. We had a good 8 bed cabin with full facilities - kitchen, bathroom, hot shower etc. There isn't a lot of accommodation on the island so book as early as you can.

You will need to hire a car to get around the island. The cars are not new, we had to change ours a few days into the trip. Petrol is expensive and watch out for public holiday closures as we couldn't fill the car up on the day we were leaving as it was a Public Holiday and the petrol place at the supermarket was closed. Bicycles are also available for hire on the island as well and would be a great way to get around, as would kayaks on the water around the coastline.



Blue Rocks



Cameron's Inlet - Chris, Beth, and Peter

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

PHOTO ALBUM



Common stingaree

◀ Malabar Beach, Long Bay, 12 March

▼ Shelly Beach 9 April

photos - Charles Bowden



Schooling blackfish

Flinders Island January 2011

photos - Beth Rohrlach

Pacific Gull



Blue Rocks



Faith the Border Collie with Peter & Beth



Fothingate Bay