



all nations
BUSHWALKERS INC



Autumn Newsletter
March 2013

PO Box Q23 Queen Victoria Building,
Sydney NSW 1230
<http://anwalkers.org.au/>

Keeping Track

NEWSLETTER OF ALL NATIONS BUSHWALKERS INC • FORMERLY ANC BUSHWALKERS INC & ALL NATIONS CLUB WALKABOUT GROUP • FOUNDED 1964 • INCORPORATED 1992

Full pack walk - New Year 2013 Gibraltar / Washpool NP

29/12/12 – 3/1/13

Grade 3

Leader Liam Heery

The advertised walk in the club program was to do the Green Gully track in the Oxley Wild Rivers NP. This was to be a reasonably easy full pack walk as there are cabins with beds and all conveniences to stay at each night, thus only a day pack is required. However a couple of weeks prior to departure I received a call from the local ranger to tell me the park had been burnt out and all bookings were cancelled until further notice!

What to do...as we were going to northern NSW I looked around for other suitable multiday walks, but found them to be few and far between. However I came across the Gibraltar World Heritage walk which had the added benefit of shorter camp to camp distances complemented by optional shorter walks along the way.

As a number of the camping areas on this walk are accessible by vehicle I worked out an itinerary that took us to the only "bush camp" for New Year's Eve, in the hope that we would have it to ourselves.

We all met up at Mulligan's campsite on Saturday evening and set up camp. The campsite is quite big and was reasonably full with a mixture of caravans and large family tents. We picked out a spot reserved for groups and had an area to ourselves excepting use of the communal facilities that had been taken over by a 3-tented family group.

The camp is located on Little Dandahra creek and beside a large natural pool. There are showers and toilets together with fire places and wood provided. We took full advantage of these facilities, had dinner and after a good night's sleep were ready to kick off the next day.

Day 1

After a leisurely breaking of camp we headed off on Sunday morning to our next camp site, Coombadjha. After about 3 or 4 kilometres we took our first optional side trip that would lead us out to the Needles lookout.

Dropping packs, everyone came along and within an hour we reached the edge of the escarpment with views to the coast in the distance. The air was still heavy with overnight mist so the view was not as clear as it might have been. The Needles are a number of sheer rocks pointing to the sky on the edge of the escarpment, not unlike the Three Sisters (in miniature!)

We took some time to enjoy the views and solitude, with only one other couple and their children there at the time. On leaving the lookout we made our way to another high point where, on climbing the rocks, Bob came across a small but lively snake. While unable to positively identify it we think it may have been a Highlands Copperhead. As it hid itself away in-between the rocks we decided to give it a wide berth and headed back to the track.

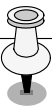
After picking up our packs we continued on the Tree Fern track which then crossed the Gwydir Highway. After a short section of road and then gravel we reached the Granite Picnic Area where we stopped for a leisurely lunch. Before leaving the area we walked out to the nearby lookout which has expansive views over the Gibraltar range where we were headed over the next couple of days.

Continued page 2



Jacqui, Liam, Fiona at Surveyors Creek

Photos - Nick Collins



President's Report

What with fires and floods, storms and heatwaves, park closures and weather-related cancellations, this has been a difficult summer to enjoy the outdoors. I am aware that a number of club activities in the Summer program have had to be cancelled, postponed or altered to accommodate the vagaries of the weather through no fault of the activity leader. Evidently, in such circumstances, the printed copy of the activities program now bears little resemblance to the online version on the Club's website which is constantly being updated. While activity leaders do send out group emails to members advising of changes, these are sometimes mislaid, overlooked or forgotten. Consequently I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all members to check the online program regularly for the latest information on what is happening this week or the next or further ahead.

It is also pleasing to see that new activities are being added frequently to the online program at short notice. This is exactly the sort of flexibility we were hoping to achieve through an online system. Please keep them coming! I would just like to remind activity leaders to submit any amended or new activities to the Program Co-ordinator for approval prior to notification to members.

On a different tack, our hard-working Treasurer, Helen, is taking a 'sabbatical' and heading overseas for around 6 months. In her absence, Navodit Narain has kindly agreed to take over the role for the time being. On behalf of the club I extend a warm welcome to Navodit and wish Helen an enjoyable and stimulating holiday.

To all our members, please keep walking (or cycling or snorkelling or...) and I look forward to seeing you out there.

Charles Bowden

Continued from page 1

After lunch we headed down the uninspiring gravel road to the Coombadjha camping area and headed for the "walk in" campsite. The campsite is really nice and on pleasant soft ground, well shaded and again amply supplied with a fireplace and wood. However the concept of "walk in" just means you can't park your car next to your tent! Nevertheless we spent an enjoyable night camped here.

Day 2

Our next campsite at Grassy Creek was only 7km away, so we had a late breakfast before heading off on today's optional Washpool walk. This is a very nice, though leech infested, walk through old growth forest. Towards the end there is even a bridge with a trap door, opening up to a dangling cup used to take a drink from the pristine creek running underneath. After this you are in an area where there are a few of the only 11 cedar trees left in the park, if not NSW. The trees under which there is a timber platform are hundreds if not thousands of years old.

From here it was just a short distance back to the camp site where we had lunch before packing up and heading off towards Grassy Creek, our New Year's Eve campsite.

The first half of this walk is along an old logging trail and a bit of an uphill slog. However once the top is reached the track becomes more remote and also stays on top of the ridge. The track used to be the access route to an old tin mine at Grassy Creek.

Along the way we passed some interesting rock formations (O'Hara's Rock) and then go through O'Hara's Gap.

We reached Grassy Creek and couldn't spot a camping site anywhere! After a bit of confusing map readings it was decided to continue on the track a bit further and, lo and behold, half a kilometre on there was the campsite isolated and empty alongside a very nice creek.

Once we had selected our preferred tent sites it was time to take a dip in the creek. It was so nice to be able to get fully immersed and rinse off the sweat and grime built up on the way here.

After dinner, the goodies appeared for our New Year's celebration, from a variety of alcoholic substances to fine foods and chocolate.

The designated time for the New Year was 9pm and around a roaring fire we counted down to 2013 and let off a raucous cacophony of razzos and bangers that would have made kookaburras blush and put Sydney's fireworks to shame!

To follow up we had a star gazing extravaganza led by our personal astrologer Nick, before hitting the sack and saying good bye to 2012.



Jacquie entering the new year

a slither for it and must have nearly shed his skin in the wake of Jacquie's screams.

Not much further along we reached an imposing granite rock formation to the west of the track. The Haystack stands out on its own and is a 150m scramble to the top.

Day 3

Leaving Grassy Creek we continued down the north west trail. Everyone was in fine mood until we heard an ear splitting scream. It seems that two of us in the lead had woken up a sleepy red belly black snake who decided to make

Again everyone made the effort and the views from the top rewarded us in spades. We spent quite a while enjoying the views and also watching a family of Jacky Lizards sunning themselves in full view and unconcerned with our presence.



Liam's first cup of tea of 2013



Fiona & Christmas Bells

Unfortunately we couldn't stay here all day and so made our way back down more or less the same route we came up.

There are a number of hanging swamps in this area and they all have numerous fine examples of Christmas bells, which slowed down those of us attempting to

get the best flora picture for the next club photo competition.

We then came across the only other people this far out. They were doing a day trip from Boundary Falls to Coombadjha and happened to be from Sydney. After a bit of JIT (Jacqui interrogation technique) we knew their ages, marital status, where they were staying and that they were members of the Bush Club.

Letting them go in a cloud of "how did we end up telling them all of that" it wasn't long until we came to the next deviation, a side trip to Duffer Falls, where we rested for lunch and Bob took a swim under the falls, while the rest of us bathed our feet in the cool water.

The falls cascade down a series of drops, with the one we stopped at only on the first level. Further downstream they drop over another two falls as the creek makes its way into the valley below created by what's known as the Demon Fault.

After lunch we headed back on our last stretch leading into the Boundary Falls campsite. This site is not only vehicle

accessible but the road runs right through the middle of the camping area! Of all campsites it was the least inspiring.

After setting up camp we walked out to the Lyrebird Falls lookout and then back and down to the Boundary Falls themselves. Boundary Falls and the resultant swimming pool make up for the campsite as it was the best falls to take a swim under. Being a very hot day was lucky as the water was freezing! I doubt it would be so pleasant on a cooler day.

Day 4

This was to be our longest day with estimates of 18 to 24 km depending on which route we took. We had heard from one of our adjoining neighbours that a section of the track was closed and we might have to make a detour.

Leaving reasonably early (for us that's before 9am) we headed up Tin Ore Creek trail which climbs towards the Highway passing numerous hanging swamps along the way. Again they were filled with numerous great examples of Christmas Bells.

On reaching the highway, due to the increasing heat and somewhat unknown distance, we talked about dropping some of our gear and picking it up later by car, however the consensus was to push on and complete the walk unaided.

Crossing the highway we followed the track down to the start of the Surveyors Creek Trail, where again we consulted and decided that the track would have dried out and should be passable without too much trouble. It was now nearing 35 degrees and the alternative was an extra 4-6 km over high ground.

Surveyors Creek Trail follows Little Dandahra Creek from its source in the hanging swamps all the way through to Mulligan's Hut and beyond. As we followed this route it was fairly flat and the going was easier than expected. The creek sides are littered with huge balancing granite boulders and then intersected with magnificent open pools.

By lunchtime we had reached the intersection with the Dandahra Picnic area track where I hoped there would be a spot to enter the creek for a swim. However we had to make do with a small pool as it was the only place there was a bit of shade. Everyone took advantage of the refreshing water and were able to cool off.

After lunch and only a kilometre or so along we came to a magnificent pool at least 100metres long and so inviting that we couldn't refuse. And as we were making such good time, there was no second thought about having a real swim yet again.

It was hard to leave, but time was moving along and so we hefted packs for the last stretch back to Mulligan's. When we got there, we had our original campsite all to ourselves and were able to take over the communal camping area. Spread out and in the lap of luxury, some of us made for the showers while others headed back to the creek and had yet another swim in Mulligan's Pool.

Overnight it rained but we didn't mind as we had cover in the morning to pack up and head off home.

Thanks to Jacqui, Fiona, Bob, Nick, Len and Alison for providing such good company and sharing our first World Heritage experience of 2013.

WALK

Malabar to La Perouse

18 November 2012

Grade 2

Leader Julie Armstrong

Karin and Scott had the right idea to have breakfast at the café near the start of the walk. Ken and I were also early so we had a coffee with them. We met back up at our arranged meeting place where Sharyn joined us for the walk. Due to illness Margaret was unable to join us.

The walk follows the coastline of Botany Bay's north side traversing the cliff line with spectacular views across the South Pacific Ocean. The walk took us through bushland and past beaches through three golf courses, namely, Randwick, The Coast and St Michaels and around the edge of NSW Golf Club.

After passing a cemetery with history of people who died of smallpox we walked by the Anzac Rifle Range and our first side trip was near the Heliport for the Westpac helicopter where Scott had childhood memories of playing around the gun battlements.

Our second side trip was to Cape Banks to look at an old wreck Scott pointed out and to watch surfers catching waves at the Bombora. Back on the track we skirted around NSW Golf Club, past cliffs with many cormorants hanging over the water and onto another battlement where we had lunch in the shade.

There were helicopters buzzing around and Ken emailed us later to advise they were looking for a spearfisherman who disappeared while free diving off the coast.

Our third side trip was down to Brown's Rock. The track kept going down and down and we finally arrived at the rock. Not much to see except water so Sharyn and I set off back up the track before the others as now it was all upwards and quite steep. We continued on when the others caught up through bushland and past views of Bare Island and La Perouse eventually arriving at La Perouse.

Karin & Scott headed off to catch a bus while Sharyn, Ken and I visited the Snake Pit for the Reptile Show which was very interesting and we got to touch some of the snakes. Then the three of us had a recovery coffee and ice cream and caught a bus back to Malabar to pick up our cars.

MALABAR

Malabar is known for Anzac Rifle Range, the largest rifle range in the southern hemisphere and Long Bay Correctional Centre.

Malabar was named after a ship called the MV Malabar, a Burns Philp Company passenger and cargo steamer that was wrecked at Long Bay on 2nd April 1931. The ship itself was named after the Malabar region in the Indian State of Kerala famous for its history as a major spice trade centre.

The State Reformatory for Women was opened in 1909 and the State Penitentiary for Men was opened beside it in 1914. The reformatory became part of the prison in the late 1950s known as the Long Bay Penitentiary. The women's prison was vacated after Milawa Correctional Centre opened in 1969 at Silverwater.



Cape Banks - the old wreck Photos - Scott Yandall

Two parts of the headland were handed over as a National Park to the NSW Government in February 2011 by the Australian Federal Government.

A deeper ocean sewerage outfall with diffusers at Malabar has improved the beach's water quality considerably since the (less deep) outfall opened in September 1990.

LA PEROUSE

The La Perouse peninsula is the northern headland of Botany Bay. It is notable for its old military outpost at Bare Island and the Botany Bay National Park. Kurnell is located opposite on the southern headland of Botany Bay.

La Perouse was named after the French navigator Jean-Francois de Galaup, comte de Laperouse (1741-88) who landed on the northern shore of Botany Bay west of Bare Island in January 1788 only days after the First Fleet of convicts arrived in Australia.

Visitors to La Perouse can learn about the indigenous significance of the area from the Aboriginal people of the area. Today one third of the area's population is Aboriginal.

WALK

Colo River Wollemi National Park

18 November 2012

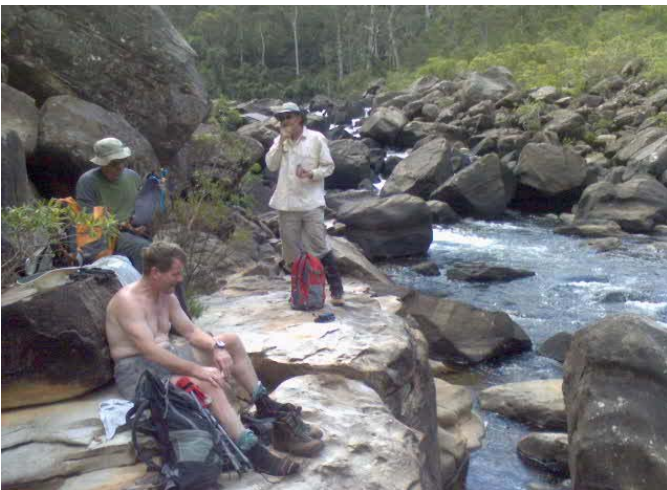
Grade 5+

Leader: Liam Heery

This was always going to be a hard walk and well deserving of its 5+ grading. The plan was to walk down Bob Turner's track to the Colo River, then follow the Colo up to a point where we could ascend Mt Parr South, traverse back down to the Colo at King's Rapids, follow the opposite bank via Mailes Cave and end up back at Bob Turner's and a return to the cars at the start.

Thus an early start was mandatory and so it was that we were on the track and walking eagerly down Bob Turner's at 8:30am. Not long down the track we came to a vantage point where we were able to see our morning's objective, Mt Parr South, striking in that it stood out from the rest of the terrain, being the highest point in view. It was also possible to make out our expected route up the tail of the mountain.

We made good progress down the easy track and passed another couple who told us that they were going to try and make Mailes Cave. They were very impressed when we told them what we were planning to do.



Photos - Nick Collins

We commenced our rock scramble up the eastern side of the Colo and did well to keep our feet dry. The Colo is quite full on this section of the river, so walking in it was not an option. The banks are relatively steep and overgrown so the easiest way through is along the bouldery shoreline. On our way through we were delighted to hear the mating call of a koala on the opposite bank but were unable to sight it.

Not long after we reached the first set of rapids and found a nice overhang in which to rest, cool down and have morning tea.

Our next objective was the hard climb up Mt Parr South and this commenced from a nearby dry creek. The climb from here to Mt Parr goes in three sections ranging from the almost vertical, ie a 60 degree angle to an inclining ridge line. This was our first major test for the day and it took almost two hours to cover less than 2kms. At times we were climbing on hands and knees, however the bush was much clearer than expected. Near the top were magnificent 360 degree views of this wonderful wilderness.

At the summit of Mt Parr South we stopped for a welcome lunch break, rest and opportunity to recharge energy. From here the terrain was unknown to everyone and depending on how hard it was going to be would have a huge effect on our ability to complete the walk. Once committed there was no way out other than to continue as planned. After checking with everyone the decision was made to continue (notwithstanding that Matt had to do some running repairs to one of his boots which was coming away from its sole).

Heading off almost due north we followed a steep ridge down through fairly heavy bush. Having plotted our route on my GPS we were able to follow its direction (which turned out to be spot on) not that we could see much in front of us. With a few twists and turns it wasn't too long before we spotted the Colo below. The heavy bush had given way to more manageable open areas and then to the steep nose that dropped off down into the Colo itself.

Some more rock scrambling and sliding around and down boulders brought us right out at the King's Rapids. Here we had a welcome afternoon tea break, however no one had the desire to jump into the very enticing pools that abound around this section of the river. Hoping that we would be able to pick up some form of a track from here to Mailes Cave we took our time before heading off again.

Not long from where we stopped we came upon a very large canoe that was tethered to a tree, with a single paddle nearby with a tarp in the sand. On closer investigation we were happy to find that there wasn't a body underneath the tarp! Some discussion took place about whether or not we should commandeer the canoe and paddle our way out as it was getting late and some of us were very tired. Matt's second boot was also now in the process of shedding its sole as well.

On reflection, maybe we should have taken the canoe, but it wasn't our property and we are bushwalkers who should be relying on our own steam.

The next section leading to Mailes Cave was up and down from the river bank and through some tough bush. The going was extremely tiring, so the three diamond pythons that we stumbled across kept our adrenalin levels up.



Photo - David Xiang

There was no sign of any tracks and again it was the accurate plotting of the GPS that led us straight into Mailes Cave.

Some of us had been here before (from the other direction) and were pleased to find our entries with the All Nations Club still recorded in the note book from 2001 and 2005! Another long break and a discussion as to how far and long it would take to get to Bob Turner's from here led us to deciding to continue as we were confident that we could pick up some tracks (including the old Engineers Track). Matt's soles were now only held on by his gaiters and he was doing very well to keep them there. Who'd have thought gaiters would be so versatile!

Leaving Mailes Cave we were hopeful of getting to Bob Turner's by about 7pm. However because of the unreliable track, (yes we found it in places, but even then it was so overgrown) I think it is now pointless ever trying to locate it again as it took us until 8pm to reach Bob Turner's.

And what a welcome sight that was. Stripping down (some of us completely) we waded across the Colo in water chest high. The relaxing effects of the water was

too much to miss out on and most of us took the opportunity to go back into the water for a welcome swim, cool down and wash.

Leaving the beach we headed up the track with our head torches at the ready as the sun quickly descended and darkness enveloped us. A few breaks on the way up left us mesmerised as we watched a Christmas lights-like display as fire-flies darted all over the place, outnumbering the stars in the sky.

After 17kms in 13 hours we reached the cars at 9:30pm! Another epic Colo walk.

By the time we reached Wilberforce the publican had just locked the doors, so we couldn't try out a new recovery location. Pubs were also closed at Windsor and when we reached the 'Mean Fiddler' we were lucky to be let in the door for the last drinks order!

Thanks to Bob Seibrigh, Nick Collins, Peter West, David Xiang and especially Matt Roper our visitor who helped out in many ways while persevering with disintegrating shoes!

WALK

Galong Gorge: Reptile Park **25 November 2012** **Grade 5** Leader: Charles Bowden

Just four stalwarts set off from Dunphy's Carpark on a hot sultry day to tackle another piece of (my) unfinished business. The last time we attempted this walk, we took the wrong creek and ended up in farmland miles away.

On that occasion we followed an old farm track down to the lower reaches of the creek. This time, we turned off and followed a faint trail to Tin Pot Hill where we had morning tea before taking a bearing and then heading down the steep spur that leads to the junction of the two creeks.

Here we once again debated which of the two mostly dry creeks was the correct one but, after following the wrong one again for a short distance, (in spite of GPS, maps and compasses!) we realised our error and this time headed in the correct direction.

The lower levels of Galong Creek were readily negotiable. Last summer's heavy rains had cleared out a lot of the



Tea break at Tin Pot Hill - Nick, Liam, Charles, Bob

undergrowth and we made good progress. Here and there large pools glistened in the sunlight but there was no flowing water.

However we discovered instead that the pools harboured abundant numbers of reptiles in their vicinity, especially red-bellied black snakes. We counted nine in total during our scramble through the lower reaches of Galong Creek... and those were the ones that we saw! The

snakes displayed a range of interesting behaviours: one was assiduously hunting for food in rock crevices underwater in a deep pool while another was busily eating a smaller version of itself in an unexpected display of cannibalism. Most however were content to bask in the sunshine, unwilling to move unless we approached too closely.



Red-bellied Black Snake



Cannibal snake

Other reptilian wildlife in evidence included fat skinks skittering over boulders and under rocks, the occasional waterdragon splashing into pools at our approach and a couple of large goan-nas clinging to trunks of trees as they impassively observed our passage.



Masked Lapwing egg clutch

After lunch the creek narrowed and we reached the gorge section, marked by steep smooth ledges of rock over which waterfalls would have splashed. However most were quite dry with just a trickle of moisture here there which made the going a bit easier as we climbed and scrambled over or around these obstacles, stopping to admire the views behind and in front of each. At one point we discovered a couple of bolts that had been plunged into the rock as climbing aids. This was quite a surprise. Evidently the creek had been a popular route at some point in the past.

After overcoming the sixth and final ledge, the gorge disappeared abruptly, replaced by wide banks. Gradually fencing and then tracks started to appear, soon followed by farm buildings and before we knew it we had reached Carlton's Farm with the carpark just over the rise.



Galong Creek, above gorge



Scrambling across a ledge past a deep pool



Gorge walls & pools

As we were leaving the carpark, we noticed a Masked Lapwing nesting nonchalantly at the corner of the grass parking area, within a foot of the road. Closer inspection revealed a clutch of 4 eggs. Perhaps the site was chosen as a defence against snakes and other predators, disturbed by the proximity of people and vehicles.

Many thanks to Liam, Bob and Nick for accompanying me on a most enjoyable and interesting day.

○ Notices Notices Notices



Pencil in this date
for the AGM

Sunday 21st July 2013,
Woodstock Community Centre
in the Ballroom

Church Street, Burwood

More details in the next issue



Photographic Competition

to be held at the next AGM

Sunday July 21st 2013

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 details will be in the next issue.

Organiser Len Sharp.

Over 4 months still to capture that winning picture

Next ANB committee meeting
Tuesday 9th April 2013 at 6:30pm

All members are welcome ... Come along and have your say

The ANB Christmas BBQ/picnic at Crosslands Reserve

18 December 2012

Thank you to all who came along, and extra thanks to those who helped in the setting/cleaning up. Special thanks go to Catharina and Charbèle for the delicious salads and table settings, Peter for providing extra shelter, Steve for bringing his super BBQ to speed up the cooking, Charles for organising the drinks, Bob for leading the walk into the site and Yuko for the photos.

It all helped to make a great day.



WALK

Crosslands to Galston Gorge and return

30 December 2012

Grade 2

Leader: Peter Bonner

This walk was listed as Grade 2 as it was intended to be done at a leisurely pace. It was to allow time for walkers to observe the flora and fauna of this section of the Great North Walk as it tracks along the upper reaches of Berowra Creek with its interesting shallows and deep pool sections.

Morning tea was taken at a clearing just off the track with a convenient layout of felled trees to sit on. As part of my walk programme, members were invited to use my small flint & steel version of Bear Grylls' flint and steel fire lighting activities. Alas we all failed to get a flame going as, despite the very dry conditions, we couldn't find the right type of fibrous bark the sparks could ignite. Having all failed our fire lighting test we continued this pleasant walk past the Rocky Falls rapids, the limit for canoes, kayaks and small craft going upstream, to start the ascent to Galston Gorge.



Leader Peter Bonner

At the part where we would have started the descent to the rocks we had a rest break for lunch prior to retracing our steps to Crosslands. After a pit stop at the excellent toilet facilities there I decided to extend the walk through the water-side picnic area and at the suggestion of Navodit Narain, we continued on the track down to the footbridge at Calna Creek. This bridge is now in need of major structural repairs as the two main beams, heavy duty telephone-type wood poles, have sagged badly in the middle. A warning notice, restricting the number of persons on it at any one time, was prominently displayed.

The return journey to our cars was without incident except that I had damaged my camera and asked Richard Milnes, who is now forging a new career as a photo journalist, to be official photographer for this walk, so thank you to all participants and to Richard for the photos.

It is worth mentioning that about 20 years ago, volunteers from the All Nations Bushwalkers worked very hard over two days to build the original track down to Calna Creek. Walkers Paul Goessling, Ken Gould, David J Cunning-

ham, Tony Webber, John & Sue Taylor and Pam Organ are names that I recall, plus another 2 or 3 I don't remember. Praise also to the hard working PWD engineer who supervised our track building, the hardest working civil servant I have ever met! Ken had invited us to a BBQ around his swimming pool but we were all so completely knackered that we just went home to bed! Working on a steep slope moving and digging and placing rocks is just plain hard yakka! I have never walked to the bridge since then, only kayaked around to go up Calna Creek.



The fire lighting test - photos Richard Milnes



Change of Details

Don't forget to notify Treasurer Navodit Narain

of any of the following -

- change in address
- email address
- phone numbers

Phone: 0409 883 164 or email us at club@anbwalkers.org.au

Tiritiri Matangi Island, NZ

By Jan Steven

On a rather grey day in Auckland, New Zealand, over Christmas, I set out on a full day tour to visit Tiritiri Matangi Island, an open Sanctuary island which allows 170 visitors daily. It is located 30km north east of central Auckland off the end of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula.

120 years of farming had seen this 220-hectare island stripped of 94% of its native bush but between 1984 and 1994, volunteers planted between 250,000 and 300,000 trees. The island is now 60% forested with the remaining 40% left as grassland for species preferring open habitat. All mammalian predators were eradicated and a number of threatened and endangered bird and reptilian species have been successfully introduced, including the flightless Takahe, one of the world's rarest species, and the Tuatara, a survivor of an ancient group of reptiles that roamed the earth at the same time as dinosaurs.



Tiri, as it is known by locals, has one the oldest working lighthouses in New Zealand, built in 1864 and still in its original condition, although it is now completely automated and solar powered. It guides all ships through the channel into the Port of Auckland Harbour.

Before disembarking onto the island we had to ensure that our shoes were completely clean and any food we carried had to be in sealed containers to protect the island from any unwanted guests. On shore we were met by a team of friendly volunteer guides who divided us into small groups for a very informative guided walk on a selection of trails. We were lucky to spot many of the native bird species that have been reintroduced to the island and identify various native trees. (They still have some Aussie wattle growing, and a few recognisable weeds which they expect will be overtaken with the native regrowth). You learn lots from the expert guide and are shown the best places to watch for different bird species.

The only additional food they supply is a sugar solution to assist the birds when food is scarce, and the odd nesting box. We were lucky to spot Stitchbirds, Whiteheads, tiny North Island robins, Tuis (parson bird), and large native pigeons to name a few.



Takahe

the tagged birds in other breeding colonies.

The tour ended at the Visitors Centre and lighthouse. After lunch and a free coffee or tea there was plenty of time to wander on my own following other trails on the map, look in the penguin nesting boxes (only one was occupied) or return to one of the beaches for a swim. I was thrilled to see a Kakariki (red crested parakeet) cross my path more than once.

The island was also once the home to two Maori tribes and the location of their Pas (villages) is marked on the map.

At 3:30pm it was all aboard once more for the fast trip back to Auckland on board the 'TiriKat'.

What a fantastic day and to be recommended if you should be visiting Auckland NZ.

Near the Visitor's Centre we were treated to an appearance of a Takahe pair and chick. This extremely rare territorial hen, for which they run a breeding program, is flourishing and various pairs are now located throughout the sanctuary islands such as Kapiti Island. We didn't see any Kiwis as they are nocturnal flightless birds, but apparently at the last weigh-in they were fatter and heavier than any of



Kawakawa - pepper tree

A decoction of the leaves was used to allay toothache and reduce swelling. Closely related to the plant from which Kava is made



Pohutukawa - NZ Christmas tree

SNORKELLING

Delwood Beach, Manly

5 January 2013

Grade 1

Leader: Charles Bowden

Eight members and one visitor turned up for the first snorkel of the season, previous ones having been cancelled due to inclement conditions. The weather was warm and sunny and the water temperature an ideal 22C, which encouraged several to have a second dip.

The highlight of the day was without doubt the presence of a spotted wobbegong (a species of placid bottom-feeding shark), resting at a depth of no more than 2 metres. This caused a lot of excitement, some snorkellers creating an impromptu spa in their nervousness. Other notable sights were a small red cuttlefish, a squadron of half a dozen squid, a flathead, a school of barber perch and a pigmy leather-jacket so close to shore he was in danger of being trodden on by those wading in the shallows.

Thank you to all those who came along and enjoyed the day.



Spotted wobbegong



Red cuttlefish



Red and black sea urchins

FUNNY TRICK

The Grevillea buxifolia or Grey Spider Flower was often used by aboriginal children to frighten other children or unaware parents by placing the flower near a sleeping victim and then wake them with a cry "look out for the big spider"



Photo - Sharyn Mattern



Barber perch

WALK

Parks & Beaches with Nary a Hill

6 January 2013

Grade 2

Leader: Charles Bowden

A warm and sunny day greeted the dozen members that turned up variously at Sans Souci Park or Scott Park to attempt the circuit walk to Kyeemagh and return. A few appeared somewhat daunted by the distance of 17km but the prospect of no hills seemed to overcome this phobia.

We set off at 9:15am from Sans Souci, heading north through the lush green zone straddling Bado-berong Creek as it runs through Sandringham to Sans Souci, dominated by Clareville Park. Here we saw plenty of water fowl and the occasional scurrying skink.



Scarborough Park wetlands

The walk proceeds on through Bona Park to Park Road where we turned east for a couple of blocks of suburbia before entering Pemberton Reserve. From here the green zone extends all the way to Rockdale Bicentennial Park, taking in playing fields, reserves and water habitats which form much of Scarborough Park.

Another diversion, this time to the west, saw us walking along West Botany Street for 500 metres before we cut back into the White Oak Reserve. From here the walk sidles past the venerable Sheralee Caravan Park, the other side of Muddy Creek (now just a concrete channel) before reaching Bestic Street in Kyeemagh.

Here a shared pedestrian/bike path runs along the Cooks River shoreline with views of the market gardens to the south-east and the Kingsford Smith Airport runways to the north-west. The planes seemed almost within touching distance, so clear was the light.

We stopped for a swim (and lunch) at Cook Park, followed by another stop for a swim (and siesta) next to Lady Robinsons Beach at Monterey, before continuing on through the throngs of swathed extended family groups



Shady lunch spot at Cook Park



Afternoon tea siesta



Forty winks

picnicking on the grassy verge, finishing at 4:15pm at Sans Souci Park, after farewelling several members in the last few kilometres as they headed off to bus stops and car parks.

Thank you to Helen, Jan, Margaret, Vivienne, Brigitte, Jasmin, Michelle, Sandy, Kye,

Sue and Julian. With a gender imbalance of 6:1 I must remember to put on more walks like this!

SNORKELLING

Malabar Beach, Long Bay

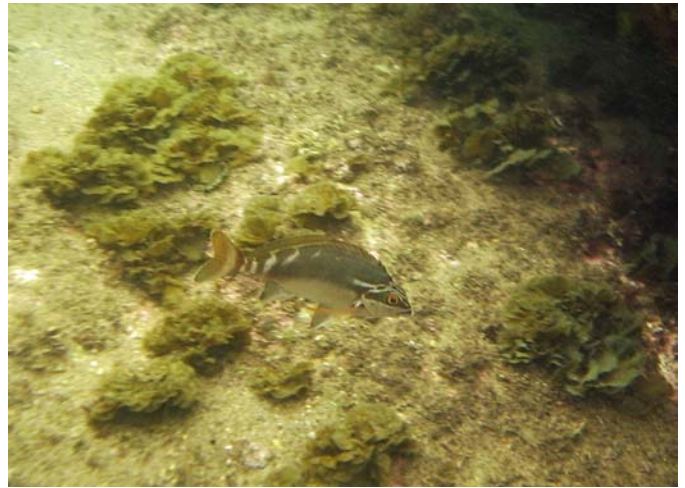
12 January 2013

Grade 2

Leader: Charles Bowden

From the weather standpoint, the day was a disappointment. A predicted heatwave didn't eventuate, the day remaining cool and overcast until mid-afternoon by which time we were all leaving.

Still, the marine life didn't seem to notice anything amiss and we spotted plenty of unusual specimens including several stingrays, a small octopus, a couple of seahares as well as juvenile morwong, leatherjackets, tubeworms and a solitary Blue Damsel in its distinctive yellow & blue livery. It was well worth the trouble of struggling into wetsuits!



Red morwong



Octopus tetricus



Sabellid tubeworm

Thanks to all who came to relax and chat as well as enjoying the water.

SOCIAL: Christmas lights Soirée, Ashbury

On behalf of those attending, a note of thanks goes to Charles for providing the delicious supper and his home for the after walk socialising enjoyed by all.

Photos - Jan Steven



WALK

Cowan to Brooklyn Ku-ring-gai National Park

20 January 2013

Grade 5

Leader: Liam Heery

The Cowan to Brooklyn walk is one of the most frequented walks in Sydney. The normal route follows the Great North Walk which is on a combination of walking tracks and fire trails. It normally takes about 3 - 4 hours and is mildly challenging.

However the walk takes a circuitous route and is not the most direct way. When you look at the map you can draw almost a straight line from Cowan to Brooklyn along what's known as Ten Bob Ridge and then around Peak Hill to Brooklyn.

This is the route I was now attempting for the first time.

On leaving Cowan station with 4 members of the club and 1 eager visitor we waved off another club (SBW) who left ahead of us. They had a large group and it wasn't long before we caught up and started passing them.

At Jerusalem Bay, our normal first stop, we met the leader of the other group who I have walked with before. He was intrigued with the walk we were doing as he had tried it himself a couple of weeks earlier but failed to make it. His impression was that it was too overgrown and there was no way off the ridge through the cliff lines, without a rope! He even mentioned that one of Paddy Pallin's bucket list items that he failed to achieve was the traverse of Ten Bob Ridge to Brooklyn!

With that encouragement I decided not to break here, but to get ahead of this party as they would be slow up the steep incline just ahead of us.

Before leaving the Bay I stopped at a clean water creek to top up water bottles in anticipation of a long and draining day. Then it was up the incline at a fair pace without stopping so that anyone who felt the pace was too much would have an opportunity to pull out before we headed off into the really good stuff.

Atop the hill it was only about 100 metres from the Taffy's Rock turnoff that we stopped and put on all of our off-track gear. Goggles, gaiters and gloves was the fashion de rigueur. The weather was overcast, misty and a little humid. Because of overnight rain the bush was dripping wet, so it was a personal choice as to wearing a jacket or not. I chose not, but regretted it within 5 minutes as by then I was soaked through to the skin.

We spotted our first objective, a hill ahead and decided to get there for our morning tea break. This took a little longer than anticipated, but by 11am we were sitting on a rock platform with views of the ridge ahead of us. Sitting down I re-evaluated my clothing option and decided on a change of top as well as putting on my rain jacket. Luckily it was warm enough that getting wet was not an issue. However being in the lead, I was the one getting all of the dew off the bush as I pushed through it!

Navigation was reasonably easy, sticking to the top of the ridge line. However our morning tea spot had taken us slightly off track and it took a little while to push through heavy undergrowth before we got to "clearer" sections, and back on track.

We then negotiated the ridge, with numerous ups and downs that included a number of rock scrambles. We came to another rock platform that gave us our first view of Peak Hill shrouded in the mist ahead of us. We could also make out Mud Creek which we would have to drop down into and the ridges that we would follow up the other side.

Heading off again we reached the end of Ten Bob Ridge and started to look for a way down though the cliff lines. A number of likely spots proved unusable as I was only going to go down through a slot that I knew I would be able to get back up again. I didn't want to get caught in between two cliff lines with no way up or down!

As it was now 1pm, I took the opportunity to break for lunch and to take time to re-evaluate our position. In consultation with the others over lunch, we decided to look for other slots nearby and, if none found, to head back on the same con-

tour towards what looked like a sloping decline (to Campbell's Creek) that would also take us back towards Cowan to exit the way we came in if we couldn't find a way down.

As we moved along the cliff top, a number of possibilities were investigated and discarded.

Then, just as I was about to call time, I

found a negotiable slot through the cliffs. Continuing down in the general direction of Mud Creek, it wasn't long before we reached the expected second of line cliffs. Again traversing along the top of the cliffs and heading towards Campbell's Creek we found our second slot and in no time at all we were through and crossing a muddy Campbell's Creek.

The creek was very overgrown, luckily though without the dreaded lawyer or lantana vines, but with native sword grasses and cabbage trees. Getting through here was a bit of a struggle, but again it wasn't long until we hit the mud flats and mangroves of Mud Creek.



**Len trying to side step the mud in
Campbell's Creek**



Crossing the mangrove flats at Mud Creek

With the tide out, although on it's way in, we had clear passage through and over the mud flats. No place for the squeamish trying to keep boots and clothes clean and dry, as we negotiated around the creek to the other side, slipping and sliding over the oyster encrusted rocks.

With the tide quickly coming in we were running out of mud flats and had to go bush earlier than I anticipated. This took us up the western side of a creek that was heavily overgrown. We really needed to be on the ridge on the other side so I dropped down into the creek and found that it was easier going in the creek bed.

After a short break, we followed the creek as far as we could and then scrambled up and over a number of rock platforms until we reached the ridge line that would take us to Peak Hill. I thought we would come across a bit of a track here, but was unable to find anything, until we came upon the track leading from Porto Ridge to Peak Hill.

On the saddle, while most of us contemplated a summit of Peak Hill for about a millisecond, our eager visitor was disappointed that we didn't bag it as well!

It was now 4:30pm and I decided we would take the "known" route from here via the creek to Sandy Bay rather than the more adventurous route to the east.

The creek route is reasonably easy until you get down to the lower section leading into Sandy Bay, where it is very overgrown and hard to push through. At this stage I was glad that Len offered to take the lead and break through for us all. (In hindsight the eastern route off Peak Hill might have been a better alternative, although it would have involved a bit of exposure).

At Sandy Bay we took the opportunity of a rest to check and search for leeches and ticks. I ended up with 4 or 5 leeches and 1 bull ant bite and our visitor looked very spectacular in her blood spotted white shirt, although I doubt she felt the same!

A short walk from here, passing the now destroyed squatter huts, brought us to Dead Horse Bay, where a few of us took the opportunity for a well deserved swim. Swimming in the clean sea water was not only cleansing and refreshing but soothing as well.

By 6:20pm we were sitting in the Anglers Rest having a well deserved beer and not long afterwards we shared a meal at the local Thai restaurant before heading home our separate ways.



Liam trying to find a way down through the cliff line



Our objective, Peak Hill, in the misty distance

Ten Bob Ridge presented a very challenging day, difficult navigation and almost every type of terrain imaginable. This route from Cowan to Brooklyn took us 9 hours of hard work as against the "normal" 4 hours along the Great North Walk. Now conquered it will become part of my repertoire with a variety of alternative routes to choose from.

Thanks to Jacqui, Bob, Len and visitor Lilium for meeting the challenge and fulfilling Paddy Pallin's dream.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

9 May 2013

**SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO
jan.steven@bigpond.com**

Pictures submitted: 300DPI resolution preferred to achieve good reproduction quality and photos should be separate files from the story text.

ClimateWatch

North Head Sanctuary, Manly

By Margaret Weiss

Welcome to 10 New Members

Anastasia Kyriacou

Katharine Fasal

Rita Thomas

Van Le

Hossam Ahmed

Philip Vouden

Adele Garnier

Patrick Mooney

Kshama Sawant

Peter Dlutowski



On Sunday 3 February four of us, Jan, Helen, Sharyn and myself, showed up at Manly North Head Sanctuary station to participate in a ClimateWatch survey conducted by the Earthwatch Institute based in Melbourne. Guides Judy and Jeff conducted the 2 hour walk on the track. The station is on the former School of Artillery site, now managed by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust. The object of the walk was to identify plants and animals on the track and their frequency. We were each given a checklist to record our observations, later to be entered into the ClimateWatch database.

What had seemed doubtful weather soon became a mild summer's day. We (a group of about 15) strolled along at a leisurely pace. Jeff has a vast botanical knowledge of Australian plants, as did Argentinian ranger Guillermo. Although it was the height of summer,

there were plenty of wild flowers still in bloom to mark off on our checklists. These included flannel flowers, grey spider flower (grevillea), eggs and bacon, woollisia, sweet scented wattle and silver banksia trees. Guillermo identified tiny native cranberries near the end of the 2 hour walk, about one or 2 kilometres in length. There were no 10 storey ascents or descents, no bush-bashing, rock climbing or creek crossings - just a pleasant level scenic coastal sandy track with vegetation to match. Someone caught sight of a



Identifying the native plants

wattlebird, and some of us heard their song.

All had a good time, and the 4 of us "recovered" for lunch at the Bellavista cafe, indulging in good food, inexpensive and generous serves.

No doubt about the bella vista: great views of the harbour and foreshores.



Flannel flowers



Native cranberries - Photos Sharyn Mattern

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

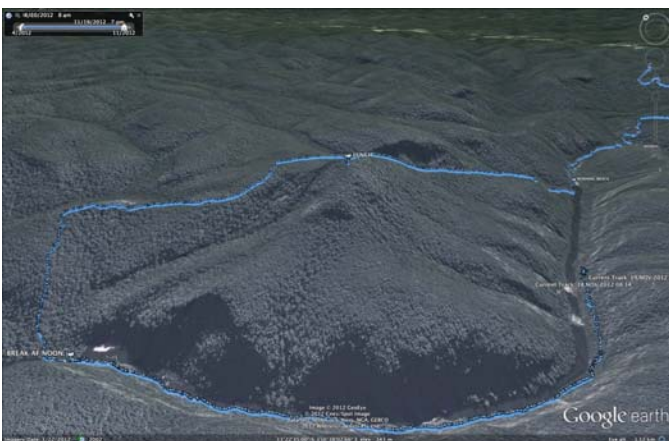
PHOTO ALBUM

Colo River

Wollemi National Park

18 November 2012

Walk route traced using Google Earth Mapping



Christmas Lights Soirée

8 December 2012 Photos Jan Steven



The ANB Christmas BBQ/picnic at Crosslands Reserve

18 December 2012

Photos Yuko Imai

