



## METROGAINE 2014

9 February 2014

Grade 2-4

Co-ordinator: Charles Bowden

Two teams of 4 participants each were entered by the Club in this year's Metrogaine. The event was fully booked which pleased the organisers with over 400 participants.

The course encompassed familiar territory for many of us, including the section of the Great North Walk between Cherrybrook and Galston Gorge, aka the Benowie Walking Track. Well-known side-tracks such as the Bluegum Walk and the Waitara Creek Walk also fell within the course boundaries.

It was a popular area to be walking in. Team 96 even encountered the club walk group led by Nick coming up from the Fishponds. After pausing to exchange light-hearted banter and facetious misdirections, we continued in opposite directions.

It was a very hot day with temperatures reaching 35°C so both teams finished rather earlier than planned due to heat-related stress. Consequently it was with some surprise and a great deal of pleasure that I found that our combined scores exceeded 2000 points, one of our best club efforts.

For the record and the statistically minded, 160 teams competed on the day.

Team 96 (Andrew, Charbèle, Charles, Susan) scored 1220 points, coming 46<sup>th</sup> in the Mixed Open category and 83<sup>rd</sup> overall, while Team 97 (Catharina, Gill, Julian, Suseela) achieved 950 points, coming 24<sup>th</sup> in the Mixed Veteran category and 125<sup>th</sup> overall.

Thank you to members of both our valiant teams for taking part and making the most of the hot conditions.



**Team 96 - Charles, Susan, Charbelle, Andrew** - photos Charles Bowden

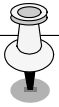


**Team 97 - Julian, Catharina, Gill, Suseela**



**Last minute swotting**

Photo: Stacey Bryce, NSW Rogaining



## President's Soapbox

As I write this, winter has just arrived. Snow has fallen in the Snowy Mountains and as far as Orange while icy winds have caused temperatures to drop dramatically. In tandem with this, daylight will steadily diminish which will mean that walks in the forthcoming Winter program will be of shorter duration.

We have recently noticed a gradual decrease in numbers attending club walks. While not alarming, the trend is of concern and it would be interesting to hear from our members as to their thoughts on what the reasons might be and potential solutions. Of particular note, walks in the mid-range (Grades 2-4) have experienced the greatest drop.

The Club relies heavily on its walk leaders who generously give their time and energy into preparing walks so I would encourage all members to take advantage of the offerings on the Winter program and make the most of your membership.

As well, the Club is always looking at ways of increasing our membership numbers and we welcome any helpful suggestions. A couple of good ideas are already being worked through and we have decided to engage again with Meetup, a social networking group for walkers, and place some of our walks on their calendar over the next 12 months.

The Club's Annual General Meeting is held in July and all members are encouraged to attend. Details are set out in this newsletter and this year there will be an eminent guest speaker, Professor Brian Gray, a specialist in combustion whose topic, "Science, Myths and Bushfires" is sure to be of interest.

I look forward to seeing you then. In the meantime, my fervent thanks once again to all who contributed or participated in Club walks, activities, social outings and events throughout the year.

*Charles Bowden*



**Team 96 still smiling**



**Seeing the funny side** Photos: Stacey Bryce,

## Club Projector

As I'm sure all of you know we have a Club Projector and Screen. While it is normally used for Club nights, the AGM and other meetings, it is also available for YOUR use, **free of charge**.

I'm sure that there are other uses that you can put it to, so long as it is club related. So if you want to borrow the projector and screen, just get in contact with Liam Heery and he'll co-ordinate getting it to you.

# SNORKELLING

## Final Summer Snorkels

8 & 15 March 2014

Leader: Charles Bowden

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The last two snorkelling outings were held at Shelly Beach in Manly and at Parsley Bay in Vaucluse. The weather was warm and mostly sunny with the water temperature being an idyllic 23 degrees.

Shelly Beach turned it on for us when it came to marine life. Several large blue groper could be seen and large schools of mullet and luderick fed hungrily amid the seaweed. Half a dozen species of colourful wrasse darted around the larger fish while sand whiting and bream hovered over the sandy areas. Juvenile squid were evident and some of the more unusual sightings included a school of long-finned pike and a stars-and-stripes toadfish.

Not to be outdone, Parsley Bay was also teeming with sealife including the ever-present whiting, bream and luderick. A juvenile giant cuttlefish was found pretending to be a leaf in less than a foot of water while two stingarees were sighted resting under rockshelves. A lovely Immaculate Damsel (yes, that's a fish) was seen nearby. A more unusual discovery was a trio of very large flutemouths, one being well over a metre long.

Thank you to Monique, Kathy, Janice and Charbèle for keeping the faith.



*Juvenile squid*



*Female eastern blue groper & mado flutilla.*



*Long-finned pike*



*Common stingaree*



*Bream*

# MARATHON WALK

## Berowra to Eastwood

23 March 2014

Grade 5+

Leader: Nick Collins

'We've done it again, for the fifth year in a row. On 23 March we did our annual 42.2km marathon walk. No injuries, no exhaustions, nobody going troppo, no serious mutiny even. This year we returned to the scene of the original crime of the inaugural such event, and did Berowra to Eastwood again, largely along the Great North Walk. Except we found we suddenly didn't have to go quite to Eastwood to get the kilometres in, and Epping sufficed. I'd known I had to add a little diversion to find the required distance, so took us to Cherrybrook and back, which was slightly further than I'd realised. As ever though, we got the distance (according to my GPS) exactly right in the end, and as ever it took about 13 hours. You just start quite early, you walk steadily with breaks that aren't too long, and you finish just after dark. Never fails. Special mention for the two marathoners who triumphed over serious ankle or foot injuries sustained in the previous twelve months. Spectacular recoveries, Fiona and Helen!'



*Five (slightly) exhausted marathoners happy to arrive at Epping station. Photo: Fiona Bachmann.*

## KATOOMBA - WINTER MAGIC FESTIVAL

**The 21st Blue Mountains Winter Festival is happening on Saturday 21 June 2014 from 11:00am.**

It starts with a large, unique and very colourful Grand Street Parade at 11:00am. The festival goes on all day with stalls, entertainment and food. Fireworks and more entertainment in the evening. An early restaurant dinner is planned for those going back to Sydney on the same day, but why not consider making a weekend of it.

Katoomba has lots of inexpensive accommodation including at the large YHA in Katoomba Street.

If you are interested in joining me at the festival, please contact Beth Rohrlach at email: [bethisbushwalking@yahoo.com.au](mailto:bethisbushwalking@yahoo.com.au) or phone 0424 732 287m. If you are intending to stay over in Katoomba, please arrange your own accommodation well before the festival date as it books up very quickly.



**\*The Winter Solstice in 2014 is June 21st, 8:51pm AEST.**

# Carol Cox

***Taken from recent correspondence with Carol and reproduced with her approval.....Nick Collins***



**Photo taken 2003**

*I've been here in Wonthaggi two and a half years now - loving every minute - if I'd known how great retirement was I'd have done it decades ago (that's wishful thinking!!)*

*Wonthaggi is a very welcoming and inclusive community - lots of varied activities to get involved in and, unlike some towns, your great-grandfather didn't have to be born in the town for you to be welcomed and valued.*

*I have joined a few activities – my choir, the Bass Coast Chorale, had a sell-out concert in the Wonthaggi Town Hall last Sunday afternoon. We're on a break at the moment and will reconvene in June to start rehearsals for our big performance at the 100th anniversary in 2015 of the ANZAC landing. It's a great choir, approx 40 members, so we make a good sound. We have a concert each year and entertain in aged care facilities in the district during the festive season.*

*I'm volunteering at the local museum on Thursdays doing data entry - we're cataloguing local newspapers over the past 100 years to enable people to do research on family news or other interests which have appeared in the local press.*

*I volunteer in an off-stage capacity with the Wonthaggi Theatrical Group - ushering, programme selling in the lobby, etc. Their 2014 production will be "Jesus Christ superstar" (one of my favourite musicals) - the music will of course be unchanged from the original but costuming will be modern so as to appear that it could be the Palestinian conflict of today. The standard of the Wonthaggi Theatrical Group is astounding - there's a great deal of talent out there among those dairy farmers !!!!*

*I'm spending time with my two older sisters and I help out in the canteen at the National Vietnam Veterans Museum on Phillip Island when we're needed, and we spend the day with our other sister (who lives just over an hour's drive away)*

*once a month - usually spent shopping !!! and we carry on like three teenagers. The three of us have just spent two nights over Easter at Maldon (our old home town) in central Victoria - Maldon puts on a three-day Easter festival with a band concert, street procession, street dancing, etc. We go every year and catch up with friends and family.*

*I've added a one-hour gym class on Friday mornings to my activities – participants are about my age so it's mostly stretching and agility exercises, and a lot of laughter !!!*

*I write articles for the Bass Coast Post which is a local on-line magazine – most recent was a series on the development of the local library.*

*"The girls" - my cats Molly and Marilyn are well and happy as are "the boys" - my two sheep Winston and Jackson. They were collected in December to be shorn in a shearing display for tourists on Churchill Island (from whence they came !!) They survived the ordeal and came home decidedly smaller as they had been carrying large woolly coats.*

*My lovely black greyhound Edward had to be put to sleep Christmas Eve 2012 (aggressive bone cancer). My options were to have the leg, including the scapula, removed or to put him out of his pain – my choice was obvious.*

*About four weeks later, in late January 2013, I welcomed Cooper – an 18 month old greyhound, white with a grey brindle patch – to the family. He also came through the Greyhound Adoption Programme - he had been in race training but would not concentrate on the lure, so didn't make it to the racetrack. He's an absolute delight and loves everybody and every other dog he comes into contact with.*

*Today has been glorious, after early rain, and Cooper and I spent two hours this morning at the beach with a friend and his Blue Heeler, Finn. The two dogs were off-leash on the beach and exhausted themselves with Cooper tearing along the beach flat out and Finn trying to round-up the waves -*



**Cooper**

*both of them true to their breed !!! At 5:30pm to-night Cooper and I will have another walk with a Heart Foundation sponsored dog walking group which meets once a week. This time of year it's dark by the end of the walk.*

*It was great to see Len when he was here recently - my door is always open to friends from the ANBC so keep that in mind.*

# FEATURE

## Afghanistan Days

by Steve Bamford

Most people are aware that Australia has withdrawn most of our ground based troops from Afghanistan following the end of combat operations at Tarin Kot, Uruzgan at the end of 2013. However, the work still goes for about 1200 Australian Defence Force personnel in support of the train, advise and assist mission in Afghanistan as well as maritime security in the Middle East Area of Operations.

Approximately 400 Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel are deployed to Kabul and Kandahar, Afghanistan to support the mission to train and advise the Afghan National Security Forces as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

A further 800 Australian Defence Force personnel are deployed throughout the broader Middle East Area of Operations on Operation SLIPPER which includes the maritime security environment, an area of more than two million square miles, encompassing the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Arabian Gulf, Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman.

The RAAF is based at Al Minhad Air Base in the United Arab Emirates and flies and maintains two C-130J Hercules aircraft which provide intra-theatre air logistic support for Australian and ISAF forces throughout the MEAO and Afghanistan. We travel with the aircraft as maintenance crew.



**RAAF C130J Hercules**

Air Force personnel don't travel beyond the bounds of the airbases so my views of Afghanistan are limited.

Kabul is the capital of Afghanistan and its largest city.



**Kandahar**

It's very scenic, similar to New Zealand, surrounded by tall, snow-capped mountains. The climate is much cooler than Dubai, being higher by approx. 1700 metres.

Kandahar has a similar climate but without the dramatic mountain backdrop. The base is akin to a dusty industrial estate, concrete, dirt roads, shipping containers everywhere.



**Section of "The Boardwalk"**

There is a rest area called "The Boardwalk", with small trinkets, fast food shops and cafes, nice to grab a pizza or coffee but feels weird going into KFC armed.

The American PX (armed forces general store) is also popular with an extensive range of items from clothing, socks and jocks, food and electrical appliances, all very cheap.



**Street at Aussie Base – Al Minhad**

The Aussie home base in Dubai, at Al Minhad Air Base, is much more civilised. The base has the feel of a small Australian oasis, the accommodation buildings are named after places at home such as Marysville, Newcastle, Bottlebrush.



**Mountains at Kabul**



**Bean Around the MEAO cafe**

Everything is paved, gardened, clean and tidy. We have a cafe called “Bean Around The MEAO” and a small general store, two gyms, (but no swimming pool).

Food at the mess is outstanding, a good variety of cuisine from the local chefs and one has to maintain a good exercise routine, as it’s very hard not to eat too much. Everything here is air conditioned, including our hangar. If it’s not, it quickly becomes an oven.

Weather is hot, hot, hot and then it gets hotter. We have regular days now when it gets to 45°C and some 47°C in the shade. In July, August it can get into the 50°C. Some days also have oppressive humidity thrown in. If not at work, people tend to bunker down in their air-conditioned rooms and watch movies, surf the net etc, only emerging when necessary to work, meal times or going to the gym. At night it not uncommon for it to still to be 30°C well after sunset.



**Dubai Skyline**

Dubai is spectacular. Huge, beautiful skyscrapers, (and the world’s tallest) and an excellent metro rail system and free-ways.

The malls here make Parramatta Westfield look like a 7-11. They all have their big attractions, Dubai Mall has a huge indoor aquarium (with sharks), Mall of Emirates is equally enormous and has an indoor snow ski park.

Every brand name fashion and accessory, high-end electronics have stores at the malls. There is no place for bargaining in the malls, all the stores selling at normal retail prices with the best shopping outside at market areas, but some of the shopkeepers can be very “politely-aggressive” getting you into their shops to buy.

Nice beaches, though surf is very mild, being located in a gulf.



**When everyone else has a Rolls Royce, get yours chrome plated.**

Dubai is also a car spotters paradise, Lamborghinis, Ferraris, Porches, Aston Martins, Rolls Royce the list goes on. No shortage of high-end cars here. Usually seen tearing down the freeways or parked in prime spots outside the big Malls.

One of the unusual sights in the desert around Dubai are hundreds of unfinished building projects. The massive building boom went bust around 2009, with the Global Financial Crisis. Scattered all through the desert outside the main city are sites ranging from foundations up to near completed buildings, abandoned. Apparently, the builders walked away when finance dried up.



Looking forward to getting back, catching up, cooling off, and doing some walks (unarmed).

**Steve Bamford**

# ○ Notices Notices Notices Notices

## All Nations Bushwalkers Inc Annual General Meeting

All Members are invited to attend  
Sunday 20 July 2014

Your invitation/nomination/proxy form  
will be emailed to you soon

**9:30am: Come for morning tea**

**10:00am: Our guest speaker**

**Emeritus Professor Brian F. Gray**  
BSc.(Hons.I), MSc., Ph.D., D.Sc., F.R.A.C.I.,  
C.Chem., F.I.M.A., C.Math., F.Aust.M.S.

who will talk about  
**Science, Myths and Bushfires**

**10:30am The AGM**

**12:00noon The Photo competition**

**Afterwards a walk (TBC on the day)**



## Changes to the PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

to be held at the next AGM  
Sunday 20 July 2014

**Photos:** Any size, in colour or black & white, and taken by you since the last AGM.  
**To be entered on the back of photo:** Category, your name when and where taken.

### Categories are:

**Nature** (taken on a club activity)

**People** (taken on a club activity)

**Open** (any subject, taken anywhere in the World)

*4 entries per category for a viable competition. If insufficient entries in a category then the entries will be included in the "Open" section (Sorry, only one entry per person per category).*

### How to Enter

Open to all club members who must attend the AGM personally.

On arrival at the AGM, hand your entry to **the co-ordinator Len Sharp.**

*The co-ordinator's decision is final as to eligibility in accordance with the rules.*

### Prizes:

A first and second prize in each category;  
First prize \$25 with a certificate  
Second prize \$15 with a certificate

*Over 1 month still to capture that winning picture.*



**all nations**  
BUSHWALKERS<sup>INC</sup>

## Change of Details

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

- change in address
- email address
- phone numbers

**email us at-** [club@anbwalkers.org.au](mailto:club@anbwalkers.org.au)

**To change your details on the website you need to make the alterations yourself.**

## **DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE**

**3 August 2014**

**SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO.....**

[jan.steven@bigpond.com](mailto:jan.steven@bigpond.com)

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



# WALK

## Experimental Farm Cottage, Parramatta Park and Lake Parramatta Circuit

30 March 2014

Grade 1

Leader: Julie Armstrong

We started the day with a very informative tour of EFC given by an enthusiastic volunteer. The cottage stands on the first land grant in Australia made in 1789 by Governor Phillip to farmer convict James Ruse (James Ruse Drive). By 1791 Ruse had successfully farmed the 30 acre site as an experiment in self-sufficiency proving that a new settler could feed and shelter his family with relatively little assistance to get started.

The Indian-style bungalow there today is thought to have been built in c1835 by Surgeon John Harris (Harris Park) who purchased the land from Ruse in 1793 for 40 Pounds. The National Trust of Australia purchased the property and officially opened the House as a museum in 1963. EFC was the first property purchased by The National Trust.

After completing the tour we proceeded to Parramatta Park for an early lunch/late morning tea adjacent to the Park Rose Garden that was donated by Mr & Mrs Rumsey and contains examples of many old roses from various countries, some dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.



**Experimental Farm Cottage**



**Late morning tea - photo Merrilyn Dearn**

We continued our day walking past Old Government House, the site of Parramatta Observatory and Boer War Memorial. 10 hectares of remnant Cumberland Plain vegetation remain as natural heritage in the Park.

Our walk then took us through the middle of the park and we reached the Dairy Precinct which is now the Park Ranger Headquarters. The Dairy Building is one of three eighteenth century buildings that survive in Australia along with Old Government House and Elizabeth Farm. All three are located in Parramatta.

Our last point of interest in the Park was to visit the Bat Colony, the Grey Headed Flying Fox, which is situated in the far north west of the Park close to Parramatta Leagues Club. The population of bats was counted as 7,000 in 2011.

Our last adventure for the day was to drive to Lake Parramatta which is in the Lake Parramatta Reserve. This 75 hectare bushland reserve, set aside for recreation, is only 2km from Parramatta CBD. The south eastern side of the reserve is bounded by James Ruse Drive, part of the Cumberland Highway.



**Lake Parramatta**

We walked the easy lake circuit of 4.2km encompassing all three tracks in the reserve, She-Oak, Banksia and Lake Circuit, which follow the lake and end at the dam. The water contained in the dam provided Parramatta's water supply until 1909.

The reserve and surrounds were originally home to the Burramattagal clan of the

Darug Aboriginal people prior to British settlement in 1788. Evidence still remains of their former occupation through the presence of shelter caves, hand stencils, campsites, tree scars and midden deposits.

Fauna surveys in 2011-12 identified approximately 70 native species including 44 birds, 12 frogs/reptiles and 12 mammals in the reserve. A number being listed as endangered or vulnerable.

A recovery cool drink was enjoyed at the Park Kiosk overlooking the lake. Thank you for making the day memorable to Fenella, Jan, Helen, Margaret, Virginia, Caroline, Peter and Merrilyn.

BURRAMATTA – PARRAMATTA – This place is where the river meets the saltwater. It's a place where eels lie down. The traditional clans of this area are Burramattaagal 'Burra' the eel (Parramatta area) and the Wallumattagal (Ryde area) as in 'Wallumai' the snapper fish of the Darug language group.

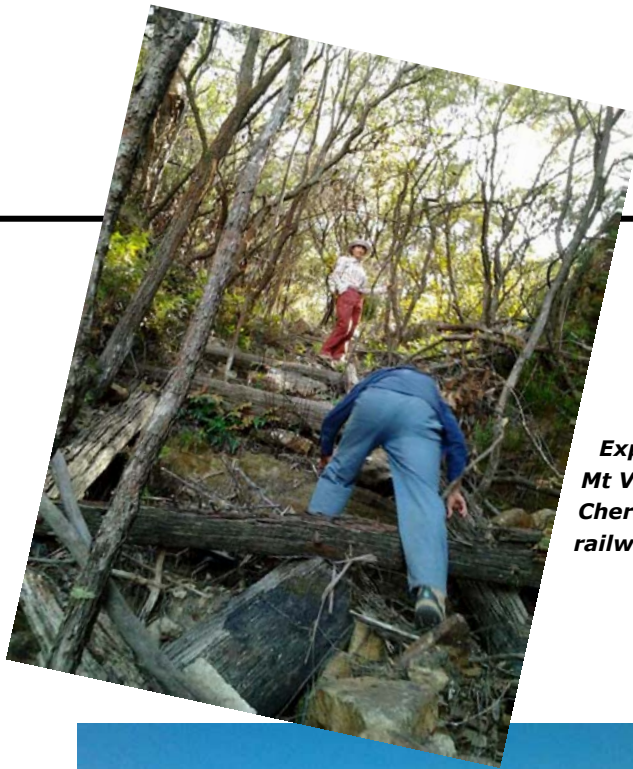
# Thursday SURVEYS

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For the last few months a group of members has been getting together irregularly and informally to do midweek walks. We've tended to go to places we'd not been to before, or by routes we hadn't yet perfected, and there's often been an element of adventure and intrepid exploration, often with an off-track element. And what fun we've had! We even came to call ourselves the Famous Five, although there were more than five of us in total and we walked in various combinations of participants, depending who was willing and available on the particular occasion.

More often than not a Thursday was chosen for these adventures, and recently we decided to expand and formalise the venture, by offering them as regular Club activities. They're to be known as 'Thursday Surveys', to emphasise their often exploratory nature, and the plan is to try to set up a monthly routine, targeting the second Thursday of each month. We're pretty sure there are other members out there who have the time, or can make it available, are fairly fit, and enjoy a bit of a less structured adventure than usual. Come along!

*Nick Collins*



*Exploring  
Mt Victoria's  
Chert Incline  
railway ruins.*



*Feet up after a cruisy harbourside survey*



*Intrepid Famous Five Donkey Mountain explorers,  
Wolgan Valley-Photo Charles Bowden*



*Atop the lesser visited Venus Tor in the Mt Hay range*

# WALK

## When tracks become creeks

6 April 2014

Grade 3

Leader: Charles Bowden

They say that 7 is a lucky number and so it was that a group of seven walkers set out optimistically on an over-cast day for the south-east section of the newly gazetted Dharawal National Park. The walk, a new one for the club I believe, mostly follows old survey tracks used at the turn of the last century when exploring for permanent sources of water for Sydney.



**Morning tea at Four Mile Creek**

The walk is also interesting from a botanical viewpoint as the terrain features 5 different species of banksia as well as numerous wildflowers. There is also an attractive lake in what was formerly a quarry used by the now-defunct North Cliff Colliery while the creeks offer some visually impressive water flows over pock-marked & fissured sandstone beds.

We soon found out why this area held some hope for water surveys as two large creeks, Four Mile and Stokes, have their sources in this area.



**Stokes Creek channel**



**Quarry Lake.**

As the weather progressively deteriorated, the tracks became progressively more waterlogged as they crossed extensive swampy heathland. By the end of the walk, the tracks had themselves long since become waterways in their own right and our feet were floating in our boots.



**Christmas Bells -  
Blandfordia nobilis**



**Heath Banksia -  
Banksia ericifolia - angle**



**Waterlogged Iluka Track**

Thanks to Bob, Julian, Vivienne, Terry, Hugh & Nick for cheerfully sloshing along and extra thanks to Nick for sharing his vehicle for the car shuffle.

# WALK

## Trails to the Nattai

4 May 2014

Leader: Charles Bowden

Grade 4

This turned out to be the first walk of winter because, in spite of the sunny conditions, we were chased by a chilly wind all day, finding temporary relief only in the Nattai River valley.

The walk takes in the Westbreak and Wonson trails in Mt Alexandra Reserve as well as a couple of lesser trails for added diversity. In addition there was a steep clamber down the slopes of Westbreak Mountain to the Nattai River, followed by several river crossings, some over logs, some over stones, some over water. Wombat tracks proved a useful means of negotiating the river banks and



**Nattai River crossing - walking over the log**



**Lunch at Nattai River ledge falls**

finding flat ground as any previous tracks have been washed away or are overgrown by a dense mixture of Trad (aka Wandering Jew) and stinging nettles.

The Nattai River itself is full of water due to the rainy autumn and we found several dwarf waterfalls flowing over large rock ledges, at

one of which we spent some time over lunch in the sun. There are also several large rockpools which would make attractive swimming holes in summer.

The lookout at Westbreak Mountain affords pleasant views over Nattai National Park and beyond as well as nearby farmland. Some in the group claimed to be able to make



**Ghost Fungus cluster -  
*Omphalotus nidiformis***



**Blue Prostanthera species**

**Parrot Pea -  
*Dillwynia phyllicoides***



**Hairy Fan Flower -  
*Scaevola ramosissima***

out several peaks in Blue Mountains National Park, the air being so clear.

The lookout off Wonson trail instead provides an interesting view across the Nattai gorge to the Boxvale Lookout and Boxvale Creek. It was hard to believe that, shrouded by the bush below, was the well-known track to Forty Foot Falls.

Thank you to Nick, Jacqui, Liam, Bob, Jasmin and visitor Sandra for joining me on an enjoyable outing, and extra thanks to Liam for helping out with the car shuffle.



**Relaxing under the overhang**

# FEATURE

## Maria Island Tasmania - Three Day Guided Walk

23 - 25 April 2014

Jennifer Shumack and Janice Besch

Grade 3

Jennifer and I met up a couple of times on the All Nations track, and it didn't take long for us to decide it would be fun to find a guided walk to take as a short break from our pretty hectic working lives. We rapidly narrowed our 'perfect short break' search to the Tongariro Trail in NZ and Maria Island, in good old Tassie.

**We weren't looking for too much of a challenge, we didn't want to spend too much money, and we only wanted to burn a few days of leave.** Maria Island won by a small margin – allowing us to take advantage of those unusual three days between Easter and Anzac Day this year and offering great value. Just over \$1k for transfers to the Island, all catering, day packs only and Barry, who turned out to be a knowledgeable young Tasmanian capable of singing ALL the words to Bohemian Rhapsody in perfect baritone while carrying a 20kg pack down a steep, stony descent.

### Day 1: North Island explorations

Tasmania turned on glorious weather for us, very little wind and lots of sun. **We were at our pickup spot by 7:30am and on the jetty at Tribunna for our ferry transfer by 9:00am.** There we found ourselves in the company of eight other women (men prefer a more adventurous life?) all of whom proved to be excellent company with interesting stories to tell.



It takes about 45 minutes to get to Darlington, the former penal settlement on Maria Island now occupied by National Parks and the start of many walks, bike rides and no doubt snorkelling and fishing trips in summer.



The water is crystal clear and there is a large marine reserve that provides plenty of protection for the sea life. To prove it, we were shepherded by leaping dolphins for part of our journey.

**You could do this walk unguided – plenty of camping sites and you can book rooms in the penal settlement via National Parks.** After exploring the convict buildings and making our first lunch (they provide the ingredients) we set off to explore the northern section of Maria.

The thing about Maria is there's lots of history to tell. Barry took his interpretive role seriously and we were soon learning more than we ever expected to about this tiny little settlement in the Southern Ocean.

The highlight of Day One was the opportunity to climb Bishop and Clark – the second highest peaks on the island at 650m above sea level. The highest – Mount Maria – requires a bit of abseiling and that didn't fit into our 'small challenge, not big challenge' specs.

Jennifer made it to the very top but not me. The last clamber up a short rock face got the better of me.

We returned to the camp in the dark, having sighted wombats, quolls, two kinds of wallaby and kangaroos. The ever present Cape Barron Geese escorted us in. Dinner was dips, Tasmanian wines and two hot dishes, followed by pavlova for the brave. The showers were cold and dark, but worth the effort and then after retiring in our bunks the wind and rain blew up – providing a fitting window rattling night with the ghosts of Darlington.



## Day 2: Darlington to the South End

No complaints about the catering – fresh fruit, muesli, bacon and eggs to wake up to, with lunch ingredients ready both days. Nor about the view from the bathroom!

The walk today was along 12 kilometres of beaches and marsupial lawns – we would have seen 40 wombats happily enjoying the autumn sunshine and at least as many kangaroos by the time we walked into camp that night. Along the way we learned more about the history of the island, explored the painted cliffs, and found out how one of the convict escapees swam to the mainland shackled to a ball and chain.

The island had, in its past, produced wine - port for the colonists and they didn't like the fact that the only thing that did well was pinot. How times have changed. Now there are no more vines and only the remnants of the production facilities.

It is also a rich marine environment so we enjoyed collecting a myriad of shells, to be left with other collections along the way. A dead seal washed ashore reminded us that there is a lot going on in the Southern Oceans.

At camp, we enjoyed an open fire and learned more about the amazing journeys experienced within our company.



Kim and Donna had ridden ponies till they dropped on the Mongolian plains, off in search of the Rainbow People and in the hands of locals who clearly didn't know how to find them. Libby and Marie were escaping the grief of Marie's widowhood. Dennis, our sea captain for the return journey, waded ashore with his four-legged skipper and hunkered down by the fire for the evening. And young Anita finally got to play with a couple of young men her own age – a game of 'throw the tent peg and make someone stretch towards where it lands'.

The night was cold, the crayfish and trevally were sweet, and the tents were very, very comfortable. (and the hot water bottles were very welcome on a cold Tassie night)

### Day 3: To Haunted Bay – then home



We woke to mist over water and mountains, the smoky scent of the log fire and the gentle sound of the bay waters lapping the stony shore. By now we were taking the hot breakfast service for granted and accepting that being looked after is a treat not to be denied.

After much fireside discussion the night before, we had decided to go over the third largest rise on the island (300 m above sea level) to Haunted Bay, so named because of the eerie calls of the nesting Fairy Penguins at night. We knew we wouldn't see or hear the penguins, but the name of the Bay was, as you can imagine, still irresistible.

The walk was around 12 ks, taking us to the east of the island and the surf for the first time, up and over the southern rise, back again, ending where Dennis would pick us up in his boat for the journey back to Tribunna and home.



Jennifer remembers a time when, with all walkers taking their own time, she was alone on the track: "Dappled sunlight, the sounds of the bush, the sounds of the ocean on either side of the isthmus and the rhythm of timelessness was extraordinary." I was taken by the way the island kept on giving new environments, this time surf and extraordinary pink cliffs down to the ocean at Haunted Bay.

The boat ride home was wild and windy. The good weather was disappearing on our departure and we ended the journey cold and wet, as you should be at some stage on any self respecting multi-day walk.

Highly recommended – DIY or full service.



## Welcome to 5 New Members

**Sandy Middleton**

**Erich Fraus**

**Sandra Parker**

**Mei Ysang**

**Deborah Mellor**



**See you in the bush**

## Walk Leader

### Beth Rohrlach



Beth has been a member of All Nations for approximately 12 years. She has had an adventurous spirit since she was young and has continued it throughout her life.

Part of her growing up was in the Blue Mountains with frequent family adventures to the Glenbrook Creek and swims in the Blue Pool, Jellybean Pool, the Duckhole and the Nepean River. As a young adult there were cycling holidays to Kyushu in Japan, France, Belgium and the Canadian Rockies.

Beth loves track walking and has walked on many in NSW, Tasmania, as well as some in Western Australia and New Zealand.

Favourite areas include Tasmania where she has been on walking and cycling trips several times and the South Island of New Zealand for skiing, walking, kayaking and cycling holidays. She loves wild places and considers Flinders Island in Bass Strait a really special place to visit, both for the walking and also for the wildlife and conservation on the island as is the walking and the native animals on Maria Island off the East Coast of Tasmania.

The Blue Mountains has many special places where Beth and her partner Christopher enjoy walking regularly. Beth has a strong passion for conservation and has helped over many years on a large number of field surveys in different states of Australia for different science organisations to help protect Australia's native wildlife. The surveys have included the platypus, many species of possum and gliders in Mountain Ash forests of Victoria, and Mountain brushtail possum. She has also help survey microbats, migratory shorebirds, woylie ( brushtailed bettong), green and golden bellfrogs, bandicoots, antechinus, native bushrats, eastern pygmy possums, echnidas, reptiles and migrating whales and most recently the critically endangered Regent honeyeater in the Capertee valley.



## Come and celebrate BASTILLE DAY - The French National Day in Sydney 12 July 2014

More details will be provided  
closer to the date.

*Please contact Beth on 0424 732 287  
if you have any queries.*

Beth has a background in science education and is currently working as part of a team on a Birds in Schools project for primary schools in the Sydney region for Birdlife Australia of which she is a member. She is also a member of the conservation education subcommittee of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. Later this year Beth and Christopher will be helping on a field survey for the mountain pygmy possum in the Kosciuszko National Park.

**Beth's walks will introduce people to nature and conservation. Beth and Christopher look forward to inspiring a new generation of people who are passionate about the outdoors through the family walks program of which they are the leaders in the Blue Mountains area.**

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



# THE PHOTO ALBUM

## Afghanistan Days

Photos Steve Bamford



*My next car (Lotto win pending).*



*Dubai Mall Aquarium*



*Abandoned building sites*

## Thursday Surveys

Photos Nick Collins



*Above Little Capertee Creek, west of Newnes*



*Clambering up the 'Goat Track' above Kedumba Valley*

# Experimental Farm Cottage, Parramatta Park and Lake Parramatta Circuit

Photos Merrilyn Dearn & Jan Steven



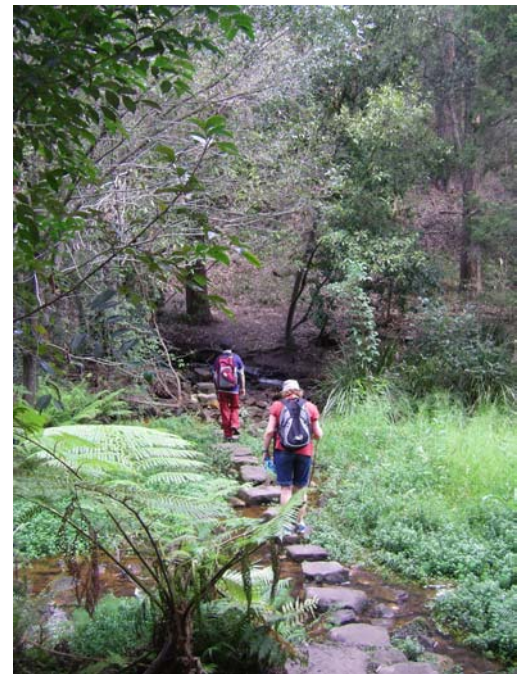
*Old Government House*



*Outside the Dairy*



*Peter with one of the dairy cows*



*Crossing the dam overflow*