



SUTHERLAND BUSHWALKERS

NEWSLETTER FOR THE SUTHERLAND BUSHWALKING CLUB

www.sutherlandbushwalkers.org.au P.O. Box 250 Sutherland NSW 1499

December 2015 NEWSLETTER



Blue Mtns NP

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Mt Victoria to Perry's Lookdown

Thurs 10th Sept 2015

Activity Organiser: Tim Gardner

Participants: Alan Webb, Kerry Clark, Allan Bunt, Margaret Rozea, Jackie and Will Becker

As I'm here to tell the tale, this killer walk did not do us all in, but some of us did feel more pain than others.

With an early start, four of us left Menai at 6.30 am. After a quick smooth drive to Blackheath, we met Tim and the other two at 8am, ahead of schedule. Car shuffling to and fro between Mt Victoria and Perry's Lookdown took 45 minutes, but we started walking at 9 am, still ahead of plan. Hey that's great - we'll be finished by 3pm!

The walk down to the beautiful Victoria Cascades and the tall Victoria Falls was relatively easy and it didn't seem steep or have too many of those things called steps! Past several more pretty and smaller waterfalls, through rain forest bush, down to the Grose River for our morning tea break. Was this the point of my demise? Known too well for my bad fast eating habits, I wolfed down a large apple!

Time was on Tim's mind, so "move on folks" was the order and very soon, "no we don't cross the river"--but, after a failed attempt to go up hill and our first encounter with the horrible Bush Lawyer vines, the track was found over the river! Now the pace really quickened along on a reasonably flat valley floor beside the river, which had large boulders and inviting pools. Through a fantastic grove of bright green grass trees with their tall black spike flower heads, past masses of Hardenbergia (the purple vine), also known as "Happy Wanderer." Did that term apply to us as well?

Why was I always falling further behind the pack, am I that unfit? Should I have done the Eagle Rock walk the day before? Or is that big apple not sitting well on the stomach? But Tim was on a mission to finish well before dark, so push on old fellow. About 11.30 some of the group started asking "when is lunch?"-- "soon" was the reply. We finally stopped at 1pm, in the majestic Blue Gum Forest. What a spot, overlooking the river with views up to those towering colourful orange cliffs. Oh, will the cliffs be as high on our side of this valley where we climb out?

Pain had started to set in for me, I didn't feel well either, couldn't eat lunch. Yuk, why did I put sweet chilli sauce on those ham sandwiches?

Drinking water was even becoming difficult, so I decided to plod on slowly and forgive the luxury of extra lunch time rest. Yes, this is comfortable walking at my pace, things are looking up, so I thought. On reaching the bottom of Perry's Lookdown track, one is met with a sign stating, "2-3 HOURS VERY STEEP ASCENT," Oh no, it's nearly 2 o'clock, we won't be out until 5. The track up began okay, nice and gentle, then those endless steps started. They truly took the wind out of my sails; no actually it was my lungs! Several National Parks guys were building great new steps, but after all, they are still steps. One nice ranger asked how I was going and after telling him he said "don't worry if we find you beside the track on our way out we can always call a rescue helicopter for you." Thanks a lot for boosting my morale. As I'm dragging myself up, one, two, three of the group "race" past, Tim next, he stops and does his dutiful leader stuff and consults with me, plus eggs me on. Next to arrive were Kerry and Alan, who both geared down to my pace. Was Kerry feeling the pain also?



The legs didn't want to move, the mind said do a dozen steps, but the body only let me do about six before yet another rest. Come on, keep pushing old chap, remember every step taken is one less you have to do. The goal, the summit looked near, but that hill and cliff tricked us several times. At stages, on all fours the progress was slower, but it did get me over the steepest upper cliff. Just over 2 hours, the car park was a very welcome sight. The body was shaking like mad, it must have been the cold 10 degrees, and no little 15km stroll would affect this hardened bush walker!

Now our nice leader tells us that the guide book suggests it's a very hard 8 hour walk or better still done as an overnight trip! Tim the time and motion man cracked us along in a mere 7 hours!

Back home after our 13 hour outing, relaxed and remarkably recovered, I could reflect on our great achievement, the great scenery, and how much I appreciated everyone keeping a watchful eye on my personal struggle. Several phone calls the next day to check on me, confirms what a great bunch of people I've met in the club.

By Allan Bunt



Hinchinbrook Island Qld

Thorsborne Trail

2015

Activity organiser: Lesley Salzmann

Participants: Jennifer Whaite, Paul Trudgeon, Ron Wiggers

One of the things on the impossibly long list of "Things I want to do" was to walk the Thorsborne Trail on Hinchinbrook Island. Hinchinbrook is the largest island National Park in Australia. 38 kms long, 3 to 7 day walk, depending on how energetic you are and whether you want to climb Mt Bowen, a ruddy great mountain sitting in the middle of the island. A marvellously uninhabited island with a limit of 40 walkers a day. (There was a resort there once, but, happily, it seems to have failed). A beautiful place, a true tropical island paradise. Of course, these island paradises always have their drawbacks. Hinchinbrook has two. The first is the heat. I was up there 10 years ago visiting a friend in winter. We went over to

Hinchinbrook for the day and I nearly died of heat. Not just hot, but hot, humid and horribly sticky. The other drawback is the crocodiles.

Then Lesley decided to walk the Thorsborne and I decided to go with her. Lesley is the perfect trip leader, as far as I am concerned. She walks almost as slowly as I do and she wobbles even more than I do when crossing creeks. And she would never suggest anything as daft as climbing Mt Bowen.

So I flew up to Queensland to Cardwell, where I was the only person in the town who wasn't wearing shorts and thongs. A sure sign of a southerner who has just escaped the winter cold. And Lesley, Paul, Ron and I got on a boat and went out to Hinchinbrook to get off in the middle of mangrove swamps to face the crocodile sign. (Mangroves are some of the world's most discouraging vegetation, even when not accompanied by crocodiles). We reminded ourselves that no bushwalker has ever been eaten by a croc while walking on Hinchinbrook, and set off.

The first day's walk was neither particularly long nor particularly hard. Just quite a bit harder than we expected. We all had a mental image of the walk being along lovely sandy beaches with a few headland crossings. Actually it was mainly through eucalypt forest and over boulders. Lots of boulders. More boulders than our group of older bushwalkers really liked. And we all said: "I didn't think it would be like this."

But the campsite was a lovely sandy area just off the beach, with a lagoon nearby for fresh water and metal bins for the second and less-mentioned Hinchinbrook pest – the rats. The rats are native Australian rats, so you can't object to their presence, but those little red eyes in the glow of the torch are a bit unnerving. Anyway we got water, cooked, put our food in the metal bins to keep it away from the rats and settled in for a good night's sleep.

You know those incredibly fierce, very brief, tropical downpours that you get in the tropics? Well we had one of those. Quite out of season. And it wasn't brief – it went on for hours. I had a borrowed tent and during one of my many periods of wakefulness (The ground has become a lot harder than it used to be when I was young and went camping. No doubt an effect of global warming.), I realised that the tent was leaking. Badly. After that, every time I woke up I mopped up the water that was pouring in. I was a lot better off than Ron, whose tent also leaked. He didn't wake up until the morning when all his gear was wet.

The next day was 10kms and 6 hours so we knew it wouldn't be easy. The worst bit was that the creeks were all swollen by the night's rain, so crossing them without getting our feet wet was a challenge, to which only Paul rose successfully.

That day we were inland, passing through mangrove swamps where we were attacked by the third hazard of Hinchinbrook – sandflies. They were very active sandflies. As we went through the steaming humid mangroves we all asked "Why are we doing this?" Some quite rough patches too. As we scrambled over rocks down a creek we all said "Gee, I'm glad we're not doing this in the opposite direction and having to go up here."

Paul's efforts to keep his feet dry were wasted when nearly at our campsite we came on one of the crocodile signs telling us not to go near the water right next to an orange route marker pointing us directly across the largest creek we had seen. All the rocks were under water so we just plunged in. Towards the further bank Lesley did ask "Anyone on crocodile watch?" Well no, we were all too busy trying not to slip on the underwater rocks. And we stood on the other side with our soaked feet we all said "Are we having fun yet?"

It was another lovely camp site. At every camp site there is a waterfall or a creek, delivering drinkable fresh water, which is a real bonus. Nothing like not having to carry water and being able to wash yourself at the end of the day. There was also another group of older walkers, coming the other way, who were obviously fitter than we were as some of them were going to climb Mt Bowen. We compared notes and they told us that we would have a REALLY hard day the next day and there was one point where they had come down a rock for about 15 meters with a rope attached and it was practically an abseil.

So it was with some trepidation that we set off the next day. Again the lovely beaches were conspicuously absent. We walked through eucalypt forest and we had to climb the highest point on the track. It was only 256 meters and there was a great view. The "abseil" was about 5 meters of easy climbing. It was nice to have the rope as there was a nasty drop but we decided we weren't too hopeless as walkers. Then as we sat and panted on the top this group of nice, young walkers who had been still having breakfast when we left, bounded gaily past us. And we all said "I'm getting too old for this."

And even if we found the "abseil" less than daunting, it was a tough day.

Another beautiful camp site and a really good swimming spot. More rats than ever. We all put our food in the rat-proof boxes. Well, except Ron, who had been keeping his in his pack in his tent. That turned out Ok – the rats didn't get to the food in his pack. However he had also taken out his breakfast food and put it next to his head. My tent was very close to Ron's and I had a very disturbed night. I kept being woken up by the squeaks and rustles of rats right next to me. Ron was woken up a lot too, but he wasn't woken up enough. The next morning he discovered half his breakfast had already been eaten. And so had enough of the tent to allow the rats to enter, which meant that the fact that it leaked badly didn't really matter anymore.

The next day was the easy one. It needed to be as we had to get to the point where we were picked up and taken back to the mainland by 12 o'clock. At last we were walking on the beaches with almost no boulders. We had no trouble getting to the pickup spot in time, but we all said "That was tougher than I expected. I won't be doing any long distance walks again."



Then the trip back to the mainland. On the boat and 10 minutes later it is all over. And as we got off we all said "Gee that was a great trip. We really had a good time, didn't we?"

The question is, of course, does bushwalking cause short term memory loss or does short term memory loss cause bushwalking?

But it WAS great.

By Jennifer Whaite



Larapinta Trail

Central Australia

6th – 18th April, 2015

Activity Organiser: Kay Rogers

**Participants: Jason, Isabelle, Helen, Gina, Don, Simon, Octavia, Steve, Patsy, Sheree, Janet, Jeannette
(Combined Sth Coast & Sutherland Clubs)**

I had spent weeks getting ready for this trip, making a pile of stuff I might need in the corner of the lounge room. Obviously 3 times what I can take. Some culling needed there. Drying meals and procrastinating about what I could eat that was small and light. Dividing meals into daily portions and making sure I was organised. The night before I was still going through stuff. Why was this so difficult?

At Alice Springs airport we were picked up and the trip to Red Bank Gorge was started with a few detours for our food drop at Glen Helen Homestead and to pick up two missing people from our party of 13. It was late afternoon when we got to Red Bank and had time to find a campsite and start dinner before it got dark.

It felt great to be in the outback and dingo's came scowring around the camp looking for food. There was meant to be a BBQ here but it turns out it was in the 4WD camping area 4km up the road, so we had a small fire and gathered in the day visitors shelter with tables and chairs to eat and celebrate Helen's birthday with lots of cake Isabelle had organised.

It would be too long to go through all 12 days 1 by 1 so I'll just do a highlight list.



Mt Sonder

The view from Mt Sonder was "Expansive" with left over cake for morning tea at the top. We could see the mountain range we had to follow disappear into the distance. Highest point at 1370m.

Swim in Red Bank gorge after Mt Sonder. Lots of fish and a beautiful waterhole. The stars!

Helen lost her food to a dingo during the night. 3 days'

worth gone. Bags look like they had been cut open and licked clean.

Lots of birds in the shrubs on the way to Rocky bar gap. The views up to Mt Sonder, amazing! The food hanging tree to prevent Dingo's taking our food (strange!).

Sunrise as we left Rocky bar hitting Mt Sonder. Spinifex spider webs glowing in the morning sunlight. The green grass and reeds amongst gumtrees at Finke River. Big contrast between the Desert and the lush river bead. The camping shed with Dingo proof cupboards and sleeping benches. Having a swim in a salty pool in the Finke River. It was a really hot afternoon. Magic sunset with all the outback colours. The stars!

Early start to Ormiston Gorge. Nice meandering walk around little hills covered in spinifex and grass seeds. Ice cream. Ormiston Gorge Waterhole. Big sandy beach and big deep swimming hole. We were picked up and taken to Glen Helen Station. Glen Helen gorge swimming hole was the biggest and great swimming. Lady with homemade harp letting the wind play it in the wind in the gorge. Shower. Restaurant dinner.

Next morning dropped off at Serpentine Dam to walk to Serpentine Gorge, great views from the ridge once we were on top. "Coutts Point" and the spectacular view up the valley. Serpentine Gorge waterhole although small felt the most spiritual of them all. Another camp shed. Segregation into snorers and non-snorers.

Early start and sun hitting the landscape made amazing patterns. Interesting rock formations, trig point, dolomite rocks creating different plants and landscape. Ellery Creek waterhole. Cool fresh water in waterhole. This is a spectacular water hole. We had platforms for tents to just sleep on. BBQ's and shade. Stars!

Beautiful morning. Big flat plain to cross. Went on forever. Ants, spiders, rocks, continuous up down and Bl###*#* Hot. It was a relief to get to rocky bar and could stop and find the little shade there was that kept moving. No one moved much till sun down. Left early to beat the heat. Country nicer than yesterday with some groves of gumtrees and river beds, spider webs glowing in the sun and glowing haze of grass seeds moving in the slight breeze. It's funny

how you really appreciate the simple things out here. Some bones. Shade at Hugh gorge and a relaxing afternoon. Great to give our feet a rest.



Left in dark as biggest day so far for walking. Got up Hugh gorge with sunrise happening as we got to the junction. Beautiful colour all around. Amazing scenery and then more amazing scenery as we travelled down a valley and then up onto Razorback Ridge. Stunning views. Rock hopping down river bed. Swim in Birthday waterhole was so needed clothes and all. Little frogs trying to sleep with you.

The biggest day. 5am start. Got 4km done in torch light. Up a mega hill that just got steeper and steeper but worth the effort for the views. Then it was views of valleys and mountains till after lunch when we were heading down. It finished along a pleasant creek bed with some shade from gum trees to finish at Stanley Chasm with it threatening to rain. Warm shower. Being clean! Stanley kiosk put on a great dinner for us. Nice having some conventional food.

Woke up next morning in the rain. We had time to go up Stanley Chasm before the bus took us to Alice.

Dim lights were blisters and sore feet. Heat during the day. Spinifex stabbings and ants.

Overall, an awesome trip and much appreciation to Kay for organising it.

By Jason Shanks (Sth Coast Bushwalkers)



Murray River Paddling

15-29th October 2015

Activity Organiser: Caryll Sefton

Participants: Kathie Stanley, Alan Webb & wife, plus NPA and Illawarra Ramblers members (14 in total)

On 18th October we met at Deniliquin Caravan Park with our kayaks for six days of paddling under the expert guidance of Caryll Sefton. We consisted of 12 paddlers and two drivers from Sutherland Bushwalkers, NPA and Illawarra Ramblers. SBC members being Caryll, Kathie Stanley, myself and my wife. Our first four days of paddling was on the Edward River which is an anabranch of the Murray River. An anabranch by definition is a river which departs from another river and returns some distance downstream. The Edward rises as a result of a bottle neck created in the Murray by the Cadell Fault which lifted the land about 15 metres, 40-60 thousand years ago. The uplift runs almost to Deniliquin. The Edward runs up the eastern side of the fault then turns west and rejoins the Murray after 383km. It's winding route travelling through giant Red Gum forests and farm land. The weather was fine and hot throughout the trip. Mornings started around 16 degrees reaching the high 20s and low 30s.

Our first day paddle was the longest at 30km in 33 degrees heat which hardened us up early. We all covered up with only our sun screened faces visible. The boats were transported up stream, unloaded then the cars returned to camp. Our two drivers then drove the paddlers back to the start. Some days the cars were taken to the end of the trip and the drivers would bring them back to the start. The river was about 25 metres wide with a six meter bank on the outside of each bend and flowing nicely, probably about 2km/hr around the many twists and turns. We dodged dead trees and stumps. Fallen trees meant ducking low or paddling hard to ride over those just

under the brown surface. Thankfully the water was quite warm as a few capsizes turned out to be a welcome relief. Along the way farmers have picnic shelters with chairs and tables which made some welcome lunch stops.

After three nights we drove down stream to relocate our camp to Moulamein, which claims to be the first town in the Riverina. On the edge of town the Edward River is joined by Billabong Creek which at 596km, according to a local (and Mr. Google), is the longest creek in the world, starting east of the Hume Highway. Here we started a two day paddle finishing at the tiny town of Kyalite. During the second day we turned into the Wakool River. Navigation became quite tricky and a GPS helped us through the many islands, billabongs and tributaries. We found that even anabranches have anabranches. The wildlife we encountered consisted mainly of kangaroos and sheep, and we also saw quite a few ospreys with nests high in the trees.

Day six found us driving into Victoria to the beautiful town of Cohuna. The caravan park is situated on Gunbower Island which is about 40km long running next to the Murray on one side and the anabranch Gunbower Creek winding along inland for over 100km on the southern side. Two 25km paddles saw us enjoying a narrower creek with low banks and swamp land which supported a lot of bird life. At our rest stops the flies nearly carried us off.



At this point most of us headed for home but Caryll and five others went on to Mildura for a couple more days around the Darling River junction.

A great trip, new friends and several good country pub dinners made for a most enjoyable 12 days.

By Alan Webb



Hatchers Hollow

Hatchers Hollow, Kowmung River

Kanangra-Boyd NP

7 - 9 November 2015

Activity Organiser: Steve Deards

**Participants: Col White, Margaret Rozea, Kay Rogers,
Bruce Franklin, Alan Webb, Shaune Walsh**

Hatchers Hollow is a large flat area on the southern bank of the Kowmung River. It is very amenable to camping, with clear running water from a rainforest stream nearby and an abundance of firewood. There are several walking routes into the area, but I chose the most straight forward and shortest route, although it was probably the longest drive. The area is visited regularly by other clubs, but I can't remember the Sutherland club ever going there.

We met at Sutherland at 7am and drove to the start of the walk near Mt Werong, south of Oberon. We started walking through medium scrub, following a compass bearing aiming at the descent ridge. The forest soon gave way to a tussocky swamp and then some thickish dry scrub until we reached the start of Irrae Gowar Ridge. The ridge leads more or less directly down to Pigmy Mt and then our campsite at Hatchers Hollow, 800m below. At first, walking down the ridge was easy enough, but it soon became a steep rocky rib which required careful foot placement so as not to dislodge the loose rocks or twist ankles. After a couple of hours of this, we reached Pigmy Mt, and after a steep scramble down to Redcliff Creek, we arrived at camp.

After setting up our tents and flies, we lit the camp fire and sat on the logs provided around the fire chatting and eating dinner. When it was nearly dark, some fire flies entertained us by flitting through the nearby shrubs. Unfortunately, showers put an end to the

campfire reverie.

On our second day, 4 of us decided to head upstream in Redcliff Creek in an attempt to reach the upper falls. The others decided to have a more restful day, and they explored the river and surrounds. The creek walkers, after having walked for nearly 2 hours and covering a little over a kilometre, decided that they weren't going to get near the upper falls after all and make it home in daylight, so they abandoned the attempt and just enjoyed the rainforest environment on the way back to camp.



On our last day, we decided to try another ridge for our return to the cars. The map indicated that this ridge was more gradual and hopefully wouldn't be as rocky as the one we descended. We started from camp at 7am, and after an initial steep climb and scrub bash up from the creek, the ridge gradient lessened and rocky patches were minimal. It was a good choice for our return. After reaching the top, we had a short rest amongst a nice colony of Flying Duck orchids, and then we had to renegotiate the thickish scrub and tussocky swamp back to the cars, arriving at just after noon. Afternoon tea was enjoyed at Mt Victoria.

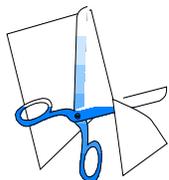
By Steve Deards

Welcome to new members:

Nerida and Vic Costi

Catherine O'Sullivan

Kerrie McLean



COMMITTEE ROOM SNIPPETS

President's Report



Club 45th Anniversary at Killalea 12/13 Sept

The NEW website is here.....

It is looking very different from before. The Club has control of content now so keep a watch as it is updated with new photos and new articles in the future.

I would like to thank the Committee for their input and learning new skills to manage the website, but also to all members for your patience while we were "under construction".

Message from Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)

<http://www.bom.gov.au>

"The November to January outlook indicates below-average rainfall is likely across parts of Victoria, NSW and the tropics. Warmer daytime temperatures are likely along much of the coast of southern and eastern Australia but central parts of the NT are likely to be cooler. The current outlook reflects a combination of a strong El Niño in the Pacific." In short -

Nov-Jan outlook shows above average temps, below average rainfall for much of NSW.

Be prepared pack plenty of water, take a hat &

sunscreen.

Another reminder to check Fire warnings for your proposed plan <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au>

VERY IMPORTANT reminder that the AGM is on 24 February 2016. Please come along on this date. The 2016 committee will be voted for, provided there are enough nominations. If you appreciate the Club and the efforts "to make it all happen" perhaps you would consider **giving** a little service back by joining the committee in 2016. The Club must have a committee to continue, so join us. A little effort and commitment contributes a lot.

Thank you all It has been an exciting year, looking forward to 2016

Vanessa Hicks

Activity Organisers:

Activity email alerts for alterations /cancellations please notify

Items for the next Newsletter:

Write an article about a bushwalk, bike ride, paddle or trip you have enjoyed for the next newsletter.

Please email newsletter items and a couple of photos to your editor,
