



## NEWSLETTER

December 2022

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This quarter has finally seen some improvements in the weather and although there are still plenty of muddy sections along the tracks, the creeks, waterfalls and pools are spectacular at the moment.

The bush has been full of beautiful wildflowers with the waratahs in abundance. Recently some members have been lucky to see some of the koalas that have been reported in Heathcote NP.

It has been good to see some club interstate multi-day walks happening again in the Whitsundays Qld and the Heysen Trail SA and a bike ride in the ACT.

It's membership renewal time and as our club is in a good financial state, the fee for existing members will remain at \$10. With the reducing number of members requesting the printed and posted quarterly program and newsletter, the committee has decided to no longer subsidise the cost and there will be an additional fee of \$25 for the print + post option for the year.

Membership renewal has now gone online, removing the previous requirement to fill in a form and post it. Thanks go to Ken Newman and Tracy Cleary for developing and testing this much needed improvement.

Our club Facebook group continues to be a good way to see photos from our regular activities and thanks go to the contributors.

Our volunteer trackwork in our new high-vis shirts has finished for another year, which has seen a

return to all our tracks for a maintenance trim to keep them in top condition. We look forward to starting a new track after the summer break.

Early next year we will be having our AGM and some of the current committee will be standing down, so we are looking for some members to step up and take on a committee position to help the club function and continue to be a success. Get in contact with myself or a committee member if you are interested.

I look forward to catching up with many of you at our free Christmas Breakfast at Wattle Forest in the Royal National Park on 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec.

*Shaune Walsh*

President



## Kiama Coastal Walk - 14 September 2022

Participants were Heather and John Hughes, Lexia Duncan, John Cummings, Julie and Bede Smythe led by Irene and Barry Mann.

A glorious day, mostly sunshine with a slight cool breeze from the south. This walk has no shade, so it can be too hot in summer months.

We met at Loves Bay, at the end of Elanora Rd. Kiama where the walk starts. It then follows the cliffline to Werri Lagoon. The lagoon was checked earlier in the day to ensure a dry crossing could be made. The walk was created in the time when Bob Carr was premier. An easement was arranged with local farmers to enable a pathway to be fenced off from the farms. It is a grassy track good for a leisurely walk and used a lot by locals for exercise.

The track had dried out in the 3 weeks since we checked it last, but there were still some wet/muddy bits requiring care. We had morning tea on the move, with a brief stop at the 4km mark. Down at Werri Lagoon, one of our walkers found a set of Audi keys and while we were having discussions as what to do with them, we saw an anxious young lady searching for something along the track! She was, needless to say, very relieved.

After the lagoon, it is a 2km walk along the pathway to the Gerringong Bowling Club. They have a great offer, have a lunch there after walking the track and they will provide transport back to the start of the walk! This saves one having to walk back or arranging a car swap. So, a pleasant lunch/drink followed, then a nice ride back to Loves Bay.

At the end, there were various measurements of the walk, ranging from 7km through to 8.5km, with an average of 11,500 steps.

Barry & Irene Mann



*Talking with a local dog walker (in the yellow shirt)*

## Royal National Park- Bungoona, Bridle Track, Robertson Knoll, Wattle Forest - 17 October 2022

Vicky Turner leader followed by Margaret, Beatrice & Vanessa

A small group in the rain walking with a purpose. That purpose being "haven't done this in a while" walk but a pleasant surprise, it's Spring!

There were waratahs, grevilleas, boronia, bush peas and bearded orchids just to name a few. It was the most uplifting walk I have done in recent time and the rain was not a problem.

The track did have mud patches, some deep. Ask Beatrice how deep and yellow the mud was up her boot but who cared as the flora just held our attention.

Good clear path on the Uloola track credit to SBC.

Vicky did a wonderful job planning and leading. I look forward to more of her trips out.

One feels so much better after time out in the bush.

*Vanessa Hicks*



## Revesby Beach to Salt Pan Creek Kayak

29 August 2022

As we unloaded kayaks and readied them for launch on the narrow strip of sand at Revesby Beach, the fog sat heavily on the Georges River, the span of Alford's Point Bridge barely visible. Just after 8.30am with thermos' loaded, there were only thin trails of mist remaining with a glassy stretch of water to entice us on our paddle to Salt Pan Creek. Alan led our party of five (Peter, Deb, Deirdre and Robin) as we kayaked downstream against the incoming tide.

Although I had crossed it countless times, I marked a 'first' by paddling underneath the imposing Alford's Point Bridge, appreciating a quite different

perspective. Just beyond the bridge, a tent pitched at the water's edge could have been an idyllic overnight camping spot but was more likely someone's 'home' close to the convenience of suburbia, nestled in the piles of river detritus to be inconspicuous from the road above. At this point, too, the bush reached down to the river's edge and urban structures were unseen on the steep-sided banks.

The warmth of the sun and the work of paddling were now necessitating the removal of a layer of clothing. The group easily found the wide entrance to Salt Pan Creek and then dawdled along under the Henry Lawson Drive bridge, following the popular board walk.

As I rounded a bend at the head of the group there were shouts from the shore at the same time as I caught sight of several fixed fishing lines stretching directly across my line of sight. I employed my (rarely utilized) rapid braking skills and sent a warning to those following me. Remarkably, we were able to avoid becoming entangled in the lines.

The inlet now narrowed and appeared more worthy of its 'creek' title. The mangroves squeezed us from both sides requiring that we paddle in single file. I was using my paddle to push, both through the water and the mangrove branches, keeping it vertical to avoid being dragged out of my kayak. I caught a glimpse of a large spider clinging to the rim of my hat, joyriding upstream from its home in the mangrove forest.

I quickly took care of the spider and caught up to Alan who was now paddling with determination towards the source of the traffic noise. Fortunately, as we reached the low level M5 bridge the mangroves retreated and gave us room to turn our kayaks around, having reached our arbitrary destination.

The paddle back down the creek became an urgent quest for a place to beach for morning tea. Several sites were considered but dismissed as too muddy, shady or malodorous. The only remaining option was a return to the camper's beach and a later than usual mid-paddle stop. We beached the kayaks just past the campsite to avoid intruding and settled on a log, lizard-like in the sun.

Some went in search of privacy for a comfort stop and others reached into kayaks for the thermos and rock cakes. We lingered too long over hot tea and travel chat and followed up with a short paddle

under now cloudy skies back under the big bridge to our waiting cars at the beach. Our GPS recorded 13km in total.

*Robin Gordon*



### Feathered Friends

On a warm August day a group of walkers led by David Beck made their way towards Fortress Ridge Lookout in the Blue Mountains National Park.

A "ky-or-ark" was heard coming from the Blue Gum alongside the track, the rusty hinge call of the Gang-gang cockatoo. Heads turned upward and eyes located the group of birds looking at as looking for them! Mostly male, the birds were grey in colour with lighter scalloping, a red head and red crest. Needless to say it was smiles all round and the cameras were out to record this wonderful highlight of the natural world.

The Gang-gang cockatoo (*Callocephalon fimbriatum*) is endemic to coastal regions of South-eastern Australia preferring the high country including the Greater Blue Mountains Heritage Area. Due to loss of habitat through land clearing it is classified as vulnerable in NSW and has protection as a threatened species. Unlike most cockatoos, Gang-gangs nest in young, solid trees using their strong beak to excavate nesting cavities.

The name Gang-gang is said to come from a NSW Aboriginal language. The meaning is unclear, however, cockatoos are central to storyline and traditional ecological aboriginal knowledge.



*Anne Brownlee*

## Solitary Islands Walk

8th to 11th October 2022

Walk organiser - Gina. Participants - Sheree, Denise, Lou, Jennifer and Robert



The Solitary Islands Walk is a 4 day, 60 kilometre walk along the Coffs Coast from Red Rock to Sawtell. It runs along a series of lengthy, deserted beaches, so there is a lot of beach walking and only the occasional climb to a headland. The walk is very well signposted and the track, where it leaves the beach, is well made. Each day ends conveniently at a Caravan Park.

However, in school holidays bookings would need to be made well ahead as this is a popular holiday area. Robert volunteered to be our support vehicle so we found an Airbnb at Arrawarah which was much more comfortable and turned the walk into a series of day walks.

The first day Red Rock to Woolgoolga was almost all beach walking. On Woolgoolga beach we saw the bones of the Buster, a nineteenth century wreck. Stopping for lunch on a headland we were rewarded not only with a beautiful view but also the sight of 4 or 5 adult whales and a couple of juveniles happily playing.

The second day took us to Moonee Beach via Look at Me Headland with its large colony of Eastern Grey kangaroos. Beach walking means there are many spots where water from a nearby creek cuts across the sand. Most of these streams presented no problem. There was just the occasional place where most of us took off our shoes rather than get them wet. The only real water crossing is Moonee Creek at the end of Moonee Beach. We arrived there at low tide and waded over a sandy bottomed creek through water that just came over our knees.

On the third day when we started our day's walk on the headland beyond Moonee Creek we looked back to see that the sand we had previously walked

over had disappeared under water. Crossing at that time would have involved carrying our packs on our heads. Moonee Creek should definitely be crossed at low tide.

The third day between Moonee Beach and Park Beach the walk was less beach walking with a long stretch of headland and rainforest. It was also the only section of the track where the track was not beautifully maintained and signposted. Also the only day when it rained. The wildlife excitement of the day came when we passed a pair of diamond pythons enthusiastically mating.



Apparently, the wet weather has resulted in a lot more snakes than usual around the Coffs area.

Day 4 from Park Beach to Sawtell is the shortest day. We passed by Coffs Harbour. For three days we had walked along empty beaches with only occasional clusters of buildings. Coffs Foreshore Park, historic jetty and areas of construction were a contrast.



Two more beaches and a railway bridge, then we stood on the final headland looking south to another empty, endless beach, feeling the usual satisfaction of having finished a long walk.

Jennifer Whaite

## Como Heritage Walk

3rd November 2022

This walk ended up having a bit of everything from street walking, bush track, river views, uphill then down hill, "just around the next corner" all on a perfect spring day.

Starting at the Como Pleasure Grounds following a map and leaders knowledge nine of us set off to explore Como suburb.

This small suburb has so much to offer in a small area with beautiful views across Georges River and Woronora River, the reserves, lovely houses and gardens, rail history and Henry Lawson fame.

The self guided trail is about 5 kms long which took us 4 hours because we were interested in everything. It is a very hilly area so some streets were a slow grind up. You need to be prepared to exercise.

Well done to council who have placed interpretive sign boards along the way which explained the interest of this walk.

Lunch back at Pleasure Grounds in the great outdoors with a view, just wonderful. Thank you Heather.

*Vanessa Hicks*

## Urban Walk Kiama

Sat 5 November 2022

We had 8 walkers in total – Kerry Gilsean, Alayne Michel, Catherine Carmichael, Leonie Bell, Wendy Raynor and Warren Mizon, led by Irene and Barry Mann.



It was a great day weatherwise, a cool breeze, heaps of sunshine and a modest 21-22 degrees. A welcome contrast to past wet expeditions.

The 5 ladies all arrived on the 8:01 train from Sutherland, arriving at Kiama 9:45. Warren and the leaders drove to the station where we all met. At 10:00 we set off down to Surf Beach then around the oval and up the headland to the blowhole. Alas, the blowhole was not blowing much, but we did see one or two efforts.

Then we walked around the "harbour" or the "basin", past our local fish shop and up to Terralong Street, past our historic Post Office (1878...this was the second post office, and is heritage listed) and up to the host of coffee shops. The terraces in Collins St were a convenient stop for several of us to visit the Pines for a cool and tasty locally made gelato.

A little hill took us up and over to the south end of Bombo Beach, and we traversed the highway bridge with cars, trucks and various other vehicles zooming past at 100kph. Very noisy and unpleasant. Once over the bridge, there is a pathway which doubles back and crosses beneath the freeway, leading to the Spring Creek Wetlands (and the cemetery).

In the Spring Creek wetlands there is a bird hide, where we rested in the peace and quiet, shattered only by screeching bats. A banana or a drink of water were downed before we tackled our first serious hill up Jamberoo Rd, under the freeway, and up to the Leisure Centre (2 indoor pools, 3 ovals, netball courts, fire & ambulance station) in a disused quarry. Then up a few stairs past a monster fig, and finally up the top of the hill. Next a short 1km "undulating" walk to the Manns for a BYO lunch and sit down tea/coffee, toilet break and a general relax. At this point, my wrist fitbit advised we had done 9km.

We then split, some electing to drive down to the Bonaira Native Gardens, others walking down a very steep incline, past Kiama's water tanks and various other secret access ways, past the high school, then meeting up in the Gardens. A welcome shady native bushland left untouched from the earliest of days.

Finally, we had time left for a brief drive to the Little Blowhole, which was in fact blowing, then a return to the station in time for the 2:55 train back to Sutherland. The total distance was a little disputed, but the general feeling was 12km for the day.



## A Taste of the Blue Mountains

15 November 2022

An early start from the Shire for most saw us arrive at Hat Hill, just outside of Blackheath, about 9AM. A cool wind along with overcast skies made for good conditions to walk.

The nine of us, Deb, John, Heather, Ross, Robin, Janice, Peter, Vicky and Ken enjoyed the small climb to look at views across the Grose Valley. It was a tad damp for the walk back down to the cars. Not surprising given the weather this year!

A brief timeline on Kiama:

- 1820 White settlers came to cut /ship cedar trees
- 1826 Site reserved for town
- 1841 First Post Office, then later a Magistrates Court
- 1850 Birthplace of dairy industry, shipping dairy products to Sydney
- 1855 Paddle wheeler begins regular twice weekly service to Sydney
- 1870 Blue metal industry commenced, used in building Sydney rail and tram lines
- 1878 Current basin is built to create a sheltered harbour
- 1881 Cheese factory built
- 1887 Lighthouse built
- 1893 Railway erected, connecting Kiama to Sydney by train.
- 2022 Over 20 coffee shops exist serving coffee, ice cream and snacks.

*Barry Mann*

### Vale John Rothwell

I have just learned that past club member John Rothwell died a couple of weeks ago.

John, Charlie Christensen and I walked together for years and were known as The Three Rusty Musketeers, which I think referred to our youthful good looks and energy. Then again, perhaps not!

Pete Guest



From Hat Hill we drove to Centennial Glen, for quite a different walk along a number of climbing walls. Only a few kilometres, but beautiful views of the Megalong Valley, waterfalls, glens, rock climbers and morning tea made it all worthwhile.

Onward to walk 3, which was a short downhill to Mermaid Falls and Mermaid Cave and back via the road. Another very pretty walk, with a couple of small creek crossings to add to the "Taste".

A short drive down to the Megalong Valley Tearooms for a very nice lunch followed. No complaints, good food and service.

Our last walk was one that many members will have done, from Echo Point to the 3 Sisters. Epic views across to Mt Solitary, Ruined Castle and of course the 3 sisters.



*Mermaid Falls, a scene from Mad Max was filmed here!*



*Ken Newman*

## Pygmy Possum Vacancies

Did you know the club is running a second week at Pygmy Possum Lodge, Charlotte Pass, next February? There are still a couple of vacancies to fill the lodge. See the latest program for details.



A warm welcome to our new members

**Geoff Stibbs**

**Lien Buu**

**George Krombas**

**Mario Sherrie**

**Carole Bowyer**

**Diana Buckingham**

**Hobden Clifford**

We look forward to seeing you out on the track, on the water or on the road soon!

## Membership Renewals

Look out for the e-mail from the club in the very near future with the link to the members page where you can use an online form to renew your membership. This is a new initiative for the club and comes after several member's requests.



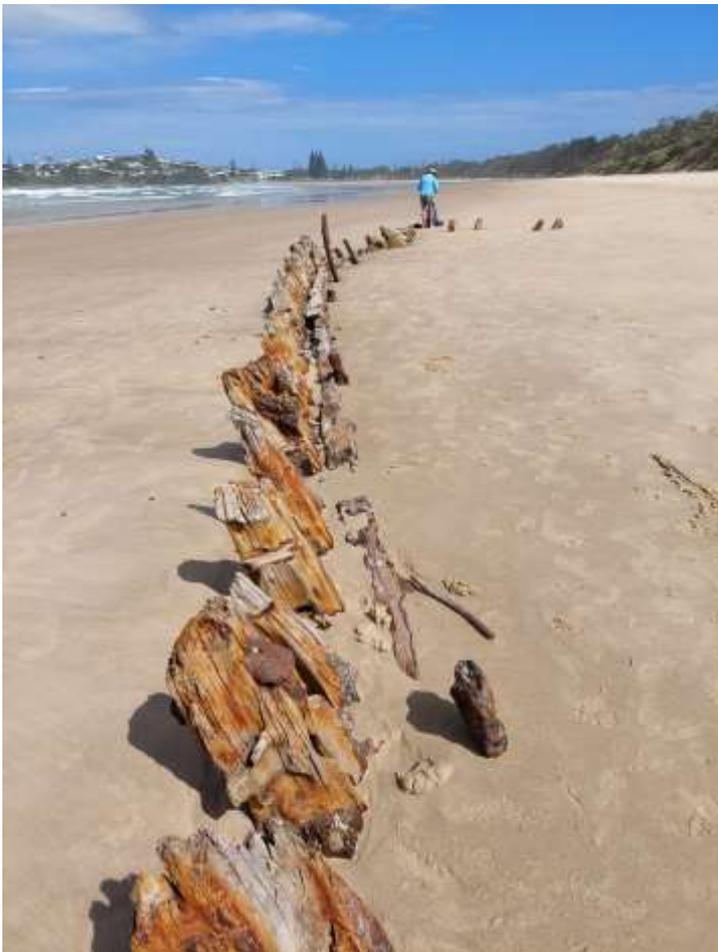
*Solitary Islands walk*



*Wouldn't be the spring without a Waratah*



*Southern Boobook RNP*



*Solitary Island Walk*



*Kanangra Walls*