



## NEWSLETTER

June 2023

### President's Ponderings

Another AGM has passed, and we have some new faces joining our committee. My thanks go to everyone who has volunteered to fill positions and welcome aboard! I certainly have some big walking boots to try and fill in my new role.

It has been just under 6 years since Deb and I joined our club, and it soon became one of the best decisions we ever made. Six years pales in comparison to a number of our members who have been with the club for over 30 years!

That time has passed quickly, and the number of adventures we have had, and hope to have, with the club are countless. We have had trips to Charlotte Pass, the Kimberleys, Mount Wilson, Lake Conjola, the Warrumbungles among others, and have trips planned for Western Australia's Pilbara and of course to Pygmy Possum to look forward to. Of course, that doesn't include all the great walks that we do in our beloved RNP, the Blue Mountains and all places adjacent to Sydney.

Why am I writing about this? Well, I was challenged the other day by a person who I met on a solo walk. I mentioned I was a member of the Sutherland Bushwalkers and invited her to check us out on our website. Her response was, and I quote, "I would never walk with a club! Why would I?"

I thought about that for about half a nanosecond and listed amongst others:

- the social aspect;
- safety in numbers;
- variety of walks, cycles and kayaking;
- broadening horizons and discovering new places, including overseas;
- and most importantly the friendships you make.

I'd like to say that she whipped out her phone and joined on the spot, but I would be lying. However, she did say that she would look us up!

I must say that I have experienced all of the above in my 6 short years, and I hope that you have too. I would love to hear why you enjoy being a part of the club. Look for a post on our Facebook Page, or just e-mail me. We are very lucky to have such an inclusive and active club.

Our next program is available on our website, and as usual has a wide range of activities to choose from.

I hope to see you out on the track sometime soon.

*Ken Newman*

### Bees and Beekeeping April Guest Speaker - Stef Press

Thanks to Stef for sharing her knowledge and experience in a very interesting and informative talk. Stef is a member of Illawarra Beekeepers and she keeps both honeybees and stingless native bees. She covered a comprehensive range of topics including the history of beekeeping, the range of products obtained from the hive, queen raising, the importance of bees as pollinators, life cycle of bees, tips for a bee-friendly garden, communication via the 'waggle dance', the spread and devastating effects of varroa mite, stingless native bees and much more.



### Did you know?

- Bees were kept in pottery vessels and woven straw baskets in Egypt over 10,000 years ago.
- Bee suits are white or yellow as they are non-threatening to bees. Black or brown suits enrage bees as they look like bears or other predators coming to steal honey.
- Worker bees do a 'waggle dance' (figure of 8 dance) to communicate the direction and distance to good sources of nectar and pollen.
- Sentinel hives are closely monitored honeybee colonies used for early detection of diseases and pests, including varroa mite.



Stef with one of her beehives.

Stef highlighted the importance of honey bees as pollinators with a quote often attributed to Albert Einstein...

*"If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would have only four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man."*

Regardless of the accuracy of this statement, there is no doubt that we should be concerned about any threats to the survival of bees!

*Heather Hughes*

### **Tasmanian Overland Track Adventure March 2023**

It was a cold and dark morning when the eight adventurers were picked up at our Launceston hotel and driven to Ronny's Creek, the start of the famed Overland Track. Excited at the prospect of the walk, we hoisted our large packs onto our backs and started our first steps on the boardwalk, (which now makes up about 60% of the track) carrying everything we would need for the next 6 days.

#### **Day 1 (13 km): Ronny Creek to Waterfall Hut.**

Climbing up Marion's Lookout past pretty lakes and tarns was TOUGH but the view from the Cradle Plateau, over Cradle Mountain and Dove Lake made it worthwhile! Then we had a long trek across open land with the boardwalk stretching far into the

horizon through alpine plains and gradually descending to Waterfall Hut, our resting place for the night.

#### **Day 2 (13.5 km): Waterfall Hut to Windermere.**

We loved the new hut with its triple glazed windows and inviting large dormitories but left it enthusiastically as we started on the less strenuous walk over alpine heathlands, lakes and tarns. Although the walk was fairly exposed and above 1000 m in elevation, we warmed up quickly. At the junction to Lake Wills, we happily dropped our backpacks and walked towards the beautiful, peaceful lake with its stunning waterfall. Back on the main track again, we covered the next few km and delighted to find the brand new hut had solar powered fans in the long drop loos to dispel any nasty smells!!!

#### **Day 3 (20 km): Windermere to Pelion Hut.**

We awoke to frost on the ground! Brrrr! But we soon warmed up crossing the button grass plains and meandered through spectacular myrtle-beech rainforests and eucalypt forests under sunny, blue skies. After we arrived at Pelion Hut, we explored the Old Pelion Hut built in 1917 and the old copper mine below, part of the fascinating history of the track.

#### **Day 4 (20 km): Pelion Hut to Kia Ora Hut.**

Our backpacks in theory were meant to be lighter at this stage, after we had eaten half our food - but each morning, they actually seemed to be getting heavier, as we became more tired! Today was full of rainforest and mountain summits, and we seemed to spend the first half going up, up and up, and the second half of the day going down, down, down! At Pelion Gap, an exposed alpine plateau, we chose to leave our large packs and scale the steep, rocky side of Mt Pelion East. The view was spectacular, and we were so happy that the clear blue skies allowed us to see the massive panorama of mountain ranges. Back down to the plateau, we collected our packs and made the gradual descent across button grass plains and eucalypt forest to Kia Ora Hut.

#### **Day 5 (17 km): Kia Ora Hut to Windy Ridge.**

The track continued through rainforest, past the Du Cane hut built in 1910. Then we walked through King Billy pine, sassafras and myrtle forests before we explored the three spectacular waterfalls as side trips carrying only our day packs. The track went up, up and up to Du Cane Gap (1042 m) through wet sclerophyll forest until we finally reached the Bert Nichols (Windy Ridge) Hut with dramatic views of the Du Cane Range as its backdrop. Tonight, some of us slept in our tents and enjoyed the darkness and quiet of the Tasmanian bush, only to be woken by the dawn chorus of the birds the next day!

**Day 6 (11 km): Windy Ridge to Narcissus Hut.**  
 We packed up our tents and set out on the last day of our walk which was a gradual, easy descent in the Narcissus Valley through eucalypt forest and across button grass plains. After crossing the swinging bridge, we arrived at Narcissus Hut early, so we had several hours to fill in before catching the afternoon ferry back to Lake St Clair. So we enjoyed resting, having lunch and exploring the riverside walks. The ferry took us back to Lake St Clair where our bus driver picked us up and drove back to Launceston. We shared a celebratory delicious dinner at the Seafront and walked in rain for the first time since we arrived in Tasmania!

A special thank you to David Beck for organising this amazing and unique walk - something we will never forget!



The Overland Track Participants

*Deirdre Bowie*

### Namadgi National Park 3 to 6 May 2023

Shaune (leader), Anne, Beatrice, Cheryl, Finlay, Gill, Greg, Helena, Judy, Kerrie, Leanne, Lesley, Lexie, Peter, Phil E, Phil M, Vanessa and Vilma

Namadgi National Park is a short drive south of Canberra and, according to Parks ACT, it contains hundreds of kilometres of walking tracks. This was a great opportunity to explore some of those walks and enjoy the niceties of car camping in a relaxed setting.

The site Shaune organised for our three-night stay, was at the Honeysuckle Campground. It was a good fit for our group, with the majority opting for tents and six of us using either a camper trailer or camper van.

The first afternoon (Wednesday), was very relaxed, with most taking a stroll to the remnants of the

nearby Honeysuckle tracking station. Honeysuckle was the site of a huge dish-shaped tracking antenna, which was used in July 1969 to transmit pictures and audio of Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon.

A shelter shed at the campground, with a fire pit undercover, provided a welcome refuge as rain settled on our camp at sunset on the first night.



View to Mt Tennent from Booroomba Rocks

Fortunately, Thursday morning was fine, although it was cold with frost on the ground and ice on the tents. A welcome 9.00am start saw the eighteen of us head off on the Booroomba Rocks walk. This was an out-and-back walk of about 12.5 km from the campground. It was a relatively easy walk. The views from Booroomba Rocks were fantastic. There was a choice of three viewing points in the area - and most visited the three. The views, particularly to the north to Canberra and beyond, made the walk well worth it.



Mt Tennent fire tower

Friday started with another frosty morning and we departed by car for the Namadgi Visitor Centre, where we would leave the cars for our walk (another out-and-back on track) to Mount Tennent. This walk was more challenging than the previous day's walk and, while it was much the same distance as the Booroomba Rocks walk, the ascent and descent were each about 750 m compared with the previous day's 400 m.



At Cypress Pine Lookout

The group split in two, with some opting for a shorter walk to Cypress Pine Lookout (about 5 km return) and the remainder going the longer distance on the same track that takes in the lookout.

After Cypress Pine Lookout the track rises steeply to Mt Tennent where there are commanding views, including to Mount Bimberi (1,911 m) to the south west. The walk also includes the first 4 km of the 650 km long Australian Alps Walking Track, which starts at the Namadgi Visitor Centre.

Following the completion of the walks on both Thursday and Friday we enjoyed a happy hour, meal and socialising around a steel-sided fire pit that provided some warmth from what was another cold night.

We departed the campground on Saturday morning after a very enjoyable three night's stay. Thanks to Shaune and Beatrice for organising and leading two great days of walking in a beautiful area that is easily accessible from Sydney.

*Phil Meade*

## Royal National Park: A to Z Wednesday 19 April 2023

Heathcote to Heathcote via Goondera Dam, Goondera Brook, Kangaroo Creek, Karloo Pool & crossing Heathcote Brook on our way out.

Thank you to Tony Larkin for a fabulous walk exploring this little-known section of the Royal National Park. Tony described the walk as 'A fairly solid day, with slow going on a scrubby creek. Come prepared for wet feet.' The walk lived up to Tony's description.



One of numerous creek crossings, this one was on Goondera Brook.

After leaving Heathcote Station, we quickly arrived at the first of the 'scrubby' sections as we headed on an overgrown, almost lost track to Goondera Dam. This is a little-known railway dam on the eastern side of the railway line at Heathcote. The hike down Goondera Brook was almost entirely 'scrubby' before finally reaching Kangaroo Creek not too far from Karloo Pool, where many of the walkers had a cold but well earned swim.



A highlight of the day was the conga line of butt scooting down the rocks behind Goondera Dam.

*Annette Mathews*

## Dunns Swamp car camp 21-24 March 27, 2023

Leader - Alan Webb + 14 others

If you like tent or caravan camping, wildlife, walking, swimming, kayaking, fishing and social chat here is a trip with it all.



Kayaking on Cudgegong River

The drive to the Greater Blue Mountains does take a while because of variant speed zones and the road repairs from disastrous weather events, but the views along the way through the Blue Mountains are superb. Stop at Kandos for lunch and a local pie, walk around this old town and read its history of cement works that even helped build the Harbour Bridge. Then onto Wollemi National Park and Dunns Swamp through sandstone pagodas and woodlands.



Sandstone pagodas

We camped on a waterway created by a weir on the Cudgegong River. It had remarkable rock features with rock art and walking trails which went around & over these sandstone monuments. Setting up camp was easy on the flat hard sandy ground, close to the car with a view of the water.

Our daily routine was an early morning swim, then off on a walk, back by lunch and another swim, relax if you like then get ready for a campfire and social happy hour. Lots of members brought and shared their kayaks to explore the waterways, led by Alan to surprising gems upstream. We found a hidden hermit's house with musical instruments inside and more Aboriginal art off track.



'Long Cave' on the walk to the dam wall



Mud-brick house built into the side of a pagoda

There was a plan for the evening, although two nights had thunderstorms with heavy rain & hail. You could still talk to your next door neighbour from your tent though. The last night was happy hour and a campfire, even in the rain, to finish off a great few days. Fun and laughs the whole time, great company, such nice people to be away with.

Did I mention the mud upstream? That's another story! Thanks Alan, much appreciated and look forward to this annual (I hope) event.

Report: *Vanessa Hicks*  
Photos: *Alan Webb*



Beautiful lake reflections



Relaxing back at camp



Handprints on the walk to the Aboriginal art gallery

We did not have many starters for this walk. Unfortunately, it was a long weekend for those in Canberra, so all accommodation, cabins and campsites were booked out in Huskisson and surrounds. For those planning an overnight stay, it was impossible. A further prospective walker cancelled due to no lift down from Sutherland being available. So.....

There were only 2 starters!....Warren Mizon and Barry Mann. This made the trip "not an official SBC walk", which requires 3 attendees. Nevertheless, Warren and I resolved to have a pleasant walk by ourselves. Furthermore, Irene and I managed to book a motel for the Friday night in Vincentia, so we enjoyed a pleasant meal at the Husky pub on the Friday night.

Irene had recently aggravated her knee injury and did not intend to walk. This was fortuitous, as my car battery died overnight, so she was able to while away the time waiting for the NRMA to come with a replacement battery.

The walk is located on the southern headland of Jervis Bay, which is part of the ACT. It was a beautiful sunny day with a slight cool breeze on the ocean side. We walked clockwise, starting at Murrays Beach then Governors Head. Murrays Beach was a bit crowded, and the massive car park was overflowing with fishermen, beachgoers and walkers. (the car park was built during the times when there were plans to build a nuclear power station there in ACT territory). The beach water was a stunning blue/green, totally free from any debris, and a delight for those venturing in.



Murrays Beach (without all the people)

Governors Head, the southern head of Jervis Bay, has a railed lookout providing views over Bowen Island sitting in the middle of the entrance to the Bay. From here the walk proceeds south along the cliffline. At times there are spectacular views of Point Perpendicular, the northern head of the bay, and panoramas of the bay and the coast. Sheer cliff walls at one spot create a cove known as Devils Elbow Wall, with some deep caves at the base. We found a little tree here which provided some shade for a “morning snack”.



Spectacular cliff line looking North

Next, the track turns inland to reach Murrays Hill (80 m), the highest point on the track. A short clamber up provides wonderful 360° views of Jervis Bay, and a good spot for a brief snack. The ruins of Cape St George Lighthouse can be seen from here. Built in 1860, it was built in the wrong spot, and failed to prevent many shipwrecks. 39 years later, the Navy was asked to shell the tower, and Point Perpendicular lighthouse was built. The track basically descends from here, eventually reaching a section with tall shady trees for the last kilometre or so, ending up back at Murrays Beach.



Cape St George Lighthouse ruins

The walk took us 2 ¼ hours for about 7 km. We returned to find my car fitted with a new battery!

*Barry Mann*

## Q1 Club Activity Stats (Jan, Feb, Mar)

Sutherland Bushwalking Club had 338 registered members at the end of April and we participated in 49 club activities during Q1 2023.

Activity Type	Number of Activities
Day Walks	30
Multi-day Walks	3
Multi-day Trips	4
Cycles	6
Paddles	4
Track Work	1
Social Events	1
TOTAL	49

(Data from Activity Organiser's Trip Reports)

### Vale - Peter Smith (22nd May, 2023)

Sutherland Bushwalking Club recently received the sad news that former member **Peter Smith** has passed away. Many of our long-term members will remember Peter, who was actively involved with the club for over 25 years. Peter joined the club in 1992 and led many activities, mostly cycling, but also bushwalking and car-camping trips.

He is credited with starting the 'Pub to Pub' cycle trips in 1998, which involved a week long ride through central-western NSW with all gear carried on the bikes as there was no support vehicle. From this inaugural ride, the 'Pub to Pub' became a popular annual event until Covid times.

Friends recall many other memorable trips with Peter over the years. These include a multi-day walk in Yuraygir National Park, camping trip to Cape York, O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat in QLD, camping & cycling on the South Coast, walking in the Snowy Mountains, kayaking in Victoria.

Peter remained in contact with club members after moving away from Sydney and he welcomed many to visit and stay on his property in Grafton. His friends recall that he had a love of adventure and was a great leader. He was kind, friendly, well organised, good at fixing bikes and always a lot of fun to be with. Peter made a significant contribution to SBC - he was a much loved club member and will be sadly missed.

In accordance with Peter's wishes, a simple service was held on 4th June and his ashes spread at his property in Grafton.



A warm welcome to our new members:

- Tina Winkler
- Keith Moonen
- Veronica Le Nevez
- Pat Jones
- Steve Sharp
- Catrina Harvey
- Randa Ghazi
- Michael Warren
- Susan Loder
- Warren Woodward
- Serge Calvé
- Paul Blylevens
- Irina Sorokina
- Anna Farnham
- Suzanne Malvern
- Kylie Witty
- Lora Moore
- Karin Inman
- Michael Mauro

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



Koombanda Canyon



Happy Campers on the Kunderang Trail



What risk assessment?



Now I understand what you meant by 'off-track'!