



## NEWSLETTER

March 2021

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2020 will be a year to remember for a number of reasons. It was the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Club and although we couldn't celebrate it with a large gathering, this significant milestone was marked with an anniversary photo book, articles in the newsletter and an event on Currockbilly Mountain in the Budawangs for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the placement of our log book there. It's fantastic to think our Club has had fifty years of continuous outdoor activities, run by volunteers, with all the friendships that have been made over that time.

The other significant event that has touched all our lives is the COVID-19 pandemic. For a couple of months all our outdoor activities were cancelled and then gradually opened up again, but interstate and international activities have been heavily restricted.

Fortunately for our members, bushwalking, paddling and cycling are outdoors and amongst the safest activities to be participating in.

A Facebook group was set up during the year and is proving popular as a way for members to share what they've been doing in the outdoors and to show off their photographic skills.

Our website continues to attract those who wish to try out our Club and is an easy source of information for our existing members.

Our Club volunteers achieved the completion of the clearing of our fifth track, the Anice Falls Track at the end of the year and received praise from the RNP management as well as walkers using the track.

Our Club finances are in a very good state with excess funds so your Committee has commenced a plan to return some of it to existing members by way of reduced membership fees over a couple of years.

I would like to thank our Activity Organisers who take our members to fantastic places outdoors and fill our quarterly programs with an incredible choice across multiple days every week. Our organisers have ensured safety is a priority and when injuries and rescues occurred during activities, the response and follow up has been excellent. The carrying of a PLB has facilitated a timely response by our emergency services. The Personal Accident Insurance with our membership has also contributed to some out-of-pocket expenses.

Thanks also goes to our members who have volunteered for the various Committee roles without which we wouldn't be out walking, paddling and cycling.

Thanks to all our members for the enjoyment and friendships that you bring to our very successful Club.

*Shaune Walsh*

President



## Visit to King Island Tasmania

On 25 to 29 November, Irene and I visited King Island. We had originally planned to do this trip from Wynyard, as part of a 4 week caravan trip to Tasmania. However a slip and fall walking up past Cradle Lake resulted in 2 x broken ribs and a punctured lung for me - thus resulting in a ban from flying. Sharp Airlines gave us a credit note to have this trip at a later date and then Covid19 set in. Not many of us get the opportunity to visit King Island, so this write-up may be of interest.

The main attraction leading us to visit was that one of the "60 Great Short Walks, Tasmania", walk 33, was listed. This turned out to be not particularly exciting: it was a short 1.4km walk and featured exposed roots of a calcified forest.

The main attraction for us turned out to be the large number of past shipwrecks around the island, most from the 19th century. These are noted by information plaques strategically placed. Two of these stood out: First the Neva, carrying Irish women convicts ran aground in 1835 - there were 235 deaths from this wreck, the ensuing board of inquiry resulting in no action. Second, the Catacaqui ran aground some 10 years later in 1845 - this time there were 400 deaths, but the ship carried emigrating free settlers, half of them children. This instigated an inquiry which led to the construction of Cape Wickham Lighthouse, the tallest in Australia at 48m on the northern tip of the island. The lighthouses on Cape Otway (mainland Victoria) and King Island virtually stopped further ship wrecks.

There is a booklet "Walks of King Island" by Ken Martin which lists 44 short walks, most very short, but the book is like a travel/information guide, and well worth reading if planning a trip. I have a copy if anyone wants to borrow it. The beaches are picturesque and the ocean looks to be very rough.

Other "attractions" include the famous King Island Dairy, which serves a tasting plate with wine/beer/coffee; Grassy, the site of an abandoned Sheelite (Tungsten) open cut mine and an almost abandoned village; a penguin colony; Pennys Lagoon, a beautiful inland lake suitable for swimming/picnicking; and the kelp industry, gathering kelp pushed onto the island by the roaring forties, then drying, grinding and shipping it to Victoria (for Seasol fertilizer) and also to Norway (as an additive for perfume, pet food and heaps of other things) a great source of employment for islanders.

There are 3 golf courses on the island - Cape Wickham Golf Course is ranked in the top 3 in Australia - this leads to many visitors having a golf holiday. We don't play golf, so 2 days and 3 nights was adequate for our visit.

*Barry Mann*



The odds were against us from the start for our usual January backpack in the Victorian Alps. Chased out by fires last year, border closure made Victoria inaccessible this year. Focusing on somewhere closer to home, Northern Kosciuszko, a favourite backpacking venue with its historical huts, had its own problems - Tantangara roads were closed for construction of Snowy 2.0, Kiandra area was closed for rebuilding after the fires (it is meant to be open for the 2021 ski season but nothing is happening so far) and, to crown it all, La Nina was digging her heels in. After much map studying, Henry finally found a corridor of old huts out of Adaminaby though, once again, road access to the track involved 8 gate openings, in rain, on private property. We decided to start with a little bit of luxury, staying at the Crackenback Guesthouse between Jindabyne and Thredbo for a couple of nights and, although the accommodation was a bit quirky, the meals we would dream about on our future diet of pasta and porridge.

So, our adventure started with a forecast week of rain but we managed to leave the car just off the highway thus not involving gate openings. Day 1's walk was into Gavel's Hut, built in 1931. This is a large hut situated on Nungar Plain and offers good camping and many brumby sightings en route. Day 2 to Schofield's Hut was a testing day with heavy rain, a 2.5 km bush bash through thigh high wet grasses, a wet foot creek crossing and still no sight of the hut. At this point, with 6 days' food for both of us in my pack, I spat the dummy and sat in the midst of the grasses minding the packs with thunder all around, whilst Henry went walkabout. Some time later, a call from Henry - he couldn't see me in the grass - as he had located the hut which was a very basic iron hut but large enough for us to erect the tent inside out of the rain. Day 3 was a pleasant, undulating, walk on fire trails to Circuit's Hut, built in 1938, but, again, well hidden, meaning we had to retrace our steps. Situated on Gulf Plain, this delightful hut has 4 rooms, a manicured lawn and sits amongst mature Black Salles and surrounding hills.

From reading the hut logbooks, it became obvious that the huts were used almost entirely by horse riders passing through and the odd walker or cyclist. The distance between the huts is ideal for people only wanting to walk short distances - 5-10 km between huts - or OBE's (over bloody eighties for the uninitiated!) in magnificent scenery. Day 4 was a day walk to a view over Tantangara Dam Wall, the Murrumbidgee River and out to stunning

Townsend Hut. This spotless hut was well worth getting wet feet to ford the Murrumbidgee, with a polished wooden floor that would have taken pride of place in my lounge room, new wooden windows and interior lining and a spectacular location looking up valleys. A breeze kept away the flies and forecast heavy rain - we should have learnt by now that the mountains have their own climate. Yellow Everlasting daisies and tall stands of purple thistles set the plains alight with their striking colour and it was cold enough at night for fires in the huts.

Day 5 was the turnaround day or we would run out of food so was an undulating walk in sun and wind back to Schofield's Hut for the night. Day 6's first challenge was 1.5 hrs of high stepping plod through the thigh high grasses to take us back to Gavel's Hut, two mobs of brumbies watching our approach. In 7 days, we only met 10 people, 6 being Park workers or botanists, 2 walkers on a mammoth day walk and a couple on mountain bikes, totally lost and escaping the mayhem of Shellharbour. Day 7 dawned with magnificent sun for our walk back to the car and drive to Cooma, via Adaminaby, to veg out and fuel up both ourselves and packs for our next backpack.

After two days R and R visiting various scenic spots, including the NSW Correctional Centre Museum, Snowy Hydro Discovery Centre, enjoying real food and buying new boots for Henry, we set off for Week 2 - this time with the heat really kicking in. On Day 1, we had booked a campsite at Magpie Flat, near Blue Waterholes, camping by the car for the first night along with, shock horror, 7 other camping vehicles. For a \$6 Covid booking fee for free campsites, one can stay for about 2 weeks thus we planned on leaving the car and collecting it a week later. Day 2 dawned hot but, once we had climbed onto the plains, a breeze kicked in. Our destination, Bill Jones Hut, was possibly one of the last huts built as part of the grazing era in the 1950's. A NP workman was rebuilding one corner of the hut which is in a nice location but very rough inside. Brumbies had a stand off with us last time we were here as we were between them and their water supply. Henry's engineering skills were required to divert a muddy, brumby trampled water source, via a trowel and piece of wood, into a flow to enable us to collect water via a miniature waterfall. On Day 3, we set off on a beautiful walk through forested country, following the Mt Franklin range, with a 46 km/h wind keeping the heat down. Pockets Hut, our destination, is a 4 room weatherboard hut, built in the 1930's, in a stunning

location and, like the other huts, spotlessly clean. Shock horror, it even had a mirror! Our definition of paradise - sitting on real chairs on the verandah, looking across to Mts Bimberi, Little Bimberi and Murray, currently forbidden territory, book in one hand and a quick sip from a miniature bottle of liqueur in the other. At this hut, we were the first entry in the logbook in 2009 and visited again in 2018. At 7 pm, two walkers appeared, having walked 40 km in 33 degrees - mad!

Day 4 was a day walk following the AAWT to Oldfields Hut - a typical slab hut built in 1925, 6.5 km from the border and looking straight up to the summits of Mts Bimberi and Murray. Also visited was the Old Snowy Camp - an extra 4.6 km return - but interesting to see that it was all set up with tents and horses for horseriding trips. Day 5 we slowly walked back to our car at the still busy Magpie Flat camping area. The temperature was 10 degrees which didn't seem to worry the numerous mobs of brumbies. After setting up camp, we drove to Coolamine Homestead, built in 1882, the walls of the main building lined with 1939 pre-war newspapers cuttings. Day 6 we spent on a relaxing drive through this beautiful countryside, viewing more old homesteads that were accessible by road and noting future areas for backpacking.

We camped by the car on the last night, reflecting on a wonderful holiday, before returning to the mayhem of civilisation and medical appointments the next day.

*Marilyn Fooks*



Coastal Walk 7 Mile Beach - Shoalhaven Heads to Gerroa - 7 February 2021

Walkers: Halina Kraski and Kerry Waters, led by Irene and Barry Mann

Wow, what a day, after all the rain the past week, a beautiful clear summer day with a pleasant sea breeze. What more could one want.

We met Halina and Kerry at Kiama Station and drove to Shoalhaven Heads. There was quite a beach crowd there (by local standards). Irene left us there to drive to the Seven Mile Beach National Park where we planned to have our lunch stop.

It was about 7km to our lunch spot, and we had left behind all the beach people and were alone, walking along, chatting, when we were overtaken by 4 horses on the gallop! One unfortunate rider waved to us, then promptly fell off as his horse bucked, then another girl fell off as her horse was nudged by the other, what excitement! I guess it is a long way from a horse's back to the ground. One young lady would certainly agree and we are sure she may have a few bruises in tender places later this day.

After that, all was as expected. The tide was out, and the beach has very flat sand, which makes walking a pleasure. We caught up with Irene at the Seven Mile Beach National Park. She had walked 3km toward us and turned around when she recognised 3 familiar walkers in the distance. Lunch was brief, but the park was sheltered from the breeze, so we were keen to return to the rest of the walk.

Once again, Irene drove up to the end at Gerroa to meet us. As we returned to the beach, we met and talked with 2 fisheries officers, they were on the lookout for those pinching pippies from the beach. Apparently, some time ago, someone died from a pippy which had filtered algal bloom, and died so, one has to be careful on these trips.

We finally met up again with Irene at the Gerroa end of the beach. Halina and Kerry had a quick dip in the surf and then it was back to Kiama for the 4 o'clock train. We had walked over 12km in 3 and a half hours, including lunch. Irene walked 10km with her up and back meeting us. All in all, a great Sunday.

*Barry Mann*

Kosciuszko Week - Pygmy Possum Lodge - Charlotte Pass

31 Jan - 7 Feb 2021

Our club has been spending a week at Pygmy Possum Lodge, Charlotte Pass in the Kosciuszko NP every summer for more than thirty years. This year we had 35 members enjoy a fabulous week of alpine walks across many of the tracks in the southern part of the NP.

At times doubtful last year due to Covid-19, the week went ahead with the reduced restrictions and only minor inconveniences. It was great to have a number of members who hadn't been before join in with the regulars.

With an eye for the best weather, Becky led 13 of us on an overnight full pack walk to Wilkinson's Creek with a side trip to Mt Townsend and the return journey via Lake Cootapatamba.

Sandra led the evening walk to the summit of Mt Kosciuszko to watch the sunset, getting her group safely back by 10PM.

The week's walks included:

Mt Stilwell

Mt Tate

Porcupine Rocks

Watsons Crags

Guthega & Illawong Hut

Horse Camp Hut & Whites River Hut

Thredbo Valley & Dead Horse Gap

Main Range walk

Mt Twynam

Blue Lake & Hedley Tarn

Sawpit Creek

There are some exciting new tracks under construction which will increase the possibility of walks from the lodge in the near future.

Thanks to the walk organisers and for everyone being such a social group.

*Shaune Walsh*



Whites River Hut



Wilkinsons Creek Overnight



## Sunset on Kosciuszko

One of the many walks organised at Charlottes this year was a sunset visit to Australia's highest mainland peak, Mt Kosciuszko.

Having been lucky enough to do this walk in 2019, it was a no brainer to sign up again. Nine of us started from the Main Range lookout about 5pm, and walked the firetrail past Seamans Hut to Rawsons Pass, and up to the summit - waving to the 13 hardy members a kilometre below camping on Wilkinsons creek. About 9km in 2 hours.

A veritable feast was laid out, with sparkling and red wine, cheese and crackers, chips, nuts, dips, and other assorted comestibles.

As the sun dipped, the mist rolled in, making for an eerie, moody mountain range. As the wind picked up, the shirtsleeve weather quickly changed, making everyone layer up. As the sun set, we watched entranced until it finally disappeared over the range.

The walk home in the dark was punctuated with laughter and headlamps, and after the longest final kilometre ever, we arrived safe and sound back at the cars for the short trip back to Pygmy Possum Lodge.

Many thanks to Sandra Kennedy for organising such an enjoyable walk.

*Ken Newman*



A warm welcome to our new members

George Menzies  
Ella Malki  
Marianne Randall  
Rosalind Anne  
Suzi Rowe  
Lydia Lee  
Ria Peterson  
Elizabeth Woodhart  
Kerry Waters  
Kuang Tju Chan  
Annette Bemand  
Lester Bemand  
Margaret Adams  
Marion Aranjo  
Steve Black  
Walter Russell  
Margaret Ward  
Vicki Thompson  
Pauline Duncan  
John Whittingham  
Graeme Smith  
Yvonne Warren  
Paul Warren  
Bruce Gillen  
Catherine Quan  
Margaret Spencer  
Chris McGoldrick  
Michael Curnick  
Cheryl Sedgewick  
David Hayward  
Vincena Hayward  
Kevin Abnett  
Sonia Baxant  
Greg Burt

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

## Sutherland Bushwalkers On-Line

### *Website*

Don't forget to check our website. All the important information is available on the site.

### **Have you seen our Members Only Facebook Page?**

So far more than 100 members have joined the Facebook group, sharing walks, rides, kayaks and photos and generally keeping in touch. If you would like to join in on the fun then:-

- 1) Go to your own Facebook page,
- 2) Search for Sutherland Bushwalkers in the Facebook Search,
- 3) Click on the page that has Eagle Rock as the photo
- 4) Hit "Request to Join".

You should have access within 48 hours, usually much quicker though!

### **Leading a Walk!**

Did you know that you can contribute to the club without being on the committee? Have you ever thought about leading a walk? The club is always looking for new leaders! It isn't a difficult job, and is very rewarding. If you are still unsure, you can organise to co-lead a walk, many of our current leaders began this way. For more information, check out our website!

**5 bridges ride from Mortdale to ANSTO and return.**



Just before Sunset on Kosci



A web of intrigue?



Snowy after heavy rain overnight - Stepping stones under fast flowing water



Beautiful Port Hacking with kayaks heading to Maianbar.



Main Range



Li Lo-ing with Tony



Flannel Flowers