

SUTHERLAND BUSHWALKERS NEWSLETTER

March 2024



President's Report To the AGM Feb 2024

What a great year 2023 was for our club, culminating in the club's annual trip to Pygmy Possum Lodge at Charlotte Pass. Like last year we were able to run a second week allowing 75 members to enjoy the alpine country.

Our membership peaked at just over 360 people and renewals for 2024 are strong.

The club is on a sound financial footing and has completed a successful audit. It was good to be able to keep fees at a discounted rate for members for their 2024 annual membership.

The website continues to be a great source of information for members and visitors and the club's Facebook page is a great way of keeping up with the activities. The club has some great photographers, who post some amazing pictures.

Volunteer track clearing in the Royal and Heathcote National Parks continues to be well attended. The feedback from Park management is always very positive and it is a great way to spend a morning.

The Activity Organiser Get-Together and free Christmas Barbecue Breakfast were well attended and a great opportunity to swap ideas and catch up with club friends. I'm sure this year's Activity Leaders Get-Together will be even bigger, as we have several new leaders this year.

General meeting attendance is still down post Covid, but is steadily increasing and I encourage all our members to come along to hear some interesting and informative guest speakers, chat with club friends and find out what's happening in the club.

To finish, I would like to thank all the members without whom we would not have a club. I am always impressed by the friendships and the ease with which people get along on activities.

Thanks also to everyone who has led an activity, you are the heartbeat of our club. So many great trips organised both overseas and domestic adding to the local weekly activities. We are fortunate to have such a variety of wonderful places to walk, kayak and cycle.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee who have all volunteered their time to ensure a smooth running of the club. A personal thanks to Shaune Walsh who stepped up in my absences during 2023.

See you on the track.

Ken Newman

Flinders Island

November 2023

Flinders island, the largest of The Furneaux group of Islands, are the remains of the land bridge between mainland Australia and Tasmania. The area, originally inhabited by Tasmanian Aboriginals saw a decrease in their population about four thousand years ago.

Sealing was established as an industry in the area in the 1790s. Many sealers took Tasmanian Aboriginal women as partners and these Aboriginal people were called Straitsmen. Mutton bird farming was also popular at this time for their flesh and oil.

In 1830, Wybalena was established on Flinders Island, by Gov Arthur and George Robinson, as a settlement for the last remaining Tasmanian Aboriginals. It housed 134 Tasmanian Aboriginals most of whom died due to poor living conditions. The area closed in 1847, with 47 remaining who were transported to Oyster Cove, Tasmania.



Colourful, lichen covered coastal rocks



Whale skeletal remains on the rocks

After this, the settlement of Flinders saw two major influxes. The first before WWI and then, post WWII, with the Soldier Settlement Schemes. This saw farming development and land clearing on the Island. Population is now approx. 920, and the main industry is export of cattle, sheep, crayfish, abalone, shark and scallop.

Flinders Island is 60 km in length and 30 km at its widest. It boasts a more temperate climate than Tasmania, but the water is still pretty cold, and the Roaring 40s determine which side of the island to walk. Major peaks are Strzelecki in the South (746m) and Killiecrankie (346m) in the North. The Eastern side of the Island is fairly flat, with a few hills in the middle. The spectacular coastline of white sands, crystal clear water and the stunning red lichen covered rocks make for some pretty good pics and beautiful walks, finished with an icy swim.



Not really tropical waters!

So, 13 of us embarked on a 9 day discovery tour of this lovely island. We stayed in a cabin park, with three rental cars to help move our group to the various walks. We walked every day and returned each night to the campground for happy hour and a barbeque on the odd nights and dinner out on the even nights. We sampled every restaurant on the island with some opening especially as a group of 13 is a big crowd on an island with only 920 people. Walking tracks vary from grade 2-5.



Great Views over the Bay - Mt Killiecrankie

We had great weather and some of the spectacular walks that we did included:

- The Strzelecki Peak walk; quite strenuous to a 756 metre High Peak, the highest point of the Island.
- Castle rock walk: a beautiful coastal walk by rocky red headlands and lovely beaches to a massive granite boulder called "Castle Rock".
- Settlement Beach to Wybalena Cemetery
- Trousers Point walk; one of Tasmania's 60 great short walks covering a rocky foreshore and beautiful scenery.
- the Killiecrankie loop; a full day coastal walk with spectacular cliffs, boulders and beautiful beaches. This included Wombat Rock, White Man Rock, Diamond Gully, and the Dock. We found huge whale bones along this walk.
- Pillinger Peak walk; a short but very steep and exposed track to a high point on the island again with great views.
- Patriarchs Conservation Area and Red Bluff on the Eastern side of the Island.
- Walks around Lady Barron.
- Pallana Beach and River on the Northeast side of the island with spectacular tidal flows.
- Egg Beach (imagination was required)



Granite Outcrop on Mt Killiercrankie

We also visited Kate Mooney, who is renowned for her work with injured wombats on Flinders. (See Land Line) She invited us in and talked for 2 hours about her adventures on saving many injured wombats and their successful return to their natural habitat. We all cuddled, and bottle fed these fascinating animals. We also visited Wybalena Museum (amazing history of Flinders island and the settlement), Whitemark Museum, a lovely private rock, gem and shell collection at Lady Barron and tasted the local wine at a winery.



Kate Mooney with her wombats

Flinders island is an island that has a dark history, which is juxtaposed with an incredible natural beauty of its scenery. It is an understated island in that not many people visit, and the locals like to keep it this way. The people we met on Flinders island were so helpful and friendly and could not do enough to make our stay better. The first thing our host told us on Flinders Island was that it was compulsory when driving to wave to a passing car. I occasionally forgot, which resulted in the rest of the occupants of the car leaning out and waving for me. Thoroughly recommended.

Gill & Greg Spencer

Murramarang South Coast Walk 22 to 25 November 2023

Shaune Walsh (leader), Craig, Gill, Helena, Kay, Phil and Vicky

This new 36 km walk, in the Murramarang National Park, is a three-day adventure that can be undertaken in a number of formats. Shaune chose the full-pack option, although it's possible to arrange a NPWS cabin package for those who would prefer not to carry all their gear.



Pretty Beach

The walk connects the Ulladulla and Batemans Bay areas. We met at Pretty Beach, just south of Ulladulla and camped there at the NPWS campsite on our first night. A car shuffle of 46 km each way to Maloneys Beach was required to ensure a quick return at the end of the walk.

The NPWS campground at Pretty Beach was busy, as a number of school groups were using it, as well as the usual mix of other campers. The facilities there (including \$1 pay showers) were very good and close-by to our pre-allocated campsites. There was also a very nice new shelter.

Rain overnight was expected and it came on cue in the early hours of the morning. Showers continued throughout the morning and we were glad it was

only light as we set off. We took the coastal track at the end of Pretty Beach, which traverses an exposed rock platform.

On the way to Pebbly Beach (6 km from the start) there's lots to take in, including Singing Stones Beach, palm-filled gullies and a nice (safe) swimming opportunity at Snake Bay. The first day was 12 km and, despite showers and clouds, the views were impressive.



Palm filled forest walk

Following our arrival at Depot Beach (first night on-track camp) at about 3.30pm, Gill and Kay decided it was time for a swim - the water looked inviting but was it cold? "Not too bad" or words to that effect, was what I heard, however, that was in the context of both of them recently swimming in the ocean at Flinders Island in Bass Strait where the temperature was probably about 15 - 16 degrees C.

Depot Beach also has a very nice NPWS campsite and excellent facilities, including free showers. Kangaroos proliferate and there were also possums - watch the food in packs!



Depot Beach Campground

We knew ticks and leeches could be a problem, with both being prevalent in reasonable numbers. Although actual bite numbers were not high, the tick bites, in particular, were annoying and irritating for those bitten.

Depot Beach to Oaky Beach (second and final night on-track camp) is about 16 km. The track out of Depot Beach is in great condition and Spotted Gums, Cycads and serpentines were evident as we approached North Durras Beach. Durras Lake was closed at its entrance to the ocean, which meant we had no issues crossing.



Oaky Beach Campground

The Murramarang Resort (now owned by NRMA), which is very close-by to the track, provided an opportunity to buy lunch as well as load some additional water for our last night at Oaky Beach.

The Oaky Beach campsite has been recently established by NPWS and differs from the others in that it has raised platforms for tents (there's little level ground). There's a good shelter shed, which again was useful to keep us dry. However, there's no water available and, as mentioned above, it had to be carried from the Murramarang Resort. There's no obvious indication that NPWS intend to install a water tank here.

The last day from Oaky Beach to Maloneys Beach is 8 km and was the most spectacular. There are some great views from cliffs and we appreciated the well-made track which winds its way through many varied forms of vegetation, including more Spotted Gums, Cycads and patches of rainforest.

Some things to remember: book your campsites (there's a limit of 8) - you can't do it as a multi-day walk without doing so and use the NPWS app, which allows park information including a map of the track to be downloaded for offline use.

Thanks, Shaune - I know the walk was enjoyed by all!

Phil Meade



The finish at Maloneys Beach - Murramarang

Bargo River Exploration

For years, Phil Escott and I talked about trying to walk down to where the Bargo River enters the Nepean River. When rules for Covid lifted, four club members took the opportunity for a recce, hopefully to make a new future walk for the club. At one stage some dense growth was encountered, so we marked our way with coloured tape to help our exit. The mission was completed, the Nepean was reached, with a bit of difficulty.



Colourful Overhang

Fast forward to Jan 2024, when a grade 4 walk was programmed. At 9 am a group of ten (a new adventure for six of them) eagerly set off. How would we go? Would the river level be too high?

Starting near the Rockford Road bridge, we followed the high track, bypassed Mermaids Pool, and headed straight for Rosies Pass. Getting a fair way down the pass, we found a blue rope in a bit of a clearing heading down towards the Bargo. - "Yes, let's give it a go" - It was steep, but a winner as the rope also took us further along beside the riverbed, bypassing the dense growth we hit on the recce.



A lot of care needed crossing the river!

More help was found with painted yellow guide marks, making navigation so much easier down the river. After passing an overhang with a beehive hanging down like hundreds of stalactites, we passed some other overhangs, one of which was a colourful orange. Climbing up and down different levels of rock shelves, we reached the Nepean. The huge pool there came just at the right time for lunch and a swim. Having made good time down, I decided that we should walk out via Tahmoor Canyon, partly to vary the route back but also as one of our group hadn't done it before. The canyon was without a cooling breeze - it was hot and humid and, of course, riverbed walking is slower and harder than the flattish clifftop! That good time we made going down was starting to be absorbed rapidly, but we still stopped at Olympic Pool for a very much needed cooling-off swim.

Onto the last leg, which had three different sections - first beside the river on a flat rock shelf, with large bowl-like pools in it, then up Jacks Pass with a rest at the top, before rejoining the flat track back to the start. It was now 5.30 pm, some of us were looking worse for wear, it had been a big and long day, and to rub it in - we didn't get coffee at the end! Everyone agreed what we did was a challenging, but interesting and scenic walk. Will I put the same walk on again? Should I reroute some of it? Only time will tell.

Allan Bunt



Back via Tahmoor Gorge?

**Barren Grounds Nature Reserve
29 November 2023**

Participants: Marilyn & Henry Fooks, Warren Mizon, and Irene & Barry Mann.

What a beautiful day, in between a showery week, and a forecast future showery week. We picked up Marilyn and Henry from Kiama train station at 9:47 and were up at the start of the walk by 10:45.



Setting off - photos by Marilyn

Irene was 6 weeks out from her knee job, so walked with us for 1 km, then returned, and did a second 1 km walk to the Illawarra Lookout and return. 4 km ... pretty good for post op recovery!

We walked anti-clockwise so as to ensure the stone bridge crossing was passable after the recent weeks rain (if impassable the return walk is only 2 km, whereas the other way is 6 km, making the walk 12 km in total). When we reached the stone bridge, the creek was still up, necessitating a foot

on a water covered rock to cross over. All made it with care and a helping hand.

A bit of a slowish slog up the hill from the creek crossing brought us to the viewing platform and a lunch break. The hill was some years ago very badly eroded by a virtual creek but it has been salvaged by sandstone and graders. Lovely views north to Lake Illawarra, south to 7-Mile Beach and Jervis Bay.



The infamous stone bridge

After lunch, it was “mainly” downhill, with a few steepish bits, and then we went to the Illawarra Lookout ... fantastic views over Jamberoo, Kiama, Lake Illawarra etc. Finally, back to the car park to catch up with Irene. A good day’s exercise. The countryside looked very healthy from recent rainfall.

Barry Mann



Henry looking out at the look out.

KOSCIUSZKO NP - WEEK 1 4 - 11 February, 2024

Thirty-five members participated in our week of walks staying at Pygmy Possum Lodge in the Charlotte Pass Village. Our club has included this in our activity program for 35+ years. Due to its popularity with members, two consecutive weeks have been booked for the last two years ensuring no one missed out.



Walkers at Horse Camp Hut

The week started with some rain and low cloud but then cleared making way for four glorious days of blue skies and a pleasant walking temperature. Thanks to our walk organisers, the activity board was full for the six days with a range of walks of various grades. The recently opened Charlotte to Porcupine Track had to be checked out and variations of it were walked. It's good that we have an increasing number of walks that can be done from Charlotte Pass with minimal driving. The more adventurous walkers got to try out some new routes that were rewarded with magnificent views and plenty to talk about afterwards. Margaret R. managed to do the Main Range circuit twice in the week.



Great Views from Mt Tate

Pygmy Possum lodge has had some recent kitchen upgrades, with new stoves and dishwashers, which are welcome. The morning sandwich making frenzy was no different this year with everyone doing a polite dance around the benches and lower food cupboards. Hana and Kerry were the master chefs delivering multiple dishes each night. Annette M organised a fun trivia night with plenty of puzzling questions that got plenty of rivalry between the tables.



Friday Night Trivia

Thanks again to our walk organisers and to everyone who attended week 1 for making it another very social week. We look forward to hearing from the week 2 group.

The walks for the week included:
Charlotte - Porcupine track
Stilwell & Snowy Headwaters
Wraggs Creek
Illawong Hut
Watsons Craggs
Bullocks Flat
Rennix Walk
Main Range circuit
Mt Tate
Thredbo - Ramshead & Dead Horse Gap
Pallaibo walk
Mt Twynam - Blue Lake descent & Hedley Tarn
Dead Horse Gap to the Chimneys
Mt Stilwell
Horse camp Hut

Shaune Walsh

Elliott Trap

While everyone will talk about the walks at Charlotte Pass, we had a "hero" on week 1 with Steve taking the brave initiative to catch a rat.

With a squeal, someone saw a long tail run behind the heater in the games room. After some brave members investigated it was determined to be a rat.

What kind of rat we all asked, reply being “I’m not getting that close to see”.
In the lodge store room we found a rat-catcher device, called Elliott, along with instructions on how to bait and where to release the caught animal.



The rat-trap

In comes our hero Steve, who set up the device in the west wing behind the couch and before long click goes the trap door.

Instructions suggesting peanut butter really does work. So with appropriate safety gloves and good cheer, off Steve goes to release said vermin down the road away from the lodge.



Intruder apprehended

Now for the question was it vermin rat or native rat? Possibly a southern bush rat (*Rattus fuscipes*)?

Will we see you next year? Who knows, but so long Elliott.

Vanessa Hicks

Pygmy Possum Lodge Wk 2

or

An Exercise in Getting to Know SBC and Kosciuszko NP in Six Easy Walks

Thirty-eight members of Sutherland Bushwalking Club (SBC) descended upon Pygmy Possum Lodge Charlotte Pass, on Sunday February 11, 2024.

A major component of the week is a selection of walks offered each day, by experienced club members.

It was discovered very early however, that many members had returned to the lodge on numerous occasions. So, it was decided to detour from a traditional report towards a more interesting, oral survey (via our daily walks), of what actually made people keep coming back to Pygmy Possum Lodge.

Day One - Rainbow Lake (Part A): 3 km self- led, warm-up walk within picturesque, tranquil scenery. A beneficial, slow walk allowing less-experienced hikers to acclimatize.



Rainbow Lake

Lookout (Part B): Commencing at the top of the hill, this is within easy access to a panoramic view of Charlotte Pass and surrounds.

Day Two - Trapyard Creek: 7 km walk led by Ron. A new track through a variety of terrain (gravel, cobble stones and grates). Not too arduous, ending with a picturesque view of the Thredbo valley.



Views into Thredbo Valley

Day Three - Pallaibo Walk: 5 km walk led by Tony. We needed two cars in order to return via the lower-level carpark. This is a one-way track, with some gentle undulations. It was slow enough to allow encounters with wildlife eg. wallaby and various birdlife. A comfortable walk, ending close-by to Jindabyne which provided an opportunity to replenish supplies, rest and enjoy a cuppa together.

Day Four - Kosciuszko/Summit Walk: 12 km, our first attempt at leading a walk. Starting with a drive (using two cars) to Thredbo. We experienced a surprisingly enjoyable chairlift ride to the start of this Summit Walk. Whilst it was successfully completed by some less-experienced and less-fit hikers we could still enjoy the spectacular views from the Kosciuszko Lookout. Eagles Nest restaurant provided a comfortable venue to recuperate and enjoy a cuppa.



Sponars Lodge

Day Five - Porcupine Rocks: 6 km return walk, led by Tony. We drove in two cars and started at Perisher. It was uphill but the pace seemed comfortable for everyone. The track comprised a comfortable combination of stones, gravel and grates. A short rock scramble mid-way was rewarded with spectacular views of the surrounding valley from above the clouds. This walk afforded the opportunity to experience diverse weather from different vantage points. As we approached the summit, we enjoyed unique rock formations at every turn.



Porcupine Rocks

Day 6 - Sponars Lodge: A walk around the grounds of Sponars historic Alpine Lodge to view the remaining swimming pool and staff quarters. Diggers Creek nearby has historical significance as it commemorates the efforts of the gold diggers in the 19th century. An excellent way to wind-down from a busy week of bushwalking.

An added surprise was the opportunity to go 'platypus spotting' this evening. We drove south to Thredbo River in a couple of cars, just on dusk. Fortunately, ninety-nine percent of our group were able to spot a platypus moving under the riverbank! Patience and binoculars recommended.

Conclusion: Overwhelmingly, participants reported the benefits of being outdoors, the variety of walking trails and the social interaction with others. Many others made mention of the spectacular scenery and the unique alpine climate. Some members recalled fondly seeing specific wildlife. For example: snakes, wallabies, pygmy possums and platypus.

For ourselves, we have enjoyed the opportunity to 'un-plug' from society, relax and reflect. We discovered there are great walks for all ability levels. The boost to daily exercise has been most valuable, as well as making connections with a great group of people.

A big thank you to the organising committee. We highly recommend a visit to Pygmy Possum Lodge!

Sue Celkys & Jenny Kalgovas

Exciting find on Charlottes Pass to Guthega walk Mountain Pygmy Possum *Burramys parvus*

Heading off on the new Snowies Walk, Charlotte Pass to Guthega section, we were all enjoying the beautiful scenery of the Snowy River Valley when Phil Travis spotted a small dead mammal on the track next to some clumps of differently coloured fur. He showed me and I examined the small furry creature and thought it may be a pygmy possum based on the lower incisor teeth, hand-like feet and long apparently prehensile tail. But which pygmy possum was it? The Eastern or Mountain Pygmy Possum. The animal was in good condition and I decided to take it back to the Pygmy Possum Lodge for closer examination. I had trapped and handled many Eastern Pygmy Possums, *Cercartetus nanus*, but never held a Mountain Pygmy Possum *Burramys parvus*.

Not expecting to come across any small mammals I had no fauna identification books but luckily someone found a copy of Ian Mansergh's and Linda Broome's book "The Mountain Pygmy Possum" in the lodge library. It had some excellent drawings of pygmy possum skulls and teeth and good information on features to distinguish the Mountain Pygmy Possum from other Pygmy Possums.

The Mountain Pygmy Possum has a tail length longer than the body length and very distinctive enlarged blade-like premolar teeth. It is the only Pygmy Possum to have these enlarged premolar teeth. With a small pocket tape measure, I measured the head-body length of our possum which was ~10 cm and the tail length was ~12.5 cm and it definitely had the enlarged blade-like premolar teeth. Its ventral surface fur was dusky grey, not white as in the Eastern Pygmy Possum. It seemed we had found a Mountain Pygmy Possum and photos sent to the Perisher Valley Ranger Tim Greville and my colleague Dr Michael Fleming who had studied Mountain Pygmy Possum in the field and lab confirmed our identification. It was a female as evident by her small pouch, and possibly a first-year female. Her weight (measured in Sydney) was only 20.5 grams.

The Mountain Pygmy Possum is listed as Endangered under State and Commonwealth legislation and is our only true alpine mammal, being restricted to altitudes above 1200 m. It lives both above the tree line and among Snow Gum Woodland, usually where large boulders provide cavities for winter shelter beneath the snow, where it hibernates for several months and stores a cache of Mountain Plum Pine nuts for winter food. In

summer it also feeds on aestivating Bogong Moths that migrate from the inland flood plains to the Alps and shelter among the boulders, however these moths have been declining in numbers following a series of droughts. The Mountain Pygmy Possum is restricted to the high alpine areas of Victoria and NSW and in NSW all its habitat occurs in Kosciuszko National Park in an area of less than four square kilometres over a geographic range of only 30 km by 8 km. It is certainly one of our rarest mammals and only a few people ever get to see them, except in a zoo.

I thought the Australian Museum would be interested in this specimen and when I contacted Dr Sandy Ingelby, Curator of Mammals, she was very excited about our find and definitely wanted our rare specimen. The Museum only has 29 specimens of Mountain Pygmy Possum and only ten of these are wild caught with data, the rest are from captive animals, mostly from zoos.

I have added the record to the NSW Bionet Wildlife Atlas and it is a new location for the species on the eastern side of the Snowy River. I will take the specimen to the Australian Museum where she will contribute to our understanding of our unique and special fauna.

Debbie Andrew



Debbie with the Mountain Pygmy Possum

<https://threatenedspecies.bionet.nsw.gov.au/profile?id=10114>

<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/threatened/nominations/comment/burramys-parvus>

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity/nsw-bionet>

Central West Cycle Trail

Leader: Rob Gibson

Group Members: Jayne, Tamara & Steve, Natalie, Peter, Tom, Joanne, Tracey, Peter

Sweeps

Jayne, Natalie, Tracey

On the 22 February, we met at Riverside Caravan Park, Mudgee, the night before for a BBQ dinner and to meet the group. The bicycles consisted of 4 road bikes and 6 ebikes.

D1 - 23 February

We started off from Mudgee with seven. One of our group was feeling unwell so decided to start their ride from Gulgong and two of our group met us at Dunedoo. The rest met at 8:00 am and we rode 30 km to Gulgong for morning tea, there was a mixture of road and good unsealed roads. After Gulgong we rode another 58 km to the Swan Hotel, Dunedoo, arriving at 5:00 pm. It was an exhausting day, cycling a total of 88 km. We had a lovely dinner at Dunedoo Hotel.



On the road

D2 - 24 February

Today we cycled North to Mendooran, 52 km. It was a nice, easy ride. We took unsealed back roads for 32 km, and then another 20 km on a quiet, secondary road. We stayed at Mendooran B & B. Anna, the proprietor, was very hospitable, providing us with snacks and bottled water. Dinner at the Mendooran Hotel.

D3 - 25 February

Breakfast was provided by Anna. It consisted of a continental breakfast and boiled eggs, we felt very spoilt. We left Anna's at 8:00 am. There were over 50 km on rough, dirt and sandy trails. It was so sandy in places, that a few of us came off our bikes. Luckily there were no injuries. There were a couple of flat tyres, but we managed to pump air into them every few kilometres which saw us through till the end of the day. An exhausting, challenging, but rewarding day. We arrived at Hair of the Dog Hotel, Balimore at about 3:00 pm. Dinner at the Hotel (a Sunday Roast for most).



On the road again

D4 - 26 February

After a continental breakfast, we departed at 8:00 am. Two of our party left early to ride straight to Dubbo, due to tyre issues. A pleasant ride, mostly on bitumen (for a change). A few bike issues and one temporarily lost mobile phone, arriving at Wongarbron for homemade Devonshire tea at the local Post Office. Off to Dubbo by 11:45 am, via 7 km of dirt road (a short cut). Arrived at the Dubbo Caravan Park at 1:00 pm. One brave lady decided to cycle the circuit around Dubbo in the heat, whilst others either swam in the pool or went for a walk. We rode 64 km today

D5 - 27 February

... and then there were 7! We departed at 8:00 am. One of our party was feeling unwell so decided to get a ride to Wellington with Mick Cooper (0437 136 169). Mick provides transport services on the CWCT. Two of our members decided to leave at 7:00 am, instead of 8:00 am.

The first 6 km was on a lovely bike path from the Caravan Park to Old Dubbo Road. We felt very spoilt, for a short time. We stopped off at the Pioneer Cemetery (a short detour), 1860 was about the earliest grave. A few more kilometres on bitumen, then more kilometres on bumpy, gravel roads until we reached Geurie for lunch at 11:30 am - 32 km.



Ready to ride

We left Geurie at 12:30 pm, heading to Dubbo. Most was on bumpy, gravel roads. The last 5 km were uphill, followed by 7 km downhill, all on bitumen, until we reached Wentworth at about 3:00 pm - 63 km in total today.

D6 - 28 February

... and then there were 6! We left Wentworth at 7:00 am, four of our group left around 6:30 am, as we were expecting a big day ahead of about 79 km with 35° temperatures. One of our groups brand new paniers broke. Many cable ties were used to try and keep it place.

The first 25 km were on sealed roads, then 23 km of good, dirt road before reaching Goolma by 11:00 am for an early lunch. There was a black water tank next to the Community Hall to top up our water and four power points attached to the side of the Community Hall (\$2.00 donation) for those wanting to top up their ebikes. Only 31 km until we reach Gulgong. We left Goolma at 11.45 am for Gulgong. Mainly on good, unsealed roads, with some bumpy sections, we reached Gulgong at 3:15 pm. The last 5 km was on the main road into Gulgong



Wildlife

D7 - 29 February

...and then there were 8. Two of our group left us at Gulgong to drive home. After a few km we turned off onto a good, sealed road. We finished our ride with only 2 km, on the main road into Mudgee, arriving at about 10:30 am.

A challenging, but rewarding trip with a great group of keen, cyclists.

Rob Gibson

November Guest Speaker Alan Jenkins (retired Paramedic)

Retired Paramedic **Alan Jenkins** was the guest speaker at our November 2023 meeting. Alan retired in 2019 after an amazing 31 year career with NSW Ambulance. For the majority of this time, Alan was a Rescue Paramedic before becoming a Special Operations Paramedic in more recent years.

Alan gave a comprehensive overview of the workings of the ambulance service and how they prioritise patients for treatment. His talk reflected his wealth of experience in rescue and special operations including situations relating to bushwalking. Alan also shared advice on medical issues relevant to our age group including how to recognise the symptoms of a stroke, the importance of being able to perform CPR and the value of having fast access to a defibrillator. Alan actually carries a portable defibrillator in his backpack when he goes out walking with friends!

Alan highlighted several helpful websites and medical Apps:

Healthdirect (www.healthdirect.gov.au) is a government-funded service, providing quality, approved health information and advice including a symptom checker. The service also includes a 24 hour advice line (1800 022 222).

Emergency+ (www.emergencyplus.com.au) is a helpful app developed by Australia's emergency services which uses **GPS functionality** built into smart phones to help a Triple Zero (000) caller provide critical location details required to **mobilise emergency services**.

NSW AED register (aed.nsw.gov.au) or the Services NSW app (Featured section) allow you to register or find a defibrillator near you.

Thank you to Alan for such an informative presentation.

Heather Hughes

History of Elouera Ski Club and Pygmy Possum Lodge (by Ron Rodgers)

*Ron is one of the original members of Elouera Ski Club and he shared some recollections in a talk during the 2nd club week at Pygmy Possum Lodge.

Elouera Ski Club was formed around 1980 by Geoff Mathie, members of the Pennant Hills Sports Club and the Highway Alpine Lodge at Perisher. Most were employed by the Department of Main Roads and the Electricity Commission and they lived either in Sydney's Northern Districts or Sutherland Shire. The Highway Alpine Lodge was at the time a 16-bed lodge that was always booked out in winter and not open to new members. Consequently, lodge members were on the lookout for more accommodation.

At the time, Charlotte Pass Village Pty Ltd were selling a sub-lease of land designated for a 50-bed lodge. Elouera Ski Club was initially formed with a maximum of 300 members to gather funds to obtain the initial 30-year lease and build the 50-bed lodge. The committee members, having many years of experience with The Highway Alpine Lodge, developed the concept of two 25-bed wings and a centre section so that half the lodge could be shut down in times of low demand at the start and end of winter and other times of the year to save on heating costs.

However, the development and building approval from National Parks and the relatively remote location with only about eight months building time each year meant the lodge did not receive final occupation approval until 28 April 1987.



The front entrance is sometimes blocked by big dumps of snow.

I bought my original shares in Elouera Ski Club when my neighbour, who worked at Dept Main Roads, told me that the club would be a good prospect. I am member number 204 of the initial 300 members. The original requirement for membership was to purchase 2 shares for \$1000 each.

We spent a week at the lodge in the first season it was opened for bookings. One early problem after heavy snow dumps was the need to clear snow from the front entrance, the deck in front of the games room and the required alternative exits (that were then the rear doors to each of the kitchens). The first two problems were solved by building a roof over the entry door and one over the front deck, though large snow dumps still require a lot of hard work to keep the entrance clear.

Many years later, additional bed allocations were purchased from the head lease holder and 4 additional rooms were added to the rear of each wing. The required exits were also relocated to the

top level and are now much easier to keep clear after heavy snow falls.



The back door to the games room is completely blocked by snow in this photo. In mid-winter the area between the two wings is filled with snow to the top of the games room roof. The heat of the lodge (even with minimum heat setting when not occupied) melts the snow near the windows & doors and helps prevent them from breaking.



All the lower level bedroom windows are completely covered by snow in this photo. Some years the snow also covers the bottom half of the upper bedroom windows that face into the area behind the games room.

The lodge is maintained by club members during week-long working bees throughout the year. The crew thoroughly clean the entire lodge, wash all linen and undertake minor maintenance works.

Elouera Ski Club Ltd has recently obtained a new lease of the land the lodge is built on from National Parks and Charlotte Pass Village Pty Ltd. However, National Parks have imposed conditions on the lease requiring the external cladding of the lodge to be upgraded to address potential bush fire risk. This will be a considerable cost, so accommodation costs will unfortunately increase as will the building levy on members.

The lodge is great for families, with Charlotte Pass ski fields being ideal for children to learn to ski. Older teenagers and young adults often head to more challenging slopes in Australia and overseas, but they then return to the lodge when they have young children of their own. The lodge is also popular with many members who use it as a base for cross country skiing on the main range when the resort lifts have closed for the season.

When we had young children, we would book a week in peak ski season every two years or so. We also participated in some week-long working bees and often stayed at the lodge during the odd week after Christmas and at Easter, when we would do some walks on the main range. When funds were available we purchased memberships for each of our children and they have both regularly brought their own children down in winter to learn to ski.



Ron (far left) leading a walk to Trapyard Creek during the 2nd club week at Charlotte Pass.

My last season of skiing was in 2022 when my then just 9 year old grand-daughter would check that I was ok before heading off to the more difficult to ski slopes!

*The name 'Elouera' is from an Aboriginal word meaning 'fine view' or 'beautiful place'. The Elouera Surf club was established in 1966, but the two clubs are not related.

Ron Rodgers (SBC member since 2005)

Vale Erika Springstub

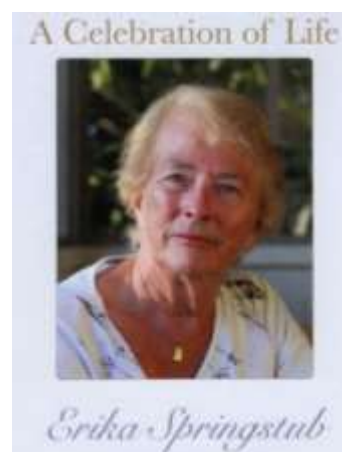
26 Oct 1935 - 22 December 2023

Erika was born in Germany and met her future husband, Kurt, at a local dance. They married in 1955 and came to Australia in 1957. They lived in a migrant hostel located at Hungry Point, Cronulla. Erika said she was now on a long holiday with beaches and blue sky compared to post WW2 Germany. The Shire became her residence all through her life, living at Sylvania till her passing.

Erika had a lust for life every moment. She loved her gardening and was active with the Garden Club, joined Probus and was a member of SBC from 1990. Erika loved her family, her garden, travelling to new countries and the outdoors. She walked alone or with friends from SBC but was always active.

Erika is survived by her two daughters and grandchildren who will greatly miss her close presence.

Vanessa Hicks



Membership Awards

The 2024 club pins for membership have been awarded to the following people.

25 yrs Pin

Gay	WICKENS
Jayne	GIBSON
Rob	GIBSON
Peter	GUEST

15 yr Pin

Vanessa	HICKS
Phillip	HOWSON
Lynn	SUTHERLAND
Greg	TAYLOR

10 yr Pin

Allan	BUNT
Isabelle	CARLETON
Sue	CELKYS
Kerry	CLARKE
Peter	DELAUNEY
Tim	GARDNER
Peter	JONES
Garry	KEIR
Filomena	MATTNER
Harold	MATTNER
Neil	ROBINSON
Brian	STEVENSON
Steve	TURNER
Ray	VAN DEN ANKER



Shaune Walsh (Vice President) presented SBC membership pins at the Christmas BBQ: (Left to right) Greg Taylor (15 Yrs), Pete Guest (25 Yrs), Allan Bunt (10 Yrs), Vanessa Hicks (15 Yrs), Shaune Walsh, Peter Delauney (10 Yrs).

Q4 Club Activity Stats (Oct, Nov, Dec)

Sutherland Bushwalking Club had 341 registered members at the end of February and we participated in 45 club activities during Q4 2023.

Activity Type	Number of Activities
Day Walk	33
Paddle	6
Multi-day Walk	1
Bike Ride	0
Multi-day Trip	4
Track Work	1
Total	45

(Data from Activity Organiser's Trip Reports)



A warm welcome to our new members:

David Andrew
 Lorena Avendano
 Bernard Badorrek
 Jeanette Barker
 John Cookson
 Melanie Cromlin
 Lisa Hynes
 Elizabeth Lette
 Solveiga Ozolins
 Franck Paulet
 Caryll Sefton
 Carol Thompson
 Maree Vogt
 Emily Watson

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on Wednesday 28 February at the Stapleton Centre, Sutherland. 27 members attended and voted on the new committee and office bearers.

The results are as follows:-

President	Ken Newman
Vice President	Shaune Walsh
Secretary	Annette Mathews
Treasurer	Tim Gardner
Assistant Secretary	Vacant
Program Secretary	Heather Hughes
Newsletter Editor	John Hughes
Membership Officer	Sheree Brinsley
Web Administrator	Ken Newman
Equipment Officer	Heather Hughes
Public Officer	Vanessa Hicks
Auditor	Phil Escott
Email Administrator	Margaret Dooley
Friends of RNP	Tony Larkin
Delegates to Bushwalking NSW Inc	Shaune Walsh & Ken Newman
Supper Co-ordinators	Beatrice Walsh & Gill Spencer
Returning Officer	Phillip Meade

Following the AGM we welcome Annette Mathews and Heather Hughes to the committee.

The club also offers heartfelt thanks to long serving committee members who have stepped down this year. We sincerely thank Vanessa Hicks, Rebecca Rae, Kay Manning, Leonie Bell, Lesley Salzmann and Tracy Cleary for their efforts over the last many years. These members have played an integral role in ensuring that the club has run efficiently and smoothly. Thank you again ladies.

Ken Newman

Volunteer Opportunity

Volunteers are the heart and soul of our club. Have you got 2 - 4 hours a month to help the club?

We're looking for a committed volunteer to take on the Assistant Secretary's role. This is a great opportunity to contribute to our club as well as learn about how it works behind the scene.

The Assistant Secretary supports the Committee in several ways, including taking the minutes at club and committee meetings when the Secretary is unavailable. A key contribution of this role is organising the speaker for the monthly General Meeting (March to November). The Committee and club members will help you identify speakers. This ranges from members giving a presentation on a recent trip or topic of interest, to organising an external speaker. The Committee has a list of ideas so you don't need to identify speakers on your own.

The Assistant Secretary attends the monthly Committee meetings which is usually held the day after the monthly General Meetings (typically 2pm, Thursday at Sutherland). A Position Description for this role can be found on our website in the Members Area. Other than basic computer skills, your willingness to give your time to the club is all that's required.

Contact Annette Mathews via secretary@sutherlandbushwalkers.org.au to find out more about this opportunity.

Equipment Donation - Thank you

Thank you to Bob East who recently donated a bag of bushwalking and camping equipment to the club. Bob was an active SBC member around 2010-2018. A 2-man tent, overnight pack and therm-a-rest mat will be added to the club's supply of equipment for loan. Some other items will be offered 'free to a good home' at the next club meeting.

More Photos from Club Walks



Reflections in Kosciuszko NP - Ken Newman



Young female Mountain Pygmy Possum



Horse Camp Hut, Kosciuszko - Anne Brian