



*NEWCASTLE RAMBLERS
BUSHWALKING CLUB
NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER 2023*

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*Helen, David, and Dale pleased to locate another station in the NavShield held this year in the Goulburn River NP
(photo by Mary)*

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Note from the Editor



Butcher Bird. This great photo was taken by Sue Linton on the Ash Island bike ride in August

Since our July newsletter the Club has enjoyed a full and varied activity program. Many thanks to Peter and Pamela G, Lynne W and Angela B for the introduction of long weekend and extended camping and walking trips to wonderful places we have never heard of. These trips take in the Friday before the week end and return on Monday. Some even extend to the following the week

Also, thanks to Lynne for her enthusiasm in arranging walks of various levels of difficulty to her favourite places – without her input our program would have fallen a bit short over a number of weekends.

Our regular meeting nights have been well attended with 20 or more members and visitors. We have welcomed several knowledgeable and entertaining keynote speakers – Dawn and Mick (Victorian Rail Trails), Terry L (Richmond Vail Rail Trail), Mandy H (Hexham Swamp and Stockton Sandspit), Greg P (More Bushrangers). We thank these people for their contribution to our Club. Thanks to Malcolm for keeping our meeting night program full and interesting as well as the supper roster organised.

The Club fielded three one day teams and one overnight team in the 2023 NavShield event. Teams again proved to be highly competitive and it is a credit to the Ramblers that fourteen members participated.

Pre-meeting dining at the Charlestown Leagues Club has been a longstanding arrangement for many Ramblers – it was time for a change. Our recent dining at the Charlestown Club (AKA Charlestown Bowling Club) has been most satisfactory and enjoyable.

Our Tasmanian member, Col McC has kept us in touch with our most southern state and enthused us to plan walks to the Three Capes and beyond. Several members have enlisted on the Lady Nelson Tall Ship for an adventure in February 2024.

Summer is nearly on us and predictions are for hot and dry conditions, so we will ease off on walks except for twilight, morning and those along the ocean front. We have a few great escapes to the Snowy Mountains coming up.

Thanks once again to those contributors to the newsletter. I would appreciate more reports and photos from more contributors, please.

All the best

Bob

NavShield 2023, Goulburn River NP – 15 and 16 July 2023

Teams:

1 – Malcolm M, Margaret C, Lynne M, Jenni M

2 – David M, Helen C, Dale G and Mary McP.

3 – Lynne W, Lois S and Lynne's niece Megan

4 – Alan T, Alan S and Nick

The Club fielded three one day teams and one overnight team, stationing its base camp at the Bylong Community Sports Ground (with hot showers) 12km from the rather crowded event base camp near Drummers Flat off the Bylong Road. Teams proved to be highly competitive and it is a credit to the Ramblers that fourteen members participated this year.

David's team reported slow progress through some of the most disgusting scrub, but towards the end had some wonderful views over Goulburn River NP, and Lois's team met Tony Abbott who was competing.



The Club stationed itself at the Bylong Sports Ground with its amenities, campfire and surrounding scenery. The Bylong St Stephen's Anglican Church (1876) is nearby. Ingrid again provided sustenance for the teams



Margaret received recognition for participating in twenty five NavShield events – congratulations Margaret



Just some of the participants of the two hundred team entries at base camp near Drummers Flat ready to go

The Overnight NavShield Team Report from Lynne

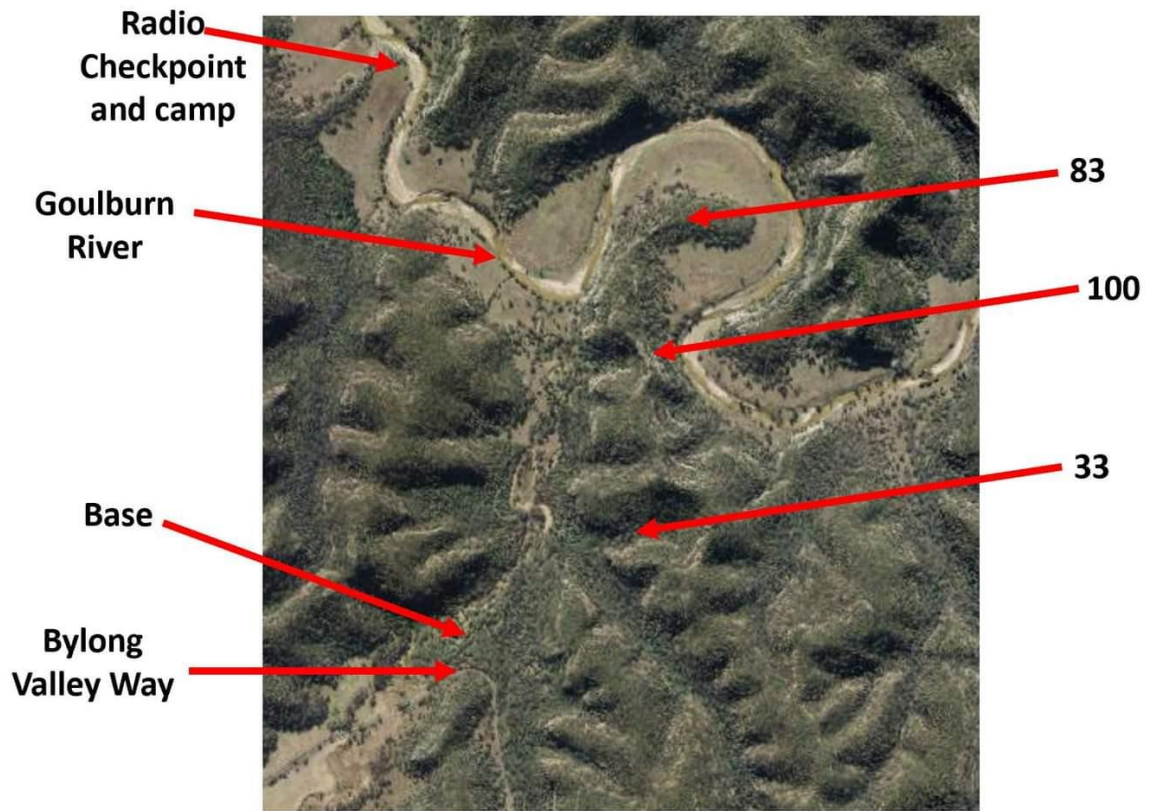
Spectacular cliffs were a feature (and challenge) of this year's NavShield. As many Ramblers are aware ... cliffs are not my thing! (Especially knife edge ridges with massive drop-offs on either side). However, the challenge was accepted (with the encouragement and support of wonderful team members, Lois and Meg). Controls 100 and 83 were added to our list (with me feeling a little nervous!). The spectacular views to the Goulburn River and surrounding escarpments were definitely worth bagging these two points.

Injuries slowed us in the afternoon, so we prudently set up camp early at Radio Check Point Alpha and rested. The fly was nice and roomy and stood up to the overnight rain.

Beautiful scenery from our campsite - as well as horrid Tiger Pear! Meg nearly sat on one (thanks to the tip from Angela B we were ready for it) Despite injuries, we managed to keep going on day 2 and collected several more points. The thought of a cup of tea and scones back at the car kept our spirits up - along with the awesome views up to the ridgeline we had walked the previous day. Well, it was tough! Usually the best teams reach every single control (they do not sleep and walk throughout the night). This year, the top team did not complete this amazing feat. 2500 points were available if every checkpoint was bagged - however, the top score was only 1800 (which I still think is absolutely incredible!).



Point 100, 'The Eye' was located in a difficult location, high on a rocky ridge with great views – Lois, Lynne and Meg bagged it



An aerial view of a section of the NavShield course



The fly was nice and roomy and stood up to the overnight rain.



Tiger Pear is a menace.

Note and photos by Lynne

Philippa and John's Visit to the Flinders Ranges – May 2023



Sturt's desert pea at Hawker

In May 2023 John Hendriks and I spent three weeks with our camper-trailer companions pottering around the Flinders Ranges. It was a lovely time of year for travel: dry, neither too hot nor too cold, and largely bug-free. We camped at a mix of national park camp sites, station

stays, and the occasional commercial campground for supplies.

Whilst it would have been possible to stay at fewer locations with more day trips, we really enjoyed the remoteness and isolation of some of the camps, and the ability to start hiking from camp. There are many options for station stays in the Flinders, usually a private (dry) riverside site with a firepit and a toilet, and sometimes access to showers and other facilities at the property homestead.

Our first camp on Moolooloo Station also included the luxury of a hut with a donkey although after over an hour of heating only a few drops of tepid water resulted! The dry riverbeds lined by red gums provided easy walking even in areas where there were no defined trails.

Of course, the Flinders is famous for gorges, and we visited some of the less well-known: Ferguson Gorge on Moolooloo Station, Moro Gorge in the Nantawarrina IPA as well as a section of the Heysen Trail in Bunyeroo Gorge. Hiking highlights included the Blinman Pool walk from Angorichina, the Yuluna section of the Heysen Trail into the ABC Range, the short Arkaroo Indigenous art walk, and several of the walks on Rawnsley Park Station.

A geological feature was the newly established “golden spike” on the Trezona Circuit walk, marking a World Heritage listing as one of 13 Global Stratotype Section and Points for the start of the Ediacaran Period 620-542 million years ago. The Ediacaran is marked by the appearance of complex cellular fossils as opposed to the cyanobacteria of Cryogenian and the burrowing fossils of the Cambrian periods.

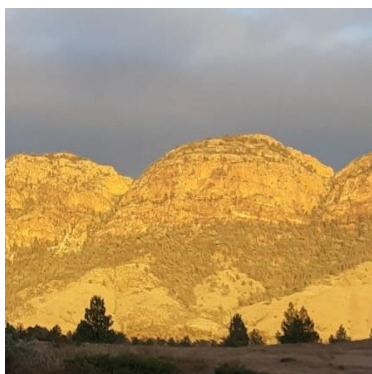
Parrots were a feature of this trip, our favourites being elegant and mulga parrots, as well as the ever-present ringnecks. Red-capped robins greeted us at most campsites. Unfortunately, some areas of the Flinders have been invaded by large numbers of goats, with consequent loss of vegetation.

As the Flinders is a popular tourist destination, there is no shortage of dining options. The Prairie Hotel at Parachilna is famous for its feral mixed grill and other roadkill dishes, Copley Bakery makes wonderful quandong pies, and the restaurants at Rawnsley Park Station and Wilpena Resort offer delicious respite from camp cooking.

As mentioned above, the northern sections of the 1200 km Heysen Trail pass through the Flinders and can be explored as day walks or as a multiday hike. For keen mountain bike riders, there is a 200 km bike loop.

So, I'd really recommend a Flinders trip in spring or autumn. If you've not visited before, and don't have high clearance 4WD or off-road camper, the more famous routes, camps, sights, and hikes are readily accessible by 2WD/AWD. If you've seen these on a previous trip and have a rugged vehicle, consider using station stays as a way to explore lesser known areas where you may enjoy complete privacy.

Report and photos by Philippa H



Heysen Range at first light from Koolamon camp.



Uncrowded Ochre Camp on Merna Merna Station – just us!



View from Bunyeroo Lookout on the Wilcolo Circuit walk in Bunyeroo Gorge

Sandy Creek and Old Timor Creek Trail, Yengo NP – 30 July 2023

Walkers: Lynne W(leader), Anna B, Alan T, and Robyn T



Mission accomplished - the end of the Old Timor Creek Trail was found! Today's loop walk to Sandy Creek had highs and lows. The lows included horrible spiky scratchy native holly, Bursaria and 'Prickly Moses' wattle. Yes, our worst fears were realised as we began the off-track ridge walk from Finchley campground to Sandy Creek - the re-growth after the fires was thick and healthy.

The highs included the little 'birthing cave' with its handprints; an adventure walking down a gully towards the Sandy Creek Trail and finding a great cave (Robyn's favourite); walking along Sandy Creek (not much water in the creek) and - finally - finding the end of the Old Timor Trail.

The walk took about an hour longer than anticipated - bashing through the scrub slowed us down. (Anna led an epic last leg!). However, we made it back to the cars before sunset with Mt Yengo basking in the glow of the afternoon light. We happily consumed mint slice biscuits before the drive home.

Note and photos by Lynne



A highlight was visiting the little Aboriginal 'birthing cave' with its handprints, not far from Finchley camping ground

Lady Nelson Square Rigged Tallship - Two Duke of Edinburgh Award Adventure Sails - Jan and Apr 2023



Captain Col at the helm

I have volunteered as a trainee crew member with the Tasmanian Sail Training Association since relocating to Tassie in January 2022. Earlier this year I had the good fortune to be part of the crew with two groups of young Aussies taking on the challenge of learning to sail on the Lady Nelson 1987, a replica of the original built at Deptford on Thames in 1798 and arriving in NSW in 1800 as a survey ship.



The Lady Nelson in Port Arthur

The original was the first vessel to sail through Bass Strait west to east after Bass & Flinders proved the passage. It was used to chart sections of the Victorian and Tasmanian coasts, the NSW coast including Newcastle, Port

Macquarie & Trial Bay areas. It was instrumental in the settlement of Newcastle, Hobart, Northern Tasmania, and Port Macquarie after Newcastle's strict penal settlement was moved north in 1821-22. The building of the replica Lady Nelson was inspired as a labour of love by Tasmanians and took place at Woodbridge on the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. She is based in Hobart and is used for youth sail training and local tourism.

The above-mentioned D of E trips were wonderful team building exercises for all on board. By the end of Day 4 the D of E candidates have 'learned the ropes', gained sailing, engineering and navigation skills as well as rostering in cooking and cleaning. They then elect a Master, Bosun, Engineer, Cook and crew to sail the vessel home to Hobart on Day 5 (under the watchful eye of the actual master of the vessel). On each occasion it was an impressive exhibition of the capabilities of enquiring young minds combined with youthful enthusiasm.

We sailed by day around the spectacular scenery of the Tasman Peninsula and Bruny Island with each night spent at anchor. We visited such places around the Derwent, Storm Bay and the D'Entrecasteaux Channel as Betsy Island, Slopen Main, White Beach, Port Arthur, Bruny Island's old quarantine station, Snug, Conningham & Port Cygnet. These trips were wonderful learning experiences for me with the reward of new friendships and fantastic memories.

In January 2024 ten intrepid Ramblers will be undertaking a 5-day Sail & Walk trip from Hobart to Triabunna taking in the magnificent scenery of the Three Capes Walk area from an oceanic perspective. Weather permitting, we hope to get ashore each day for a walk, potentially at Mt Brown near Port Arthur, Fortescue Bay, Marion Bay (where Abel Tasman first stepped ashore) and Maria Island. After this trip The Lady Nelson will be doing two x 2-night trips around the Maria Island area, followed by a 5-day trip back to Hobart. There are also other Sail and Walk opportunities planned. Check out <https://www.ladynelson.org.au/> if you are interested.

Report and photos by Col



Mid Week Bike Rides, Various Locations

Wednesday bike rides organised by Philippa, Dale and Sue have continued each week and are a feature of our program. Below is a small sample of the excellent possibilities in our region.

Duckenfield Circuit – 5 July 2023



Ash Island Bike Ride – 9 August 2023



And on Other Rides



SEC Hut, Barrington Tops NP - 29 July 2023

Walkers: Malcolm M (leader), Bob C, David M, and Kay E



The hut was constructed by employees of Shortland Electricity Council. It has been well maintained and is located in a superb hide away location off the Mountaineer Trail

Malcolm's favourite walk was on again. The last time I had been there was probably around 30 years ago, and it was time to do it again. Oddly, I have no memory of it at all. I may have photos somewhere, but it is not as easy with boxes of slides as it is on a computer. So, we set off about 6:30am to meet at Dungog by 8am. All four of us piled into Malcolm's car - better for the anticipated rough road. Our preferred route was along Middle Ridge Road, but after 15 minutes, there was a barrier on the road saying logging was in progress and the road was closed. Working

on a Saturday? Unlikely, but we dutifully turned around to try Wangat Trig Road which was a bit rough in places but got us to the start of the walk. The name of the walk presumably comes from all the mountains that have to be climbed over. Yes, it was quite steep in places, both up and down. But the forest was beautiful. Ancient trees, some long dead, showed the ravages of time in the textures of the trunk. Tree ferns abounded. Orchids survived their hosts having died decades before. And no leeches!



The walk contained many huge trees some of which were down across the trail

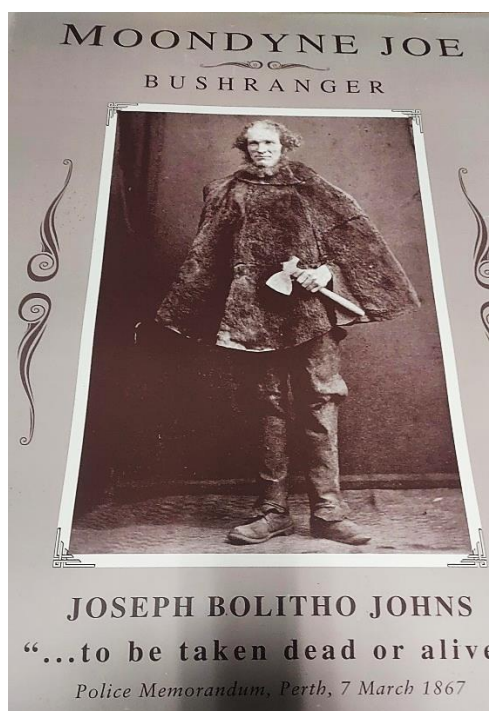
Coming down into a leafy saddle, Malcolm dived off into the bushes, looking for a barely distinguishable track which would lead to the hut, built by SEC workers decades ago so they had an excuse to get away from their wives. Or so I was told - it could not possibly be true! In due course, a hut hove into view, complete with host to greet us. Materials for the hut had been dragged through the bush over the years to build it, and later to improve the facilities. It is now a pleasant stopping place, clean and bright, with numerous platforms for sleepers to settle on.

As we ate lunch beside the fireplace, the host's family and friends arrived. It was lovely to see teenagers loving

being out in the bush and hearing about the challenges they had overcome over the years. It was to be an overnight stop before returning home on Sunday. We returned to the cars the same way, taking about 10 minutes less time. Sadly, the cafes in Dugong which has promised to be open until 4pm were all closed when we arrived at 3:15. The only place open in the main street was the Brewery which only sold beer! But they did tell us that Irwin's, the service station at the top of the hill did sell coffee, so Kay and I got a coffee before heading home. All up 10km over about 3 hours walking time

Note and photos by David

Moondyne Joe, Bushranger - Club Presentation by Greg P - 24 August 2023



The Ballad of Moondyne Joe by Bryan Lynch

*In the Darling Ranges, many years ago,
There lived a daring outlaw, by the
name of 'Moondyne Joe'.
He stole the squatter's horses, and a
sheep or two or three,
He loved to roam the countryside, and
swore he would be free.
The troopers said we'll catch him, but
we know it's all in vain,
Every time we lock him up he breaks
right out again.
'Cause in he goes, and out he goes,
and off again he'll go,
There's not a gaol in W.A. can keep in
'Moondyne Joe'*

*Joseph Bolitho Johns, better known as Moondyne Joe, was an English convict and Western Australia's best-known bushranger. Born into poor and relatively difficult circumstances, he became something of a petty criminal robber with a strong sense of self-determination. **Born:** February 1826, Cornwall, United Kingdom, **Died:** 13 August 1900, Fremantle, **Place of burial:** Fremantle Cemetery, Perth*

Many thanks Greg for your very interesting and entertaining presentation

Easy Backpack to Widden Valley – 22 to 24 August 2023

Walkers: Bob C (leader), Noel H, Sue L, Lynne M, Frank K, Malcolm M, Ingrid W, and Kevin S



The group at morning tea after a stiff 250m ridge climb to the base of the cliff line

We arrived at the Pomany Angus Property in three vehicles having met first at Denman for morning tea in the only very busy café – a second café is due to open shortly.

The drive up through the Widden Valley – some 30 km is stunning – I have never seen it so lush and green and it was great to show it in that state to those who had not been to the valley before. We parked up from the entrance to the property and set off south along the property track for eight kilometres to find the perfect camping spot beneath the huge She Oaks which line the Widden Brook – it was flowing well from all of the rain earlier in the year. A herd of beautiful black Angus cattle moved away from us as we set up. For the evening we strolled about two km further upstream towards the National Park boundary before turning back for a fun night around the campfire – a short lived thunder clap and a few spots had us in tents for a few minutes.



There were stunning views of the valley everywhere

For Wednesday we picked a less steep ridge to climb 250m elevation to see where it might lead and what we might find. For morning tea we found a large exposed sandstone outcrop amongst the thick vegetation which contained a range of native wildflowers we don't see closer to the coast. The vegetation just got thicker as we progressed with ankle deep tangled vines to trip us up on every step. We needed little encouragement for us to head back down to the Widden Brook, landing upstream in the National Park. It was an idealic fern clad spot on its bank for lunch - then a slow rough walk downstream to return to camp and another great starry night and campfire.

On Thursday we packed after a two-hour lazy loop across mostly open grazing ground, and returned the eight kilometres to our vehicles. We met up with the property manager Dave along the way to learn a bit about the property. At Widden we diverted to seek out St Luke's Anglican Church of, Widden Valley (1856) and which is still in use.

We were back in Denman by 3.00pm and Newcastle by 5.00pm

Just another great backpacking experience in the most beautiful valley in the Hunter. Thanks everyone for your great company and fun around the camp fire.

Report by Bob and photos by Bob and Sue.



St Luke's Anglican Church in, Widden Valley (1856) and just some of the different wildflower discovered



Sue and Dawn back in camp relaxing after our walk

Sculptures on the Farm, Fosterton – 30 September 2023

Walkers: Ingrid W (leader) and 10 Ramblers



Photos by Angela L

Daywalk to Rocky Ponds and the Icicles, Brisbane Waters NP – 24 September 2023

Walkers: David M (leader), Kay E, Nell W, Bob C and Robyn T



It is always a thrill to find a Waratah in flower

This is a great walk for cooler walking weather – thanks David for introducing me to such a stunning walk, complete with diverse wildflowers, shady creek lines, delightful pools, and outstanding lookouts over the Hawkesbury River and to Dangar Island.

Leaving Newcastle at 8.00am we arrived at the impressive man-made mountain of the Woy Woy Tip ready to sidle past its boundary fence by 9.30am and pick up the Dillons FT. The next 5km was along a wide-open Rocky Ponds FT which has been obviously prepared ready for fire control. For its length on either side we kept stopping to look at and

identify hundreds of native species in flower.

Next, we dived off the FT down a steep eroded foot pad to the Tank Creek and its Rocky Ponds and Jeannie's Pool which is located above a large sandstone outcrop with



David and Robyn pose on the sandstone outcrop above the waterfall and near Jeannie's Pool. Views from the Icicles south to Little Wobby and Dangar Island

views to the Hawksbury. Whilst almost completely eroded we could just make out Aboriginal engravings of footprints – David reckons in earlier days of his visits a row of footprints crossed from one side of the outcrop to the other and were clearly visible. It was such a wonderful location for lunch before climbing west to the ridgeline above to the Icicles (as shown on the Cowan map) for more outstanding views.

On the way we diverted 500m off the foot pad to see a large overhang with hundreds of names and dates inscribed by boat people who had called in below for fresh water and had made their way 100m up to the cave.

We returned the way we had come to the vehicles checking out a very nice Tank Creek camping location near Rocky Ponds on the way.

The Ramblers on previous occasions have tackled this location via ferry to Little Wobby Wharf. We were back at the cars by 3.00pm – all up about 15km of very pleasant walking – many thanks David.

Note and photos by Bob

Frying Pan Rock and Burragurra, Yengo NP – 26 to 27 August 2023

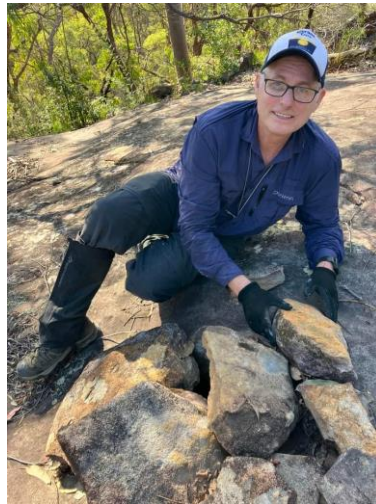
Walkers: Lynne W (leader), Alan T, Nick S and Jeff B



The four of us had an awesome walk this weekend. Thankfully, the ridges were pretty clear so the walking was easy. The numerous Aboriginal sites, as always, were a highlight for me. The weather was spectacular (perhaps a little warm in the afternoons). The Burragurra Cave is one of my favourite campsites, so it was wonderful to visit it once again. It's always nice to know that no matter what time you arrive or how bad the storms are, there is always wood and water there - a dry, comfortable spot to spend an evening. Looking forward to visiting again in next year's walking season.

Note and photos by Lynne

Nick, Alan, Lynne and Jeff in Burragurra Cave



Aboriginal water wells along the Bala Range. Nick is lifting the covering stones of the well. Further along the Range there is evidence of Aboriginal seed grinding bowls



Someone had marked over the engravings on Frying Pan Rock. The little horse engraving near the well was probably by a stockman stopping to boil the billy

The Basin to Mt Warrawolong, Watagan NP – 4 July 2023

Walkers: Bob C (leader), Alan K, Sue L, Richard F, Malcolm M and Mel M



It was a wet trudge back to the vehicle; however, Sue was well equipped. The rain forest along Watagan Creek is always magnificent, even more so in inclement weather. Photos by Sue

Mill Creek Car Camp, Dharug NP – 1 to 3 September 2023

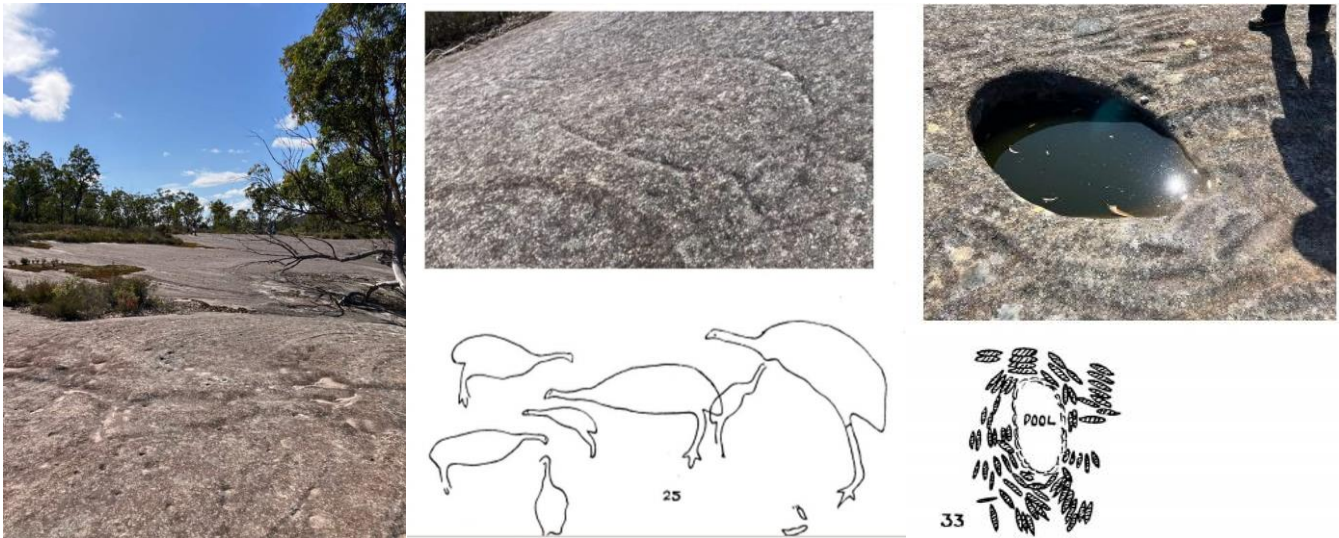
Walkers: Lynne W (leader), and 6 Ramblers



A favourite lookout of the Ramblers along the Finches Track overlooking the Hawkesbury River – we have camped and held an 80th birthday party at this location. It is the spot for lunch



Lynne and David chatting at the 'Hangman's Cave' along the Great North Road



The expansive rock platform of the Group 6 Aboriginal engraving site and examples of the many engravings

An Extra Night at Mill Creek Camping Ground for a Few Ramblers

Some of us stayed an extra day, having intended to go and have a look at an aboriginal site in Gorrick's Creek on Sunday. Unfortunately, things conspired against us getting there so we had an enjoyable day on the Great North Road. We had the campsite to ourselves Sunday evening, and very peaceful it was despite the aircraft going overhead to land at Sydney.

On Monday, we caught the ferry across the river to Wiseman's Ferry township, and went up the road towards Windsor to Hawkins Lookout. This is on the top of the ridge and had wonderful views along the Hawkesbury. Oddly, it is only signposted for people coming from Sydney - we had to guess that the entrance was to the lookout.

Many years ago, while camped at Mill Creek, Joan Robinson had shown us a convict camp used to build the road down the steep spur to where the ferry was eventually built. I had remembered this so we stopped at an unmarked spot on the road and walked about 250m into the bush. Here we found the remnants of a camp, untouched since the 1830s. Not much remains of course, since the buildings were mostly bark or timber. But they did have fireplaces made of stone, and the piles of stone are still there. There is a second camp further down the spur so a sign said, but we decided to leave that for another visit.

After this interesting interlude, we returned to Wiseman's Ferry and had morning tea or lunch at a cafe before heading home.

Note by David

Mt Kaputar Car Camp - 8 to 12 October 2023

Strickland State Forest Daywalk - 4 November 2023



Helen and Alan S bag' Mt Helen' at Mt Kaputar.



The group in Strickland SF

Abbotts Falls, Olney SF – 2 July 2023

Walkers: Alan T (leader) and 8 Ramblers,



Abbotts Falls

Thank you, Alan, for a beautiful rainforest walk to Abbotts Falls. The weather was great, and the company excellent.

A vine-assisted jungle descent led us to mossy boulders, which reminded us that we were in a Watagan Creek. The rocky overhang near the base of the falls was a perfect spot to listen to the tumbling water and sit for a few moments.

A thoughtful person has placed a rope at the top of a rock chute not far from the base of the falls. This was a very welcome helping hand in the climb back up towards the top of the waterfall.

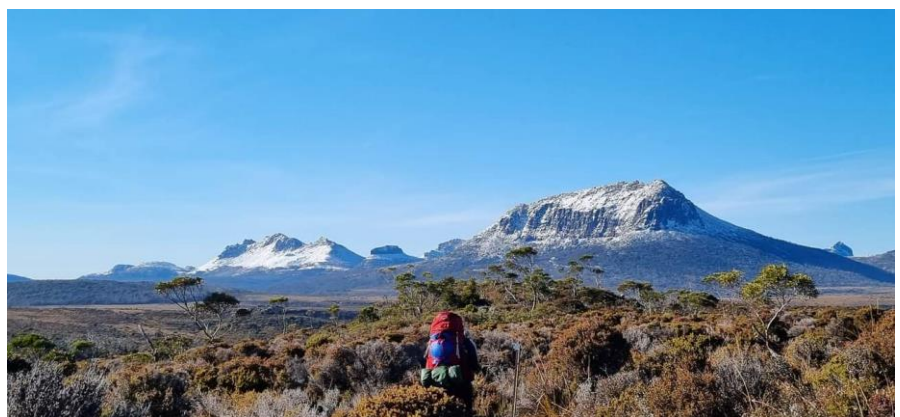
This walk is a hidden gem - so close to home. Aren't we lucky!

Note and photos by Lynne



Intrepid rock hoppers ready for the rough scramble up the creek. Rock hoppers Lynne and her daughters back out of the creek

The Overland Track, Tasmania - October 2023



Col McCsent through these great photos from his and Janes's trip on the Overland Track a few weeks ago

Goulburn River Backpack from the 'Drip', Goulburn River NP – 24 and 25 October 2023

Walkers: Bob C (leader), Sue L, Graeme P, Malcolm M, Ingrid W, and Greg P

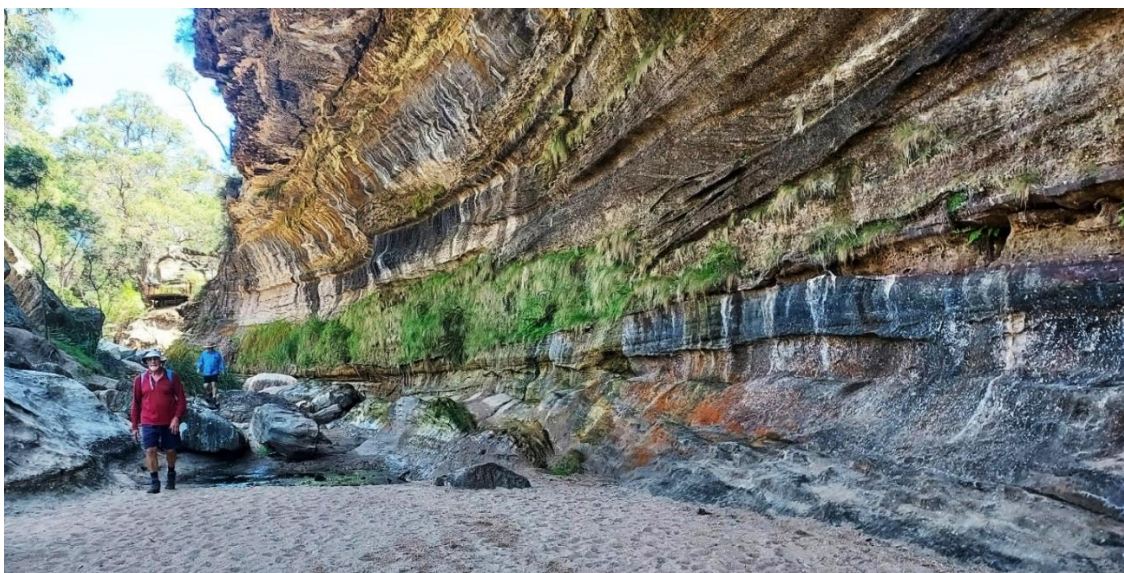
The two-hour drive from Denman along the Bylong Valley Road via Wollar to the 'Drip' carpark was most pleasant and scenic. The country side had dried out considerably and the extent of open cut mining operation was an eye opener. Wollar was almost deserted.

At the 'Drip' carpark we met Greg who had driven up the day earlier and before taking lunch we walked 20mins downstream along the newly constructed track to the outstanding 'Drip' and its fern clad walls. Nearby the overhang containing the artwork attributed to Brett Whiteley was checked out. We met two NPWS rangers responsible for the new pathway construction and discussed their further plans.

After our lunch at the picnic location we drove a few

kilometres to park our vehicles at 'Gleniston' property downstream from the 'Drip', and from where we commenced our backpack. It was getting very hot by now and over 35 degrees. The property owner, Julia, welcomed us and filled us in with local information and what we could expect on our walk.

The walking was easy along the sandy sweeps of the river as we crisscrossed without getting our feet wet. We walked for about an hour and a half through some stunning gorge scenery to camp on a grassy bank above the flowing river. Away from the river the bush and grasslands were as dry as a crisp and we elected not to have a fire that night. It was a perfectly clear night with a bright half-moon to light up the surrounds. The river frogs serenaded us.



Malcolm and Greg approach 'The Drip' and its moist hanging wall of ferns



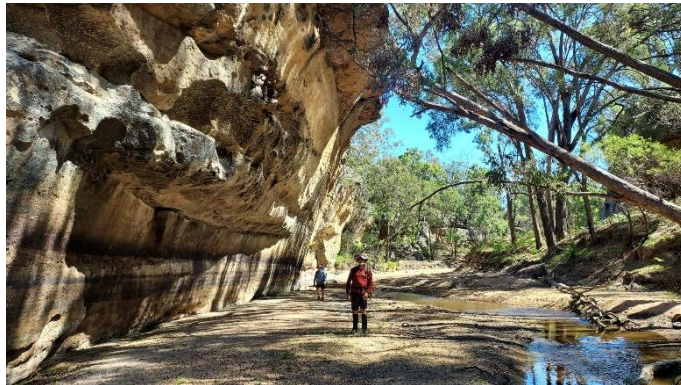
We visited the overhang containing Brett Whiteley's imitation Aboriginal art – not impressed. Breakfast the next morning at our campsite along the Goulburn River

For Wednesday we set off at 8.00am to walk 3km further downstream to the wide-open junction of Murrumbline Creek with the Goulburn River, again passing through more beautiful narrow gorges. We returned to camp, packed up and were back at our cars by 12.00 noon for a lazy lunch beneath a shady tree. The weather was again very hot with a good breeze to provide some relief. We called into the 'Hands Cave' up the Ulan Road and thence

onto Merriwa for afternoon tea at the Bakery which was still open. We were back in Newcastle by 6.00pm.

This easy walking location is fabulous and I will put it on the program again next year. The Club has walked this section and further downstream on a few occasions. I might mention that at this time of the year there was little weed evident and no Tiger Pear.

Report and photos by Bob



Stunning gorge scenery at every bend in the river



There weren't too many wild flowers around except for a bright red Bottle Brush and a small Tea Tree



On our trip home we called into the 'Hands Cave' not far from 'The Drip'

Mt Allyn, Burruga Swamp and Allyn River Rainforest, Barrington Tops NP – 14 October 2023

Walkers: Bob C (leader) and 9 Ramblers and 1 visitor



It was a long dusty drive through lovely green landscapes and in perfect weather to visit a location most of us had not returned to for many years. The timber workers village was well maintained and peaceful. Mt Allyn now sports a communication tower to take away the views. The twenty minute stroll through Antarctic Beech forest to the Burruga Swamp is magnificent. We descended to Lady's Well on the Allyn River for lunch to find it well overcrowded, being Saturday and very hot by now. We moved further upstream to find a quiet riverside spot beneath littoral rainforest. Our return took us up over the ridgeline into the Williams River and back to Dungog for a coffee – note and photos by Bob

Barraba Spur – 22 August 2023

Walkers: Lynne W (leader) and 3 Ramblers



Thankfully, we reached the top of the Congewai ridge (approx. 300m climb) before the day grew too warm for pleasant walking. Once on the ridge, a cool breeze wafted across our faces and the trees gave welcome shade. The off-track section of this walk is one of my favourites - a rocky knife-edge ridge, dotted with grass trees - its steep sides revealing glimpses of the deep valleys below. The walking was very easy today, as it appears that someone has done a cool burn along the ridge. The fallen leaves had been incinerated and charcoaled grass tufts were littered everywhere. But most of the tall trees were untouched - some of the grass trees had been singed but will soon regenerate.

From the end of the ridge, Alan's car was a white dot down below and Mt Warrawong stood out clearly behind Flat Rock Lookout on the other side of Congewai Valley. It was quiet and still - and we sat in the shade, boiled the billy and ate an early lunch. The snake was well camouflaged - I walked straight past! Mark and Jackie realised it wasn't just another one of the many twisty snake-like sticks we had been walking over. It looked like a diamond python. It was long and green and fat - stretched out completely still, except for the occasional flick of its tongue. Even though it wasn't one of the nastier varieties, I still felt grateful for my gaiters.

I was sad to finally reach the end of our return walk along the ridge - it is one of my happy places! The walk back down the spur along the Great North Walk was shaded and pleasant. We didn't really feel the heat until the last 200m or so of the walk when we reached the valley floor and moved out of the shade into the sun.

Another beautiful day great to get this walk in, as the off-track walking season will soon be limited. It already felt like the warmer days of spring had arrived (25 deg C) - just without the wildflowers!

Report and photos by Lynne

A Day Out in Muogamurra NR - 3 October 2023

Walkers: Angela L (leader), Jill Clifford, and Tess W



Nell, Jill and Angela on the day

Walkers: Bob C (leader), Charley and Jeanette M

Both Bob and Angela arranged separate visits to this amazing reserve, rich in wildflowers, Aboriginal engravings and early Australian history. It opens only for six weekends per year and you need to be quick to secure a reservation.

Although early in the season there was a great range of flowering plants to be seen. Bob headed on down to Peats Crater and early farm, the mangrove wetlands and Peats Bight for lunch looking across the Hawkesbury River. Along the way we visited the site of a former inn and a bend in the road where it had been tunnelled beneath and charged ready to blow up should the Japanese find their way this far south in WW2.

Note by Bob

Photos by Angela and Bob



An Aboriginal engraving of a whale, and just a couple of the flowers on show.