



Newcastle Ramblers Bushwalking Club Newsletter July 2024

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Lunch on a sand dune behind Tin City (Kate, Kay and Nell)

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Note from the Editor

Our Activity program has been full and varied and has been commented on by prospective members as being the reason to consider belonging to our Club. The weather has been a little unkind, though, with persistent rain resulting in cancellations of activities and generally putting a dampener on things. Vegetation growth on our favourite off track walking areas has been prolific and proven daunting in some locations.

Peter and Tracy have initiated alternate Wednesday local daywalks for which there has been a strong response from members – thanks Peter and Tracy. Lynne W with the cooler temperatures has been enthusiastic with the programming of many interesting short and extended walks

Six Ramblers participated in a photographic course run by Chris Paterson a former Club member and a recent judge of our Photographic Competition - many thanks Chris

The Committee has met on three occasions since the New Year. Matters discussed have included budget predictions for the next year, and continued support of donations to the Westpac Helicopter Service and the National Parks Association.

There is now no need for members to log in on our website to view the Activities Program which is up dated the Sunday before meeting days. Leader' waiver forms can be uploaded from the 'Walking with the Ramblers' tab, without logging in. The Committee has also asked members to pay fees by way of direct

deposit, with a view to phasing out Pay Pal in the future. We will also have Club business cards available soon.

Regular meetings continue to be well attended and the auction in June was a huge success with \$508 being raised. We enjoyed a great presentation by Johannes Hendriks '9 days packrafting the Franklin River in Tasmania - with a side trip to Frenchman's Cap.' and another evening focused on travel to Japan.

Earlier in the year Malcolm and Ingrid had volunteered to assist with the removal of Scotch Broom from around Little Murray on Barrington Tops which led to us hearing a very interesting talk from NPWS Ranger Boyd Carney how NPWS is controlling its spread and removing it from around montane swamps. Who would have believed that by cutting stems close to the ground would kill Broom without the use of herbicide spray? Our next program will contain presentations on members trips to Antarctica and the Camino Trail in Spain.

Thanks to those who provided content for the newsletter. It would be great to receive more diverse interesting stories from other members.

Good walking

Bob



A few images from Carnarvon Gorge taken by Dawn on a recent trip enjoyed by several Ramblers

Newcastle Ramblers Bushwalking Club – AGM Presidents Report for 2023

Dear Ramblers

It is with great pleasure that I present the President's report for 2023. The Ramblers has had another very successful year with plenty of wonderful activities on the program to suit all capabilities and with great participation by members. We finished the year with 150 members, a similar number to that of 2023 and we welcomed more than ten new members.

Whilst we are all another twelve months older it is great to see us enjoying ourselves just as much as ever out in the bush exploring both new and old locations. Our style is changing though with shorter walks, more coffees, and camps which require less sleeping on the ground. Some members even have trailers and are venturing out on some fabulous longer trips all over Australia. The friendship, comradery, and closeness we enjoy be it in activities, at fortnightly meetings or outside of the Club makes our Club truly unique. I thank all members for this.

We congratulate Margaret Covi for her award of a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to bushwalking.

It is fair to say that we are probably still getting over the effects of the Covid lockdowns, like other organisations, and this reflects in how people use their time and for their desire to belong to a club. Climate change is also having its effect on where and how we bushwalk. Extremes of weather have resulted in many activities being cancelled or modified.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank earlier office bearers and committees who have left the Club in such great shape. In particular Angela Begg for her role in developing our website and its membership management system and Alan Thomas for his role as walks officer over many years. I also thank David Morrison for his unselfish and time-consuming efforts in keeping everything else about the Club running in the background. I have relied on David for sound advice.

During 2023 our new Committee has been very active meeting eight times as we came to understand how the Club works and what we needed to do to simplify our systems and make us more attractive to new members. Thanks Brett, Dale, Kate, Kay, Malcolm, Ingrid, and Angela L.

After a few venue trials the Committee has settled on the Mayfield Wests Leagues Club for its morning committee meetings. The recommendations of the strategic review which was facilitated by Alan Thomas and other keen members in 2022 was adopted by the Committee and has been the blue print for our deliberations. We have ticked off most of the recommendations.

Our website has been tidied up, we have a Facebook page 'Bushwalking with the Newcastle Ramblers' to compliment the internal 'Friends of the Ramblers', both aimed at casting a wider net and better promoting the Club. At this time, we have deferred any decision to change our website and membership management system until we can identify the necessary human resources from within the Club. We have conducted a member's

survey (the first of several to come) to gather feedback and ideas from members - thanks Dale and to the 50 or more members who have responded. We are all making an effort to welcome our visitors and new members to our regular meetings and walks.

Kate Rados has picked up the membership secretary role enthusiastically and is on a learning curve as she navigates our membership management system. – thanks Kate

Our financial accounts have been ably managed again this year - thanks to Kay for her diligent account keeping and to Glen Bird who has audited our accounts. With rising costs, the next Committee will need to look closely at our budget for the next year - it is foreshadowed that we may need to increase our fees.

Newsletters, a wonderful information and promotional asset have continued during the year and appear on our website for the public to see. Previous editions and programs dating back to 1970s will be held on line at the City Library.

We have revamped how the activity program looks and the full public version with leader contact details is available on the website making it easier for prospective members to make contact and join in.

A huge thanks goes to Malcolm Mill, ably assisted by Ingrid Waeger for taking over the role of Activity Officer from Alan Thomas. This role is in addition to his existing roles of PLB Office, and Meeting and Supper organiser. Malcolm has created an excellent twelve-week Autumn seasonal program and with Lynne Walker has developed a way to update the program and get it out and onto the website. The Autumn Program is mostly full. I ask what other club of our size has a better program?

Peter and Pamela Gallagher with Angela Begg have introduced longer weekend car camps and walking trips, and Lynne Walker has been very active in adding walks of various grades to great locations which she knows about – many thanks. The Club entered four teams again this year in the 2023 NavShield competition, and with Col McCluskey, our Tasmanian member, the Club has participated in several trips to Tasmania including a memorable voyage on the Lady Nelson.

Bike Rides have been a regular weekly or fortnightly event on our programs – thanks Philippa, Dale and Alan.

The secret to our Clubs success is in having a good interesting program which will entice prospective members. I thank all leaders for their contributions during the year.

Regular Club meetings on the first and third Mondays of the month have been well attended with over 20 or so members enjoying interesting outside speakers and presentations by members. Premeeting dinners have continued although the longstanding venue of the Charlestown Leagues Club has

changed to Club Charlestown, formerly Charlestown Bowling Club.

Where to from here? – let’s keep on doing what we are doing well namely enjoying each other’s friendship and company at meetings, in the bush and around town. We will need to review our strategic plan to see how we are going, aim to involve more members in the various management roles of the Club, focus our

efforts on maintaining a strong activity program, and the promotion of our Club. Let’s see if we can get our kayaking group going again.

It should be another great year. I look forward to seeing you all out on the track soon

Bob Clifton President

Elected and Appointed Positions 2024-2025

President	<i>Bob Clifton</i>
Vice-President	<i>Ingrid Waeger</i>
Secretary	<i>Brett Bennie</i>
Treasurer	<i>Kay England</i>
Committee	<i>Ann Scott, Dale Graham, Kate Rados</i>

New Member and Visitor Liaison Officers	<i>Kate Rados</i>	Assistant Treasurer	<i>Not Filled</i>
Membership Secretary	<i>Kate Rados</i>	Librarian	<i>Ingrid Waeger/Dale Graham</i>
Activity Officer	<i>Malcolm Mills</i>	Photo Competition	<i>David Morrison</i>
Assistant Activity Officer	<i>Not filled</i>	Web-site Manager	<i>Bob Clifton (temp)</i>
Meetings Planning Officer and PLB Officer	<i>Malcolm Mills</i>	Club Public Officer	<i>Peter Farley</i>



This great photo at Lake Mungo was taken by Lynne Walker on her recent trip

Cowan to Berowra via Berowra Waters. Berowra Waters NP – 9 June 2024

Walkers: Alan Thomas (leader), Bob Clifton, Mehrdad Parsaei, Barry Williams, Sue Holt, James of the WW, and Lisa Lovi

We were walking from the Crowley Road track head (near Berowra) by 9.15am after our two hour drive in two vehicles, and after dropping a car near Cowan for our return. Travelling by car rather than train (as we have done in earlier trips) allows for more flexible planning and not having to rush to meet train departure times.

It was perfect weather. The first section of the walk on track and fire trail drops 500m (steeply in places) over five kilometres to the still, scenic waters of Berowra Waters with its ferry, moored boats, small houses and an expensive restaurant.

After morning tea nearby the next section of the walk is a stiff 600m climb over 7km though some beautiful bushland and steep creek gullies which would be alive with spectacular wildflowers in a months time. The track is rough with several scrambles along the way. We passed some impressive wind caves and there were plenty of locations to take lunch, all with extensive views.

Towards the end of the walk a couple of us opted for a shorter walk out to the Turners Road exit and to wait two hours while the rest of the group dropped down into another gully and then back up to the Cowan exit – an extra 4.5km of rough walking.

This was a most enjoyable harder daywalk through some amazing Sydney bushland – all up about 13km over six hours.

Many thanks Alan for getting this one organised

Note and photos by Bob



Wallsend Historic Walk – Easter Monday

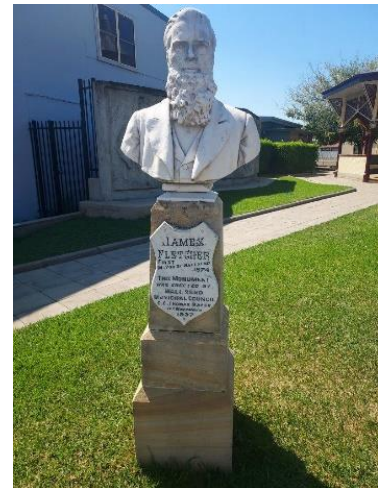
Walkers: David Morrison (leader) and 17 Ramblers



At short notice for Easter Monday David organised this great historic walk based on the City of Newcastle's brochure. It was a leisurely stroll across and through Wallsend township to take in some beautiful buildings and lots of its history. Kate who has lived in Wallsend for 40 years ably assisted with in depth information and brought along some great books on Wallsend for us to view over lunch. The Wallsend RSL had been booked for a nice lunch at 12.30pm

Thanks David for a great morning in perfect weather

Note and photos by Bob



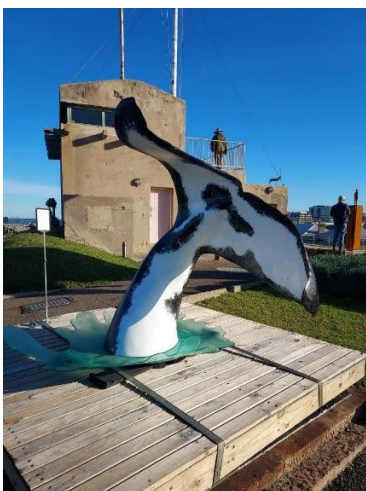
Fort Scratchley Sculptures – May 2024

Whilst the programmed visit to the sculptures was abandoned because of the wet weather most members made it to the exhibition individually. Towards the end of the exhibition the weather was magic.

The sculptures this year being in its second year was much larger and the quality of sculptures was outstanding.

We congratulate the organisers on such a fine exhibition which we hope will become a regular event for Newcastle – we will be there again next year.

Note and photos by Bob



Tank Trap Track to Tin City Circuit, Worimi Conservation Lands – 25 May 2024

Walkers: Bob Clifton (leader) Malcolm Mills, Ingrid Waeger, Kate Rados, Kay England, and Nell Watson



We have walked the Stockton Sand Dunes in the Worimi Conservation Lands many time over the years—the most recent being June 2023. This year in perfect weather we parked vehicles at the entrance to Boyers Road to walk a short distance before diverting south to the Powerline Track and then after crossing a disused sand quarry we joined onto the Tank Trap Track. It was pleasing to observe that some effort has been made to revegetate the quarry.

The bushland surrounds of the Tank Trap Track are always a delight, although this year few wild flower were evident. The short steep climb up the dune system face is always fun – one step up and two back.

We walked 1km SE towards the beach front descending gradually to some beautiful perched wetlands behind the foredunes. With so much rainfall this year there were more wetlands than usual and surrounded with native vegetation. As we walked north behind the foredunes we crossed many exposed Aboriginal middens and to our delight we found a significant cutting tool that had been exposed. We left it in place and contacted the Worimi people later.

We crossed onto the beach to look for whales and dodge 4WD vehicles, and then back again to behind the dunes – all up about 4km of sand walking and picking up rubbish as we progressed.

This year as it was a weekend there were some of the Tin City owners in residence and one of the older men immediately recognised Malcolm whose father had built a hut there back in the 70s – in fact Malcolm had also built a hut near his father's and fondly remembers the many trips to Tin City with his young family. Both huts have long since been removed.

We found a nice sand dune behind Tin City for a lunch spot before heading back across the dunes to pick up the track head of Boyers Lane. I have never seen the faces of the dunes so steep which made for some interesting walking before the track walk back to the cars.

All up a fabulous 5 hours and 12km of walking before afternoon tea at the Fighter World Café.

Report and photos by Bob



Tin City has not changed much since our last visit



The Tank Trap Track is lined with hundreds of tank traps from WW2



Crossing the dune system towards the ocean to find many interesting freshwater wetlands



Amongst one of the many shell middens we discovered an Aboriginal cutting implement

Three Day Walk to Burragurra from Mogo Creek, Yengo NP - 14 to 16 June 2024

Walkers: Lynne Walker (leader), Alan Thomas, Sue Holt, Robyn Tucker, Meegan, Neil Liddle, and Mary McPhillips

Seven of us enjoyed a 3-day backpack in Yengo National Park last weekend. Despite the rain on Days 1 and 2 (apparently nowhere near as heavy as along the coast), we were dry and warm in the Burragurra overhang. The resident *Antechinus* did not make its presence felt - so no food stolen this time. I did jump out of my sleeping bag upon finding a fat and squishy leech only minutes after getting settled for the night - great entertainment for the others

A beautiful day on Sunday for our off-track ridge walk back to the cars.

Note and photos by Lynne.



It was a good off track walk up one ridge from the Mogo Creek Bridge and then via Frying Pan Rock and the Boree Track to the Burragurra Overhang for two nights. For the second day Burragurra and several other Aboriginal engraving sites were explored. The last day took us off track down another ridge to Mogo Creek and then upto the Mogo Creek Camping Ground and our parked vehicle.

Long Wheeny Creek Backpack, Wollomi NP – 31 May to 2 June 2024

Walkers: Lynne Walker (leader), Robyn Tucker, Nell Watson, Richard Fielding, and Sue Holt



Day 1 of a 3-day backpack into Wollemi National Park began with an off-track ridge walk into the NP and then followed along the Long Wheeny Trail to an old hut for our first night. Afterward we squeezed in a short walk before the rain set in to an overhang containing artefacts from early farming activity in the area. The Long Wheeny Hut was a great place to shelter from the rain and cook dinner.

On **Day 2** we walked along the Long Wheeny Creek in light intermittent rain, amazed by the amount of water flowing as this creek is usually a sandy highway. Luckily, we had discovered an overhang last year which a shepherd had used as a shelter - even building a chimney and making a rock wall at one end. We used overhang for our campsite for our second night. We had lots of rain... but were dry and toasty warm near a lovely campfire

For **Day 3** we enjoyed a beautiful off-track ridge walk up out of the Shepherd's Overhang on Long Wheeny Creek. There were great views out to Mt Yengo to the north and the Kekeelbon Mountains to the west. We were lucky that most of the rain was further to the north - so walking through the bush back to the Putty Rd and the vehicles was pleasant.

Despite the rain, we had a wonderful walk. The Long Wheeny Creek Hut and the Shepherd's Overhang were excellent campsites. We had a campfire each night and were able to sit, chat and cook our dinner out of the rain. There was a lot of water in Long Wheeny Creek and nice open walking along the creek and surrounding ridges.

It was Nell's first backpack... what a legend!

Note by Lynne and photos by Lynne and Richard



Home Sweet Home – Looking out at the rain from the Long Wheeny Creek Hut



Our second night was in the Shepherds Cave overlooking a swollen Wheeny Creek

Anna's Great Walking Holiday – June 2024

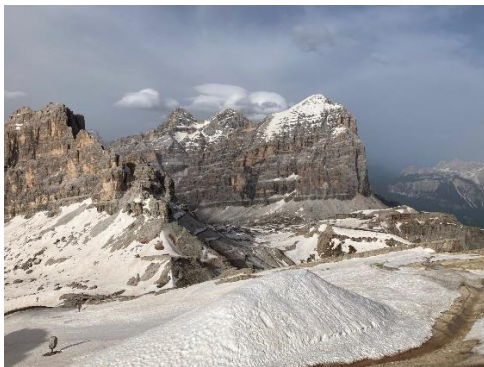
We wish we were there!



Just a few pictures to show you what an extraordinary adventure I am having in the Scottish Highlands. Very wild and beautiful with weather changing rapidly leading to multiple clothing adjustments. HF Holidays does a great job with volunteer walks leaders. Not country to tackle on your own.



After Scotland I went to The Lakes District staying with Julie my friend in Kendal. Beautiful rolling green hills and some high fells. Charming, but lacked the drama of Scotland and the Dolomites.



I'm having a fantastic time in the Dolomites. Every day brings more amazing scenery. Walking is challenging with scree, snow, and high passes - but great fun.



I fell in love with all the Herdwick sheep, an ancient breed only in the Lakes District.

Overnight Backpack to Alidade Hill, Wollemi NP – 18 and 19 June 2024

Walkers: Bob Clifton (leader), Brett Bennie, Robyn Tucker, Malcolm Mills and Ingrid Waeger



Brett, Malcolm, Ingrid and Robyn on the way along the ridge leading to Alidade Hill (in the background)

Our Club first visited Alidade Hill in July 1988 when seven members parked their vehicles just off the Putty Road and walked the eight kilometres along a very rough Grassy Hill Fire Trail before scrub bashing a further 2km west along the ridge to Alidade Hill. There, to their delight, they enjoyed extensive 270-degree views over the Wollemi Wilderness and discovered an aluminium screw top canister containing a small log book and a pencil secreted within a small stone cairn.

The container and log book had been placed there before February 1972 at a time when there was interest in the possible damming of the Colo River to support a future power station on the Newnes Plateau. The first entry is dated 3 February 1972 by G Daley and Laurie Bell. These and other keen bushwalkers and well-known conservationists of the day have their names inscribed in the early pages of the logbook. It is an interesting piece of the history of bushwalking and nature conservation in NSW, for a few years later in 1979 Premier Wran put an end to any thoughts of despoiling the area and dedicated the

Wollemi National Park. A second logbook has since been added to the container and a small set of binoculars has been left.

Our Club has visited Alidade Hill, many times since on the way to and from our adventures into the Colo Gorge and along its river – to swim, fish, laze about, pack raft, explore and each time a record of our visits was inscribed in one of the two small notebooks. Our last visit was in 2014 on the way down Canoe Creek to camp on the river. In 2013 wildfires swept across the Wollemi NP and the outcrop location was used to drop remote firefighters into the park which necessitated the removal of the cairn and its contents and relocate them to beneath a small overhang nearby.

Our mission for our backpack on this occasion was to revisit Alidade Hill, find the container and notebooks, and reconstruct a small cairn. Our intended route was the one I had used over the years which followed the Grassy Hill Trail about 2 km past the gate to the side track down to Canoe Creek and then another kilometre further along the trail to a point below the ridge which runs west to Alidade Hill. From there in the afternoon after setting up camp we planned to climb 60m up onto the ridge and walk off track about one kilometre to the Hill – not this time. Since our last visit the trail beyond the gate has deteriorated badly with washouts and has become totally overgrown - a narrow foot pad is now the only access. The only clear location we could find to set up camp was at the point where the Canoe Creek foot pad takes off.

We were at this site for a late lunch at 1.00pm and abandoning any idea of reaching the Hill that afternoon we climbed north east up on to an adjoining ridge to enjoy views across to Alidade Hill and the colourful cliff lines. We returned to set up camp early and enjoy the afternoon and a nice fire. We had walked about 4.5km for the day.



The original cairn was removed and the log books and binocular were relocated to a small overhang nearby, to clear the location for helicopters to drop off and pick up fire fighters during the 2013 Grassy Hill bushfires

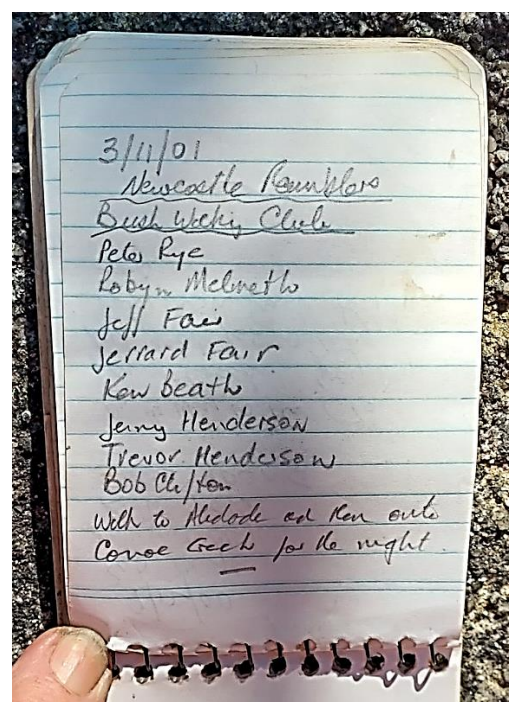
The container and notebooks were still in place since our last visit in 2014. Bob and Ingrid set about photographing the contents while Brett and Malcolm reconstructed a small cairn above the shelf where the container (and small pair of binoculars) were housed.

The next morning, we were woken by the most magnificent chorus and imitations by a Lyrebird next to our camp– Currawongs, Whipbirds, Kookaburras to name a few. We enjoyed breakfast around a warming fire before leaving to retrace our steps to reach our cars by 10.00am. We topped up with water in our daypacks and headed up and along the ridge 2.5km off track to Alidade Hill. It was a light scrub bash all the way with one tricky 20m cliff line to negotiate. It took us 2 hours to reach the Hill for a 12.00pm lunch and enjoy the views.

Our return after lunch to the cars took the same time and we were ready to renegotiate the rough 8km of fire trail to the Putty Road and thence onto Bulga Roadhouse for a coffee and chips before returning to Newcastle by 6.30pm.



This is the view south west over the Colo Wilderness from Alidade Hill



A couple of nice shots of Malcolm reviewing the log books from the newly constructed cairn and a sample of a Ramblers entry in November 2001 (you will remember some of the names)

The biggest disappointment for the trip was the fact that the Grey Gums Café which has much changed only opens on Fri, Sat, Sun and Mondays. It was a great walk out into the Wollemi Wilderness with nice company – thanks all

Report by Bob and photos by Bob and Robyn

Wednesday Walks – Various dates

Caves Beach to Catherine Hill Bay, Munmorah SCA – 15 May 2024

Walkers: Peter Hoogland (leader), Tracy Hoogland, Margaret Covi, Bob Clifton, Lynne



Peter and Margaret paused to take in one of the beautiful wetlands and rainforest gullies along the way

We met up at the Cave Beach Surf Club car park about 9.00am to head south on tracks and fire trails along the coastline of the Wallarah Peninsular NP. We reached the northern end of Catherine Hill Bay for lunch on the rocks at the end of the beach – a very nice spot before wending our way back along the same route. We did not realise it but over the duration of the walk we climbed over 400m elevation. It took about 6 hours over mostly rough tracks and some fire trails. Behind Pinney Beach and along the Yondeo Trail there were some lovely littoral rainforest patches and we spent time searching for names engraved in the sandstone outcrops of the creek by the boys of the Anglican Boys Camp. I was told by Margaret that yondeo is an anacronym derived from the name of the camp.



This section of our coastline is quite spectacular with Pinney Beach and the Shark Hole being two of the standout attractions. We could see the ladder which is fixed in position to provide access 40m below to the Shark Hole. The location is renowned for its abseiling opportunities.

Southern Glenrock Circuit – 26 June 2024

Walkers: Peter Hoogland (leader) and 6 others including two visitors





Thanks Peter for sussing out an interesting three-hour circuit walk from the Dudley Beach Car Park through the southern section of Glenrock Conservation Area. It was in perfect weather to spot several whales and a great number of birds. There is an impressive selection of cafes in Whitebridge.

Frenchmans Cap Backpack, Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers NP, Tasmania – 21 to 26 February 2016



On top of Frenchmans Cap, Tasmania in fine weather

When cleaning out our Club cupboard the other day we came across a CD belonging to Richard Fielding which he had submitted for the 2016 Annual Photographic Competition in November of that year. Richard was one of Angela's group which successfully climbed the Frenchmans Cap, Tasmania and descended 1000m to swim in the Franklin River at the Irenabyss. The others were Alan Thomas and Anthony Cook.

It got me looking up our **March 2016 Newsletter** for the full story, I could not resist adding these great rediscovered photos taken by Richard on such a wonderful inspiring Ramblers adventure.

Note by Bob



Teamwork was essential.



Angela crossing in mist



The magnificent Irenabyss between showers



The unreachable Clytemnestra

Wednesday Bike Rides – Various Dates



Raymond Terrace to Medowie with 10 Riders – 6 June 2024 (photos by Jackie Mann)



Cooranbong Circuit with 6 riders – 19 June 2024 (photos by Jackie Mann)



A morning in the country around Stroud with Sue Linton – 25 March 2024

Ramblers Club Auction – 17 June 2024

Our best auction yet. We had a terrific roll up with over 30 cashed up participants to vie for the purchase of plenty of relevant items. Auctioneers Malcolm and Arthur cleverly extracted a total of \$508 from the energetic bidding of the crowd. Stand out items included Lemon Butter, Blackberry Jam, Apple Strudel, native plants, walking poles, and MSR tents.

Thanks to everyone for your participation, humour, and quality products

See you next year at the Club auction



A really good crowd and auctioneers Malcolm and Arthur in action

Bush Dancing at Teralba – 28 June 2024

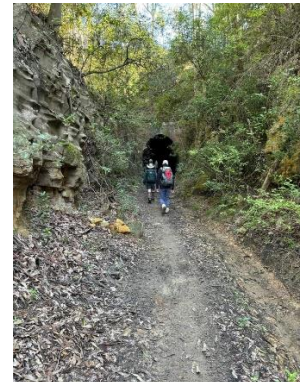
Although not on the program because it is a social event, Shane and Roz let Ramblers know that there was a bush dance on. They play terrific lively music at these events. On Friday night there were eleven Ramblers in the hall at Teralba having a great time with plenty of aerobic exercise, and lots of laughs. You didn't need to know any dances as instructions were given. The next one is at the end of August. Thanks Dawn for sending through.



Shayne and Roz provided some fabulous music for Bush Dance. Eleven Ramblers enjoyed the energetic night.

Stockrington State Conservation Area – 16 June 2024

Walkers: Craig Whitford (leader) and 6 Ramblers



Always a great walk in the Stockrington Conservation Area for a circular walk off George Booth Drive via Jew Boy Cave and Stockrington Quarry. Returning via the Richmond Main Railway easement through Tunnel #1. All up 12km over 5 hours (photos by Brett)