



Newcastle Ramblers Bushwalking Club Newsletter November 2024

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Views overlooking Sandy Hollow and up the Goulburn River Valley from the Giants Leap (photo by Sue Linton)

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Note from the Editor

Since our last newsletter in July the Club has had some great walking and our program has been largely filled with a wonderful range of interesting activities – Wednesday walks and bike riding have been regular – thanks to Peter, Tracy, Philippa and others for your enthusiasm. Peter and Pamela have returned from their Australian wide travels to add in some interesting activities, and Lynne Walker, as usual has been active with some great walks. We have had few nice backpacks as well and there are three high country backpacks planned – one to the Victorian Alps which is a bit different. Towards the end of the period a week at Yarrangobilli Caves was organised by Jenni.

Our walks Officer Malcolm was travelling in Europe with Ingrid for August and September – Lynne Walker capably filled in and kept our program up to date and circulated – thanks Lynne.

Our Club entered three teams again this year in the NavShield navigation competition with eight participants and two support staff. It was a cracker in beautiful bushland north of Stroud and which turned out to be more difficult than it looked. We performed creditably and enjoyed ourselves immensely.

Our committee has met on two occasions and amongst other matters has decide to retain our ABN number, considered Club promotion, and it finances into the future. We now have a

business card and flyers, and participated in the Hunter Street Mall Party in November. A Remote Area 1st Aid Workshop was arranged for 12 Ramblers at the Garden Suburbs Uniting Church Hall in November.

Our regular Club meetings have been very well attended despite the fact that so many of our members have been away travelling and enjoying themselves elsewhere during the period. Don and Michelle's presentation on Antarctic Macquarie Island and the huts of Shackleton and Scott was a standout and Lynne's exciting adventure of 'Big Boots' was entertaining.

We are looking forward to the Club Christmas party to be held again at Dawn's home – thanks Dawn

On a sad note earlier members will remember the wonderful times we spent with Jenny Whyte a very independent and adventurous member who died on 15 November 2024 at the age of 94. She was a great friend of Joan Robinson. Many Ramblers Christmas parties were held on her waterfront property at Morisset.

Breaking News – our resident Tasmanian member, Col has relocated to Christmas Island

All the very best to you all for Christmas and the New Year

Bob

Beautiful Fine Timber Work by Mark Frith



If you are passing on the way to Canberra don't miss calling into the Bungendoor Wood Works Gallery to view some of the most incredible timber craft created by our Club member Mark Frith – simply stunning!

Day Walk Giant's Leap and Phipps' Cutting, Goulburn River NP – 30 June 2024

Walkers: David Morrison (leader) and 6 Ramblers



Thank you for an enjoyable day yesterday, David ~ walk up to Giant's Leap Summit behind Sandy Hollow for some spectacular views. Followed by a short drive along the Bylong Valley Way to our lunch spot overlooking the Goulburn River and then a post-lunch walk along a small section of the Phipps Cutting Walking Track.

Note and photo by Sue Linton

Week Long Walking at Kanangra Walls, Yerraderie and Wombeyan Caves – 16 to 22 September 2024

Walkers: Bob Clifton (leader), Tony Winton, Sue Linton, Graeme Penny, Brett Bennie, and Nell Watson



Nell, Tony and Bob around the camp fire at Boyd River

Three locations I missed out on when included on the Ramblers program many years ago, and finally the opportunity to get there. Our six hour drive from Newcastle on **Monday** took us to Glenbrook for morning tea and the Hartley Historic Site before reaching Oberon at mid day for a look around and lunch. We arrived at the Boyd River Camp site in the Kanangra Boyd NP before 3.00pm leaving plenty of time to drive the 6km to the Kanangra Walls Lookout for its views and a steep descent to the top of the Kalang Falls, the starting point for the Ramblers abseiling adventures in earlier years.

The general location is elevated at over 1000m and we experienced two freezing nights to the extent that after our walk the next day we returned to Oberon to fix a slow leak in a tyre and purchase some warmer sleeping gear.

Our walk on the **Tuesday** returned us to the lookout location before heading out along the Plateau past the famous Dance Floor Cave. The weather was clear and beautiful as we walked the five kilometres each way through low heath and stunted vegetation with its wildflowers and the most stunning views over the Kanangra Boyd NP in all directions. At the end of the Plateau the track descends through a cleft in the cliff line to Crafts Walls and onto Mt Cloudmaker. Tony reminisces on his many extended walks to the Cloudmaker and the several ridgelines which he descended to the Cox and Kowmung Rivers,

On **Wednesday** we packed to drive to the Mt Wareng camp site about 1.5 hours away for morning tea and a two hour walk to the Ruby

Creek Gold Mine ruins and return for lunch. From there it was about 60km to Yerranderie over a rough slow road taking us two hours. Once at the Private Township Camping ground we were delighted with this serene location with its back drop of Bartlett Head and surrounded by many remaining buildings of this gold mining town which flourished in the early 1900s when it had a population of over 2000 people. Now owned and managed by NPWS several of the old buildings have been restored and available for rental. The amenity building was excellent with hot showers and a camp kitchen. There was a fire ban on the two nights we were there – bad luck.

On **Friday** we drove on down to Wombeyan Caves stopping for lunch at Abercrombie River National Park. The caves location is well appointed and spacious, and obviously gets very crowded in holidays and weekends. We spent our two days there walking the tracks down into Limestone Creek and taking in a paid cave inspection.

Sunday we retruned to Newcastle via Mt Annon Botanical Garden – A great enjoyable week to special places

Report and photos by Bob



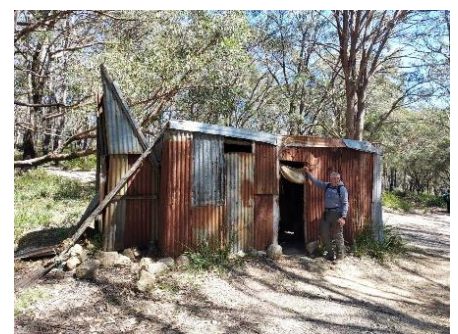
The Hartley Historic Site has many old buildings of the day with good interpeative signage. We spent some time taking it all in.



Taking five on our return from the Plateau Walk



Here we are in the famous Dance Floor Cave – a meeting point for the early drovers and community, and then out along the plateau



The Mt Wareng Camping Ground where we had morning tea would be a great spot to camp. Nearby there is an old homestead of some sort with surrounding exotic planted trees. It was the starting point for the walk to the Ruby Creek Gold Mine ruins – all that remains is an old hut. On the way from the campsite to Yerranderie we took a nearby fire trail and were able to climb Mt Wareng and bag its trig.



Some of the restored building which surround the Private Town Campsite with Bartlett Head as backdrop



On **Wednesday** we walked from camp to the Old Government Town and onto the Cemetary. On the way we passed the Yerranderie Airport complete with aircraft.



At Wombeyan Caves we tried out the local walks which led down steeply to Limestone Creek. It is a short walk to the pretty Victoria Arch and its formations

Daywalk to Tin City and the Tank Traps, Worrimi Conservation Area – 28 September 2024

Walkers: Pamela Gallagher (leader), Peter Gallagher, Alan Scott, and one other





Blue Mountains Walking and Mid Mountain Garden Festival - 19 to 22 September 2024

Walkers: Anna Braithwaite (leader) and 6 Ramblers for two day and 2 Ramblers for two days



The Grand Cliff Top Walk was disappointing so we only did the first day of it - badly signed detours for tracks already damaged and poor track notes and map from online site. We didn't get lost just not excited.

Instead on **Friday** we completed two fantastic walks:

- Aboriginal heritage at Walls Cave Blackheath 1.4 km 140 m ascent and descent. A spectacular small canyon and large cave with a rich indigenous history.
- Solitude at Asgard Swamp and Thor Head Mt Victoria 12 km 310 m ascent and descent. A beautiful remote area with spectacular views of the Grose Valley, Asgard Swamp and an old shale mine from 1880 furnace and accessible 20 metre tunnel.

Saturday - fabulous gardens with their Waratahs, Rhododendrons and Azaleas particularly good.

Sunday - Porters Pass, Colliers Lookout and Centennial Glen 6 km 215 m ascent and descent great flowers and the usual stunning cliffs and grottoes

Note many Blue Mountains National Parks tracks remain closed. NPWS facing court action regarding the tragic family accident a few years back plus ongoing climate damage to existing tracks. Check carefully best to phone before heading that way.

Note and photos by Anna

2024 NavShield,- 19 to 21 July 2024

Participants: Team 1 Malcolm Mills, Margaret Covi, Nell Watson
Team 2 David Morrison, Bob Clifton, Lois Simpson,
Team 3 (overnight) – Lynne Walker, Meg Walker

Congratulations to the SES Bush Search and Rescue for its superb organisation of the 2024 event with all of its uncertainties leading into the event associated with the prolonged wet weather. Over 550 teams from the various emergency agencies and bushwalkers competed in this years event which was held in NP north of Stroud.

The weather had fined up allowing access to the site however on Saturday midday a hurrican and strong winds swept throught the camp demolishing many of the tents and structures. The strong wind prevailed most of the night.

When we arrived on Friday afternnon Malcolm, Ingrid and Kay had our camp set up. We all catered for ourselves that night and on Saturday night after we checked back Ingrid had soup, Spag Bol and apple strudel ready to warm us up. At the presentation that night David and Lois received their 10 and 20 year awards, and on Sunday Lynne received her 15 year award.

The area for the shield was fairly straight forward with bushland which was generally open. Road and tracks as shown on maps were heavily overgrown and difficlut to follow which created problems for those relying on a road to travel between points or base quickly.

All up another couple of great days in the bush testing our navigational skills. It was Bob and Nell's first occasion taking part in this annual navigational event



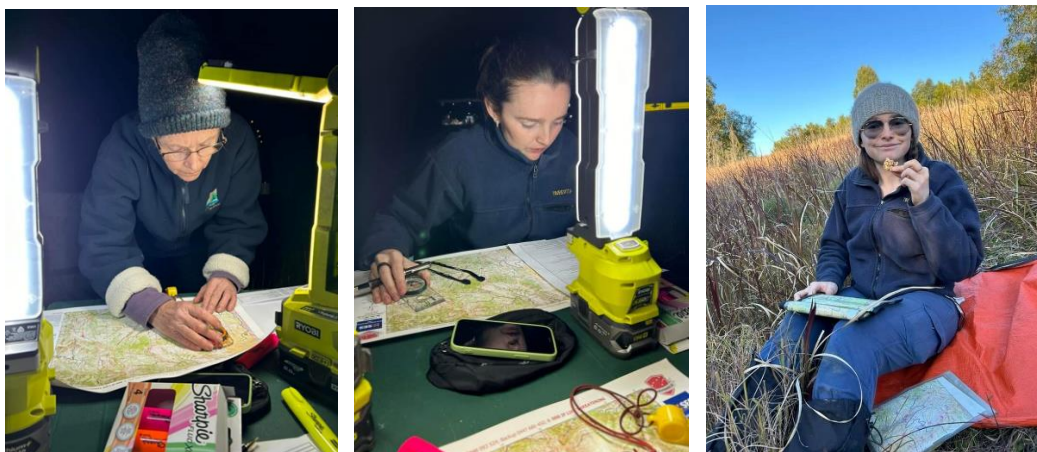
General views of the Main Base and camping area located on an adjoining grazing property



Malcolm and Ingrid's base camp with others nearby. It was a time of celebration on Saturday for Malcolm's birthday with a love heart cake. Malcolm arrived early on Friday morning to grab a good spot and set up our camp location – lucky, because of all of the rainfall and the boggy ground conditions most of the participants had to camp 500m away on a hillside. We thank Ingrid and Kay for the wonderful support to the teams and for the catering on Saturday night after the one day event.



At the award ceremony on Saturday night David and Lois received their awards for participating in 10 and 20 year Navshield events respectively and on Sunday at the conclusion of the two day event Lynne received her award for 15 years.



This is how the professionals do it -Lynne and Meg preparing their map and navigation coordinates – fully set up with table, chairs, and super lighting with a cosy brazier fire burning next to them.

'Meg and I had 'type C' fun at NavShield 2024 in the 2 day event Some of the more memorable moments included crossing Johnson's River, sleeping out overnight during a severe weather warning event (wondering when tree branches were going to land on the tent); bagging checkpoint 80 in the fading light; getting back to base and finding the Ramblers there to welcome us with smiles, hot coffee and strudel. Lois receiving her award for 20 years of NavShield participation and me 15 years; spending 2 days in the bush with my gorgeous and capable niece, Meg.'

D/W Tanilba Bay to Lemon Tree Passage – 4 September 2024

Walkers: Bob Clifton (leader), Peter and Tracy Hooglan, Jennifer Kelly, Brett Bennie, Lyn Hancock, Kay England, Warren Taylor, and local visitor Pam



This great day walk took us from Sunset Park Tanilba not far from Tanilba House (1831) and along the foreshore to Lemon Tree Passage and then onto the Koala Shores Caravan Park where we had left a vehicle for our return. For most part the walk was on the foreshore and through wooded reserves except for locations where private water frontages are involved. We enjoyed morning tea in Caswell Reserve after spending time in the Tilligerry Habitat Park, which is quite special. As the morning wore on and the tide receded we were able to walk on sandy flats and over shoreline rocks.

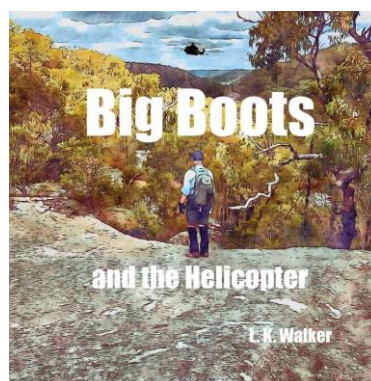
"Big Boots and the Helicopter" – Club Meeting 21 October 2024



Lynne treated us to the launch of her latest illustrated children's book which is all about being prepared when you go on a bushwalk into the wilderness. The story is based on some actual injuries and evacuations we have had on our own Ramblers' walks (modified, of course to make them OK for kids to read about!). Some of us could recognise ourselves in the images or storyline!

The helicopter adventure is a sequel to Lynne's first book "Big Boots goes to the Snowy"

These fabulous books are available through Amazon – check details with Lynne



Gap Creek Falls, Watagan NP – 14 September 2024

Walkers: Arthur Radford (leader), and 4 Ramblers



Photos by Kate Rados

Mill Creek Camp, the Group 6 Aboriginal Engraving Site and the Great North Road – Dharug NP – 20 and 21 August 2014

Walkers: Bob Clifton (leader), Alex Bencke, Lynne Walker, Mark Frith and Jennifer Kelly



After our two hour drive we stopped for morning tea at Spencer – it was misty and still. We set off from the Mill Creek Camping ground about 10.00am to follow the creek line through some pretty nice rainforest vegetation passing some good-sized overhangs. Once up out of the creek line the vegetation changed to open woodland with some wonderful wild flowers.



We reached the Group 6 Site for an early lunch. It is a huge sandstone outcrop with hundreds of engravings which are increasingly difficult to make out. Lynne had a copy of a 1950s study by F McCarthy which helped us to make out a number of the engravings. The patches of wildflower gardens growing on seemingly nothing are amazing.



Three of us remained to camp overnight at the beautiful Mill Creek Camping Ground – it was a mild night complete with full moon and we had the place to ourselves. The next day we drove to the start of the Great North Road near Wisemans Ferry to complete this delightful round walk up Devines Hill and return via Finches Track. At the start of the walk there is some massive road repair work being completed following the flooding rains in the previous year. Our drive back to Newcastle took us via St Albans and then Mogo Creek Camping ground for afternoon tea. Wonderful couple of days – thanks to those with me for your company

Report and photos by Bob

A Rambling Tasmanian Adventure Aboard the Tallship LADY NELSON Out of Hobart 3-8 Jan 2024

Participants – Sophie Tredinnick, Lyndon & Melissa Meadows, Aaron Cottrell, Therese McCarthy, Geoff Bowyer, Kate Rados, Alan Kelly, Gillian Clifford, Barry Williams.

Lady Nelson Crew – Master – Mal Riley, Bosun – David Brown, Engineer – David Allen, Cook – Kari Kanuck, Coxswain – Nick Whyatt, Deckhands, Harry Hunter, Meg Johnston & organiser Col McCluskey.



Wednesday 3rd January 10 Ramblers + 1 rendezvoused with me in Hobart in anticipation of a unique Rambling experience.

All of us, along with previous Ramblers, now Hobart residents, Chris & Bev Paterson, ventured to arguably Australia's oldest pub, 'The Hope & Anchor' for a wonderful dinner & camaraderie.

The Hope & Anchor Hotel, on Macquarie St, upstairs in particular, is museum-like and a must for anyone visiting Hobart. Early Thursday morning we had a briefing from Captain Mal, met the other crew members, then set off on our adventure sail to finish in Triabunna 5 days later. Initially the wind was not in our favour, and we motored to Trumpeter Bay, North Bruny Island where we dropped anchor for a lunch break.

After spicy tomato soup and fresh bread rolls, we raised the anchor, unfurled the square sails and sailed north across Storm Bay to drop anchor off Sloping Main Beach where we were to spend our first night. Sails were put to bed (furlled for the night) and we settled in for a lovely chicken dinner on the deck courtesy of Kari.

After dinner Aaron brought out his fishing gear and with two rods, he and Therese caught many small flatheads, none of which were keepers.

Friday proved a better sailing day and as a few adventurous Ramblers climbed aloft to unfurl sails. From the top yard I was startled as a small shark snatched a garfish, breaking the surface with a thrash just off our bow, before disappearing into the depths.

On a glorious morning we made our way around the Tasman Peninsula past Roaring Beach, Nubeena, Wedge Island, Tunnel Bay and Shipstern Bluff. With magnificent scenery and a nice breeze, we cut the engine and were able to enjoy the sounds of the sea and the wind as we sailed on toward the spectacular dolerite pillars of Cape Raoul. We were passed wide out by the

Young Endeavour which had been in Hobart when we departed and last sighted her rounding outside Tasman Island. We sailed on past Port Arthur and had the good fortune of calm seas and a favourable breeze which enabled us to sail through The Gap between The Blade, Cape Pillar and Tasman Island. Kate and I climbed out onto the bowsprit and savoured the moment, whilst Alan did the same from the foremast platform. Three Pennicott tour boats arrived to check us out and we had passengers send great photos to the Lady Nelson later in the day. Thank you to the anonymous well-wishers.

We took in the views of the old flying fox arrangement for earlier access to the Tasman Lighthouse and The Blade on the peninsula side as we rounded the cape. Most of us had walked The Three Capes in the previous October with others having done it on other occasions. It was rather special to be able to view this spectacular coastline from below on an idyllic day.

Waring ship, we now sailed north towards Cape Hauy before turning into Fortescue Bay our anchorage for the night. After anchoring the dinghy was inflated and passengers were ferried ashore for a walk to Canoe Bay followed by a swim at what must be one of Australia's prettiest beaches. Dinner again was on deck on a glorious evening.

Saturday, we departed Fortescue Bay and motored out to The Hippolyte Rocks viewing many seals hauled out on Cheverton Rock before setting sail north. This morning we passed The Blowhole, Eaglehawk Neck and Deep Glen Bay where 50 years earlier the survivors of The Blythe Star wreck off southwest Tassie had eventually drifted ashore. An epic survival story that had been in the news not long before we had left Hobart. On a beautiful morning we headed toward Maria Island, passing The Forrestier Peninsula and Marion Bay where Able Tasman had landed in December 1642.

Melissa, Jill, Sophie, Meg, Kate & Therese all took the opportunity to savour the experience out on the bow sprit, with many dolphins coming in beneath on numerous occasions throughout the day.

At Maria we were taken ashore at Rutherford Beach and walked to The Painted Cliffs before walking to Darlington and the old Maria Island Penitentiary. We then walked to Fossil Bay and the Fossil Cliffs before looping around past the airfield and back to Darlington Beach for a swim. Nick ferried most back to the lady Nelson whilst ironwomen Meg and Kari opted to swim all the way. We later moved to a more protected anchorage for the night.

Saturday was silly shirt night and Melissa and Barry stole the show, arriving on deck in near matching, blue, Where's Wally outfits. Later Lyndon, who had apparently been misbehaving seemed to take a bit too much pleasure as he was tied to the mast and thrashed with a 'cat of nine tails' by disciplinarian wife Melissa. After dinner Aaron again brought out the angling gear and he, Kate and Therese spent hours catching squid in the twilight accompanied by a fun sea shanty singalong on deck as the sun set.

Sunday, we explored more of Maria from the sea sailing the channel between the island and mainland Tassie before dropping anchor at Ocean Beach for a scrumptious lunch of fresh

calamari salad, thanks to Kari and our keen fisher peoples. With a less favourable weather forecast we spent the afternoon sailing before finding a safe anchorage on the north side of Point Lesueur. At this sheltered spot, Jill (almost 85, "shoosh") harnessed up and took the opportunity to climb aloft. Well done, Jill, applause all round.

Monday we awoke to a wet and windy morning but all were in good spirits and opted to brave the rain and sail to our final destination Triabunna in Spring Bay. The weather improved as we approached Triabunna and we took in the scenery of old mussel farms now turned to salmon farms & the old woodchip mill now an Eco Resort. We reached the Triabunna Fisherman's Wharf and were met by the oncoming Lady Nelson crew, prepped and ready for the next sail and walk trips around Freycinet and Maria. Farewells were made & photos were taken. We then walked to the Spring Bay Hotel for a late lunch while we waited for the bus back to Hobart.

Later in Hobart we had a big celebratory dinner at The Shipwright's Arms Hotel in Battery Point and relived some of the fun of the previous 5 days.

Thank you, adventurous Ramblers, and a great big thank you to all the volunteer Lady Nelson crew.

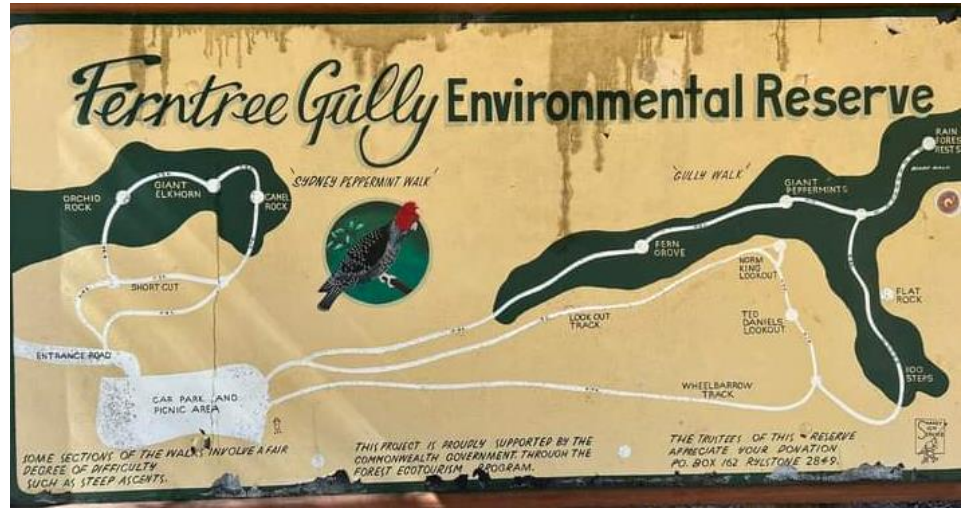
What a magnificent adventure we shared!

Report by Col McCluskey



Ferntree Gully and Ganguddy-Dunns Swamp, Wollemi NP – 30 August to 1 September 2024

Walkers : Lynne Walker (leader) and 5 Ramblers



Along the Ferntree Gully Track through beautiful rainforest vegetation



Always a great walk around the pagodas of Dunns Swamp

Taffys Rock, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park – 6 July 2024

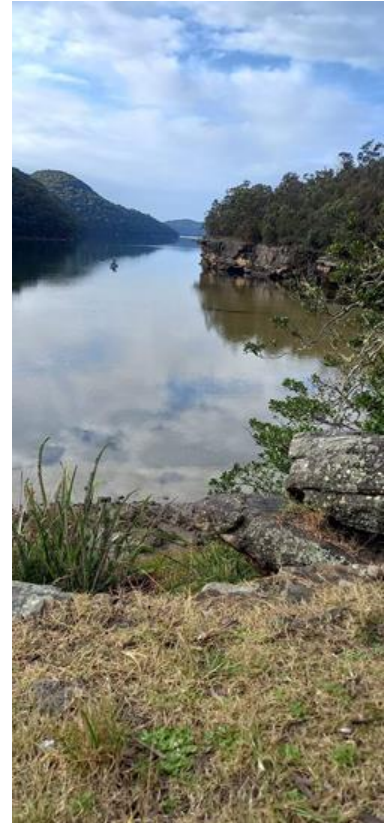
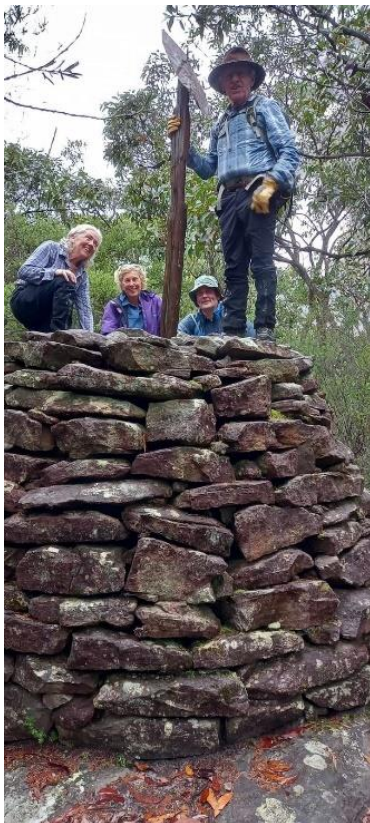
Walkers: Alan Thomas (leader), and 4 Ramblers

Despite a bit of misty rain, and a wee bit of sunshine, had a great walk with Newcastle Ramblers last Sunday led by Alan.

We hiked from Cowan station, down to beautiful Jerusalem Bay. Then the steep climb up the other side, with glimpses of views down to the water, then took a small side track about 4km out to Taffy's Rock and lookout. Beautiful walk following the undulating ridge, with lots of lovely rocks to go over, under and around!

We had misty views from the top, even got a glimpse of Lion Island. It was rather chilly up there on the huge exposed Taffy's rock platform, but a great walk. About 7 hours later we made it back before dark.

Report and photos by Robyn Tucker



Wednesday Bike Rides – Various Destinations



'The Babbling Brooks of Stroud' 8 August 2024 (Sue Linton)



Ash Island 17 July 2024 (Jackie Mann)



Just a nice shot taken by Sue Linton on a bike ride

Old Timor Creek Trail Backpack and Emergency – 12 to 14 July 2024

Walkers: Lynne Walker (leader), Mary McPhillips, Robyn Tucker, and Melissa Gavenlock

Our plan was to try to find and follow the Old Timor Creek Trail from its start on Yango Track to its end in Sandy Creek. The trail was mostly very overgrown from decades of lack of use. We had glimpses of the trail here and there and made use of one of these spots for our campsite. It was a beautiful campsite, with good access to water, where the trail looped up and around a side creek. We had a great first day, exploring and navigating with map and compass



The last day and a half of our Timor Creek adventure was not what we had expected at all ... a bit of a 'curve ball' you might say. The irony was, that we had actually reached a clear section of the 'trail' ... so, hearing a sudden cry of pain and seeing Mary sitting on the ground was very unexpected. We all realised that this could mean a helicopter ride .. there was no vehicle access to this place ... and a broken cliff line to negotiate to be able to reach the nearest fire trail on the other side of Sandy Creek.



First aid was given... and contingency plans put into action... Pack contents were shared around and Robyn stepped up to carry packs on both her front and back (!) ... improvised crutches made using walking poles... track clearing became Melissa's mission, on an overgrown and sometimes non-existent track... and the 1.5 km to a campsite 80m above Sandy Creek was covered in 4 hours.

Tents were set up and Mary made comfortable... two of us set off on a reccie to find a possible pathway off the ridge down into the creek... we found a slot and made use of animal tracks wherever we could... it looked possible.

The fire was lit as a cold night set in ... the Scorpion blazed across the dark, clear sky and the moon threw shadows on the walls of the tents. It was a long sleepless night... thinking about the plan we had made to get Mary to the 4wd track on the other side of Sandy Creek. The back up plans were still hovering there as well... an emergency text using the satellite facility on my iPhone .. or setting off the emergency beacon.

The stars had aligned ... and Mary's resilience, courage, determination and positive attitude allowed us to cover the last kilometre to the 4wd track in 3 hours. Much 'bum sliding' and pack-hauling for the descent into the creek... a well-earned cuppa on the banks of Sandy creek.. and then a slow and steady climb up the spur, through scratchy, thick scrub, to reach the Sandy Creek Trail.

We couldn't believe our luck ... a couple had driven in to get some firewood from their property inside the national park... we were rescued without having to call for help.

A huge thank you to the three wonderful women who helped me walk out from Timor Creek on a fractured ankle. They bandaged me up, fed me nurofen, took all my gear, gave me their poles and cleared the ground in front of me. Inspired leadership from Lynne who mapped the quickest, easiest way out, never any doubt we would be able to get to Sandy Creek Trail on Sunday. Robyn could probably win the Strong Woman title, carried her heavy pack plus mine! And Melissa who pretty much graded the path to make it easier to walk as well as making us all laugh. The couple who were at their property Damien and Suzanne, gave us a wild, hairy 4WD ride down Sandy Creek Trail, we were so very lucky they were there. I am grateful it wasn't worse. If you are going to injure yourself on a walk these are the sort of people you want to be with

Mary



Mt Royal Circuit, Mt Royal NP - 5 October 2024

Walkers: Barry Williams and 10 Ramblers and friends



Most of the group at the Mt Royal Trig, now hidden away in the undergrowth

Left our vehicles at the base of Mt Royal. Set off down Cassels Road descending slightly, which remains in good condition although clearly the road here is more suited to 4WD vehicles. Immediately past the first running creek an old road is seen departing on the right leading towards the north-east. It had not been trafficked for years and is eroded with water runoff and with plenty of fallen timber to negotiate. A couple of hundred meters up quite suddenly we came to a major wash-away which had occurred within the last two years, a clamber around above it was undertaken. Clearly this road would never be trafficked again! Just above here we saw a small grove of Orange Blossom Orchids in flower on dead Acacias. Resuming the easy uphill climb, we started to notice the gusty south-westerly wind picking up its intensity. Showers had been forecast (which never eventuated) but it did remain cloudy for most of the day. As we

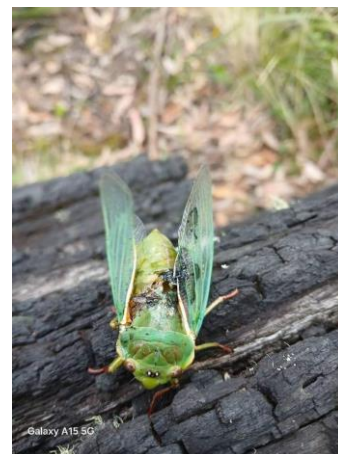
approached the top of the ridge (at Sneaky Pinch) the gradient eased off. As mentioned, now nearing the brow of the ridge, Barry suddenly struck out to the right to ascend the spur. We still remained in open mature eucalypt forest with minimal undergrowth but from here until the descent from the mountain, there were no tracks and so we picked our way along (and up). Judging from the steadily increasing wind that it would be 'unpleasant' (to say the least) to have morning tea above, where the views would be better, so we stopped here, got what shelter some of us could and had a break.

Up we continued! Within a relatively short time the open tail of the mountain was fully exposed above us and after a pic break the clambering soon began in earnest. The exposure rapidly increased as we climbed an ever-continuing series of basalt boulders usually on the western face just below the summit edge. This terrain meant that any plants would need to cling to near the surface to have any chance of surviving here and the exceptionally blustery south-western gale on this day, kept things 'interesting' along here. Unobstructed 360 degree views were the reward of course and these got even better as the mountain was ascended in places in a series of 'jump ups'. You just had to take it slowly through there and stop periodically to marvel at the views. At the top of this razorback a ten meter or so traverse was necessary with a nice 20 metre sheer drop below on the right and having to contend with the wind, this was an 'interesting' part of the walk. Soon enough this razorback ended and it was necessary to descend slowly (still) down often large and sometimes loose boulders towards the south-east. Being a totally sheltered area, the rocks here were covered in thick moss confirming that this would not be a place to be in wet weather.



The slope having now reverted to a pedestrian undulation, there was now time to pause and look around. We were now on the eastern side of the mountain and inside a cool temperate rainforest. There was still no track as such but other than having to pick your way through periodic vines and low bushes, the way now was quite easy although there was still no defined path. Along this section small sized Nothofagus (Beech) trees were first seen. There were occasional views from along here towards the east but these were usually limited by the vegetation density. The drop off the mountain on that side however remains 'severe' to put it mildly! Picking our way along, occasionally we entered thick groves of native Senecio (yellow daisies) which occurred in gaps in the canopy. In some cases these groves are more than one meter tall, repulsing our efforts to pass through and so it

was sometimes easier to skirt around them. The terrain tended upwards with occasional small size jump ups as we moved southerly. Of course being inside rainforest, views ahead are rather limited by the density of the vegetation. Reaching a grassed area with views towards the west, we paused there for lunch. The plotted Mt Royal Trig Station was behind us in the forest. 'Plotted' because the regrowth forest made it impossible to see it from more than ten meters distant. A visit there after lunch revealed a sealed capsule in its base with copies of log entries, some memorabilia bric-a-brac and, interestingly a typed screed written by the owner of Callicoma Hill below which stated the impressions that explorer Ludwig Leichardt had when he came up here for three weeks in early 1843.



We pushed on south-wards after lunch with more ducking and weaving on what was clearly now the wider head of the mountain judging by the easy terrain being negotiated. Periodic battling the vegetation and pausing looking for the best way forward continued though and slowed progress somewhat. Coming to what seemed to be the end of the mountain, Barry paused saying that there was a narrow, really rough defile which descended and if chosen correctly would suddenly break out of the rainforest onto grassland and eucalypt forest below it. The end of the plateau we were on which led to the south-eastern side of the mountain but a cursory look showed that the mountain there dropped off very rapidly and so this was clearly not the correct way down.

After a brief consult we moved more to the right and could then see the position of the defile to our right. Over to its assumed position and down we went. This section is (once again) really 'bouldery' in and the vegetation closes in rapidly and the canopy descends – being the southern exposed part of the mountain, so there are no views at all. What was clear however was, that there was a used route in here and so we were confident that we had

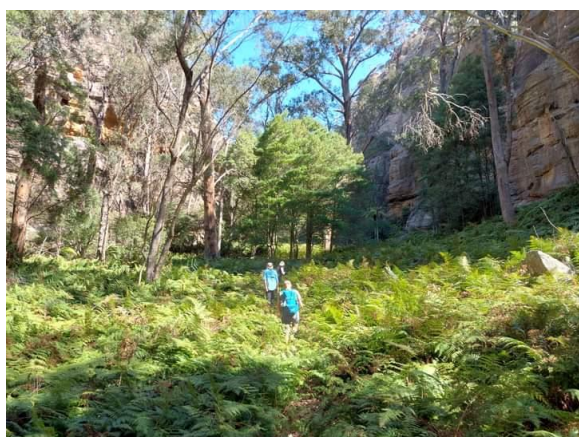
the route correct. Abruptly, we broke out of the forest onto a grassed area. We were still high and the views were amazing 180 degrees plus! From here it was a matter of descending, descending and more descending! Near the top there were several rocky outcrops to negotiate down but the main issue on the descent was to keep your feet and not trip on occasional loose rocks, loose surfaces and fallen branches (not necessarily in that order and sometimes all three at once!) The descent goes straight down the hill and so we slowly re-entered the forest first dry then in wetter form, so the views disappeared of course. Not that you are looking outward because you are concentrating where you are placing your feet! I carried and used my walking pole throughout the walk and found it great for balance particularly when on the razor edge and on this long descent. Glimpses of the road below became visible through the timber soon enough and the picnic shelter and our cars were reached by 1500 hours and we were done.

All up 6 hours of walking over 8 kms

Report by Craig Whitford and photos by Barry Williams

Car Camp Capertee NP – 4 to 8 October 2024

Walkers: Pamela Gallagher (leader) and 8 Ramblers



Day Walk at Rothbury and Tiraki NR - 13 October 2024

Walkers: David Morrison (leader) and 13 Ramblers

This trip being just south-west from Branxton was inside a 'recovering' post- industrial area (coal mining) and so some mining relics were expected to be seen.

We left the cars on the Old North Road verge and walked uphill to a locked gate and entered the Reserve. The walking track here was, in the past, used by vehicles but it was clear that motorbikes were still using the area. Passed through a line of stones embedded in the ground and there was brief speculation as to whether this was a natural or a man-made structure. Further on it became quite clear that this was a natural feature, when a lengthy 'dyke' was encountered. 'Dyke' is stated in this form because the rock was clearly sedimentary in origin –

conglomerate or sandstone and it ran visibly for over one hundred metres parallel to our track.

Then turning left (westward) downhill and eventually the path turned towards the north and started following a watercourse downstream. Then followed a still obvious track uphill until we broke out of the timber onto grassland on the summit of Terrace Ridge. This grassed area allowed views in most directions but due to ongoing cloud and haze, these views were limited. On the eastern horizon the Sugarloaf Range and vaguely its transmission towers were discerned. The height here was quite surprising because the climb had not been onerous. Morning tea was taken and the breeze up there was enjoyed.



Set off northwards along the crest of this wide ridge, once again along a clear vehicular width track. Periodically there were extensive patches of grassland with emergent saplings showing that this land had once been grazed. Surmounting a slight rise we turned right and soon enough were onto a spur of this plateau where we were now gazing down on the flats of Black Creek below. We descended eastwards down the broad, in places eroded track through the timber until we broke out onto the edge of the floodplain below.

Avoiding further groups of motorbikes, we continued on a meandering way with the creekline vaguely on our left then we suddenly dived off to the left and went down to the creek to view to ruins of what had been a substantial timber road bridge. Time and decay were playing their part and it was clear that this structure would likely be gone with the next fifteen years or so. Returning to the 'main' road - clearly such now running southwards we soon came across the first traces of the underground mining operations which had once taken place here. First on the left and then more so on the right were signs of the former shafts which were once here. Both these were marked with a hand-made 'plaque'. Proceeding on southwards, we turned off once more towards the left and came across a ruined building. The four main walls remained standing but the

roof was well gone. More recent vandalism in the adjoining area meant that outer walls and other structures were lying in pieces on the ground. There were in places substantial parts of water tanks and this coupled with apparent stalls, led to some speculation that this may have been a Colliery Bathhouse. Proceeding onward down a minor path towards the south-east, we emerged on the north-western shore of a colliery dam where lunch was taken. The dam is about football field size, likely not (now) deep with most of its surface covered with water lilies and native water plants. A few water birds were seen here.

Following lunch we chose to walk across the dam wall further towards the south-east and then almost circumnavigating the dam turned towards the southwest and worked up the tributary which fed the dam from above through the bush. Eventually crossing this water course without difficulty and gained the road we had been on before (but further south of course). From here it was a roadbash of about 1.5 kms due south in denser forest until surmounting a small hill, a vineyard appeared on our immediate left hand side and following the road down along its fence line we returned to Old North Road at another locked gate. From here the cars could be seen to the west and so a 200 m walk there completed this very pleasant day. All up 6hr and 13 km.

Report and photos by Craig

