

SUTHERLAND BUSHWALKERS NEWSLETTER

June 2024



President's Ponderings

The writing of this President's Ponder started more like a President's shiver. I began this wrapped up in thermals and a sleeping bag, in a tent, while on Shaune's Namadgi car camp. It may not be Antarctic temps but it is too cold to keep my hands out typing. For those interested it got down to minus four just before dawn!

The camp over 3 nights was a great success and you can read about it later in the newsletter.

There has been a lot of bad press lately in regard to social media and rightly so. However, there are many great resources for bushwalkers on the web, and I heartily endorse the work that Caro Ryan, aka Lotsafreshair, has done. Apart from a website that has a plethora of information, she has YouTube videos and a podcast entitled Rescued, in which she chats with both people who have been rescued and the responders who effect the rescue. There are some amazing stories shared in the podcast, and a few times I have thought, "there but for the grace...". Caro is based out of the Blueys, which makes the majority of her content local and relevant to us. I guess you could say I am a bit of a fan boy. 😊

Our own website is also stacked with lots of information about the club and is regularly updated. The Facebook page is only available to members, and has some seriously good photos and trip reports. Have you visited them recently?

Our new committee is settling in and the club continues to be in good hands. A new method for submitting activities was trialed for this quarter, and at the time of writing appears to be working well for activity organisers while streamlining the back end production. Anything that makes life easier for our volunteers is welcome.

Speaking of volunteers, our Activity Organisers get together will be held in August, please see the program for details. This is a great day for leaders to get together and discuss issues and more importantly learn from one another.

Finally, a number of members attended a first aid course in late April. It is always interesting to hear how the approach to first aid has changed over the last few years and update your skills. If you haven't done a first aid course, or need to renew your qualifications, the club reimburses 50% of course fees up to \$100.00.

Cheers

Ken

Bushwalking and Camping in the New England Area

6 - 12 April 2024

Deirdre Bowie (organiser), Vicky, Nicola, Judy, Kathy and Alayne.

6th April 2024 we caught the train to Newcastle. Due to trackwork but mostly due to the violent storm the previous night, most of the trains weren't running and those that were had to travel extremely slowly. I left home at 9.45am to catch the 11.44am XPT and thought I wouldn't make it. Fortunately, the XPT had also been delayed by 1 hour and 45 minutes. I made the train with 5 minutes to spare.

Three of us spent the night at the Ibis Hotel and the other three were at the Grand Hotel. The accommodation at the Ibis was good but their food was crap.

Sunday 7th April 2024 we were picked up by Billy who owns Oz Eco Tours and travelled north, through Gloucester and the Barrington Tops, to Walcha and The Apsley Falls walking tracks in the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. The Apsley River is part of the Macleay River system which empties into the sea at South West Rocks. The cliffs are made of slate but the walls of the gorge are highly unstable and likely to collapse at any time. The trees are Black Cypress Pine, New England Stringybark, Snow Gum, Bendemeer White Gum and Grey Box. At Lions Lookout, settlers chased the Aboriginal people to the edge of the bluff and pushed them over.



Apsley Gorge



Apsley Falls

We arrived at our accommodation late in the afternoon and fortunately, we were in cabins for the 3 nights. The cabins were in The Little Styx Camping Ground - 971 Point Lookout Road, Ebor. We had the Styx River running behind us, so it sounded as though it was raining. The cabins had hot water and a gas cooktop but no electricity and no internet or mobile coverage. There were 2 cabins with double bunks. The cabin to the left was called the Hilton. Judy and Kathy slept in one room and Nicola and I slept in the other. Deirdre and Vicky slept in the other cabin. Billy and his son Forrest chose to sleep outside in the open. The nights were cold - around four degrees. One sleeping bag wasn't enough so we put another sleeping bag inside it.

Monday 8th April 2024 we visited Dangars Gorge, in Oxley Rivers National Park south of Armidale and walked the track to McDirty's Lookout and viewed Dangars Falls. We drove along Wollomombi Falls Road and then walked the tracks to Wollomombi Falls.



Wrights Lookout

Tuesday 9th April 2024 we drove to Point Lookout Campground and walked the Lyrebird Track and continued on to Wright's Lookout. Finally! We had mobile reception. Sitting on top of the mountain it must have looked comical. Here we were with

beautiful scenery in front of us and we've all got our heads down looking at our phones!

From here we drove to Ebor Falls in the Guy Fawkes River National Park.



Ebor Falls

Wednesday 10th April 2024 Lunch today was at Sweetie's Pie Shop in Glenn Innes. After lunch we drove to the Torrington State Conservation Area, where we were taken on a walk by Uncle Paul, an Aboriginal elder. We went on the walk to Mystery Face and were told stories of Aboriginal life and culture and stories of the Rainbow Serpent. We also saw huge granite boulders that had very interesting shapes.

Thank goodness Billy had hired a 4-wheel drive minibus or we wouldn't have got into our campground. We spent the night at Boundary Creek Campground in the Gibraltar Range National Park.



The stretcher with the bright green sleeping bag was my bed.

Thursday 11th April 2024 we walked to Boundary Falls and then to Duffer Falls in the Washpool National Park. Duffer Falls was a series of waterfalls with beautiful swimming spots and Forrest had a swim.

We drove to Raspberry Lookout for afternoon tea. Raspberry Lookout takes its name from the edible native raspberry, a tall thorny vine that grows in the forests. From the lookout you see across the Mann River Valley to the Nymboida National Park.



Duffer Falls

This night we camped at The Bellbird Campground and I decided to sleep on the bus.

Friday 12th April 2024 This morning we walked down to the Coachwood Pool - absolutely beautiful! The walk was full of coachwood trees, ferns, elk horns and heaps of beautiful fungi. Several of the women had walked down in the dark last night and the fungi were iridescent and glowed red in the night. But it was still beautiful in the daylight. The pool looked lovely.



Spectacular fungi

We had lunch in Grafton before flying home with Jetstar from Gold Coast Airport. It's the first time I've flown with Jetstar. Their staff were efficient, helpful and friendly, the flight was good and our luggage came out quickly, but the food they sold was terrible.

We saw lyrebirds, crimson rosellas, wallabies and possums and we heard bellbirds, owls and bats.

It was a great holiday.

Alayne Michel

Ganguddy-Dunn's Swamp Camp

12 -15 March 2024

Leader : Alan Webb plus Lexia, Dierdre, Vanessa, Bronwyn, Carl & Lou

Located near Kandos in the Wollemi National Park on the Cudgegong River

Alan has put this trip on for a few years now and there is always a good bunch of "happy campers", some return from previous years and some are new. Doesn't matter because everyone has a great experience. Car camp or caravan there is plenty of room to claim a spot. The campers have a water frontage while caravanners have about a 100 m to walk from their allocated avenue. First and last days are setting up and breaking up camp but with two full days in between there is a lot to do.



Pagoda Turrets

A mandatory is multiple swims, in fact you can just stay in your cossie all day, go for a walk, kayak or even just chill and have a sleep in a chair under a tree. Do whatever means relaxing. Alan's local knowledge is amazing, as he has discovered a mud brick house (history unknown) built into an overhang which has a cello and a recently added violin inside, as well as a visitor book which has named it "Hobbits Hut".



Kayaking on the glass-like water in the dam.

Also, there are other places of interest only accessible by kayak, pushing through the reeds, tackling the mud and then walking through the bush. Well worth the adventure. There is a marked path to the dam which forms this lake and a lookout reached by climbing up some pagodas for the most breathtaking views. You need to take your camera for that, plus morning tea.



A great place to rest our legs

At night we were lucky to have a campfire (check for any National Park fire ban advice) and several visitors also enjoyed our cook up. Each starry night we had a camp oven cake prepared by Bronwyn and Alan, as well as some possum entertainment. All this adventure is quite tiring so there were no late nights, off to bed for a good night's sleep ... until a possum slips into my tent and starts eating a fresh loaf of bread and sits on my food basket looking at me as if to say "yum". So, a quiet night, where sound travels and the whole camp can hear the commotion of me chasing this cutie around a 3 x 3 m tent and me saying "get out of here!".



Possum on the prowl

Agh, the great outdoors I'll be back Alan, please put it on again!

Vanessa Hicks

Trip Report - Mt Bushwalker

23 March 2024

Irene and Barry Mann (Organisers), Philip Travis, Lien Tat, Greg and Pam Melrose.

Weather was overcast, cool, yet fine. We met at the Porters Ck Rd turn off from the Princes Hwy at 10am, then drove up to the car park at the trackhead. This track has undergone a significant upgrade in the past couple of years - expanded car park, "board" walk for over half of the walk and a raised platform at the end for a lunch spot. Previously, it was a very damp walk, now one can walk in new shoes and not get them dirty!



The nice clean easy walkway

A fire has taken its toll on the undergrowth in recent years, although there are many signs of recovery ... in a few years the scrub will grow over a metre or two as before. In the meantime, there are more views of surrounding hills ... even the “mound” known as Mt Bushwalker can be seen from far away. The track ends at a “lunch” platform with one of the best views in the Budawangs: Clyde Gorge immediately below, Folly Point and Shrouded Gods Mountain to the west, the Castle, Byangee Mountain, and the bulk of Talaterang Mountain in front ... there is even a glimpse of the top of Pigeon House Mountain. From here there is an extra 6km return walk to Ngaityung Falls which we did not undertake.



The lunch spot ... Mt Talaterang in the centre, the tip of Pigeon House to the left.

One always learns something on walks, this time it was about sundews or *Drosera*. There were over 1000 of these carnivorous plant visible alongside the track, made more obvious by the elevated nature of the walk. We learnt about the most common *Drosera* shaped like a rosette, saw some with their flowers on a stalk, noted the “forked” *Drosera* and Pam took many close-up shots ... very beautiful!



Sundew close up

After returning to the carpark, we drove 1 km further down the fire trail, crossing a now unused airstrip (relic of WWII) to reach an unusual area called the Ravines (note NPSW has this signposted as “the Splits”). Here the fire trail has deep ravines on both sides of the road, each being 30 - 40 m deep, and less than 1 m wide. These were formed by huge floating rock masses gradually detaching themselves from the main rock mass and moving downhill (or so they say).



Group of Sundews, with some (greenish) forked sundews at the rear.

We walked 7 - 8 km in total, the rain held off, and a sociable informative day was had by all.

Barry Mann

A Cautionary Tale

A bushwalker from another club recently shared his experience with me about what appeared at first to be a minor bushwalking injury. He slipped and fell in the creek in Heathcote National Park, grazing his knee while on a Saturday bushwalk. The bushwalker washed out the wound in running creek water and applied a dressing. Later at home he washed the wound again and dressed it. Nothing to worry about. We’ve all had similar incidents. Right? Wrong!

The following day the knee was painful and swollen. Queues at the hospital emergency department were long and the wound would place him right at the bottom of the queue as it didn't appear too serious, so he delayed visiting his doctor until Monday. By this time, it was very swollen and painful and the doctor immediately prescribed antibiotics.

They didn't work. Further swab tests revealed the bacteria was *Aeromonas Hydrophila*, which is found in the gut of leeches. These bacteria are found in fresh or salt water such as lakes, rivers, reservoirs, and estuaries, and are more prevalent in warm climates. Infection occurs when the bacteria that produce aerolysin toxin enter an area of broken skin, such as a shaving cut, abrasion, surgical wound, or insect bite.

Fortunately, after a course of different antibiotics and regular wound dressings by the nurse, his knee is well on the way to recovery, but the outcome could have been much more serious, requiring hospitalisation.

The moral of the story is to try not to let creek water come into contact with abrasions or insect bites (admittedly he didn't deliberately fall in the water). Cover wounds promptly to protect skin from infection. Never flush a wound with creek water, but use your drinking water instead. Seek help sooner rather than later for infections.

Leonie Bell

Editor's note: A similar situation happened to a friend of mine who swam in Kingfisher Pool with a small cut on his knee. He ended up in hospital with strong antibiotics and a knee operation to clean it out (infection type unknown). I have also noticed foul and discoloured water in Heathcote Creek. I have notified the EPA who are investigating. They have also requested help from Sydney Water and Sutherland Shire Council.

Car camp in Namadgi National Park

1 - 4 May 2024

Another successful car camp was held in May 2024 with 17 club members making camp and braving the icy weather at the Orroral Valley campground in the Namadgi National Park just south of Canberra.

Day 1 we arrived and set up camp, selected the communal fire site and ensured we had adequate timber for the duration of the camp. We then enjoyed a short local walk along the adjacent river.

The Orroral Valley campground is a lovely campground, adjacent to the Orroral River and it has been recently upgraded with new toilets, BBQ facilities and well-spaced sites.



Orroral Homestead

Day 2 saw us explore the Orroral Valley, past the site of the now decommissioned Orroral Valley tracking station, a NASA built facility that tracked the American space adventures in the 70s and early 80s. This was a lovely 11+ km walk through the predominantly grassy valley, an area of early settlement and farming activities with a number of old homesteads and stockyards to inspect along the way.



Brayshaw's Hut

Day 3 we jumped in our cars and headed south to the end of the Park and completed the Settlers track, a lovely 10+ km circuit walk. This was a walk back in time. We passed 3 homesteads, huts and stockyards, which have been restored and maintained for walkers to appreciate the difficulties of living conditions in this era. They were a tough and resilient lot of people.



Waterholes Hut

Day 4 was pack up day and we headed back to a very wet and soggy Sydney. We enjoyed clear weather over the camp with all members enjoying a nice period of enjoyable walks, good camaraderie and conversation. Evening temperatures dropped to low single digit numbers and sometimes below zero overnight. The evening drinks around the fire was the reward following each day's activities.



Happy hour around the campfire

Thanks to Sean and Beatrice Walsh for organising and leading the event. This event has now become an annual event in early May each year. For your diary next year!!

Gill and Greg Spencer



Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

Sutherland Shire Environment Centre RNP Walks

The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre will be speaking at our July General Meeting about coal pollution in the Royal National Park and koala habitat protection.

SSEC is an independent, not-for-profit, community organisation actively involved in a wide range of projects aimed at maintaining the natural beauty and character of our Shire, surrounding waterways and parks. SSEC runs a range of activities aimed at increasing awareness of environmental issues, protecting our environment, and just having fun.

They are inviting Sutherland Bushwalkers to attend a 4 hour walk in the southern part of the Royal National Park, around the Hacking (Deeban) River and Camp Gully Creek. This is one of the lesser known and hidden parts of the park, adjacent to the beautiful Lady Wakehurst Drive. Coal waste is visible through this area, but it is still quite beautiful.

A number of walks are scheduled between May and July. The walk is free, but numbers are strictly limited. Please register with the walk leader Pam Campbell - Mob: 0431 873 599 or Email: pamela.campbell007@gmail.com

For more information visit the SSEC website <https://www.ssec.org.au/events/>

Annette Matthews (Secretary)

Come Along to our Monthly General Meetings

Were you aware that we host a monthly General Meeting? It's a great opportunity to share a cuppa and stories with your fellow walkers and hear a little bit about the operation of the club. A highlight of the meetings are the speakers. Each month we invite a club member or an external speaker to talk about all sorts of interesting topics. There's also a lucky door prize.

Upcoming meetings and speakers:

- 29 May: Engineer and Historian Bill Phippen will be talking about Kathleen Muriel Butler, Confidential Secretary to John Bradfield during the building of the Sydney Harbour Bridge
- 26 June: Greg Inglis from Marine Rescue
- 31 July: The Sutherland Shire Environment Centre about coal pollution in the Royal National Park and koala habitat protection
- 28 August: The Rural Fire Service

General Meetings are held at 7pm on the last Wednesday of the month at the Stapleton Avenue Community Centre, 3A Stapleton Ave, Sutherland. Everyone is welcome.

Annette Matthews (Secretary)

Marrickville Food Tour 8th May 2024

In the middle of a very wet spell for Sydney, 10 of us congregated at Wollie Creek Station for a walk through a number of parks and reserves in Wollie Creek, Tempe, Earlwood and Marrickville before descending on the food haunts of Illawarra Rd and Marrickville Rd in the heart of Marrickville.



Everyone ready for a foodie tour

After a leisurely, and largely rain-free walk, through the parklands surrounding Discovery Park, Tempe Recreational Reserve and the Cooks River we arrived at the bottom end of Illawarra Rd. First stop was Athenas, a Greek Patisserie specialising in Greek biscuits and cakes as well as beautiful savouries such as spanakopita and moussaka. From there we wandered down Illawarra Rd through the Vietnamese quarter and then onto Marrickville Rd to take in the sights, sounds and aromas of the Greek legacy for which Marrickville is famed - continental deli's laden with cheeses, charcuterie and antipasto; fresh seafood straight from the markets and numerous eateries highlighting the cultural diversity of the area.

Lunch was timed fortuitously - as the rain bucketed down. The group separated at this time, making a beeline to various Vietnamese establishments that had caught the eye on our walk.

Following a delicious interlude, the plan was to commence the homeward bound journey and walk back to Wollie Creek station. Some in the group had other ideas. One participant chose to stay on to retrace our steps with a view to perusing the vintage clothes options at the many op shops. Another intrepid group went in search of an Instagram dessert ("a passionfruit, meringue and



something" concoction). We were informed later that they added considerable length to their walk (going almost up to Sydenham Rd and back) only to be met by a bemused proprietor who had never heard of the dessert before. They then traipsed back to Athenas and stocked up on some Greek sweets instead.

Anyone for pho?

In all, the day was very enjoyable in spite of the gloomy weather. We hope our newcomer to the club enjoyed her first outing and that we will be seeing more of her in the future.

Ray Madden

The Fungi are Blooming

Two walks in the Kirrawee / Loftus area of the very wet Royal National Park this week (13 and 16 May) sparked an interest in the numerous and very varied fungi in the area. Who knows why fungi come in all shapes, sizes, colours and textures, but once you start looking, they're everywhere.

What I've learned ... fungi evolved about 1.5 billion years ago from a single common ancestor with animals and as a separate group of living organisms. They are neither plant nor animal, they belong to their own 'fungi kingdom'. But, genetically speaking, they're more closely related to animals than plants. Like us, they 'breathe in' oxygen and give out CO₂ and, as such, even contribute to global warming! Unlike plants, they don't need sunlight to reproduce. They rely on other organisms for food - just like animals. Also, their cell walls contain chitin, which is found in the exoskeletons of insects, the shells of crustaceans, and the beaks of octopuses.

Scientists estimate that 25% of the world's biomass is fungal. A recent estimate of global fungal diversity is 2.2 to 3.8 million species, of which a mere 80,000 have been studied and described.



This was the first fungus that caught my attention. If Google image search is to be believed, this is a yellow coral fungus called *Ramaria Flava*. Apparently, this fungus is edible but only in moderate amounts. However, it can easily be confused with, and may well be, *Ramaria Formosa* which looks very similar except it's slightly pink and is seriously poisonous.

Then I stumbled upon (in fact, almost walked on) a blue fungus on the edge of the track at Temptation Creek. Blue isn't a very common colour in the botanical world, so although it was small, this one really stood out. During the two walks I managed to spot three of these fungi. It's most likely *Entoloma Virescens*, more commonly called a Skyblue Pinkgill. It's unknown if this one is edible or not, so this one's probably best left where you found it.



This one (on the left) was pretty cool with its yellow underbelly, which I now know are called gills. After searching on the 101 Forest Fungi of Eastern Australia website, I decided that this is most likely *Boletellus emodensis*, commonly known as a shaggy cap.

The Purple one below is probably *Cortinarius Archeri*, a native to Australia. These distinctive mushrooms have bright purple caps that glisten with slime and appear in autumn in eucalypt forests. The white one may be *Amanita Virgineoides*, known as the false virgin's lepidella.



Fungi are endlessly fascinating especially since they perform vital ecological roles in the carbon cycle as the primary decomposers of organic matter. They cycle nutrients, provide shelter and sustenance to animals, invertebrates and microbes, promote disease resilience, conserve soil and have highly symbiotic relationships with many plants and algae.

All of the fungi in this article were photographed on two short walks in a small section of the Royal National Park. Imagine what else is out there.



Annette Mathews



A warm welcome to our new members:

- | | | | |
|--------|------------|---------|------------|
| Sharon | Butler | Alison | Katsiaris |
| Tony | Carolan | Merilyn | Madden |
| Libby | Davey | June | Masters |
| Glenys | Davies | Cynthia | Mikel |
| Mike | Drew | Ingrid | Moon |
| James | Goh | David | Nakkan |
| Fiona | Hammel | David | Norman |
| Reg | Hammel | Barbra | Sharp |
| Fadia | Hango-Zada | Lucy | Smie Chura |
| Susan | Hitchen | Carly | Wallace |
| | | Gary | Williamson |

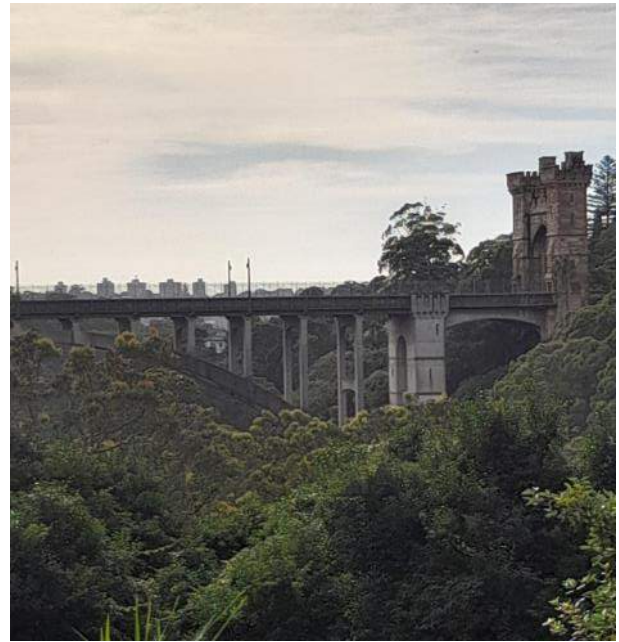
We look forward to seeing you out on the track, on the water or on the road soon!

Q1 Club Activity Stats (Jan, Feb, Mar)

Sutherland Bushwalking Club now has 358 registered members and we participated in 46 club activities during Q1 2024.

Activity Type	Number of Activities	Number of Participants
Day Walk	35	299
Paddle	4	33
Multi-day Walk	2	8
Bike Ride	2	12
Multi-day Trip	2	9
Track Work	1	10

(Data from Activity Organiser's Trip Reports)



Northbridge courtesy of Donna Hollaway



Three days in the mountains with Phil and Lien



Blue Mountains day walk with Tim