



Newsletter

Milton Branch of the National Parks Association of NSW Inc.

No 53: May – September 2008

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

My year as President has of course flown by and I haven't even taken the opportunity to have my say on the things that concern me. So here goes. We are of course a very successful social group with a marvellous walking program and our work in supporting National Parks is valuable. However in future years I would like us to be more proactive on some of the environmental issues facing New South Wales, Australia and the rest of the planet. It is still possible to debate human influence on global warming, although the evidence mounts rapidly, but population growth, deforestation, overfishing, salinity and water shortages are all facts of life. In our own State unbridled development remains the norm. We are all concerned by these matters but I, like most people, have been happy to leave any real action to a tiny minority. Perhaps it is time that as an organisation we applied ourselves more passionately to some of the issues of the day.

Moving from the global to the really significant, I am very sorry to report that Dave and Sheila Wardleworth have, after much soul searching, decided to take a break from administration of the branch. They certainly deserve a spell after all their work and I hope they enjoy some more relaxed walking without having to worry who's got the EPIRB and whether the leader of the other walk actually knows where he/she is supposed to be going. Their departure leaves a big gap in the committee. Presidents are two a penny but good walks co-ordinators are worth their weight in gold. So let's hear those nominations flooding in.



Roger Parris

EDITORIAL

We have a new advertiser with Paul Lenton at Konica advertising with us in the Newsletter. NPA Walks Programs will be available at Ulladulla Fast Photos for those who like to get their photos printed there.

President Roger has not mentioned that his 'other' occupation as an Industrial Heritage Consultant is increasingly part of his life. He has currently been contracted to write a history of Darling Harbour for the powers that be. This means of course that he will not be standing as the Milton NPA President this coming term.

Roger's departure from the Presidential scene is regretted as his cheerful and urbane manner will be missed from the chair. We are assured by him that his presence will continue at the branch in other capacities, most of them highly social in nature. Thank you Roger for your efforts this past twelve months.

rondoughton@aapt.net.au

BRANCH MATTERS

General Meeting Presentations

Presentations given, with attendances not available at this time:

6th February: Trekking in Italy with the Intrepid ladies! (See Newsletter 52 for details!)

3rd April: To Kosciuszko in a Howling Gale-Bev Blakston (Replacing Fire Prevention in the Shoalhaven, due to illness by the speaker.)

Branch Meetings

Branch General Meetings are normally held at 7:30pm on the first Wednesday of **even numbered months**, at **Ulladulla Community Centre, St Vincents St, Ulladulla**, followed by a talk of interest. New members are especially welcome at meetings.

Dinner Dates: Branch social dinners are normally held on the first Wednesday of **odd numbered months** (not January).

Dates for 2nd Semester 2008

General Meetings:

4 th June 2008	AGM	7.30
6 th Aug. 2008	General Meeting	7.30

Committee Meetings:

28th May @ Judi and Bob Sloan's home.
30th July 2008 TBA

Social Dinners:

2 nd July 2008	Ring Cecily for details
	6 for 6.30 pm
3 rd September 2008	"
	6 for 6.30 pm

BUSHWALKING CORNER

Since the last Newsletter the walks (participant numbers in brackets) were as follows:

February

Narrawallee NR Roger Parris (10)

Car Camp Wog Wog Kevin Richards (9)
Guerilla Bay Leigh Martin (10)
Nowra Birdwatching Bob Black (11)
Bomaderry Chris Huddle (6)

March

Clean-up Oz Day Lorraine Clowes (7)
State Council Meeting/Greenfields Ron Doughton (27)
Peppers Gap Dave Wardleworth (7)
Rusden Head Barry Vidler (16)
Long Gully Keith Richards (9)
Part of Long Gully Roger Parris (10)
Easter Sunday No Walk
Gadara Point Ron Doughton (14)
Mt. Bushwalker Barry Vidler (12)

April

Mt. Carriloo Bob Black (Cancelled)
Hylands Lookout Dave Wardleworth (24)
Clyde Gorge Kevin Richards (9)
Warden Head Roger Parris (14)
Little Forest/Pigeon House Bob Black (13)
The Basin Track Barry Vidler (Cancelled)
Extended Car Camp Sheila Wardleworth (10)
Murramarang NP John & Sheila Brooks (16)

May

Meroo NP Russell Peterson (26)
Maloneys Beach/Three Island Pt. Leigh Martin (not available at publication)
Bangalee Reserve Lorraine Clowes (")
Quiltys Mt. Bike Ride Ron Doughton (")
Greenfields Beach Denise Dent (")

Thank You –

I would like to thank the NPA members assisting in 'the Bikes at Budawang School' program – Anna, Bev, Chris H, Denise D, Dave F.

Plus thank you to the volunteers for Education Week, on the 2nd June, for setting up camping gear and taking the Budawang students on a bushwalk along Millard's Creek. A 3rd thank-you to the 'Clean-Up Australia' crew who collected 84 kg of rubbish.

Lorraine Clowes



Advance Notice Day Walks in the Blue Mountains Leader is Kathy Manning

Monday 20th Oct to Friday 24th Oct 2008
Staying at the Katoomba Falls Caravan Park, Katoomba Falls Road (Cliff Drive), Katoomba. Ph: (02) 4782 1835, email katfalls@tpg.com.au
Accommodation: Cedar Cabins with ensuites, caravan and camping, powered and unpowered sites. Book early for cabins and powered sites, as October is a popular month. When booking, mention NPA Milton /Ulladulla Walking Group and Kathy Manning's name. Kathy's phone is (02) 4454 4457. Please contact Kathy for more details.

Instructing Bushwalkers How to Lead

by Heather Roy

Back in the 1980s when I was leading many NPA bushwalks. I started a scheme where I invited members to walk with me as I led. I discussed the route using the appropriate map and compass where needed. I discussed the need to walk as slowly as the slowest walker and have a tail end person and to let everyone know at the beginning of the walk during an introduction circle, who the tail ender was and that person would always be at the end of the walking group and should be alerted by anyone in the party having difficulties. As leader, I never allowed the party to get so far ahead that contact with the tail ender was difficult and that most of the time was in sight so that a signal or message could be sent forward to the leader to pause until the whole party caught up, or not allow big gaps in the group. Everyone should be able to see the person in front and behind.

At any major intersections I stop to talk to the whole party, explain the turn off, show it in the map, then proceed.

As the prospective leader and I walked I showed how I stop to point out to the group notable wild flowers and anything else of interest along the walk. I also explain that having done the walk previously I have noted times, a good morning tea stop and lunch stop. Then the likely time of arrival back to train or cars. Explain the need to let everyone know the

difficulty of the walk, what clothes, food and drink needed (either through the program advert or by phone). Along the track explain the need to and how to protect the environment (travel safely).

I then progress to giving the map (and compass if needed) to the learner leader and suggest he/she walks in front of me and actually leads practising what I have taught but with myself as a backup and as a confidence booster.

The next step is to suggest that two learners lead a walk together either with a small private group or a limited NPA advertised walk, not too many people at first, I suggest about eight. Choose a well-known walk.

(Heather Roy is a well known member of Sydney Branch and is currently Co-Chair of Park Management Committee. This classic article was retrieved from the archives by Dave Wardleworth.)

Birdwatching in the Arctic

Words and photos by Bob Black

At 9:30pm on Easter Saturday, I was standing in snow outside the fishing port of Vardø on the Arctic coast of Norway at 71°N. The temperature was probably only -10C but with the wind chill felt more like -30C or -40C. I was wearing seven layers on top, four below and three on my head.

With the others in our group, I was watching the magnificent spectacle of the Northern Lights. It started as slow moving broad bands of light stretching directly overhead from horizon to horizon. This display faded, and some minutes later was replaced by a dancing curtain of light, folded like a shepherd's crook, with downward thrusting shafts of illumination. This too faded and we retired to our hotel.

The previous day, we had flown from Heathrow to Helsinki and then on to Ivalo in Finnish Lapland, far above the Arctic Circle. Ivalo does a roaring trade in the run up to Christmas, with charter flights of children, adults in tow, visiting "Santa and his reindeer in Lapland", and still being home in time for tea.

The sun was setting as we landed at Ivalo, casting a delicate pink hue to an otherwise stark landscape of dark grey conifers contrasting harshly with the unrelenting whiteness of the snow. Temperature -10C.

Saturday morning dawned grey, with what would have been drizzle if it wasn't frozen.

Temperature -14C. We set off in two large people-movers to our first stop at Inari, 20 km north of Ivalo, to see a Crested Lark. It had decided to spend the winter here, a thousand kilometers north of its usual range! The locals thought it was a funny looking sparrow, and dubbed it the "punk rocker".

At the roadhouse at Kaamanen, we stopped for a much needed cup of coffee and our first Arctic specialties at the bird-feeders there. Arctic Redpoll, Pine Grosbeak, Siberian Jay and Siberian Tit were all new birds for me. The sky had cleared to a brilliant blue – and the temperature dropped to -18C!

We crossed into Norway at Utsjoki and then drove on along the northern side of Varanger Fjord to Vardø. Unlike the spectacular fjords of western Norway, those of the north coast have gently rising sides. We stopped at a few spots along the way to look at sea duck – Steller's Eider (new for me), a distant glimpse of King Eider, Common Eider and Long-tailed Duck.

Easter Sunday dawned to snow showers

and a more moderate temperature of -5C. We took a 12 metre fishing boat to the Hornøya Island Nature Reserve, just off the coast from Vardø. We stood in the back on a slippery snow-covered metal floor. The sea was pretty smooth, but with hands full of camera and binoculars, a third hand to hang on with would have been most useful!

We motored out to huge rafts of birds – Common Guillemot, Brunnich's Guillemot, Black Guillemot, Razorbill, Puffin, Kittiwake – on the sea, and thousands upon thousands wheeling through the air. This was the highlight of the trip for me, being immersed in so many wonderful birds.

Over night, a howling gale blew up, and



Birdwatchers – Arctic style!

Monday dawned a blizzard with visibility at times down to fifty metres. We had to retrace the 400 km to Ivalo and fortunately the snow tyres and drivers were up to the task. The temperature had risen to -1C.



Pine Grosbeak – an Arctic speciality

That night at Ivalo we went out listening (unsuccessfully) for Tengenbaum's Owl, and early the following morning out looking (again unsuccessfully) for a Capercaillie. We then flew back to Heathrow, and two days later I was birdwatching in Singapore, but that is another story...

-oOo-



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Descent of Gadara Pass recently.

Photo: Ron Doughton

Found!!

Lost at the State Council Weekend with all the Thermos' being used for hot water - one Blue and Silver 'Jackeroo' Thermos lid/cup.

If you are missing this item from your Jackeroo Flask, please get in touch with Ron who will be delighted to return it to you.!



Story and photos by Geoff Andrews

The West Indies have always held a fascination. They have been so much involved in European history from Columbus onwards. The Spanish Main bred buccaneers (or pirates depending on your view-point) Napoleon's Josephine hailed from Martinique. Some of the world's greatest volcanic eruptions have taken place there. They, or the Caribbean, are the source of the Gulf Stream. Revolutionaries, weird music and religions were born there. It was lucky therefore, that Elisabeth and I had the chance to visit and sail round some of the Windward Islands on our son's Dufour 385 recently. We started and ended in Grenada and visited the islands of Carriacou, Union, Mayreau, Tobago Cays, the Grenadines and Petit St Vincent.

Although we spent only 12 days there, that

the cruise liners or vessels or those that did book 'land' holidays, who sat all day and roasted by a pool in a resort somewhere – real St Lawrence's I called them. For those who wonder at the reference, he was tortured on a spit and was reputed to have stated at one stage,

"I am already roasted on one side and, if thou wouldst have me well cooked, it is time to turn me on the other."

The climate is equitable as to be expected less than latitude 10°N and the Trades blow constantly. No land-sea breezes here among the smaller islands. The flora and avi-fauna are exotic without being especially 'tropical' except in the highlands. We were surprised how dry much of it was.. The 'rum punches' were great, especially when taken in one of the

infinite small bars which are everywhere. One advertised that it sold *spiritual* liquor.

The people really are on the horns of a dilemma. Life is relatively easy; the people laid-back and friendly. Those that have get-up-and-go do just that, either to the UK or the USA. On the one hand they want the tourists to come and get annoyed when the cruise liners don't put people ashore and on the other they provide nothing apart from deckchairs and truly terrible T shirts and sarongs. The supermarkets are devoid of



was sufficient to allow us to form impressions that people who visit in huge cruise liners or who stay in the various resorts, would never even contemplate.

It is understandable that those who live in latitudes higher than Australia would view the sun, crystal seas, warmth and exotic beaches somewhat differently from we who have such things on our doorstep. But we were amazed at the number of people who either never came ashore from

most necessities and with a few exceptions the food in restaurants very ordinary. The reasons



of course for this state of affairs are not confined to this region and need no explanation here. Patriotism is flaunted everywhere. The sides of roads, bunting, house colours and even the plaiting in women's hair portray national colours. The majority dress in truly casual style and yet the school children (and police) are immaculately dressed.

As with so many places in Europe, the UK and Asia, there are marked divisions within both rural and urban life. There is the rustic with its crowded street markets and verging on what we might call slum conditions. On the other hand there are also well-heeled suburbs and international shops, although these occur sporadically. Many houses are half built, waiting one assumes for income to continue.

The language is amazing and the *patois* incomprehensible when the locals are speaking amongst themselves but they revert to English when it suits. There are quaint notices as already mentioned in the liquor example. Others advertised toilets with an arrow pointing to *inboard* and *outboard*.

Still another requested '*Please do not dispose of anything except toilet paper in the toilet. Thank you.*'

Highlights were many and varied and included seeing the various responses when our son asked to play the conch shell and proceeded to summon half the village to see not only him doing it but also the fish that it was assumed he had delivered! Visiting the chocolate and rum 'factories' on Grenada (rum at 69% Alc/vol. and 138% proof) trying to photograph boobies, gannets and frigatebirds from a bouncing platform, walking to catch a local bus and going to 'town' with twice as many locals as the vehicle was designed to carry, having one very good meal and then attending a local steel band concert on the beach-front, lunch on board off Petit St Vincent with freshly cooked (by Elisabeth and Sophie) lobster washed down by excellent English 'champagne' on St Valentine's DayIt was all great fun.

-oOo-



From whatever direction you arrive at Alice Springs, you've travelled far to reach this town, the Territory's second most populous area after Darwin. Travellers from south pass through Heavitree Gap to reach the town, often in company with long, slow freight trains as they snake through the Gap beside the Stuart Highway. You may be lucky enough to arrive with The Ghan. According to the 2006 census, the population of Alice Springs was 23 892 – small enough to be relaxed and big enough not to know everyone's business!

We found caravan parks plentiful and well situated to enjoy the many delights of Alice Springs. The City Centre houses many indigenous art galleries with beautiful examples of desert dot art, as well as the very

finely painted works of many Arnhem Land artists. Prices range between reasonable and very expensive due to the popularity of our indigenous art, especially with overseas travellers. The cafes, restaurants and pub bistros are well patronised if you're looking for a change from camp cooking.

Still in the City Centre, Hendrik Guth's Panorama Gallery houses a wonderful collection of Albert Namatjira paintings and those of his sons and other family members. Panorama Guth was well worth the visit for Aboriginal artefacts and paintings as well as Guth's prolific works. While still in the City Centre, don't miss a visit to Adelaide House Museum, a wonderful building designed by the Reverend John Flynn (Flynn of the Outback) with a unique air conditioning system at that time. John Traeger's early radios are also on display. The John Flynn Memorial Church, situated next door is very simple but lovely, with a wall of plaques to commemorate the early pioneers and those involved with the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

The Olive Pink Botanic Gardens are situated on the north side of town. The gardens are a lovely example of a comprehensive arid area garden and the walk up Meyer Hill leads to two quite elevated lookout points of the town - both a must to see. The view from the north eastern lookout is exceptionally good and also takes in a view across to Anzac Hill. After a stroll along the walking tracks meandering through the gardens, visitors can indulge in a light lunch or cappuccino and cake at the café – yum!

The Telegraph Station is reached by vehicle or on foot via the Todd River Walk. We enjoyed the walk and on arrival, had a





Sunrise at Trepina Gorge

long chat with a chap named Bruce whose son leases and manages the Station as a tourist and education venue. Bruce had been called from retirement to provide visitors with information. Pictured above (in the title photo) is a beautiful Ghost Gum at the Station. We returned to town via the Bradshaw Walk enjoying the ranges and hills bathed in the soft colours of late afternoon light.

Larapinta Drive takes travellers west from the town, passing the Cultural Precinct which houses various art exhibitions, a cinema, cemetery and historic exhibits including an air museum. At the time, we saw very good exhibitions of Rex Battarbee paintings and Namatjira works as well as a good photographic display of indigenous footballers (many barefooted). The cemetery contains, amongst many others, the graves of Lasseter, Albert Namatjira, Rex Battarbee, Olive Pink, the Connellan family (aviation) and Hetti Perkins (mother of Charles Perkins, Aboriginal activist and politician).

We joined the Emu Run tour company to visit Palm Valley. Our driver Les (aka Carmel), was a very colourful character and a "rough diamond" by her own description. First stop was just out of town at the memorial graves of the Reverend John Flynn and his wife. We continued on to Hermannsburg Historic Precinct for morning tea and many photo opportunities of the old Lutheran Mission

Battarbee

The road from Hermannsburg to Palm Valley is definitely 4WD and extremely rough in places. Our driver was very expert in negotiating the track and gave us plenty of laughs to soften the jolts. We lunched in the valley and took The Cycad Walk below spectacular rusty cliffs as well

as the walk up the ridge and back into Palm Valley.

Desert Park is another "must visit" venue. Whilst at the park, we were lucky to catch the Birds of Prey exhibit where several birds fly into the small amphitheatre area – the Wedge Tail Eagle was awesome. The park is a wonderful presentation of the various woodland, desert, rivers and sand country habitats of the flora and fauna. The Nocturnal House and its various fauna were beautifully presented and the displays of birds in their native habitats just blew us away. We agreed that Sir David Attenborough's comment that "there is no museum or wildlife park in the world that could match it" is not overstated.

Prior to our arrival at Alice Springs, we had visited Uluru, Kata Tjuta and Kings Canyon, however, the splendour of these sights is well matched by both the West and East MacDonnell Ranges. Again, Larapinta Drive takes travellers towards the West MacDonnell Ranges. At Simpson's Gap we were rewarded with sightings of several Mala – Black Footed Rock Wallabies moving into the warmth of the afternoon sun. Nearby, the short Cassia Hill walk of 1.5km has good interpretive signage and information sheets.

Although only a short walk, it was geologically fascinating, due to the age of the hill area – some 1,600 million years. Cassia Hill is a section of exposed rock which actually underlies the MacDonnell Ranges which date back some 750 million years. It is believed to be the oldest exposed area in the world. It's quite difficult to get one's head around the geological processes of the whole area but it's certainly fascinating. The Geology and Landforms brochure, if available, helps to explain the geology of the Macdonnell Ranges.

The site of Albert Namatjira's Twin Ghost gums is nearby although the trees have suffered the ravages of time.

Ellery Creek Big Hole is a very beautiful waterhole – lovely sandy bottom and sparkling ti-tree coloured water but swimmers beware – the water is freezing. We took the 3km Dolomite Walk which followed the Larapinta Trail for a short time and then cut back around a hill for great viewing of the incredible rock formations – some over 750 million years old and mere youngsters when compared to Cassia Hill!

Whilst continuing on to Glen Helen, the visual treats continue with a noontime visit to Standley Chasm – the only time the sun penetrates to the floor of the chasm. The Ochre Pits are also of interest as the Aboriginals sourced their art materials from the pits and traded ochre with far distant tribes. Serpentine Gorge is also spectacular with a lovely but steep climb to a lookout point and views of the Gorge below.

We chose to base ourselves at Ormiston Gorge, having been lucky enough to secure the last campsite large enough for our trailer tent. The camp area is a short walk to the Gorge where visitors have the choice of several walks of short to medium length. The sunset view of the Gorge walls from the camp area was picture perfect, followed that night by the eerie howling of dingos from the rim of the Gorge.

Ormiston Gorge



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buildings. At Hermannsburg, we viewed a very interesting old ABC video on Albert Namatjira, who lived at the Mission and learned to use watercolours provided by Rex

Glen Helen Gorge is at the end of the bitumen and has a resort providing accommodation and camping facilities which we found a bit on the tacky side (2004). The pub is pleasant but pricey and although the Gorge is easily accessible, it lacked the rugged beauty of the previous Gorges visited.

The drive from Alice Springs to Trepina Gorge, beside the East MacDonnell Ranges is a rewarding experience. The Nature Park at Trepina Gorge has good camping sites, toilets and water but no showers. This is a very open Gorge, quite different from Ormiston, with lots of beautiful Red River Gums. We experienced warm days and perfect, cloudless blue skies – a wonderful offset to the rusty gorge walls. 4WD roads provide access to many other interesting areas, Ruby Gorge Nature Park and Arltunga Historical Reserve being but a couple.

As you can see, there are many treats in store for visitors to “the Alice” and a wealth of information is available on the internet – so get googling and go!



From the Archives: Milton NPA 25th Anniversary Celebrations at Narrawilly Farm in 1985: From Left, Chris Humphries, Mae Humphries, Marcia Higgs, Harry Higgs, Colin Watson and Emily Vidler (in front). *Photo: Ron Doughton*

**Milton National Parks
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