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**Membership Fees**

**\$40 Per Person**  
**Subs due July each year**

# *Sunraysia Bushwalkers*

## *October 2013*

*PO Box 1827  
MILDURA 3502  
Ph: 03 50257325*

Website:  
[www.sunbushwalk.net.au](http://www.sunbushwalk.net.au)



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# GALPUNGA WILDERNESS WALK

29-30 August 2013

By Dick Johnstone

The place is exactly the same but its face alters ever so much. Of the five Club members who retraced the Mt Henschke walk from two years ago, four were journeying for the second time. The seasonal timing was similar but the contrast stark. Our old memories and pictures of vast areas of golden acacia are superseded with many shades of green grey shrub land, an absence of flowers and greater exposed soil surface.



*Peter with his new pack. I imagine that he was hoping that all would be well and no sore shoulders*

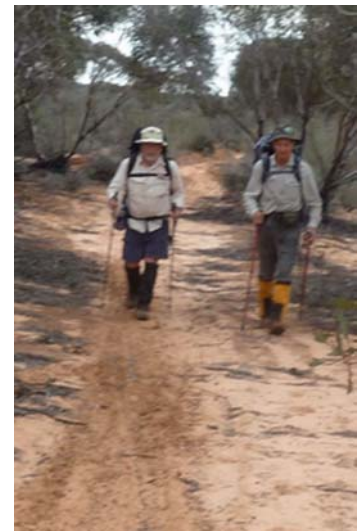


Soft sand tells tales, like the twin imprints of kangaroos left well before the last fleeting rain shower and the widespread diggings of busy echidnas. There were no obvious feet marks this time of Mallee Fowl, although at one stage a large bird with a whirring sound took flight at tree top level and was not seen again. Several old nesting mounds were seen but none of them were being worked, largely because of the lack of moisture and surface litter.

Signs of other critters still abound. Cloven hoof marks of feral goats are not difficult to find and many smashed shrubs are victim to their actions. We would have preferred the inward track to Mt Henschke to have not been cut up by knobby motor bike tyres.

The bush adapts to the transition from distant past wetting to the exceptionally dry autumn and winter. We noted abundant numbers of healthy young Mallee Pines. Even more surprisingly, an occasional delicate Spider Orchid could be

found defying these harsh desert conditions.



*A couple of ferals with knobby knees?*



*Atop Galpunga Rocks*

Our journey was to each of the key points that we chose for the previous expedition. Firstly to Mt Henschke - or its latest title Galpunga Rocks. Then it was across a vast lower scrubland to a small area with its flat open clearings for a night's camp. Next morning, before breakfast, we walked to the top of a rise (141 meters) which we believe to be the highest point in the northern Sunset country.

For some reason, perhaps a slight hue in the air, we were not as confident this time of identifying Mt Crozier on the far southern horizon.

There are always rewards to be reaped from venturing into this country. It is dangerously remote from accessible tracks; there are no obvious relics of prior human activity to be seen, yet the resilience of the bush is inspirational. It is no place for the foolhardy or ill-prepared, but this wilderness possesses a special fascination. We continue to appreciate the opportunities of trekking into the Murray Sunset Park.



*Roger, Peter, Dick & Noel, with Russell behind the camera*



*Just checking!*



### INFORMATION RECENTLY RECEIVED

An introduction to a new web site for camping and associated activities.

[www.youcamp.com](http://www.youcamp.com) is a unique, new website. **Youcamp** is essentially about land/property sharing and is the first of its kind in Australia. They connect bushwalkers, travellers, campers, adventurers, families, silver nomads and backpackers with landholders across Australia. They have over 48 categories of adventure including bushwalking. Their goal is to create a community of people who interact in a new way across Australia and it's not just about tourism. **Youcamp** is also about new friendships, labour exchanges, genuine experiences and seeing the real Australia.

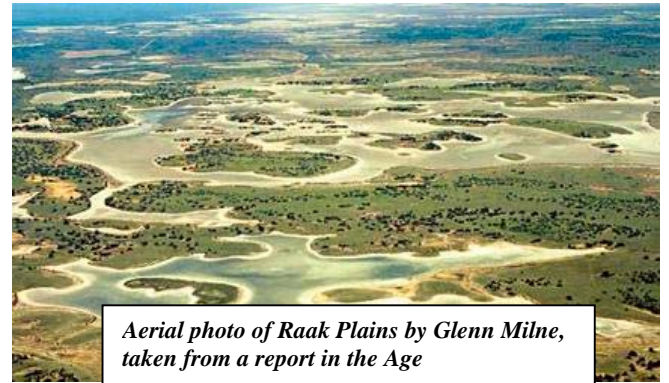
80% of properties currently listed on **Youcamp** welcome bushwalkers. Other categories include kayaking, bush camping, rock-climbing, swimming, conservation sites, wildlife, wildflowers and scenic views.

It's free for people to search, contact the owner and to make a booking (no commission) on **Youcamp**.

# Raak Plain Ramble

14<sup>th</sup> September 2013

What a roll-up! We were 13 in number for this great walk – Kim, Mick, Trisha, Rita, Liz, Paula, Michael, Peter, Jeff, Tony, Jenny, Roger & Barb



*Aerial photo of Raak Plains by Glenn Milne, taken from a report in the Age*

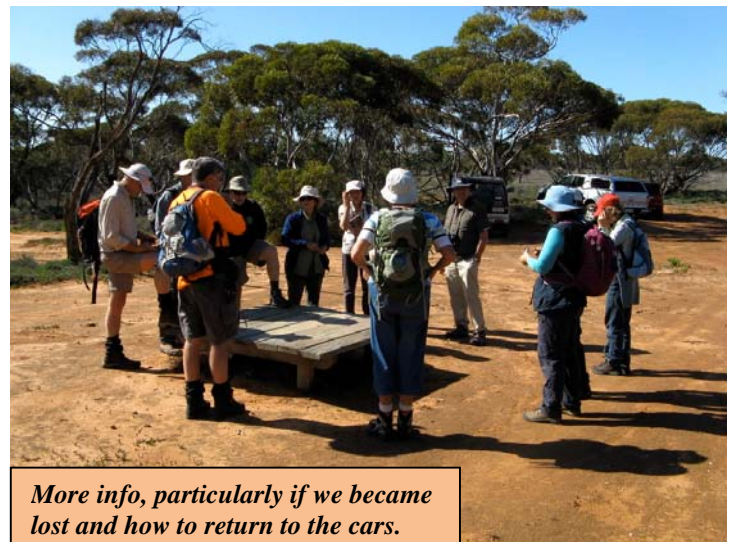
It had rained the day before so there was some trepidation as to the state of the roads & tracks within the Sunset National park. Fortunately the water had soaked through the sandy country and made for a very pleasant drive – no dust!

I thought a GPS was supposed to be a helpful navigational aid; nevertheless Roge had 3 double takes before we arrived at our starting point!



Our first intended stop (as prescribed by our absent President) was at the corner of Settlement road and the Meridian road for Roge to impart some interesting knowledge of the area supplied by Dick. Whilst in the area we located quite a stand of Quandong trees.

The intention for the day was to visit the red rocks and the red ochre pits. This thus meant we firstly had to walk south from the vehicles to view the rocks, back to the vehicles, via Raak Plain's edge, for lunch. Then we walked northward to view the ochre pits.



*More info, particularly if we became lost and how to return to the cars.*



It was quite a walk to where the red rocks are located. The weather had warmed considerably and we had to contend with a myriad of flies around our faces – not very pleasant and most annoying. Once at the rocks it was a very pleasant scene with a thin layer of water on the lake like depression, giving us some lovely reflections. A scroggin break was called and we sat and enjoyed our surrounding. As we set off to return to the cars for lunch Paula drew our attention to a colourful and extremely fast moving beetle – an absolute beauty (we think it was a cricket – see photo).



Our walk was enhanced with the discovery of a couple of wonderfully shaped chough nests constructed from mud plus a beautiful Major Mitchell at his/her nesting hollow.



After lunching with the flies it was then off to view the ochre pits. It is quite interesting and fascinating to see the red ochre lodged within the surrounding clay which is named lacustrine. (A geomorphic process whereby soil forming material is deposited in lakes.)

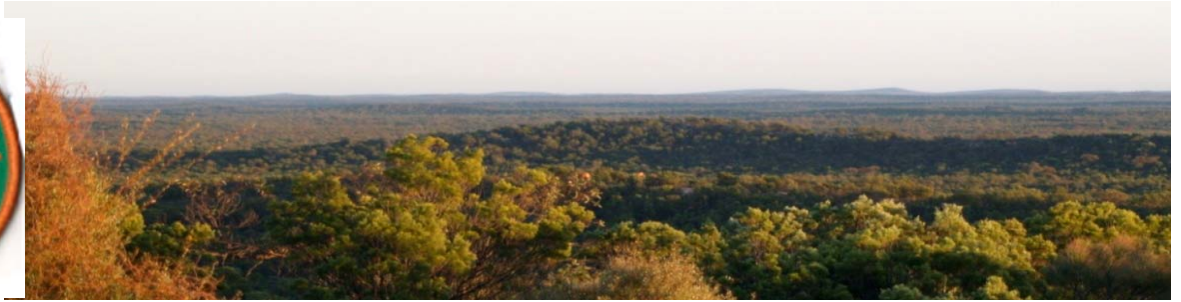


*Michael having a break in the pits!*

14.9 kilometers were walked for the day! Thank you Roge (& Dick for organizing) another great walk, together with some great bushwalking members.



*Report by Barb*



## PLANNED WALKS FOR 2013/14

*If you intend going on any of these trips please contact the Trip Leader by 8 pm the Thursdays beforehand so that arrangements may be finalized. Unless a minimum of 4 walkers (including the Trip Leader) have registered by Thursday evening walks may have to be cancelled.*

2013	Activity	Grade	Contact
October 2nd	Meeting		
October 19th	Evening walk at Kings Billabong followed by a picnic tea	E	Dick 50220030
October	Croajingalong	MM	Roger 50257325 0488121648r
November 21-30	Bike Tour & Ramble – Tasmania 9 Days <b>or High Country Rail Trail See separate email</b>		Michael 04005749988
<b>2014</b>			
April 18 – 21	Mootwingi National Park		
	Cobdobra – <i>Suggestion only at present</i>		
	Glue Pot - <i>Suggestion only at present</i>		
Late April/May	Mt Feathertop – Harriet Ville to Ridge Walk - <i>Suggestion only at present</i>		
	Katoomba to Genolan Caves (5 days) - <i>Suggestion only at present</i>		

All walks are given a **two letter grading code**

<p><b>The first letter refers to the distance</b>  <b>S</b> - short (8-12 klms a day)  <b>M</b> - medium (12-20 klms a day)  <b>L</b> - long (20 plus klms a day)</p>	<p><b>The second letter refers to the terrain</b>  <b>E</b> - easy (mainly following form of marked track typically on flat ground)  <b>M</b> - medium (mainly on formed tracks but may include some off-track walking with moderate climbs on or off track)  <b>H</b> - hard (day or overnight walks which may require long or multiple steep climbs, cross country travel, creek crossings &amp;/or some rock scrambling)  <b>R</b> - rough (day or overnight walks in difficult terrain which may include long &amp;/or steep climbs and considerable off track walking. May include special requirements such as requirement to carry extra water, experience in rock scrambling &amp;/or snow, knowledge of survival)</p>
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**Next Meeting**  
**Wednesday 2nd October at 8.00 pm**  
**at Drysdale's**  
**2164 Fifteenth Street,**  
**Irymple**