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**Membership Fees**

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

# *Sunraysia Bushwalkers*

## **AUGUST 2014**

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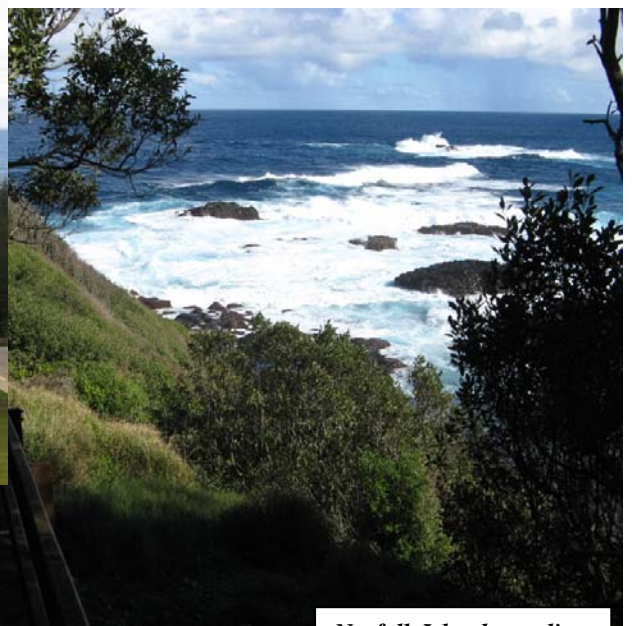
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*Norfolk Island*



*Norfolk Island coastline*

To view the complete calendar, please follow the link:  
<http://www.sunbushwalk.net.au/calendarofactivities.html>



# NORFOLK ISLAND

*- HELL & PARADISE -*



We departed from Sydney and after a couple of hours flying a tiny speck of land was sighted in the South Pacific Ocean - Norfolk Island. A mere 8km x 5km in size with 32 klms of coastline. Two other islands; Phillip and Nepean are nearby which are uninhabited. Our group consisted of Roger, Barb, Verna and Eileen (a guest from Darwin).



Norfolk is a volcanic island which rose from the sea about 2.5-3 million years ago. There are a number of walks on the island and whilst the distances are short they make up for it in gradient. This was challenging for some of us “flat country” dwellers as we huffed and puffed our way up steep inclines or cautiously made our way down the slopes. We were rewarded for our efforts however, with many spectacular views of the coastline or sightings of the endangered Green Parrot.

The National Park covers 460 acres and is maintained by Parks Australia. This was very evident when we crossed over the cattle grid onto a well maintained road which was a change from

the remaining island roads which have numerous potholes which one tries to avoid. We did a short walk from Mt Pitt to Mt Bates which are the two highest peaks (~300m high). The view from Mt Pitt allows you see most of the island. Everywhere is the Norfolk Pine, which can grow as tall as 60 metres. Another common tree easily sighted is the white oak.

It was on this walk we first sighted the Green Parrot – due to an assisted breeding programme this bird is recovering from near extinction, another bird we frequently saw were Grey Fantails; plus occasional sightings of scarlet robins and sacred kingfishers. All of these birds are endemic to Norfolk Island.







*Bird Rock & Elephant Rock*

Other walks took us into Palm Glen and some of the thickest mountain forest. This is where King Ferns thrive; the fronds of this large fern can reach lengths of 3-6 m. The Norfolk Is palm reaches up to 10m high and the Norfolk Tree fern is recorded to be the tallest in the world. We also noted the Norfolk Island Fork fern and the Hanging fork fern, both epiphytes.

A track out to Bird Rock view point provided us with some spectacular views of the coastline and islets. There were a

few mutterings whilst making a steep descent to Bird Rock about having to climb back up however we did continue and were well rewarded for our efforts.

We also visited the Botanic Gardens where we were able to see many of the islands unique plants. Due to Norfolk Island's isolation there are around 200 native plants.

A couple of other walks outside the National park were undertaken and were primarily to coastal views.

Whilst this was a bushwalking event, we did visit historical sites and learn of the island's past. Somewhere around the 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries it was home to Polynesians but little is known about these first inhabitants.



The island was uninhabited for some 4 centuries until Captain Cook rediscovered it in his 1774 voyage. In 1788 just weeks after the First Fleet arrived in Sydney an outlying settlement was formed on Norfolk Is to prevent it being occupied "by the subjects of any other European power". It was also planned for cultivation to take place to help provide for the inhabitants of Sydney, and to use the pine for masts and flax for sails – neither of which proved successful. This settlement lasted for a quarter-century before being abandoned for a decade.

Most notable was when the settlement was re-opened in 1825 and used for some 31 years as a place of secondary punishment for convicts. It had a reputation of brutality and a place of no escape. It became "a place of extremist punishment short of death". In 1852 it was decided that it would cease to be a penal colony and it was gradually emptied of its prisoner population. In 1856 the Pitcairners (194) who were mostly descendants of the mutineers of H.M. armed ship Bounty were transferred to Norfolk from Pitcairn Island, which they had outgrown. Some returned to Pitcairn a few years later.

Today Norfolk Island has a population of around 1800 of which approx. 40% are 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> generation descendants of the Bounty mutineers.

## Hattah Mid-Winter Dinner

5th - 6th July 2014

Once again the Club conducted its annual mid-winter dinner. This year those who were daring and brave all congregated at Lake Mournpall in the Hattah National Park.



*Our chef at work while everyone else looks on with keen interest !*

Actually the weather really wasn't too cold, though it was fairly cool when the sun dropped below the horizon.

Roger, our resident camp oven cook remained in camp to prepare our meal whilst the rest of us went off to investigate just where the water level had reached in the lakes at the back of Mournpall.

The Lower Murray Authority is in the process of pumping water into the Hattah Lakes system, hence our interest in the water level.

Trestles were set up in our dome tent so that we could have at least some comfort from the evening chill while we enjoyed the roast beef, pork and roast vegetables, followed by a chocolate self-saucing pudding. Thank you Roger, for yet another great meal. Though we did miss Wendy's touch, in the table setting and decoration department. Will try and do better next time!



*Lake Mournpall*

Some members returned to Mildura after the meal and left the others to pack up camp the next day!





*Off we go!*



*What strange things to be seen at the mid-winter dinner.*

## Invitation to Club Members

For those interested in observing birds,  
the Bird Observers Club's guest speaker  
Victor Hurley, will be talking about Regent Parrots,  
this Tuesday night (5<sup>th</sup> Aug.) 7.30pm  
at the Carnegie Centre  
(formally the old Library)

**A reminder that membership fees are now due for the  
2014 – 2015 year.**



*Paddling Chalka Creek*

## CALENDAR

Aug 6th	Meeting	8.00pm	Club Room
Aug 9-10th	Lindsay Island/ Ned's Corner	Possible canoeing	Proposed stay at Ned's Corner As a base for the weekend. Contact Noel 50257455 / 0438456355
Sept 3rd	Meeting	8.00pm	Club Room
Sept 6 <sup>th</sup>	Hattah Kulkyne	Day Walk	Contact Roger 50257325
Sept 7 <sup>th</sup>	Chalka Creek &/or Lakes	Canoeing	Contact Dick 50220030 / 0417245350

**Next Meeting**  
**Wednesday 6th August at 8.00 pm**  
**at Drysdale's**  
**2164 Fifteenth Street,**  
**Irymple**