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Membership Fees

\$40 Per Person
Subs due July each year

Sunraysia

Bushwalkers

November 2013

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Last month the Club ended up having two events on the one weekend. So decisions had to be made whether to do the Friday evening walk at Kings Billabong or celebrate Karl's 60th Birthday in Broken Hill followed by a walk and a night camped at Mutwingii camp ground – what choices!

As things evolved Dick, Wendy, Russell, Sandra, Elizabeth, Bernie, Tony, Jeff & Marion joined forces for the Kings Billabong Walk, while Barb & Roge did the trek to Broken Hill with Karl & Meryl. It eventuated that Michael & Paula were also in Broken Hill and they joined us for the birthday evening meal at the Good Earth restaurant on the top of an enormous mullock heap on the outskirts of the Silver City.

The following are reports by Dick on the Kings Billabong walk and Mutawintji Moochings by Barb.



KING'S BILLABONG WALK

18th October, 2013.

The King's Billabong and its surrounds is a treasure not widely known to many Sunraysia locals. Being easily accessed because of its proximity to Nichols Point, it offers the opportunity for interesting walking in a bush environment. The billabong has been a permanent water storage since the beginnings of the Chaffey settlement when the single levee wall was constructed at its northern end. In the



The bird hide at the Billabong

early years much of the surrounding land was a designated "common" where livestock were grazed and stockyards were located near the levee. A road track crossed the levee and for a number of years vehicles had unrestricted access to the area. The closing of these rough tracks prompted much public outcry about "loss of rights" but it enabled the Friends of King's Billabong to implement their vision of creating an attractive place for passive recreation.



Nine club members met at the car park at the levee and walked to the bird hide via the inland loop. The water level in the 'bong' was a bit lower than is often the case, but the view from the hide across the water revealed vast numbers of water birds. We returned to the starting point by walking closer to the water and found a plundered tortoise's nest beside the track.

Back at the start, we drove a short distance in the direction of the old pumping station. We enjoyed a picnic snack while watching the effects of the setting sun on the glassy water. It was indeed a pleasurable way to finish the working week.



The beautiful changing face of the river



Mutawintji Moochings & Karl's 60th Birthday
18th – 20th October 2013

The group of four set off at about 3pm on a rather warm afternoon to drive the 265 klms to celebrate Karl's 60th at Broken Hill followed by a walk in the Mutawintji Nation Park the following day.

Oh dear, all those dead kangaroo bodies along the way are such a sad sight to see. The only things that are flourishing are the Kites and Wedge Tail eagles feeding on all the carcasses and the goats eating all sorts of vegetation as they do.

We made it in time to change at the Grand Guest House, where we were overnighing. Once upon a time it might have been described as 'Grand' but now sadly not quite so grand as it was in its heyday. A real step back in time experience.





Three of the group were keen on walking up the mullock heap to the restaurant! Barb chickened out, as dress shoes rather than walking shoes would have been rather crippling to say the least. Michael & Paula put us to shame as they managed the walk up the hill! I meant to check out Paula's footwear that allowed her to achieve the climb up without undue discomfort. The view overlooking the town of Broken Hill together with the setting sun is a wonderful sight.

Early Saturday morning we departed for Mutawintji National Park, which is 130 klms from Broken Hill. Part of the way is bitumen which gives way to a wide graded dirt road. The surface is rather gravelly so one must take care of the speed when taking the corners.

Once at the Park camp ground we sorted out our gear for the day's walk and set off into the Park. Our route brought us unintentionally across the rubbish area from the Ranger's houses. It was an awful surprise to see at least 3 pairs of freshly cut emu legs left lying on the ground, together with some other slaughtered animal. Unfortunately there seems to be no attempt at keeping the rubbish in one central spot as we came across a fresh load of rubbish spread over the ground.



Atop the ridge checking out the views

We sadly continued on our walk. But our spirits soon lifted as we came across quite a few kangaroos sheltering in the shade of the low bushes as we climbed to the top of the gorge. Here we stopped for lunch. It was a great spot to view the gorges and to have a cooling breeze. The temperature for the day was forecast for 33°C, just a little too warm for comfortable walking.

While we rested Roger set off to locate a cave where one can see ochre hand prints, spears and lizards painted on the walls. He then led us there before we started to head back. The floor of the rocky overhang where the hand paintings are located is totally covered with goat droppings. So many goats were seen that we despaired for the vegetation, desperately trying to survive in this rocky dry area.



It seemed a very long walk back in the heat and the camp was an extremely welcome sight.

The amenities at the Park consist of toilets and solar heated hot water showers.

We continued Karl's birthday celebrations, enjoying all the lovely nibblies, wine and bushwalking tucker provided by Meryl & Roger.

The photo on the right is of a sign in the information shelter at Mutawintji.

The number of goats supposedly removed is quite incredible and really makes one despair for the future of the Park.

We are left wondering as to the number taken out in 2012 if any!

Have you seen any goats during your visit?

We have been capturing and removing goats from the park for many years. Each year expressions of interest are sought for goat harvesting. From 1996 to 2006 an agreement to harvest goats was made with one goat harvester each year. Beginning in November 2006 three goat harvesting agreements were signed. So now each goat harvester works one month at a time in a rotation. This has introduced some competition between goat harvesters that hopefully will lead to more goats being removed.

Conditions are put into the harvesting agreements to minimise environmental impacts of removing the goats and to ensure it is done in accordance with relevant codes of conduct.

Two methods are used to capture the goats. Trap yards and mustering. The trap yards are located around dams that were built when the land was used as a grazing property. Once set, the trap yards allow the goats in, to get water, but not back out. The goats are also rounded up on foot using specially trained dogs and then mustered into holding yards.

What happens to the goats?
After they are trapped or rounded up the goats are loaded and taken off park. The smaller goats (under 13Kg) are kept until they reach marketable size. The larger goats are sold to abattoirs to be slaughtered for their meat, which is then generally exported for human consumption.

How many goats have been removed?

Year	Number of goats removed
2000	1590
2001	2931
2002	2828
2003	1555
2004	1744
2005	1076
2006	3914
2007	7566
2008	8770
2009	6467
2010	4862
2011	9152

KANGAROO ISLAND

Proposed trip to Kangaroo Island next April 2014

Duration: Approx. 6-8days, including travel to and from Mildura

Accommodation: Camping

Walking: Mostly day walks but those wishing to can do overnight treks. Bike riding may also be an option.

Cost: Flinders Chase National Park Camp Grounds.
Per Car includes 5 persons
Rocky River \$27 per car Toilets/ Showers
West Bay / Snake Lagoon 13 per car Toilets
Most camping ~ \$13 - \$15 per night per vehicle.
May camp in a couple of different locations.

Ferry: Per Person \$94 return plus \$180 per vehicle return.

General Information: www.tourkangarooisland.com.au/

Verna

CANCELLATION OF HIGH COUNTRY RAIL TRAIL BIKE RIDE

Due to the low numbers of interested persons for the High Country Rail Trail bike ride, proposed for 21st November, it has now been withdrawn from our calendar



Above is a tin of Christmas Bush Honey bought in Sheffield, Tasmania. If you are in Tasmania some time I would suggest that you give it a try. It is absolutely delicious.



SUNRAYSIA BUSHWALKERS



PLANNED WALKS FOR 2013 & 2014

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
November 6	General Meeting		
2014			
April	Kangaroo Island – 8 days	E	Verna 50234102
April 18 – 21	Mutawintji 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>The first letter refers to the distance S - short (8-12 klms a day) M - medium (12-20 klms a day) L - long (20 plus klms a day)</p>	<p>The second letter refers to the terrain E - easy (mainly following form of marked track typically on flat ground) M - medium (mainly on formed tracks but may include some off-track walking with moderate climbs on or off track) H - hard (day or overnight walks which may require long or multiple steep climbs, cross country travel, creek crossings &/or some rock scrambling) R - rough (day or overnight walks in difficult terrain which may include long &/or steep climbs and considerable off track walking. May include special requirements such as requirement to carry extra water, experience in rock scrambling &/or snow, knowledge of survival)</p>
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Next Meeting
Wednesday 6th November at 8.00 pm
at Drysdale's
2164 Fifteenth Street,
Irymple