



Newcastle Ramblers Bushwalking Club Newsletter March 2025

Editor Bob C – Newcastle.ramblers@gmail.com



A glorious photograph taken by Lynne W at Cootapatamba Hut during her backpack to the Main Range in March 2025

Contents

Garry Scully Perpetual Trophy Photographic Competition 2024

Scotch Broom Eradication Volunteers, Barrington Tops NP

Remote First Aid Training Workshop

Twilight Walk – The Big Picture, Newcastle CBD

Breakfast Walk to Green Point

Return to Tantangarra, Namadgi and Kosciusko NPs

Caves Beach to Murrays Beach

The Cascades at Saggers Creek

Five-Day Backpack on the Main Range, Kosciusko NP

Obelisk Hill-Arcadia Park Landcare - Progress 2024

Alan's Snowy Backpack, Namadgi and Kosciusko NP

Victorian Alps Backpack

Col McCluskey Relocates to Christmas Island

A Week at Yarrangabilly Caves House

Visit to the Australian Maritime Museum, Sydney

Coolah Tops between Christmas and the New Year

Wednesday Walk in Tomaree NP – Zenith Beach to Barry Park

Note from the Editor

Thanks everyone for the wealth of material to work with. The range of activities included in this edition of our Club newsletter demonstrates the variety of interests of our members and the opportunities they provide for us to socialise and enjoy our natural environment. Thanks to leaders for their imagination and efforts.

The Rambler's fascination with the high country continued this Summer with three extended visits to the Snowy Mountains and a visit to the Victorian Alps. Ramblers also enjoyed a week at Yarrangabilly Caves House to explore the wonders of that location. As would be expected in the mountains the full range of weather conditions were experienced. To seek out the cool for Summer elsewhere there were visits to Coolah and the Barrington Tops.

Members of the Club have maintained their volunteering involvement through Landcare around the City and with Scotch Boom control in the Barrington Tops.

David introduced early morning breakfast walks to beat the heat and twilight walks took advantage of daylight saving. Wednesday bike rides and walks on alternate weeks have been regular and varied.

Meeting nights have been well attended, especially for Peter and Tracy's presentation on their extensive gliding experiences. Their skill in navigating and staying aloft for as long and as far as possible was impressive and intriguing - thanks Peter and Tracy. Stewart Cater from the Munibung Hill Conservation Society amazed us with details of its skilled organization and its achievements against the many obstacles.

Thanks to Malcolm M for his role as Walks Officer and Lynne W for her able assistance with our program presentation. Between Malcolm and Ingrid our meeting night program has been full and interesting and our supper roster organised.

We held a well-attended Remote Area 1st Aid Workshop in November and Dawn provided the venue again for our Ramblers Christmas Party

We have an open invitation from Col, now a resident of Christmas Island - 'the Galapagos of the Indian Ocean', to visit him.

All the best

Bob



Kayaking has been missing from our activity programs more recently, however Sam, an earlier Rambler discovered night kayaking in the Swansea Channel (spot Sam in the back seat)

Garry Scully Perpetual Trophy Photographic Competition – November 2024

The Club's photographic competition started in 1973, which makes this year the 51st year it has been run. It was again organised by David M – many thanks to David. The number of entries this year was lower with people being away on trips, however the quality of entries was again of an exceedingly high standard.

Categories of photographs for the 2024 competition were as follows:

- Ramblers People - People involved in activities that the club undertakes
- Places Ramblers Go - Places where the Ramblers go,
- Things Ramblers Come Across – Objects or things that might be seen on a Club activity, natural and man-made
- Special Category - The special category for 2023 was 'Birds'.
- People's Choice – Members get to make their pick.

Our judge this year was Barbara B and we thank her for her diligent and pre-recorded review of each photograph. A video of the proceedings was recorded by David and is posted on our website.

Col McC took out the coveted Garry Scully Trophy with his photograph '*Wombat Aaron*'. Congratulations to Col for winning the trophy and the Club Photographic Competition Album. The winner of Peoples Choice was Jenni M with seven votes for '*Serenity in the Snowies*'. Congratulations to Jenni. and all category winners, and thanks to all of those members taking part this year.

Winner of the Garry Scully Perpetual Trophy 2023



Overall Winner - '*Wombat Aaron*' – Col McC

Ramblers People



First – '*Drying out at Millers Hut, Kosciuszko NP*' – Angela B (m) Second - *Katoomba* – Jenni M (r) Third - *Morning tea in the Watagans* – Sue L

Places People Go



(l) **First** – Seal Lake, Mt Field NP – **Bob C**

(r) **Second** - Line up Royal Razorback – **Craig W**



Third - Southwards Panorama from Mt Royal – **Craig W**

Things Ramblers Come Across



(l) **First** - 'Buoys Tin City' – **Bob C** (m) **Second** - 'Shelter Millers at Hut Kosciuszko NP' – **Angela B** (r) **Third** - 'Wombat Aaron' – **Col McC**

Special Category - Birds



First – *'Reading the rules Patonga'* – David M

People's Choice



'Serenity in the Snowys' - Jenni M

Remote First Aid Training Workshop, Garden Suburbs Uniting Church Hall – 2 November 2024



It was an excellent day for thirteen Ramblers spent with Kylie, our trainer refreshing the many aspects of 1st Aid in a remote situation

Scotch Broom Eradication Volunteers, Barrington Tops NP – 30th January to 2nd February 2025

In January, Ingrid and Malcolm attended with 25 other volunteers, camping at Little Murray for four days and working to clear Scotch Broom from the Barrington Trail near Junction Pools.

Scotch Broom which covers a large area is a problem in Barrington Tops NP. It is fast growing and produces hundreds of seeds which last for tens of years. Broom shades the ground so native plants do not grow around it. Biological control is the only thing that will get rid of it in the long term. Gord Mite will attack and kill the broom. Mite was brought in from Bathurst and Armidale however it did not survive. GOOD NEWS - not far away at Aussie Ark they have Gord Mite attacking the broom. NP will introduce the Mite into the special areas, and monitor progress.

Short term, the NP's aim is to protect fragile areas around Polblue and Edwards Swamps. Volunteer programs are conducted each year in Dec and Jan aiming to expand and follow up previous work in these areas.



Photos show regrowth of broom. Ingrid working in an area of previously cut broom with regrowth. Lunch in a work area off the Barrington Trail.

Breakfast Walk to Green Point – 8 February 2025

Walkers: David M (leader) and 9 Ramblers

David's early morning breakfast walks have proven very popular during the Summer months – on this occasion to Green Point – David's motive has been to provide fitness training for the planned Three Capes walk at the end of February



Photos by Craig W

Twilight Walk – The Big Picture, Newcastle CBD – 15 January 2025

Walkers: Bob C (leader), and twelve Ramblers

2024 was the third Big Picture Fest in Newcastle – 3 days of live street art. The fest has been held each two years since 2020. Expressions of interest and proposals are called for from street artists and a selection made by a Big Picture Committee.

Our two-hour twilight walk commenced at Pacific Park and wove its way through the streets and alleyways of the CBD to the Honeysuckle Light Rail Station seeking out the various art sites, sculptures, and other interesting building and places of the City. We returned by light Rail to enjoy a good pub meal at the historic Great Northern Hotel in Scott Street.

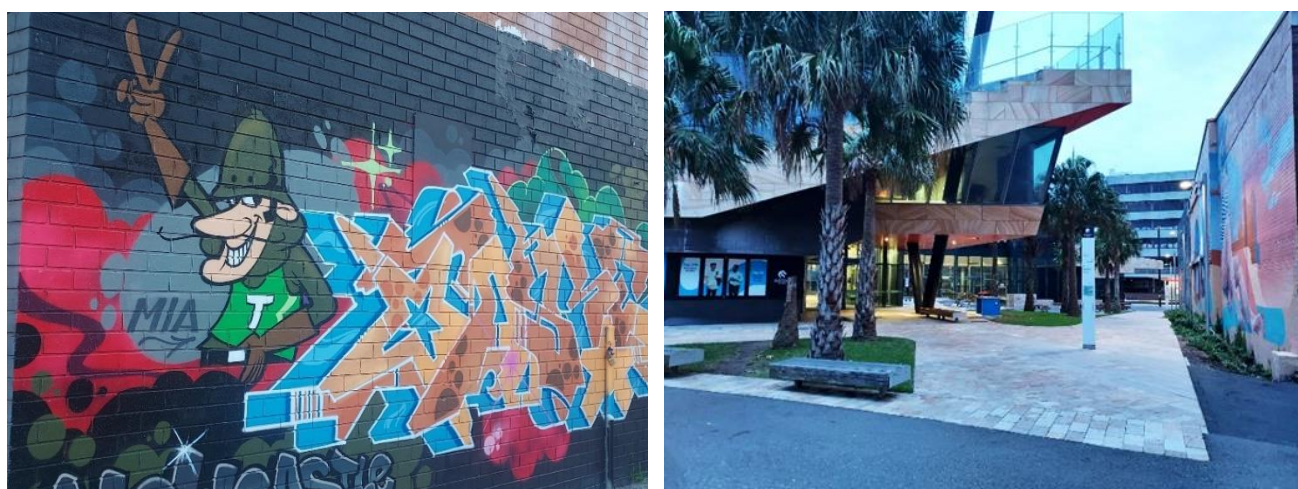
Note and photos by Bob



Examples of art we discovered on our walk



Art along King Street and in Union Lane (between King and Hunter Streets)



Art along Hunter Street. The UoN NuSpace is surrounded by some great art

Return to Tantangarra, Namadgi and Kosciusko NPs - 10 to 17 November 2024

Walkers: Bob C (leader), Malcolm M, Ingrid W, Lynne W, Dale G, Nell W.



Our group poses for a selfie beneath a particularly interesting fire damaged Snow Gum at Gavels Hut

It is always a great pleasure to escape each year with friends to the high country for more discovery and visiting the many old huts. This year in November and in great weather we returned to the Tantangarra area, taking in the Orroral Homestead and Settlers Track of Namadgi NP on the way.

After an early start from Newcastle, morning tea at Marulan we checked out the Namadgi Visitors Centre and then walked across to Orroral Homestead for lunch and an inspection of the nearby wool shed built in the 1930s. The sleepy family of kangaroos reluctantly moved from their shady resting places as we approached. Orroral is a magnificent homestead, built in the 1860s typical of the period and easily accessible. It has been well restored, and features a central slab homestead, plus outbuildings.



The homestead was built for Archibald and Mary McKeahnne for grazing in the 1860's. It has three rooms and a chimney at each end, plus a full-length verandah at the front. The original kitchen and staff quarters were built behind, and were as large as the house. The main chimney for the kitchen remains. We walked over to the Orroral shearing shed which still contains much of the original internal fittings.

From Orroral Valley we drove the 40km along Bobeyon Road to the southern boundary of the NP to leave vehicles and backpack 4km on the Settlers Track past Brayshaws Hut and through open woodland to camp near Waterhole Hut for the night. This is a lovely hut and surrounds with restored historic timber stock yards nearby. The 6km walk out the next morning took us via Westermans Homestead and all of its history – again a lovely location to stay and located not far from the main road.



Waterhole Hut on Grassy Creek was built by the then owner, Thomas Oldfield, his son Jack and Henry Tyrie in 1939, to support grazing. It is a basic hut with a dirt floor. Nearby early stock yards have been restored.



Westermans Homestead was built by Bruce Jeffery for grazing. It was originally occupied by Selena Westerman and Bruce Jeffrey, and later by Selena's parents, Thomas and Mary Westerman. We were able to visit the graves of a Westerman baby and adult daughter up the hill from the house. Ready to leave Schofield Hut and walk south across Nungar Plain to meet up with the Gavels FT. It was built in 1943 by Stan and Wally Scholfield for grazing purposes and is famous for its unique 16 pane window.

Leaving Namadgi we drove the short distance to Adaminaby, a small town we always enjoy visiting – its interesting op shop was open and we found good coffee at the great little café next door. Not far along Tantangarra Road we parked on the Schofields Trail and a short distance along the trail at the Nungar Creek ford we rested and enjoyed lunch. From there it was 4km to Scofield Hut for the night. All up for the day we walked about 13km in fine clear mountain weather.

For Tuesday we planned a circular walk from Scofield Hut which took us north east off track onto a clear beautiful rocky knoll (MR 544 320) and thence a descent north through alpine grassland and open woodlands to meet the Gulf Creek FT which led us west to Circuits Hut - we were there for lunch. There are thick groves of a deciduous tree nearby. The stroll south to return to Scofield was about 5km. All up it was over a 15km walk through some very attractive and diverse vegetation full of wildflowers and ground orchids.

On Wednesday we packed to walk directly south across Nungar Plain which turned out to be beautiful open walking with no swampy locations to negotiate. Once on the Gavels Hut Trail it was a fast walk to Gavels Hut just before a decent storm passed through. We looked around for the Gang Gang FT shown on our maps – not to be found, however there is a clear horse pad leading off in the right direction and we noted in the log book that riders visit Gavels Hut from Wares Yards Camping Ground. For the day about 7km.

About now one of our group was unwell and our plans changed - instead of trying the horse pad out from Gavels Hut back to Wares Camp we retraced our steps and crossed Nungar Plain to reach the Scofield Hut Trail at the ford where we had had lunch two days earlier. Further changes to our plan meant we returned to our parked vehicles and drove to Currango Homestead for lunch and a visit. The surrounds of the homestead are magnificent and a real credit to John the caretaker. We crossed the dam causeway on the Port Philip FT and towards Long Plain parked in a new car park to walk the 30mins into Millers Hut. We have camped here on previous occasions – we love this little hut and its secluded location. For the day 9km.



This rocky knoll at MR 544 320 on the 1:25,000 Tantangarra map is quite spectacular with 360 degree view and those back across Nungar Plain. Our group descending from the rocky knoll after MT across beautiful alpine grassland full of small wildflowers and ground orchids. Just an example of wildflowers and our group relaxing at Circuits Hut for lunch.

Friday saw our group do an extended drive along Long Plain to visit huts along the way to the Blue Waterholes and Coolamine Homestead and then back to Yarrangabilli Caves. The Long Plain areas was new to most of the group.

Saturday we reluctantly packed and left Millers Hut and drove down to Adelong Caravan Park for the night, stopping along the way to find the recently rebuilt Vickerys Hut. It did not work out too well as we did not have a map and after walking and descending quite some distance thought we were on the wrong track and turned back - we did not quite reach the hut – better luck next time. It was again a fabulous week of walking in the mountains. All up we walked about 50km and visited eleven mountain huts and homesteads. It is great to report that the huts were in good clean condition and all well maintained following the NP closure from March to October. Thanks to KHA an NPWS. As a matter of interest, we did not spot one wild horse in our travels.

Report and photos by Bob C



Nungar Plain was a delight – about 3km of open easy walking. The actual creek was too wide to jump and necessitated stepping down into thigh deep flowing water. We walked away from the trail to find a log to sit on for MT and spotted this interesting hand hewn artifact



Gavels Hut was built by Dick Schofield and Roy Rawson in 1931, and used for grazing. However, Tom Taylor swears he stayed in it in 1929 and that it was built by James Gavel himself about 1922. This old fire damaged Snow Gum is still alive and made for some good photos.



Our visit to Currango Homestead for lunch was again a most enjoyable occasion meeting up with caretaker John. the whole location was a picture with beautiful mown and landscaped open areas. Further upgrading of accommodation options has continued since our last visit 12 months ago. We drove onto the Port Phillip FT to park and walk to one of our favourite huts – Millers Hut for two nights

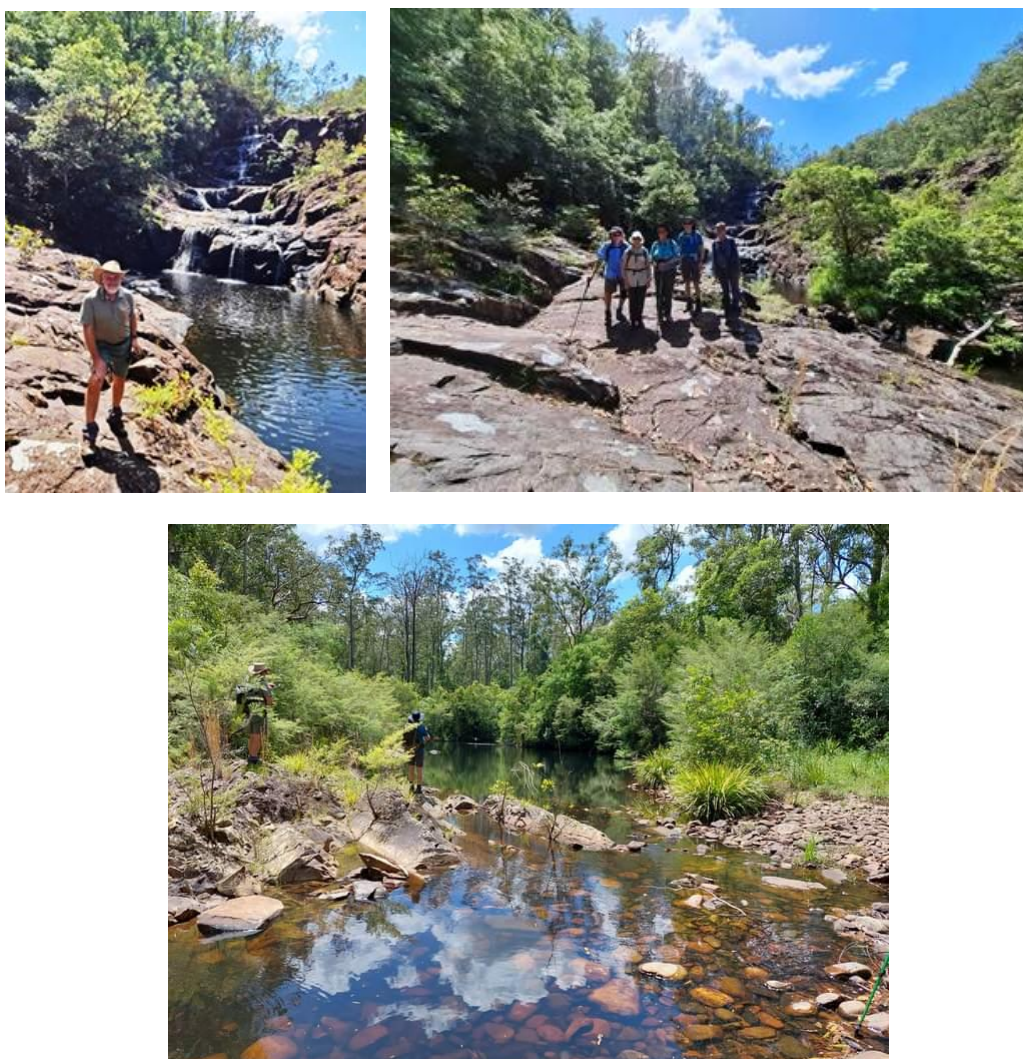
Caves Beach to Murrays Beach – 10 November 2024



On his excellent morning walk from Caves Beach to Murrays Beach Barry Was always spotting interesting local plants

The Cascades at Saggars Creek – 9 November 2024

Walkers: Arthur R (leader) and six Ramblers



Five-Day Backpack on the Main Range, Kosciuszko NP - 8 to 12 February 2025

Walkers: Lynne W (leader), Sue H, Robyn T, Melissa G and Mary M



We encountered a severe thunderstorm with hail on our way to Jindabyne which thankfully passed by the time we reached Charlotte Pass. As the weather was looking potentially grim, we decided to do our planned trek in reverse (as this provided more contingencies if the weather became foul). The thunderstorms had also closed the Thredbo chairlift and so we couldn't use it to reach the tops as originally planned. Instead as more storm cells were predicted, we trudged up the 'Yellow Brick Road' and aimed for a sheltered campsite below Blue Lake and we only had low misty cloud overnight.

On **Day 2** we woke to a beautiful sunny morning and took a few moments to dry our tents before starting the day. The climb to Mt Twynam was spectacular with views to Ramshead in the north and Jagungal in the south. We walked off track from the trig point via the Twynam Cirque down into Blue Lake while watching the black clouds rolling in and listening to the thunder. We hunkered down in a sheltered spot near Blue Lake until the storm passed (luckily, the worst of it moved around us).

The next peak to climb was Mt Carruthers, followed by a deep descent into Club Lake Creek. Here we were able to find a spot to camp which was sheltered from the wind. A few sleepless hours followed as the lightning on the tops lit up the tents and thunder rumbled around us.

We started **Day 3** with a huge climb out of Club Lake Creek to Club Lake itself, and then straight up onto the Main Range Track near Mt Lee. The walk above Lake Albina is one of the best parts of the track. We diverted off the track after morning tea to climb Mt Northcote. We were able to check the weather forecast here and decided that the severe thunderstorm warning meant a change to our next planned campsite. Sadly, the planned side trip to Mt Townsend and Alice Rawson Ridge was cancelled and we motored on to Cootapatamba Hut via Mt Kosciuszko. The off-track walk along Cootapatamba Creek was slow going, but the great campsite was worth it. Luckily, the storms went around us once again.



Another big climb to start **Day 4** after breakfast in the creek. We wandered around the Ramshead climbing both Ramshead and North Ramshead. Lots of dark clouds filled the sky and we watched thunderstorms in the distance. We walked off track along the ridge before dropping back into the Main Range track near Rawsons Pass. From here a short climb to the top of the Unnamed Peak on Etheridge Ridge completed seven out of the ten peaks we had planned to summit. A short walk to Seaman's Hut completed the day. We camped along the ridge from the hut in a sheltered spot. It was tricky to find flat spots to fit in all of our little tents - but dinner in the hut was a treat.

Finally, **Day 5** - a sunny day!! We had a beautiful walk off track across Kangaroo Ridge to Mt Stilwell for a late lunch. A leisurely stroll back to Charlotte Pass finished a wonderful five days in an awesome part of the world.

Report and photos by Lynne



Obelisk Hill-Arcadia Park Landcare – Ramblers Involved Throughout 2024

During 2024 Ramblers remained involved in Landcare activities and in several areas of our coastal CBD to make a real difference to their appearance and biodiversity. Enthusiastic turnouts of 10 to 15 volunteers for our Friday work sessions continued and we received corporate volunteer involvement from Pacific National and KPMG.

We worked on over **54 occasions** to tally up over **1700 hours** of volunteer effort (equivalent to more than **\$68,000** in value). We planted out over **2400 native trees**, shrubs and grasses to the areas we worked in.

In **Arcadia Park** we mulched and added plants to the N/W Pit Street Rainforest Slope, along the western fence line, and in the S/W Slope and Southern Gully. Madeira Vine and Trad remaining our biggest problems.

We assisted the **Friends of the Church Walk Park** to progress projects in its park and assisted with the preparation of its 100-year celebration.

In **Nesca Park** we worked on either side of the grassed corridor clearing, mulching and planting.

The northern entrance to **King Edward Park** was a major commitment by our group which commenced at the end of 2023. We managed to restore about 200m² of the entrance slopes by removing Bitou Bush and other weeds and replacing them with erosion control logs, mulch and plants. The maintenance of previously restored locations was maintained.

Morning tidy rounds of the **Darby Street Community Garden** continued with the addition of manure, mulch and hay. Its Facebook postings receive interest from the community. We thank its neighbours for their continued access to water for the garden.

Elaine has again maintained our Instagram account up to date (**search Obelisk_Arcadia**) which is a wonderful record of our progress since November 2015. We have a website up (**Google Obelisk Hill Arcadia Park Landcare**) and have commenced adding content to Facebook (**search Obelisk Hill Arcadia Park Landcare**)

Several of our group attended training and networking opportunities during the year which included National Tree Day at Tarro and a Landcare training session in Nesca Park in May. We paid a visit to the nursery of Trees in Newcastle at Redhead in November for morning tea and to meet its volunteers.

The support and guidance we have received from the staff of Natural Areas of NCC has again been outstanding. We appreciated the supply of mulch and plants to support our progress.

Especially, I thank all of the members of our group for their friendship, great company and outstanding energy. It has been a fun year.

Bob C – Coordinator Obelisk Hill-Arcadia Park Landcare



We spent most of the year working on the Northern Slope of the grassed corridor clearing, mulching and planting – we still have more to complete in 2025



We spent several sessions Bitou Bush bashing at KEP. We discovered stone walls and added coastal plants. The Friends of Church Walk Park and our Landcare took part in the Hunter Street Mall Street Party in November. Lyndley, Malcolm and Ingrid were there to help. We had flyers available and were able to show off our new A frame display and posters. We took the opportunity to promote the Newcastle Ramblers handing out our new business cards

Alan's Snowy Backpack, Namadgi and Kosciusko NP - December 2024

Walkers: Alan T (leader), Nick S, Peter D, Tim G, Edith G, and Sue H

The plan for this year was to avoid the NSW National Parks in case the horse-removal program interfered with our movements as it had in 2023. Instead, we planned to do more walking in Namadgi NP, including climbing Mt. Namadgi. Accordingly, we travelled via Queanbeyan and first visited the Namadgi Visitors centre to get a Permit to camp in the Mt. Namadgi area (access is restricted) then to the Mt. Clear Campground on Boboyan Rd to camp Saturday night. This is a beautiful campground (tents only), probably the nicest I've visited in the area.

The plan was to do two separate walks, the first being a one night "shakedown" in the Southern part of Namadgi NP, then relocate to the Orroral Valley for a longer walk, which included climbing Mt. Namadgi. The unseasonably hot days (high twenties/low thirties) made walking unenjoyable at times,

particularly on areas of hard going and we decided to change our plans so that we actually walked in three separate areas.

7- 9 December. Namadgi NP - Leaving the cars at Mt. Clear Campground, we followed the Long Flat FT south then the Burnt Hill FT west to inspect Westermans Hut. This is easy walking along fire trails through undulating open country that has been grazed in the past. Just before Westerman's there is a sign which reads "No Horses Past This Point" and we joked that this is the ACT's solution to the wild horse problem with money set aside to teach the horses to read. Nevertheless, it appears to be working, as we saw no sign of horses from there on! From Westermans we made our way NW to Brayshaws Hut, then followed another track to Waterholes Hut for the night. Waterholes Hut is a good deal more primitive than the others.



(l) Horses can read in the ACT ?



(m) Mt. Clear Campground (Photo Sue H) (r)



Just arrived in The Promised Land – Photo Sue H

Sunday morning saw us heading north on the Waterholes FT to intersect Old Boboyan Rd. Leaving our packs, we went west to check out “Luton’s Crutching Shed” which must have been a very significant operation in its day. From there, collecting our packs, we followed Old Boboyan Rd North to get back to the cars. We did try to get away from the track using an off-track “shortcut”, but this wasn’t very successful. We were back at the cars by early afternoon and packed up, relocating to Orroral Campground some 35 km to the north. A car shuffle to leave a car at Yankee Hat Carpark completed arrangements for the next days’ walk.

10-11 Dec. Namadgi NP - We got away early from Orroral campground, heading west along the “Heritage Trail” for a few kilometres before climbing up the steep track towards Nursery Swamp. After a break where the track crossed Nursery Creek, we headed west off track. There was no sign of the Bridle Track that once existed (according to reports from about 25 years ago). The 2020 fires had been through this area, so it is quite scrubby and entailed a lot of zig-zagging. It took about 2 hours hard going to get to the saddle at 747515, where we stopped for lunch. The descent from there to Rendezvous Creek looked quite precipitous and very scrubby with post fire regrowth. Additionally, the day was hot; around 25 degrees and too hot for this sort of walking.

After lunch, we bush bashed a bit to the NW, then down the spur. To our great delight, as we approached the creek, we got

glimpses of green patches, indicating unburnt bush along the creek. We called it the “Promised Land”. And it was! Unburnt that is! This was precisely what we’d hoped. The bank along either side of Rendezvous Creek has largely escaped the bushfires and consists of patches of tussock, often several hundred metres long, dispersed with scrubby sections that are mostly reasonably easy to get through with a bit of zig-zag.

Nevertheless, it was a very hot day and we’d had some hard walking so after only a km or so, we found a shady camp spot where we could rest and have a splash in the creek. It was at this point that we decided that the plan to Mt. Namadgi, which would have involved four long days of hard bush-bashing, in this hot weather was going to be anything but fun. So, we discussed alternatives, deciding to walk out via Rendezvous Creek to the car at Yankee Hat the next day, then go to the Tantangara area (where Bob Clifton had recently been) for a few days easier walking.

12- 14 December. Kosciuszko NP - We left the cars at Wares yard (Tantangara Rd) and walked the few km along the BNT to Schofields Hut. Then early Thursday morning we made an off-track walk north to Circuits Hut. This was a pleasant ramble through mainly open (unburnt) bush. Circuits Hut is actually a four roomed weatherboard house with a veranda and even an old kerosene fridge. It was built in 1938 for the Australian Estates Pastoral Company and is in excellent condition.



Circuits Hut (Edith in foreground) A pleasant afternoon at Schofields (Photo by Peter D) Gavels Hut

Returning mid-morning to Schofields Hut, we packed up and crossed the treeless Nungar Plain to Gavels Hut Trail and on to

Gavels Hut. It was a “stinking hot” day and the March Flies were out in their thousands. There was very little water at Gavels Hut,

just enough to fill your water bottle using a cup, so, unlike our other camps, there was no opportunity for even a “bird bath”. Unless they get rain again soon, I expect the water will dry up. Anyone contemplating using this hut in future should consider the water situation.

On Saturday morning we again got away early to beat the heat and headed west to the cars, arriving before 10:00am.

Originally, we’d planned to stay in the Snowy area for the night, but considering how early we were out and it being too hot to contemplate another day-walk, we decided to head home. Overall, despite the unseasonably hot weather and the annoyance of the March Flies, we all greatly enjoyed the walks and the excellent company and will all be back again.

Report by Alan T Photos from the group

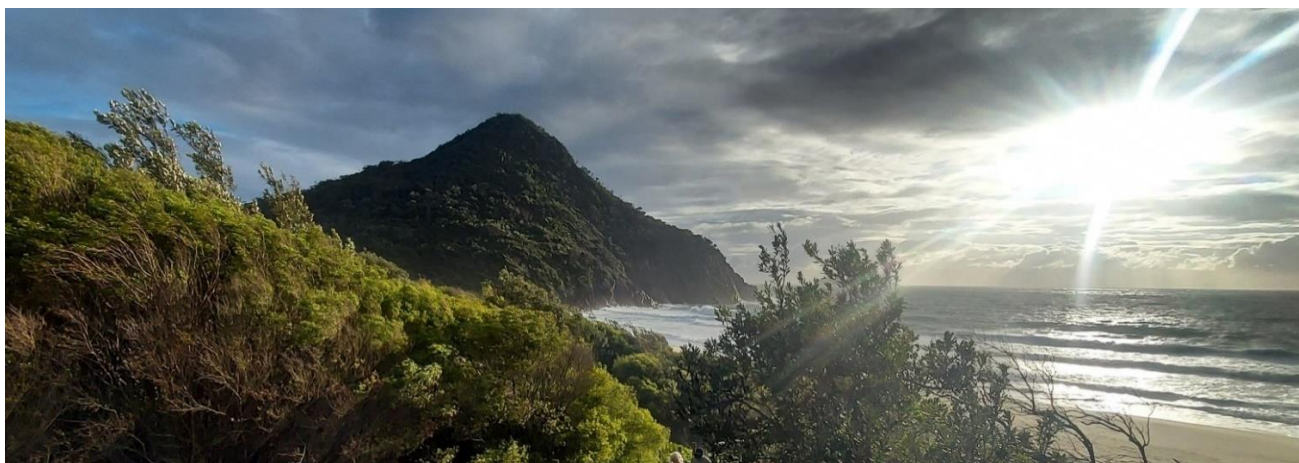
Christmas Party at Dawn’s Home, Marmong Point – 7 December 2024

Twenty five of our members enjoyed a lovely lunch and afternoon with Dawn and Mick to celebrate the end of the year and Christmas. Earlier in the morning members joined in on a walk around the nearby foreshore. Thanks Dawn for your hospitality again this year



Wednesday Walk in Tomaree NP – March 2024

Walker: Ingrid (leader). Malcolm M, Nell W, and Bob C



Early morning from Zenith Beach to Barry Park, Fingal Bay – Tomaree NP

Victorian Alps Backpack – 23 November to 1 December 2024

Walkers: Meg W (leader), Lynne W, Sue H, Melissa G, and Robyn T

Day 1 - We travelled via Berrima and Jugiong to the Hume Dam where we camped on its shores at Hume Tourist Park

Day 2 - We drove to Mansfield via Yackandandah for morning tea (there were hundreds of bike riders there on the epic annual 5 Day Great Victorian Bike Ride - something for the Ramblers to consider for next year ?) and after a car shuffle and inspection of the rising waters of the Howqua River, we settled in for a very rainy dinner under the only shelter - a small information noticeboard - and then spent a very wet night wondering how far the river would rise overnight.

Day 3 - It was a 5 km walk along the Howqua River with 6 river crossings and 27 million leeches to be followed by a 900m altitude gain over 5 km up the Howitt Spur to the Mt Howitt trig point. Then a 3 km ridge walk to Macallister Springs to camp - all in the rain. There were some fabulous views through the cloud and mist once we reached the tops. Wet feet - wet tent but a fire in the hut before bed (along with about 20 students). It had been a big day



Days 4 and 5 - We spent most of those two days hunkered down in the Macallister Springs hut, as heavy rain and thunderstorms rolled across the mountains. However, on the afternoon of Day 2 a break in the weather allowed for a short afternoon hike to the 'Devil's Staircase' - no photos as I stayed behind to rest my bad leg.

The 40 TimberTop kids who took refuge spent virtually the entire time in their tents. The others (from a different school) crowded into the hut with lots of squealing and yelling as they played cards and 'Mafia'. We decided to lay claim to the loft and tried to let the teenage energy wash over us! We were exhausted by the end of the day.



Can you see the little blue tents outside the hut in one of the photos ... we spent most of our time surrounded by seventy Year 9 school kids, as these mountain huts are a safe haven during summer storms. Lots of the walking groups were told to stay put because of the weather.

Day 5 - We changed our planned route due to the weather and injuries - we just looked at the rugged and magnificent 'Crosscut Saw' in the distance to the north and turned south instead - perhaps we will return to cross it next year.

We climbed out of the Macallister Springs saddle up over Mt Howitt again ... then down into Hellfire Campsite... then up and up and up to Hells Window and on to the top of Mt Magdala. We met a father and son hiking the AAWT on the top of Mt Magdala, who warned us that the next peak had to be approached from a 'disappointingly low saddle'- no truer words were spoken as we trudged down the side of the mountain.

And then it was up and up and up again to Lovicks Hut for a well-deserved afternoon billy, a feast of snakes and boots off to feel the soft, green grass on our toes. The last 4 km slog along a track led us to the most beautiful campsite under the snow gums and

an absolutely gorgeous sunset with mist rising from the valleys below. It had been a glorious day with a fabulous scenery - but we were very footsore and weary by the end (and almost too tired to want to eat)

Lots of rain while we were on the tops ... needed to change route ... but when we finally reached the Howqua River it was not safe for us to ford... with some sneaky bush bashing (aagghh leeches) we managed to ford a side creek and get back to the cars via a small bridge (which 2 days earlier was apparently completely under water!!)

Days 8 and 9 - We changed our plans and camped at Mansfield instead of King Hut for our final night - and then travelled home after a lovely breakfast stop in Mansfield.



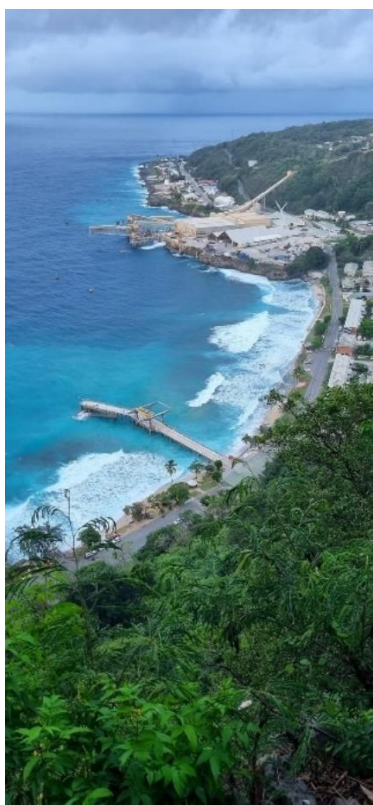
Post Script by Lynne

I just wanted to give a very BIG shout-out to Meg, who led our Victorian Alps adventure.

Meg is an ex-TimberTop student - so very familiar with the alpine country around Buller and Mansfield. We were really pleased that she was able to share her knowledge and experience with us. Although MANY decades younger than rest of us in the party her warmth, sense of fun and easy-going nature made us all feel that she was having a great time with us too! Meg was supremely organised, with many contingencies in place to use as needed.

Meg in the big Red rain jacket.... Always ready to lend a hand, share a laugh and make sure everyone was well and happy - a Legend

Col Relocates to Christmas Island - the "Galapagos of the Indian Ocean"



At the end of 2024 Col relocated to Christmas Island taking up a permanent position there. He has been sending through posts of his experiences so far to share with us and to enthuse us to perhaps travel there for a visit.

Christmas Island is an Australian territory in the Indian Ocean, lying south of Java, Indonesia. A national park covers most of the 135-sq-km island, offering rainforest hikes to wetlands and waterfalls like Hugh's Dale. Native wildlife includes nesting seabirds and the red crab, a land species known for its late-fall migration to the sea. It's also known as the "Galapagos of the Indian Ocean" because of its geographic isolation and high level of biodiversity. It has a population of about 1700.





A Week at Yarrangabilly Caves House – 20 to 27 October 2024

Walkers: Jenni M (leader), and 10 Ramblers

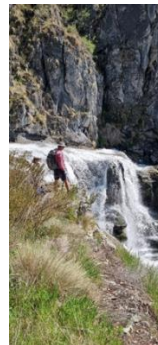


Yarrangabilly Caves House and its Thermal Pool



The Coolamine Homestead complex with the first real house built in 1883 for grazing which was followed up with the log cheese house in 1889. The Campbells residence was built in the 1890s for summer use.





Day walk to the Blue Waterholes and Nichols Gorge

Visit to the Australian Maritime Museum, Sydney – 23 October 2025

Participants: Kay E (leader) and several Ramblers



Captain Robert and exhibits at the Australian Maritime Museum. The visit was ably assisted by Peter C who is an enthusiastic volunteer with the museum

Coolah Tops between Christmas and the New Year – 27 to 31 December 2024

Walkers: Arthur R (leader), Malcolm M, Ingrid W, Lynne M,



Five Ramblers had a lovely time at Coolah Tops from 27th - 31st Dec. Mornings spent walking/exploring and evenings were naps/ reading and games under the cool pine trees at the camp-site. Thanks Arthur for organising.