

# Armidale Bushwalkers



Armidale Bushwalking Club newsletter

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www.armidalebushwalkers.org phone 6775-2026

## Green Gully Walk 24-27 January 2009

by Kathy King

Six of us did a four day walk over the Australia Day long weekend in Werrikimbee National Park. Lorraine

taken this for the track to the hut. By the time we had descended 200 m to the hut, the Peters had their tents already up. How could we have

doubted their navigation skills?

Whenever we stopped for a break during the day, the march flies would descend. They couldn't fly as fast as we could walk, but once we stopped, they zoomed in for the kill. If swatted, your own blood stained your socks. We recovered from the arduous day, some by sitting on the



the trail going towards "The Rocks"

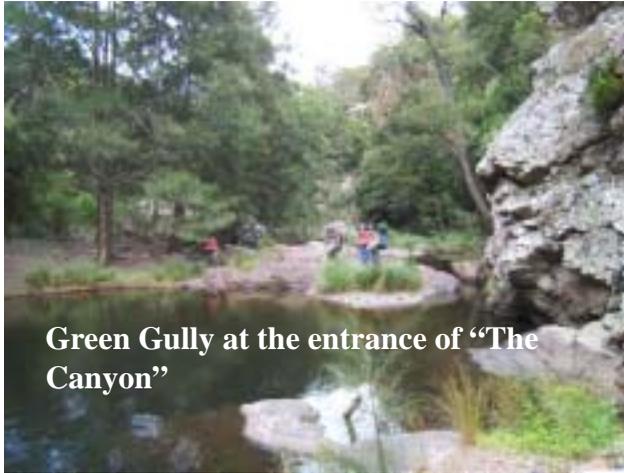
and I had been promised a hut each night and it didn't take much persuading to leave our tents at home. We started walking through forest along Kunderang Trail and soon came to a rocky knoll overlooking Kunderang Brook and Kemps Pinnacle. The track became more undulating and the heat, wearying but at the Colwells Trial junction we realized we were making reasonable progress, despite the heat. We continued through the forest, passed another junction and wondered if the two Peters, making good time ahead of us, might have mis-

rickety outside bench while others reclined on groundsheets. We brewed up cups of tea to replace fluids lost in sweat during the day but our peace came to an abrupt end when the recliners found leeches looping towards them through the grass.

We had expected an earthen floor of the old mustering hut, but not the creosote smell from recently treated timber. "A bit late" said Lorraine pointing to a pole that had already rotted at ground level. We washed as best we could in the tiny creek and it was bliss to be clean again. We had

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dinner and chatted into the long twilight. As Lorraine and I were nodding off in the hut, we could hear electronic beeps coming from Jim's tent. Was he still playing with his GPS - or testing the 2 way radios – or was he at the end of his tether and setting off the club's new acquisition, the



**Green Gully at the entrance of “The Canyon”**

Personal Location Beacon?

Next morning was cool and misty – a relief to everyone. Peter R. had been designated “alarm clock” and his “Day-O” before daybreak had everyone groaning and rolling out of their tents/huts for an early start. We took off uphill towards Bird’s Nest Trig, our first goal for the day. A track from the trig led us to The Rocks where we decided we’d done enough walking to earn an early lunch. We sat on the edge of the gorge overlooking Green Gully where we would be walking the next day. In the distance, we could see The Tooth and then, further away nearer Riverside on the Apsley River, Paradise Rocks.

The track ended here so we took to

the bush following Jim’s GPS. We had to descend 600 m and knees were groaning when we reached the creek. Here, we found the stout wooden fence that had been erected between tall rocky bluffs in a narrow section of the creek – a natural barrier to herd stock into. We collapsed in

the shade of the hut and recuperated. It wasn’t the march flies that pestered us here, it was swarms of the small bush flies. Oh, the joys of summer walking. Tents were put up and it was then that David insisted that the hut was uninhabitable because of the smell of fresh creosote and that Lorraine and I use his tent. “But where will you sleep”? David would sleep under his poncho/tarp/fly

arrangement. It looked all too insubstantial to me – not rain- nor spider-proof! Lorraine and I objected but when we saw the extent (and the smell) of the anti-termite treatment, we took up his offer. Luckily that was the night that it didn’t rain. We found a good wallow in the creek this evening. Ahhhh! Fresh again. Peter R. built a fire and we sat around in the early evening cooking and consuming dinner and, later, a teensy tippie from Jim’s bottle. It was a pleasant evening, even if the mozzies had taken over from the bush flies to torment us for the night shift. I wondered if David would be spared this under his fly. He gallantly denied being bitten but I wondered.

Peter's "Day-O" went off even earlier the next morning. We didn't have to carry water as the route was 12 km along Green Gully. Almost immediately David had a headlong fall into a blackberry bush. This seemed to set the tenor of the day as each of us had a fall or an unintended dip in the water. The banks were covered in weeds - farmer's friends, blackberries, forests of fleabane - and ankle-high vines to trip you up. The rocks could be exceedingly slippery but luckily the water was never more than thigh-high. We struggled along the banks of this very convoluted stream, loop after loop, crossing after crossing. We made it to "The Canyon" - a very pretty part of the creek where the banks narrowed in and we had to scramble across rocks at times. Rock wallabies on the cliffs above were silhouetted on the skyline. We had lunch at a shallow rocky cave, dubbed by David, "The Sound Shell", with orchids covering the cliffs above.

Sometimes it was easier just to walk in the water, especially if the bed was sandy or gravelly. Eventually, we reached the hut and collapsed in the shade of the verandah. After a cuppa, we struggled down the steep bank to the creek for a wash and to collect water. This hut had a wooden floor, no creosote smell and even had a couple of chairs which we promptly took outside. We cooked dinner in the cool of the evening, slapping the march flies, then mozzies, attacking our legs.

"Day-O" and we were off again, up, up, up Colwell's Trail. We all trudged on at our own pace, mine being a snail's. At times, I caught up with Jim for a break or to collect water at the

only wet spot on the trail. The day had heated up by now but we eventually joined the faster ones, waiting at the junction with Kunderang Trail. We had several more hours to walk to our designated lunch spot at the rocky lookout over Kunderang Brook. This section seemed to take forever, as it was the more undulating part of a now-familiar trail back to the cars. We just plonked down on the roadside for lunch, too tired to climb the extra bit for the view. Everyone's spirits now perked up with the thought of a hot shower before the trip home. This promise had been held out to us by a NPWS ranger who'd said that several park workers could possibly be at a cottage at the end of our trek and just might let us use the facilities.

### **Booralong Creek/Gwydir River Walk 1 February 2009**

Kathy King

David Lawrence was to have led this pleasant half-day walk but his bung knee went bung on him again. He met us at the Visitor's Centre carpark to take us over the walk on the map and to point out features that we should see along the way. Six of us left him hobbling back to his car.

We drove out to Booralong Creek, near Mt Yarowycyk, and hopped over the fence, to stroll along the creek to where it, shortly, joined the Gwydir River. There was some discussion as to exactly where it changes from being the Rocky River, which flows through Uralla, to become the Gwydir River. We couldn't resist the ripe Isabella grapes on the huge grape vine which drapes itself over the huge pine trees at the junction. We crossed over the

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Gwydir immediately opposite the junction and continued over to a fenceline. Along the way, we crossed over an old mining sluice – a relic of the old gold-mining days along this river.

As we walked across the wide river flats, we kept finding more of the old



sluice. The next feature that David had mentioned was a “rocky outcrop” which we were meant to clamber over but we had hearded a mob of sheep along the way and they had commandeered the outcrop. If we’d kept going they may have panicked so we took an alternative route along a sandbank and ended up in a grassy glade. We came across a freshwater turtle in the shallow water. He stuck his head firmly inside his shell, even into his armpit, when Joc picked him up. When I told David about this later, he got excited thinking it might be a rare turtle that inhabits the upper reaches of the Gwydir River but an internet investigation showed this was not so.

Just a common garden variety turtle.

We also didn’t find the nice clear slab of granite from which we could look down on a set of falls. However, after morning tea, when we started to turn back, we found the pink granite rocks above the falls – we’d gone too far. Here we found the entire shed

skin of a black snake. We came across two live ones on the river banks as well – one went straight between Mahalath’s legs – screech! We came upon the other one and watched as his tongue flickered in and out until he smelt us and zoomed off through the grass.

The walk across the wide river flats

on the opposite bank to the rocky outcrops was becoming hot. We came across the old walnut and almond orchards wilting in the noon-day sun. Joc said it was orchards like this that would have kept Armidale in food 100 years ago. The fig trees had green dry fruit on them. The old elm trapped between two strands of wire was still there, cropped as usual on each by sheep into a hedge. We had to compete with king parrots for the grapes though they were feeding high up on sweeter grapes in the full sun above the canopy of the vine and the pine trees. We gathered and inspected the nearby blackberry bushes. Then it was back to the cars and away from the fast gathering heat of the day.