

# Armidale Bushwalkers

ARMIDALE BUSHWALKING CLUB VOL 1 No 3 MAY 2005  
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## BARRINGTON CANOE TRIP, EASTER, 2005.

We had been checking the river on the excellent NSW Water Information page ([http://waterinfo.dlwc.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/sites\\_riis.epl](http://waterinfo.dlwc.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/sites_riis.epl)), and had been a bit concerned, as the height at Forbesdale on the Barrington had been about 40 cm- a bit low for canoeing. We had the wit to ring the Barrington Canoe Centre (BCC), and found there had been a storm on Wednesday night.

**BCC:** It's a bit high-unless you are pretty good. What are you paddling?



*Joc and Kirra setting up camp photo-David Lawrence*

David: We're not very good. Canadians.

**BCC:** You'll be swamped in the first 200 metres.

After this not very encouraging chat, we drove down on Friday, in the hope that "quick Rise" would mean "Quick Fall. Still too high on the Friday at about 80 cm, so we had a chicken try-out on the nearby, very flat, Barnard River. We finished this 2-hour trip feeling pretty cocky, having easily negotiated its (very small) rapids.

Previously, we had decided to camp at the end point- the free campsite at Brettie. Well, so had everybody else, it seemed. That is, everybody with a boom-box, or a large dog, or a chainsaw, or a generator, or a trailbike- or all five. We came to a quick, unanimous and almost unspoken decision, and headed back to watch the river gauge at Forbesdale, hoping it had sunk below the 80 cm "limit of paddling" height.

Good news. It had sunk to 77 cm. So we set up camp, drank a little red wine, checked the gauge again, had dinner, drank a little more red, checked the gauge- nearly fell in the river, and went to bed quite happy and hopeful.

Better news in the morning. It was down to 70 cm. Still roaring over the crossing, so we launched cautiously below the foam, and swung into the rapidly moving current. Amazingly, we all stayed in our boats, and very quickly ran a succession of grade 1 and easy 2 rapids to the bridge at Barrington. Highly chuffed, we pulled out, and decided to brave the higher river sections.

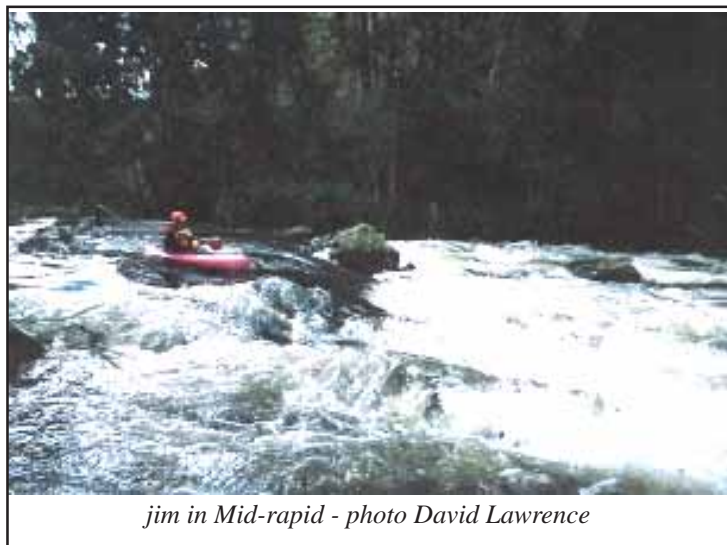
Cheered by a last gauge reading of 67cm, we quickly set up the car shuttle. Leaving Jim's car, we crammed drums, canoes, paddles and 5 people into Joc's dual cab and drove over the Copeland Tops to the concrete bridge near Rawdon Vale. The sight of the first 200 metres gave us pause- solid white water, grade 2s and 3s. We decided that if we launched from the bridge we'd "be swamped in the first 200 metres", so we faint-heartedly put in below the first run, and flew down the still rapidly moving water.

Kath and I had a involuntary swim quite quickly- I still have a faint yellow and purple bruise about 20 X 20 cm as a souvenir of that first dip. Soon Jim, bravely leading the way in a wide-bodied kayak, also had a refreshing dip. By the end of the afternoon, just Joc and Kirra were dry and -not smug, just quietly confident.

We camped at the heaven that you find on good rivers- wide bank, firewood, sheltered, beautiful. We chatted, ate dinner, tried a little port, and turned in early.

Sunday gave us more swims, and more beautiful water. A few rapids well run, and your confidence went up. Falling out meant try to avoid bashing into rocks, hold onto your paddle, and somehow manoeuvre a boat full of water into the shallows to drain it and try again. Your confidence went down. However, once again the river compensated for our bruises by giving us a heavenly campsite, and a great night around the fire.

Monday, our last day, and to our well-concealed but very definite glee, Kirra, then Joc and Kirra, also had little mid-rapid swims. We nicely judged our last rapid, all paddling a beautiful line and finishing in the boats, not the water. Pulling out at "The Steps", we flagged down a lift.



*jim in Mid-rapid - photo David Lawrence*

Jim and Joc did the car shuttle while Kirra, Kathy and I dried out gear, and watched with great envy as people ran the rapids here in very modern inflatable kayaks- very forgiving, just right for our low paddling standard.

Soon Jim and Joc were back, and we regretfully loaded gear, shook hands, and

headed away from the world of whitewater and sudden swims, back to the workaday, predictable, safe world of home.

But- if you ever fancy a trip to cleanse your soul, try logging on to <http://www.thesteps.com.au/>. Cheap accommodation, beautiful setting, good instruction, and wonderful white water. And if you want to buy Kathy, David, Kirra, Jock and Jim great Christmas presents, we'll all have one of the inflatable kayaks advertised on that page..... David Lawrence

# POINT LOOKOUT RD TO YARAANDOO VIA BULLOCK CREEK – SERPENTINE RIVER. 27<sup>TH</sup> FEB



*A gorge on the Serpentine - photo Colin Wood*

*Prologue. I have tried on two other occasions to get to the junction of Barwick and Serpentine, this will be the third.*

This walk was not for the faint hearted, it was both very strenuous and challenging for the body and map reading skills.

The walk started at the lower car park at Yaraandoo and straight away we plunged into the scrub and walked down to the "wetlands" area near the pumping station on Bullock creek. Then downstream on Bullock creek to the junction of Bullock and Serpentine rivers.

Someone commented on the fact that river walking has a very sad truism that "the other side of the river always looks the easiest." Well we



*Strung out along the river - photo Colin Wood*

were to find out that neither side is easy. This short "walk" to the junction was about 1k but took about 1 hour.

We continued along the Serpentine crossing the river a couple of times thinking that "the other side of the river always looks the easiest," Sometimes the going was almost easy crossing flat basalt and granite rock. We continued for about 2-3 hours occasionally having to go up over ridges but keeping as close to the river as possible.

The scenery was awe-inspiring with many rapids, small gorges and waterfalls. We stopped for lunch at a spot that was truly beautiful, near huge granite rocks with a waterfall going into a small gorge.



*Lunch and a rest on The Serpentine - photo Colin Wood*

As it was about 12.15 we decided instead of trying to get to our destination, the junction of Serpentine and Barwick (on the map this is called Back creek) we would get away from the river and go north west and try to cut an old logging track. After checking our map and getting a good bearing we headed off up a very steep climb through scrub and rocks until we got to the highest point. We then took another compass bearing and after about ½ an hour we cut the logging track and followed this for about 3 k. We were at this point about 1k downstream from the Trout hatchery on the Serpentine river. We decided we would follow the river downstream back to Yaraandoo. After some heavy going through tea-tree scrub we heard a waterfall, we came out at the top of a waterfall which had a fall of at least 30-40 metres. On checking the map this waterfall is not named and considering the terrain very few people have ever seen it.

We then, after crossing the river again, followed the river for a time then went cross country approx north-west till we cut the power lines that run past Yaraandoo, we followed these back to Yaraandoo for a very welcome coffee and smoothies and to lick our many cuts, bruises and scratches. I suppose we covered no more than 10k on our six and a half hour walk

*Epilogue. Well I still haven't made it to the junction of Serpentine and Barwick. Maybe next time I won't try following the river, just go cross country straight to the junction, but this might be too easy!*

## MAY - SEPTEMBER 2005 WALKS PROGRAMME

Date	Leader	Venue	Details
21/22 May	Paul McCann 67726156	Macleay R., Blue Knobby	Medium grade. Steep descent of 600 m off track. Approx. 20 km. Highlights: stand of grass trees, red cedars, good views. Circuit.
29 May	Dave Lawrence Mt Duval 67753164		Easy grade (all on 4WD road).
11/12/13 June	Inverell Club Peter Rodger coordinating - 67720464)	Or if no water N of Gibraltar Range	
26 June	Col Wood 67759214	Serpentine R. Barwick Ck	Medium/Hard grade Off track See 6 waterfalls rarely seen, a very rewarding walk
10 July	Jane Grouns 67722980	Guy Fawkes R. NP from Chaelundi camping area	Easy grade. Escarpment Walk, 13 km circuit with great views.
23/24 July	David Lawrence 67753164	Banksia Point- New England NP Cabin Accomodation	23/24 July Dave Lawrence Banksia Point Xmas in July + some walking easy/med grade
6/7 August	Paul McCann 67726156	TBA	
21 August 67759214	Col Wood	Diamond Falls near Cathedral Rock	All off track - grade easy/medium
10/11 Sept	Dave L/Peter Roger 67753164 67720464-	Apsley Falls	Part of Walcha – Coffs walk
17/18 Sept	Dave L/Peter Roger 67753164 67720464-	Table-top & Coxcomb	Part of Walcha – Coffs walk
25 September	Dave L/Peter Roger 67753164 67720464-	Dangars Falls	Part of Walcha – Coffs walk

**WALKERS CONTACT LEADER FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK FOR WALK**

**ESSENTIAL'S FOR ALL DAY WALKS**

**DAY PACK - PERSONAL FIRST-AID KIT - WATER (AT LEAST 1-2 LITRES) CHECK WITH LEADER FOR AVAILABILITY OF WATER ON WALK - WARM TOP - RAIN GEAR - SNACK - LUNCH - TORCH.**

**OVERNIGHT OR EXTENDED WALKS CHECK WITH LEADER FOR GEAR TO PACK.**

### STANDARD WALK GRADINGS

Grade 1 (Easy) Suitable for most people, including those with reduced walking ability, to walk on well marked and even tracks. Tracks are man made, not steep, and may have a few steps. Suitable for beginners. Distance should not exceed about 10km.

Grade 2 (Easy-medium) Easy walk, mostly on well-marked tracks of low gradient. Distance should not exceed about 15km.

Grade 3 (Medium) Medium walk with some hilly sections &/or rougher terrain on defined and distinct tracks with some steep sections requiring a moderate level of fitness. Suitable for fit beginners. Distance should not exceed about 15km.

Grade 4 (Medium-Hard) Steeper, rougher terrain mostly along defined and distinct tracks (may have off-track sections of no more than one quarter of the walk) or a longer distance track walk. There may be rock scrambling involved. Distance depending on circumstances. Not suitable for most beginners.

Grade 5 (Hard) Off-track or difficult terrain, for walkers with advanced outdoor knowledge and skills to find their own way along often indistinct tracks or off track in remote locations. May include steep sections of unmodified surfaces. There may be rock scrambling involved. Distance should not exceed 25km, but may be short & difficult. Not suitable for beginners.

Grade 6 (Very hard) Strenuous off-track walk or very long distance, for highly experienced walkers to explore remote and challenging natural areas without reliance on managed tracks. Extensive knowledge of map reading and compass use necessary. There may be rock scrambling involved. Distance covered may be up to 30km or more, but may be short & difficult. Only for experienced walkers.

# SUNDAY 6 MARCH

## WALK AT LONG POINT: "TWO GORGES, MANY VIEWS".

by Isabel Tasker

8 people assembled at the information centre in Marsh St and the ninth joined us at the Hillgrove turn off the Waterfall Way.

The weather was good and the drive in from Hillgrove, which follows



A few of Armidale Bushies on many of the great lookouts on Long Point - photo Colin Wood

a finger-like remnant of tableland between the Chandler and Macleay Gorges to the Long Point section of the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park, was very pretty.

We started our walk from the picnic area, following the Chandler view circuit trail. This descends through an area of dry rainforest (which actually felt quite damp) with tree branches festooned with beautiful mosses and lichens, and evidence of lyrebird activity. After skirting the edge of the gorge, with glimpses to the north west into Macleay River gorge and Bakers' Creek, we crossed back through stands of very local Hillgrove gum towards the park entrance, and on to the east-facing lookout where we enjoyed stunning views of Chandler river gorge over morning tea. We then continued on and took the 2 kilometer side track called the Michaeliana Walk, which leads to a viewpoint from which it is possible for the intrepid to descend a ridge down to the Chandler River. None of the party chose to be intrepid on this occasion!

Returning to the main trail we checked out the campground and then turned on to the Cassinia Walk trail (named after the yellow-flowering shrub to be seen in the area). This led us to another lookout platform suspended over the void with magnificent views back in to the Macleay River Gorge.

The walk ended back at the picnic area for a late lunch followed by a short quarterly club meeting.

## ATTENDING YOUR FIRST WALK

- Book on a walk by calling the trip leader listed on the walks program. Let them know that you are new to the club. They will advise you of meeting arrangements and can assist with transport if required.
- Please note that when you book to go on a walk you will be gone all day, most walks will start at 8am and will not be returning to the car till at least 4pm.

· Expect the "third degree" from the leader. When you ring a leader, whom you have not walked with before, you may be asked a number of questions. The purpose of these questions is to determine as best as possible whether the walk that you are considering is the right sort of walk for you in this stage of your bushwalking career. The safety and enjoyment of you and other members of the party depends on you being open and honest in your answers.

Depending on your answers to these or other questions, leaders will give you information about the walk. Please keep in mind leaders are volunteers who give their time, energy and expertise so others can share the enjoyment of bush walking.

So when you get the "third degree" from a leader, think about the leader's responsibility to you and other party members, and try to assist by giving accurate information in a spirit of cooperation.

Every individual planning to join, whether as a single or as part of a couple/family must complete a membership form.

Steps in becoming a member

1. Complete the membership form.

2. Upon receipt of your membership form, you will receive the Walks Programme.

4. Book on a walk by calling the trip leader listed on the walks program. Let him or her know that you are new to the club. He or she will advise you of meeting arrangements and can assist with transport if required.

The sooner you take the step of contacting a trip leader to go on your first activity the sooner you will start to benefit from the experience of our activity leaders, so don't delay.

Join in, enjoy...

# ARMIDALE BUSHWALKING CLUB MINUTES OF MEETING THURSDAY APRIL 28 2005 AT THE WICKLOW HOTEL

Meeting opened: 7.00 pm

**Present:** Dave Lawrence, Col Wood, Peter Rodger, Jane Grown, R. Luxton, Peter Lockwood, Joanne Davidson, Isabel Tasker, David Sutherland, Andrew Pearson, Nick Stephenson, Joc Coventry, Paul McCann, Steve Tremont, Bryce Wentworth, Ric Schneider, Graeme Somerville, Margaret Brown, Margaret Vaughan, Lisa O'Brien.

1. **Apologies:** Lindsay Teychenne
2. **Minutes of last meeting (Sunday 6th March, Long Point):** Circulated and approved. Moved Isabel Tasker, seconded Col Wood.
3. **Treasurer's Report:** No treasurer's report as he is overseas.
4. **Membership Report:** 25-30 members at present.
5. **Correspondence / Newsletter:** Col had heard from the Federation about insurance. Period covered starts at the Information Centre and ends either back at the Information Centre or when you leave the group at the end of the walk, i.e. it does not cover travel home once the group has broken up. We pay the Federation \$14-15 per person per year, most of which is insurance.

Several leaflets/newsletters from the Federation were tabled for distribution.

6. **Planning of Winter/Spring walks program:**

Dave commended those who have led walks.

David Sutherland offered to lead a walk along disused railway tracks near Dorrigo in spring. There are some legal issues about access to be investigated.

1. **Walcha to Muttonbird Island - a long spring walk:** discussed during previous item.
2. **Other Business:**
  - a) David Sutherland expressed concern that the meeting was not very suitable for non-members, partly due to venue being noisy. He suggested that the committee should set the walks program. He was advised that that was against the constitution. We agreed that the next meeting should be held at the Outdoor Guiding Centre in Rusden Street. More publicity would be good – perhaps we could have a link on the Armidale-Dumaresq Council web page.
  - b) Col Wood asked for show of interest in mid-week walks. Several people were interested.
  - c) Walk report - Little Llangothlin Walk, led by Andrew Pearson. Sophia, Dave, Peter, Jean, Rowena and Isabel went on the walk. Dave was seen without his GPS! Highlight of the walk was sighting a Spangled Drongo.
  - d) Andrew requested reimbursement for advertising costs. Dave also needs reimbursement. This was done.

- e) Slides of the overnight walk from Blue Hole to Dangars Falls were shown.
- f) Free public seminar on Tibet and the Fall Country will be held 30 May, 12.10 pm, TAFE, Room FG11 in Rusden Street.
- g) Next meeting will be 11 August 2005 at the Outdoor Guiding Centre, 7 pm.

Meeting closed 8 pm.

## NEW ENGLAND NP 6<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

*by Nick Stephenson*

Nine people participated in this walk in the New England NP on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February.

The walk started at the Banksia Point picnic area, we first walked along the Lyrebird Track through Antarctic Beech rainforest just below the escarpment. Here and there we encountered moss-covered waterfalls on the basalt cliffs that towered above us. Leaving the forest, we then followed the broad flat-topped ridge to Wrights Lookout where we rested for morning tea amidst stunted heath-like vegetation struggling to survive on the scant sandy soil developed on the underlying Trachyte.

Wrights Lookout provides stunning views over the coastal hinterland to the east. On a clear (but not on this occasion) one catches glimpses of the ocean 60k away. From Wrights lookout we retraced our to Robinson's Knob track, which we followed westwards to Point Lookout rd. From there, tea Tree falls walk through eucalypt and Banksia forest and woodland (crossing little Styx river on the way) back to Banksia Point for a late picnic lunch.

# BLUE HOLE TO DANGARS FALLS TRIP, APRIL 23-24TH, 2005.

Peter Rodger, Peter van Haeff, Peter Emerson, Jane Grouns, Cindy Schneider, David Lawrence

by David Lawrence

lawns, no splashing rapids- just a wide flat of dead trees a couple of kilometres from the junction became our campsite for the night.



*Party on the ridge a between Long Swamp Creek and Squires Gully - photo David Lawrence*

33 kms, Medium Grade Two-day walk

Our party of five left the Blue Hole at 8.48 am Saturday . We headed southeast for about 400 metres, then climbed a gate back into private land. For the next 2 hours, it was up and down across incredibly dried-out farmland and many barbed wire fences that parallel the western edge of Gara Gorge (great tumbled boulders choke the riverbed, making walking down it difficult). It was a relief to cross into the cool green woodland of Oxley Wild Rivers National Park at about 11.30 am.

After an early lunch, we angled down to the main ridge between Squires Gully and Long Swamp Creek. It gives a fairly gentle descent to the creek junction, reached at 1 pm. The lack of water allowed us to travel directly down the dry river bed, over tumbled rocks and stretches sensuously sculpted granite.

Gara Junction was a chaotic hectare of large boulders. We picked our way through them, acutely conscious that a misstep would give at best a twisted ankle. We were relieved when we crossed into the metamorphosed sediments below Cooney Junction, where the rocks were smaller and the walking easier.

(Some years ago -was it really 1998?- our party surrendered to the beauty of the sandy campsite under the casuarinas beside the deep pool at Cooney, and went into camp early. Memories of a campfire flickering, of Jack Patton and Chris Bone talking about the application of law to wild teenagers and wilder adults, and Dick Kingston telling his outrageous jokes.....)

But our 2005 party had planned to do the walk in two days, not the leisurely three of earlier times. So we pushed on, crossing the dry river bed repeatedly through the sharp bends that characterise the Gara in this section. We found a bivvie camp of sheltered twigs, and speculated it was the work of the hermit that lives in the gorges. What lead him to a choice of wilderness over human company? We all felt the pull of a life of rocks and trees and sky and long long silences. But we had "promises to keep, and mile to go before we sleep".

Another great tumble of rocks announced the Gara -Salisbury junction at 4.20 pm. Though the legs were a bit rubbery from all the rock hopping, we passed over the inviting flat and headed up Salisbury Waters. Here, 50 metre scummy pools at 1/2 kilometre intervals were the only sign of water. The leaves hung listlessly on the trees, and the grass and shrubs appeared dessicated by the drought. No inviting tent

We arrived at 5.10, and just had time to set up camp and gather firewood before darkness fell. With the fire sputtering, lots of dead timber for backrests, and the little stoves purring or hissing according to their nature, the campsite became an inviting haven. A drawn-out dinner, numerous brews, lots of talks on tracks and river junctions and how far it was tomorrow, and the evening wound itself down. Peter Emerson, having not slept for a couple of days, was first to bed at 8 am - "the bushwalker's midnight", according to Peter Rodger. The rest of us followed soon after.

An early misty morning, and we'd packed and started walking by 8 am. Of course, only a few hundred metres further on we found the perfect campsite. Glowing cliffs dropping into one of the few remaining deep cleans pools on the river, clean sandy banks just wide enough for a few tents, green shade water-rich casuarinas. Oh, well- maybe next time.

Contrary to the normal pattern, the Salisbury seems to become wider as you go upstream. We travelled by wide grassy flat and stony river bed. We saw many Brush-Tailed Rock Wallabies perched incongruously on near-sheer cliff faces, and the occasional Wedge-Tailed Eagle, their main predator, sailing on the thermals rising from those cliffs. Occasional dramatic screes broke up the arid grassy slopes and red cliffs. After a break at Spring Camp junction, we reached the Mihi and lunch at 12.10 pm.

It's a good idea to wait for the cool of the late afternoon before heading up out of a New England gorge. So we luxuriated in a long laze by the junction pool till 2.30, then, after edging carefully around the north side of the next big pool, we began climbing the NPWS track at 3.00 pm.



*View along Salisbury Waters - photo David Lawrence*

Slowly- very slowly- we gained height. A marvellous lookout 800 metres up the track gave a view back along our walk along Salisbury Waters- and past Gara Junction to Long Point, the reverse of the view Isabel showed us on March 6th. The daylight had faded, and the kangaroos were out feeding when we tail-enders reached Dangars Falls Carpark at 5.45 pm, to find our lifts waiting. Oh, the comfort and ease of an 18-km car ride!