

Armidale Bushwalkers



Armidale Bushwalking Club Vol 2 No 3 September 2006

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Long Point 30 June – 2 July 2006

by Kathy King

Lorraine Hecker, Kathy King, David Lawrence, Peter Rogers, Paul McCann and a newchum to backpacking, Sandi Smolders drove to the end of the Long Point Rd from Hillgrove. This three day walk started on the Long Point Ridge which projects between the Chandler and



Start of walk - left to right - Sandi Smolders, David Lawrence, Lorraine Hecker, Peter Rogers, Paul McCann - I'm behind the camera! Chandler Gorge is in the background with Halls Peak mine scar.

Macleay Rivers in the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park. At the start, Halls Peak could be seen across the Chandler gorge and also the nearby scar which was an old minesite from which silver, lead and zinc had been once extracted. We quickly branched off the fire trail which continues along the length of Long Point ridge and descended 740 m in altitude to the Chandler River down a well-marked bridle trail along a spur.

We had lunch at our first view into the Chandler. Lorraine said she had cleaned her backpack using the vacuum cleaner – it gave a whole new meaning to the term “vacuum packed”. No wonder she can fit so much in. After this, we crossed a rocky knoll where the track petered out but we traversed across the spur to where Paul had found the bridle track again. David told me that horses hate rocky ground and will avoid it so the track must have diverged before this. We found this to be true as we approached another rocky outcrop and found the trail diverging again as David had anti-

pated.

We continued down the spur to the Chandler River with no further dramas except for a few light showers promised by the weather bureau. It was now boots-off time but we only had 2 river crossings before we found a vast river terrace for a great campsite. A fire was quickly lit and was blazing down to cooking coals as we scurried about erecting tents and getting into warm clothes. Paul had set his new glossy tent up away in the distance. “Too good to camp with the rest of now, Paul” quipped Peter.

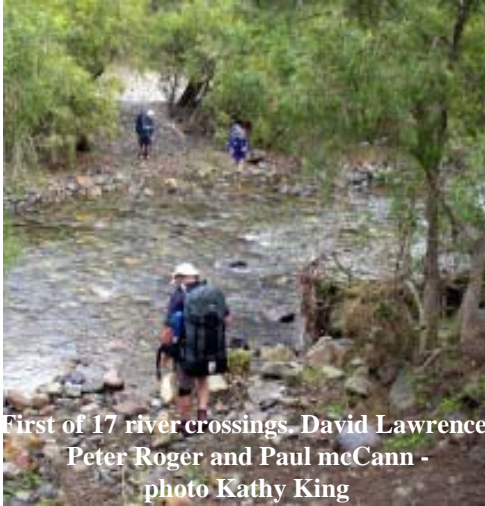
The evening was almost clear with a new moon drifting in and out of clouds. Scorpio was in the heavens and David pointed out the Coal Sack near the Southern Cross. We sat comfortably on a huge log as we ate dinner. Paul was doing a good line in fried horse poo – his billy had picked up some on its bottom and became quite aromatic when he put it back on the fire. We stayed up until Peter’s “bushwalker’s midnight” (8 pm).

We had a leisurely day as it wasn’t far to the next campsite on the Macleay River so David pursued his botanical interests while the rest of us wandered slowly on. We spread our wet tents on warm rocks to dry as we ate morning tea. David found a horse’s skull and decided it had died of old age judging by the state of the teeth. There were some huge river flats just before the junction of the Chandler with the Macleay River which made for very pleasant walking and we did see the occasional horse. We reached the junction for lunch but by 1 pm, the sun set behind the steep



First camp on Chandler River - photo Kathy king

junction spur and shadows slowly crept up the bank toward us. Time to be off before we got too cold and we wended our way across Long Flat, another large expanse of river terrace. A huge cliff overhung the flat



First of 17 river crossings. David Lawrence
Peter Roger and Paul McCann -
photo Kathy King

which led to Peter and Paul musing about taking the "short cut" up onto our exit ridge. We camped on the large river terrace just before this ridge. This was Sandi's first "gorge experience" and the prospect of the long haul out the next day up this ridge, was daunting. To encourage her, Peter adjusted her pack and showed her an exercise to build up leg muscles. It was a much colder night but the sky was clear and we even managed to stay up past bushwalker's midnight.

Peter had been designated as the fire-lighter and alarm clock. The morning was very misty and we started our climb along the steep, shaley bridle track early. Wild dog howls accompanied us. "Probably sat on a prickly pear" said Peter. Paul pointed out the Cocks Comb on the other side of the Macleay gorge. Sandi was pulling out strongly with Peter's encouragement and by 11 am we were at the top of the spur and from here we easily found the Long Point fire trail. We still had to climb 120 m back to the cars over about 8 km but along here were great views into both river valleys. From one viewpoint down the Chandler River, we could see Halls Peak. We were back at the cars by mid-afternoon. David's GPS indicated that we had walked 38 km over the 3 days and I counted 17 river crossings. (note on river crossings. It's best (in most cases) to get you boots wet than get cut feet, or carry a spare pair of volleys, also it's difficult to maintain tour balance with bare feet.)

MT Yarrowick walk - Sunday 20th August

by David Lawrence

Mt Yarrowick is about 33 kilometres west of Armidale. The carpark at its base is 800 metres above sea level, while the summit trig point is at 1206 metres. So it sort of looms over the Gwydir River valley at its base, and its jumble of granodiorite boulders provide some challenging cliff lines for the rock climber, and a pretty solid puff up for the summiting bushwalker. As it is on the boundary of the New England Tableland and the North West Slopes, you can find plants and animals from both regions somewhere on its slopes.

Its location makes it a natural for a joint Armidale-Inverell Bushwalkers outing. So, with a touch of Spring in the air, and an absolutely cloudless day, 18 of us started out from the carpark at 9 am.

The formed track to the Aboriginal art site is pretty level, and passes through a woodland of Blakely's Red Gum, Yellow Box and Rough-barked Apple, with shrubs of Dead Finish – a kind of daisy bush that grows in such poor conditions that you are really finished if you have to rely on it for stockfeed. There are a number of information boards along the way that try to give some sense of the Aboriginal relationship to the land. I've met a lot of Aussies whose ancestors came out with the First Fleet, and "the wide brown land" has certainly seeped into their souls. I can't imagine the depth of attachment that people who have been here two hundred times as long would have to the country.

Well, we doddled along, and had drinks break at the Art site while scratching our heads a bit at what the dots and lines might represent before heading north on the contour to a big ridge leading up towards the top. After we'd climbed it to about 970 metres, we chose a great sheet of exposed rock for our morning tea spot. The hectare of sloping slab, and the elevation, gave us a grand view of the Gwydir River valley heading off west then north towards Bundarra and Copeton Dam.

Suitably refreshed, we headed on up the ridge. Navigation was no trouble- the only way was up- so we took advantage of the numerous lookout points to 'admire the view'. I'd be a bit sceptical if the camera buffs show you what appears to be tremendous exposure and death-defying heroic poses- it's steep, but nowhere particularly exposed or frightening (there

Warra National Park - 23/7/06

by Jim Palmer

were some good actors walking that day!) We reached the top about midday, and bemoaned the regrowth that now nearly hides the Trig Station and cuts out the views that were so impressive – was it 25 years ago really when some of us first climbed it? We took the obligatory photos, and headed south along the summit to a saddle, then dropped into a WNW gully paralleling our way up.

We headed down slowly and carefully, admiring the Native Fuchsia, Sword Sedge, Orange Gums and a number of different species of fern that make their home in the mossy ledges bordering the polished rock bed of the gully. Near the bottom, we crawled through, be-

Warra National Park is a relatively small park, situated 22 kilometres east of Glencoe and can be walked, off-track, from one end to the other in a day. The topography is rugged and dramatic with impressive granite intrusion, marked by huge tors atop mountains and ridges, interspersed with deeply incised gullies. Most of the park is made up of forest with, in some places, a dense understorey of shrubs. At times, navigating can be quite challenging.

Eleven of us set out to walk to Nightcap Mountain that morning. With a forecast of "showers" we felt that good luck might be with us as the day began with clear skies. This weather was to hold, at least until lunchtime - allowing us to walk in comfort and enjoy some impressive panorama of the surrounding countryside. A somewhat diversionary route to Nightcap presented the opportunity to reach "spot height" 1329 metres on the way and take in views of Mt. Mitchell and Crown Mountain. Three hours and forty-five minutes after leaving the vehicles we arrived at the base of Nightcap Mountain where we decided upon lunch in the shelter of some large rocks before tackling the final climb to the peak; some kind of shelter being necessary, as our meal break was briefly interrupted by a hail shower. The sky however, soon began to clear which encouraged us to stir and make our ascent. The short climb

to the top is quite difficult in that there is ultimately only one suitable way up and so we had to pick our way carefully through large boulders, negotiate smooth-surfaced sloping granite rock faces and penetrate some dense stands of rare New England Mallee (Eucalyptus



Mt Yarrowick trig - photo David Lawrence

tween and over the great boulders draped in the roots of the Rusty Figs that are a welcome feature of these granite mountains.

We made our way back to the carpark by various routes-some routes were a bit longer than others! - and drove 6 km towards Armidale to Boorlong Creek. In the green cool of the River Oak woodland, we ate our lunch, listened sceptically while Jim explained that the food they will backpack into the Australian Alps for 12 days at Christmas didn't weigh all that much, talked about a weekend at Gibraltar/Washpool in November that's on both our calendars, and wondered whether we'd be able to stand up when it came time to head back to the cars. The legs worked, so we made our farewells and left for home about 2.45. Thanks to everybody for their company, and especially to Joan Germany for bringing the Inverell people over to spend the day with their daughter club.



Climb up Nightcap Mt - photo Jim Palmer

approximans - ssp. codonocarpa). Once through the last obstacle to the summit we were able to enjoy the magnificent view that can had from Nightcap Mountain - this being the highest point in the Park. Chaelundi and The Guy Fawkes are clearly visible to the east.

The descent was no less difficult and care had to be taken as we made our way down to the south-west saddle. From this point it was moderately straight-forward, as we only had about one and a half kilometres to walk to the Moggs Swamp fire trail which roughly follows the south-east boundary of the Park. Progress was slow however, due to the heavy undergrowth in parts and some boulder-strewn declines which inevitably must be crossed when going in this direction on the return journey.

From the point where we met the fire trail it was only a little more than an hour and a half to walk back to the cars, passing through The Green and Sara River on the way. Fortunately for some, one member of our party had gone on ahead of the rest of us and returned with his ute to collect those just about to climb the quite steep and last hill of the day; thus saving some tired legs. In all: a hard day's walk, typically so, since darkness had descended by the time we were leaving; but we did manage to experience most of what Warra National Park offers in one day.

Brian's Gulf Walk - 9 July 2006

Five of us joined Brian Hardaker on his walk along the rim of the Wollomombi Gorge. Newcomers, Moya Tomlinson and Neal Lake came along with David Lawrence, Lindsay Teychenne, Kathy King, and Brian.

We walked between the dingo fence and the edge of the gorge where it was a bit "airy" in spots; hence Brian's warning beforehand that those people who were anxious about heights may not appreciate the views along here.

We started off from Edgar's Lookout and walked beside Green Gully Gulf. We could see over to where there would have been a waterfall in wetter times and also the darker green of the dry rainforest in the gullies. Wattles were just starting to flower down in the gorge. Along here, we disturbed a swamp wallaby who thought he had the path to himself. Brian asked if there were any geologists in the group and felt very confident in imparting new-found knowledge from his U3A geology class once he found we were only biologists or IT whizzes.



We came across an old wooden fence balanced precariously on the gorge rim and held together with wire looped about the old palings. Its construction became obvious where fire had probably burnt the old palings out. We crossed Green Gully Creek just as it passed in front of a ridge of rock separating it from the gulf. Brian pointed out that if we hung onto an old wooden construction, we could peer into the entrance of a small derelict mineshaft on the other side of this rocky ridge. It would only have taken the miners to have been a few centimeters off-course in the making of their shaft, to have drilled right themselves out of the mine and into Green Gulf. Whatever it was they were mining, we hoped it made their dangerous mission worthwhile.

We continued around to the top of St Helena's Spur where we had magnificent views down the Chandler River, over to "Palaroo" on the plateau in the distance where some of us had camped during the WAMBLE Walk to the coast, and deep down into St Helena Gulf. Some of us had scrambled up St Helena Spur in the past and recalled scary moments walking up this cliff-lined ridge.

We retraced our steps and had lunch back at Edgar's Lookout before walking the national parks trail from the main picnic area, across the Wollomombi River which was still frozen in parts from a -11°C frost in the morning. We passed a lyre-bird display mound which David knew about. It was rather scratched about so somebody had been busy. Brian explained that people who only venture from their cars and

amble down to the viewing platform at the main picnic area, only see a fraction of the full drop of Wollomombi Falls.

What we were looking at from the Wollomombi Falls viewing platform on this side of the river was the true top of the falls. Brian pointed out a ridge of rock that obscured the top of the

falls from the view that we see from the main picnic area.

We continued walking to the lookout platform beside the Chandler River. We could see frozen water on parts of the rocks here as well. David pointed out peregrine falcon nests marked by white splashes of guano below ledges on the distant cliffs. It was great walking weather and Wollomombi Gorge showed off its best side to us this perfect day.

Heavy Metal "Garbage" or CD's used as mirrors

by Keith Maxwell President Bushwalkers Wilderness rescue www.bwrs.org.au

The world is now overflowing with cheap mirrors - compact disks (CDs) of all kinds of music from head banger "Garbage" (it really is a group) to "both kinds" Country and Western (to quote the 'Blues Brothers'). Now mirrors are good things to signal aircraft and helicopters but need to be aimed to be effective.

The problem is of course that aircraft always seem so obvious. They are only obvious because they are moving. When you Freeze their motion in a picture all you get is a dirty speck. I have an excellent panoramic slide of Mt Cook taken while climbing Copeland Saddle. The great weather produced a clear picture spoilt only by a dirty speck. If the plane is a speck how much smaller must I have been?

Helicopters and light aircraft are always used first in fine weather to search for missing persons. They can be quick and cost effective from their ability to travel quickly to the search area and communicate via radio to ground search teams. With trained observers they are often successful but when there is tree cover their success rate is often quite low. Many years ago in a training exercise with Dick Smith, and his first helicopter, bushwalkers standing still. in the Cox's River were not seen! In September, 1999 in Cedar Creek, under Narrow Neck, the search helicopter was so close the missing bushwalker reported that he could stongly smell its exhaust fumes but still was NOT seen!

Prompt identification will lead to early rescue. There are a number of ways to attract attention. You obviously need to be in an open an area as possible and use combinations of contrasting colour, shape & movement. The unusual often draws the eye to it. For example, in a sea of green eucalypts blue (or red) stands out. It is even more compelling when the blue is of a rectangular groudsheet pegged down. Alternatively you could furiously wave your blue parka in all directions. Others jumping up and down with you is better again. Just pick an unusual combination of

contrasting colour, shape & movement. On hazy days smokey fires are almost invisible and always difficult to maintain for that brief moment when the aircraft suddenly appears. To really catch attention, though, why not send a mirror signal, i.e. a flash of light into the aircraft.

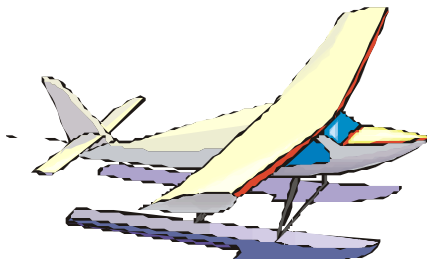
But, how do you aim the mirror flash to hit the moving dirty speck (aircraft)? The hole in the CD makes it easy. Hold the CD (with the reflective side facing out) close to one eye and look at the aircraft through the hole. Now hold an arm out with a finger extended and track the aircraft across the sky. If you now catch the sun to flash onto your finger you must also hit the aircraft!

What if you don't want to be noticed. In snow capped mountains (such as New Zealand) on a clear day

climbers readily stand out as moving coloured specks on a vast white background. The convention is if a climber has an accident they wave vigorously at any plane flying overhead. The pilot will immediately radio to Emergency Senices for a rescue. If they have only slipped and bruised nothing but the ego they deliberately pay no

attention to overhead aircraft which may now circle waiting for a signal. Alternatively you could be walking in one of the popular parts of the Blue Mountains and a possible search aircraft flies low overhead. If your trip is proceeding well you should stand still under tree cover if possible until the aircraft passes. Pilots seeing groups not in difficulties can potentially delay the location of the group who really need their help.

Other sources of CDs are trial computer programs



Armidale Bushwalking Club Spring/Summer programme 2006

Note: Walk standards have been classified according to newly adopted grading system, copies of which will be forwarded to members (see back page). If in doubt as to any aspect of a walk or your ability to participate, refer to the walks leader.

September 30th – October 2nd (Labour Day weekend)

Washpool National Park. Leader Paul McCann 67726156 (contact after 19th Sept.)

Three day overnight walk down Pi Pi Creek to Pi Pi Flat. Camp amongst tall Brush Box and Blue Gums. Return via Hianana Creek. Grade BP (3d 2w) M 4 C.

Labour Day Weekend day walk.

Opportunity for a day walk on one of the three days. Leader required. If you would like to lead a walk contact Colin Wood 6775-2026 or turton37@bigpond.com and volunteer to lead a walk.

October 15th Leader and venue required for either a 2 day or 1 day walk. Contact Colin Wood.

October 22nd Long Point area.

An easy walk on NPWS tracks with good vantage points for views. Also interesting and varied vegetation. Leader required. Walk grade DWSIA.

November 10th – 12th Gibraltar Range – Washpool NP.

Leader David Lawrence 67753164. A weekend to cater for all tastes and circumstances.

- 1) Overnight walk to commence Friday afternoon and to do the "walk on the Edge of Wilderness." Over 2 nights and 2 and a bit days.
 - 2) Car camp at Mulligan's Hut with 2 or 1 day walks.
 - 3) Come for the day from Armidale and link up with walkers in alternative (2) above.
- Weather will be warmer with opportunities for a swim. Pleasant campsite with barbecues, toilets, shelter sheds and showers.

Contact David after 20th October for bookings/further details. Remember the Waratahs should be in bloom. Walks grades. Alternative 1). BP (3d 3n) M2B.

Alternative 2) DWM1B. Alternative 3.) DWM1B.

November 25th. Day walk and end of year get-together plus AGM.

Location Blue Hole. Note. Suggested date is a little earlier than usual as a number of club members will be away in December.

Contact David Lawrence 67753164. Walk Grade DNS1A.

December 1st – 8th Kosciuszko National park

Leader Jim Palmer 67758281. One 3 day walk in Mt Jagungal area. One 3 day walk in the Main Range area. A day between to re-supply probably at Jindabyne. Also allow traveling time to add to above dates. Walks grades. BP (3d 2n) M4D. Note the possibility of climate extremes in an alpine environment.

December 3rd. Styx River area. Leader Lindsay Teychenne. 6771 3891

A cool spot in the New England NP area. Swimming opportunities. Activities otherwise to be determined. Check with leader for grading and schedule of intentions.

December 28th undetermined finish date. Alpine National Park – Victoria.

Leader Jim Palmer 6775-8281.

This trip will be primarily cover the southern section of The Australian Alps Walking Track, commencing at Walhalla in the Gippsland. On completion a shorter in the Bogong High Plains is proposed. Further details from Jim Palmer as to exact dates/transports/gradings etc.

Notes Re Walks Programme.

From the above it will be seen that there are several vacancies for locations and leaders. If you would like to lead a walk then please contact Colin Wood or Peter Roger on 67752026 and 67720464.

Over the summer month's bushwalking activity is generally planned for locations that permit ready access to river or seaside locations, whilst additionally many walkers head to Tasmania, New Zealand or the Alpine areas of NSW or Victoria. However we wish to plan the next programme from about mid January to around Easter, so if you would like to lead a walk, please don't hesitate. At the present time there are moves underway to integrate the walks programme's of clubs in the region which will be broader the base for walkers in all the participating clubs. More on this later. Note: Anybody wishing to borrow a back pack(50 or 95 Litre) for extended walks contact colin Wood turton37@bigpond.com



Doing it easy near Long Point

Six day trip Oxley Wild River NP Stories & photos By Peter Rodger

Saturday 2nd September dawned fine, with the promise of continuation of the balmy early spring weather which had been experienced in the days preceding the start of the walk.

Thirteen participants, including several visitors traveled by bus to Dangars Falls, where we joined forces with three Club members who would accompany us for the day as far as Salisbury Waters, where we enjoyed lunch together.

After farewelling Jane, Julie and Andrew, the through walkers headed downstream. We encountered some difficulty at the cliff face on the left hand bank of the creek just short of the Mini Greek entry, which,



although having been negotiated by several of us on previous occasions, appears to have been affected by a recent rock fall or other circumstances, or maybe we didn't just approach it in the right way. Notwithstanding, we all got through in one piece, although there were a few anxious moments, which fortunately didn't result in any major catastrophes.

Camp was made at a large flat area .about four kilometres downstream from the Mihi junction. Unfortunately, one of our group had sustained an ankle injury which had not improved overnight, and after an assessment of the situation, it was decided that three of the party would head back to Armidale. The cliff of the previous day was no less difficult on the return for the three, and the decision was made to lower packs at one point and swim around the

obstacle. Kathy King, who was one of the three returning members, has compiled an ancillary trip report on the return journey, which is retained in the club records and, in part, makes recommendations for perhaps having a Club day trip to sort out the problem, as Salisbury Waters is a gateway to many interesting parts of the gorge system.

Sunday 3rd September, onwards -

The balance of the party continued on downstream. The group now numbered ten, and for around two days, only maintained a slow pace due to the amount of rock hopping required, the techniques for which were unfamiliar to several members. It was mutually agreed that the faster walkers would go ahead and that a suitable Campsite would be chosen later in the day, with allowance made for all to be together Ba.ch night.

As the walk proceeded, it was possible to identify a number of features familiar to those who had been on various sections of the river on previous trips. The "heart" of New England, formed by two significant bends in the river near the Bakers Creek confluence, and the ridge out to Blue Knobby, were noted, as was the razorback ridge leading up to the Cock's Comb, a significant feature in the Table Top Mountain area.. By now the walking was less arduous in the absence of rock hopping. Nevertheless, frequent crossings of the river had to be negotiated.

After passing the entry point of the Chandler River, there was a noticeable change in the river level, together with the rate of flow, and this necessitated a little extra care when fording. A bonus however, was the difference in water quality, which made for more palatable drinking; although throughout the entire trip, all of us adopted precautionary measures of water treatment.

Although our overnight locations varied in quality, all were acceptable, this was particularly so at Oven Camp, where an early finish enabled a swim and leisurely mid to late afternoon to be enjoyed.

After passing the Apsley River confluence, we reached East Kunderang the following day at lunchtime, thus enabling us to savour the surround-

ings and again relax for an extended afternoon. The old homestead and its surrounds are steeped in history, and our thoughts turned to conjecture as we tried to imagine the scenes in the lives of many who had passed this way.

Our final day (Friday 8th) saw us to a mid-morning arrival at George's Junction, where we took a leisurely lunch made up in part by our leftover food items. The waiting time for our transport passed quickly as we relaxed in warm sunshine and dried out shoes, sox and feet, which for the previous six days had been subjected to frequent immersion in the many stream crossings.

Any hidden thoughts as to whether we'd arrived on the wrong day, or even been forgotten, were dispelled as we saw our chartered bus coming down the hill. True to their promise, Kathy and Lorraine were on board and no doubt glad to see us as we were then. Their thoughtfulness had extended to providing refreshments, which were welcome after almost a week of dehydrated foodstuffs and similar bushwalking fare. After a quick exchange of news (and which continued on the way home) we boarded our bus and headed to Armidale. It has been said that any trip can be categorised in three phases -viz., ANTICIPATION/PARTICIPATION/REFLECTION.

In reflecting on our trip and experiences, all agreed that it had been an enjoyable time together, as the participants represented four different clubs from the region. The weather had been kind to us, with only one night of rain, although there was a drop in temperature with some strong wind in the final days,



as a cold front came through.

A variation of the trip in the future would be to gain access via Blue Knobby, thus bypassing some of the upper reaches around Salisbury Waters and the Gara River, which have been visited on previous trips.

River levels are crucial, and some crossings, even in times of normal, flow, require care. A minimum of six days, depending on the makeup of the party, should be allowed. There are no major obstacles to progress, other



than those stipulated earlier in this report. However, in one instance, a rock barrier had to be negotiated, which whilst not difficult in itself, required wading near the river bank in a backwater pool which can only be described as fetid. For future reference, this is located on the right hand side of the river at approximately grid reference 004 970 (Winterbourne 1:25k O.S.).

In summary, all participants enjoyed the experience. The area was new to some, and to others it filled in the "gaps" from previous trips in the area.

The best time of the year to go? Probably early spring and maybe a little later than our time frame, as the water was still a little on the cool side. Early summer would also be likewise acceptable, subject to influence of summer storms on river levels, which at the time of writing, has not been a problem in recent times, due to the continuing dry conditions.

So, there are some of my random recollections, and now I go to reflect some more on yet another bushwalk to etch into the memories of places seen and companionship enjoyed.

Walk to Dibbs Head July 30th 2006

Allan Went

The walk to Dibbs Head coincided with the best day's weather for two weeks; A perfect mild winter's day and in the morning, not a cloud in the sky. The walkers were David and Julie Kinnelly, Peter Van Haeff, Neil Lake, Paul McCann, Peter Roger, Joanne Davidson, David Lawence, John Gray and Alan Went, several of whom were shortly heading of on various extensive walking trips in NSW, interstate or overseas.

We drove along Slingsbys Rd to the North-West corner of the park, part of the large addition of 1985 that doubled its size. This is quite different to the sub-tropical rain forest on basalt near the park headquarters and campsites an interesting mix of temperate rain forest, pockets of old growth hardwood forest and some unusual plant species around the escarpment, the grass plain and rocky outcrops.

The Killungoondie grass plain, just inside the park boundary, once quite open and extensive, has now become largely overgrown with scrub and sapling tree growth. This is probably due to the absence of fire in recent decades. However, enough still remains to make it an interesting feature.

Various other points of interest were seen on the way to the ford across Wild Cattle Creek, where the track to Dibbs Head begins. This track is not set down for retention by NPWS, so is getting overgrown by rainforest regrowth, which makes for slower walking. In another 20 years it may be quite difficult to follow this old track. However, with the aid of some flagging tape and other markers over the last kilometer, it was possible to find our way out to Dibbs Head itself. This is where the escarpment runs out to a narrow point, which ends abruptly with a very steep drop-off on three sides, affording great views across the Bellinger valley to the coast, with other distant landmarks including Smoky Cape Mt Banda Banda, Cockatoo Point lookout and Darkie Point.

After the strong winds in Armidale the previous day, it was remarkable that the air was perfectly still at this exposed point.

Due to the distance from Armidale and the days being quite short, there was no time for any side trips and we retraced our steps to the cars in the soft golden light of the lowering sun.

A day well spent!

7B MultiWalk Gradings August 2006

The grading system is divided into trip type, approximate dally distance, type -of terrain, fitness level required. All walk participants should check the grading to ensure they have suitable fitness level before undertaking a walk.

Walk Type.

DW-One Day Walk

BP (3d2n) Backpack, 3 Days, 2 Nights

CC (2d2n) = Car Camp, 2Days, 2 nights

Approximate distance

S-Short-Less than 10km

M- 10-15 km

L-Long- 15-20 km

XL - Extra Long - over 20 km

Terrain

GRADED TRACK WALKING - These walks are on formed and maintained tracks for walking or for vehicles.

OFF-TRACK WALKING -These walks are over territory where there are no formed or maintained tracks.

1 - Graded track, some Incline

2 - Graded track, hills, creek crossings

3 - Rough track, steep sections, and creek crossings

4 - Off track, moderate terrain

5 - Off track, rough terrain

6 - Off track, rock climbing and exposure

Fitness

A - Low-fitness

B - Moderate fitness

C - Good fitness

D - Good fitness with agility

E - High fitness level

F - Strenuous - experienced walkers only!

(So the Threlfal Walk would be rated DW S 1 A; Kathy's Long Point Backpack BP (3d2n) M 4 C; and so on)