

THE BUSH CLUB NEWSLETTER



Spring 2015

www.bushclub.org.au

Walks Reports Autumn p. 11
Walks Program Spring p. 19

WALKS SUBMISSIONS

Email

Walk submissions for the newsletter
walkssecretary@gmail.com

Short notice walks

bushclubsnw@gmail.com

Postal address

Walks Secretary
PO Box 3079
Regents Park.
NSW 2143



**Web Information and
Notice Board**

www.bushclub.org.au

CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

Please send anything you think will
interest our members to
Judith O'Connor

bushclubeditor@gmail.com

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND DINNER TO FOLLOW

Our Annual General Meeting will
be held at **6.30pm on
Thursday 3rd December 2015.**

The venue will be announced in our
next Newsletter and via the Bush Club
Bulletin. A highlight of the evening is
always the post AGM dinner when
members and prospectives have the
opportunity to chat to old friends and
make new ones in a relaxed casual
environment.

**Please make a note in your
diary as things get pretty busy
at that time of year.**

The AGM will be preceded by a
committee meeting from 4.30-6.30pm.
Members and prospectives are also
welcome to attend this meeting and
see how the committee works on their
behalf.

The main business of the AGM is
to receive a report on the club's
activities, approve the audited
accounts for the past year and to elect
office bearers for the year ahead.

The Constitution requires that each
AGM elect the nominated positions of

...takes less than an hour...

President, two Vice Presidents,
Committee Secretary and Assistant
Secretary plus one Ordinary Member
who may be involved in a special
project.

In addition to these positions, once
elected, the committee appoints other
office bearers to help carry out its

functions and ensure a wide representation of members.

The AGM takes less than an hour and members and prospectives are invited to stay for an informal meal after the meeting. Our Events Coordinator, Shirley Hart will be in touch with more details later.

New ideas needed

All committee positions are held for one year. Several current members have indicated they are prepared to stand again but some will not be

...just two hours a month

seeking re-election. To maintain a strong club it is important that there are fresh ideas and people with new skills and perspectives. **We need new committee members to help keep our club dynamic and energized over the next year.** Think about making a great contribution by joining the committee.

Why not nominate?

It requires just two hours a month of your time (excluding January when there is no meeting). Meetings are held at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre on the first Thursday of the month. If you would like to nominate for a position please contact the president Cavan Hogue cavan.hogue@gmail.com; Phone: 43420551 Mobile: 0416168639/

Carol Henderson: Secretary



The Great North Walk

May 1-16, 2015

By Sandra See and Jane Millgate

The Great North Walk (GNW) is a 250km track that runs from Sydney to Newcastle, starting in Sydney's CBD and finishing at Queens Wharf, Newcastle. It passes through Hunters Hill before reaching the Lane Cove River where it follows the river through Lane Cove National Park to Thornleigh before following Berowra Creek. Further north, the track crosses over to the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park before proceeding to Brooklyn, on the Hawkesbury River. The river is crossed either by train or boat, after which the track proceeds north through Brisbane Water National Park and the Ourimbah Valley before reaching the Watagan State Forest. Further north, it veers east in the vicinity of Brunkerville and follows the Myall Range for some distance before reaching Teralba, on the southern fringes of Newcastle. It then proceeds to its official finishing point in Newcastle.

Walkers: John Hungerford (leader), Sandra See, Jane and Paul Millgate.

Others who walked part way, or turned up to cheer along: Rogo Owens, Jacqui and Tony Hickson, Geoff Bishop, Col Isaac, Jim Mahoney, Laurie Olsen, Rowena Hungerford.

After weeks of planning, John Hungerford and those of us who walked the whole distance (plus Rogo Owens who walked three different days), gathered at the official start of the GNW which is the obelisk

in Macquarie Place, near Bridge Street in Sydney's CBD.

As we neared our destination on the first day, Lane Cove Caravan Park, we met Tony Hickson on the track. He had kindly come to wish us well for the long walk ahead.



L to R: Sandra See, Laurie Olsen (support), Paul Millgate, John Hungerford.

Between Lane Cove and Pennant Hills we encountered several swollen creeks and heavy showers so we 'camped' at the Millgates' home overnight to dry off.

However, by the next morning we were wet again as we had to cross more fast flowing creeks. To avoid further creek crossings at The Spa and Fishponds, we made the steep detour up to Manor Road. John Hungerford proposed coffee at Mt Wilga Hospital, a pleasant retreat from the mud and leeches we'd put up with all morning.

The weather cleared as we approached Crosslands. The sight of Geoff Bishop who appeared with supplies was welcome indeed. That evening we had to take advantage of the low tide, and make the thigh-deep crossing at Calna Creek.

On the fourth day, after sharing their tents with leeches, John Hungerford

and Sandy See set off in fine weather for Cowan. Rogo Owens joined us again as we walked from Cowan to the Hawkesbury from where we could view the way ahead in the distance.

...we walked towards Noah's Ark...

From Brooklyn we took a water taxi to Patonga and were soon up at the Warrah Lookout overlooking the Hawkesbury - one of the highlights of the walk.

After morning tea at the Phil Houghton Bridge we walked towards a derelict house boat, known rather cheekily as Noah's Ark where John Hungerford and Paul Millgate had earlier left water before the walk.

Slip, splash, waterfall

Crossing Mooney Mooney Creek was the next hurdle. After eventually locating the crossing point, we realised it would be slippery. John Hungerford led off gallantly but slipped, took a soaking, and lost a walking pole - fortunately retrieved before it went over a waterfall.

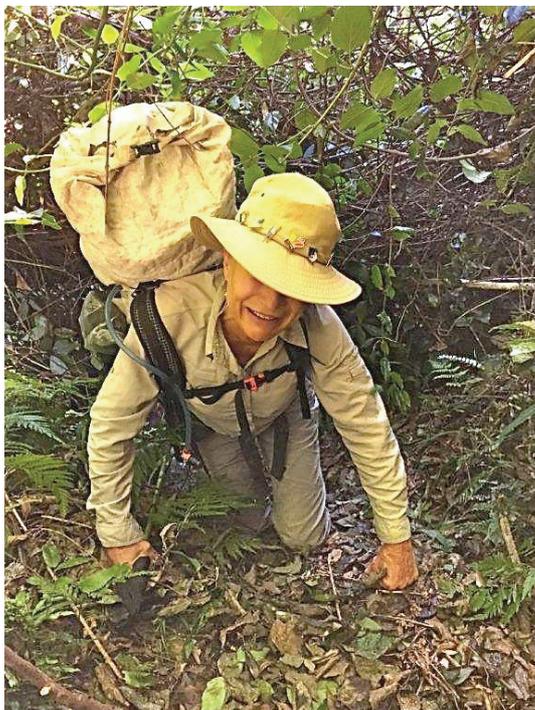


John Hungerford and one of many fallen trees

We walked through beautiful rainforests on our way to Hidden Valley where we found a well-equipped campsite but on the track from there to Yarramalong we came across numerous fallen trees which made progress difficult.

The track from Yarramalong to The Basin campsite started with a pleasant 11km road walk through farmland, then from the Cedar Brush Trackhead we walked through abundant rainforest. Suddenly we saw the familiar faces of Tony and Jacqui Hickson, Col Isaac and Jim Mahoney walking to meet us. We had a great evening around the campfire enjoying all the treats the Hicksons had brought with them.

En route to Watagan Creek campsite we encountered more obstacles. Both Sandy See and John Hungerford slipped on the deeply rutted track, John snapping a walking pole.



Sandy See

Mother's Day to remember

We had great views of Congewai Valley from Flat Rock Lookout where Sandy See and Jane Millgate received belated Mother's Day emails. We met Laurie Olsen who brought not just food supplies but afternoon tea which we enjoyed at our campsite on the Brown Muir farm.

On Day 13 we headed from Congewai Valley East to the Watagan Forest HQ and enjoyed fabulous views over the Quorrobolong Valley. We met a NPWS ranger clearing the track who attempted to explain the complicated responsibility for the GNW: NPWS vs Forestry vs Dept of Lands, each body responsible for different parts of the track.

Next morning, we passed two beautiful lookouts, the Hunter and Maclean Lookouts, before the horror stretch started. We clambered over, under and around multiple fallen trees that at times covered the track for twenty to thirty metres. What we had hoped would be an easier day ended up long and difficult.

...courtesy bus to local Bowlo...

The walk from Heaton Gap to Teralba was one of the less interesting parts with eroded tracks, land subsidence areas and road walking. We pitched tents at the Teralba caravan park and, as light rain was falling, took the courtesy bus to the local Bowlo for a great meal.

Next morning we set off in high spirits for the final leg. Rogo joined us again, complete with budget raincoat and new white shoes – only to step in ankle deep mud later that morning. It was a scenic walk beside Lake

Macquarie before rejoining bush tracks. Our first views of the Pacific Ocean from Leichhardt Lookout heralded the beginning of the end section of the long walk. From Bar Beach we took the newly opened ANZAC Walk.

In light rain we crossed King Edward Park and descended the city streets to reach our final destination, Queens Wharf. John Hungerford's daughter, Rowena, greeted us before a heavy downpour had us scurrying for cover at the bus shelter.



L to R: Paul Millgate, Sandra See, Rogo Owens, John Hungerford, Jane Millgate.

The walk owed its success to John Hungerford's excellent leadership and meticulous planning.

Many, many thanks to everyone who encouraged and supported us.



*Michael Pratt, on holidays
in the UK sends this
cautionary tale*

The club has a tradition of coffee breaks and with this in mind I entered an establishment within the City of Worcester, during a riverside walk. Refreshments were ordered but the waitress continued to quiz me, before my companions, about some quite inconsequential detail. Some surprisingly trivial matter which really did not trouble me at all:

'Look' I replied, with a smile, hoping to settle the matter.

'I'm easy.'

I was floored when she said:

'In that case, luv, I'll see you out the back in ten minutes.'



Magic of Southern France
Edited by Mary Ann Irvin

*Day walks (May 2015) from 18th
century farmhouse Etxexuria (Etchers)
in the rural countryside, Pays Basque*

Leaders: Graham Lewarne, Bob Taffel, Jill Green.

Walkers: Ros Kitson, Sally Reynolds, Jo Cikos, Tom Halbert, Douglas Irvin, Mary Ann Irvin, Rogo Owens, Helen Fastovsky, Rosemary MacDougal, Glen Goodacre, Mark Armstrong, Ann Armstrong, and Sandra Bushell.

Cooking staff: Sal, our chef, with assistants Nigel (or Biggs), and Anne Tribe

Our first walk, led by **Graham Lewarne** started at the nearby Col d'Ipharlatze, a saddle at 328m. We trudged to the top of a bare and windswept hill that provided a grand vista. We were introduced to some of the locals – Pottocks (mountain horses) and Blonde Aquitaines (cows). We followed a ridge, then continued down a trail that wound through a woodland providing shade, skirted farmland, passed hides for pigeon shooters then hiked uphill to the Chapelle de Soyarza.

Camino walkers

This chapel is surrounded by plane trees that have been pollarded and trained to form a ring around the building. We met several walkers doing the Camino de Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage which is also part of the track.

We then headed to Harambeltz, where we visited 10th century Chapelle Saint Nicolas d'Harambeltz, listed as a Historical Monument. We walked on through woodlands to Ostabat, a village where pilgrims are offered accommodation, and dropped in to a local bar. While beers were popular, a new sensation was a *Citron Presse*, made from freshly squeezed lemons, served with chilled water and bowl of sugar. Rogo was seen to buy a beer.

The next day our leader was Bob Taffel

We first visited a market in the town of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, one of the most popular starting points for the Camino de Santiago and featured in the movies *The Way*, and documentary *Walking the Camino*. In 1998, the Porte St-Jacques (city gate) was added to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The markets were colourful, with a variety of local produce, notably cheese and sausage.

For our second walk, we drove through winding roads to the border crossing at the Col d'Ispeguy. What followed was a beautiful traverse through oak and beech forest on a steep hillside. We border-crossed at least five times as we admired the brilliant green shoots on the trees. After morning tea, we walked through beech forests to an alpine meadow near Hautza, highest point on the watershed between the Baztan and the Aldude Valleys where shepherds had once constructed stone corrals to protect the sheep. Today they are

...the rest of us enjoyed a siesta...

crumbling stone walls and, along with terra cotta tiled roofs, make for picture postcard scenery. At the saddle below Hautza was the border between France and Spain - completely open and marked only by border stones (*bornes*) every few hundred metres. After lunch, six intrepid walkers climbed Hautza (1306m), with instructions to return within 90 minutes). Rosemary, Rogo, Jill and Sally made it to the top while the rest of us enjoyed a siesta and examined the megalithic stone circles of burial sites that are found there.

Next day our leaders were Graham Lewarne and Bob Taffel

We drove to Saint-Étienne-de-Baïgorry then uphill to the Valley of Aldudes. Along the way we stopped to allow a herd of sheep with swinging udders to pass on their way to milking. The Oylarandoy walk was basically a figure of eight, starting along a made road to concrete sheep pens. There were lots of flowering plants – raspberry foxgloves, aquilegia and Scottish thistles.

We then walked up to a col in the fog along a trail called Sentier des

Contrebandiers (*The Smugglers' Trail*) and back to the sheep pens for lunch.

Next day our leaders were Graham Lewarne and Jill Green

Since this was forecast to be a hot day, we set off early to a point along the road from Saint-Étienne-de-Baïgorry to Col d'Ispeguy. The plan was a steep climb to the GR10, then along to Col de Buztanzelhay to finish at the venta at Col d'Ispeguy. However, because of heavy fog, the leaders made the popular decision to change plans to a country lane walk from Ispoure to Saint-Jean-le-Vieux. We visited the Basque church, L'église Saint-Pierre-d'Usakoa, with its fascinating interior and cemetery with painted tiles depicting the occupation of the person buried below.

We crossed the River Laurhibar, wandered through country lanes, past houses with beautiful gardens to Caro. After one of the group was temporarily misplaced in town, we set off home in convoy.

Next day was our culture day. We spent time in Espelette, with its traditional Labourd houses and famous Piment d'Espelette, a chilli



brought to France from Mexico around 1650. It is dried in the traditional way, hung on the facades of houses. We drove to the seaside town of Saint-Jean-de-Luz to swim, visit the church, and/or sample the cuisine for which it is famous.

The next day we walked to the Sommet d'Occabe. We drove up to Col de Burdincurutcheta, then ferried one of the vans to Chalet Pedro, where we would finish the walk.



Etchers' countryside, South of France

The wind was strong, estimated by the yachties amongst us to be gusting to about 20 knots.

This is one of the classic Pays Basque walks with extensive views of the Forêt d'Iraty, said to be Europe's largest beech forest. We climbed to the top of yet another col with spectacular views down across the valley. In the foreground was a valley with limestone cliffs defining the deeper gorges. We pressed on to the Col de Sourzay following the contour of the hill. From here it was a steady climb through a beech forest to a mountain meadow with sheep, several Pottocks, and the Cromlechs



Graham Lewarne (left) and Bob Taffel enjoying their 15 minutes of fame

d'Occabe. These are great circles of stone, iron age burial sites, that stretch along the crest of the mountain. We lunched on the Summit d'Occabe (1466m), a rocky ridge with a

spectacular view over the Iraty Forest. After lunch it was time to start our descent via the GR10, through a beech forest, along a slippery, stony track where there was very little under-story. That night we celebrated our trip with dinner at a traditional restaurant and our leaders were presented with *Le Grande Order de la Beret Noir*.

Last day

It was with heavy hearts that we packed knowing this might be the last time the club visits Etchers. Here's hoping that another brave soul will take on the mammoth task of coordinating the whole thing again.

References: Keats, Michael 2006. A Pyrenees tasting pack. *The Bushwalker* 31(3):4-6.

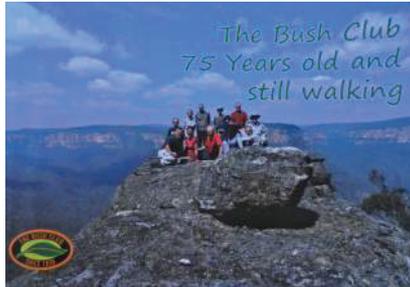


Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. Throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover. Mark Twain





Letters to the Editor



I just got my *75 Years Old and Still Walking* book. What a masterpiece it's turned out to be. Most of us leaders and walkers just did some preparation, then went and had a good time away walking.

All the credit must go to you all, the editorial committee and Barry Hanlon, whom I do not know, for producing such a wonderful book to keep, read and treasure. Thank you.

Morrie Donovan



Thank you to all the committee members and walk leaders for all their hard work and effort over the past year. Since I first became a member, I have had a simply marvellous year of walking.

And as for the club's *75 Years Old and Still Walking* illustrated book of walks in Australia and around the world – well, it's nothing short of fantastic.

Thank you all for a marvellous year. Regards and best wishes,

Mike Warren



Walking or Life of Riley?

**Blo' Norton Hall
Norfolk, UK**

By Joan Walsh and Col Prentice

Walkers: Graham Lewarne and Bob Taffel (leaders) Col Prentice, Joan Walsh, Daryl and Pamela Warren, Ros Kitson, Sally Reynolds, Roger Clarke, Steve Proctor, Rogo Owens, Helen Kershaw, Jennie Kelso, Bev Barnett.

*Blo' Norton Hall is a moated Elizabethan manor in a village comprising 100 households with a population of around 270. There is evidence of people having lived in the area from Saxon times, and perhaps from the Romano-British period. Author Virginia Woolf once stayed at the manor where she was inspired to write her short story *The Journal of Miss Joan Martyn*.*

Having endured over an hour in a queue to clear immigration at Stansted airport plus a somewhat shorter delay while our leader reasoned with the rental car staff that a car with seven seats and seatbelts was **not** an 8-seater - 15 exhausted club members staggered

...supposedly a ghost...

into Blo Norton Hall late at night and into the welcoming arms of our hosts for the week – Sal and Sue.

Rooms allocated, we were offered quiches, salad, restorative drinks and a late breakfast in the morning. Bliss.

Blo Norton Hall is in a tiny village in south Norfolk surrounded by quiet

lanes and farming fields. The house dates back to the 16th century and, while modern comforts have been installed, there is the occasional reminder – uneven floors, odd angled walls, four poster beds – of its age. Supposedly there was a ghost though none was seen. The gardens are extensive and would have been imposing in their day.



Blo' Norton Hall

Our walks were organised by local residents, Anthony and Sarah, who happily rearranged their lives to plan then lead, with their dog Guinness. Each day we walked 12-15 km along mostly flat footpaths and byways, through wheat and rapeseed fields, copses and across meadows, dawdling over roses and other flowers.



Three course meals every day

One morning we walked along the towpath beside the Cam River into Cambridge, admiring a range of barges, rowing skiffs and families of cygnets. A whole day was spent walking part of the North Norfolk

Coastal path along wide sandy beach flats then on the edge of forest and along the riverbank into Wells next-the-Sea.

Each day we were chauffeured by our drivers (Bob, Sue and Roger) who safely negotiated the many

...walks ended with cream tea in the garden...

roundabouts, A and B roads and managed to keep in speedy Sal's wake whenever she led a convoy.

The non-walking activities were particular highlights. Sal organised the first day's walk so that we could lunch in her garden then visit the local church *fayre*, a scene straight out of TV's *Midsomer Murders*.

Most afternoons we ended a walk with a cream tea in the garden of one of Sal's friends.

We were taken through the grounds of Trinity Hall in Cambridge by Fraser, Sal's husband, who had been a student there. We visited Norwich and admired its Cathedral, Castle and the John Lewis depot car park. In Bury St Edmunds, we gazed at the painted ceiling of its Cathedral and the new Millennium tower.

At our farewell dinner, a barbecue outside on a balmy summer evening with a storm approaching, Nigel (aka Biggs and a friend of Sal's) came with friends in their vintage cars and thrilled us with short drives in the countryside.

Sal and Sue excelled themselves with the catering. Most evenings we sat down to a three course dinner with wine, served at a long table in the dining room beneath the gaze of some grand toffs. A little like TV's *Downton Abbey* – without Carson.