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20 Feb Sat **Munmorah SRA** Blue Mts
Day walk 14km tracks and beaches
Mark Goodson 4739 3898 7-8.30pm Mon-Fri
Pinny Beach - Middle Camp Beach - Deep Cave Beach -
Frazer Beach - Red Ochre Beach
How does 9 beaches, short and long, sound for a summer
walk? As we stroll along the littoral zone there will be ample
time for surfing, swimming and odd bit of coastal cruising.
Come along and enjoy. Map: Catherine Hill Bay. Limit 15

21 Feb Sun **Bouddi NP** Sydney
Easy/med day walk 200m asc 14km varied tracks
Steve Bennetts 9411 4908
Maitland Bay - Putty Beach - Box Head
Great views of coast, Hawkesbury R and Brisbane Water.
Swims at delightful secluded beaches. Cars from Woy Woy
station. Ideal summer walk. Map: CMA Broken Bay. Limit 15

20-21 Feb Sat/Sun **Morton NP** Sydney
Shoalhaven River
Liloing and walking 430m asc 24km hilly terrain also rocky
riverscape. Track to and from river
Tom Hayllar 9905 3484 Tue only 6-9pm
Badgery's Lookout - Badgery's Crossing - Canoe Flat -
Funnels Pass - Caoura - Badgery's Lookout
Float down the Shoalhaven amidst grandeur of magnificent
mountains and riverscape. Splendid campsite for indulging
in a gourmet evening. Essential: lilo, paddle, pack
waterproofing. Must be able to swim! Map: Caoura. Limit 12

20-21 Feb Sat/Sun **O'Allans Ford** Illawarra
Neriga
Base camp at cars, campsite close to sandy river beach,
walk upstream and down
Jim Chapman 4296 3633
Rendezvous O'Allans Ford (via Neriga/Bungonia). Arr Fri if
poss. Campsite a little off beaten track - good for swim-
ming, liloing, canoeing, indolence, even panning for gold!

22 Feb Mon **Members' Evening** Sydney
Monthly get-together to air Branch matters and enjoy talk/
slides. Tea/coffee from 6.30pm Mitchell Room, Level 4,
Imperial Arcade. Enter from Pitt St Mall. Details in Branch
Newsletter

23 Feb Tue **South Coast Part 2** Sydney
Easy/med day walk 10km
Jean Blackman
7.58am train Central country plat to Port Kembla, change

Wollongong. Meet leader for circular walk via beaches,
headlands. Swim

27 Feb Sat **Sydney Harbour NP** Sydney
Day walk 100m asc, 9km on tracks
Norma Whitmore 9872 4679 no need to contact
Manly to Spit via Bicentennial walkway. Meet outside
entrance of Manly ferry terminal 10.10am. Buses to Manly
and Wynyard to finish

27 Feb Sat **Royal NP Part 2** Sydney
Med day walk 12km, rocky terrain
Jean Blackman
8.20am train sub plat to Heathcote ETA 9.10am. Meet
leader, scramble down Kangaroo Creek, up to Heathcote
via Karloo pool. Swim

28 Feb Sun **Ku-ring-gai Chase NP** Sydney
Day walk 250m asc 8km, coastal track
Sandy Johnson 9489 3500
Mackerel Beach to West Head
10am ferry from Palm Beach (allow parking time), two
optional swims, no changing sheds. Map: Ku-ring-gai
Chase NP

28 Feb Sun **Wollemi NP** Sydney
Day walk 250m asc 10km all on tracks
Greg Bridge 9804-6490(h) after 9pm; 9437 6655(w)
Newcomer's Walk - Bob Turners track, Colo R & return
Easy track walk to beautiful Colo R. Long, possibly gourmet
lunch, plenty of time for liloing or simply floating in the river
on your air-bed, if that is your inclination! Spaces reserved
for newcomers but old customers also welcome. Limit 15

26-28 Feb Fri-Sun **Morton NP** Illawarra
Kangaroo Valley
Car camp, easy walks, swimming
Teddy Curtis 4229 7509 7-9pm
Car camp Hampton Bridge C'van Park, something different
to Bendeela camping. Shelter shed with BBQ, sink. Walks
in beautiful Kangaroo Valley. Small fees apply. Limit 15

27 Feb - 7 Mar **Blue Mountains NP** Sydney
Full pack walk, trackless
Richard Thompson 9144 1392(h), 9213 8033(w)
Nine days in the magnificent Blue Breaks area. A unique
chance to get to really see this rarely visited area

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ADVANCE NOTICES

20 Mar Sat **Blue Mountains NP** Sydney
Day walk 1,350m 43km all on track
Greg Bridge 9804 6490 (h) after 9pm, 9437 6655 (w)
Richard Thompson 9144 1392(h)

Six Foot Track in a day. Following last year's great success, it's on again! Limited back-packer accommodation at Jenolan for about \$30 for Saturday night after our celebration dinner. Bookings must close Mon 8 March - walkers and helpers urgently needed.

15-23 May **Mittagong to Katoomba** Sydney
160km track on and off
Bruce Howe 9331 5455(h)
Richard Thompson 9144 1392(h)

It's on yet again!! Nine days from Mittagong to Katoomba with some of the best scenery in the Blue Mountains. A wonderful rest day in Yerranderie and great campsites. See how good a hamburger and champagne in Katoomba can taste! Book early as the trip is very popular

Mid 1999 **Daintree** Illawarra
Jim Chapman 4296 3633

14 night base camp at YHA affiliate hostel set in secondary rainforest just north of Daintree River. Accommodation \$30 per person - 7 per cabin - up to 14. Two cabins will be hired if necessary - otherwise 'unisex' (cabins have en suite showers/toilets). Leader has coordinated 3 previous NPA expeditions to the Daintree and is familiar with the local landscape (and local inhabitants). If you are into ecotouring and are prepared to accept spartan accommodation, this could be the bargain you have been looking for!

Sept 1999 **Austrian/German Alps** Sydney
Graham Holland would like to hear from anyone with experience of walking from hut to hut in the Austrian or German Alps, so he can plan to do the same. Please phone 9427 3282 or e-mail graham@arch.usyd.edu.au

28 Sept - 8 Oct **Barrington Tops to Myall Lakes**
Med full pack walk for 2 days then 9 days with a day pack
Andy Cairns 4758 7787(h)
Central Coast contact: Hanns Pacy 4997 0212 (h)
11 days from Barrington Tops NP to Myall Lakes NP. This is the eighth annual walk following the Tops to Myall Heritage Trail

SHARING TRANSPORT COSTS

When transport is arranged by private car it is normal for passengers to share the costs with the driver. Taking into account some of the extra costs of running a car, the following formula is suggested:

- Calculate the contribution of each person by adding 50% to the cost of fuel and dividing by the number of occupants.
- Share equally any additional costs such as park entry fees and so on.

For example if fuel costs \$40, a single passenger (plus the driver) pays \$30. For two passengers, each will contribute \$20.

Many NPA activities rely on the generosity of drivers in providing transport and this suggestion does not fully compensate for their costs. Please make sure that you do contribute.

NPA BRANCH MEETINGS

ARMIDALE BRANCH: Second Thursday of month at 7.30pm, Uniting Church, Rusden Street, Armidale.

BERRIMA (SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS) BRANCH: Third Fri alternate months. Contact Sec 02 4872 1116.

BLUE MOUNTAINS BRANCH: Third Wednesday of the month at 8pm, Springwood Neighbourhood Centre.

CENTRAL COAST BRANCH: 3rd Thursday March, May, July, September, November 7.30pm, Bateau Bay Progress Hall.

CENTRAL WEST BRANCH: 2nd Friday of month, 6-8pm, Bathurst Information & Neighbourhood Centre. Ph 02 6331 5284.

CLARENCE VALLEY BRANCH: First Monday of month at 7.30pm, Grafton High School Common Room.

FAR NORTH COAST: Contact Hazel Bridgett 02 6629 5010.

FAR SOUTH COAST: Meetings every 2nd month, field trip alternate months. Contact Kim Tayson, PO Box 797, Bega 2550.

HUNTER BRANCH: Contact Secretary, David Cater, on 02 4921 6376; e-mail: ccdic@cc.newcastle.edu.au

HAWKESBURY-CUMBERLAND BRANCH: First Wednesday of alternate months (starting February), 7.30 pm, Tebbutt Room, Windsor Library, 02 4573 6169.

ILLAWARRA BRANCH: Contact President, Pam Robinson, on 02 4284 1662.

LACHLAN VALLEY BRANCH: Third Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm, Parkes Neighbourhood Centre.

MACARTHUR BRANCH: Second Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm, Campbelltown North Public School, cnr Thomas St & Rudd Rd, Campbelltown.

MID NORTH COAST BRANCH: Third Monday of the month, 6pm; alternate months 6.30 pm. Ring Gwen O'Dea 02 6583 2272, Mollie Rowell 02 6583 1427.

MILTON BRANCH: First Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm, Room 10, Ulladulla Primary School.

SOUTHERN SYDNEY BRANCH: 3rd Wednesday of the month (not school hols) 8pm, Multi-purpose Centre, 123 Flora St, Sutherland. Ph Peter Vaughan 9556 3485 for details.

SYDNEY BRANCH: See Members' Diary in *Sydney Branch Newsletter* and this Activities Program for details.

TAMWORTH-NAMOI BRANCH: Third Friday of the month at 8pm, No 1 Oval Pavilion Kable Avenue, Tamworth. Phone Ron Webster for details: 02 6766 4296.

THREE VALLEYS BRANCH: Last Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm, Parkhouse Residence, Grassy Head Road, Grassy Head.



Walking with Jean at Glenbrook

A beautiful day had dawned and I was looking forward to a bushwalk in Glenbrook.

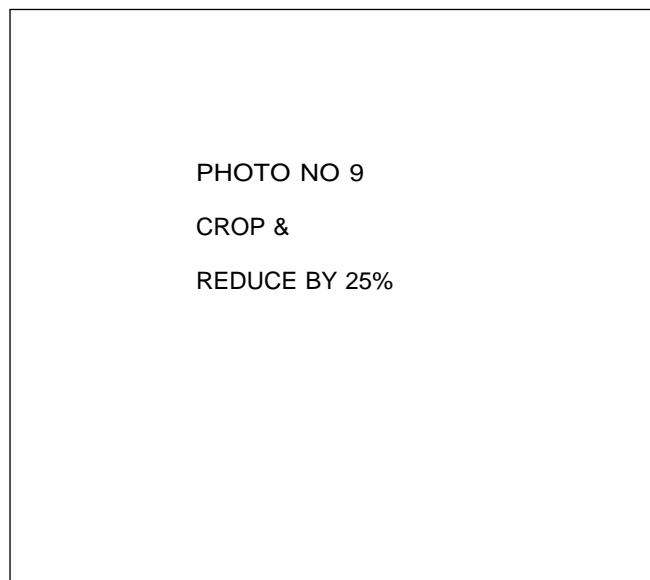
We met our leader, Jean Blackman, at Glenbrook Station on a sunny May day, perfect for walking. The plan was to walk to the Crayfish Pool via Red Hands Cave, a distance of 14-16 km.

Glenbrook is a picturesque village situated in the Lower Blue Mountains, where beautiful trees abound and the atmosphere is peaceful.

We proceeded on our way and upon arrival at the Ranger Station, a decision was made to walk the first section along the road. Eventually we stopped at a pretty spot near the water where morning tea was enjoyed by all.

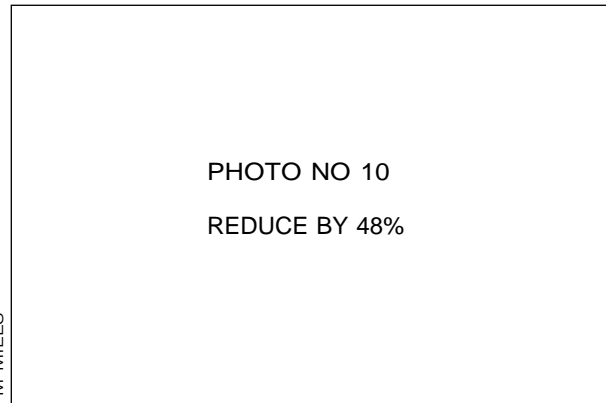
Over the last few months a lot of rain had fallen and the plants were thriving; their foliage glistened in the morning sun.

As we started to walk along the track the beauty of Glenbrook became more apparent. The tall eucalypt trees and native flora looked magnificent. The mountain streams were so clear and still in places that fallen leaves were visible sitting on the sandy base below.



PM MILLS

Jellybean Pool



PM MILLS

Morning tea by the pool

I was captivated by a little tree fern growing in the track path. A ray of light filtering through the tall trees touched the foliage, creating a lovely natural scene.

We continued along the track until we reached Red Hands Cave.

In *Exploring the Blue Mountains*, by ME Hungerford and JK Donald, it is explained that Aboriginals had decorated the walls of the cave with handprints and hand stencils. They used natural ochres from along Campfire Creek, and the art represents a culture dating back many thousands of years. There are also a number of narrow grooves apparent in a rock surface, which would have been used for sharpening spear heads and stone axes.

A wire fence has been erected across the cave entrance to prevent vandalism.

Further along the track, we branched off onto a side path which led to the Crayfish Pool. The sound of rushing water could be heard and as we entered the clearing a magnificent panorama came into view - a huge waterfall was cascading into a large pool, creating a most impressive sight. Tranquillity filled the air.

On the return journey, whilst pausing for a refreshment break, John Dennett (a fellow walker) recited a poem which he had written for Jean:

Walking with Jean

*Have you heard the sound of raindrops
Falling softly on the ground?
Or whistling wind blowing through the trees
In the valleys all around?*

*Have you seen a water dragon
Or a turtle in a creek?
Or seen treecreepers on a tree
Or heard a lorikeet?*

*Have you seen a walker fall on
down
And break a pair of bones?
Or others slip on mossy rocks
Or trip on rocky stones?*

*Have you picked bush spinach
by a lake
Or water cress so green?
If you haven't done these
wondrous things
Then you haven't walked with
Jean.*

*John Dennett
May 1998*

Poetry in a bush setting - a special moment in time.

We arrived at the Jellybean Pool mid-afternoon and enjoyed the serenity of this special place.

This day spent amidst the peace and beauty of Glenbrook had touched my soul. I had a feeling of reverence towards the Aboriginal people, and felt privileged to have been able to share a part of their history.

In a meditative frame of mind, I began to imagine myself back at the Crayfish Pool absorbing the scenery. Whilst gazing at the waterfall, I saw - an Aborigine, proudly standing near the cascading water. He was smiling.

**Pat Mills
Member**

PHOTO NO 11
REDUCE BY 60%

PM MILLS

Crayfish Pool

Looking for crocodiles

A walk in the Mary River National Park, Northern Territory

I was staying at the youth hostel at Annaburroo Billabong, located within the Mary River National Park about 150 kilometres east of Darwin. I had come here for a few days to see this new national park and to get away from Darwin for a while. There was only one other person staying at the hostel - a woman called Jo - and we soon became friends. On the second day we were there, we decided to go for a walk.

Jo suggested a walk to the Mary River, about 5 km away "to look for crocodiles". I was a little dubious about this as, although I love wildlife watching, I had never thought crocodiles were the type of creature to deliberately seek out when one is on foot in a remote area. I had also read in my Lonely Planet guidebook that the Mary River has the highest density of saltwater crocodiles in the world, so I was not too comfortable with Jo's suggestion.

"How about a walk around the billabong?" I suggested lamely. "We might see some magpie geese or egrets." Jo gave me a quizzical look; it was obvious that these humble waterbirds did not hold the same allure for her as crocodiles. So, crocodiles it was to be. Bravely we set out, after obtaining directions to the Mary River from one of the workers at the hostel. It was hot now - the early afternoon. The heat drummed down relentlessly, its intensity creating a somewhat languorous mood, which helped to blunt our thoughts from the perils of hungry crocodiles. The terrain was generally flat, although in places it was gently undulating. We tracked across some low hills

covered mainly with straw-coloured grasses, interspersed with cycads and salmon gums. I particularly liked the gums. The colour of their bark reminded me of the *Angophora costata* which grow so prolifically around some areas of Sydney, yet the bark of the salmon gum is perhaps paler and more subtle, while still very vivid and vibrant. The peculiar mix of heat, the odd-coloured bark of the gums and the ancient cycads struck a strange note, yet was nevertheless beautiful and haunting.

We walked on and, for no apparent reason, Jo suddenly asked me: "Do they still shoot pigs here?" I was nonplussed by this question and answered non-committally. A fence line crossed the track; we crossed it, and on the other side, hidden behind tall grasses, was a small clearing with the burnt remains of many animal carcasses - mainly pigs and buffalo. The stench and stark whiteness of their bones lent a menacing quality to the scene - but I hoped, in view of what we were doing, that it was not ominous.

We continued on our way, the track becoming narrower but still quite distinct and fringed with tall grasses. Up ahead we saw a shady waterhole and, thinking that it was time for a drinks break, left the track and threaded our way through the grasses to the waterhole. It was fringed with peaceful-looking melaleucas. As we made our way through the grasses we heard the anxious squealings of pigs as they scattered from the waterhole, though their wallowings and stench were obvious when we arrived at the waterhole. We sat for a while, and were soon enveloped by a timeless and ethereal silence as we rested under the melaleucas.

A beautiful, miniature azure kingfisher - its wings the most vivid blue - flitted from branch to branch, the way birds do when they have drunk their fill. This brought our minds back to more earthly matters, and the object of our walk, and we continued on our way.

The track drew closer to the river, and turned to follow a course somewhat parallel to it. We could see the river some 30 m away, behind a thin wire fence and dense bush. With the river now so close, my crocodile thoughts took on a more rampant form, as I imagined snapping crocodiles lurking behind every bush. Further on, a side track led down an eroded gully to what appeared to be the river. We entered the gully and followed it. It was deeply eroded and piled high with racks of rotting vegetation, presumably stacked here in the last wet - or else it was a crocodile nest. We both picked up sticks to ward off attacking crocodiles if necessary.

I heard a rustle from the vegetation further on and jumped up. Two magpie geese flew up from the gully, the perfection of their markings striking. I heard another rustling sound - this one much closer - and looked up to see a big brown snake disappear into a hole just above my head.

The gully led only to the overflow channel of the river, so we returned to the main track. After following it for another kilometre or so we arrived at another gully, with the track and the main river clearly visible on the other side.

We now faced a decisive moment - to go on now meant a commitment to walking to the river, and putting ourselves into an exposed position. On the other hand, we could turn back now with some honour, as we had made a fair shake of our quest.

With courage in both hands we quickly crossed the gully. On the other side the track ran adjacent to a sandbar some 50 m wide, behind which was the Mary River. We hesitated momentarily at the edge of the sandbar, but feeling braver, perhaps because the end of our quest was in sight, we struck off across the bar, ignoring the myriad of grotesque animal tracks on the sand. We reached the shady sanctuary of the melaleucas lining the river, and peered down into the river some two metres below us.

Almost immediately a saltwater crocodile about 1.5 m long dived off a sandbar and swam out into the middle of the river. It was not huge, but it was a live, wild crocodile. We felt a tide of sublime joy enveloping us, our fears now totally dissipated. We watched the crocodile as it gazed cautiously up at us. We looked up and down the river, taking it all in. It was wild, languid and beautiful. We moved downstream a little way, looked into the river again and this time saw yet another saltwater crocodile. Our joy was now complete.

We left soon after and made our way back to the hostel, taking precious memories with us. I had seen crocodiles before - on a boat cruise on the Daintree River, and was to see many of them a few weeks later on a cruise on the Yellow Waters in Kakadu - but this experience was far more satisfying. We both felt a sense of pride at having overcome our fears and entered a truly wild area on its own terms; yet, much more so, we felt humbled and privileged, and truly grateful for what we had seen.

**Martin Beveridge
Sydney Branch member**

CUNNINGHAMIA

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PAGE 11

SUNDAR HIMALI TREKKING

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EAGLE GRAPHIC -

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MARTIN BEVERIDGE

Crocodile territory? Roper River, Elsey NP

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