



Old Scotch Bushwalking Club

Tracknotes

June 2021

Number 96

Visit the bushwalking club's page on the OSCAnet website: www.oscanet.com.au. Click on 'Clubs' at the top of the home page, and then on 'Bushwalking Club'.

Mud Islands visit – a very different bushwalk



Rhonda McMurtrie prepares to step ashore on Mud Islands in Port Phillip Bay on Monday 29 March. The boat trip was something new for the club, and 12 members participated. Despite early morning drizzle in Melbourne, the weather at Sorrento for the departure for the islands was fine.

It was a most successful event, very well organised by Noela Foote, which we hope will be repeated before the end of the year. A report appears on page 4 of this edition.

Neil returns as President

Neil Hart-Smith was elected club President at our annual general meeting, held at Mildura on Saturday 20 March during our weekend away at Mildura. This is Neil's second term as President. His previous presidential term was 2003 to 2008.

Neil's return to the committee was one of three committee changes. John Moore and Andrew Gibson did not seek re-election, and the club is most grateful for their service on the committee as weekends away organiser (John) and Treasurer (Andrew).

Other appointments at the AGM were Laurine Symington (Vice President), Ian Hansen (Treasurer) and Sonia Gilderdale (Secretary). General committee members are David Ashton, Tom Morris and Norrie McLeod.



Laurine Symington hands over the Presidential Walking Stick to Neil Hart-Smith



Ten questions – Susie Kilby

How long have you been a member of the bushwalking club?

Since 2018, although I have to make the distinction between being A ... a paid-up member and B ... an active member. I'm an A. A dodgy knee, surgery, work, and of course COVID have all contributed to my A status.

How did you find out about the club?

After meeting Bee Moignard on a trip to Morocco in early 2018, she encouraged me to join, given we both enjoyed the outdoors, walking and hiking.

What are your links with Scotch College?

None that I'm aware of.

What is your dream walk within Australia?

Anything in the wilderness areas of Tasmania.

What is your dream walk overseas?

I was booked to walk the Routeburn Track (in New Zealand) in late 2019, but contracted pneumonia 48 hours after arriving (not having much luck, am I!). It remains a yearning.

What is your dream holiday in Australia or overseas?

To explore the Daintree Rainforest.

What are your hobbies and interests, other than bushwalking?

Playing cello and piano, hosting chamber music concerts



here in our home. I WAS learning French, and I recently joined a local spinners' and weavers' group. I also enjoy gardening and food growing, reading and voluntary work. There are a couple of other activities on the horizon. Just as well I'm not working anymore!

Oh yes – I love and care for our geese, ducks and chickens of various ages and breeds, not forgetting our two beautiful Schnauzer dogs, Scout and Aza.

What is/was your occupation?

When my children started school, I started my nurse training, then moved into the social welfare field. I completed an MA when I was 58, while relationship and family counselling was my field. I facilitated men's behaviour change programs for a number of years, along with a private practice. The end of my working life coincided with 2020's first lockdown.

What football team do you barrack for?

Well I don't, but if pressed, it's the Western Bulldogs. I attended matches as a child with family and neighbours, and my youngest son is an avid follower of 'the Doggies'.

What is your favourite restaurant?

We are fortunate to have a fabulous Japanese restaurant in Woodend, some 21km from our home which is in the middle of nowhere, but seems central to many places. Kuzu Izakaya is innovative and the service is second to none.

Members featuring in Lyceum Club events

Two of our members – Jenny Stewardson and Murray Hooper – played prominent roles in recent events at the Lyceum Club in Melbourne.

Murray has an extensive collection of fine Worcester porcelain. On 5 May, together with his friend and fellow collector, Rob Robertson, Murray spoke at the Lyceum on the subject of 18th century Worcester porcelain. Murray and Di brought along items of porcelain to illustrate Murray's talk.

Several years ago, Murray and Rob produced a catalogue of their combined collection, titled *Worcester Porcelain: Two Australian Collections*, a copy of which they presented to the Lyceum Club after the session on 5 May.

Jenny was the co-Director of a live play, *Pack of Lies*, a

Continued opposite



Murray with a cream jug in 'fancy birds' pattern, made c. 1800.



President's Tree-Stump

Another year has ended, and what a year it has been. After the bushfires we were locked down by the pandemic and unable to have many walks. Thankfully that is behind us now.

Your new committee was elected at the AGM, held during a delightful weekend of walks at Mildura. Thank you for electing me as your President. Your committee has already worked out many interesting walks for this coming year.

I would like to thank all of our outgoing committee for the tireless work they undertook during a very frustrating year.

We have already had several walks this year with our Portarlington event on 26 May having a ferry ride thrown in for good measure.

The committee is looking for help from members in organising our midweek walks. Perhaps a couple of our ladies could help out with this task. The committee will provide you with support.



Finally, again I thank last year's committee and the hard work already put in by this year's team.

Until next time, or when we meet 'out on the track'.

Neil Hart-Smith

President
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Save the date – our October weekend walk

MICKY ASHTON

Our weekend walk on Sunday 10 October will be at the Boneo Park Equestrian Centre Wetlands at Rosebud, and it will include a wetlands walk followed by lunch in the equestrian centre's Arilla Restaurant

Plan a staycation or book your beach house on the Mornington Peninsula on the weekend of 9 and 10 October, and join us for a wetlands walk and lunch.

We will walk with a professional guide through the wetlands, then enjoy a two-course lunch at Arilla Restaurant, which is on site. The restaurant has picture windows that overlook the equestrian centre's show jumping and gymkhana arenas.



Jenny Stewardson

drama of friendship betrayed, set in a London suburb in the 1960s at the height of the Cold War.

Based on true events, the play – a spy thriller by Hugh Whitemore – was staged by the Lyceum Club's Drama Circle at the club on 19 May.

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Our midweek walks

Monday on Mud Islands

LAURINE SYMINGTON

After waking to drizzle in Melbourne, the weather for the drive to Sorrento on Monday 29 March looked very positive for a good boat trip to Mud Islands.

We enjoyed lunch in Sorrento Park, joined by Wendy Bladon for lunch and a stroll along Millionaires' Walk. The thought of \$16,000 per annum for council rates, plus land tax, was discussed as possibly the reasons for the redevelopment of some of the large sites along the walk.

After the mandatory coffee, it was onto the jetty for the 12 of us to board our boat to the islands. We passed a few Australasian gannets before we arrived at the islands just as the cormorants left, not being prepared to stay and share their beach with us.

We clambered off the boat and paddled in the water, then bush-bashed our way to the highest point on the islands – 4m above sea level – noting the abandoned nests and chicken bones along our way. Then we returned to the shelly sand for a walk along the beach. The selection of shells was amazing, many of which



Noela
with an
interesting
object



Micky Ashton amid the undergrowth on Mud Islands

were unbroken and just empty of any sea life. Further on was an example of the phosphate rock of which Mud Islands are composed.

Most unexpectedly we found a lemon which somehow had made its way onto the beach, which prompted a thought – how about a gin and tonic after we return to Sorrento?

After climbing to the top of the 'hill' to view the pelican breeding area we returned to our boat and clambered aboard, a little inelegantly in some cases, for the return trip to Sorrento pier. Once on dry land again, six of us visited the Sorrento Hotel to enjoy a G&T before heading home.

It had been great to be joined by Micky Ashton, who was looking fantastic after her *annus horribilis* last year.

Thank you, Noela, for organising the trip. Another Mud Islands excursion will be organised later in the year.



The group on the beach at the islands

Our midweek walks

A good day for a bayside walk

RUSSELL AND GAILE KEMP

Thursday 22 April turned out to be a good day for a walk along the beachfront – cool and cloudy, but with not too much wind off the bay. Eighteen walkers set off through the Trey Bit Reserve, down to the beach and along the promenade beside the sea wall.

Behind us we could see Sandringham Yacht Club and the rock breakwater built for the protection of yachts sailing in the 1956 Olympic Games. As a result, the Hampton beach became badly eroded and a number of rock groynes were built in the early 2000s with sand then pumped onto the beach. It is now a popular swimming area.

In the early days Brighton Beach was the destination for holidays and picnics, with tram



City vista across the bay

and train access and a hotel. There were large sea baths and a major steamer pier with a tunnel link to the Brighton Beach station, now sadly all demolished in the late 1970s. At Green Point we stopped at a viewing area to read information boards about early artists and their paintings. We continued on to visit the colourful iconic bathing boxes at Dendy Street.

Turning back, we passed through the Brighton Beach Gardens, stopped at a coastal defence 68 pounder muzzle loading gun and paused at the war monument. Next via the cliff top path to our lunch stop in the Ferdinando Gardens, which we shared together with hordes of children from a local primary school.

We finished up for afternoon tea at the local cafe next to Sandringham Yacht Club.



Cool, cloudy and still conditions made for pleasant walking



In the local cafe after the walk. New club member Sara Saubern is sitting third from right.

Our weekend walks

Fun in the autumn sun at Mildura

At last: a weekend away – hooray! For the first time in 12 months we were able to enjoy the fun, friendship and pleasurable walking that our weekends away always bring us. Our very successful weekend at Mildura, 18-21 March, certainly continued that tradition.

Most of the group arrived at the Big4 Mildura Holiday Park in time for a welcome meeting in the early evening. There was no large camp kitchen, so many members used the barbecues on the decks of the cabins to entertain their friends.

Sonia Gilderdale, Jan Ward, Celia Dynon, and John and Margaret Moore had arrived early in the day to check out some of the walks.

Friday dawned fine and warm, and walkers had three walks from which to choose: from the holiday park to Mildura, or to Merbein; or a riverfront history walk in Mildura. After lunch some walkers travelled to the Australian Inland Botanic Gardens, and others who had completed the Merbein walk also did the riverfront history walk.



Silo art at Sea Lake, seen during the drive to Mildura

Friday: walking along the Murray - SONIA GILDERDALE

The longest walk of the weekend was from the caravan park into Mildura along the riverbank path, tackled by 17 keen walkers (approximately 9km).

At the start of the walk was an old building on the riverbank on which previous flood levels had been informally recorded, showing that the three highest levels had occurred in the 1950s. We observed several old pumps, used for irrigation. Massive, old river red gums lined the banks.

The weather warmed as the morning progressed. The path was partially shaded, and it was easy walking, with varying



Lunch at Lock 11

views of the river as we rounded the bends. There was evidence of old middens, and from time to time we observed ducks and other waterbirds. On the northern banks were several grand old properties.



Walking along the Murray

Due to COVID-19 restrictions no-one had been able to pre-walk the entire route; consequently it was hard to estimate how long it would take to get to the lunch spot at Lock Island. So as midday approached and went, there were murmurings of 'are we there yet?' Fortunately, before the protests became too loud, the green oasis of Lock Island was spotted.

The island is accessed via the opening bridge of Lock 11, one of 13 along the river. We enjoyed lunch sitting on lush green grass on a shady incline, from which we could see boats going through the lock. Feeling rejuvenated after lunch, we only had a short stroll to coffee at the rowing club, from where there was a magnificent view over the river.

Friday: to Merbein – MURRAY HOOPER

After organising a car shuttle, a group of 15, ably led by John Moore, set out westward on the banks of the Murray to walk 6km to Merbein.

A private pumping station showed the high water marks and timelines of various floods, revealing that the last flood was in 1993; maybe we are taking too much water from the river

Our weekend walks

Merbein - continued

system. The high algal content of the river water was also a testament to this.

We continued on, admiring the many houseboats tied up to the bank. Some were certainly very fancy homes away from home.

Approaching Merbein, we passed one of the first government-built pumping stations (1909), which continues to supply the local irrigation system. Edging our way below the beautiful white and red cliffs, we came upon a cairn marking the spot of the 1857 camp site of the German explorer, naturalist and artist, William Blandowski who camped there for seven months while collecting specimens of the local flora and fauna.

It was also here that barrels of spirit from the Mildara winery/distillery, which sits atop the cliffs above, were



Stepping out during the Merbein walk

loaded onto river barges for transport. A short stroll brought us to the cars to return us to the holiday park. Our thanks go to John for an interesting, well-planned walk.

Friday: Mildura riverfront history walk — LAURINE SYMINGTON

This walk, of about 4km, was offered to two groups as an easy walk along the riverfront from the Mildura wharf to the Mildura Station Homestead and return.



The Rio Vista House, now the Mildura Arts Centre

We passed the cairn commemorating Captain Charles Sturt's exploration here in 1830, and the relocated billabong steam engine.

The Chaffey brothers were developing an irrigation system in Ontario, California, when the Victorian Cabinet Minister, Alfred Deakin, invited them to come to Mildura and establish the Mildura Irrigation Colony in 1887. The plan was to use steam-driven pumps to raise water from the Murray into King's Billabong, then to pump it to various heights to irrigate up to 33,000 acres. The steam engines were replaced in 1959 with electric pumps.

We continued past the Mildura lawn tennis courts and on to Lock 11, one of 13 navigation locks along the Murray. We rested while we watched a houseboat navigating the lock.

We arrived at the Mildura Station Homestead, a reconstruction of the original homestead built in 1847 by the Jamieson brothers, and later purchased by the Chaffey family. It was closed due to COVID-19 restrictions, but we looked through the windows and admired the rose garden. Some of us walked further to the Chaffey women's gravesite and commemorative garden.



A houseboat negotiating Lock 11

Passing an amphitheatre, we then crossed Cureton Avenue to the Rio Vista Mildura Regional Art Gallery and Sculpture Park. The Rio Vista House was built in 1892 by W B Chaffey. Returning via the Mildura Bowls Club and the river, those who were longing for a coffee were rewarded for their patience at the Mildura Rowing Club coffee shop.

Our weekend walks

Friday evening: paddle-steamer cruise —SONIA GILDERDALE

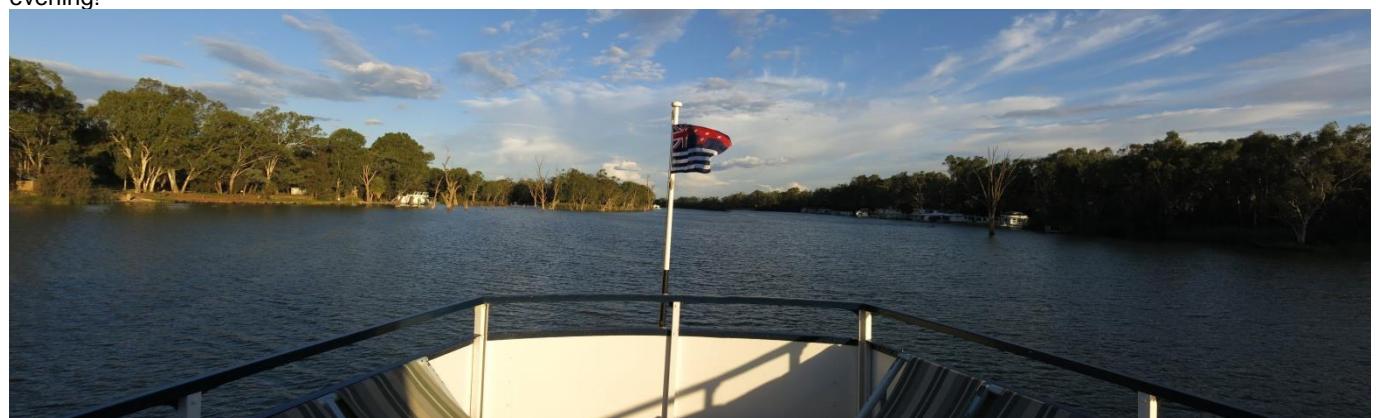
It was a beautiful balmy evening in Mildura, as all the weekend away guests boarded the MV *Rothbury* for a dinner and cruise upriver. We were joined by former Scotch events organiser Bec Marshall, now living in Wentworth, and also by Old Scotch Collegian, Ian Law, and his wife, Barbara, who run holiday accommodation near Wentworth.

Many houseboats and other vessels were moored along the banks, and there were some impressive-looking residences. Drinks were enjoyed and an extensive and tasty buffet dinner was served. As darkness fell, several guests ventured up on deck to get fresh air and a better view; however an enormous swarm of moths, mosquitoes and other flying insects drove them back to the cabin, fearing they had been extensively bitten.

The return trip downstream went as far as Lock 11, before returning to the wharf. It was an altogether enjoyable evening!



Murray and Di Hooper and Pam and Norrie McLeod
aboard the MV *Rothbury*



Cruising up the Murray on an autumn evening

Saturday: King's Billabong (shorter walk) — CHRISTINE MOSS

I led the shortest of the three walks to the bird hide, a pretty return stroll of approximately 4km. Unfortunately we didn't see any birds of note on the billabong as it was the wrong time of day. However, we all enjoyed the easy walk, with its lovely views across the lagoon.

Some chose this shorter hike as they were then leaving to drive to the historic town of Wentworth just over the border in NSW; others were off to explore the lovely, well-kept arid botanic gardens in Buronga.

Pausing during the shorter walk to King's Billabong



Our weekend walks

Saturday: King's Billabong — SONIA GILDERDALE

Saturday's weather was again fine and warm, and the sky cloudless. The walks today were at King's Billabong, bordering the Murray about 10km south-east of Mildura. A 4km walk to the bird hide, a 6km circuit of Ducks Foot Lagoon and the bird hide, or an 8km circuit around Ducks Foot Lagoon were the choices.

The area is criss-crossed with walking tracks, with wetlands and lagoons providing habitat for a wide variety of waterbirds. Majestic river red gums and black box trees line the paths.

Along the way we observed pelicans, cormorants, black swans and ducks frequenting the large lagoons, and there were bird hides in various places. It was a very peaceful location, and it was easy to forget we were only a short distance from Mildura and the busy Murray River.

Walking was completed by lunchtime, so in the afternoon some of us went to Wentworth, others to the botanic gardens, and some returned to the holiday park for a well-earned rest, before assembling for the brief annual general meeting back at the caravan park.



During the 8km King's Billabong walk

Saturday evening



Saturday evening dinner at the Mildura Rowing Club



Pumphouse with flood marks.
1956 mark highlighted.

Sunday: home time

After a memorable weekend in beautiful weather, Sunday was home time for most of us, although some headed off for more adventures.

Many thanks to John Moore, supported by Margaret, for meticulously planning the entire weekend, and to all who planned and led walks. Thanks also to Laurine, Sonia, Chris and Murray for their write-ups for *Tracknotes* of various walks

Our weekend walks

A beautiful day for bushwalking in Anakie Gorge

PAM MCLEOD

Sunday 11 April: the weather forecast stated 'high chance of showers, chance of a thunderstorm, gusty winds and small hail possible – maximum temperature, 15 degrees'. It did not seem an ideal day for bushwalking, and so 13 members set out from Melbourne in rather pessimistic mood for a walk at Anakie Gorge.

The Rowsley Fault is a major geological feature of the area west of Melbourne. The fault line marks the boundary between the flat plains around Port Phillip Bay and the rugged hills of the goldfields. The southern end of the elevated area is now known as the Brisbane Ranges, and small streams have dissected the raised ridge, creating numerous gullies and small gorges. The largest of these is formed by the waters of Stony Creek and is known as Anakie Gorge.



Tackling the very rocky, long and steep climb

We made a 200m side trip to the rocky outcrop of Nelson's Lookout with views north-west of Anakie Gorge, and further on we stopped at Bellarine view, with distant views of the You Yangs.



The downhill part was somewhat easier

After leaving the picnic area the track followed the gorge upstream, crossing Stony Creek numerous times, sometimes on stone weirs. At a track junction we turned left and commenced a very rocky, long and steep climb, finally reaching a lookout with a view north-east across the plains towards Melbourne.

The track then became flat, the walking much easier through open bushland, and we passed an abundance of grass trees – these are plants that thrive in the dry conditions found on the ridge.



Pausing on a stone weir

The track connected with Switch Road and led to the Stony Creek picnic area where everyone enjoyed a well-earned lunch. From here we followed a track to return to the Anakie Gorge picnic area.

The weather had been perfect – no rain, not too windy and there were even periods of bright sunshine. After our 11km walk we all had tea and cake in the carpark before the trip home – there were no coffee shops nearby!

(Thanks to Norrie for organising and leading the walk, and to Pam for providing delicious chocolate brownies to enjoy after the walk, and for writing this article! – Editor)



The views from the top made the steep climb worthwhile

Our weekend walks

Chilly winds and great views

LAURINE SYMINGTON

Nineteen walkers assembled in the You Yangs Regional Park's Turntable car park on the morning of 16 May, having all read the walk notice which suggested wearing clothing 'appropriate for the day', but the lazy, chilly wind was finding us anyway.



The 'Bunjil Geoglyph'

The East Track was challenging, but with patience and a bit of help we all made it to the Saddle. The views from the track were fantastic, with the high towers of Melbourne away to the north-east and the much smaller skyscrapers of Geelong clearly visible to the south-west.



Tackling the East Track



Lunch on the rocks



Walk leader Laurine briefs the walkers

We stood in the sun, looking at the views, as other younger and more agile walkers overtook us. Below us the 'Bunjil Geoglyph' was very obvious. The geoglyph is a stone sculpture in the shape of a wedge-tailed eagle, which commemorates the Indigenous Creator Spirit and the local Wathaurong Aboriginal people. The sculpture was created as part of the cultural activities for the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games.

We had left behind the shelter of Flinders Peak, and the Northern Range Track was easy walking. Lunch was consumed as we perched on rocks, sheltered from the wind. After one long and steep downhill section, we examined the geoglyph from ground level. Then it was on to the Branding Yard Trail, the final track. What goes down must go up, so some more climbing was required as we headed back to the cars.



Rhonda Hoelter and Bee Moignard

It was a delightful day – and as we were arriving home, it started to rain!



Laurine attempts to cover a sign warning of 'steep inclines, rough track'

The club's 2021 program

The dates for our 2021 walks are final, but the location of nominated walks may need to be changed.

	2021	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Feature	Walk (Proposed)	Leader
Public Hol.											
New Year						1	2	3	New Year		
	Jan	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
	Jan	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		Camberwell	C Moss
	Jan	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
Australia Day	Jan	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
	Feb	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		Hastings	T Morris
	Feb	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Valentine's Day		
	Feb	15	16	17	18	19	20	21			
	Feb	22	23	24	25	26	27	28			
	Mar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		Solomon's Ford	R Piesse
Labour Day	Mar	8	9	10	11	12	13	14			
	Mar	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		Mildura	J Moore
	Mar	22	23	24	25	26	27	28			
Easter	Mar	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	Easter, Day save	Mud Island	N Foote
	Apr	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		Anakie Gorge	N&P McLeod
	Apr	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			
	Apr	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		Sandringham	R Kemp
Anzac Day	Apr	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	Anzac Day		
	May	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Mother's Day		
	May	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		You Yangs	L Symington
	May	17	18	19	20	21	22	23			
	May	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		Portarlington	J Isaac
	Jun	31	1	2	3	4	5	6			
Queen's B'day	Jun	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			
	Jun	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		Philip Island	N Hart-Smith
	Jun	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		St Kilda	I Hansen
	Jun	28	29	30	1	2	3	4			
	Jul	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		Kinglake	I McMichael
	Jul	12	13	14	15	16	17	18			
	Jul	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		Abbotsford	J Stewardson
	Jul	26	27	28	29	30	31	1			
	Aug	2	3	4	5	6	7	8			
	Aug	9	10	11	12	13	14	15			
	Aug	16	17	18	19	20	21	22			
	Aug	23	24	25	26	27	28	29			
	Aug	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	Father's Day		
	Sep	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
	Sep	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			
	Sep	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	AFL	* * *	* * *
	Sep	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	Day save start		
	Oct	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
	Oct	11	12	13	14	15	16	17			
	Oct	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			
	Oct	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
Cup Day	Nov	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		Rawson	I McMichael
	Nov	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Rememb Day		
	Nov	15	16	17	18	19	20	21			
	Nov	22	23	24	25	26	27	28			
	Nov	29	30	1	2	3	4	5			
	Dec	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
	Dec	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			
	Dec	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	Christmas		
Christmas	Dec	27	28	29	30	31					

31 = School Holidays  = Bushwalks