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# *Sunraysia Bushwalkers*

## *May 2016*

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*Affiliated with:*



**Membership Fees**

**\$30 per Person**

**Subs due 1<sup>st</sup> July**

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To view the complete calendar please follow the link:  
<http://www.sunbushwalk.net.au/calendarofactivities.html>

## Cowanna Bend Billabong Walk 17th April 2016



The wonderful Indian summer weather we have been experiencing was possibly the impetus for 14 Club members plus 2 visitors to join Verna & Kim on the Cowanna Bend Billabong walk that they had organized for us to enjoy.

Leaving the vehicles opposite the gate to the Merbein Cemetery, we followed the track sign down onto the Common, where we came to a body of water known as the Brickworks Billabong. An area used in the early days of Merbein to collect clay for the making of bricks at the kiln near where we had commenced the walk.



We wandered our way around the perimeter of the 'bong' eventually passing one end of the Cowanna Billabong and then on to the main river bank. As this report is being written the Murray itself is experiencing a blue green algal bloom which can be toxic if consumed. Those of us who access water from the Lower Murray Water Authority,



have had to isolate our domestic water supply so that it does not become contaminated, as the water comes untreated directly from the river. Some households have had to buy in additional treated water to supplement their domestic supply.





After having a short rest at the river Verna & Kim then took us along one side of the Cowanna Billabong. It has become quite a haven for, Swans, Pelicans, banded Stilts, Black-fronted Dotterel, Australian Wood Duck, Black Duck, Australian Grebes, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Terns, Sea Gulls, White Ibis & Reed Warblers.

Initially the plan was to return to the cars

for a morning tea break.

But by the time we returned it was closer to lunch. Nevertheless we enjoyed a belated tea break in the quite pleasant surrounds of the Merbein Cemetery.

Most of the group then departed but a couple of hardy souls continued with Kim to walk the approx. 5 kms around Catfish Billabong. There was decided evidence of 4 wheel drivers having tested their supposed 'skills' in the clay around the 'bong'. What a mess they leave.



At the end of the walk Kim treated us to a delicious array of cheeses, biscuits, nibbles and an extremely smooth red wine. A fabulous end to a most enjoyable day.



*Report by Barb*

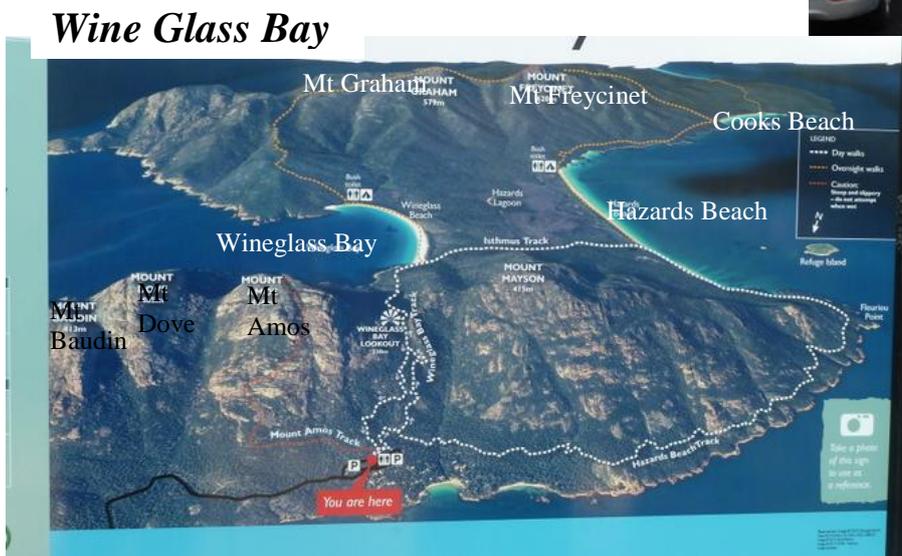
# Tasmanian Odyssey

## March 31st to April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Sometimes we have the luxury of making a choice. After weeks of forlorn scanning weather data and wishing for a drenching of the Tasmanian fires, Russell, Tony and I arrive in Launceston for a planned walk into the Walls of Jerusalem and later, Lees Paddock. But the reality of the weather forecasts for the next few days tells us that there will be nothing idyllic at those places. Not unless we relish the daily prospect of a temperature range of 2-8 plus 8mm of rain, some snow above 1200 metres and 40kph winds. So instead, we elect to explore the Freycinet Peninsular that extends south of the holiday town of Coles Bay on the east coast.



Tony, Russell & Dick



The National Park has around fifty separate waterfront camp sites with use of toilets and one tap showers at Richardson's Bay. As we look at the protected waters of the

bay, we have on our left, the three towering pink granite peaks known as 'The Hazards.' Information maps identify three designated camp areas for hikers venturing into the greater Park, being Hazards Beach, Cooks Beach and Wineglass Bay Camp. Of these, Cooks is the only one that offers fresh water, so we make this our target destination for the first day's walk.

The well defined trail commences its gently undulating path through dry forested terrain close to the coast before descending to the firm white sands of Hazard's Beach. Walking along these beaches is so much easier than slogging across some of the coarse soft sands that we have encountered in other places. At the far end of the beach we find its deserted camp area. Thereafter, the route veers inland for some distance before coming out on to Cooks Beach. A fifteen minute walk brings us to Cooks campground with an abundance of good tent sites. Luck is on our side as we discover the



vacant restored Cook's stone hut replete with wooden floor and table. It seems a good idea to avail ourselves of the use of this hitherto unknown edifice for the night; not knowing that the principal occupant was one plump *Rattus Rattus*. The critter could adeptly leap on to hanging packs, descend thin cords and wires and rapidly scale a vertical stone wall.



Confident that we can improve our defenses for a second night at this same place, next morning we take a one and a quarter hour easy walk to Bryans Beach at the southern end. Here, we find an especially attractive stretch of white sand and blue water backed by an eroded embankment with its big embedded shells from a distant era. Throughout the place we see abundant flat, round bleached white shells about 100mm across. Each end of the beach has cleared places suitable to pitch tents, but

the sites are more exposed to the wind than the principal areas. We watch a Pacific Gull apparently swimming idly not far from the water's edge. Suddenly, it flies up one metre and then dives below the surface for no reward.

A second dive yields a sizable crab in its beak. The plan for the return is to take the higher inland track past the peaks of Mt Freycinet and Mt Graham before the next night stop at Wineglass Bay Camp. It is essential to carry sufficient water to get us back to the car park. Although there are signs indicating the dangers of slippery rocks and steep ascents, we have not fully appreciated that the highest point of the track is barely below the summit of Mt Graham at a height of 578 metres. It is a pleasant clear day and the high sections of the track afford splendid views of the peninsular, Schouten Island and pristine white sands. Thereafter the track descends into forest and ends at Wineglass Bay.



Completion of the circuit is made by walking the length of the beach and ascending amongst hordes of visitors to the viewing platform 200 metres above the sea. From here it is a downhill trek to the almost full car-park.



We have had a truly pleasurable few days in the National Park. We have shared the outdoors with only a very few other walkers and only met two people on the high loop. This section should only be tackled by those prepared for hard climbing. The warnings of slippery and dangerous rocks would be particularly pertinent when the conditions are wet. Perhaps the young foreigners can teach us something about efficient preparation because generally they appear to be far less laden than us. And then we

wonder how they cope when conditions are sub optimal.

## Hinchinbrook Island - Thorsborne Walk

Hinchinbrook Island lies 8kms off the coast of Queensland between Cairns and Townsville. It is a National Park within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

A signature bushwalk has been created in the park called the Thorsborne Trail. It is 32 km long, classed as difficult but should pose no real problem to experienced walkers. Young children walk the trail.

A walk has been arranged and you are welcome to come. The number that can go is six in any one group. Forty people is the maximum on the trail.

I have likely four confirmed starters: Bill, Don, Geoff, & Roger

1. Get to Townsville by the Tuesday 14th June 2016. It is likely we will stay at a hostel or lodge that night within 15 minutes walk from the Greyhound bus station.
2. Take Greyhound bus to Cardwell at 6:45am from Townsville. Cost is \$36 pp each way.
3. Hinchinbrook Island Cruises take us to the Island and pick us up. The return trip is \$190 pp. They take us from Cardwell to Lucinda at the southern aspect of the island, and we start walking about 1:30pm. We will go by either bus or ferry to Lucinda then ferry to the island. We walk south to north.
4. We stay 4 nights on the island (Wed Thurs Fri Sat) and look to get a permit to climb one or two peaks on the island. On Sunday morning we have a pick up at 9:30am back from the north of the island and return to Cardwell, then later by Greyhound bus to Townsville. There are 4 trips each day to Townsville.
5. Midges, biting sand flies, and mosquitoes will accompany you on the island.
6. High tides influence the walk.
7. The cost of the walk is \$6 per night pp
8. At this stage only 3 places have been booked for the island on the day we go so there is plenty of room there.
9. We book the boat trip 1-2 weeks prior to leaving.
10. Depending on the bus time, probably midday, you may need to stay in Townsville overnight Sunday before flying home.

Contact me if you are interested.

Bill Sutherland

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## CALENDAR

**2016**

May 4th	Meeting <b>AGM</b>	
6th - 8th	Pink Lakes - Mt Crozier Circuit	Contact Karl 50227676
8th	Mopoke Hut- Day Walk	Contact Noel 50257455
June 1st	Meeting	
14th - 19th	Hinchinbrook Island, Qld 4 Day Pack walk	Contact Bill 0408231984
19th	Lake Cullulleraine	Contact Peter 50221898
July 6th	Meeting	
9th - 10th	Mid-winter Dinner at Walpeup Research Station	Contact Verna 50223480 Peter 50221898
August 3rd	Meeting	
6th	Riverland Walk, SA	Contact Verna 50223480
21st	Rocket Lake	Contact Peter 50221898

**PLEASE NOTE  
NEW LOCATION FOR  
OUR MEETINGS**

**Next Meeting  
Wednesday 4th May at 8.00 pm  
at Apex Park,  
Life Saver's Club Rooms,  
Mildura**