



The Message Stick

April 2024

Mackay Bushwalkers' Club Inc. PO Box 1313, Mackay, 4740

Web: <https://mackaybwcq.org.au/>

Email: mackaybushwalkingclub@gmail.com

Future Events

Eimeo to Reliance Creek.....	5 th May
Owens Creek.....	12 th May
General meeting.....	15 th May
West Hill Island.....	19 th May
Leap walk from Tranquil Hill Social event.....	25 th May
Halliday Bay, McBride's Lookout and Ball Bay.....	2 nd June



Eimeo to Reliance Creek

Club Officers

President	Peter Bennett	0427 383 732	Digital Officer	Bethany Morgan	0415 761 058
Vice President	Carole Weekes	0455 872 207	Newsletter Editor	Telina Lambert	0434 392 558
Secretary	Philip Morgan	0431 130 074	Walks Coordinator	Coral Morgan	0407 164 856
Treasurer	Mari Simmonds	0429 190 168	Equipment Officers	Frances Eiteneuer	0447 866 188
Membership Secretary	Mari Simmonds	0429 190 168		Penny McMahon	0421 071 294

From the Editor

This year is our **50th Anniversary** and we would like to redesign our club shirts to celebrate. If you have any ideas or suggestions for what you would like the shirts to look like please send all your ideas to the club email listed below.

Also, we have been made aware that some people are unable to access the newsletter via the Facebook page so we will be updating our registration process to account for this soon. We will be able to send out emails or postal to those requesting however there will be a fee per month for those who wish to have it sent by post.

Just a reminder to members any person who attends a club walk must be a member. This includes children under 5. There will be more discussion at the next meeting regarding updating the fee structure for child members and we will update the members handbook to provide better clarity on membership requirements.

In the meantime, the idea is that children under 5 are free and children from 5-18 are half price. A membership form and child waiver must be filled out for any children attending club events. If you have children attending events who are not already members, please submit the necessary forms as soon as possible to

It's starting to cool down now for 2024 but the weather is still unpredictable so please be aware that walks may need to be cancelled at short notice if the leader deems it unsafe to go ahead. Any cancellations will be advertised on the Club's Facebook Group. Also remember that the terrain can be treacherous and full of poisonous animals and plants so be prepared with a small personal **First Aid kit**. It doesn't have to be huge but should include a snake bandage.

Items for the next newsletter should be sent to mackaybushwalkingclub@gmail.com by 14th May.

Key to Walks Grading System

Distance	Terrain	Difficulty
S = short – under 5km	1-3 = Graded or open terrain, no scrub	1-3 = Easy, suitable for beginners
M = medium – 5-10km	4-7 = Bush, minor scrub, rainforest	4-7 = Medium, reasonable fitness required
L = long – over 10km	8-10 = Rocks, creeks, rockhopping, scrambling, thick scrub, major rock scrambling using hands, technical	8-10 = Hard, strenuous, fit walkers only

Future Events

All trip leaders please ensure you collect the club gear bag before undertaking your walk and return it as soon as possible afterwards.

Please contact the leader to nominate for all walks before 12.00pm the day before the walk unless otherwise stated.

**Eimeo to Reliance Creek
Sunday 5th May**

Leader: Carole Weekes 0455 872 207
Depart: 8am from Bucasia Boat Ramp near Caravan Park
:10-10.30 from Shoal Pt picnic ground
Journey: N/A
Grade: L34
: M33

Estimated walking time: 5 Hours.

Total of all uphill sections: 50m

Pace: Average

Terrain: Parkland, pathway, beach, some sandy tracks, rocky areas.

Vegetation: Dune vegetation, scrubby forest, mangroves.

Expect: Open sections, some shade, fairly easy walking with some challenges, and about 14 kms if you are completing the entire walk. There is an option to start at Shoal Picnic area and walk to Reliance Creek and back to Shoal Pt picnic area, which would be about 6 km with a grade of M33. Insects, obstacles, and wet shoes are possible. As it is high tide at about 8.30 am, the morning will be spent in parkland, on the pathway, along a road for a while, and climbing staircases and short bush tracks to avoid the wet rocks around the headland. When the tide has ebbed sufficiently, we will walk along the beach.

Bring hat, insect and sun protection, lunch, snacks, and plenty of water. Please indicate when you book with me whether you will do 14 km or 6 km. This walk is part of the Northern Beaches Community Activation Week which was explained at our March meeting, so we will be joined by some of the people who have responded to this. Further details about this later.

PLEASE NOTE DIFFERENT TIME AND MEETING PLACE FOR THIS EVENT.

Owens Creek

Sunday 12th May

Leader: Mari Simmonds 0429 190 168
Journey: n/a
Grade: n/a
Estimated walking time: n/a
Total of all uphill sections: n/a
Pace: n/a
Terrain: n/a
Vegetation: n/a
Expect: For more details about this walk please contact the leader.

**Induction 6.30pm &
General Meeting 7.30pm
Wednesday 15th May**

Downstairs room, Mackay Family Care and Community Support Association Centre 60 Wellington Street, Mackay. Newcomers and visitors welcome.

**Westhill Island
Sunday 19th May**

Leader: Kate Brunner 0467 976 955
Journey: n/a
Grade: n/a
Estimated walking time: n/a
Total of all uphill sections: n/a
Pace: n/a
Terrain: n/a
Vegetation: n/a

Expect: For more details about this walk please contact the leader.

**Leap walk from Tranquil Hill Social Event
Saturday 25th May**

Leader: Bethany Morgan 0415 761 058

Depart: 2:00pm from Mackay if walking
: 4:00pm meet up at leap for social
only.

Journey: 25km = \$2.50

Grade: S85

Estimated walking time: 2 Hours.

Total of all uphill sections: N/A

Pace: Slow

Terrain: Steep uphill, rocky uneven track in
sections, loose rocks

Vegetation: Thick scrub in sections, grass
tree, wattles.

Expect: A steady short walk up the
Northwestern side of The Leap, starting at
Tranquil Hill (Morgan property). Walking and
some short scrambles through scrub up to a
rocky outcrop at the top of the ridge with
views from Mount Dalrymple to Cape
Hillsborough. A nice spot to sit and take in the
view with smoko. Walking back down the
same way to enjoy a social fire with toasties
into the early evening.

What to bring for the walk: Hat, backpack,
water, INSECT REPELLANT (scrub itch is
bad at the moment) walking shoes, long
clothing and gators are a good idea but not
essential.

What to bring for the social fire: BYO chair,
drinks, bread, toasties fillings and jaffle iron if
you have one, plates etc

So we can plan logistics for parking etc,
please indicate attendance by Friday 5pm
May 24th by text or calling Bethany
0415761058

**Halliday Bay, McBride's Lookout and Ball
Bay**

Sunday 2nd June

Leader: Carole Weekes 0455 872 207

Depart: 9am from Mackay

Journey: 100km = \$10

Grade: M52

Estimated walking time: 4 Hours

Total of all uphill sections: 100m

Pace: Average

Terrain: Beach, track, rock, taped trail

Vegetation: Forest, grass

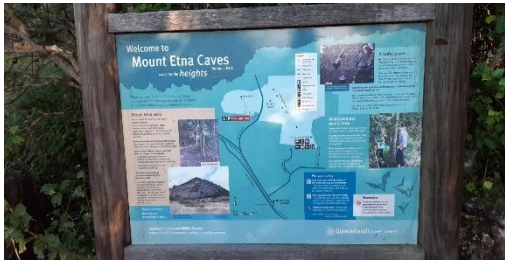
Expect: PLEASE NOTE LATER STARTING
TIME TO SUIT THE TIDE

This walk will begin at Halliday Bay with a
walk along the beach to a rocky area near the
swimming enclosure. We will then access the
track up to McBride's Lookout which provides
360 degree views from a rocky outcrop. Next
a taped trail will take us through to Ball Bay,
but if the trail is too overgrown, we will drive
to Ball Bay instead. The rest of the day will be
spent exploring Ball Bay, including a wetland
area. This will be a relaxed day of quite easy
walking, but please bring sun and insect
protection, plenty of water and the usual
morning tea snack and lunch. Suitable for
beginners - the climb to the top is on a track
and steep in parts, but very short.

Previous Activities

Beginners Caving camp

13th – 14th April 2024



Saturday 13th - There were only a few who represented Mackay bushwalkers but after we joined the other group of a few cavers on Saturday we were a good number who entered the underground world of shadows in hidden spaces. We entered a cave called Johnson's on Saturday afternoon after a quick bush bash to the track. This is a walk-in cave with some large caverns, each with its own personality and each

more challenging passages leading off for the adventures to test skills and nerve on narrow squeezes and crawls. All went to a cavern called Rhino known for its eroded feature of a parent and baby rhinoceros shape in the middle of the room. Then some



choose to head out and back to camp while a few of us ventured further into the cave seeking adventure. Later in the afternoon we met back at the camp near by and while some went off for drinks and a feed down at the local pub others relaxed at camp. Later a fire was lit, and the camp circle enjoyed the ambiance.



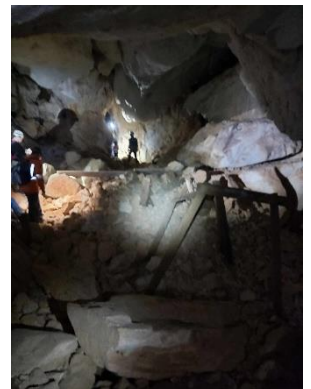
Sunday 14th – Alarms went off too early for many, but a few eager campers crawled out of their sleeping bags to do a predawn hike up Mount Etna to see the sunrise. We had time to get the end of the trail to a place called Bat Cleft



where in the breeding season it is known for the swarming of thousands of bats at dusk and dawn, it however was not breeding season so it was quiet, but we still looked into the depths of darkness before heading back to the sunrise viewing area which did not disappoint. Later that morning the sleepy heads crawled from their slumber and had breaky, and then the group split again with some going off to explore a more advantageous cave with amazing decoration but viewing had to earned with some challenging climbing and squeezing. Others were led by Telina to another area, which was once a tourist cave prior, being taking over by national parks. The tour cave is



now closed but an interesting round stone structure remains with pictorial information about the area and its wildlife with enjoyable but slightly overgrown walking trails which meandered through bushland. It was a good walk for the mums and bubs and those just wanting an easy stroll before it was time to pack camp to make the long trip home. I believe everyone had a good time either relaxing or facing their fears of the unknow below ground taking on physical challenges and seeing the birth of a new day. The weather was perfect and the company good. Thanks to Bethany for organizing the camp and to Telina for leading walks and thanks to those who came to make it a great weekend.



Celestine Lambert.



Beginners Caving camp

13th – 14th April 2024



Saturday - A group of members made the long journey on Saturday morning. Heading 300kms South of Mackay to The Caves, a fine country town 30kms North of Rockhampton, we set up camp and had lunch. Everyone then geared up for the short, overgrown walk from camp to the access road which leads to the entrance of Johansens Caves. These caves which were once mined for guano, are now gated and locked for 9 months of the year to protect the endangered Ghost



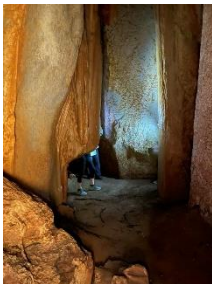
bats who call these caves home. The group gathered at the entrance for the customary run-down on the caves. I took great pleasure in sharing my knowledge with the members to which this experience was very new to. The group consisted of some who had caved once or twice before but not in this cave, others who had never stepped foot inside a cave before. We also had some babies and toddlers along for the experience as well as some seasoned cavers



who were eager to share their memories with the group. We then navigated slowly through the cave, with unfortunately minimal cave formations to see due to the high volume of humans and damage over the years but nonetheless a great experience for those who are new to caving, getting to experience the dark and occasionally quiet of the underground. There were some optional little challenging squeezes which some bravely took on, some remnants of old mining equipment, caves which have been named after a standout shape of a rock, the most well-known being Rhinoceros (pictured). We walked and ducked and scrambled and weaved our way through the cave and back to the entrance to enjoy a social night around the fire.



Sunday – Sunday morning with Telina leading, a few of us set off to walk the Mount Etna Caves walk to see the sunrise. The track is a man made path with steps leading up the mountain with views South East towards Rockhampton on the first uphill section, some overgrown vegetation but mostly open forest. We reach the flat bench near the top and enjoy some brief respite for our legs as we marvel at the view to the Northeast as the light from the sun is growing. We then tackle the last, very steep section of steps up and then back down towards Bat Cleft



cave, a very deep cave which bats roost in and at certain times of the year. National Parks do guided tours to observe the millions of bats flying in or out of the cave in December. After a brief stop at the Bat Cleft, we made our way back to



the flat bench for some photos while taking in and observing the glorious view. On the way back down we heard some stunning birdsong and made our way back to camp for a hard earned coffee.



After breakfast the group split in two, while Telina led a group on another walk through the Camoo Caves area while I took those eager for adventure through another cave, this time in the Mount Etna caves system. We walked from camp roughly 1km to the entrance, where we enjoyed some slightly more challenging caving. Climbing, crawling and scrambling, we made our way into the third chamber where we saw some great formations, heard the beautiful sound of water dripping from stalactites and marvelled at the giant column formation. We could hear the distant sound of bats which were roosting in the area and seemed to be annoyed by our presence so we



didn't proceed so as to not disturb them any further. We went back towards the entrance and a few of us made our way back out while others opted for 'The Test Tube', a downward climb with a hand line for safety into a small pit where we then squeezed along a short tunnel and then climbed up and down again, ending up just below the main entrance. We then climbed up the final ascent to the entrance and made our way back to camp to pack up and head home.

A great social weekend with a diverse group of people, many great experiences were had and I look forward to seeing more club events like these in the future!

Bethany Morgan.

Saint Helens Creek

14th April 2024

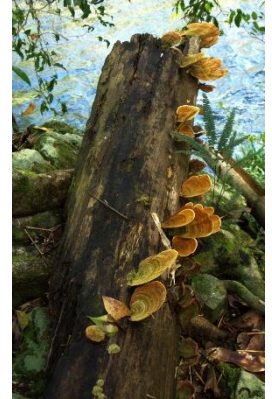


We made a small group of four ladies, including a new member. I would like to welcome Genine who completed her first bushwalk with the club. It is always a pleasure to have a new member and take them out on their first walk with the club.

There is so much to see, discover and experience far from the beaten track.

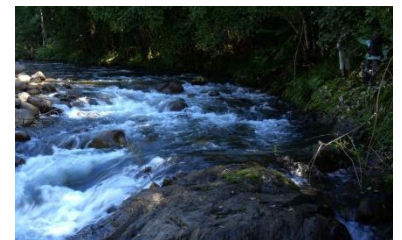
Sun was shining, not a cloud in the sky, the creek was sparkling clear with a strong flow. The water was at a higher level due to recent heavy rains in the area.

We started the walk from Kate's property and headed off climbing over rocks, through long grass and some rock hopping. Eventually we had to take the plunge and cross the creek as the creek banks were more suited for walking on the opposite side. We found a place to cross, water was thigh deep depending on your height. It was definitely an effort to stay upright whilst

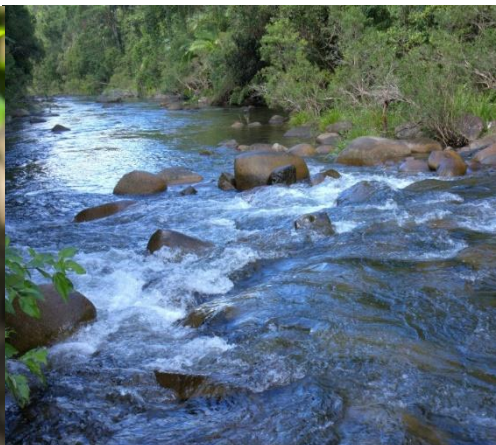


crossing as the current was flowing very strong. Throughout the day we made several creek crossings back and forth. We stopped for morning tea at 10am then continued on until 12 for lunch break. We had our lunch in the middle of a creek crossing. Plenty of comfortable rocks to sit on and we could dangle our feet in the water, water temperature was not too cold for swimming. It made sense to sit in the middle of the creek and have lunch on a beautiful sunny day. Some people went for a swim and sat in the water

cascading over the rocks, while others rested. Whilst having lunch we were happy to spot Ulysses butterflies overhead, the flash of electric blue as they fluttered past. Never still for a photo. After drying off on the rocks we retraced our steps back to where we entered the creek. We had to cross and the water level was deep, Kate conveniently had a paddle board stored on the opposite side. All of our gear cameras, phones, backpacks got ferried across the creek safe and dry. There was one last person left standing on the wrong side, me. I got to go across the creek on the board. A great day out in a beautiful pristine creek. Thanks, Kate, for organising and leading St Helens Creek walk.



Deb Wilson.

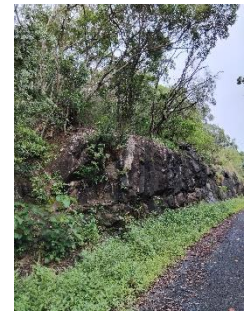


Mt Blackwood

21st April 2024



At 8am all seven of us embarked enthusiastically on the ascent of Mt Blackwood, and it was great to be able to introduce Phiona to the beauty of this particular landmark within the Pioneer Peaks National Park. The morning was coolish and



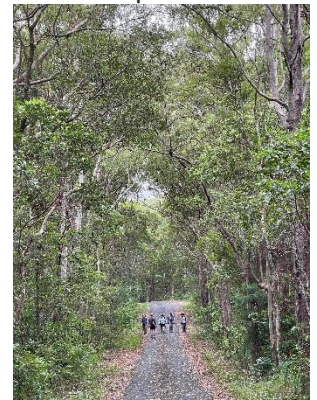
unfortunately the views were masked by fog, but we knew that a couple of hours of sunshine would improve that situation. As we negotiated the uphill journey, our

attention was held by birdsong, the refreshing scents of the forest, and the various trees, ferns, flowers and epiphytes available for inspection. The keen photographers were kept busy, especially at the two lookout's points, even though the vista was not crisply outlined.



The group fell naturally into the advance party who arrived at the top at about 10 am, and the rear guard who enjoyed a lot of chatting and google researching and morning tea on the way. When we were all reunited at the top, a leisurely lunch was enjoyed and quite a bit of entertaining behaviour

took place. Of course, before we set off on the descent the obligatory group photo was engineered by Edie. It was quite cold when we were not on the move, but after such an unrelenting summer, the promise of autumn was welcome.



We were very happy to notice that the fog had burnt off and the views were much clearer during the climb down. This turned out to be an all-female event, and apart from the youngsters (Jeanette, Phiona and Therese) we were a group of senior citizens, but how wonderful that we are still able to participate in our club's activities. Therese set off for home, but the two carloads from town were lead astray by Phiona and indulged in ice creams at the Mt Jukes Family Farm Cafe. Thanks for the introduction, Phiona.

Carole Weeks

