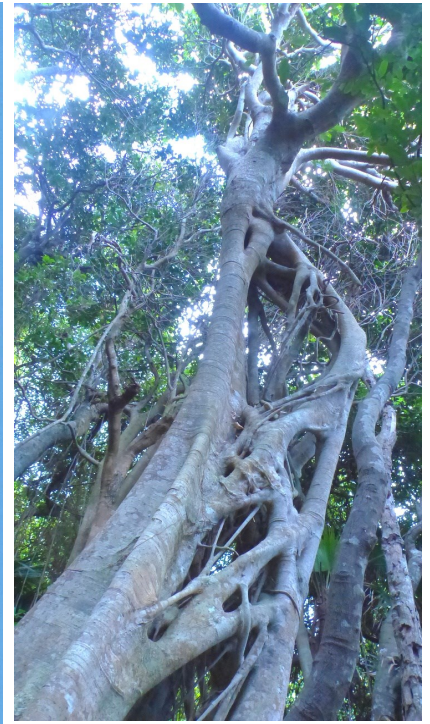




**ROYAL
NATIONAL PARK:**
The world's second
oldest National Park
Ghardarigal land in
Dharawal country,
much older
Wirrimbirra



The southern part of the Royal Coastal Track

How wonderful is a walk that starts with looking DOWN on a pair of white-breasted sea eagles (*burumurring* and *manangan* - the smaller male) skimming the tops of the swell a hundred metres below. I'm guessing that this was their first flight of this cool *Murrai'yunggory* day, two hours of daylight enough to start the air warming and the sea breeze to get blowing so as to lift them in seconds past their cliff-face nest to a hundred or more metres above us.

On this walk the forest and vegetation types nearly outnumbered the few humans we passed: Woodland, heath, allocasuarina forest, littoral rainforest, melaleuca swamp - eucalypts, angophora and *kai'mia* lilies, wildflowers, coachwoods, cabbage-tree palms – not forgetting sandy beaches and rock platforms.

One ancient angophora, circumference 2 to 3 m, had completely crashed to earth. Never-say-die! It was shooting prolifically. Another of similar vintage has gift-wrapped the rock it grew beside.

A 20cm wide web, maybe of a basket-weaving spider, suspended beside the track and lit brightly in a beam of sunlight.

A strangler fig – job done – self-supporting now with no evidence of the original tree inside the woven trunks that had wrapped it. Elkhorns perched in the Port Jackson Figs (*dhai'aman*).

Kai'mia lily in full bloom and full sun, also below us, our birds' eye view.

Birds, unseen but clearly heard - New Holland Honeyeaters, whipbirds, crimson rosellas, wattlebills, currawongs, seagulls, a noisy friarbird, and others unidentified.

Slippery rocks and a higher low tide changed our destination - to Era Beach rock shelf.

(Geoff and Anne)

Era rock shelf





WILLOUGHBY: Things I enjoy on my rambles

The first perfumed roses of the season, and the prolific callistemon. (Nuala)



MOUNT BANKS: Beautiful, wild and wondrous!

Mount Banks is covered with spring wildflowers - amazing success blooming post horrendous fires two years ago. Some parts missed the worst of the blaze and you can see heavily burned patches where embers flared. Spectacular views of the Grose Valley and distant cliffs and mountains. (Marilyn K)



Mt Tomah:

The Australian Raven met us at the Mount Tomah picnic area where picnics often happen - hopeful but disappointed.

I love the blue sheen in the black feathers.

(Marilyn K)

McMAHONS POINT LOOKOUT:

Mia and Summer, seasoned bushwalkers

Aged seven and five - they had done the Grand Canyon and many other walks in the Blue Mountains.

Don and I spent five hours out on Kings Tableland - half an hour with an Irish cyclist. I decided on the spur of the moment to start singing "Mountains o' Mourne", but I only knew the first verse. Don of course just kept going with the rest. Rider said he wasn't familiar with the song!

We stopped from time to time and to check out this beautiful flowering exposed ridge.

At McMahon's lookout we came across Mia, Summer and their mother. Whilst chatting, the girls became fascinated with the sap on the tree behind us. So lovely to watch them. Summer picked some of the sap, wandered over, showed and then gave it to me.

Magic moments for an old codger and very special. Not a gadget or phone in sight. My faith in human nature restored.

The planned two hours with Don became five. Can't remember any jokes, maybe he's got the message. Very easy young man to get on with. Thanks for the day Don, loved it. (Ron)



The same place, 20 years ago ...



A Margaret moment

It was a special moment for me when I returned to McMahon's Point lookout, at the southern end of Kings Tableland, with Ron Hyslop. We looked down on the spectacular valley of the Coxs River near the confluence with the Kowmung, partly recovered from the 2019/2020 bushfires but now under threat from the proposed dam wall raising.

Ron mentioned that his late wife Margaret Hyslop had accompanied him on a previous visit and later supplied a photograph.

I felt really honoured to be walking in Margaret's footsteps with Ron. For the longer term TING walkers, Margaret is an unforgettable friend, mentor and adviser.

Only occasionally have Margaret's reactions been captured in a photograph – that feeling she had when she'd come to a special place, just a bit more worthy of appreciating, loving and preserving than the many other bushland locations she shared with us. (Don)

Another time, another season ... 20 years ago.



WILLOUGHBY: Things I enjoy on my rambles

The mural from the old Willoughby ice works has intricate details. (Nuala)



KU-RING-GAI CHASE NATIONAL PARK: Wildlife

My son Matthew and I often walk from Turramurra into the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park to Bobbin Head.

On this occasion, on the track from Bobbin Head to Apple Tree Bay, we came across a large goanna, commonly seen here, and a pair of lyrebirds (probably mother and a juvenile, in its mother's care until next winter's breeding season). We gingerly passed a Death Adder which was on the track, getting some sun after its winter hibernation. Matthew took the photo. (Michael)

The Common Death Adder feeds on frogs, lizards and birds and, unlike most Australian venomous snakes that actively search for prey, this snake sits in one place and waits for prey to come to it. Covering itself with leaves makes it inconspicuous and it lies coiled in ambush, twitching its yellowish grub-like tail close to its head as a lure. When an animal approaches to investigate the movement, the death adder quickly strikes, injecting its venom and then waiting for the victim to die before eating it. (Australian Museum)



SHELLHARBOUR: 'Tis the season

Our day began at Blackbutt Forest Reserve with the deafening rasps of twenty-plus sulphur-crested cockatoos as they helped defend the nest and young of a pair of their kind from ravens intent on plunder.

Later, sheltering from the rain under a large picnic shelter, we chatted to a couple of council workers who introduced us to two wattle bird chicks fallen out of their nest. Then, outside Lake Illawarra PCYC, we were treated to the sight of an adult-plumaged masked lapwing chick and the ak-ak-ak sound of a protective parent. (Geoff and Anne)



Wattle bird parents were still feeding the chicks. A council ladder could have been put to good use.

Defending the nest

