

Wednesday Walk – Dhurrawarri Buranya Walk, Googong Foreshores – 5 April 2017

The Dhurrawarri Buranya Walk is mostly on a track along the ridge between Burra Creek and Queanbeyan River and ends where the two waterways meet. But, before we got to that part of the trip, we had already crossed one of the highlights of the day, the London Bridge Arch. The Bridge is a large archway of limestone carved out over the years by water from Burra Creek seeping through cracks in the soft rock until caves and then the arch were formed. Eventually, some 20,000 years ago, the course of Burra Creek changed from its journey across the alluvial plain to a flow entirely through the arch. The vegetation on the limestone rocks is mostly short grasses, but a few tall *Gynatrix pulchella* adorn the entrance to the caves.

For a while we walked along the valley beside the creek — obviously home to quite a few wombats. The adjacent hillside was cloaked in Burgan (*Kunzea ericoides*) beneath *Eucalyptus pauciflora* (Snow Gums) and *E. stellulata* (Black Sallee). Further along, a series of steps and flat rocks led us up the steep slope to the shaly ridge. Along the climb, we passed through *Cassinia longifolia* and some *Daviesia mimosoides* with the lower understorey consisting mostly of *Pultenaea microphylla* with a few small patches of *Cryptandra amara* var. *longiflora* and *Pultenaea procumbens*.

As we progressed along the ridge, we came into dry forest consisting mostly of Brittle Gum (*Eucalyptus mannifera*) and Broad-leaved Peppermint (*E. dives*) with a scattering of Red-stemmed Wattles (*Acacia rubida*) and Blackthorn (*Bursaria spinosa* ssp. *lasiophylla*). Two robust *Persoonia rigida* were growing near the path, a species that seems to occur only as isolated specimens or in very small groups.

Further on, the vegetation changed slightly as we came into an area of grey shale. *Eucalyptus polyanthemos* (Red Box) were sheltering an understorey of mainly *Dillwynia phyllicoides*, but with a few *Leucopogon fletcheri* in bud, some tough and tufty *Lomandra longifolia* growing amongst the rocks and *Stellaria pungens* (Prickly Starwort) forming a few green carpets over the thin soil.

And then we came to the quite large population of *Dillwynia glauca*, a rare plant found only in a few scattered populations from Michelago to Goulburn. Quite a few of the plants were dead, but there were a lot of younger plants replacing them and numerous still-healthy older plants.

After descending down a slight slope of metamorphic rock studded with quartz, we came to the confluence of Burra Creek and Queanbeyan River, a wide stretch of tranquil water often inhabited by a range of water birds. This time, there were only a few Coots and some Australasian Grebes on the water — but a Wedge-tailed Eagle drifted high above and kept an eye on us as we ate our lunch.

The return trip was on the other side of the ridge and close to the river for a while. The moister soil there gave rise to some different vegetation. *Acacia mearnsii* grew thickly beside the track above *Pomaderris betulina* ssp. *betulina* and a few *P. angustifolia* — and a flat muddy area near the river was carpeted with bright green *Hydrocotyle tripartita*, a striking contrast to the dark foliage of the wattles.

Most of the understorey along the return track consisted of *Pultenaea microphylla* and *Dillwynia phyllicoides*. They were growing in mostly separate populations, their position influenced by soil type, tree cover, aspect and other factors of the landscape. Close to the end of the walk, a small population of *Astrotricha ledifolia* lined the track, another one of those species that occurs in widely scattered areas and in usually small groups.

The realisation that we were walking between two converging waterways on the Dhurrawarri Buranya Walk added a sense of anticipation to the experience of diverse vegetation in an ever-changing landscape. (B)

Bird List

Pacific Black Duck	White-throated Treecreeper	Brown Thornbill
Grey Teal	Superb Fairywren	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Hardhead	Eastern Spinebill	Weebill
Australasian Grebe	Yellow-faced Honeyeater — Very	Dusky Woodswallow
Little Pied Cormorant	conservative, groups of between 3	Grey Butcherbird
White-faced Heron	and 15 birds passing overhead quite	Australian Magpie
Wedge-tailed Eagle	frequently	Pied Currawong
Eurasian Coot — very conservative,	Noisy Miner	Grey Currawong
count of birds around confluence of	Red Wattlebird	Willie Wagtail
Burra Creek and Queanbeyan River	White-plumed Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Masked Lapwing	White-eared Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Laughing Kookaburra	White-naped Honeyeater	Little Raven
Nankeen Kestrel	one group flying over	Eastern Yellow Robin
Australian Hobby	Spotted Pardalote	Welcome Swallow — Estimate; flying
Galah	Striated Pardalote	under the rock bridge and into the
Crimson Rosella	White-browed Scrubwren	caves near bridge
Eastern Rosella	Buff-rumped Thornbill	Silvereye

Text: Jo Walker; Bird List: Sandra Henderson; Photos: Gail Ritchie Knight (GRK) and Brigitta Wimmer (BW)



Eucalyptus brigesiana (GRK)



London Bridge (BW)



Vittadinia muelleri (BW)



Climbing up to the shaly ridge (GRK)



Melichrus urceolatus (BW)



Eucalyptus stellulata (BW)



Cassinia longifolia (BW)



Eucalyptus stellulata leaves (BW)



Eucalyptus stellulata flowers (BW)



Bossiaea buxifolia (BW)



Hydrocotyle tripartita (BW)



Kunzea ericoides capsules (BW)



Pomaderris betulina (BW)



Up on the ridge (GRK)



Persoonia rigida (GRK)



Microseris lanceolata (GRK)



Flying visitor (GRK)



Wombat visiting card (BW)



Typha ? domingensis (BW)



Coming to the end of the walk (GRK)