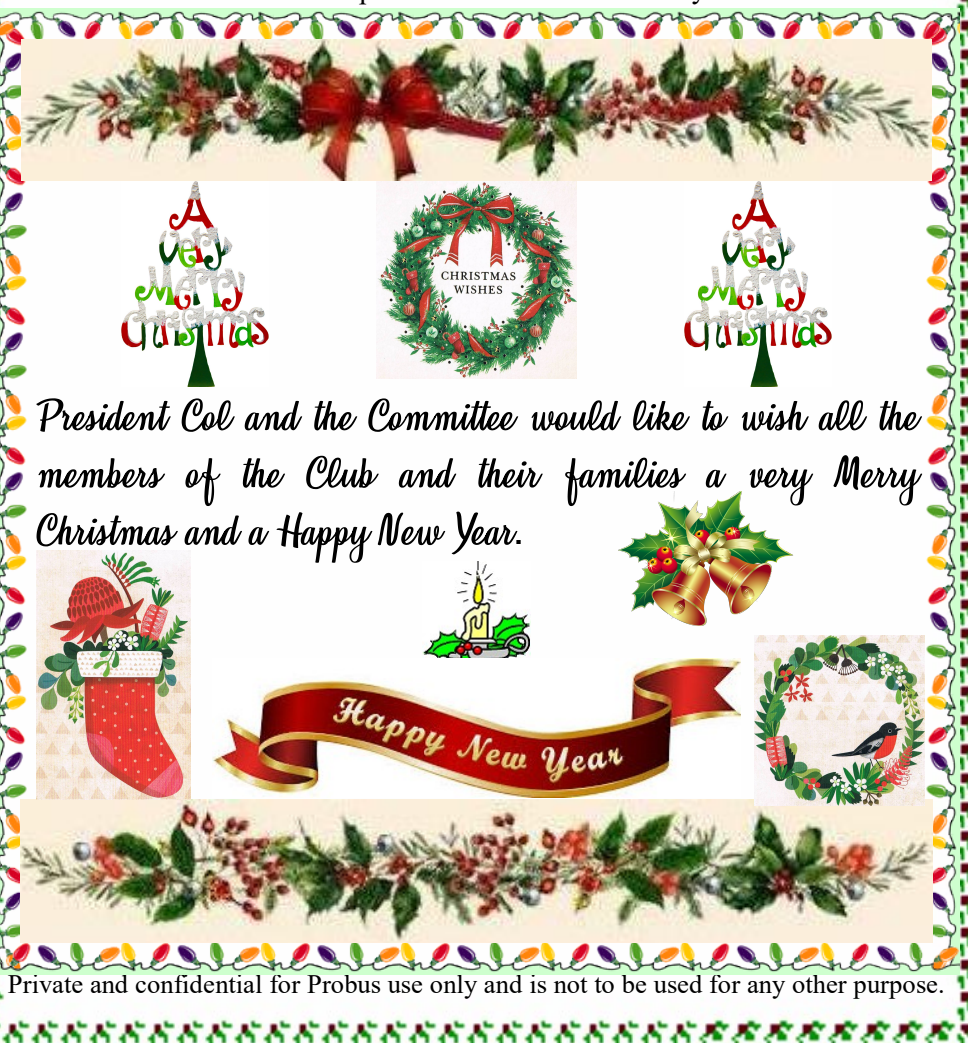


In an effort to break the stalemate, the 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade brought its tanks and remnant troops around from Buna, but it too failed to make progress. However, unknown to the Australians, the Japanese, who were sick and starving, had been ordered to withdraw. The Brigade and a new American Regiment renewed the attack. In a flanking operation to the north, the Brigade reached the sea and all enemy resistance ceased on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 1943.

The Australian units in the sector sustained over 1400 battle casualties and the Americans seven hundred. The victory at Sanananda marked the end of a 6-month Papuan New Guinea Campaign, during which the enemy deployed about 20,000 troops of which more than 13,000 died.

While this was the end of the New Guinea Papua Campaign with the defeat of the Japanese, the war against the enemy was by no means over. Final defeat and surrender of the Japanese did not occur until 3 years later.



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**MERRY CHRISTMAS**



### DECEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

#### MEETINGS

##### November

James Rutherford was our guest speaker last month, when his topic was "The Story of Cobb & Co". The power point presentation covered on the origins and the expansion of the coaching company Cobb & Co, which dominated the transport industry in the Eastern States of Australia in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the role played by his namesake and Great Grandfather James Rutherford.

Cobb & Co was founded in the USA by Freeman Cobb in July 1853. While attempting to set up a coach business to the Californian Goldfields, Cobb found a ship going to Melbourne. Consequently, he and his partners John Peck, James Swanton and John Lamber arrived in Melbourne in December 1853. On 30 January 1854 they began a coach service from Melbourne via Forest Creek to Bendigo. They imported their coaches from their home country. They were called concord coaches. Eventually they expanded across Victoria. In May 1856, Cobb and Lamber returned to the USA. Swanton continued with the business. Between 1856 and 1861 the business was sold several times.

In 1861, the business was sold to James Rutherford, John Wagner, Alexander Robertson, Walter Hall, William Whitney and Walter Bradley. Rutherford, an American like Cobb, re-organised the business and by 1870 most of Victoria was covered by Cobb & Co coaches. He had won a monopoly on major mail contracts. In June 1862, with the Lambing Flat gold



rush occurring, Rutherford transferred 10 coaches to Bathurst to establish Cobb & Co in NSW. Meanwhile, Wagner and Robertson took over the operations in Victoria.

Walter Russel Hall married Eliza Kirk in 1874 and he became a well-known businessman. He was an original shareholder and director of the Mt Morgan Gold Mining Co. Ltd and a director of Mercantile Mutual Insurance Co. Ltd and the Sydney Meat Preserving Co. Ltd. He died at his Potts Point home in Sydney in October 1911 at the age of 80. His widow established the Eliza and Walter Hall Trust which led to the establishment of the Eliza and Walter Hall Institute of Medical Research in Melbourne.

Coach routes were introduced from Bathurst to Penrith and Sydney, Forbes via Orange, from Bathurst to Lambing Flat (Young) via Carcoar, via Cowra to Mudgee and Bendigo to Bathurst. A buggy and coachworks business was established at Bathurst and the firm began investing in properties, the first being “Buckinguy” station near Nyngan.

In 1865, the business expanded into Queensland with a service operating between Ipswich and Brisbane. Eventually the business greatly expanded in Queensland and in 1886 a large coachworks was established at Charleville. In 1871, the Victorian business was separated from the NSW and Queensland operations.



As railways expanded across Eastern Australia so Cobb & Co. moved to be a link from an adjacent railway station instead of Melbourne, Sydney or Brisbane. Its mail contracts were awarded by the Post Office. Eventually its operations were reduced by more railways, cheap motor vehicles and aeroplanes delivering mail. In 1920, the Charleville works closed and by 1821 Cobb & Co. had lost most of its mail contracts in Queensland. The last coach service in NSW occurred in 1913, in Victoria in 1916 and in Queensland in 1924. James Rutherford also died in 1911, the same year his company approved the purchase of its first motor vehicle.

supported by air strikes and artillery, but suffered heavy losses and by 26 November were restricted to patrol activity.

On 28 November, the 21<sup>st</sup> Brigade, under Brigadier Ivan Dougherty, began to arrive and was joined by the 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion. The next day the Brigade attacked Gona strongly from the east and gained control of the landing beach. The 21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Brigades contained Gona until 4 December, when the 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade was withdrawn and flown back to Port Moresby. In a series of attacks, bunker by bunker, the four battalions annihilated the enemy. The final composite attack by the 2/16<sup>th</sup> and 2/27<sup>th</sup> Battalions under Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Honner gave rise to the famous signal by Honner “Gona’s Gone”.

By this time significant Japanese forces, which landed at night at the Mambare River, were between Gona and the Amboga River. Lieutenant Alan Haddy’s Chaforce had harassed them, inflicting casualties. Lieutenant Haddy, ever leading from the front, remained to the last and was killed. On 7 December, a 2/14<sup>th</sup> Battalion patrol was joined by the remainder of the Battalion and took over the responsibility for the area west of Gona to the Amboga River. This force was joined by the 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 10 December and the Japanese were finally eliminated on 18 December when 170 were buried at Haddy’s village.

The victory at Gona killed 638 of the 800 Japanese defenders and another 200 at West Gona, but the cost was excessively high—total Australian casualties were 893, the heaviest in the 21<sup>st</sup> Brigade and the 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Mopping up in the Gona area was done by the 36<sup>th</sup> Battalion in the west and by the 55/53<sup>rd</sup> Battalion in the east.

**Sanananda Point**, half way between Buna and Gona on the northern Papua coast, was an uninviting desolate area. However, it formed the centre of the main Japanese defensive position in the final battles of the Papuan campaign. The Japanese commander concentrated most of his force in this area and took personal command there.

On 22 December, the Australians at Sanananda were further reinforced by the 21<sup>st</sup> Brigade (each battalion down to less than company strength) and the 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion, but the Japanese positions could not be eliminated. Brigadier Selwyn Porter’s 30<sup>th</sup> Brigade engaged the main Japanese position with Brigadier Ivan Dougherty’s 21<sup>st</sup> Brigade at the road block.

By this time the largest number of troops on the Sanananda track was from militia units rather than the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). The personnel of the units threw themselves bravely into attacks against well-concealed enemy positions and lost heavily. The 55/53<sup>rd</sup> Battalion casualties alone numbered 264 and when the number of evacuations due to illness are added, the total casualties were 542, which was greater than the Battalion strength at the beginning of the campaign.

Bay in early December. Warren Force was then brought under the command of Brigadier Wotton. His main support troops were eight tanks from the 2/6<sup>th</sup> Australian Armoured Regiment and 25-pounder artillery from the 2/1<sup>st</sup> and 2/5<sup>th</sup> Field Regiments plus some engineers and the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance.

On 14 December, the American column known as Urbana Force entered Buna village after the Japanese defenders were ferried away at night. Two days later Brigadier Wotton launched the first phase of a thrust from the east, aimed at capturing the area between two airfields dubbed “New Ship” and “Old Ship” and the sea. On 18 December, the 2/9<sup>th</sup> Battalion attacked at 0700 hours following an artillery barrage and immediately struck heavy opposition at New Ship, where it lost 11 officers and 160 men. The Australians gained their first objective next day and continued to advance. Six days later this phase came to an end.

The next phase, which began on Christmas Eve, was carried forward by the 2/10<sup>th</sup> Battalion supported by the only four tanks that were still operational. A Battalion of the 126<sup>th</sup> US Regiment, moving on its left flank, also provided support. The advance began well but faltered under heavy fire which quickly accounted for all four tanks. However, 700 metres was finally gained. This was due in no small way to Private Timothy Hughes, an Aboriginal soldier of the 2/10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, who silenced some key Japanese defence posts with grenades and tommy gun. For his action he was awarded a Military Medal.

On Christmas Day, a 25-pounder from the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, known as “Carson’s Gun” was sited between the airstrips and west of the bridge over Simemi Creek and created havoc in Japanese defensive posts. A former Japanese observation post in a 25-metre high banyan tree was utilised by Captain Tom Handran-Smith of the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment. An attempt to resume the advance on 29 December also founded.

On New Year’s Day 1943, after the arrival of a fresh battalion, the 2/12<sup>th</sup> from Goodenough Island, and six more tanks, another effort was made. This attack swept through open plantation, dealing with one Japanese bunker after another and by the following day had reached Ginopa Point. This completed the capture of the Buna area in conjunction with a fresh attack by Urbana Force which captured the old government station.

The bloody operation had cost the Allies 2870 battle casualties—913 of whom were among Australian units. The 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade suffered 863 casualties including 306 killed. A minimum of 1390 Japanese were killed.

**Gona** was the site of an Anglican mission that served nearby villages on the north coast of Papua. The 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade led by Brigadier Ken Eather, including the 3<sup>rd</sup> Militia Battalion, reached Gona on 19 November with “Chaforce”, which had been placed under its command at Wairopi. The Brigade, led first by the 2/33<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, launched several attacks, some

We very sincerely thank James Rutherford’s Great Grandson for coming and enlightening us about the history of the well-known stagecoach company his ancestor had much to do with its success over nearly fifty years in providing vital transport for the citizens of Victoria, NSW and Queensland.

## February 2023

An interesting start to the New Year with a special woman giving us awareness on an important health issue. Michelle Sharkey OAM will be our guest speaker on Monday, 13 February 2023, when her topic will be “Stroke—Awareness, Treatment and Recovery”. It will give a comprehensive overview of Stroke, including:

- What is a Stroke?
- What to do if you think you are having a Stroke
- New treatments for Stroke in NSW
- Risk factors for Stroke
- What to do to prevent a Stroke.

Michelle has worked as a Social Worker in NSW for over 40 years, her main area of experience is in Community Development and Health. She has worked in Commonwealth, State and Local Government agencies as well as in the Non-Government sector.

In 1997, she became the Executive Officer for the Stroke Recovery Association. The Stroke Recovery Association is a community-based organisation which offers support and services in the community for people affected by Stroke and their families. It has very strong links with other the Health services with whom it works closely and co-operatively to ensure the delivery of quality services to people affected by Stroke and their carers in the community. It auspices and supports the work of over 35 Stroke Support groups throughout NSW.

In 2011, Michelle was honoured for her work in Stroke with the Order of Australia Medal. She is very passionate about people’s ability to recover and live a good quality of life after Stroke. She is a strong advocate for people’s ability to live in the community and in their own home for as long as possible and she has an extensive knowledge of the services available to assist the individual and their families to achieve this.

## March

The March meeting is also an important event as we will be conducting the AGM with extra time to get to know your fellow members (important part of Probus is friendship and fellowship) plus we will be given a demonstration of the Defibrillator, a knowledge we all need to know but hopefully will never need to use. Consequently, there will be no guest speaker.

## CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

Our Christmas Function this year will be held on Wednesday, 7 December 2022, at The Grand Pittwater: North Ryde Community Club. Our function is timed to commence at 11.15 a.m. Drinks will be served at the lunchroom entrance from approximately 11.20 a.m. and lunch will commence at 12 noon. Any additional drinks must be ordered at the Bar.

## DAY OUTINGS

### November

Those members and wives who attended the outing on Monday, 21 November 2022 to the Ralph Honner Education Centre at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway were very privileged because attending to conduct us around to the Centre Piece of the Walkway and a couple of Stations was Reg Chard OAM, aged 99 and a veteran who served on the Kokoda Trail Campaign in Papua New Guinea together with Bob Flint, who served in the Australian Defence Force from 1960 to 1993.

We were also privileged to hear Reg speak about his experiences on the Kokoda Trail and to watch a short video of the Campaign.

Your President asked Reg two main things—how old was he when he enlisted and why the term “Trail” in Papua New Guinea and the term “Track” in Australia. He enlisted when he was 18 and it was General Douglas McArthur who referred to it as the Kokoda Track.

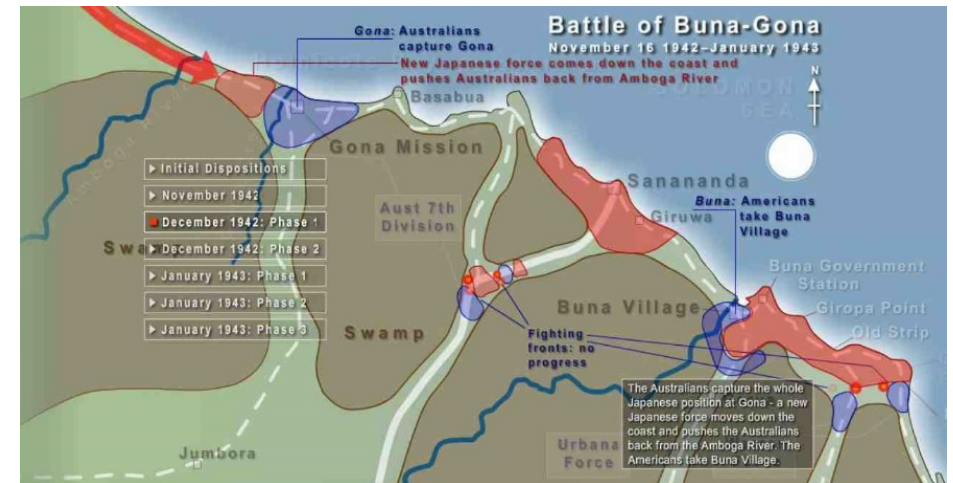


### February 2023

The first outing next year will be on Monday, 20 February 2023, and will be a visit to the Art Gallery of New South Wales for a guided tour of the new Sydney Modern galleries. In this tour we will explore the art and architecture of the Art Gallery’s new building. We will meet the one-of-a-kind artworks created for this space and see how an abandoned oil tank has been turned into a gallery. The cost of the tour will be \$32 per person. Members must register and pay on or before Monday, 13 February 2023.

## WE PAUSE TO REMEMBER

Over the next 2 months the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries will be celebrated for the battles on the beaches of Papua New Guinea. **Buna** was a small village on the north coast of Papua and the headquarters of the district. There were several coconut plantations but much of the area was cut by small creeks and interspersed by fetid swamps and jungle. At Gona and Sanananda the Japanese had established a series of strongly constructed and fortified bunkers during October to November 1942. They were well camouflaged and sited to provide mutual fire support. The positions defended the new and old airstrips and westward the right back to Buna village.



The initial attack began on 19 November by two Battalions of the 32<sup>nd</sup> US Division under the Command of Major General Edwin Harding and supported by two guns each of the 2/1<sup>st</sup> and 2/5<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Regiments. The US troops, known as the Warren Force, made little progress. The 2/6<sup>th</sup> Australian Independent Company reported to the 1/128<sup>th</sup> US Battalion on 21 November in a supporting role and patrolling vigorously, finally being withdrawn from action on 11 December.

On 1 December, Lieutenant General Robert Eichelberger replaced Major General Harding. In early December Battalions of the 126<sup>th</sup> and 127<sup>th</sup> US Regiments were added to the troops of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Division already in action and gradually the Americans began to have success, with the Australian artillery playing an important role. Air support was provided by 4 and 30 Squadrons RAAF by means of a radio hook-up between ground forces, planes overhead and RAAF Headquarters at Popondetta.

To reinforce the Americans, the Australian 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade, under Brigadier George Wotton, was brought forward from the general area of Milne



## † IN REMEMBRANCE †

We pause to remember those of our number who have passed away since 1 December 2021—Ian Campbell, Ron Mackintosh, John Cox, Philip Jones and Bernard Cupitt. We think also of member's and deceased member's wives—Judy Nicholson and Shirley Clark (widow of Keith, who passed away in 2011).

## SECRETARY'S GUFF

I recently sent all members a call for nominations for the election of Committee Members and Officers at our next Annual General Meeting (13 March 2023). Nominations should be lodged with me no later than the February meeting. Please consider this matter in the interest of the Club and its members. I send my very best wishes to all members and their friends for a happy Christmas and a safe and healthy 2023.

## MORNING TEA ROSTER FOR FEBRUARY

Wayne Steele is happy to do the pre-Meeting set up, so rostered members are only currently needed should be at the hall for serving and tidy-up. If you are unable to be present as rostered, please arrange a swap with another member and inform the Secretary.

Geoff Richardson   Lance Walker  
Geoff Brothers



## TOUR NEWS

### Friends of Bishops Reunion—20 December 2022

Anyone who has travelled with Bruce and Lindy Bishop on any of their many adventure tours over the last 30 years is invited to a reunion of friends at Shoalhaven Heads on 20 December. The reunion will take the form of a catered afternoon tea/ Christmas drinks, to coincide with the launch of Bruce's memoir *See You in Two Weeks*. This is a light-hearted recollection of some amusing, awkward and sometimes challenging incidents that occurred in their 30 years 'on-tour'.

The function will be held at Bangalay, Shoalhaven Heads, from 3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 20 December—all welcome. Bookings please with Wal: [wwg@bigpond.com](mailto:wwg@bigpond.com) or 0429-484-639.

We will assemble at the Epping station Concourse at 9.30 a.m. to catch the 9.47 a.m. train to Town Hall station, arriving there at 10.28 a.m. We will then catch the Route 441 bus (due at 10.37 a.m.) from Stand H in Park Street (northern side) to the Art Gallery. The guided tour will commence at 11 o'clock. We will have lunch at one of the cafés in the Art Gallery.

## March

The next outing will be on Monday, 20 March 2023, and will be a guided tour of the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct. Dating back to 1821, this national heritage precinct covers an area of 7.3 hectares where the adjacent historic institutions of the Roman Catholic Orphan School and later Parramatta Girls Home and the convict built Parramatta Female Factory and later Parramatta Invalid & Lunatic Asylum are situated. The cost of the tour will be \$10 per person.



## May

The Naval Historical Society will be holding a cruise on Thursday, 1 June 2023, the 81st anniversary of the attack on Sydney harbour by the Japanese midget submarines. The cost will be \$70 per person for a group. The Club has booked a limited number of places on this cruise. It is expected that the cruise will be very popular so, if you are interested in this outing, please advise the Outings Co-Ordinator early so more places can be booked if necessary.



If not paying by cash for any outing, please make a direct deposit to Probus Account BSB 633 000 Account No. 182681668 stating YOUR NAME and reason for payment and also advise the Outings Co-Ordinator, Russell Gough, by email to: [Russell.Gough51@gmail.com](mailto:Russell.Gough51@gmail.com)

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

The following ‘other activities’ are planned for this month. It goes without saying that all activities are conditional on compliance with any relevant Covid-19 restrictions.

**Old Codgers Music Group**—on 14 November, nine music lovers enjoyed the music presented at Andrew and Gillian Davidson’s home. The music group will recess over the holiday season, coming back together in February 2023.

**Coffee Club**—11 members and three guests met for coffee and chat on Friday, 18 November. You are all invited to meet ‘face to face’ to socialise over tea, coffee, etc., at the Coffee Club, Carlingford Court, at 10.00 a.m. on Friday, 9 December.

**Dining**—the Christmas Party is being regarded as the December dining function and so, no other lunch is planned for December.

Ross Beattie has offered to arrange lunch at the Wild Pear Café (licensed) in Dural, for some time in January (watch your email for details).

Members are encouraged to consider arranging a future lunch or dinner at a venue of their choice. Please discuss with Ray Finch: email [rayfinch42@gmail.com](mailto:rayfinch42@gmail.com) or mobile 0414-746-954.

**Cycle Group aka Wobblies**—there were four riders for the Parramatta Wetlands ride on 25 November 2022. After meeting at Mill Park Street, Rhodes, the ride was through Liberty Grove into the Wetlands, returning to Rhodes via Benelong Bridge for coffee (a total distance of 20 km). Many thanks Russell, for leading this ride.

The next ride will be Friday, 16 December 2022 meeting at Mill Park Street, Rhodes at 10.00 a.m. The route will be over the railway bridge to Meadowbank and on to the Parramatta River Cycleway to Parramatta Park. The return trip will be via Silverwater Bridge and the cycleway back to Rhodes (a total distance of 23 km). Unfortunately, I am unable to join you on this ride, still in recovery mode! However, I suggest we all get together, with partners, for lunch at Rhodes.

Please contact Steve Drury if you wish to participate or need more information: email: [sandbdrury@gmail.com](mailto:sandbdrury@gmail.com) or phone 9872-7447 or mobile 0487-785-444.

**Movie Group**—the movie *Mrs Harris Goes to Paris* was thoroughly enjoyed by a group of 11 moviegoers at Event Cinemas, Macquarie Centre, on Tuesday 1 November, followed by lunch at Chantilly Café.

The movies will recess for the rest of the year. Keep an eye on your email for details of the next movie in the New Year.

**The Ramblers**—the final Ramble for 2022 was on Thursday 1 December, meeting at Epping Station concourse to catch the Metro to Chatswood, bus to Manly, and then bus to North Head. From North Head a lovely 5 km, mainly downhill, ramble back to Manly was enjoyed, along sealed or well-made paths and boardwalks. The ramble included the views and wildflowers found along part of the Sanctuary Loop boardwalk, the North Head Barracks Precinct, the “secret path” through the landscaped grounds of the old St Patrick’s Seminary, and the Marine Parade walkway from Fairy Bower beach to Manly beach, for lunch at the Fins and Ribs restaurant, 33 South Steyne. After lunch we rambled along the Corso to catch the Manly Ferry to Circular Quay, and then train back to Epping.

**By Opal Card**—seven members and a wife partook on the final trip by Opal Card for 2022 on Tuesday, 29 November for travel to Kurrajong for lunch at The Village Kitchen.

The next Opal Card trip is planned for Monday, 27 February 2023 to travel to Budgewoi for lunch. Travel will be by train to Wyong Station, thence by to Lake Haven and another bus to Budgewoi for lunch at a nearby café or hotel (full details in the February Newsletter).

## WELFARE REPORT (prepared by our Welfare Officer, Ray Palmer)

I wish to advise of the passing of Bernard Cupitt on the 26th November—our sympathy and good wishes from the friends of Bernard are sent to Clare and their families at this sad time.

The following Non-Active Members, who are in full-time care, are all comfortable: Laurie Fuller, John Steele-Smith and Paul Woodward. Frank Johnson, Bruce Frost, Owen Harrison, Alan Herron, Dick Nicholson, Dennis Druce, Wal Williams and John Goodman are Ok at present. Alf McDermott is far from well, and the Doctors are concerned with the cancer in mouth. Tony Malin is Ok but is concerned about his wife Ann following a fall.

And now to our Active Members: Following numerous attempts I was unable to find out how Yew Cheah is going. Doug Sneddon has been in Chris O’Brien Lifehouse for operation on both legs. They are excising two SCCs on one leg and another on the other leg. This requires 2 weeks in hospital because of grafts. Keith Robinson is continuing to have concerns with blood clots, requiring new medications. Col Jones is booked to have heart surgery on the 5th December at the San and we all wish him a successful procedure.

Now to a celebration while we are on our break: Derek Jones will be turning 95 on the 22nd January—Congrats Derek!!!

Until Probus resumes in February I will be happy to receive any concerns of members by phone. Every good wish for the Season.