

Field Trip- Easter Weekend
March 2013
BOWNING, YASS & WEE JASPER

Twelve members of the Illawarra Lapidary Club intended to take the opportunity to join with the Fossil Club of New South Wales, for that Club's annual long weekend field trip. Unfortunately, six were to pull out before the event. Ken and Margaret Mitchell, Peter and Corrie Kemp and David and Diana Hindmarsh participated.

Friday

Time Period; Very Late Silurian

All met at the Caravan Park, then travelled to the private property in convoy.

Soon after arriving, members were quickly at work; in the creek, in the banks, and on top of the banks. Finds were soon being shown. Trilobites- mainly tails, shells, corals and crinoids.

Limestone slabs containing "snails"- Gastropods, were found well away from the usual fossicking area. A member walked some distance down the watercourse and relocated a very large lump of Coral, members soon had a specimen for slabbing and polishing!

Two years ago, several wild Quince trees provided dessert for some willing to cook them. With Easter very early this year, we thought that we may have been too early, but no! buckets were produced, and filled.

All in all, a rewarding day, but we missed the sheep shearing that was to happen the next day.

Saturday

Time Period; Late Silurian

All present agreed to an earlier start time, given what we wanted to do on the day. Plans can be changed!

Those that stayed the night met at 8.30 am and travelled to the day's location, another private property. A conspicuous heap of rock, acting as an erosion barrier soon revealed to the new comers that Trilobites were there for the taking. The whip was produced to move all to the actual fossicking site for several hours of hammering. Many finds were made by all - many Trilobites complete with heads. In past years, mostly tails were found, with few complete.

All then progressed to the next site where the graptolites are found. A few Trilobites were recovered above that layer, higher on the knoll.

We then travelled to the historic Hatton's Corner, an important coral reef formation. All were surprised at the great vertical depth of corals, and of the time frame required for such growth to form.

All headed back to the Trilobite site to score that last complete specimen. Ken found a nice Trilobite complete with head.

We reluctantly left at 3.30pm for our history lesson, visiting one of Yass's most significant historic houses - "Cliftonwood", built in 1841 for a Mr Watson, on land owned by Hume Highway explorer Hamilton Hume. All were impressed with the house, sheds and underground grain silo. A long but very rewarding day, requiring sustenance at the local Soldiers Club for dinner.

Sunday

Time period; Devonian

We left Yass at 7.15am, to Wee Jasper, Carey's Cave location, for a fund raiser breakfast run by the locals to support the Primary School and Bush Fire Brigade. Bacon, egg & sausage sandwiches, hash browns and pikelets, tea or coffee AND an Easter egg!!

A short drive, and we were met by the landholder, who, with the aid of some superb local Devonian Marine fossils, some four hundred million years old, gave us an in-depth insight into the formation of limestone bedding that runs through his property. Tilted to the vertical, this blue- grey limestone belt is full of any number of interesting creatures from an ancient past. Despite being very chilly weather-wise, we soon warmed up with a farm walk, our guide pointing out numerous preserved fossils in situ.

Google: Burrinjuck Fossils, Australian Heritage Magazine article.

We then drove to another private property, where we were privileged to see the significant formation known as “Shearsby’s Wallpaper”, a road cutting, through the *Spirifer yassensis* Limestone Member, part of the Taemas Limestone beds, whose wall was a crowded mass of the *Spirifer*; *Spinella yassensis*, with fewer *Chonetes culleni*.

This bedding plane was also almost vertical.

What better way to finish a long weekend of fossil hunting and learning, than to all be seated for afternoon tea, taking in the splendid rural view at that location, followed by a drive back to town, and dinner at the Soldiers Club.

Trips like this only happen due to the generosity of the landholders granting us the permission to access their properties. Thank you!

Assistant Trips Leaders; Ken Mitchell & David Hindmarsh