

in the gullies.

The area was heavily logged except in steeper areas.

9. WETTER GULLIES on the foreshore like this have eucalypts such as Bangalay and understorey plants such as Blueberry Ash (*Elaeocarpus reticulatus*), Scented rosewood (*Synoum glandulosum*) and Sweet pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*).

10. VIEW across the inlet : The bay opposite is Freshwater Bay where a mill was established in 1884 and where all Narooma boats were pulled up during World War II as a safeguard against a Japanese invasion.

11. PICNIC POINT was the site of a large midden and is still a good picnic spot. It is at the end of a major ridge used by Kooris to travel from the hinterland to the coast and later for early settlers. There was a small wharf here late last century.

12. FLYING FOX GULLY (and the end of the Ringlands Rotary Walk): This is an outstanding rainforest because of its structure and species composition. Please keep to the track and so help conserve this area.

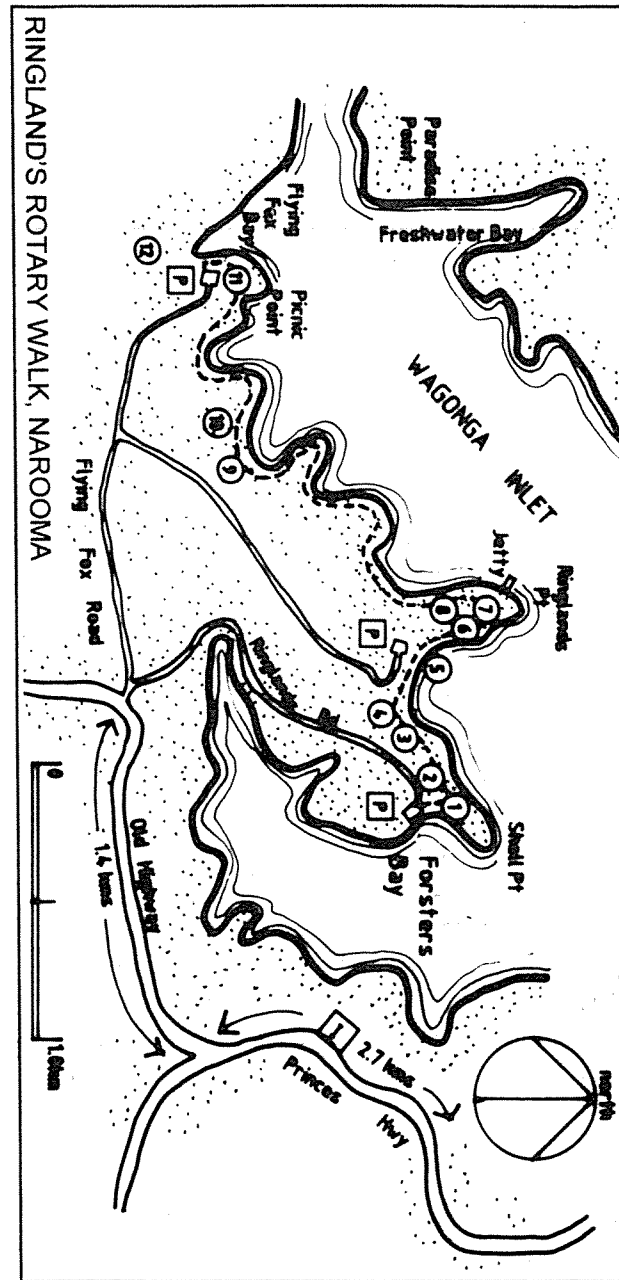
On the left as you enter the rainforest is a clump of Sassafras (*Doryphora sassafras*). Crush a leaf in your fingers; it smells like cinnamon or nutmeg.

This area is a warm temperate rainforest with sub-tropical species including the large "strangler" figs (*Ficus obliqua*), Lilly-pilly (*Acmena smithii*), and the Giant Stinger tree (*Dendrocnide excelsa*) with the large leaves and named appropriately (take care!). Several rainforest species here are close to their southern limits. It is also rich in fauna.

Take a deep breath and hold it; the smell is a mixture of rainforest vegetation and at times flying fox excreta! Grey-headed Flying Foxes (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) come here in their thousands when the spotted gums blossom. Experts say they migrate from as far away as southern Queensland. In other years, only a few visit.

You can now either retrace your steps along the foreshore, or travel via the road along the ridge back to Shell Point.

We hope you have enjoyed this walk.



The Ringlands Rotary Walk was a Narooma Rotary Club initiative for 1995/96.

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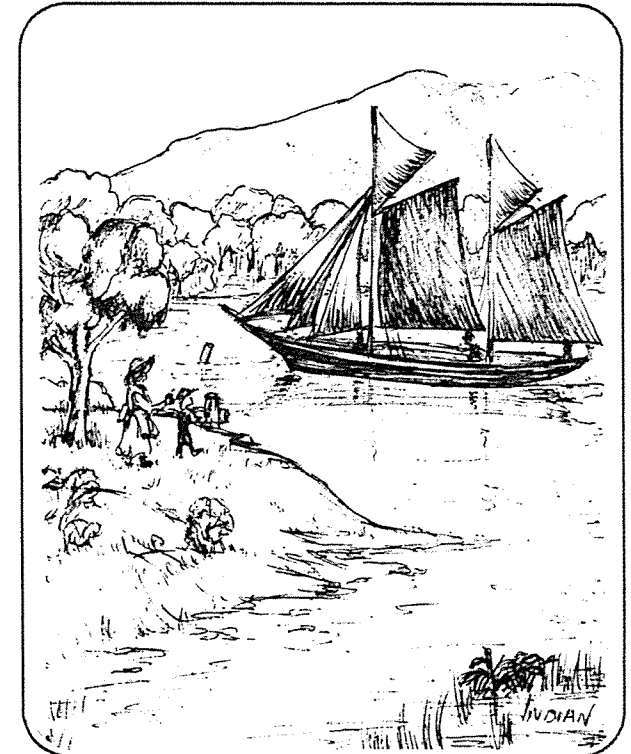
Ringland's Rotary Walk

This bush track goes from Shell Point to Flying Fox Bay along the foreshore of Wagonga Inlet.

Distance: 4km one way

Grade: medium

To get to Shell Pt : Turn off Princes Hwy 2.7km south of Narooma Visitors' Centre on to Old Highway. Turn right after 1.4km into Flying Fox Rd, then immediately right again on to Ringlands Rd. Park at the end of the road and follow track signs to Shell Point.



This pamphlet was sponsored by Narooma Rotary Club.

1. YUIN ABORIGINES lived along this coast and close to Gulaga (Mt Dromedary) which has special significance for them. Fish, shellfish and game were plentiful, as were small native yams and the nuts of burrawang palms. These poisonous nuts were pounded and processed before they could be eaten.

Mounds of their discarded shells, called middens, were all around the Inlet, particularly on headlands. Now only a fraction of the bulk of the middens remains but they are still significant to local Koori people.

SHELL POINT had a particularly large midden of mainly cockle and mud oyster shells.

Campsites were often on nearby ridges.

2. VEGETATION : From Shell Point the track passes through dry sclerophyll forest characteristic of most headlands on this walk.

The main tree species here are Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*) with some Grey Ironbark (*Eucalyptus paniculata*) and Coast Grey Box (*E. bosistoana*). The under-storey includes the Burrawang (*Macrozamia communis*). These species grow in the poor Wagonga shales. The track passes good examples of the Native Cherry (*Exocarpi cupressiformis*).

You will see several types of vegetation on this walk. For example, on Ringlands Point you will see species indicative of the better basaltic soils in the area.

Grey (Swamp) She-oaks (*Casuarina glauca*) grow along the shore.

3. OYSTER LEASES : There are private oyster leases along this shore. Please respect the oyster farmers' property. Oysters have been shipped to Sydney from this Inlet since last century.

4. RINGLANDS FARM : The open grassland marks the start of what locals know as Ringlands Farm.

This grassland was originally covered by dry sclerophyll forest, grading to moist sclerophyll forest and rainforest in some gullies.

There were possibly several logging operations here to supply timber for local sawmills such as Coman's (1880s) at Punkalla, Lynch's (1890s) or McMillan's mills (c.1905 - c.1920s) in Forsters Bay, or the Narooma Sawmill near Narooma Bridge. Remaining timber was probably cleared for grazing at the turn of the century.

This land was part of extensive holdings taken up

in 1839 by Frances Hunt who called his station 'Wagonga'. He sold it in 1849 to Thomas Forster who called it 'Noorooma'.

'Noorooma' approximates a local Koori word for the area, 'Noorawa', which some people thought meant 'clear blue waters'. Yuin elder Guboo Ted Thomas says it was the word for the yellow bubble seaweed in the Inlet.

5. RINGLANDS BAY : Little evidence remains of the large midden of mainly cockle shells once here. Such sites were occupied for short periods throughout the year by small groups of Aborigines. Each group piled up their shells from previous meals before they moved on. The next family along would eat a different shellfish.

Early settlers removed the bulk of the midden material to build roads or to make lime for mortar.

Wagonga Inlet is a drowned river valley. Sea levels rose to the present level about 6,000 years ago.

Note the wonderful example here of a Bangalay or Swamp Mahogany (*Eucalyptus botryoides*).

In the 1930s, regattas were held in this bay and several Sunday School picnics held on Ringlands Point. A carnival with woodchopping was held here in the late 1940s. There used to be a small wharf in the bay.

A large oyster shed and jetty were built here in the mid 1970s. All oyster sheds around the inlet were consolidated in Barlows Bay on the north side of the Inlet in about 1983. This move prevented alienation of the foreshore and gave oyster farmers access to electricity for their equipment.

6. GOLD DISCOVERIES on Mt Dromedary in 1860 and at Nerrigundah in 1861 drew more people to this general area. Access then was mainly via Wagonga Inlet.

At that time, small sailing vessels and steamers navigated upstream to Punkalla and Wagonga with supplies for miners and settlers. Some vessels were owned by Captain Ringland.

Captain William ('Billy') Ringland operated several sailing vessels along the coast; one was called 'Echo'. He and his wife Susan (nee Gallagher) moved from the Shoalhaven in 1861/62 having selected 40 acres around Ringlands Point. They built a small hut on this ridge. Susan died of dropsy in 1866, age 39, and was buried on Ringlands Point.

Captain Ringland operated his ships from Bermagui from the early 1870s. He is buried in Bermagui cemetery.

7. RINGLANDS POINT : This is a good time to reflect on the people who have been associated with Ringlands Farm over the years.

Edmond Joseph Coman owned it from 1891, but possibly had control earlier. He had a sawmill up the inlet at Punkalla from 1884, when he was described as having the "go ahead style about him". He "kept three to four vessels running regularly". He sold it in 1888 after establishing the first hotel in the growing village of Noorooma.

Edmond's son James worked Ringlands as a dairy farm supplying the Noorooma Cooperative Dairy Company factory in Forsters Bay, established in 1914. He was company chairman in the 1920s.

When James died, his wife's brother Jim Flanagan returned from New Zealand to work the farm. He netted 100 acres against rabbits and introduced rotational grazing to the area. He milked 40 to 50 cows, making it one of the biggest herds supplying the factory.

The Bettini children would row across the Inlet and pick up the two Coman girls and row them to school at "The Pines" above Forsters Bay.

Other names associated with Ringlands include Lilian Piper, her brother George Bush, Bill Bentley, Mrs Cairnes, and sharefarmers Cyril Negus and Joe Hurley.

Sam Brown and his son Colin farmed it after World War II and supplied cream to Cobargo factory because the Noorooma factory had closed by that time.

English millionaire Jack Billmier, known as 'Potato Jones', owned Ringlands from 1952 to 1974. He never set foot on the place, although he flew over it once. He apparently made his millions from shipping during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s. The story goes that Ringlands was bought on his behalf by an oil company as compensation for damage to one of Billmeier's ships.

Ringlands was managed for him by Walter and Peggy Norris. They ran Hereford cattle and grew beans.

After Billmeier died, the property was sold to oyster farmers - Clarry Lewis and his son Ed. They grew corn, ran a few cattle, and used it as a base for their oysters.

The waterfront and rainforest have been made into public reserve as a result of the recent subdivision.

8. FOREST RED GUMS : The trees on Ringlands Point include Forest Red Gums (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*) which indicate the better basaltic soils here. Other species here are Grey Box and Stringybark plus rainforest species