

Monday 28th August 2023

MALABAR HEADLAND NATIONAL PARK



Grade: 2 **Ascent:** 150m **Distance:** 6km

Having finally gathered the party together, we headed along the newly re-constructed path to the park entrance. It was as good a place as any to outline the story of the park and its establishment, its relationship to the firing range, etc and, with the aid of the map on the park sign, hopefully we made an impact¹. The part we were in, the eastern section, was officially opened in March 2017. It is approximately 54 hectares. Both it and the smaller western section contain remnant coastal vegetation communities of Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub growing on Pleistocene sand. It's similar to the Jennifer Street sector of Kamay-Botany Bay National Park.

As for the firing range, the recent story in The Guardian makes for interesting reading.²

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malabar_Headland

² <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/aug/20/can-sydney-national-park-malabar-headland-on-a-spectacular-seaside-cliff-top-and-a-rifle-range-coexist>

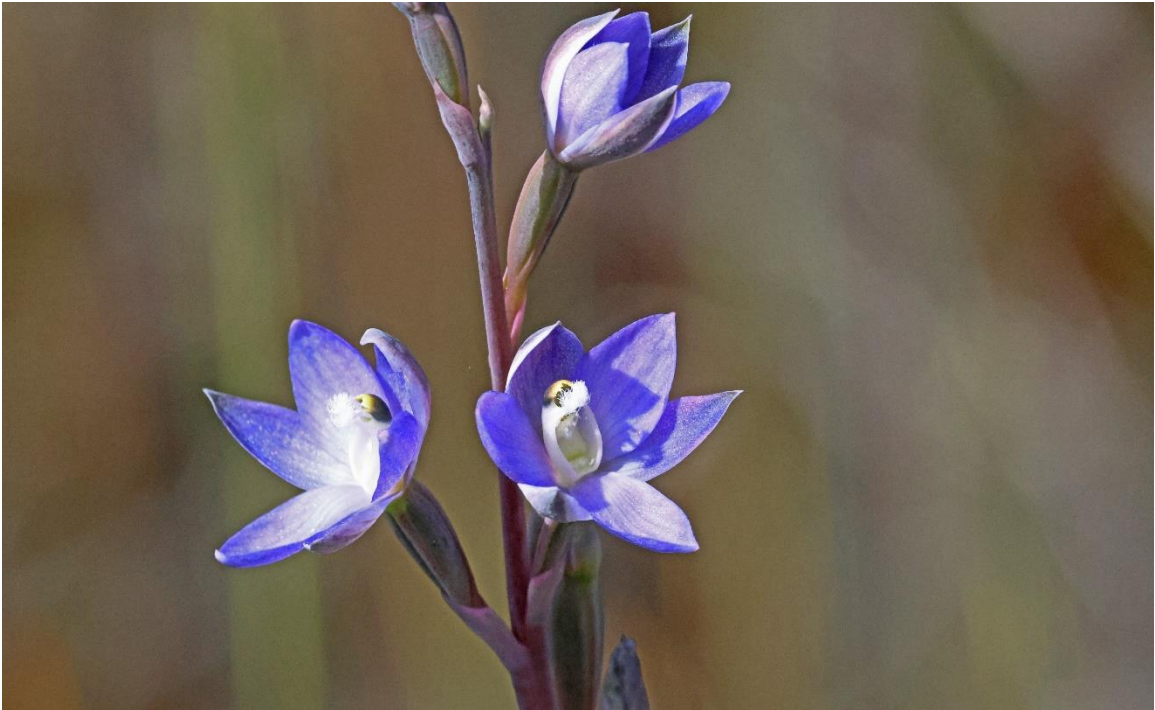


It's that time of the year when the heath is at its best!



Senecio lautus subsp maritimus or Coast Groundsel





Thelymitra ixioides

But put it down to my reading this week (*Understanding the Scenery* by Bob and Ann Young), but my own passion was the geology today!!!!

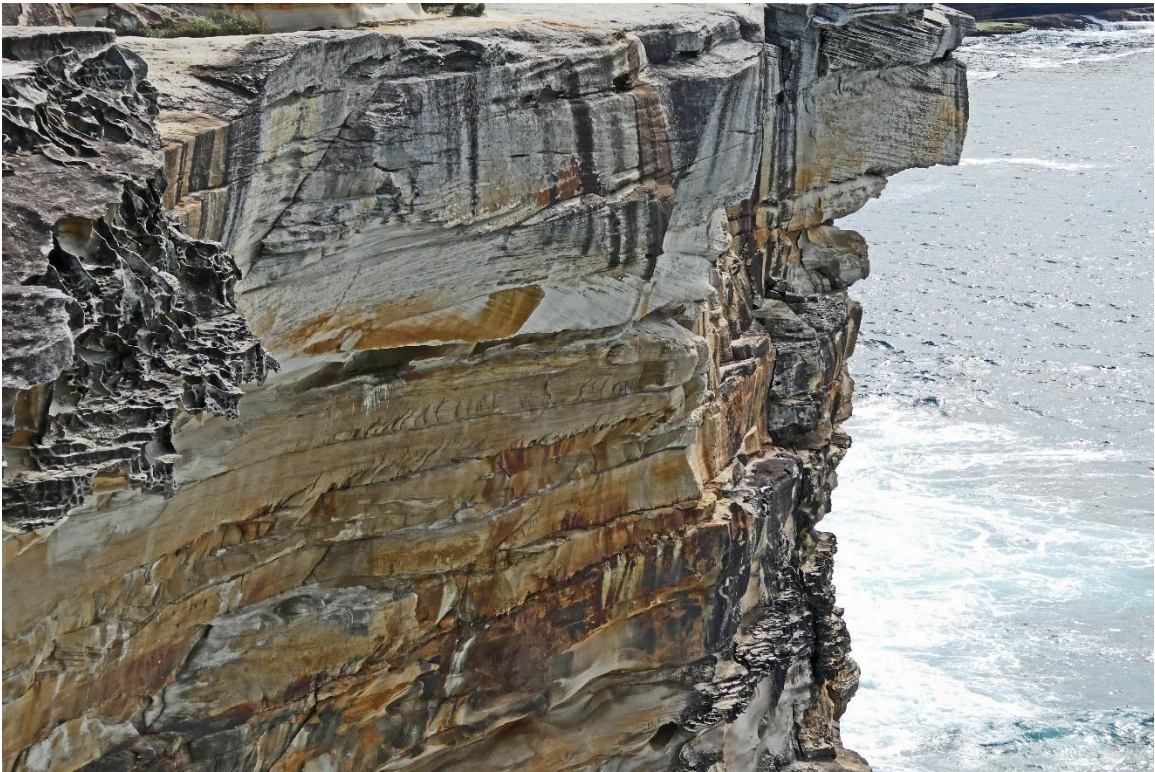


The weathering



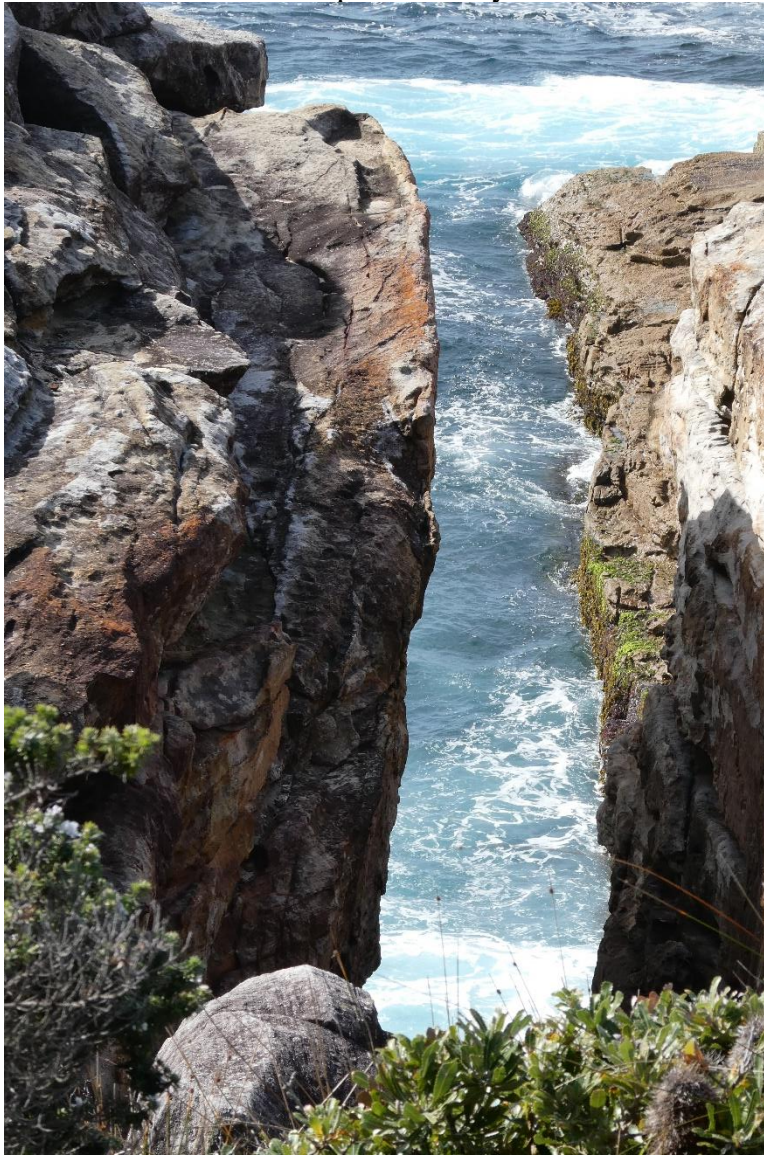
Classic undercutting of entire blocks along the joint lines





Hawkesbury Sandstone creates hard edges and steep cliffs

And a spectacular dyke



The volcanic intrusion has long since eroded away

Some others were more interested in feathery things! Indeed, Sue has become quite proficient in spotting and she and David were not satisfied with our own meagre offerings but as we walked home they headed back to look for more aerial displays of the Peregrine Falcons!



Others took an interest in the military installations on the headland!



At Magic Point



At Boora Point



The rail cutting³

The battery was equipped with:

- two breech loading 6 inch calibre guns with a maximum range of 20,400 metres (over 20 kilometres)

³ <https://malabarheadland.org.au/about/military-heritage/>

The coastal defences on Malabar Headland (Malabar Battery) were built in 1941-42 on the orders of Australian Army, Fixed Defence Command, Coast Branch and manned at combat readiness in the period 1942-1943.

The Malabar Battery was designed for a counter-bombardment role and could also perform a close defence role. It was sited to fire into a gap between the Signal Battery (South Head) and the Banks Battery (at Cape Banks, the northern headland of Botany Bay).

- a battery observation post / close defence battery observation post
- two searchlights (one for each gun)





And with that quizzical look, those who were still with us, departed.