

Port Fairy to Warrnambool: 9 Jan 2010

Walkers: Coralie G, Fiona P, Ian F, Jim F, Lothar S (leader), Peter M

We met at Thunder Point at 6 am and then proceeded in Coralie's vehicle to the Surf Club in Port Fairy. Ian was waiting for us there. After a few minutes of preparation – shoes, sunhats, sunscreen, etc – we got underway at 6:40 am. We were heading to Warrnambool on a falling tide but the sea had already retreated substantially and we walked on firm sand near the water's edge.

It was 38°C yesterday and meant to be about 27°C today – they had incorrectly predicted 31°C for yesterday so we hoped that they had not made the same mistake for today. Fortunately it got a bit warm but definitely not hot. At about 10:45 am a cool SSW breeze came up and stayed with us for the rest of the walk.

We stopped at Killarney for a bit of morning tea. The campground seemed fairly full with the oval ringed by tents, caravans, etc. Coralie left us at this stage to return to Port Fairy.

The section between Killarney and Rutledge's Cutting is the more interesting part of the walk. Lots of birds, rocks, seaweed, fishermen, people walking their dogs, etc. We were also overtaken by 3 riders on horses, and met a couple doing the walk in the opposite direction. Sections of the beach were fenced off to protect the hooded plover "nests".

We had an early lunch in the shade at Levy's Point, and finally reached Thunder Point at about 12:40 pm. Ian and Jim headed back to Port Fairy whilst Fiona, Peter and I were joined by Rosalie, Chris & Catherine at Saltmarsh Gallery & Café for coffees and teas. A lovely way to finish the walk!

Lothar



Great Ocean Walk—Aire River to Johanna Beach: 6 Feb 2010

Walkers: Linda H, Lothar S, Mabel M, Viviane W

I'd been walking the GOW for 3 days and stayed overnight at the GOW campsite at Aire River. Linda, Mabel and Viv arrived at the bridge at about 9 am. Thankfully they'd brought my drop off kit #1 which included my lunch and water! We walked uphill to the GOW campsite, picked up my gear, and then headed off.

The walk was about 14-15 km in length and graded med/hard. Along the way there were lots of scenic spots to stop and look, rest, and take photos. At Castle Cove the GOW actually meets the Great Ocean Road and here we shared the views with many, many tourists. We continued on, and then stopped for lunch at another scenic lookout high above the sea.

As we arrived at Johanna Beach we caught up with Caroline and Meaghan, 2 backpackers that were also doing the GOW. We continued along the soft sand, crossing the Johanna River with and without shoes. After a short walk through the camping area we finally reached the car. My kit #2 was there so I was able to change into dry clean clothes and replenish my food supplies.

It was then time for the guys to drive back to pick up their car at Aire River (and have lots of cake and coffee at Lavers Hill) and for me to trudge fully laden up the hill to the GOW camping area. No C&C for me unfortunately!

Thanks to all for making it a great day along a fantastic part of the coastline.

Lothar



Grampians, Halls Gap: 13–14 Feb 2010

Walkers: Mabel (Leader), Peter, Linda H, Linda & Roy C, Ian.

When Linda suggested a romantic weekend in the Grampians, with the added bonus of the Jazz Festival and a nice leisurely walk on the Saturday, I should have known it was too good to be true. The Jazz was lovely, as was the weather, but I have to query the leisurely walk and the romantic bit.

We started the walk from the Halls Gap camp ground along the newly formed walking track to the Pinnacle. The first 100 metres was indeed very nice, but quickly changed to a bit of a grunt. This grunt (from my point of view) was accompanied by groans, moans, sweat, gasping and asking Mabel, "are we there yet?" She assured me it was, just around the bend, not far. We finally did reach the Pinnacle, in good time, and the views, (when the sweat stopped burning my eyes) was indeed worth it.

The bush has regenerated well after the fires, with everything green and flowering. The scenery coming down was just as stunning as the journey up and was indeed a great walk.

Roy C

P.S. I was so worn out that I forgot all about the romantic bit of the promise.



Twelve Apostles to Princetown Gourmet walk: 27 Feb 2010

Walkers: Coralie, Diane, Helen A (leader), Linda H, Lothar, Marg, Val and Viviane.

The idea of a walk incorporating local food industries has been brewing for nearly 12 months. There are so many in the area that few of us had visited, let alone sampled their wares.

The walk commenced on a cloudy, blustery day with the change of weather looming. The scenery is always breathtaking though stops to look were very brief. After a coffee at Princetown (at the Do Duck Inn), we retraced our steps with a lunch break during one of the few sunny breaks.

Drizzle started just as we neared the end and rain commenced in earnest on our way to Stop 1: G.O.R.G.E. Chocolates. After replenishing spent calories from our walk, we headed off to Stop 2: Apostle Whey Cheese. A large selection of cheeses were available for tasting and after making our purchases, Stop 3 (Timboon Distillery) beckoned for a coffee &/or ice cream. It was here that it was pointed out that I'd bypassed a winery and Timboon Cheese farm!!

A very enjoyable day was had by all. The company was great and the food sensational. Discussions were all about incorporating another walk with other food outlets. A true "porker" spirit!

Helen A



Clean Up Australia—Wangoom: 14 Mar 2010

Cleaners: Bronwyn, Coralie, Dina, Helen A (leader), Lothar, Ivan, Jim, Peter and Rosalie.

After meeting at Wangoom at 8:30 am, we split into teams to clean the roadside from the store to the Wangoom Falls carpark. Quite a lot of rubbish collected had obviously fallen from trailers on their way to the tip. Drink containers were again the most collected item.

With a large team, we were able to complete the job in an hour so we had an early cuppa at the store before leaving 11 bags of rubbish at the tip. I wonder who the aspirant for the “Porker Award” was that had the cheesecake!

Thanks to everyone for their assistance. Several people said “it may not be a lot of rubbish but it is 11 bags of litter less to pollute the environment”.

Helen A



Lake Gillear to Portland: 19–25 March 2010

Walkers: from NSW – Bill A, Chris & Ian W; from WW: Ian, Jim, Lothar, Peta

Our NSW friends have walked from Sydney to Warrnambool via the coast and are on their way to Adelaide. Due to an illness in Sydney and lack of permission to cross private property near The Craggs, the day walks were reorganised and rescheduled:

- 19/3: Rifle Range to Logans Beach carpark 11km
- 20/3: Logans Beach to Levys Point carpark 12km
- Followed by Henty Bay Caravan Park to Portland V.I.C.
- 21/3: Levys Point carpark to Time and Tide cafe 21km
- 22/3: Surrey River to Henty Bay CP 9km
- 23/3: Lake Yambuk to Fitzroy River 21km
- 25/3: Fitzroy River to Surrey River 14km
- That still leaves Port Fairy to Lake Yambuk to do as 2 day walks in 2011 (or later in 2010).

I'd never walked the coast between Port Fairy and Portland before so I was eager to again join the NSW crew. They are great walking companions and they pay meticulous attention to map details. There are tracks between Warrnambool and Port Fairy that I didn't know existed!

Between Lake Yambuk and Surrey River (Narrawong) the beach is excellent for walking at low tide. The 35 km stretch would also be good for mountain bike



riding if you didn't mind riding on the salty damp sand. A highlight was an old giant whale skull we saw in the sand dunes.

I did have to endure a couple of hardships though – yep, coffee and cake at the Richmond Henty, and freshly baked scones in Narrawong thanks to local Di B.

Many thanks to all for making it a great experience!

Lothar



High Country (Feathertop and Razorback): 28 Mar to 1 Apr 2010

Walkers: Coralie, Fiona P, Janice

Janice and I were chauffeured across country Victoria by a lady well versed in good eateries. As we needed to make Harrietville by nightfall, our food stops were brief but we listened with delight to Fiona's detailing of where gourmands could be sated. That evening the Snowline Hotel Motel played host to us for passably good 'parmas' and a green Thai curry.

Come the wet morn and we were less than eager to attempt the stiff climb to Feathertop. After several coffees and lunch (of 'Vita weats'!) outside Bella's cafe, we began ascending Bungalow spur. The track was well contoured, but with our heavy loads progress was slow and steady.

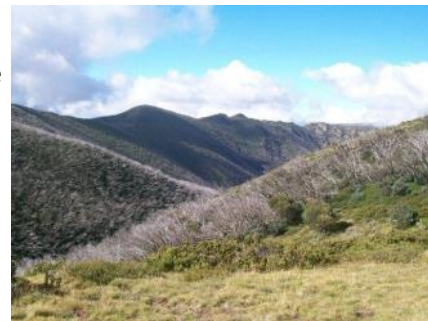
After views back down the valley at Picture Point, our world closed in somewhat as we made our way through the 2003 fire's regrowth. By the time we reached Tobais Gap, our clothes were wet from the constant exertion and high humidity which became rain at times.

Leaving the alpine ash forest, we climbed through snow-gum meadows to the remains of the Feathertop Bungalow Hut and the grassy area that was home to the old Federation Hut. Wearily we trudged the last kilometre and half to the new hut site as the clouds descended and the light faded.

With tents erected, the first task was to revive our spirits with a cup of hot soup. As the billy boiled we chatted to the other inhabitants; a cadet group and a lone walker we met in Harrietville. The 'sergeant-major' soon had his charges sawing logs for fire wood and within minutes a fire in the pot belly stove inside the hut was coaxed into life.

After a grey and cloudy morning, the skies brightened so after lunch Janice and I tackled the looming peak of Feathertop. It was a pleasant climb and as we ascended the clouds rose briefly so we gained uninterrupted views of the Buffalo massif, the Fainters and the High Plains proper and Mt Bogong.

A highlight of the afternoon for me was visiting the MUMC Hut at the top of the Northwest Spur. As a member of the MUMC in my university days, I had heard many tales of those who



had spent nights in its domed structure and was pleased to have paid it a visit at last. Back at camp, Fiona's plan of a quiet day reading her book was thwarted by a constant stream of day walkers and back packers. She was, however, a wealth of information about adventures of others in the area.

After one false start (some fool wanted to start walking at 12.30 pm; mumbled something about her watch being upside down!) we were away early on morning 3. It was a beautiful time to be walking; the low clouds and mist rising from the valleys added another dimension to the scenery. Although the track across the Razorback was relatively easy, progress was impeded by all the photo stops. As we neared the Hotham Road, we left the main track and headed towards the Bon Accord Spur.

Once we reached the turn off the track descended steeply and we were pleased to call a stop for lunch above the snow gum. A sign warning of 'steep curves' on the edge of the precipitous spur took our fancy and we posed for a number of photos beside it.

The track down to the Bon accord Hut site was even steeper and seemed to go on for much longer than the 1.9 km suggested in the notes. This hut was built in 1939 to service tourists to the Hotham Heights Chalet from Harrietville and for a number of years was the only route to Hotham. We could only imagine what the journey by horse and cart would have been like, especially when the track was covered in snow.

That night we camped by the Ovens River East Branch. After the long day, I'm not sure whether it was the tired thighs, the pummelled feet or the voracious mosquitoes that saw us seek the sanctuary of our tents early that evening.

In the early morning light, we followed the river downstream. With the rushing water, lush vegetation and ever changing light to entertain us, we were all too soon back in Harrietville and ready to tackle the journey home. Not, however, before a muffin and coffee at the Harrietville Ice-creamery.

Coralie

PS. Fiona took us to the delightful King River Cafe at Oxley for lunch on the return trip. If you are ever in the area, this cafe is definitely worth a visit.

