

Sunday 5th October: Four volcanoes

Vulcanologists: Rob (leader, record keeper), David (transport), Gwenda, Jim and Lothar (pastry detection)

The grand old Duke of York, he had ten thousand men.

He lead them up to the top of the hill and he led them down again.

And when they were up they were up.

And when they were down they were down.

And when they were only halfway up, they were neither up nor down.

This walk was very much like that, though with a smaller contingent and more hills. Mt Warrnambool was the first volcano to be climbed. Not a challenging peak, but given it's the source of Warrnambool's name, it seemed a worthwhile destination. The overcast sky meant the view from by its fire tower was "hazy, pretty good, but could have been better".

Mt Noorat was next. Its deep, steep crater was impressive, tempting, but deemed look-at-only. The climb to the trig was rewarded with another good view of all the surrounding countryside, including the walk's three other mountains.

Planning the walk had a setback when permission to climb the proposed volcano number 3 was denied. The volcanoes of Camperdown were a late substitute. After a visit to a bakery, we were sufficiently fortified for the gentle spiral walk to the top of Sugarloaf, a direct descent, and the crater rim ascent to Mt Leura. Another magnificent 360° view. Then the descent, with lunch eaten halfway down.

This left Mt Elephant for the afternoon, on its "open to the public" first Sunday of the month. The conquest was easy, despite the climb being 170 metres (compared to 110 for the others). Glorious sunshine had replaced the clouds and the superb view was enhanced by the brilliant fields of canola. Magnums among the gulls of Mortlake finished off this very pleasant way to welcome daylight saving.



The south to west view from Mt Warrnambool



October 8–9: Lilydale to Warburton and return bike ride

Cyclists: Helen R, Gwenda and Mabel

Bikes were stowed in the Warrnambool Rail Goods shed the night before for speedy loading into the goods van of the 05:30 am train to Melbourne. We had a hassle free transfer from the Southern Cross train to Flinders Street and then the train to Lilydale, arriving there at 10:30.

And from there the ride began. With a lunch stop along the way, we arrived mid afternoon in Warburton. We slept the night at the Alpine Retreat Hotel, comfortable inexpensive accommodation.

Reversed the route the next day, arriving home at 10:30 pm. An easy, in total, 80 km ride. This ride is worth repeating, to include a two-night stay, thus allowing a day for further riding or walking around the many tracks of the picturesque Warburton area.

Helen



After the practical instruction class near the Twelve Apostles, it's examination time for **Snake handling 101**. Which of these snakes would you pick up? Answers page 11.

Trip Reports

Saturday October 25: Durd-Durd from Mafeking

Walkers: Phil (leader), Adele, Alex, Brett (report contributor), Julie (Grampians BWC); DJ & Eric (visitors); Coralie, Rob (Warrnambool Bushwalkers); Marg (dual alliance); distance, 13km; medium/hard.

The Durd-Durd walk was advertised in the walks calendar as "A demanding climb up Stockyard Track from Mafeking to reach a remote peak that is the same height as Mt William" and a rating of Medium / Hard, with an altitude gain of nearly 650 metres over a distance of around 5 km followed by an equally steep descent on the way back again. This would normally be enough to scare away any sensible bushwalkers (and perhaps it did!) but fortunately it also had the effect of attracting a terrific turn-up of 10 somewhat crazy masochistic walkers who were really keen to take up the challenge!



A low grey blanket of unseasonal fog threatened to spoil the party as it blocked out any chance of views on the initial section of Stockyard Track as we set out from Mafeking, but it also provided pleasantly cool walking conditions as we made our way up the steady climb to the junction with the track along the top of Mount William Range that would eventually take us up to Durd-Durd. By the time that we reached Stockyard Saddle the fog had started to lift and we enjoyed superb views across the Serra Range as well as marvelling at the meadow-like patches of daisies, chocolate lilies and pincushions that lit up the saddle with their rainbow of colours.

The next section of the walk was by far the most punishing one with a brutally steep climb/scramble up to the top of Banksia Hill. The sweeping views from the lookout at the top were a great reward as we paused to catch our breath and the best part of the view was that we could now see Durd-Durd some 2 km to the north-east along the Major Mitchell Plateau and only about 60 metres higher than our current altitude: we decided to press on and have lunch at the top even though midday had already ticked over and a few tummies were starting to rumble with hunger after the big climb.

The top of Durd-Durd was marked with a large rock cairn and it was there that we enjoyed lunch with one of the most spectacular views imaginable—a 360-degree panorama that took in the likes of Mt William to the north, Mt Ararat and Mt Langi Ghiran to the east, Victoria Valley and Victoria Range to the west, Serra Range and Mt Abrupt to the south-west and even Mt Elephant through the lingering fog to the south-east, as well as agricultural land, lakes and wind farms in the distance and any number of jagged Grampians peaks and deep rugged gullies in the foreground.

We were supposedly at the same altitude as the summit of Mt William, though it still looked considerable higher than where we were standing and indeed there were a couple of other points on our section of the plateau that looked a little higher than Durd-Durd's supposed official summit. To satisfy our curiosity we walked a further kilometre along the track with GPS in hand to ensure that we really had reached the top of Durd-Durd. After a group photo near the cairn we made our long and at times tricky descent back down the track to the cars, marvelling at all of the great views and the stunning variety of beautiful Grampians wildflowers that changed frequently in composition as we walked through the various habitats along the way.

Upon reaching the cars and then making our way back to our initial meeting point at Moyston, all walkers agreed that the physical workout had been well worth it and that it had been one of the best Grampians walks that we had ever done ... and that we were all crazy and masochistic enough to willingly do it all over again some time in the not-too-distant future! Many thanks to all who participated for their great company and it was particularly nice to have Rob and Coralie along from Warrnambool Bushwalkers to make it a very sociable dual-club walk.



A PS from WB: Thank you, Phil, for a most enjoyable day with pleasant company, spectacular views, and abundant wildflowers.

November 7–9: Federation Weekend at Rawson (near Walhalla)

After a wonderful weekend walking in the beautiful Baw Baw national park Irene and I realised that you really have to make an effort to experience truly magnificent country. We arrived late Friday afternoon set up camp and then registered and met up with members of the Bayside group for dinner at the Stockyard, an amazing restaurant in the bush. Thank goodness we booked a table as the place was packed out by 6:30.

Early start Saturday morning to meet our leader for a beautiful 16 km walk. This included walking down to the Thompson river to the outlet of Horseshoe Bend Tunnel, then onto the Walhalla rail trail track, where magnificent gums and tree ferns thankfully shaded the track. Then onto



Thompson station where we caught the train to Walhalla. After lunch in Walhalla we walked along the Australian Alps Walking Track back to Thompson station and finishing back at Rawson.

On Saturday night we joined over 300 walkers and officials for dinner at the Rawson Resort (school camp) and were captivated by the guest speaker Tim Cope who talked about his adventure of riding a horse across Mongolia to the Danube. An amazing unassuming young man with a very dry sense of humour.

Our walk on Sunday was described as a true alpine walk above the snow line, through beautiful alpine vegetation including snow gums. We followed the main ski trail to the summit of Mt St Gwinear and then continued to Mt St Phillack, 4 km from the Baw Baw village.

This was a great weekend and we are both looking forward to next year's [Federation weekend](#) in October at Daylesford.

Linda



November 8: Circumnavigation of Tower Hill

Walkers: Rob (scribe), Dina and Jim

From just below the entrance we followed the lake shore on the eastern side of the crater. The Shines Springs track (recently re-cleared for a foot race) ceased being flat when it left the lake to join the foot track at the base of the final cliff. This track was followed until it reached the top and the road. The views and an echidna were the highlights along this stretch.

The “verge bash” for a few kilometres had more superb views and some yellow-tailed black cockatoos as a bonus. We then returned to the Reserve and followed a track along its western border: more good views, a well with its defunct windmill, some alpacas, and a seat, conveniently placed two-thirds-of-the-way around the walk.

Animal paths served us well for the rest of the walk, especially through the only prickly bit, the box thorns at the lowest part of the crater's rim.

All-in-all, it was an enjoyable 200 minute 10 km walk that looked at Tower Hill from many different perspectives to our usual walks there.



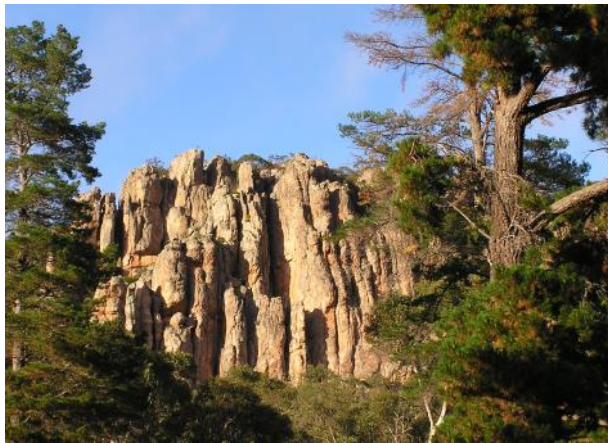
November 15–16: Mt Arapiles and the Black Range

The forecast promised showers, but when we pulled up at Mt Arapiles it was overcast but quite warm in the openness of the Pines campground. After lunch we walked to the base of “D Minor” and “Organ Pipes”, climbs that are popular with intermediate climbers. As there was little action there, we continued walking, ascending to the top plateau via a gully. From here there were great views to the north western walls of Arapiles and farms on the Wimmera plains. Picking up a cairned track we traversed to the central area and along the road to the summit, where Mitre Rock and Mitre Lake could be seen to the north. Lightning strikes in the distance encouraged us to retreat from the summit lookout and return to the campground via the very steep Pharos Gully.

After a long wait for Kate’s new kettle to whistle and boil, we enjoyed a cuppa under the pines near our tents. The sky looked threatening but that did not deter us; it was on to Declaration Crag to get up close to some nervous-looking climbers attempting some of its smaller slopes. After extensive preparation, one pair of climbers was away up the rock; the second group had much more trouble attempting the early moves of a grade 24 climb. Then the rain hit! Back at camp, Rob’s and my tents were in some danger of inundation. Luckily Rob was able to trace the stream back to a blocked drain alongside the road and repairs were undertaken to rectify the situation.

The Natimuk Pub was the chosen site of our evening meal. Unfortunately for us it was hopping! A local lad was having his dreadlocks cut off to raise money for breast cancer research and the whole town had turned out to witness this event. Eventually we found a free table in the bistro and devoured our meals when they finally arrived.

Because we had the services of Kate’s 4WD ‘beast’ we decided to visit the Black Range on Sunday. From the picnic ground, I found the fenced off rock art site easily enough but then walked right passed the entrance to the camp cave I had been telling them about all morning. After some blundering about on old



goat paths (we did sight the goats!) we stumbled across an overhang to rival the 'official' camp cave. With a little back-tracking we were able to get back on track and find the intended cave. We then followed the route for some time along the Black Range obtaining wonderful views of the Grampians to the east and Mt Arapiles to the north-west.

We returned the way we had come without further mishap, apart from a lost water bottle, and were all home by 6 pm.

Coralie



Trip Reports

Saturday, November 22nd: Timboon Rail Trail

Once again, a group of five walkers descended on Timboon to stretch their legs. The group set out from the Distillery car park, walking up the rail trail and checking out the new shelters on the way. The group split up, with some walking a little further to the trestle bridges, before all turned round to go back to Timboon and refreshments at the café.

Thanks Coralie, Jim, Lothar and Linda for a pleasant morning's walk.

Dina



Sunday, December 14th: Rail trail, Warrnambool to Koroit

Participants: Coralie, Helen A, Janice, Jim, Lothar (leader), Mabel

The day was expected to be about 21°C with a few spots of rain. This forecast proved to be accurate and we never needed to unfurl the raincoats. We kept up a brisk pace and only occasionally stopped for a breather, a drink of water, or a look at all the water birds. The 18 km walk was completed in 4 hours and we arrived at the Koroit station just after 12.

It was too early for lunch so we went to Poppies for large coffees. Only I had a vanilla slice. This didn't spoil my lunch. Shortly after we arrived back at the station the pizzas arrived and we, as well as 30 other rail trail helpers, including Linda and Irene, tucked into the free lunch. A range of pizzas, soft drinks, and a slice of fruitcake. All yum. Afterwards we stopped at Poppies again and purchased takeaway vanilla slices ... for afters.

The 2:05 bus was on time and we caught it for our free ride back to Warrnambool. A very pleasant day was had by all!

Lothar



Bliss!

December 6–8: Cape Bridgewater gourmet end of year do

Chefs: Lothar, Linda; partakers: Mike, Liz, Gwenda, David, Coralie, Dina, Rob; day-trippers Mabel and Jim

The initial plan for camping was not possible and we opted to stay at the Cape Bridgewater camp ground both nights. And a very good choice that proved to be—well worth repeating. The other change was courtesy of the very strong south-east wind: we walked in the opposite direction to that planned. It was mostly overcast, but no rain, making for pleasant walking conditions.

We arrive about 9:30 Saturday morning, put up tents, and had morning tea. Then we walked from the Blowhole carpark to The Springs campsite for our first gourmet treat: a lunch of prawns, champagne and some of the potato salad. Lothar cited our stability as the reason for not going to The Springs. The day's walk ended at the Bridgewater Lakes. Back at camp, Lothar roasted turkey and vegetables for a very delectable tea.

Sunday dawned windy and we eagerly gobbled down Linda's Egg McMuffins and Lothar's bircher muesli. Then the necessary calorie-depletion exercise started in earnest: the morning's walk from the camp over Victoria's highest coastal cliff, past the seals, and so to the Blowhole. The afternoon's walk went from Trewalla back to the camp. Much of the good work was undone by lunch and afternoon tea at the Cape Bridgewater café. The rest of the good work was undone by Lothar's chicken soup and Coralie's cherry tart for tea.

Pancakes and berries were Linda's treat for Monday's breakfast. Then, to facilitate the car shuffles and help Mike's sore knee, the party split: four walked from Trewalla to Cape Nelson, and the others did a there-and-back walk from Cape Nelson, where "there" was about where the two parties met, around morning tea time. Lunch at the Cape Nelson café.

A very enjoyable weekend. Thank you Lothar and Linda for the organisation and cooking, a few more hearty cheers to Lothar for the meals, thanks to the car shufflers, and thanks to the nibbles and other food providers.

Rob

