

## Trip Reports

### To the east of Childers Cove: Saturday 6 August

*Walkers: Rob (leader), Lothar, Dina, Helen A, Kate and Ian (visitor)*

The six of us started walking from the end of Stanhope Road and were soon carefully treading along the rocky cliff top. The views reinforced the memories of the most jagged forbidding beautiful coast scape around Childers Cove. Buttress Point optimised the amount of coastline visible from the one spot: stare out to sea, turn your head to the east, and the cliffs stretched for kilometres, turn your head to the west, the same.

Nibbles were had in a no-roof two-entrance cave. If we'd been a half an hour earlier, we might have been able to then scuttle round the cliff to the beach-walking component of the itinerary. However, Kate's sacrificial wet feet suggested that up-over-and-slide-down-on-one's-bum might be the more prudent approach.



As we walked along the beach, we noticed two humans and two dogs looking down from the cliff top. Heading up the track from the beach we noticed the same, in surfing gear, heading down. From the top of the cliff, there were the four again: a reasonable distance from the shore, one heading out and three heading in. The dogs were obviously good at the “follow your master” component of discipline but equally obviously had failed “stay 101”. One surfer shepherded them back to shore, where they stayed briefly before following him back into the water—several times this was repeated. We left them all heading out to sea and continued along the fence line.

After we reached the cars a little earlier than expected, Lothar suggested a quick stroll to the nearby pebbly beach, which neatly filled in the half hour before lunch.

After lunch we did the standard why-don't-I-do-this-walk-more-often westerly loop from the Childers Cove carpark. The route, despite some head-high bushes, is easy to follow and the views are great. The cracks in the ground near the edge of the cliff seemed the same size as last trip. This part of the walk was also supplemented with a bonus stroll, along the cliff top to another view spot. And while it was sad to say farewell to Childers Cove, our *Cheeseworld* coffee encounter beckoned.

Rob



## The Chimney Pots—a reconnaissance walk: Saturday 13 August

*Leader: Coralie; participants and track clearers: Rob, Dina & Kate*

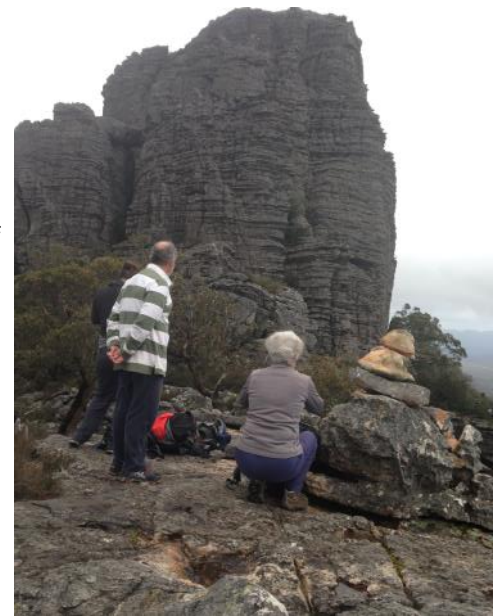
As I have been allocated as leader for the Chimney Pots walk for the Federation Weekend in October, it was thought prudent to check the current state of the track before then.

The walk started nicely enough but then rapidly ascended behind the rock stacks of 'the Pots', leaving us gasping for a breather. In May club members were involved in a working bee on this track but the wild wind experienced over winter had since caused a number of trees to fall and block the way. Without tools we put 'shoulders to the log' as we did our best to ensure a passage through the vegetation.

We detoured to the lookout but, as Kate's page 1 panorama shows, the weather did not encourage us to linger: back to the circuit route to find a more sheltered spot for lunch.

The descent to complete the loop was rapid, although a little more track-clearing skills needed to be employed along the way. After a quick visit to Strachans Campground and a chat to the ranger on duty we headed home through the Victoria Valley.

*Coralie*





## Trip Reports



### **Tower Hill wattle walk:**

**Saturday 27 August**

*Walkers: Rob (leader), Dina, Gwenda, David, Rhonda and visitors Ross and Daf*

We hastily sought shelter from the wind at the entrance to Tower Hill while the party arrived. Other than that, it was pleasant walking weather all morning. We followed the Water Edge Track to its end, with wattles, pittosporum and clematis the main flowers.

After a diversion towards the information centre (tick off koala and emu), Daf's advice improved my cavalier route of how to return to the exit road.

As we followed the Shine Springs Track we saw kangaroos, crimson rosellas, and a few swans nesting in the lake. Eventually, the flat walking had to end. We took our time on the ascent to look at the view and some more relics from the mud bash. After a couple more view stops along the rim, we reached the cars at noon.

We parted company with two going to pick up a trailer from Port Fairy (as it turned out, unbeknownst, from Kate's husband's sister's husband) and the others going to Koroit for the required coffee. *Rob*



## Wartook to McKenzie Falls Federation Weekend reconnaissance: Saturday 3 September

*Walkers: Mabel (leader), Rob; (Grampians) Graeme, Julie, Alex, Jane and Greg*

Mabel started her reconnoitring on the Friday and found, as expected, that the first part of her walk was underwater. As a result our happy band of walkers started from an improvised point on Roses Gap Rd to meet the official route about a third of its way along.

We passed a thryptomene plantation and a native fish farm before reaching Horsham's water supply channel, a slight impediment since our designated route was on its opposite bank. Fortunately a bridge had been built so a creek could cross the channel, and hence so could we. It was slow walking: each orchid—indeed most of the numerous flowers—had to face the lens of at least four cameras. The track was a little wet underfoot in spots and we sloshed our way to Zumsteins for lunch. The final leg to McKenzie Falls was also hampered by water: the precipitating type rather than the precipitated puddle-based type.

With the trip over and car owners reunited with their cars, we settled into our sites at Smiths Mill campground in readiness for Sunday's walk. Ian was already there. Janice arrived bearing wood. A fire was soon blazing, enhanced by contributions from other unused sites' fire places. As a result we went to bed quiet late: that it was very wet around Derrinallum was the main talking point.

*Rob*





## Deep Creek Federation Weekend reconnaissance: Sunday 4 September

*Guinea pigs: Rob (L-plated leader), Janice (L-plated whip), Mabel, Ian, Diane, Jenny (Geelong), Michael and Kylie (both Wimmera)*

We converged on Buandik Campground at 9:30 and drove four kilometres to the start of the Fortress and Deep Creek track. Wimmera Bushwalkers planned the routes for the Federation Weekend and Michael had offered to come to show us the finer points of this one. Even though not all of these could be put in practice with the creek as high as it was, his suggestions were very much appreciated by me, by the rest of the party, and no doubt will be by those doing the walk in a month's time.

The first kilometre was a sandy road followed by a reasonably distinct foot pad to the first creek crossing, achieved with more dry boots than expected. After a climb through light scrub to the top of a ridge, morning tea was at a superb view spot. We then visited the preferred view spot before descending to creek crossing number two. A reasonably good track was followed upstream to some falls where the traditional route passing them was deemed too slippery. Lunch was had in lieu of any definitive action.

After lunch we scrambled to the top of a ridge, found a simple descent to the creek above the falls and had a pleasant stroll upstream, occasionally deluding ourselves that we were on a track. A vegetation-free rock shelf sloped irresistibly up, and we soon reached the cliff tops overlooking the creek, Billywing Gorge and the Fortress—a good destination for the walk.

The return route cut off some of the creek walking, but the ensuing enthusiasm and easy walking had me miss the descent to creek crossing number 2. Soon rectified. We then puffed our way up to the ridge, dropped down to crossing number 1, and followed the track to the start. Faster than you can say “roo o’clock” everyone leapt into their cars and headed home.

*Rob*



### Thunder Point to Levy's Point: Saturday 10 September

*Hardy souls: Rob and Rhonda*

The outward leg followed the Merri River rail trail. A water-induced diversion along Wilson and Kennedy Sts returned us to the trail, unfortunately still between water barriers. We backtracked to Swinton St.

The return leg was along the beach, under increasingly grey clouds with a burst of rain after we passed Levy's Point. Despite that and the 1.5 km diversion, it was a pleasant morning with lots of temporary water features to look at. Possibly not so great if you were a frog.

*Rob*



### Port Fairy—Pea Soup and Griffiths Island: Saturday 24 September

Our party of five spent a couple of very pleasant hours on this easy coastal walk in Port Fairy, being especially interested in the works done to preserve the dunes in the Pea Soup area after the 2014 storm: the washed-out steps are now a ramp and are preceded by a substantial rock wall. The circuit of the island, with the light house as a feature, was its usual scenic self—how lucky we are to have all this on our doorstep! Thanks to Rhonda, Rob and two visitors, Loretta and Debbie, for an enjoyable morning.

*Dina*



## Trip Reports

### Lake Bellfield, Sundial Peak, Bugiga Campsite, Lake Bellfield: Sunday 18 September

*Walkers: Rob, Ross, and Mabel (leader)*

After a week of winds and heavy rain creating floods and landslides in our region we were very fortunate to have a beautiful day for walking. The Grampians looked refreshed with the wildflowers on show. The photographer in our group tried very hard to resist taking photos of every flower encountered but eventually gave in and took a few!

On the way up to Sundial Peak we met a large commercial party: 16 walkers and 2 guides. They were on a two day walk, many experiencing their first overnight camp having stayed the night at Bugiga Campsite.

We had great views of Mt Rosea and down into the Halls Gap valley and beyond. Lunch was at Bugiga Campsite but it was too cold to sit in the wind-tunnel of a shelter.

The track back up towards Sundial Peak from the Silverband Falls Road had even more cairns marking the beginning and had signs of frequent use. The riddle was soon answered when we met three young men coming down the track. It is used to access a rock climbing area and there is a cairn about half way up the track showing where to go to the rock climb.

A short drive into Halls Gap for ice cream and/or coffee completed a very enjoyable day.

*Mabel*

*The picture shows the large animal-proof cage under each camping platform, the access hatches to which have been permanently shut due to their finger trimming potential.*

