

The Mt Rosea Traverse: Sunday 2 April

Participants: Marg & Coralie

Keen for a one-way experience, Marg & I arranged a car at each end of the walk and commenced our journey at Borough Huts. The first 8.5 kilometres are on the Grampians Peak Trail so the walking is well defined and contoured.

We met no walkers on the lower slopes but after passing Sanderson Gap and, as we headed for the summit of Mt Rosea, several different walking groups were encountered. Some were completing the 3-day Bugiga Loop; others were enjoying a day walk in the mild autumnal weather.

We ate lunch on an open rocky area after summiting then continued along the ridgeline toward the metal bridge spanning a death-defying chasm. More parties heading to Borough Huts were passed. On the descent to the Mt Rosea carpark, some native flora in bloom were spotted and duly recorded for our report.

Coralie



Mts Noorat and Leura: Sunday 9 April

Despite the most awful weather an intrepid (foolish?) four set off to climb these two peaks. We did dally at the Camperdown bakery between ascents but to no avail: it was still raining. The tracks were short, mainly grassed and in parts moderately steep. The views would have been quite panoramic, as the destinations suggest, but for the rain. Great company though, thanks to Kate, Helen A. and Rob.

Dina

PS did I mention Mt Noorat was windy?



Colac to Gellibrand: Wednesday 19 April

Riders: Mabel, Jim, Mike, Rob, Geoff, Fred

The parts of the Old Beechy Rail Trail made for trains were most pleasant, the road sections less so. Gellibrand is the lowest point on the trail, and this was reflected in our times for the 27 km one-way cycle: 2½ hours there, 3½ hours back. It was a tough but enjoyable day. In poor competition to Hawkesdale's claim to fame was the historic concrete culvert (or large drainage tunnel depending on the sign you read). Other highlights were the magnificent forest between the 13 and 16 km markers and a bicoloured English/French vanilla slice at Gellibrand.

Rob



Trip Reports

Yarram Gap to Mt Christabel Homestead: Saturday 29 April

Walkers: (Warrnambool) Rob (leader), Ross, Lothar, (guest) Maxine; (Camperdown) Bob, Fiona; (Grampians) Graeme, Julie, Brett, and Marg.

Four cars and ten walkers from three clubs converged on Yarram Gap at 9:30. After a half hour doing an as-it-turned-out-not-quite-optimal car shuffle, we set off along the ridge south of the Gap—the first of the promised short climbs being immediately on leaving the cars, with the steepest one a little later. But on the whole, the many bumps along the ridge weren't much trouble and gave lots of excuses to stop and look at the plains to the east and the usually cloud-topped Serra Range to the west. Despite a threatening sky all day, there was only one short spell when parkas were needed by all but the leader, already sodden from his crucial role as sponge for drying the bushes and collecting spider webs.

A bulldozer track from the ridge took us most of the way to the open grass of the former Mt Christabel property. Geelong College considered the site for a remote campus in 1998 but decided against buying in 2000 because of access problems. The 129 ha property was sold to Parks Vic in 2004 so presumably the magnificent but unfinished Grampians-profiled building is about 15–20 years old. After admiring it, all that remained was to follow Lynch's Track to the main road and the cars.

All agreed the open ridge had been pleasant walking, possibly the most enjoyable type of bush walking. The amount of talking seemed to be inversely proportional to the gradient, and we were probably dawdling along the ridge—its 5 km took longer than I expected. None the less we satisfied the 6 pm deadline for Ross to be delivered home by all of two minutes.

Rob



Russell Creek: Saturday 1 May

On a chilly morning 11 walkers (plus one four legged critter) congregated at the Pig and Pie and set off for an easy walk round the environs of Russell Creek. Along the way, we took in the Wollaston Bridge, the amazing amount of weed in the Merri River, all the new Flood mitigation works and paving along the Russells Ck pathway, as well as setting off what seemed like hundreds of barking dogs. Coffee at the P&P afterwards was a fitting conclusion to a pleasant morning's stroll. Walkers were Lothar and Chris, David and Gwen (& Hugo), Rhonda, Mary, Ian, Jim, and visitors Kris and Scott.

Dina



Grampians Grape Escape weekend: 6–7 May

Participants: Lothar (leader, both days); Saturday: Dina, Marg; Sunday: Coralie, Rob.

As I (Lothar) was the only one staying overnight I didn't participate in any Grape Escape activities. The \$50 charge to get into the gated arena on the Saturday was instead invested in two absolutely delicious Indian meals at the Spirit of Punjab restaurant. The other participants came up just for the day. Both walks were quite solid workouts. Many thanks to all the participants for two excellent days!

Saturday: We walked the circuit from the swimming pool to the Pinnacle, and returned via the Wonderland Canyon, Splitters Falls (for lunch), and Venus Baths. On the way up the wind was ferocious and at the top it also started to spit...we didn't linger! The rain never really set in but we nonetheless wore our raincoats most of the way back.

Sunday: We met at the swimming pool then drove to the Mt Rosea carpark, the start of this clockwise circuit. We walked along the road towards Silverband Falls, turned right onto the old Burma Track [along which we were ignored by a large roo], before another right turn along the Borough Huts to Mt Rosea section of the Grampians Peaks Trail. From Rosea's summit we took the normal route to the carpark, stopping for lunch in a sheltered spot on the way down. The weather was much better than the day before but we again wore raincoats off and on.



The Sheep Hills Track to Mt William: Saturday 14 May

Participants: Coralie (leader), Lothar, Jim, Ross and Rob

From the road, we descended to a small creek and continued walking through open forest to Fyans Creek. We all successfully negotiated the crossing without wetting any boots and began to climb more seriously. The track was well-contoured so we made steady progress.

While admiring the stunning views of Cathedral Rock across to the south, Lothar ventured a little too close to the edge of the track. Without warning, the track crumbled beneath his feet and he was pitched down the steep slope. Fortunately, a tree close to the track saved him from catapulting to the valley floor. To the group's surprise, a few small tears to his walking pants were the sum of the damage sustained.

We emerged from the track onto the road at the Mt William carpark and debated the merits of ascending further. To gain a better view of the Serra Range we decided to head up the sealed road a short distance. This was the steepest gradient of the trip but when the clouds descended on the summit we returned to the carpark for lunch.

Here we were entertained by a flame robin and a cyclist attempting to ride past the gate. In cold conditions, we traced our steps and returned to the car—about 13 km walking in all. We missed the closing time at Lothar's favourite coffee shop in Dunkeld but were still able to enjoy a hot drink at a rival café before continuing homeward.

Coralie



GSWW—Pritchards to Moleside: Saturday 20 May

Ramblers: Rob (leader), Ross, David and brother Peter, Glenda and her Peter, and guest Chris L.

After the necessary car shuffle, we set off at 9:45. The overcast sky did not leak during the day, rather to the contrary it gave way to occasional bursts of sunshine. The Great South West Walk between Pritchards and Moleside Camps makes for a pleasant stroll giving frequent glimpses of the river and meeting it again at Saunders Landing and Wild Dog Bend, our lunch spot. Our endpoint, the 400 mm high Moleside Creek Falls, was reached at 2 pm.

A flock(?) of teenage emus and an impressively antlered stag were the highlights of the animal life for one carload. As for the walk itself, one wallaby scurrying off into the bush was the sum total of furry animals. Several blood suckers were removed from legs. There was much discussion about how the vegetation changed over the 12 km as well as “what gum is that?” There were few flowers but many fungi. It was a nice day out, with coffee on the way home at the Heywood milk bar—possibly the only cafe open.

Rob



Chimney Pots track maintenance: Saturday 27 May

Navvies: Rob, Ross, David, Ian, and (Grampians Walking Tracks Support Group and foreman) David W

Being track maintainers rather than shepherds the brilliant red dawn was of no concern. From Tower Hill after our 7:30 start, the Grampians stood out clearly on the horizon, unlike two other trips there this month. We arrived at the Chimney Pots at the anointed hour of 9:30, collected our hoes, spades, secateurs and Hi-Viz vests, and set off on our day of drain enhancement, step building, and vegetation snipping.

We were soon spread out over a kilometre or so, beavering away at whatever our equipment was meant to do. Miraculously we converged near the highest point of the circuit for a late lunch just as the howling gale of a cold front passed through. There were a few spots of rain after lunch as we scuttled up to the lookout—we did of course have to check that the vegetation wasn't encroaching that side track.

We were back at the cars by four. Coffee and crumbly yo-yos at Dunkeld and a reasonably good lightning display for the rest of the ride home saw us back in Warrnambool just after 6 pm but before the rain promised by the dawn. Thank you navvies for your work.

Rob



Trip Reports

Lake Elizabeth: Saturday 3 June

Walkers: Rob (leader), Linda, Viviane, David and Gwenda.

None of us had been on this walk before. It was a most enjoyable day with magnificent ferns, magnificent trees, and magnificent reflections in the water. The town of Forrest—a mere 100 minutes from Warrnambool—has become a mountain bike mecca with 16 trails. And so navigation for us was straightforward: follow Trail 2 from West Barwon Dam to the Lake Elizabeth carpark, follow the tourist track to, around, and back from the lake, and return to the cars along Trail 3, as per Geelong Bushwalking Club's *Walking the Otways*.

Fortunately no one brought golf clubs, which ruled out one of the 11 'verboden' at the Dam. Coffee at the quirky *Corner Store* (disappointing carrot cake) pre-walk and the *Brewery Café* post-walk. Driving into the rising and setting sun was the only downside.

Rob



South W'bool Walk: Saturday 10 June

Walkers – David (leader), Linda, Lothar, Chris, Mary, Ross, Jim, Rob, and visitor Dennis.

Nine walkers left the Beach Kiosk on Pertobe Road at 9.05 am in drizzly conditions. Thankfully, the drizzle soon stopped and the weather cleared as we walked along the Beach Promenade path towards the breakwater.

We walked to the end of the breakwater, checking the fishing activity of the fishermen as we strolled along—the only fish seen caught was a small sand whiting. After climbing up the over-sized steps at the end of the breakwater, we walked along the parapet back and joined the path alongside the road of the causeway. The first phase of the breakwater was built in 1890 but we noted the erosion to the concrete blocks of the parapet wall to the section of the 1914 extension.

We crossed the footbridge leading towards Pickering Point and followed the path along the cliffs towards Thunder Point, where we stopped to enjoy the view. From Thunder Point, we followed the coastal path, part of the Mahogany Walk, first up to the Trig Point lookout, then continued along the path to the Far Rocks. At our further-most west spot, we stopped for a break, admiring the seascape. We discussed the fate of the large whale that had been decaying on the rocks several years ago.

We returned on the same path for a short distance, and then made a left turn into the scrub and passed the sewerage treatment works. We continued north until we reached Elliot Street and followed it until Coramba Court and followed the Merri River downstream to cross the Stanley Street bridge. Then we followed the river upstream on the rail trail amid great discussion as to the history of the rail line to the Breakwater.

We followed the path around Lake Pertobe while admiring the prolific birdlife. At the Gilles Street crossing we took the path between the two lakes and then crossed the footbridge leading to the playground. We finished the 10.3 km walk about 11.30 am at the Kiosk and then had coffee.

David



Back of Lorne: Saturday 24 June

Walkers: Lothar (leader), Jim, Linda, David, Ross, Rob and guests Ken and Shirley.

I always look forward to doing this walk in the Otway National Park. It has tremendous tall timber, waterfalls, a canyon, a clifftop lookout, and a lake ... and one or two very steep bits. And in all the years I've led the walk I've never seen any Otway leeches here. So it's THE perfect walk for me.

We met near KFC before 7 am and motored in 2 vehicles to Lorne. Here David joined us with his car. We left one vehicle at qDos and then drove to the Sheoak picnic area. After bikkies and a cuppa we headed to Swallow Cave. Here some briefly donned raincoats but the drizzle only lasted a minute. The rest of the walk was shower free. Sheoak Falls (pictured) followed, and then hills to the Castle Rock lookout.

We returned to the Sheoak Picnic area for lunch and another cuppa, then headed through tall ferns and trees (pictured) along soggy paths to Henderson Falls. Always cute! Then on to the Canyon. We took our time getting there as there were lots of fungi to photograph.



On reaching Phantom Falls we decided to save a bit of time and skip the walk past the lake (and also save us getting wet feet from a creek crossing). We therefore headed straight to qDos, exiting the bush directly opposite it.

Whilst the drivers picked up the vehicles we indulged in flat whites and cakes, artwork, etc. It was about 4ish when we headed back to Warrnambool. Thank you all for a great day out!

Lothar

