

Wannon and Nigretta Falls: Saturday 6 October

*Grampians Bushwalking Club: Graeme (leader 📷), Yvonne, Greg, Alex, Brett 📷
WBW: Dina, Lothar 📷, Gwen, Mary, Rob 📷, Shirley, Ken, Rosalie, Maxine*

Somewhere past Penshurst a phone rang in the back of the car. A minute later, a phone rang in a different backpack. A minute later Maxine's phone rang. Do you think somebody's trying to contact us was our collective thought? Has the other car had a problem? No, something much more significant: they were going to stop for coffee at Hamilton and wondered where we were. As if they could last that long! At Tarrington Lothar flagged us down at the Catalpa coffee shop. Caffeine sated we continued to Wannon Falls, the meeting spot with the Grampian Bushwalkers.

An hour to do the 2.3 km return walk to the alternative lookout is indication enough that some orchids were found. That speed was like lightning compared to the 45 minutes for 867 metres at Nigretta Falls: photographers were of course to blame. Still it was a pleasant day, just perfect for lolling around, though rumbling stomachs were starting to make their presence felt. Solved, by heading to Lake Hamilton for lunch.

The subsequent 65 minutes 4.3 km walk around the Lake showed we could manage a reasonable pace if there weren't too many photographic distractions. Homeward bound, one car stopped again at Catalpa, the other went via Byaduk Caves, impressive holes in the ground that were a first for the passengers.

And so ended a very enjoyable day. We had invited ourselves along to this Grampians Bushwalking Club walk, so all the more reason to thank them for putting up with us.

Rob



The Warrnambool Roc: Sunday 7 October

Paleo-zoologists: Rob, Coralie, Herb

The Roc [1], as is well known, was a gigantic bird capable of snatching elephants from the ground. Such megafauna is thought to have died out long ago, although there is now mounting evidence that such creatures still exist beneath the surface of the earth. Examples of such evidence are a giant rat under New York's Centennial Park [2], both a numbat and a goat under Perth [3], and a dinosaur under Vancouver Island [4].

The most likely time to catch a glimpse of an underground roc is at the advent of daylight savings when the missing hour means it may fail to return to its underground lair in time. Hence the timing of this expedition.

Given the expected extent of the exploration—it turned out to cover 33 km—the trio opted to use bicycles for their search.

Despite some deficiencies in the ability of the equipment to detect talons and feathers and some failures of the search technique, the results to the right would appear to prove that Warrnambool is not only built on rock but is also built above a large roc-like creature.

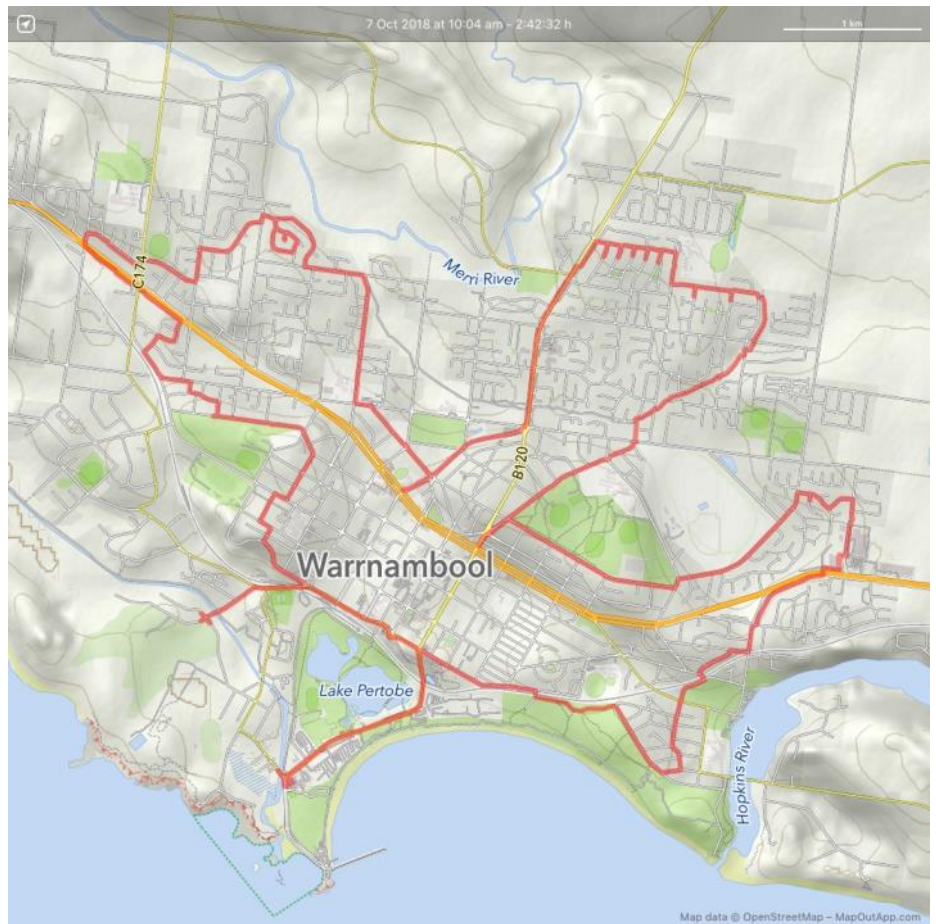
Rob

[1] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roc_\(mythology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roc_(mythology))

[2] https://belindie.wordpress.com/2018/08/27/manrattan/amp/?_twitter_impression=true

[3] <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-19/perth-cycle-group-fight-club-creates-strava-map-numbat/9562696>

[4] <http://www.theage.com.au/technology/technology-news/gps-doodles-and-the-art-of-turning-exercise-into-an-adventure-20160215-qmv0tm#ixzz40O8GhfsW>



Saints and Sinners bike ride: 13–14 October

*Riders: (WBW) Coralie, Mike, Liz, Rob, Marg,
(Wednesday riders) Lester, Heather, Richard and Julia*

For some the annual pilgrimage to St Arnaud starts on the Friday afternoon. The drive to St Arnaud is 2 hours 40 minutes (according to Google Maps) so leaving at 2 pm meant we were setting up tents at 5 pm in the local caravan park.

At 9 am the next morning we registered at the Town Hall and were on our way soon after 9.30 along the St Arnaud-Ararat Road to the small township of Navarre, 39 km away, for lunch. A 23 km loop to Barkly was available for those who wanted it.



All that remained was lunch at the RSL Hall and the awarding of certificates of completion. This is a wonderful weekend for the cycle enthusiast and it would be good to see more club members join us in 2019. Pencil in 12–13 October.

Coralie



After a delightful lunch of chicken and salads we pushed into the wind for the return journey to St Arnaud. In the evening a meal of roast meats and dessert was provided for the riders at the local RSL Hall.

The same venue catered for Sunday's breakfast. After that, we rode to Stuart Mill, 34 km south of St Arnaud for a water stop. We returned via a shorter slightly different route, riding 59 km all up.



We pedalled past the historic pebble Carapooee Church (for the Saints) on the one day of the year that it holds a service. The Royal Hotel (for the Sinners) provided Saturday's post-ride coffee.

South Warrnambool: Sunday 14 October

Walkers: Gwenda, Jim, Lothar, Chris, David, Rosalie and Terry (prospective member)

After a leisurely 10 am start, we walked around Lake Pertobe to Thunder Point and Shelley Beach, back along the cliff tops to the Merri River, around the Breakwater, and finished at the Kiosk on Pertobe Road where we enjoyed coffee. A walk of about 9km.

Gwenda



GSWW—Cobboboonee to Fitzroy camps: Saturday 20 October

Walkers: Rob (leader 📷), David 📷, Lothar 📷 and (GBW) Gareth

Our meeting spot, the Heywood bakery, had a couple of trays of yesterday's custard puffs for sale cheap. Just like last time we went there, with the same inevitable tasty purchase. There was one exciting section on the dirt roads through the forest to the start of the walk: newly spread but presumably not properly compacted gunge had not reacted well to the overnight rain. We returned a different way.

Two unopened umbrellas scared off the slight drizzle at the start and the rest of the day had good weather for walking: occasionally overcast, occasionally sunny. We met a pack carrying walker at the Cobboboonee campsite with his tent pitched in the two-sided shelter. He mentioned the rain and leeches the day before.

The walk is entirely through open forest, superficially much the same, but every now and again the species changed. Enough flowers to keep us looking for things: even some boronias, and towards the end, a large patch of purple flowering melaleucas. One snake, a blue-tongue lizard and lots of skinks were our reptilian sightings, not to mention an impressive number of ant holes. Most of the marsupials were seen while driving.

We made it back to the Heywood bakery with 12 minutes to spare, had coffee, and, as we got up to leave, David noticed blood under his chair. There was blood under mine too, plus the leech that had dropped off David's leg and been accidentally squashed by my chair leg .

Thanks to David and Gareth for the car shuffling. Whether they ever get the mud off is anyone's guess.

Rob



Twelve Apostles to Princetown: Saturday 27 Oct

After arranging car shuffles, 7 walkers were at the 12 Apostles Visitor Centre to start our walk. Of course, we quickly first checked out the iconic vista of the 12 A's especially as the throngs of tourists had yet to arrive. Then the group moved on to the Gibson Steps, which we all navigated comfortably, for a view of the coast line from the beach. We then moved on to continue the walk along the cliff tops, being fairly substantially buffeted by the wind, though happily there was no rain to contend with. The path was well utilised with umpteen teenagers (two buses of Monash University Sustainable tourism students) walking in the opposite direction, as well as a few other smaller groups of walkers. The walk concluded at the Gellibrand River, where we farewelled Coralie (who was going on to a further walk), with the 6 remaining walkers lunching at Peterborough. Thanks to Coralie, Jim, Lothar, David, Rob and visitor, Annette, for an enjoyable morning's walk.

Dina



Framlingham Forest: Saturday 3 November

Walkers: Gwenda, Rob, Lothar, Mary, Dina, Linda, and David (leader).

Seven of us drove the 20 km to the Framlingham Forest under skies giving mixed messages on the weather. After our car juggling, we started from the south end of the Warroneung Track and walked 1 km to the Hopkins River, where we briefly left the track and walked to the edge of the steep bank for a good view of the river below us. We continued on the Warroneung Track, roughly following the course of the river and catching various good views of the river. The forest has good stands of Manna gum, Messmate stringybark and blackwoods, with a thick undergrowth of bracken fern.

After about 6 km, we left the Warroneung Track and followed a rough track that took us through scrubby tea tree and small eucalypts, again following the river which gave us another spectacular view of the river down below and the Hopkins valley.

The Prickly tea-tree (*Leptospermum continentale*) was in full flower with a white profusion of flowers. Wildlife was elusive but we saw one koala and caught glimpses of black wallabies as they rustled thru the tall bracken. David was lucky to have a leech catch onto his trousers! The shrill screech of numerous sulphur crested cockatoos broke the quietness of the bush.

Our walk ended back on the Framlingham Forest Road where we collected our vehicles and made for the Wangoom Store for a coffee and cake. The 10.6 km walk was made in good walking conditions with the interruption of one shower of rain, when luckily we found shelter. It was a pleasant walk in nice bush surroundings and we give thanks to the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust for their permission to walk through the Forest.

David



West Barwon Dam to Lake Elizabeth: Saturday 10 November

Ramblers: Rob 📷, Lothar 📷, David, Linda

Our first stop was earlier than expected—along the Allansford–Cobden Road, just after we passed a man taking his parrot for a walk. Fox ahead? Dog? Cat? Koala!!! It sat in the middle of the road trying to out-stare us but eventually moved on. Such behaviour is not as rare as one might think: I came across a road-sitting koala two days later, west of Peshurst, the same day as my daughter chased a mother and bub from a Timboon road. Our second stop was for coffee at Forrest. That was soon followed by the third and final stop at West Barwon Dam where cars were abandoned.

Navigation is simple: follow mountain bike route 2 to the Lake Elizabeth car park, then the track to the lake. Walk around the lake and have lunch, or just have lunch. David and I saw a platypus in Lake Elizabeth. Those of you who know the power my camera has over birds will not be surprised that it caused the platypus to submerge. Back the same way with the exception that route 3 is followed from the car park to the dam.

It had rained overnight and the forest was looking its best. Lots of tree ferns. Olearia were the predominate flower, but the occasional purple prostanthera were both showy and defied the auto-focus capabilities of my Panasonic camera. One carnivorous snail was found on the track. David was on a hat-trick in the blood-sucking department, but alas he failed—no leeches were seen.

Rob



Port Fairy and Griffiths Island: Saturday 17 November

Walkers: Dina, Lothar, Chris, Jim, Rob and visitors Julie and Sharon.

On a perfect day (well, there was only a slightly cool breeze), seven walkers converged on Port Fairy for a coastal walk. Chris's decision to walk around just Griffiths Island expedited car shuffles hugely—thanks Chris!! The walk started at the western end of Port Fairy just past Phillip St, and proceeded along the beach or just behind it, till we reached the Island, which we circled anticlockwise, (apparently we should have gone clockwise, said Lothar and Chris). Onto the wharf (the new building there is now open and doing quite some business), over the bridge, and so to East Beach. We met a moderate number of other walkers along the way, and they all had very friendly dogs which we were obliged to greet! Coffee at Charlie's concluded our morning's exertions.

Dina



Tarrington hay bale appreciation: Wednesday 21 November

Hay bale appreciators: Rob 📷, Coralie, Mike 📷, Diane, Helen R, Herb, Michael

One of our Wednesday morning riding groups went further afield than usual. We drove to about 8 km west of Peshurst before starting on what turned out to be a 58 km upsidedown woodpecker route to see the hay bales that are part of Tarrington's Lanternenfest. Bitumen all the way. No vicious hills. Considering how overcast the day was, the views of the Grampians weren't too bad. Twenty km to Tarrington for hay bale appreciation, coffee, and watching a koala wandered across the Hamilton Highway. Our second stop was at the Hamilton Kart area, lunch for some, a rest for the others. We almost lingered there too long but most made it back to the cars before a sprinkle of rain. Lunch for others at Peshurst, followed by a bit of rain on the way home. A pleasant day in new territory.

Rob



Cape Bridgewater: Friday 30 November to Monday 03 December

Revellers: Lothar, Jim, Rob, Dina, Mike, Liz, Linda, Coralie, Mabel.

Our End of Year base camp returned to the camp ground at Cape Bridgewater, but not to the big kitchen. We had the smaller kitchen and all agreed it was quite adequate for our needs, which included, for some, a quieter, drier, less tent-flapping spot to snooze. From that you may conclude that it was a windy weekend with one wet night. That didn't daunt the walkers: five half-day walks of about 9 km each.

All the favourite meals were there, lovingly prepared by Lothar and Linda: egg and bacon muffins, pancakes, prawns and potato salad, turkey and vegies, paella, and fruit salad. And a few kiosk delights as well.

After a Friday late-afternoon arrival for most, we had tea at the kiosk, followed by a short beach stroll.

Saturday had the traditional Blowhole to Bridgewater Lakes walk for the champagne and prawn lunch with a slightly more wobbly return walk afterwards. We learnt that a table cloth is more of a hindrance than a help in strong winds.

Sunday had two of the usual legs: Blowhole to Bridgewater and Bridgewater to Trewalla Camp, separated by lunch at the camp ground.

Our choice of route was more cunning on Monday: most of the wind was avoided by going from Cape Nelson to Yellow Rock. Lunch in Portland since the Cape Nelson café had not yet reopened under its new management.

A fitting end to the year thanks to Lothar's planning and organising.



Port Fairy to Warrnambool, Saturday 8 December

Participants: Coralie, Lothar, Maxine, Rob, and return driver Chris

We assembled at Thunder Point at 1 pm and then drove in one vehicle to the surf club at Port Fairy. We had hot drinks at Charlie's, then Chris took the car, and the rest of us commenced our walk, just before 2 pm. There wasn't much sand to walk on initially but once we left the main beach we had plenty. Low tide was still 5 hours away but the walking was on firmish sand. The wind was blowing over our right shoulders and made the going easier.

"Hours" later we picked out a rest stop at the back of the Cutting...ie out of the wind. Further along we picked out a spot for dinner...again out of the wind.

There were many birds about on the first half of the walk. We were successful in spotting a number of hooded plovers. We also saw a number of dead albatrosses(?), a couple of dead seals and a dead fairy penguin. Surprisingly we didn't encounter much rubbish.

Six hours after starting, we arrived, tired, back at Thunder Point. We didn't need the head torches after all. Rob's app said we'd done 23.8 km....mmm, it felt like it! Thanks to all for a great afternoon!

Lothar

