

Beachwalk to Rutledge Cutting: 4 February

Walkers: *Tony, Marcia, Ken, Trevor and Marg*

I delayed finalizing my plans until the last minute only to find that at least one riparian farmer was opposed to us trampling through his property at this time of the year. It is a hot dry summer and he worried about the risk of fires sparked by touching his electric fences and the presence of snakes along the river. I agreed to postpone our proposed walk from the Hopkins Falls to Blacks Falls on Mt. Emu Creek.

Undaunted we opted for a leisurely walk along the beach from Thunder Point aiming to be at Rutledge Cutting for lunch. Knowing our fickle climate, we had raincoats, sunhats, and sunscreen ever ready, and after a healthy slice of fresh banana cake we set off at 10 am. Walking across the cliffs we were met by a great panoramic seascape which is on our doorstep but one we may take for granted.

It remained overcast for most of the day. We had the beach practically to ourselves with the waves breaking on the shore and flocks of seagulls flying overhead.

Hunger got the better of us and we paused for lunch with Rutledge Cutting in sight where we found a homemade platform of wooden spars built up on the sand.

The return walk brought us back to Thunder Point at 3 pm.

The track is one most of us has walked several times before but in different seasons and weather it remains a favourite local day stroll.

Thank you to the group for your good company.

Marg.

Halls Gap Jazz Festival weekend: 10–11 February

Walkers: Steph, Diane, Lothar, Linda, Irene, Peter, Judy and Kids; visitors: Doug, Anne, and Marcia, and Dennis

Friday night saw the arrival of Linda and Irene to the Halls Gap Caravan Park. Tea was had at the Pub, it was one of the best pub meals I've ever had. We left our car back at the campsite and walked to the marquee to listen to the Jazz. To our pleasant surprise most of the other listeners were of the grey nomad variety. The music was great and we heard it into the wee hours of the morning.

Saturday morning saw the arrival of Steph, Diane and Lothar. The temperature was rising quickly so we abandoned all thoughts of the original walk. We all wanted to walk somewhere, preferably close by, Splitters Falls seemed ideal, a short 2 hour return. We set off at a very slow pace, it was extremely hot plus we had not seen each other for ages so we had heaps of gossip to catch up on. We passed Venus Baths where a few kids were whizzing down on plastic bags, having an absolutely fabulous time, we were all jealous of their activity UNTIL.... we found our own rock pool. With the ever present "Gentleman" standing guard, we stripped off and with squeals of delight plunged into the icy waters.

The return to the base camp was a much cooler experience, which allowed us to be in a relaxed mode for the evening. Not long after our return Peter, Judy and the kids arrived in their van to join in with the evening activities. What with the eating of Pizzas for tea, the drinking of quite a few bottles of good red and the dancing to the great music we had a fantastic time.

After a refreshing sleep and an early morning wake up call (Ed: thanks to Dennis!#?%), the cheerful little group lead by our one and only Diane headed for the Elephants Hide. For those of us who are not mountain goats the steep climb was exhilarating, an hour later as we punched the air in 'Rocky' fashion we reached Mackey's peak and conquered it.

We all agreed that this should be an annual event and bookings are now open.

Linda & Irene



Aire River, Cape Otway Lighthouse, Rainbow Falls: 17 February

"Glenaire Beach/Aire River to Cape Otway Light House via Rainbow Falls (5 hrs 1 way) or Cape Otway Lighthouse to Rainbow Falls (2 hrs return). Day &/or Overnight"

Walkers: John & Glenda, Doris, Lothar (leader)

We drove to Port Campbell and met Doris near the old cemetery. On the way to Aire River John discovered that Doris had also spent many years in the area we were travelling through. Between them they knew most of the farms and families along the way.

24Km from Lavers Hill we turned towards the Otway National park and made our way towards the Aire River. We parked at the dilapidated bridge, had morning tea, and then set off. It's a lovely spot - you can walk, fish, canoe & bike ride there - a great place for an extended stay or maybe even a Christmas breakup.

The track was sandy and uphill for about 20 minutes but then levelled out. From the top of the hills we had excellent views inland towards the river valley, and towards the sea. After about an hour we stopped and enjoyed the clifftop views across the ocean and towards Rainbow Falls in the distance. We then returned to the car. On the way back I almost stood on a snake. The snake and I both jumped back very smartly!

The drive to Cape Otway lighthouse (or www.lightstation.com if you like) was only about 15 minutes. We had a rest and lunch there before walking towards Rainbow Falls. We passed the old cemetery and had some glorious views along the way. After about an hour we left the main track and headed down to the beach. After a few hundred metres (to the left) we came to the falls.

Even though we've had a dry summer there was still plenty of springwater spilling over the top. We had a long rest and watched starfish and fish in the rocky pools.

We then returned to the lighthouse and drove home.

A great outing!

Lothar



Western Otways - Cape Volney area: 4 March

Walkers: Glenda, John (leader), Doris, Irene, Linda, Viviane, Lothar

Doris, a new member from Cobden, joined us at Port Campbell. After that we lunched at the "Talk of the Town" café in Princetown, then drove a further 15km along the Great Ocean Road to Wattle Hill. The walk started from there, out along a four wheel drive track to Cape Volney on the coast. Occasionally we made short detours on side paths through the scrub to the cliff top where we saw magnificent views of the rocks beaches below. We also had a view down on a nice bushed catchment on the inland side during the middle of the walk.

Finally the vehicle track descended close to the beach where the hard part began. The vertical height of the cliffs is only 130m but the footpath is about 1km of winding ascent, overgrown with bracken (over Viviane's head in places). We made it to the top about 2 hours after leaving Wattle Hill.

Normally the last leg is to walk along the road back past "Moonlight Retreat" to Wattle Hill. However because most people had not seen Moonlight Head we had earlier left one vehicle at the cliff top. So we drove to Moonlight Head and walked through She-oaks to the Gable lookout, then (after a bit more driving) did the return walk down the steps and along the beach to the old ship anchor. We all might have gone home a bit tired but Glenda's legs ached worst on Tuesday, as usual.

John (organiser and author - forgot to ask someone else to write it!)

