

Borough Huts to Halls Gap via Mt Rosea: 20–21 April

Walkers: Brian & Glenda, Bill & Fiona & Bayden, Liz & Mike, Lothar (leader)

Rosea Campground to The Pinnacle, via Lakeview Lookout, 6.2 km

Bill, Fiona and Bayden were having breakfast, and would return directly to Warrnambool after a full day walking yesterday. Lothar, Brian and Glenda, Mike & Liz left the Rosea Campground at about 9am, and we started walking NE on a gently rising track. We walked through an open forest of Stringybark Eucalyptus trees, with an understory of Banksia, and Grasstrees, and smaller plants, including *Correa reflexa*, which was in flower. Within a kilometre we were climbing a steeply rising stony track. On several occasions we stopped to admire the view to the west (and to catch our breath).

Congratulations to Lothar as he carried a full overnight pack, while we only carried a few requirements in a day-pack. (It is amazing to these new walkers, how often when Lothar leads us, we start with a steep climb).

Once on the top of the Wonderland Range the walking was easier. We arrived at Lakeview Lookout for a spectacular view of Lake Bellfield and the Mount William Range to the east. We resumed our walk to the Pinnacle, which included some steep sections through Devil's Gap.

At the Pinnacle, Liz's nerves were tested as Mike walked out on the Nerve Test. The Pinnacle was very busy with several groups of young people as well as family groups enjoying the views and warm clear weather. We stopped for a well-earned rest, and had a cup of coffee or tea, fruit cake (thanks Glenda) and muesli bars. We took photos at the Pinnacle to record our achievement.

The Pinnacle to Wonderland Car Park (2.5 km), then to Halls Gap, (3km)

The walk down to Wonderland car park through Silent Street, past Cool Chamber and through Grand Canyon was slow and measured as there were many groups of walkers travelling both ways, and transversing the ladders and walkways.

The track from Wonderland Car Park to Halls Gap follows Stony Creek NE to Halls Gap, through Stringybark and Grampians Gum trees with bracken and ferns along the creek. The track is also close to the road so at times we could hear motor bikes roar through the bends, and at other times we could hear the tinkle of water tumbling over rocks in the creek. We took a short detour to Splitters Falls, where a trickle of water fell 10 metres into a pool, however the falls would be spectacular in winter. An easy down hill track led us past the Elephant's Hide; a spectacular sheet of rock rising in a plane to the East. We stopped for a while at Venus Baths, where there are shallow and deep pools carved out of the rock surface, and would be very inviting on a hot day. Several other walkers were cooling their feet, and assured us that the water was cold.

An easy walk through an open forest dominated by Manna Gums and bracken returned us to Halls Gap car park by about 1.30pm. Brian and Mike returned to Rosea Campground to retrieve Brian's car, and then we had lunch and a visit to the ice cream shop. Thanks to Lothar for a very enjoyable walk over two days.

Mike & Liz

Lederderg Gorge 11-12/5

Walkers: Diane (leader), Lothar, Heaton, Steve, Pat and Ron plus Ian and Luka (Geelong).

Friday afternoon Di drove Heaton, Lothar and myself through a beautiful sunset to Ballarat, for a big meal at the Criterion, then on to Ballan through a light fog to a *small* cabin. After explaining why Di was spending the night with 3 blokes, we turned the floor to sleeping quarters. The fog was to set in and turn Steve and Pat's trip into a 5 hour ordeal.

The caravan park had a large red texta note in the Men's: "*Setting facilities alight will not be tolerated. I know who you are.*" So we hid our Trangia's.

Saturday, we met Steve, Pat, Ian and Luka at O'Brien's Crossing. Di was concerned that water would be scarce and organised a drop which we could pick up a short distance from our camp site, must have been too early in the morning for me, I seemed to have some trouble understanding the intricacies of this manoeuvre, but it worked really well.

We waited three quarters of an hour for the *other couple* and reluctantly decided to leave without them.

A gentle and slow walk up Bier's Back Track to Gibble Track through dry and grey bush, broken by the flashes of the colourful winding line of packs and the cacophony of sulphur crested cockatoos. Vandals had ripped out the track signs but orientation confirmed our position. I wonder is there a direct correlation between vandalism and the proximity to car (4WD) access? We scrambled down the track, very steep and loose to the Tunnel.

The dry conditions allowed us to explore the Tunnel at close range and from inside the cathedral ceiling of flood debri was amazing.

At this point we begun our 2 days of admirations for the miners determination.

The climb out of the Lederderg River's valley was steep, Luka's young legs were keen to climb, his dad's keen to compete, Steve just seemed to like a steady vanishing pace, Pat's petite step kept her in the front of the pack, I read the *Cascade* name tag on Heaton's pack most of the afternoon, Lothar quietly checked the flock and Di ensured we were all having a good time.

We collected our water, which fortunately wanted to go down hill, met two locals, the only other pedestrians for the day ambled (scrambled) down the hill, and set up camp in paradise.



I love watching the unpacking and setting up and a highlight was the bucket (20 litre job) that came out of Steve's pack; very sensible, he collected (water there was plenty), took his furnace out of it, and then sat on it (the bucket). Fantastic!! Heaton provided home made wine, Steve a small cask, my Cab Sav and Lothar's Port made for a full night. We celebrated Mother's day and Ian's 44th birthday (both Sunday). I can recommend the hydration tube into the tent and direct to the mouth for overnight rehydration, might use it at home too.

Mother's day but no breakfasts in bed. Unloaded the excess water to lighten our loads and headed off along the river. The path we took followed the original water race and was, as a consequence, gentle at first. Heaton's keen eye noticed a second path and we diverged to a ruin and part of a major dig, Luka had a refreshing curiosity. The valley's bush became quite light and open with steep sides, the kind of country Tom Roberts depicts in Bailed Up. The rock walls were reflected into mirror still ponds, the weather was perfect for walking and the track all ours. A few minutes from the car park we met some fellow travellers, stopped for lunch (out with the bucket and furnace), collected some rubbish and readied for civilisation.

A fantastic walk, good company, home before it rained. Thanks Di.



GSWW from Moleside to Pattersons Canoe Camp 25–26 May

Walkers: *Tony, Sandra, Lothar, Doris, Mabel, Helen & Marg (leader)*

Day 1: Post & Rail to Moleside

Editor: Just in case a report never gets written for day 1, I can report that after the day's walk we had 3 camp ovens going on the fire. These produced 2 lamb roasts and a range of baked potatoes and vegetables. All this, together with some delightful red wines, views of the river, clear skies, candle light, and pleasant company with lots of chatting and laughing, made it a most memorable evening.

Day 2: Post & Rail to Pattersons

We camped overnight at Moleside after walking from Post and Rail on Saturday. We woke up to a white world next morning. Margaret had difficulty unzipping the tent due to the heavy frost. No one complained about being cold overnight- due to our good gear of course and not the amount of red wine consumed at our candle lit dinner! Lothar again was impatient to light the fire and resorted to the use of metho. Breakfast was a leisurely affair of warming cups of tea, cereal and toast. The biggest challenge was to find a suitable toasting fork. Tony road-tested several before finding one to suit his needs.

The sight of the mist slowly rising over the river mouth made you feel glad to be alive. It was well worth coming on the walk just to see it and the birds flitting around our campsite.

Most of us decided to take our tents down and dry them at home because the sun could not do the job in time. The car shuttle was organised with Mabel, Tony and Marg. Lothar, Doris, Sandra and I waited at Post and Rail whilst the cars were driven to Pattersons Canoe Camp. The morning was still very brisk but looked as if we would not get any of the rain, which was forecast.

We started walking a little before 11:00 am and took time along the way to admire the views: the river, limestone cliffs and Gorges. The track was soft underfoot being carpeted by leaves. Grass trees were a common sight when we left the river. Lunch was had at Murrels Camp where we observed a huge fungi growing in the grass. My lunch was not as substantial as the others due to the possum stealing some of it from the table yesterday evening! The talk over our meal degenerated somewhat indicating that our spirits were very high after walking 10kms in a little over two hours.

The walk in the afternoon was very pleasant. The undulating track meandered through lightly timbered areas, which afforded us beautiful views along the river. The cliffs near the end of the walk were spectacular. The group broke up and re-formed many times into smaller groups enabling us all to know each other better. The walk ended with everyone stating that they'd be more than willing to continue with the walk to Nelson at a later date.

A most enjoyable weekend was had by all. Thanks Marg for your organisation.

Helen

Progressive Dinner: 1 June

On Saturday 1st June the annual progressive dinner was held in the Bushfield area. An enormous thank you to Sandra for all of the preparation and organisation that went into making the evening a huge success.

Thank you also to Viviane, John & Glenda for providing venues. The food was sensational and thanks need also to go to Marg, Judy, Coralie, Sandra and Liz for helping the hosts prepare the scrumptious food.

The evening started at the Bushfield oval. A few hardy souls dressed up in sports gear. It was a beaut walk to John and Glenda's. The night was brisk and the sky was clear. The pies were magnificent and the venue good.

Then the spirited group moved to Viviane's house and was served scrumptious Pavlovas, lamingtons, plunger coffee and port. A good time was had by all. The evening raised a small profit for the club. Thank you to everyone who assisted and attended to make it an enjoyable evening.

anon