

## **Lorne area: 20–21 July**

**Walkers:** *Saturday: Bill, Doris (leader), Lothar, Marg. Sunday: Brian, Doris, Glenda, Karen, Lief, Lothar (leader), Marg*

### **Saturday: Doris' walk at Lorne**

On Saturday Doris led four of us on a walk around Lorne itself. But first of all we booked into the YHA BackPackers' Lodge realizing how cold and muddy the campground was already and more rain was expected during the day. So our tents, sleeping bags and mats remained packed in our luggage for the weekend!

After a hot cappuccino at Kafe Kaos on the main drag of the town we dressed up in raincoats, waterproof pants - if we had them. Doris dashed off to the Op Shop to purchase a raincoat whilst Bill put up his golf umbrella. Then we headed along the foreshore.

The grey sea was calm and lapping the shore. It was lowtide and we walked along the sand and over the rocky outcrops. The rock shapes fascinated us - smooth rocky bubbles and circular rock pools were like a lunar landscape in miniature. When the headlands ahead and behind us became shrouded in cloudy mist and the rain started , we turned back to the town for lunch.

Doris and I indulged in our homemade picnic lunches eaten in an outdoor setting. The men opted for a banquet of hot poached eggs, spicy sausage, bacon and mushrooms on toast (like they'd seen served on our earlier visit to the cafe that served "breakfast all day").

Doris then escorted us on a brisk walk out along the jetty. A double rainbow lit the sky as the sun briefly shone through. A white stork waited hopefully by a fisherman's side and seagulls weren't far away.

Then we headed for Teddy's Lookout. The lookout is at the end of George Street, a few blocks parallel to Mountjoy Parade, but we chose to approach it via the "direct route" opposite the fish depot. We headed up the steep slope, through the deserted caravan park and up tracks through the bush, but we frequently met a dead end. We were never too far from our target but it did take us a while to actually get to the top and to Teddy's lookout. From up there we looked out across the ocean and down to the mouth of the St George River.

We then ambled back down the steep streets of suburban Lorne to the parked cars where Doris offered us a good afternoon tea of homemade passionfruit sponge and apricot loaf (that delicious recipe is in a recent WW newsletter).

It was after five when Bill left for home. We returned to the hillside lodge for tea and to play "UNO" in the warmth of the kitchen.

### **Sunday: Lothar's walk from Sheoak Picnic area**

We met Glenda, Brian and welcomed Karen at 10am at the Sheoak picnic area. We'd brought along Lief whom Lothar had met at the lodge and who had just arrived in Australia from Sweden a few days earlier. The day was fine and it was expected to remain clear.

We headed off down the track to Swallow Cave where the rapids build up and spill over at the nearby Sheoak Falls. After the rains we were to find each of the falls in a healthy flood, the rivers flowing well, and the walking tracks mud and slush at various points. The atmosphere was cool but we were warm and cosy as we strode along, enjoying the bush scenery. Tall trees towered overhead seeking the sunlight and the understorey was green and lush. Pink heaths were in bloom and a few Wattles were nearly out. We didn't see any animals but there were plenty of small birds chirping in the damp bush. Most of these kept out of sight but for the honeyeaters and the currawongs calling from the treetops.

Soon the track descended steeply to Castle Rock from where we looked out over the ocean and down on the mouth of the Cumberland River. We watched the cars on the Great Ocean Road that looked like Dinky Toys from our high vantage point.

We returned to Sheoak picnic area for a healthy lunch.

On the second loop Brian continued to carry his loaded backpack and Lothar shouldered his (ever in training for future extended walks). We left the road shortly after the picnic area and took the track to the Wonwondah Falls, Henderson Falls, and then on through the magnificent rainforest to The Canyon. Here we were surrounded by towering gums and tree ferns, and moss and lichens covered ancient rocks.

Phantom Falls is on the St George River and was a splendid sight and sound show. As we climbed up out of the the gully the only reason Lief followed us was that he had probably run out of film. We were all taken by the beauty of the bush in the Angahook State Park.

We returned to Sheoak Picnic area along the Sheoak and Garvey tracks. Doris and Brian soon disappeared as they accelerated up the last steep track and the rest of us lagged behind.

Back at the township we had coffee and a chat, well satisfied by the good 15km walk. By 5pm it was time to return home.

Thank you Doris and Lothar for leading the walks in such good company.

*Marg*

## **Mt Sturgeon/Jimmy Creek area 3–4 August**

**Walkers:** *Saturday: Bill, Karen, Lothar (leader), Marg; Sunday: Brian, Glenda, Graeme, Janice, Lothar (leader), Marg, Shirley, Terry*

### **Saturday: Mt Sturgeon; Teddy Bear Gap loop**

Marg & I met Bill and Karen for morning tea in the park opposite the Visitor Info Centre in Dunkeld. The day was perfect - it was still, just a little cloud above Mt Abrupt, and absolutely no sign of the forecasted rain. We drove to the Mt Sturgeon carpark, donned our walking boots and day/full packs and started our Mt Sturgeon walk at 10am.

Naturally enough we stopped several times on the way up. For Karen it was her first time on Mt Sturgeon and she was busy taking lots of snaps. I was busy just breathing very hard. Bill led most of the way up and was able to point out circling eagles and other features once we caught up to him. We also saw a few of Wallabies, and a couple coming back down with a large dog on a lead.

At the top, as always, it was breathtaking. Marg and Karen explored near the false peak while Bill and I just took in the views below and further away.

We got back to the carpark at about 12:30pm and headed for Jimmy Creek Campground. There we had lunch.

At 2pm we headed west from the campground to start our Teddy Bear loop walk. It was flat for the first 5 minutes and then we started to climb. We crossed a management track and for the next 20-30 minutes it was uphill and the going tougher than the Mt Sturgeon climb (or so we felt after our lunch break). We took a few breathers and looked through the trees to the mountains beyond.

The lookout was great and offered excellent views of the surrounding valleys and mountains. After a further brief climb of about 10 minutes we started to head downhill. Hooray! I knew this was the last of our uphill climbs and the rest of the walk was going to be either downhill or relatively flat.

We hit the road and turned right. We followed the road in a north easterly direction until we came to the Management track. Here we again turned right and travelled along it. We saw a kangaroo, 3 circling eagles, and heard quite a few birds.

We eventually came back to the point where we'd crossed the track previously, turned left, and within about 5-10 minutes were back at the campground. We had some snacks and at 4:30pm all drove to Dunkeld for further refreshments. After this we all travelled back home. A great day out!

### **Sunday: Stockyard Saddle**

We all met at the Jimmy Creek campground between 9-9:15am and had morning tea (well, we all did get up early!) and prepared for the day's return walk from the campground to Stockyard Saddle along the track to the Major Mitchell Plateau. It was to be Janice's first walk with the club. Graeme was the representative from the Camperdown Walkers.

It was a steady uphill climb. Shirley was still suffering from her flu and felt unwell. After a while she became sick and returned with Glenda to the car. (They were to spend the rest of the day at Halls Gap and surrounding towns checking out wineries, nurseries, etc, while the rest of us....)

It was another perfect day and we took many opportunities to stop and look at the distant mountain ranges (and get our breath back!). And yes, eagles were also circling around.

We reached the Saddle after 2 hr 45 minutes. We unpacked our lunches and sat on seats/rocks/logs and munched on our sandwiches and fruit. We were in the middle of a large clearing and had good views of the Serra Range and Victoria Range beyond. We did a bit of parallel play: Marg and Graeme checked out the soil, vegetation and track to the next lookout; some looked at maps to identify features, and I disturbed a wallaby in the surrounding bush/undergrowth.

At about 1:30pm we headed back. We were retracing our steps but the scenery and views were just as magic going down. We often stopped to sip water, admire more views, look at flowers on many different types of bushes and trees, and to all stop talking and just listen to the birds around us. Definitely worth doing it all again in the future.

We arrived back at Jimmy Creek campground at about 3:30pm and had afternoon tea while we waited for Glenda and Shirley to return.

Janice had not only survived her first club walk but she also joined the club on the spot! Afterwards, Janice returned home via a shortcut while the rest of us went to the TakeAway in Dunkeld. We had fried chips, cappuccinos and (chocolate) milk drinks. And ice creams. And plenty of sugar and other delights.

It was then time to say goodbye to Graeme and make our way back home.

Thanks to all for another great day and for making it an excellent weekend.

*Lothar*

## **Halls Gap (Wonderland & Mt William) weekend: 17–18 August**

**Walkers:** *Brian, Glenda, Lothar (leader), Shirley, Terry*

### **Saturday: Wonderland Loop 4.5hrs**

We met at the entrance to the Halls Gap swimming pool at 10:30am. I'd just driven up from Warrnambool and had a quick cappuccino whereas the others had driven for 5 minutes from a house near Lake Bellfield. We decided to do the longer Wonderland Loop walk than the shorter Garden Loop. The sun was shining and we were all looking forward to a great day.

We headed through the caravan park towards Venus Baths and then branched left onto the track heading towards (Mackeys Peak and) The Pinnacle. We stopped a few times along the cliff face and appreciated the excellent views. We also commented on how we were all a bit fitter than the last time we did the same climb.

At The Pinnacle it was a bit breezy and cool and so we all put on our warm jumpers. We had lunch and cups of tea/coffee and watched the views and the other walkers/tourists.

It seemed to take us no time at all to walk downhill to the Wonderland carpark. We gave lots of encouragement and time estimates to the eager and/or completely puffed walkers coming up, and diverged through the always impressive Grand Canyon.

We had a quick pit stop and then headed back towards Halls Gap. We visited Splitter Falls, the pool where some of the walkers like to swim when it's really hot, and Venus Baths along the way.

We got back to Halls Gap at about 3pm and had a few well earned refreshments (ice creams, chocolate milk, etc) before heading off the Lake Bellfield for the night.

PS If you were in Halls Gap a couple of hours later you would have seen Brian (fresh from his spa bath) up to his navel digging down into a large rubbish bin. I wish I'd had my camera at the ready for that one!

### **Sunday: Mt William 6hrs**

At 8:40am Brian, Terry and I left the Sheep Hills carpark on the main Halls Gap - Dunkeld road and headed towards Mt William. Tyrone T Thomas has this listed as an 7 hour (without breaks) hard walk and the sign at the carpark said "Mt William 12km". Both are wrong. We did the walk in 6 hours and that included a lunch stop. We also reckon that the total return distance is only about 16-17km (in line with TTT). Anyway, it was an excellent walk that none of us had done before and surprisingly moderate.

For the first 20-30 minutes the track was relatively flat. For the next 90 minutes it was mostly gently rising with just a few steeper sections in between. We had a breather at the "Lothar's" lookout and within half an hour scrambled up onto the bitumen road a 200-300 metres or so before the car park.

Glenda and Shirley hadn't arrived yet (well, we were an hour earlier than I thought we'd be!) so at 10:50am decided to walk to the top. The 1.8km section of the road became steeper and steeper and then eased off a little. It was amazing at the top - practically no views! It had been clear and sunny all morning but now we were in cloud and it was cold. We soon headed back down.

Thanks to modern (mobile) technology we met Glenda & Shirley on their way up - Shirley continued to the summit and Glenda returned with us to the Mt William carpark where we had our well earned lunches.

It was during this time that Brian was able to talk Glenda into doing the walk back to the Sheep Hills carpark. Shirley decided to have lunch, take the car back down, and meet us in about 1.5hrs. We were careful on the steeper bits but were then able to stride out on the downhill and flatter bits.

We got back to the carpark at about 2:40pm and all headed for the Dunkeld Take-Away for chips (fries), coffee, milk shakes, etc. And who should we find there? Diane, Coralie and Steff doing something similar after their independent walk!

Thanks to Brian, Glenda, Shirley and Terry for a great weekend of walking, for letting me stay in their (rented) house, and especially to Brian for explaining why he was prancing around starkers on Friday night.

*Lothar*

## **Cape Bridgewater and Point Danger: 14 September**

**Walkers:** *Chris, Lothar, Steff*

When we didn't get the numbers for a weekend at Nelson we decided to do something else, something closer.

A glorious sunny day. 9:15am leave Warrnambool. Cape Bridgewater. Cappuccinos at the Kiosk. Whales in the bay. Swooped by a magpie. Seal colony. Lunch. Half moon. Ship. Dolphins. The Cape. Crashing waves. 130m Uphill. Birds. The beach. Rolling waves. Ice cream and drinks. Feels like summer. Watching kids play.

Point Danger. Gannet Colony. Gannets in the distance. Flags up. Firing range active. Shooting towards the viewing platform and Gannets. Unbelievable!

Port Fairy. Rebeccas. Sitting outside. Cappuccinos and milkshake. Yummy cake and toppings.

A fantastic day.

*Lothar*

## **GSWW from Pattersons Canoe Camp to Nelson: 21 September**

**Walkers:** Margaret, Dianne F, Karen, Linda, Lothar and Chris

Two groups set out on a cloudy but bright day. Lothar, Chris and Linda started their walk from the junction of North Nelson Track and the River Road (Ed: to walk 14km instead of the planned 20km). Margaret led a walk with Diane and Karen from Pattersons canoe camp, both groups finishing in Nelson.

I knew we were in for a great walk when we had ambled along the track to the clifftop walk. The views along the river were spectacular and we had them to ourselves all day. The scene was of tranquil water meandering through high chalky cliffs surrounded by lush forests. It was not long before we realised we had come at the right time. The track walk took us through a riot of colour, all the flowering shrubs were in bloom. I can name a few: wattle, banksia, correa, hakea, bush pea, grevillea, tea tree, heath, running postman (kennedia) and the flame heath (I read up about this plant, the emus love it and we saw quite a lot of bright red emu droppings on the trail). There were numerous other plants I can't name but they were all wonderful. The track followed the river, turned off through the bush and then meandered back to the river. The river was magic, every now and then a boat would pass by – we wondered if we could hitch a ride and beat the other group back to Nelson but this was just a passing thought, as we knew we were taking the best route along the river. We stopped every now and then to watch the river traffic and the birds. Colourful rosellas and parrots would swoop by us and as we stopped at one lookout three parrots gave us a wonderful performance, flying loops around us and over the river.

It was approaching lunchtime so we decided to find a nice spot to stop. As we wandered along we would come across a comfortable log but no, we didn't get the view, where there was a view, there was nowhere to sit. We decided to see what there was around the next bend. As we rounded the bend, Margaret whooped in surprise, she had found a timber seat, fitting three walkers very comfortably, with a clear view of the river. We were a really spoilt bunch of bushwalkers. Inevitably, our lunch break was quite long and relaxed. We would never catch up with Lothar's group now.

If the views, the birds and the wild flowers made the going slow, the orchids stopped us in our tracks. We were so lucky, not only were the pink caladenias (pink fingers) out but we found blue caladenias, spider orchids (4 different types) and what I later found out to be a hare orchid. It was like finding jewels in a treasure trove.

We had passed the Princess Margaret Rose cave and crossed the South Australian border and continued along the river past picturesque boat sheds. We visited a couple of the boat landings along the way, waving at the passing boats (actually we were trying to hitch a ride – it would be the only way to catch up with the other group). As we approached Simsons Landing we found more people boating, fishing and walking their dogs, we knew our walk would soon come to an end. One last surprise before finishing, Diane spotted an echidna shuffling across the track into the bush. The echidna had rushed head-first into some dead bracken trying to use it as camouflage. We quietly approached it and stood quietly for a while. When the echidna thought it was safe he would lift his head out of the bushes and sniff the air, and we could get a very good look at him. All too soon we approached Nelson. We had come to the end of a wonderful day. The weather had been perfect, the track clearly signposted, the birds, wildflowers and orchids had given us a spectacular display and the river was a glorious and tranquil backdrop.

Thank you Margaret for leading one of the best walks I have done. We didn't beat the other group back to Nelson, but we didn't care. Lothar, Chris and Diane all reported that they had a wonderful day and enjoyed the wildflowers and orchids too.

*Karen*