

Carlisle - Gellibrand State Park: 11 October

Walkers: Andrew (leader), Susan, Karen (Camperdown), Doug, Eva and Andrew (Melbourne), Marg

I hitched to Cobden with Eva and Andrew W. We met the others and headed off in two cars to the intersection of the Carlisle-Gellibrand Road with Cricket Pitch Road (on the left) and Bunker Hill Track.

We set off in cool conditions and cloudy skies following the sandy four-wheel drive Raper Ridge Track. That was conducive to social chat which was pleasant as we walked along. The native vegetation was bright with heaths, wattle, banksias, blackboys, white everlastings and pink and purple orchids that Karen spotted.

I must say the start of the walk was not up to Andrew's forte - no snake reared its head at us and in fact there were none to be seen all day. We crossed Boggy Creek where ferns and tall trees towered. The first suggestion for a lunch stop was a false pause, only one of us had prematurely turned the clock onto daylight saving time. So we climbed the next steep stretch before we picnicked.

There were more steep climbs and dips into lush gullies, good views across the hilltops and flat stretches when it was lovely to experience the peaceful bushland.

Along the way we swapped news and philosophical ideas, the latest tips on home brewing and on vegetable gardens. We learned that Doug is an accomplished bagpipe player, Karen has had marvellous walking holidays, that Eva is as comfortable in the bush as she is in the business world, and that Andrew W wishes to walk the Serra Range having mastered the Australian Alps and Tasmania's Federation Peak and more.

The loop walk returned us to the cars about 3:30pm where we served coffee from the car boot before returning home.

Thank you Andrew for an energetic walk in such good company.

Marg

Wilson's Prom NP: 23–26 October

Report 1:

Walkers: Linda, Marg, Helen, Dianne, Doris, Karen, Steph, Ann, Vivienne and Bill

Day 1: Mount Oberon Carpark to the Lightstation (18.4km)

We were on the sandy four-wheel downhill track just before 10am on Friday morning. Beyond were the peaks of Mt McAlister (340m) and Mt Oberon (558m) as we trod the Telegraph Saddle southwards.

Heaths were flowering among the wattles, banksias, she oaks, tea tree and gum trees. Black cockatoos shrieked and small birds were in abundance. We passed Halfway Hut then climbed steadily to Martins Hill where lunch was enjoyed beside the track at a cleared area.

At Roaring Meg the track divides and we continued on the Telegraph vehicle track to where it stops and meets the walking track. By then we could hear the waves rolling into the shore as we descended through the forest of towering Stringy Barks, down to the landing ramp.

A shock was in store. The concrete path to the Lighthouse angles at 45 degrees and laden with our packs the last 800m was an effort. Accommodation was delightful: bunk beds, carpeted lounge room with gas heater and cushioned sofas, kitchen and a dining room that faced westerly.

The ranger Gill welcomed us at the cottage and Keith took us up the 62 stairs inside the beautiful granite Lighthouse that was built from the tumbled granite boulders that form the Prom landmass.

We watched the sun set in a ball of crimson beyond the cliffs and rocky outcrops of Wattle, Anser and Glennie Islands. Cooked our rice and noodles on the kitchen stove, sipped wine from egg cups, played King's Corners, had hot showers and then slept soundly in comfort. Though we carried full back packs it would be the last night before we unpacked the tent, Trangia, method and utensils. Overnights at the Leongatha Hotel then the Lighthouse . . . and we call that backpacking!!??

The long weekend at the Prom was great, thankyou Linda for your leadership and to the company for a very happy and memorable weekend.

Marg

Report 2:

Walkers: Linda, Marg, Helen, Dianne, Doris, Karen, Steph, Ann, Vivienne and Bill

Day 2: Lighthouse to Oberon Bay via Waterloo Bay

After a very comfortable night at the Wilsons Prom lighthouse Marg and Karen set off for Oberon Bay Camping Ground via the South East Walk and Waterloo Bay. We were advised by our hosts to take this more scenic walk even though it extended the direct route by 2km. It was definitely worth the extra effort. The morning had been overcast but fine as we headed off towards the mist covered hills wandering along winding tracks through tall forests and deep ferny creek gullies. The track would skirt around the hills and give us glimpses back to the lighthouse and out to sea. We stopped at many of the lookouts to take off our heavy packs and take in the ocean views. The mist took most of the morning to roll down the hills and out to sea. When the skies cleared we could see the stretch of beach along Waterloo Bay. At the far side of the bay we stopped for lunch. This was a very pretty place with the sea and orange lichen coloured rocks on one side and a picturesque and tranquil lagoon on the other. One of the rocks looked like a dolphin's head rearing out of the water. We were soon joined by silver gulls. Not the scruffy sort you find attacking your chips on our beaches, but clean, well-behaved ones that politely watched as we finish every last crumb. Two black swans swanned up the lagoon to have a look and returned to their paradise once they decided that all was well. It was hard to leave this place but we had a rendezvous to keep with Linda, Steff, Vivienne and Bill at 4pm. As we strolled back along the beach to the track we noticed we were being followed by a gull and a crow. Did they want to join us or were they making sure we were leaving their little paradise?

The track now crossed heath and marshlands, with boardwalks making the going very easy. We stopped to look at all the wildflowers in bloom and our first orchid (purple wax lip) was sighted. Further along the track we admired the boulders on the nearby hills. Some of the boulders looked like craggy, battle-scarred pirates. A check of our map and we discovered we were looking at the aptly named Boulder Range. As we neared the Telegraph Track turn-off we were in deep, shady forest and more orchids! Back on to the Oberon Track and yet more orchids, Nodding Green Hoods, lots of pretty pink and white Hare Orchids, a spray of yellow Leopard Orchids and dozens of deep pink Caladenias. The going was slow as we admired the flowers and it was close to four o'clock before we could smell the sea air coming off Oberon Bay.

We finally reached the campsite with Linda, Steff, Vivienne and Bill all settled in after their various treks. The had kindly put the water on boil for a well-earned coffee. We finished the afternoon with a leisurely stroll down to the beach, a play on the swings and sitting back on our kitchen benches, which Bill had fashioned out of bits and pieces of wood. We had a spectacular sunset before settling in for a quiet dinner and a very deep sleep. What a life!

Thanks to Linda for organising the entire weekend in paradise.

Karen

Report 3:

Walkers: Linda (leader) Viviane, Bill

Day 2: Lighthouse to Oberon Bay via Roaring Meg

After a very comfortable nights sleep at the lighthouse, we all sat at breakfast and watched the heavy clouds lift up over the mountain behind us. The weather forecast had predicted a thunder storm, but there was no wind and we could see clear skies moving in from the west, so we held great hope of a fine day. Karen and Marg left us and went to Oberon Camping ground via Waterloo Bay. They both wanted to experience the new track. Bill, Viviane and myself headed back along the track which we came in by. The going was very slow as Viviane had a sore knee and I was sporting a new blister on my heel. We passed through a magnificent stringybark forest, I don't recall ever seeing one so healthy and strong. The trees just towered over us. We stopped at Roaring Meg camping ground where we met up with a group who had left the lighthouse before us. They had unfortunately travelled by the walking track and had leeches all over them and boots full of water and mud. Lunch was at Halfway Hut where we enjoyed the solitude. Blue wrens and their mates were in a flurry collecting insects. We topped our water supply up and headed towards Oberon Camping ground. As always the last 1 and 1/2 hours was the longest. It was a sandy track quite different to the one we had been on. We were now in tea tree country, the flowers made it look somewhat like snow, truly magnificent. After 6 hrs, we found the camping ground nestled amongst the tea trees and if Stephanie had not been snoring we would have missed her (!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!) The only spots of rain we felt was at tea time, but by the time we all rushed off to get our coats it had stopped.

Linda

Christmas Breakup GSWW Lake Monibeong: 6-7 December

