

## **GSWW—Mallee Camp to Portland: 4 July**

**Walkers:** *Mabel, Val, Dianne, Liz, Fiona, Karen, John, Ken, and Doug.*

We met at Portland on a fine morning expecting a showery day and all loaded down with wet weather gear. After a quick car shuffle (thanks to Betty), we set off from the road near Mallee Camp on the winding track through coastal shrubs of wattle and tea tree. John had organised a two-way radio system with Mabel so that the walkers ahead could keep in touch with the group. This became amusing when some walkers not being aware of the set up began hearing voices and others who would be thinking they were having a conversation with John when in fact he had his ear piece on and was talking into his radio!! All very amusing but in a practical sense worked very well and would be useful on a lot of walks.

Soon we were at the cliff top overlooking the ocean where gannets were seen everywhere on the water, way out to sea sitting on the water or doing spectacular dives. We would see them all along the way to Portland.

The track then turned down into the Enchanted Forest with craggy sandstone cliffs above and the lush overgrown forest beneath. There was a little side trip to a lookout over the sea and then back out to the coast heath. Further along the track was the Yellow Rocks and another side trip to view the coast (and yellow rock). At lunch we found a sheltered part of the track amongst the heath – not that we needed shelter as the weather turned out to be sunny and mild (no need for wet weather gear at all).

After lunch we headed off along the smelter track with views of the Cape Nelson Lighthouse on the cliffs behind and the gannet rookery ahead. The track took us through a variety of vegetation, coastal heath, grass trees, a windy exposed section and pine forest. We took the side trip to the gannet rookery for a close up look. A lot of walkers had brought binoculars so we had a good viewing. The gannets were on the island and mainland and kept us amused with their mating rituals (necking) and diving.

We walked on past the smelter along the cliff tops for spectacular coastal scenery and the port in sight. This section of the walk seemed to take the longest as the port never seemed to get any closer but eventually we made it back into town for a well earned coffee. The group had enjoyed the variety of landscapes and spectacular scenery. Many thanks to Mabel for organising a great walk.

*Karen*

## **Mt Sturgeon and the Piccaninny: 11 July**

**Walkers:** *Ken, Marg, John, Sandra, Tony and Mabel*

We started the walk up Mt Sturgeon on a cool overcast and misty day. The early wildflowers were out and the nature study walkers were naming the respective flowers. We saw Kangaroos and various birdlife.

We arrived at the top but could not see a metre in front of you because of the fog. After a small rest the walking party descended down the mountain and had lunch at the base. When we reached the bottom John and Marg said we should go back up the top again as the fog had lifted but the other walkers declined. We then walked up the Piccaninny in sunshine and had a good view of the countryside from the top. John had his video and was taking film of the events as they happened.

After the walk we descended on the cafe at Dunkeld and enjoyed a coffee break. A good day was had by all.

*Ken*

## **GSWW: The Gorge to Nelson 24 July**

**Walkers:** *Linda (leader), Karen, John L., Eleanor and Frank, Marg*

We met at Nelson about 10:00am, and we introduced Frank and Eleanor to their first walk with us. John's car was left at Nelson and we all moved on to the Gorge car park where the North Nelson Track meets Glenelg River Road. Dressed in rain coats we warded off the rain and the walking was pleasant. The track offers great views of the steep limestone cliffs and the deep Glenelg was tranquil in the absence of ski and fishing crafts that often use these waters.

At Gizzy camp table where we lunched a lone walker passed and headed east, otherwise we had the area to ourselves. Eleanor introduced her essential kit, the Saturday football broadcast through earphones. Though we didn't see any Echindas, the track was often burrowed and dug up. There were large ant hills piled up along the way. Coastal wattle was in full bloom, Golden Wattle in bud and pink and white Heath, Correa and Red Emu Bush were all out but Karen's search for early Orchids was in vain. I'm still on the lookout for the red-tailed black cockatoo.

Reaching Nelson at 3pm was a surprise to us in that the 16 km walk was easy, we'd been distracted by various social chat along the way. Coffee at 'Ambience cafe and art gallery was a good place to finish a familiar walk. Thanks everyone for your good company.

*Marg*

## **Tower Hill - walk & ride: 7 August**

**Walkers:** Marg, Val, Doug M, Doug, Anne, Frank, Eleanor, Mabel, Dianne F, Karen, Betty, Irene, Linda

Marg, Val, and Doug met at the old touro centre at 9.30 am for the ride to Tower Hill.

The weather looked decidedly inclement at the start but in her usual efficient manner Marg had arranged with Jupiter Pluvius for a definite improvement. The weather proved to be fine and a glorious day followed. The ride out was very pleasant, no wind and no traffic worries.

At the Tower Hill car park we met up with Anne, another Doug, Frank, Eleanor, Mabel, Dianne, Karen, Betty. Irene and Linda turned up later for lunch. We then walked a circuit of the park, this took about two hours, and we were entertained by the Koalas in the trees, Kangaroos on the ground, Blue Wrens, Firetails, and Thrushes in the air. Back at the car park. LUNCH.

After lunch Marg, Val, Mabel, Irene and myself set out for the ride back to Warrnambool, on the way Mabel and Irene left us to ride different ways leaving Val, Betty (by car) and I to go to Marg's home for a cup of tea and a natter. If I have got names or places wrong it's because my notes are mixed up with a fruit cake recipe that Marg wrote out for Betty.

Many thanks to Marg for organising the day. Her attention to road safety and care for slower walkers made for a great day that was I am sure, enjoyed by all.

*Doug M.*

## **Rail Trail Glenfyne to Timboon: 8 August**

**Walkers:** Doug M, Doris

After lunch, Doug and I started at Glenfyne and walked toward Timboon from where the others -including some Portland bush walkers - had left about the same time. The weather was cool and overcast and the track wet and slippery. We met the rest at the Curdie River Bridge. We had to be careful on some of the bridges as there were a few missing sleepers. The Friends of the Rail Trail have started to make by-passes at some of the old bridges but there remains a lot of work to be done. It was nice to meet the Portland people as well as our own for afternoon tea. I have to thank Marg and Coralie for the lovely fruit cakes and wishes for my birthday. We all enjoyed the afternoon tea. Dianne F. was the only one unlucky enough to attract a leech. We then headed back to where we had come from and were lucky enough to have no rain until we were close to the cars.

Thank you Coralie, for doing such a good job of organizing both the walk and the weather

*Doris*

## Grampians— Mt Dundas: 14–15 August

**Walkers:** Heaton (Leader), Doug M, Marg, Anne, Liz C, Dianne F

### The Jewels of Mount Dundas

“We must be bloody mad” I thought upon waking at 5.30am on Saturday morning - to gale force winds and pouring down rain. It was with some trepidation I dragged myself out of my warm and very comfortable bed. I decided my cat had a much smarter idea by staying in bed snoring!

Gritting my teeth and fully determined not to “wimp out - this weather is not going to beat me” I resolved as I set off to collect Marg. . . . “I’m not going in this weather!” Marg stated as soon as I walked in the door! Oh, OK then, we won’t go! Such determination! Fortunately common sense (and a conversation with a slightly disgruntled Heaton – who muttered something about the weather clearing up) prevailed and we set out. We left ourselves the option of deciding whether to persist with the overnight walk or make it a day walk. After all, Heaton did say the weather was clearing.

Lo and behold – Hamilton appeared - bathed in sunshine. And who was standing in the middle of McDonald’s car park sporting a grin from ear to ear – Heaton. “I told you the weather was clearing!” After coffee and a quick discussion we conceded we had no option but to stick to the original plan, so we set off to Mount Dundas.

Saturday turned out to be one of those coats on – coats off days! We had 2 short sharp hail storms (they did give us doubting Thomas’s some small satisfaction with our weather forecasting abilities!). But overall the weather (we have to admit) was ideal for walking. In fact the hail showers created some very pretty effects on the fauna. Marg was delighted to find the first Jewels of Mount Dundas; the remnants of little hailstones on some delicate leaves.

As Heaton promised, there was no formed track so much of Saturdays walk was clambering up and over rocks and finding the animal tracks. This made for interesting (and fun) walking. Each time we thought we had cleared the rocks. we managed to find more to climb over. It was on one of these rocks that we had our first casualty . . . . Doug took a small trip on a slippery rock, he did manage to impress us by scrambling his way up - backpack and all. However he did break something rather vital – the elastic in his jocks! In the spirit of good bushwalking etiquette I offered him my spare pair of knickers.

After recovering from this we set off – greatly encouraged by Heaton’s comforting words; “it’s pretty easy from here . . . . except for some of those rocks over there!” Our clambering and tripping was rewarded at the top with some wonderful views – and yes the weather had cleared enough to see for miles and miles! As we were making our way along and heading back down a little we had our second casualty. Liz tried to take the quick way down the slope and turned her ankle in doing so. Therefore we decided to find a camping spot and call it a day. (And I think Liz was a bit concerned about Heaton explaining that the best way to get an injured walker

out was to tie a rope around them and drag them down).

We pitched tents, made tea, lit a HUGE campfire and had a most enjoyable night sitting around, partaking in Heaton's plum wine (which was very nice indeed), chatting and discussing the merits of walking, drinking, eating, camping, – you name it.

We woke to a very cold morning – yes it was cold overnight too. Ann reported it was 0 in Hamilton – probably -2 on Mount Dundas – judging by my feet and hands!. Liz's ankle seemed to be holding up but to be safe we walked down the mount rather than scramble back the way we came. We found an emu egg neatly placed in the hollow of a tree trunk – is that where emus put their eggs? I think not. It was interesting that throughout the walk we saw heaps of evidence of emus but no emus different to Tower Hill! We did see quite a few kangaroos though.

We finished the walk early so enjoyed coffee before heading out to Wannon and Nigretta Falls on the way back. Both of these have water gushing over them at the moment and are quite spectacular.

This was a wonderful walk – a great time was had by all – despite the perfect weather!

Thank you to Heaton for organising and leading the walk and for not letting us wimp out! Doug – it is good bushwalking etiquette to wash any items borrowed before returning them, thanks!!!!

Di F

## Grampians—Mt Difficult to the Plantation: 21–22 August

**Walkers:** Coralie (leader), Mabel, Diane, Janice, Clive, Fiona

Oh what a beautiful day to climb a mountain. Leaving Troopers Creek we went onward, upward, zig-zagging, contouring, overhangs, rock ledges. Oh what a beautiful day to climb a mountain. Marvelling at running waterfalls, gorgeous colours in layers of sandstone, amazing boulder balancing acts. Oh what a beautiful day to climb a mountain. Splashes of magenta Heath, dagger Hakea, Acacias and Banksias. Ahah at last! The rim we're closing in on the peak.

Oh what a beautiful day to climb a mountain. Lunch first and then a dash to the summit. Reward, Mt Difficult an 808m high 360 degree view, admiring folded and twisted geological formations. Oh what a beautiful day to climb a mountain. Bagged the peak, time to meander a gentle descent east to a 4WD track which ended at the night's camp. Trangias fired up it was soup and cuppas all round followed by a variety of culinary delights and lots of fireside stories. How did the Grampians Puma escape a mention??

Awoke Sunday to a chorus of birds under low cloud and a wet tent. Time to climb back up that mountain range and onto the ridge Oh what a beautiful day to climb a mountain. The ridge was picturesque. Loaded with exciting Grampians variation, views of Lake Wartook, collections of Nodding Greenhoods and Scented Sundews.

Along the way a few passing showers brushed us by but Oh what a beautiful day to be on a mountain range but it was time to get off the Mt Difficult Range. Firstly, lunch in a saddle at the top of the descent and then against a backdrop of fluorescing moss on huge boulders we enjoyed some slipping, sliding and hopping. The descent ended at the Plantation accompanied by a down pour. How timely. What a wonderful leader.

After a car shuffle it was cheerio to Janice and Clive and a dash to Halls Gap for a mugaccino and, compliments of Coralie, a prize winning vanilla slice, oh what a wonderful leader. Driving home the roadside wattles put on a great display and a rainbow at one stage made it postcard stuff.

The Grampians bold and striking as ever, great company and a beautiful day to climb a mountain made for a very enjoyable weekend.

*Fiona*

## Great Ocean Road - Melanesia: 28–29 August

**Walkers:** *Heaton (leader) Coralie, John, Doug M*

How do the best walks start? COFFEE Heaton, Coralie, John, and Doug met at Port Campbell for coffee, then cars, and car shuffle from Moonlight Head to start of walk at Melanesia. Down the HILL to the beach, each step and turn of the track bringing up fresh aspects of magnificent scenery. A bit of a look around at the bottom then set out to walk along the beach toward Moonlight. This is where King Neptune took a hand.

Incoming tide and rising sea didn't look too good, so Heaton went ahead, did a survey and decided the only way was back. This meant back up the HILL. Then it was car back to the track into Ryan's Den.

In along the track we found the Otway Walk, deviated to Ryan's Den and then back to the walking track. It was a bit upsy - downsy but the scenery and John's reminiscences of fishing trips to the area years back kept our minds off our aching legs.

To camp, perhaps not the best in the area, we only found one leach, but I think someone took pity on a poor joker who was getting a little tired.

While we were sitting, in the light of a near full moon, around a pile of wood, that would have been a camp fire, had we been allowed to light one, it came out in conversation that Coralie didn't like ticks. Heaton assured us that the biggest and savagest ticks came out around the time of the full moon and these were called, wait for it ----- Lunar Ticks. To bed, perchance to dream, if you're not too tired.

Morning. Pack up quick, threat of rain. It didn't come. Day two followed a similar pattern to day one. Down into gullies with lovely little creeks, up to the ridges with more magnificent coastal scenery. I lost track of the number of places Heaton wanted to build a house. Again John's stories ( nearly ) kept our minds off our aching legs. The only one who didn't seem affected by the aching leg syndrome was Coralie. She reduced three macho men to little boys by comparison.

Finally it was time to turn our backs on the coast, climb the last hill, walk up the road to Coralie's car, car shuffle and then back to Port Campbell for COFFEE. There I left them to make their way back to Warrnambool while I headed home to Cobden.

It was a great weekend, thanks to Heaton for his leadership and to Coralie and John for their companionship.

*Doug M*

## Halls Gap - Stormy Creek: 5 September

**Walkers:** *Ann, Doug, John, Dianne and Mabel*

### **Waterfalls, wildflowers and wanders**

Ann, Doug, John, Dianne and Mabel enjoyed a pleasant walk along Stormy Creek at Halls Gap. There was a reasonable amount of water in the creek making Splinter and Turret Falls well worth visiting. We had a very relaxing lunch stop at Turret Falls where Ann, our leader organised the sun to shine through the clouds that had hidden it for much of the walk.

We won't win a prize for flower identification but after much debate and consultation with the books we did manage to identify thryptomene, cat's claws grevillea, pine heath, flame heath, scented sundew, correa and hakea to name a few. Many more went unidentified. There are lots of flowers in bud so it will be spectacular in a couple of weeks. No orchids were sighted.

At Wonderland car park on the way back to Halls Gap we met up with Marg, Ken and Trevor on a family walk to the Pinnacle. They joined us for the return journey back to Halls Gap and of course, the compulsory coffee and cake to finish off a very relaxing day.

Thanks Ann for organizing the walk and Doug for leading the way. An enjoyable time was had by all.

*Mabel*

## The Warrnambool Porkers Guide to the Heysen Trail: 18–24 September

**Walkers:** Coralie, Heaton, Janice

The section of the Heysen Trail we chose to explore was like many other good walks: it had the advantage of a long gradual warm up as we toured through the bakery and winery studded *Barossa Valley* on our way north to serious gastronomic adventure.

The first stop on the Porkers itinerary was Claire, home of *several bakeries*, including the one we chose based on its 3+ metre counter filled with traditional German and Australian cakes, savouries, pies, and of course, a range of coffees. Concerned about serious privation during the next six days walk, we fuelled up on a BeeSting and an Apple strudel.

Serious map study was required to locate the next feature of interest: the famous *Wirrabara Bakery*. The first glance inside this historic building was enough to reveal shelves groaning with pies, pasties, pastries, cakes, biscuits, baked deserts and preserves of every possible description. The selection of steak and mushroom pie did not disappoint with a full flavoured pastry encasing rich chunks of tender beef and aromatic local field mushrooms in a tasty gravy.

We could now start the walk from Melrose with full packs, confident that we had undertaken the best preparation possible. Suitably fortified we did ultimately reach our final destination, Quorn. Rushing through our only shower for a week we were able to make time for coffee and cake at the *Quorn Milk Bar* before tea. Weekender biscuits the size of wagon wheels and YoYos (known by the local name of “cockles”) the size of scones gave us the energy required for our next task, the pursuit of dinner. Detailed reconnaissance of all hotels in town revealed the *Austral Hotel* as the best.

Welcomed by mine host we were shown into a recently renovated dining room. The innovative flavours of seeded mustard and Parmesan bread tantalised our taste buds. Our main meals did not disappoint: my cutlet of swordfish in a tumeric crust with sesame wafers was so fresh it had just stopped swimming and was cooked to melting perfection. The platters of Bush and Bay included an entire kangaroo fillet sliced and surrounded by fresh scallops in a garlic cream sauce. Kangaroo has the reputation of being difficult to cook, but those chefs should be giving lessons to the rest!! Acting upon Heaton’s informed advice we chose the 2001St Hallets Faith Shiraz for a fruity and light accompaniment to the roo, and the robust Skillogalee Riesling to complimented the flavoursome fish. The size of the meals prevented incursions to the dessert menu and although seriously tempted by the macadamia nut and mascapone pizza, we retired early: beaten.

Homeward bound in the early morning brought the advantage of another visit to the *Warrabara Bakery* for coffee and cake for the lighter eaters and a pie for Heaton. We stocked up on pasties and pies for the forthcoming week and continued down into the Barossa. No visit here is complete without stopping at *Linkes* for Thai Chicken pies or the gold award winning modern pastie. We continued on, visiting Angaston for dried fruit, and discovered a supply of dried complete bananas, mango cheeks, nectarines, chocolate covered apricot balls and all other requirements for the next walk...or should that be pork??

Showing great focus we kept driving till exhaustion and boredom forced a break at Hamilton where *Gilly’s Café* awaited. Light meals are their specialty, and our vegetable lasagne and asparagus frittata were accompanied by the best warm roasted vegetable salad I have tasted in a long time. Sadly we again had to ignore the large range of dessert cakes and headed off on the final leg home knowing that the Cornish pasties, Satay Chicken, Traditional Beef, Chicken and Mushroom, and Beef and Mushroom pies destined for the freezer would prolong our memories of another excellent rain free Coralie led Warrnambool Pork.

Janice

## **Blue Mountains, Blackheath Base Camp: 18–28 September**

*Walkers: John and Glenda, Liz and Mike, Helen, Marg, Doris, Val, Linda and Karen*

### **Karen's report 1:**

We enjoyed warm weather for the whole week. The walks were strenuous but enjoyable, the wildflowers were in abundance and we were surrounded by a symphony of birdsong. Each walk featured a different aspect of the area and the views were magic. There were lots of cameras clicking, endless conversations, laughter, lots of food and wine and some great memories and experiences had by all. Hope to see some more reports. Thank you all for a wonderful time.

### **Day 1 and 2**

One car and one motorcycle departed Warrnambool stopping at the Seymour Info. Centre for lunch. We met up with the other two cars in Seymour and continued on to Albury by late afternoon. We enjoyed a cheap dinner at the local country club and had an early night in readiness for the next days drive. The next day we took the Olympic Highway through various towns via Wagga Wagga and on to Cowra, stopping at the info centre for lunch. We continued on through Bathurst and Lithgow finally arriving at Blackheath in time for a meal at the local pub and another early night.

### **Day 3 - Pulpit Rock (Blackheath) 12 - 14km**

Starting in town at Dell Street we took the Popes Glen Track to the cliff top edge for spectacular view of the Grose Valley, Horseshoe Falls and Govetts Leap Falls. We then followed the track to Pulpit Rock for more spectacular views of the cliffs and the lush green valley below. On the way back passed the Horseshoe Falls and continued on to the NPWS Heritage Centre and Shop to look at information on the Blue Mountains and pick up souvenirs and maps, etc. We returned to town via the Popes Glen track.

### **Day 4 - Grand Canyon (Blackheath) 8km**

A spectacular walk through lush forest, down into the canyon with its and overhanging cliffs overgrown with moss and ferns and back up to the top to a lookout over the Grose Valley. We started at the Grand Canyon Loop Car Park in Evans Lookout Road and took the loop track along side the road through Neates Glen. We continued down into the Grand Canyon with a short side trip to the Beauchamp Falls. The gorge was dark and lush with plenty of water running through the creek. Bright orange yabbies were spotted in the pools. After lunch we headed back up to Evans Lookout and met up with cars at the info centre.

### **Day 5 - Leura to Katoomba via the Prince Henry Clifftop Walk 10kms**

We caught the triple decker train to Leura and wandered through the Leura mall stopping for a bit of retail therapy and coffee. We ambled along the streets until we came upon the cliff top track which led us to Leura Cascades. We stayed on this track and continued on to the Prince Henry Cliff top walk for spectacular views of the valley below and (finally) the Three Sisters at Katoomba. We wandered back into Katoomba for another coffee and train ride home.

### **Day 6 - Wentworth Falls – National Pass 8kms**

A short but spectacular walk with fantastic views of the Wentworth Falls at different levels. We started out from the Wentworth Falls gardens taking the National Pass Circuit Walk along the cliff side for spectacular views of waterfalls, cliffs, steep valleys and lush green gullies. The walk involved a lot of steps and ladders, a feature of this area of the Blue Mountains. The track clung to the side of the cliff for most of the way. The last part of the walk wound through the Valley of the Waters Reserve where we passed by numerous waterfalls and cascades. An early finish allowed us to have afternoon tea at the Hydro Majestic Hotel in Medlow Bath. The hotel was built in 1904 and retains a lot of the period features. The Megalong Dining room has spectacular views of the Megalong Valley.

### **Day 7 - Pierces Pass to the Blue Gum Forest 5km**

A more adventurous walk starting at Pierces Pass, descended steeply down into the Grose Valley until we reached the Blue Gum Forest. We continued along the valley floor until Acacia Flat camping ground where we enjoyed a hard earned leisurely lunch. The Blue Gum Forest was an area of leased land that local bushwalkers in the 1930's decided to preserve by buying out the lease. This was the start of the Blue Mountains national park. The walk was short but very steep and involved very steep rocks and steps all the way down. It is only 5kms return but requires up to 2 hours walking each way.

### **Day 8- Leura Cascades to Katoomba via the Federal Pass 12kms**

Another train trip to Leura and starting at the Leura Cascades, took the track to Leura Falls lookout and branched off down the slope to the Jamison Lookout junction. We then walked along the Federal Pass track along the cliff under the Three Sisters and on to Katoomba. There is a lovely board walk at Katoomba that takes you through a lush ferny forest. We spotted a couple of lyrebirds here. Some of us then went for a ride up the cable car to the top whilst others chose the steep walk up the Furber Steps. We all met up in Katoomba again for a coffee and train ride home.

### **Day 9 – Govetts Leap revisited.**

Starting in town at Dell Street going down the Popes Glen Track to the cliff top edge for spectacular view of Horseshoe and Govetts Leap Falls. On the way back we continued past the Horseshoe Falls and the NPWS Heritage Centre and Shop for last minute souvenir shopping.

### **Day 10 and 11—Return to Warrnambool.**

#### **Doris's report 2:**

As can be seen in the photo on the front of October's Warrnambool Walkers newsletter, we really did it tough in the Blue Mountains. Karen had us walking a new track each day. It was hard to hear all the birdsongs and to see the numerous beautiful wildflowers and waterfalls. It was pretty tough to endure a whole week of warm weather, also all the yummy food, heaps of laughter and general good cheer. There was also the problem of having to sit on the porch smelling the Daphnes, soaking up the atmosphere of the garden and a good cuppa, enjoying the simple things of life. Thank you Karen for such a great trip. I really had a great time and from observation I think everyone else did. Also Linda thank you for the use of your car - I hope it has suffered no ill effects.

## GSWW: Petrified Forest to Bridgewater Bay 19/9

**Walkers:** Dianne F, John P, Mabel, Lothar

We didn't want the Blue Mountains walkers to have all the fun so we got together and drove to Bridgewater Bay and then on to the Petrified Forest car park. Chris left us there to do the walk to Bridgewater Bay.

We had a look at the Blow hole, Petrified Forest, and the rugged coastline all the way to the Seals viewing platforms at Cape Bridgewater. We had lunch overlooking the many seals frolicking in the waters below us.

After the walk we met up with Chris again and had coffees at the Bridgewater Bay Kiosk before returning home.

Who'd want to be anywhere else on such a glorious day?

*Lothar*

