

The Halls Gap area: 9–10 July

Walkers: Linda (leader) Dianne F. Max, Marg, Helen A. Doug, Anne, Ken, Lothar.

Friday 8th. Helen and myself travelled up in daylight, wanting to avoid any Kangaroos. After arrival and unpacking we headed straight to the Hotel where we had arranged to meet the others at 7pm. Needless to say we were the last to leave the Hotel later that night.

Saturday 9th. Everyone met at the Sundial car park and we headed towards the Pinnacle. The weather was gorgeous, the sun was shining but there was a very cold breeze. We were able to capture some magnificent views on the way up. Whilst we watched Max climb a large rock Helen and I noticed that Anne had taken on Dolly Partons magnitude, a most unusual site, we were in hysterics. We found a spot out of the wind, once we were up the top, for a quick bite to eat. As it was such a clear day the view from the observation deck was breath taking. We then started the downhill trek towards Wonderland car park, down Silent Street and finally the Grand Canyon. There was very little water running down the Canyon, which is a bit worrying considering the time of year. At Wonderland car park we had our lunch. The final stage of the walk was down to Halls Gap via Splitter Falls and Venus Baths. The whole day took about 4 hours and it took us through such a variety of vegetation and terrain.

Our evening meal, which we all contributed to, was held in the YHA kitchen. We had soup, mains, sweets and unfortunately none of us could eat the chocolates, and they were held over for the following day.

Sunday 10th. Ken and Lothar joined us for the day. We all met at the wall of Belfield Dam, where a car shuffle took place. I, unfortunately, had forgotten how steep this walk is at the beginning. We kept walking up and up, and when we thought we were at the top, we had to go up some more. However it was well worth it for the views at the top, absolutely magnificent across the Lake and surrounding country. We stopped here for a quick break and as I was moving around taking photos I woke up a large male Kangaroo who stood up to his full height, scratched himself and then lay down to go back to sleep. What goes up must come down, as the saying goes, so down we went, to Delly's Dell, which was to be our next stop for lunch. At this point we broke up into 2 groups, the people who had come up for the day, plus a couple of others went onto the Burma Track and made their way down to Borough Huts, whilst the others followed the Dairy Creek track down to the main road.

We had a lot of fun, ate a lot, laughed a lot and certainly did some sensational walking. Thanks to those of you that came, I really enjoyed your company.

Linda

Sunday walkers: Linda (leader), Helen A, Max, Doug, Lothar, Dianne, Marg, Ken

On Sunday July 10th the walk was arranged from Lake Bellfield to Borough Huts along the Burma Track. A car shuffle was arranged from opposite Lake Bellfield to Borough Huts. Eight walkers started out on the adventure to Delys Dell for lunch, the weather was kind to us with sunny breaks and no rain, the tracks were good to walk on. The track to Delys Dell was quite steep in sections with excellent views from the "view point" of the mountains. We had lunch at Delys Dell, the 5 walkers took off on the Burma Track to Borough Huts past the Burma Hut, and 3 walkers returned to the Grampians Road via Silverband Road. The walk was interesting with different views, seeing the odd kangaroo and bird life. We arrived at Borough Huts where the car was waiting for us. The rest stop was at Dunkeld for a coffee break which was most enjoyable.

Thank you Linda for arranging the walk and a good day was had by all.

Ken

Childers Cove towards Peterborough: 5 August

Walkers: Marg, Lothar, Dianne, Max, Val, **Stroller:** Leo

Met at the Childers Cove car park, and enjoyed a nice cuppa and cookies, courtesy of Marg. Shall we go left towards Peterborough? or right towards the Crack? Left was the verdict. Up onto the cliff edge, past Murnanes bay, then back to the cliff edge again. Words we have all heard before – stunning, breathtaking, superb, wouldn't want to fall down there, and so on and so on. Do we really appreciate the scenery in our very own back yards? Maybe not. Past a superb little inaccessible bay between Murnanes bay and Sandy Bay, and then down the sand slide to Sandy Bay. A pause here to watch a Little falcon as it swept and zoomed around the rock stacks. Truly the speedsters of the animal kingdom. Up onto the cliffs again past more “stunning, breathtaking, superb, wouldn't want to fall down there” scenery, towards Stanhopes bay.

To make the day interesting

1. we learnt all about Dianne's habit of studying scat. (That's just a polite word for shit)
2. we had the anguish of learning that Dianne had dropped her water bottle along the way.
3. we oohed and aahed over Max's shiny new Italian boots.
4. saw more “stunning, breathtaking, superb, wouldn't want to fall down there” scenery

Finally after a strenuous stroll and a bit of scrub bashing of at least two hours duration we came to Dog Trap Bay, unusual for this part of the coast in that it is a stony beach. But as a reward you can let your imagination loose on all the rocks (see my “goose head” as an example)

“Tired and exhausted” and completely lacking the will to go any further we settled on the beach for soup and sandwiches. Then back to the car park, Val and Leo taking the easy track, the others retracing their steps searching for the water bottle.

From the Car Park Marg then guided us to Flaxmans hill, the highest part of the coast in this region. This is accessible from a turn off just before the Nirranda church. Having reached this peak none of us doubted the claim about it being the highest. Another discussion ensued Down to the beach or back? The backs won, the beach will be another walk another day. Certainly from the peak a huge vista from Port Fairy around to the bay of islands.

Home via the Allansford pub where a cuppa was enjoyed by some.

Leo

Editor's note: the water bottle was found in amongst chest high thick bushes.

Grampians — Golton Gorge & Mt Zero: 13 August

Walkers: Coralie (Leader), Mabel, Diane, Linda, Marg, Max and John.

Our day began with an 8 AM start from Warrnambool and coffee in Hall's Gap brought the group together. We then had another half hour or so of travel to the first of the two walks, Golton Gorge.

The track up followed the northern side of the valley, sometimes requiring care on the slippery rocks. Great company, views of the sandstone cliffs and speculation about the nature of the bird roosting places saw the uphill stage pass easily and we were soon in the region of the old copper mine. Some peering (and undignified reaching) into the shafts followed.

The walk back down the southern side of the gorge took us past stands of grass trees and all too soon, back to the cars for lunch including the apparently traditional vanilla slice.

Another short time in the cars had us at the start of the Mt Zero track. This part of the day provided great opportunity for some scrambling and we were soon on the summit looking South East to Mt Stapleton and across the plains to the North and West. One could not help noticing the Mt Zero Olive Farm just below us. There was much anticipation as this was to be our afternoon tea stop and we were soon back at the vehicles and on our (circuitous) way there. Coffee, olive oil tastings and chocolate brownie fortified us for the trip back to Warrnambool.

Thanks to Coralie for an excellent day. It was a wonderful mix of challenge, interest and social activity.

John



Otways—Wonga: 20 August

Walkers: GBC: Lesley, Rosemary. WW: Doris, Mike & Liz, Graeme, Max. Dual members: John (leader) & Glenda, Alan.

This was a combined Warrnambool / Geelong Clubs walk.

Meeting time was 10am at Gellibrand. So when I arrived soon after (no comment Coralie) we drove up the short distance to the entrance to a farm located at Wonga. Although it was fine, a strong wind was blowing so we promptly set off onto the property, with a short stop at the impressive old homestead surrounded by huge palm and Cyprus trees. At 300m elevation it afforded fine views overlooking the township. We followed the natural ridge line westward which was bordered by the Gellibrand River valley on one side with another large valley to the north. We had continual views south to the main Otway Ridge where the cloud was just starting to lift ... for having lived up there for the last 40 years I can assure everyone that it does happen occasionally. There were several muddy areas that we negotiated caused by the 500 sheep and 200 cows that grazed the farm.

We descended downwards following a spooked mob of sheep entering into the bush near the Gellibrand River. A short 'bash' that negotiated some blackberry infestations with our trip leader energetically swinging his machete clearing the way and the crossing of two small streams soon had us out on pasture again, now on a neighbouring farm. The mystery of why Rosemary wore shorts was revealed as we found that she loves playing in water ... nearly as much as the tiger leeches loved playing on her. Lunch was had near the banks of the river in pleasant conditions before we started the walk north to the ridge. At the farmhouse we met Brian, the caretaker, his friendly German Shepherd and several of his prize winning Clydesdales. Then it was off on the final leg through beautiful gums and wattles along Escarpment Road back to our cars. For what was a most enjoyable walk, thanks go to John for his local knowledge and seeking permission from property owners. All were tempted back to 'Gelli' for a coffee in the old shop, now also a café.

I was happy with an early finish as I had a full moon walk later. There is something about being on a remote beach at night with the waves illuminated by a big moon ... but that's another story.

Alan

Grampians maintaining tracks at the Chimney Pots & Mt Abrupt: 27–28 August

Walkers: Marg, Lockie, Di, Max, David, Helen, Linda, Coralie



Skipton Rail Trail, Mt Widderin, and Mt Elephant, etc : 3–4 September

This was 5 trips piled into one weekend, each with a different set of participants. So as you can imagine, the car shuffle became more than a little complicated. A little like the puzzle about the man, the fox and the two sheep on the side of the river with a boat that can only carry two at a time. Thankfully Janice was more than up to the challenge.

Coralie and Mabel rode their gleaming mountain bikes from Ballarat to Skipton along the rail trail, and then on to Mooramong Homestead for the Saturday night feast in the shearer's quarters.

Linda, Janice, Helen and I walked with Ballarat-een ring-in Karen for 19 km along the rail trail from Scarsdale to Pittong (25,000 steps on Karen's pedometer!) and shuffled the cars. Linda proved once again that walking on compacted gravel is hard on the feet, ending up with a beautiful blister on her heel. Let's hope it is better in time for the Bibbulmun walk in two weeks.

After the first two courses of the feast, we all went bandicoot spotting in the homestead grounds. They didn't seem too worried about our activities – we saw a number grazing in the lawns and one in particular seemed to like the attention and stayed around so we could have a good look. Apparently there are 90 bandicoots living in the area! More feast finished up the evening nicely.

Sunday and a few of us toured the homestead before joining Marg and Ken to slip, slide and wriggle through the lava cave at Mt Widderin. Those old clothes were a good idea - we all got muddy.

After lunch Marg, Ken, Helen and I climbed Mt Elephant. We enjoyed the view from the crater rim, and it was really interesting to talk to the locals and get a glimpse of how hard it is to re-create an ecosystem after it has been destroyed. It is going to be a really long term project to get it looking like it did early last century.

Thanks Janice for the perfect walking weather and a great glimpse of the variety and interest to be found in the Western Plains.

Max

Bibbulmun Track: 17–30 September

Walkers: Chris, Helen, Irene, Leo, Linda, Liz, Lothar, Mike, Val, and members from Perth's [AOA](#)

Leo: Albany - Windmills, windmills everywhere, but where is Don Quixote?

First real walk of the trip scheduled today Enough of living in five star Chalets in Albany, it's time for some real work, a round trip starting at the Albany "Wind farm" along the coast to an overnight hut on the Bibbulmun Track, and then back to the wind farm.

Last toilet stop and off through typical coastal scrub. Similar to coastal vegetation in Warrnambool only in that the bushes are all salt tolerant, but there the similarity ends. Here there are hundreds - maybe even more - varieties of plants, many in flower in September. I won't even start to name them, mainly because I can't!

This was my first experience of the Bibbulmun Track and I was impressed. Well defined, but not at all intrusive. A bonus on today's walk was the sound of the surf from the cliffs just off the track. A fairly easy two hours brought us to an overnight hut, and lunch. Liz was introduced to the "deadly WA dugong spider" also known as the "Finger Web spider". A bite on your funnel by a finger web spider is said to be very painful!

Lunch, conversation, toilet visit, and back towards - whoops the wrong way for a while - the windmills. Discussion was held about the impact of the windmills on the environment, and the conclusion was that it can be severe in that no dinosaurs have ever been seen near the windmills. A possible reason was proposed by somebody - who knows - that maybe at night amorous dinosaurs attempt to mate with the windmills and get chopped into salami by the blades. Back to the car park and toilets, and back to the 5 star chalets. A very enjoyable introduction to the Bibbulmun Track.

Editor's comments: Six of the walkers continued along the Bibbulmun Track for another couple of hours until they reached Frenchman Bay Road.



Chris: Walpole - Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk & Tingle Forest walk

The overall-clad man climbed over the safety railing and disappeared, causing a nasty lurch in my stomach, and leaving his companion adjusting climbing gear on the gently-swaying ramp. There's another career you don't hear much about: Tree Top Walk maintenance. The guys were checking the struts, and also installing anti-slip mats, so that in rainy weather visitors would no longer have to walk like penguins to avoid falling. Given how often it rains in this area, that's going to be a big improvement.

It's a wonderful experience to walk way up high amongst the treetops, then experience the tall WA tingle trees at ground level. People fall silent as they wander the paths; the trees do all the speaking necessary. It's a magical place.

I'm told some children experienced the magic of Leo emerging as a troll from inside a hollow tree trunk beside the path. I understand he demanded payment in the form of ice cream, but the kids told him to "Get real" and kept eating. It's not easy to earn a living as a troll these days.



Linda: Walpole - Giant Tingle Tree

Walkers: Helen, Mike, Liz, Val, Leo, Linda

We were camping at Walpole Tourist Park the night before our scheduled walk to the Giant Tingle Tree. The Park was sensational and owners so obliging, they gave us a discount for being a group. The camp kitchens found in some of the camp grounds amazed me. This one had a TV, microwave, fridge, hotplates it was like being at home. Chris and Lothar had decided not to walk this day so they actually drove up to the tree whilst the rest of us parked our cars down below and walked up the Bibbulmun Track. It was a gradual incline on a well defined track. The forest put on a marvellous display for us with Tingle trees and Casuarinas in abundance. Part way up we came to an observation area but because the trees were so tall it was difficult to capture the view, so had a brief stop. When we finally got to the top we were astounded to find that there was not just one Giant Tingle Tree but a whole forest of them, with a board walk around them, to stop the tramping down of the earth around them and people damaging their root system. Some of these trees are 400 years old and massive. You can walk through them; there are photos of cars parked inside some of them. My favourite

one had been called the Grandmother; her trunk was full of knarls which resembled a very wise, old face, unfortunately I could not get close enough to cuddle her. We met up with Chris and Lothar whilst we were up there and we all walked together. Chris and Lothar then drove on to Pemberton. The rest of us started our walk down and stopped again at the viewing area for lunch. Whilst we were there three women stopped as well. The mother travels over to WA once a year from Tasmania, to catch up with her married daughter and they walk parts of the Bibbulmun, just amazing stuff.

Irene: A Weekend in Pemberton with Old and New friends, or the weekend when East trounced West.

Walkers: Warrnambool - Lothar & Chris, Mike & Liz, Leo & Val, Linda, Helen & Irene;

AOA Perth - Robyn, Ramah, Godini, Heather, Mary, Judy, Bruce, Barbara & Ken

I finished my working week and headed to Tulla looking forward to catching up with friends in Perth on my way to Pemberton where the WW's were expecting me. The New Norcia (Mt Hawthorn) bakery was a very welcome site the next day, and after lingering over morning tea, so that I could stay for lunch, I thought I'd better pay my bill so that the manager didn't start charging me rent.

Do you see where this weekend was headed right from the start?

Robyn arrived home from work (Friday evening) and we headed off shopping for the weekend, just the essentials – biscuits, dip, blue cheese and a couple of things for lunch, not much though. Then out for dinner to the Vietnamese restaurant, home for a cupper and chat whilst Robyn packed. Up bright and early Sat morning, picked Ramah up and off to Pemberton, arriving just in time for, you guessed it, lunch.

The Warrnambool mob greeted us with food, drinks, lots of news of from the preceding week, and RED & WHITE streamers. Yes that's right - we were in the heartland of the West Coast Eagles with the number 1 Sydney Swans supporter in our midst on grand final weekend!!!!

The afternoon was interspersed with screams and groans from the lounge of the very comfortable accommodation with the very big TV firmly tuned into the football, and the #1 Swans supporter coming and going from the Pemberton Pub, just to annoy the locals. Whilst the rest of us headed into the bush for a quiet stroll, a detour on the way home to pick up some wine before showers and a sumptuous meal prepared by Lothar. The AOA lot joined us post dinner so they could hear a blow by blow description of the footy, and to plan the next day.

Sunday morning bought about another great walk, the AOA lot chatting their way through the bush whilst we soaked up the scenery and magnificent array of wild flowers. Because we hadn't yet had enough food or drink the afternoon was spent at the sumptuous wood work café. Back home for a Sunday roast and an evening spent with the AOA mob nodding off in the middle of conversations. I don't know if it was the fire, the food, the wine, the STRENUOUS walking, the making of new friends, the catching up with old friends or all that barracking for those Swans, but by Sunday night we were all well and truly ready for sleep.



As we all bid a fond farewell and rolled out of Pemberton on Monday morning final visits were made to the divine café for that last latté, and the Pemberton market to stock up on much needed grocery items, as we were all becoming anorexic and dehydrated!!!

An extremely enjoyable weekend thanks to all, both East and West.

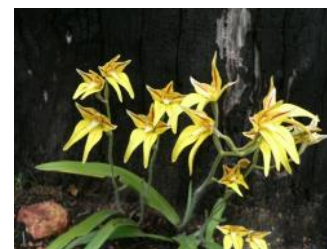
Lothar: Pemberton - [Beedelup National Park](#) with AOA

We did a car shuffle between the start of the walk (where the Bibbulmun Track crosses Channybearup Road) and end of the walk (corner Vasse Highway and Hop Gardens Road). We (about 18 in total) headed west and then Northwest until we came to the Beedelup campsite situated along the Beedelup Brook. After morning tea a few walkers returned to the cars while the majority continued on.

We visited the Walk Through Tree (and like typical walkers attempted to set a World Record by squashing as many as we could into the hollow!), the large lake/dam (where we saw a tiger snake) and then the Beedelup Falls (where we crossed a swiny bridge and had lunch). I was tempted to diverge the group to the Karri Valley Resort when someone hinted that they had cappuccinos there but I resisted the urge.

The track was supposed to cross Beedelup Road (marked on the map as "Karri Forest Explorer drive"). As all we found was an overgrown disused track we continued...until we reached Carey Road. We then walked south west until we reached the road junction that Mike & I had thankfully sussed out prior to the car shuffle. This unmarked road junction then led us along the almost disused section of the Beedelup Road and joined us to the Hop Gardens Road and the parked vehicles at the Vasse Highway T-intersection.

Highlights included the Karri forest, Walk Through Tree, Beedelup Falls and swing bridge, and the great atmosphere generated by the walkers - particularly during the world record attempt.





Lothar: Balingup - to Hays Rd area

We drove to Balingup that morning and had a few showers on the way. We met Val and Leo there - they'd arrived the night before. While waiting for the weather to clear a bit we had morning tea at a local cafe. In spite of the conditions we decided to walk anyway.

The Golden Valley arboretum area was interesting but not as spectacular as we'd hoped. There were only a few trees dotted around. The rain held us up for about 10 minutes (fortunately we had shelter) before we continued on a steady climb to Hay Road.

The highlight of the walk was between Hay Road and what the 4A map refers to as "Scenic Views". Here the forest had been burned (the year before or earlier that year?) and there were cow slip and spider orchids everywhere. We spent a lot of time looking at and photographing the orchids, grass trees, Zamia palms, etc. The scenic view was also worthwhile but the howling wind in our faces and the drizzle drove us back into the shelter of the trees.



Lothar: Dwellingup

We'd spent the night in a large cabin at the caravan park and had had our last night together. In the early morning we did a quick car shuffle and dropped off 2 of the cars at the endpoint. Our final walk was to be beside a railway track heading South East out of Dwellingup.

The walking was easy but a bit boring in comparison to all the other walks we'd done. A lot of the flowers along the track were garden escapees. Regular burnoffs along the railway track had seemed to wipe out a lot of the native flowers. We passed a small town (Holyoake?) that appeared to have been burnt out and abandoned some years before.



The railway track is only used now for the tourist steam train. During our walk we heard it and all raced to the track to look at it and take pictures. Not long afterwards we came to a "station" where the train had stopped, somehow turned around, and was waiting for the passengers to return from a brief stop. Helen, Liz and Val took the opportunity to pay for a ride back into Dwellingup while Chris, Mike and I continued a couple more K to Inglehope Road where the 2 cars were waiting.

