

GSWW from Mt Richmond to Tarragal camp to The Blowholes: 5–6 November



Mt Field NP, Cradle Mountain, Narawntapu NP, etc: 10–20 November

Walkers: Di, Karen, Ken, Lothar, Marg, Max, and members of the Launceston Walking Club led by Carolyn Farrar

Carolyn's (Launceston Walking Club): *Mt Field NP*

This weekend trip was shared in the company of the Warrnambool Walkers, a Victorian Walking Club of which my parents belong. They were awoken late on Friday evening as 9 LWC (Launceston Walking Club) descended upon the Mt Field campground. We eventually managed to erect all our tents and settle down to sleep.

The plan was to be away by 8.30 am as we still had the 16 km drive up to Lake Dobson. A few of the group were ready early and enjoyed a stroll to the fast-flowing nearby Russell Falls.

After the logistics of the car shuttle was sorted we began the trip to Lake Dobson. The temperature was noticeably cooler at the lake which was a sign of events to come! We donned our warm gear then began our walk with 13 backpackers and 2 day walkers. Patches of snow could be seen as we gained height. We retreated to the Rodway Ski Hut for morning tea to escape the weather which had deteriorated quite significantly. Trangias, a cake supplied by the leader, snacks and waterproof pants surfaced, preparing the group for the trip to K-Col. The day walkers made the sensible decision to retreat to the cars at this stage! The walk was challenge for us all as snow and ice-covered scree and slippery duckboards became the order of the day.

The group worked very well together helping and supporting each other as we neared the Petersen Hut. A small group decided to stop for lunch in a brief break in the weather whilst the others pushed on, eventually having lunch in the shelter of the Hut. The Petersen Hut could have been renamed the Petersen Sauna as the temperature and steam rose as we lit the fire and all filed into the Hut, rotating around the Hut like a peleton so we could all gain the benefit of the small fire and attempt to dry ourselves off. Any thought of attempting Mt Field West had been dismissed long ago and a small break in the weather was seized to enable the pitching of tents by Clemes Tarn. Rodney and Rolfe kindly surveyed potential campsites for us before the rest of us braved the cold. Once tents were pitched some stayed in their tents until the morning whereas others returned to the Hut to cook up gourmet delicacies.



The weather on Sunday was a vast improvement on the bleakness of the Saturday so we were able to gain some lovely views of the Valley as we walked in pursuit of the Watcher and Newdegate Pass. Morning tea was enjoyed at the base of the Watcher before we climbed the said mountain. Views of Frenchmans Cap were gained and the Southern Ranges. Some more scree (minus snow) was tackled on our descent to Newdegate Hut where we met Lothar and Ken, our day walkers, for lunch. We returned to Rodway Hut via Tarn Shelf, and decided to return to the cars via Pandani Grove, all in sunny conditions allowing for lovely views of Lake Seal and the tarns.

We unexpectedly needed to change a tyre of Rolfe's vehicle upon our return as it had been punctured during tour absence. We said farewells to the Warrnambool Walkers as they were to stay on at Mt Filed another two nights. Thanks you to Margaret, Ken, Diane, Max, Lothar and Karen for your company.

This trip proved to be a great learning experience for us all and was a good reminder of the potential for winter weather in late spring. The Warrnambool Walkers are planning a return invitation to Victoria.

Marg's: *Solitary Man's Hut 16th November*

Walkers: David & Heather, Carolyn, Ken & Marg

Several years ago our friends, David & Heather, told me the history of Solitary Man's Hut. A soldier returned from the Vietnam War, unable to face society. He headed for the wilderness to settle out there by Tiger Lake. He built a simple shelter, an A-shaped hut with a fireplace, a bed with a mattress of animal skins and neatly hung essential utensils for daily living. Outside, a large flat boulder served as a platform for his exercises. He would walk and ride a bike that was stashed in the forest down the mountains, to Mole Creek for his rations. He lived in the hut for some years. These days he has settled in Launceston with a family of his own. He returns to the hut sometimes. The door is left unlocked for day walkers and as an emergency shelter.

David led our day walk. The track to Trappers Hut is well-marked and well-known. The track then heads east through alpine scrub. Wearing long sleeves for shade on a nice fine day, prickly scoparia scratched our legs. Tiger Lake is about 90 minutes beyond Trappers Hut. Pencil Pines reflect in the dark waters of the lake. Giant mosquitoes are resident. Ken encountered his first leech. We picnicked with the mozzies.

We retraced our steps, passing George Howes Lake and many tarns. When the dolerite rocks of Clumner Bluff towered like a fortress we were at the end of our day of walking in a beautiful isolated area near the Walls of Jerusalem.



Lothar's: Mt Field NP

We left Warrnambool for Melbourne on Thursday afternoon in a 2 car convoy. By the time the Spirit of Tasmania left the dock at about 8:40pm we were excited to be finally underway on our 10 day trip. We went to bed before midnight and a few of us got some sleep. None of us were sea sick.

We arrived in Devonport at about 7am Friday, had breakfast, and then headed for Mt Field NP via the Great Lake. After setting up tents we walked to Russell Falls. The LWC contingent did not arrive until about 10:30pm but I was too pooped to get out of my tent to greet them - it had been a long day.

Everyone was up bright and early on Saturday. Karen - who'd moved to Hobart to live - also arrived early to join in the weekend walk. After introductions, etc, most of us walked to Russell Falls again before heading in convoy up the dirt road to the Lake Dobson Carpark. It was cold up there and we had a light drizzle that came and went. We skirted to the left of Lake Dobson and headed uphill. We stopped for morning tea at the Day Shelter at Rodway Tow. You can imagine the excitement and noise in a small hut with about 14 walkers falling on a cake that Carolyn had schlepped up!

Ken and I then departed from the group - they were doing a 2 day circuit via K Col, Newdegate Pass and Tarn Shelf whereas us two were doing just day walks. We returned to the shelter at Lake Dobson Carpark and had lunch. We then drove back to the campground, stopping along the way to do the short Tall Trees circuit and the longer return walk to Lady Barron Falls. We had the obligatory Cappuccinos, and after tea went to the pub for a beer.

On Sunday Ken and I drove back to the Lake Dobson Carpark. The weather was much better than the day before - you could actually see the tarns. We again stopped for morning tea at the Day shelter at Rodway Tow before weaving our way through the Tarn Shelf area towards Lake Newdegate. It was perfect timing: when we reached the shelter at Lake Newdegate we could see the overnights slowly making their way downhill towards us. After lunch we headed back at a brisk pace, stopping at the Rodway Tow for afternoon tea. At the Lake Dobson Carpark we took the obligatory group photo before saying our goodbyes.

On Monday Di, Ken, Marg, Max and I went on a 4-5hr return day walk to Mt Field East. We started near Lake Fenton and headed along muddy tracks and through Windy Moor before reaching the rocks near the summit. After a fair bit of rock scrambling we finally reached the peak. As it was cold and windy and looked like there was rain heading out way we soon



headed downhill again. After crossing Windy Moor we reached a dry forest patch with views - a good place for lunch. Within another hour we were back at the cars and headed for the cafe for the obligatory hot drink. Ken and Marg left at about 4pm to drive north for the remainder of their holiday...and then there were three!

Tuesday was one of those days. We got up early to reach Cradle Mountain by lunchtime. Di moved the car and the car key disappeared shortly thereafter and try as we might we couldn't find it again. There was no spare key. A tow to Hobart's Mitsubishi's dealer, lunch in a restaurant, pick up a hire car, drive, dinner, drive, saw us at Waldheim Hut at Cradle Mountain by about 9:30pm. We set up our sleeping bags - oh, *there's* the key - had showers, and went to bed.

Cradle Mountain

Wednesday was a perfect sunny day with just a light wind. We were away early and soon were on the Overland Track. We lingered at the Crater Falls before making our way to the boat shed at Crater Lake. The track then became rough and steep. After Marions Lookout the going was a lot easier. We stopped for morning tea at Kitchen Hut looking up at Cradle Mountain. Di had decided to return so Max and I continued.

The climb was scrambly towards the top but the views made it worthwhile. I get all smiley just remembering the moment. We had lunch with a growing number of other walkers/climbers, had another look around and then headed back...slowly.

That night Di and Max drove to the Info Centre to go on a Ranger led night walk to see the animals but I was too pooped to join them.

Narawntapu NP (formerly Asbestos Ranges NP)

Thursday was another long driving day. We left early to return the hire car back to Hobart, have lunch, pick up Di's car (now with a 2nd set of keys), drive to LaTrobe (near Devonport) to drop off Di at her Rellies and then with Max drive a short distance to Narawntapu NP. We got there late afternoon and set up our tents for a 2 night stay.

On Friday, Max and I did a 5hr return walk to Point Vision. There were too many trees at the top for good views, but from the track near the top you could see back towards the flats, towards the Springlawn camp site, towards Port Sorell, and in the distance you could see Devonport. On the way there/back we saw a few Pink Lady orchids, and lots of Paddy Melons, Wallabies, Kangaroos and Wombats.

On Saturday we packed up our tents and then headed towards Little Badger Head. We stopped at the bird hide, skirted flooded sections of the track, saw a snake, climbed Archers Knob and had spectacular views of the surrounding countryside before returning along the very wide Bakers Beach. Then it was shower time, a rendezvous with Di, Ken and Marg in Devonport, dinner, and then the boat trip back to the mainland..and home.

Many thanks to Marg for organising the trip, to Carolyn for leading the Mt Field walk, and to all of you for making it a fantastic walking holiday.



Christmas Breakup weekend at Princess Margaret Rose Caves: 3–4 December

Walkers: Anne, Chris, Coralie, Di, Diane, Doug, Helen, Irene, Ken, Linda, Liz, Lothar, Mabel, Marg, Mike

A great weekend was had by all!

Most arrived Friday night and a few on Saturday morning. The walks were Lasletts Loop walk (Sat AM, PMRC), Dry Creek Loop walk (Saturday PM, just past Donovans Landing), and the Caroline Sinkhole & Wombat Loop walk (Sunday AM, Penambol Conservation Park). Fortunately there were only a couple of spots of rain on Saturday and Sunday.

In summary: Great company, great camping facilities, easy and interesting walks, porkers delights (pots of tea & plunger coffee at the PMRC cafe, nibbles/roasts/fruit salad/wines/chocies/etc on Saturday night), an evening stroll to the jetty, the *royalty* theme for the Saturday evening, the presents from Santa, hours of laughter, and the mandatory Cappuccinos on the way home. The quote of the weekend was from Marg (in reference to husband and acting Santa Ken) - "He's been coming down my chimney for 30 years!"

Merry Xmas to you all,
Lothar





New Year's Eve at Dunkeld: 31 December to 1 January

Walkers: *Coralie, Diane, Dianne, Gabrielle, Helen, Ken, Marg, Sandra, Tony, Trevor*

We arrived separately during the afternoon. Ken and I wondered what had struck us as we stepped out of the car on arrival at the campground. Hot northerly gusts and probably 42 degrees. One tent pole promptly snapped soon after the tent was pitched. With luck we had a trusty old smaller tent with us.

We joined the girls at the town pool and cooled off quickly. The waterslide (for big and little kids), floating mats and doorstep shaped floaties featured.

The Polo Match at the racecourse started at 4pm, but the pool satisfied us. Aperitifs, chicken, salad and champagne was enjoyed when the day cooled as the sun went down. We walked out to the racecourse where the party continued. Restaurant and Drinks tents attended to the formal diners, coffee and cans served the rest of us who sat on rugs and camp stools when we weren't dancing to the great music from "HeartBeat" who played from the back of a truck. Children with luminous balls and hoops played on the oval. It was a great family event for locals and we visitors. The music continued past midnight, welcoming in the New Year, 2006. We walked 'home' by the light of the Milky Way and headlights of cars. Tony and Sandra entertained us with supper at Parker Street and after 1:30am we ambled back to our tents.

Roosters crowing and Dianne gave us a wake-up call at 5am for the 'walk up the Piccaninny' to see the sunrise on New Year's Day. Champagne at the summit and sausages in the carpark offered by the locals who organise this walk told us that for the fourth year the sun has failed to make any dramatic rise...just a glow on the horizon through grey cloud.

The Arboretum attracted most before the trip home, whilst Coralie, Dianne and the Farrars climbed Mt Sturgeon. A weather change of low clouds swirled across the gap and steady rain set in so that those of us who had forgotten raincoats (!) were soggy on their return.

We converged on Madigan's Cafe at Penshurst for coffee and cake. We'd packed a lot into our twenty four hour trip to Dunkeld to celebrate together and welcome in the year 2006.

Marg