

Grampians: Briggs Bluff Interclub Circuit 14—15 October

Walkers: *Dianne F, John L, Mabel M, Coralie G (Warrnambool Walkers), John M, Peter M, Beth D and Carmel G (Bayside Bushwalkers).*

Briggs Bluff is an impressive peak from the flat track leaving the Roses Gap car park. Most gazing up at the summit wall on that Saturday morning had little idea of the trail ahead but could appreciate that there would be blood, sweat, tears and perhaps a few bruises involved in the rugged climb ahead.

The first stop for the day was beside the cool ferns surrounding the pool at the base of Beehive Falls. The continuing dry had reduced the falls to a small trickle but it gave the group a chance to adjust clothing and packs and prepare for the steep haul ahead.

The Bayside group, led by Peter, struck out strongly but were soon brought back to the fray by a somewhat ambiguous red direction arrow. We made steady progress in the warm weather and soon had the worst of the climbing behind us. It may have helped that we had ‘superman’ aka John in his red cape walking with us (supposedly a rain cover for his pack).



Second breakfast was called at the “Arch” where the green tripod seat made its appearance to the amusement of our city hikers. At the Briggs Bluff turnoff determined preparations were made to thwart the marauding crows that carefully watch hiking parties from treetop locations and plot sorties to deplete packs of edible contents. Packs secured, we made the 1 km detour to reach the top of Briggs Bluff. Unfortunately the windy conditions prevented us from enjoying the panoramic views for too long and we soon returned to our stashed gear. Success! Not a single pack had its zip undone and no food was lost. One to us; zero to the currawongs.

After a welcome lunch break, we continued on past the Mud Hut Creek Bush Campsite and on to tackle the second major climb for the day. Despite the warm weather, this was soon conquered and we were enjoying views of Lake Wartook from our high point. The spring wildflowers were also a highlight with many varieties including orchids seen alongside the track.



As we descended to our campsite, Longpoint East, the promised water gathering spot proved disappointing. Usually a decent flow of water across some rocks, it was hardly more than a drip. Undeterred Beth and Carmel collected water in a rock people whilst the rest of us continued to camp, hoping for better water in the creek behind the camp.

Peter, Mabel and I spent some time in this pursuit and came back with enough reasonable quality water to get us through the rest of the trip.

Around the cooking circle (fuel stove only area) that evening we traded stories and walking gear tips. Peter's cheapo "Crocs" proved a revelation in lightweight camp shoes. Mabel's shared pre-dinner nibbles and apricot and almond Biscotti meant that some could lay claim to a five course bush feast. Dianne and John's 2 litres of red wine was also enjoyed by all; especially by those who didn't have to carry it!

The next morning we followed the 4WD tracks to Longpoint West Camp where we found clear, fresh water flowing. I think the party was unconvinced at my protestations that this was very unusual.

In the relative cool of the morning we climbed the Mt Difficult track. At the base of the summit we off-loaded our packs and made the ascent to the summit cairn and trig point. Alas on our return, we found our feathered friends had taken advantage of our complacency. John and Mabel lost food to the currawongs. The score was now one all!

At lunch on the return to Roses Gap, John declared the weekend a catastrophe. Alarmed, we all stared at him. He was still ruminating over Peter's late night revelation that true love only lasted a month. Peter upgraded this estimate to 10 years when pressed, but it was the former statement that captured the imagination and destroyed it for some. We can only hope time will heal the disillusionment!

Thanks to all for accepting the challenges of this walk with good grace and much humour.

Coralie



Wilson's Promontory 27–29 October

Walkers: Linda (leader), Helen, Doris, Diane, Margaret, Michael.

We arrived at the lighthouse 6 hours after starting our walk. The first sighting of the lighthouse was so exciting. It is perched out on rocks and looks brilliant glistening in the sun. We still had 3 kilometres to walk to get there, which included "Heart Attack Hill". We were welcomed by our hosts Chris and Ailsa, who put the kettle on for us. I just happened to glance out the window, before the kettle boiled, and "Oh my God" is what came out of my mouth. We had noticed the wind getting stronger but we were not anticipating what we saw. The black mass of a storm was heading towards us across the ocean; it was actually frightening, especially when it hit us. The house was shaking and the hail came down. The sea was huge crashing up on the rocks, it took my breath away. All through the night, whilst we were snuggled in our sleeping bags, we listened to the storm. The next morning the caretakers told us that the wind reached 135 kilometres per hour, WOW.

Linda

Comments on the trip:

Doris: Exhilarating, especially when I first saw the light house. There were a couple of times on the walk in that I started to lose it because my energy levels were dropping; I went quiet so that I could concentrate.

Helen: The group were very supportive of each other, we mixed well. I was amazed at how stunning the vegetation was, the contrast of the black trunks, new green growth against the grey rocks.

Diane: Because of the fire going through the rocks have been exposed and they look stunning.

Margaret: This has been a real physical challenge for me but to be with people who were appreciating the environment helped me refocus my thoughts.

Michael: I am amazed at the delicateness of the plants living under such a harsh environment. Having not been here before everything is so new for me.

Linda: I was apprehensive about going because of the fires but I was blown away by the new life, it is like the Prom has had a rebirth. I could not believe how majestic the rock formations were. I've been here before and never seen the rocks; it's like viewing the skeleton of the Prom.



Great Ocean Walk from Cape Otway Lighthouse to Johanna Beach: 25–26 November

Walkers: Coralie, Marg, Janice, Michael and Mabel (leader)

The walker's camp at Cape Otway is hidden in the bushes not far from the lighthouse. As well as the usual 8 camp sites it also has a group site within the camp. A comment made by a fellow walker who had stayed there on the Friday night was the noise the koalas made during the night disturbed their sleep – the joys of bush camping!

From Cape Otway the track goes along the cliff top until the branch to Rainbow Falls. Rainbow Falls is a 3 km side trip and well worth doing. The falls are spring fed and there was quite a bit of water trickling over the moss covered rocks. The colour comes from the build up of minerals on the rock faces.

There are great coastal views all along this section of the track to Aire River. The walker's camp again is in the shelter of the trees. We lived up to our "Porker" tradition and were even able to exchange ideas with a family group sharing the camp with us. Michael tried to add some fish to our meal but after a couple of hours without even a bite gave up.

It was an early wake up next morning with the birds starting before 5.00 am (I didn't say we were up that early). The first few kilometres of the walk towards Castle Cove is through bush but then opens out to walk around the cliff face and offering superb views of Castle Cove and towards Moonlight Heads.

The walk finished with a kilometre or so along the beach to the car park. Michael, Coralie and Marg decided to walk a bit further by walking out to the Ocean Road while the car shuffle was going on.

A camping fee is being introduced on December 1st for the Great Ocean Walk. It will cost \$20.00 per tent site per night plus a \$5.00 processing administration fee per application.

Mabel



Christmas Breakup at the Princess Margaret Rose Caves: 2–3 December

Walkers: Anne, Chris, Claire, Claude, Doug, Helen, Irene, Ken, Linda, Liz, Liz(2), Lothar, Marg, Mike, Sandra, Tony, Vince

A total of 17 Walkers enjoyed each others' company at Princess Margaret Rose Caves. The Dry Creek Walk fulfilled the requirement for gentle exercise, followed by wine and nibbles, and frivolities got us all merry and jolly, to the theme of "Favourite Bush Characters".

To the great delight of the crowd present, Prancer and Dancer arrived with Santa in tow. Although few of the Walkers admitted to being "good" during the year, presents were duly distributed, with shrieks of joy!

Crickey! We were fortunate to have a wide variety of deceased personalities visiting to bring a few laughs. Steve (Helen) Irwin pranced around the campfire with a Croc, accompanied by John Williamson's song; The Crocodile Roll. She seemed quite happy to share her tent all night with that primitive animal. Enough said.

Bushrangers, Ben Hall and the Outlaws burst on the scene, demanding money from the startled campers. No one claimed to have any money, poor buggers. More of a stuff-up than a stick-up!

Things got off to a bad start as I (Ken) forgot the gas stove, but the weekend was great with good company and plenty of fellowship.

Marg is still searching for the Red Tailed Black Cockatoo. What a magnificent meal. Lothar "Iron Chef" filled 4 camp ovens with succulent goodies. The camp was another "Porkers Event" for the 17 campers.



Plenty of laughs were had around the campfire, so I agree with all written above. I enjoyed the Dry Creek Walk with its wombat holes, view of the Glenelg River, and bush track was very pleasant. Loved the meal and the fruit salad.

Had a great time. Good company, superb food, (Well done Lothar and helpers). Walk was very pleasant and lots of birds was a bonus. Great weekend, everything went well.

A discovery for us Swiss people, we enjoyed everything so much; the company, the cookout, the bush and the cabin. We had such a laugh with Santa Claus.

It was our first time camping (in a cabin), and we thoroughly enjoyed the occasion. The meal was very good, and it was a great occasion to get to know people better.

