

Terang to Mt Noorat: 1 April

Walkers: *Doug (leader), Marg, Ken, Barbara, and Sandra*

Doug's walk on 1st April from Terang to Mt Noorat and back started with five walkers: Doug, Marg, Ken, Barbara, and myself.

We started after morning tea provided by Doug and Marg. We left Terang at about 10 o'clock. The walking track to Mt Noorat had been recently relaid so fast progress was made to Noorat township. The only nuisance was the FLIES that descended and stuck for the rest of the day.

At Noorat Doug thought we may have been able to enter the Presbyterian Church built in memory of Neil Black who died 15th May 1880. The church was erected by his widow and sons in 1883 and has a magnificent organ inside. Unfortunately a service was in progress so we couldn't enter. We tried on the way back but the church was locked up.

FLIES and all we headed up Mt Noorat for lunch at the summit. Surprise, surprise, Doris was up there before us, waiting. (I thought she must have flown in by helicopter!) Six of us then had lunch and took in the great views all around as the day was very clear and you could see forever.

After lunch we walked the rim and back to Noorat and the Beehive Cafe for icecream and coffee. A brisk walk back to the cars completed a 16+km walk on a beautiful day.

Thank you Doug and thanks to the present Neil Black for allowing us through his property.

Sandra D

Mt Abrupt: 8 April

Walkers: *Ken (leader), Doug, Doris, Linda, Lothar and Marg.*

We all arrived at the Mt Abrupt car park at 10am. After morning tea we proceeded to the summit of Mt Abrupt on a beautiful, sunny, clear morning. The outlook over the countryside was magnificent. There were a lot of walkers on the mountain – the car park was full.

We arrived at the top where we had lunch with the flying ants and hornets. The Easter Bunny was there somewhere because we shared Easter eggs during the lunch break which everyone enjoyed.

After lunch we walked back to ground level meeting different walkers who were proceeding up the mountain. We all arrived back safe and sound and pleased with the day's exercise.

The day finished with coffee and cake at the cafe in Dunkeld. Everyone had had a great time and the walk was very enjoyable.

Ken

Ararat, Anzac Day Scarecrow trip: 25 April

Walkers: Val, Heather, Marg, Ken

Val, Heather, Marg, Ken and I left Warrnambool at 9:15am. We arrived at the Ararat Gardens and had morning tea compliments of Marg. After a short drive we reached the Gully Gardens winery where Val had put in an entry of Bart Simpson. There were 12 entries in all and all were good. Val won the people's choice last year and won \$1,000 of fine wine. Ken sampled some of the wine and bought a bottle to keep him company when Marg leaves to go O/S.

We then climbed a steep hill after our lunch to view the town of Ararat. We all agreed we had had a great time. Oh yes, we did stop for coffee and cake.

Thank you Marg for putting on such a fine day and for Ken for the safe driving.

Doris

Anglesea Heath area: 29 April

Walkers: Doris, Glenda, Graeme, John (leader), Liz, Lothar, Michael J, Mike H, and GBC members

Lothar, Michael, Mike and Liz accepted John and Glenda's hospitality and stayed overnight at their home in Anglesea. Glenda provided a wonderful lasagne to build our glycogen levels for the walk the next day. Some of our party spent the night watching the final of the World Cup cricket, which is not the best preparation for a long walk.

Graeme and Doris joined us, and together with six walkers from the Geelong Bushwalking Club at the open-cut coal mine and power station generating power for Alcoa's aluminium smelter at Point Henry. After introductions and briefing from John, we set off along a walking track full of energy and enthusiasm. The track was wet after heavy rainfall overnight, and it looked as if we might get more rain during the day. Actually, the day turned out to be quite warm, as we were soon stripping off outside layers.



The walk was through heathland, and low forest, which showed signs of the previous dryness, but now recovering after the rain. A few banksias were in flower, and a few early flowers of red heath (*Epacris*). The track was described as undulating by our leader John, but some of the undulations were very steep and quite challenging. The walking track was quite wide and muddy so we had fun walking around the puddles, or straight through, depending on your preference. As we walked, our boots built up a platform of mud, so soon it felt like we were tottering on high heels.



Lunch was taken at a grassy shaded site just off the track, and then we continued down a shortcut to pick up the track again. The return walk was along infrequently used 4 wheel drive tracks; including more of those undulations.

Thanks to John and Glenda for their hospitality, and for leading a very enjoyable walk.

Mike



Lorne—walks around Sheoak Picnic area: 5–6 May

Walkers: Catherine (v), Doug M, Linda, Liz, Lothar, Michael J, Mike H, Tim (v)

Saturday: We all met in Lorne shortly before 10am and drove in convoy to Qdos, dropped off a car, and then drove another few kilometres to the picnic area. The area was wet from recent rains and everything was sparkling. After the long drought you could almost see the plants drinking in the moisture. We had morning tea and then headed south along the gently descending track. (This section had been closed a year or two when floods caused one of the bridges to be upended). After a quick explore of Swallows Cave we crossed the creek and climbed towards Sheoak Falls. This area is quite scenic and there are a few lookout points. We took obligatory pics of the falls and then retraced some of our steps before the long steep climb to Castle Rock.

Perched on the top of a cliff, the views from Castle Rock are excellent - the sea in the background and the Cumberland River and Holiday park below us. We pointed out Mike & Liz's Wedding Anniversary cabin, and the Satzke & Peterson tents - we'd all slept there the night before. After a short lolly & snack break we climbed back up and headed to the picnic area for lunch.

As time was slipping away we decided to skip the sidetrip to Henderson Falls and the detour via Allen Reservoir. The Canyon area was as spectacular as ever with its tall ferns, fallen timbers and rocks, and the track signs that have arrows pointing *downwards* into a hole in the ground. Further on, Phantom Falls also had enough water flowing over the top. After more photos and drinks we headed north east towards the Cora Lynn carpark and along a (mostly) 4WD track to Qdos. The drivers then picked up their cars from the picnic area and picked the rest of us up before heading back to Lorne.

We had a round of high GI drinks and talked about the day. Linda and Michael (and Chris) then headed back home. A few of us had a counter tea that night before retiring early.

Sunday: another great day! Happy anniversary Mike and Liz! We packed our tents, gear, etc, and arrived at the Sheoak Picnic area shortly after 9am. Doug was already there to meet us. Our party of 6 then headed to Lower Kalimna Falls along a track that was once used to haul the tall timbers out of the area. The overhang at the falls is quite spectacular.

Next we continued to Upper Kalimna Falls. While not spectacular they were nevertheless worth seeing. After a short rest we decided to take the same shorter and more scenic route back to the picnic area (rather than the longer uphill route via the 4WD Garvey Track). We were at the picnic area an hour later and immediately had lunch. Catherine and Tim then left - and we were reduced to 4.

We'd somehow saved the best till last. Henderson Falls are small and cute. With the twin flows coming over the top, the ferns, and the prospect of seeing wild orchids - it is always a wonderful place to visit.

Many thanks to the Betty and Chris support team and to all for a magic walking weekend.

Lothar





Mt Stapylton circuit: 12 May

Walkers: Linda (leader - if she could stay on the right track), Coralie, Diane, Dianne, Helen, Lothar and John.

What a glorious day. The sun was shining; there had been recent rains so the vegetation had a wonderful aroma and the walking was terrific.

We all met at Koroit at 7am with the first stop at Cavendish for 2nd breakfast and cuppas. We lingered for quite awhile so I had to rally the troops. We found Mt Stapylton camp ground easy enough and headed towards the track which leads from Mt Zero car park. The walking at this stage was quite easy so we were able to enjoy the bush. There were no orchids out but you could feel they were on the way. Once we joined the other track the walking became more strenuous as we headed for Bird Rock. The final climb to the top can be a bit challenging for those who don't like heights but everyone did well. At the top we rested and had lunch, how easy it would have been to have a nap, but we had a long journey back.



We turned off the main track shortly after the rock scrambling down; this track enabled us to actually do a loop back to the cars. We climbed quite high again between 2 large rock formations. At this point we could turn and look back to where we had been and beyond, it was truly breath taking.

Once back at the cars we headed back to Cavendish again for another "brief" stop and then home.

Thank you to Coralie and Diane who kept me on the right track and to the others for an extremely enjoyable day. We will have to put it on again later in the year.

Linda



Boronia Peak Track Maintenance: 25 – 27 May

Participants: *Jim Harker (Convener of Track Clearing for Bushwalking Victoria), club members from Grampians Bushwalking Club, Melbourne Bushwalkers, Sunraysia Bushwalkers and Warrnambool Walkers (Linda, Lothar, Doug, Anne, Helen and Coralie) with the Bushwalking Victoria Track Maintenance Group. Organisers: Rod Novak (Bushwalking Victoria), David Witham (Grampians Walking Tracks Support group), Frank Van der Peek (Parks Victoria Grampians Volunteers Coordinator) and Linda (organiser of the Warrnambool arrangements).*

The Halls Gap Hotel hosted Linda, Lothar, Anne and Doug on Friday night for a delightful fish dinner of dory, all round. The chilly evening back at Borough Huts was warmed by a 'modest' campfire until even warmer sleeping bags beckoned. Groups travelling from afar arrived throughout the night so that by the first weak rays of sunlight next morning, a little tent city had sprung up.

At 9 am sharp the full gathering of workers was briefed at the base of the Boronia Peak walk. Safety glasses and reflective vests were issued; tools and tasks were allotted to participants. As the numbers were large, smaller teams were formed and tasks allocated according to expertise (and muscle!)

Linda, Helen and I were quick to volunteer for pruning and trench digging duties on the upper slopes of the walk. Although we had to walk, half an hour or so before starting work, this seemed like a better deal than moving rocks. Lothar and Doug were put to work on the lower slopes where they made stone steps and channels for rainwater to follow to minimize future track erosion. Other groups also worked on creating impressive stone steps and dry stone walling. As this track is heavily used at the moment, these works should do much to stabilise the lower section of the track.

That evening, around a blazing fire that kept the entire group warm (thanks to the boys from Mildura for their wood chopping skills), we listened to David Witham relate the story of the emergence of the Grampians Track Maintenance Support Group. Donation boxes at various locations in the Grampians provide some funds for its activities but more are desperately needed if tracks are to be re-opened in the wake of the 2006 summer fires. He also mentioned that the idea of an "Iconic Walking Track" that is in the developmental stages by Parks. The very rudimental and early plans have it starting at Staplyton then onto Roses Gap (avoiding the Coppermine Track), up past Beehive Falls, then to Lake Wartook where a camp would be developed. From here it would be onto Boroka, Mt Rosea, perhaps up to Redman Bluff, over to Mt William and the Major Mitchell Plateau. It may then go past Stockyard Creek and further along the lower slopes of the William range crossing on to the Serra Range before Signal Peak, Mt Abrupt and Mt Sturgeon finishing in Dunkeld. However, he did stress that it was only on concept stage and would be many years (and millions of dollars) before it is likely to be reality. He is planning a political campaign soon and may need our support if governments are to commit to the idea.

The Pork Report

This started Saturday night with the obligatory 'pre dinner' fare. Out of the cooler boxes came the White Castello, the garlic and cracked pepper Mersey Valley Cheddar, the gourmet soft cheese from a small farm enterprise in NE Victoria and hummus. This was accompanied by soy & linseed and water crackers, wasabi coated dried green peas (spat out in a hurry by a 'first time taster' Linda) olives and a sea salt cashew, macadamia and blanched almond mix and a reviving glass of beer or red wine.

Main course was provided by the organisers. The barbecue was trucked in and by 6 pm the locally made hamburgers and sausages were sizzling. An array of freshly prepared (by David Witham's wife) salads and bread was laid out on a side table. It was too difficult to choose between the bean, rice, potato and garden salads so, sportingly, we took a spoonful of each.

The next morning, Linda arose at the crack of dawn to ensure the kettle was on for the early morning cuppa. Soon after, the aroma of hot pancakes pervaded the camp ground. It may have been the mascarpone cheese, the bowl of mixed berries or even the maple syrup that had others glancing with envy at our breakfast table.

A Parker's weekend would not be complete without the farewell coffee at Maddisons in Penshurst. Again we avoided the difficulty of sampling just one of the cakes on offer by ordering and sharing four. We are still awaiting the jury's verdict in order to award the gold medal. It was a close thing between the lime and passionfruit cake, the plum, lemon and coconut cake, and, the quince and apple tart with the crumble topping. The silver medal would probably go to the mud cake.

Coralie

Progressive Dinner: 2 June

The usual annual theme was varied this year with about 20 enthusiasts meeting at Patterson St, Koroit, at 2:30 pm. We then converged on Michael and Mary's kitchen at Crossley to be greeted by our hosts and warm aromas of home baked crusty bread and steaming pots of vegetable soups. We toured the country garden admiring the native plantations and fruit trees that were loaded with apples and pears.

Then it was time to rug up for the walk back to Koroit where Linda and Irene entertained us in their covered-in courtyard. The pit fire outside was ablaze for us.

BBQed meats, salads and wine were consumed, then an array of delectable pavlova, fruit salad, cheesecake and warm apple pie was offered. What more could we ask for?

It was a wonderful afternoon/evening event. Our thanks to May and Michael, Irene and Linda for hosting the feast.

Marg

The Chimney Pots: 17 June

Walkers: Coralie (Leader), Ken & Marg F & Di F

Well, it was supposed to be the Timboon Rail Trail, but due to circumstances beyond our control we went to the Chimney Pots instead. We set off in grey dismal weather with the promise of rain looming! The rain did hold off long enough for us to have a quick (thermos) coffee (& a piece of Marg's homemade cake) before starting the walk. I was beginning to wonder about these so called Chimney Pots – we could not see them for the thick cloud! Just like the last time I was there! Our leader assured me they were there! At the track junction we decided to go up backwards! No, not walk backwards but to ascend the descent and vice versa! It wasn't long before we were donning rain coats – which we were able to leave on for the duration of the walk. However, who is going to complain about a little fine rain on a walk!!! And of course, apart from the obvious, rain/moisture brings the added bonus of fungi! And yep, there was lots of it!

We were all interested to try out the last part of the track – which was cut by none other than the Warrnambool Bushwalkers on one of our track maintenance weekends. I am pleased to report the track is as good as it was when we cut it, and we all went up to that last little bit – what a lovely view – pity we couldn't see it through the clouds! We found a charming little sheltered spot for lunch on the way down. Then hey presto! the cloud started to clear! However, no amount of persuasion could convince our driver to turn around and go back just to see the real view! Oh well, maybe next time! I think it was the thought of getting to Madigans for coffee and cake was just too strong. Then . . . disaster struck! . . . Madigans was closed – 3pm on Sunday afternoon and it was closed! Once we recovered our composure we pushed on to Koroit and just managed to get to the Bakery in time for the essential after walk refreshments! PHEW!

Thanks Coralie for leading a most enjoyable walk, thanks Ken for being the driver and thanks Marg for your wonderful company (and pre walk cake!!)

Di