

Old Beechy Rail Trail from Barongarook to Gellibrand: 12 Apr 2008

Walkers: Doris D, Heather P, Helen A, Linda H, Lothar S (leader), Mike H

We all met outside the loos in Colac then travelled the short distance to Barongarook. Following a car shuffle to Gellibrand and back, we finally left the Barongarook Hall for the day's walk.

The trail dropped about 400–500 metres over the day but we were hardly aware of this – the walk seemed fairly flat except for the big hill between Watson & Faceys and Kawarren stations. We also had the trail to ourselves except for a couple of bikers. Between Barongarook and W&F we walked on the original railway track (minus all the steel and sleepers of course) passing through some magnificent tall eucalypts.

Between Kawarren station and Gellibrand the track is only 10–20 metres from the road – a bit noisy with traffic at times but nevertheless very pleasant walking. We had lunch in the picnic area opposite Kawarren—a lovely spot with picnic tables and more tall eucalypts. A couple of kilometres past Kawarren, Heather's foot began to play up so she and I waited near the road whilst the others completed the rest of the walk. We'd been thinking we hadn't heard any birds for the day – but when we sat and just listened we were surprised by how many birds were actually calling all around us.

We were picked up in the car shuffle to Barongarook. In Gellibrand we all had the essential hot drinks and cakes and again enjoyed each other's company. We avoided the apple crumble though – there were quite a few flies trapped under the gladwrap. Yuk!

Many thanks to all for a very enjoyable outing!

Lothar

Dunkeld Bicycle/Walking tour: 25–27 Apr 2008

Walkers: Coralie, Diane D, Diane P, Fiona, Helen, Irene, Ken, Linda, Marg, Peter, Rosalie, Sandra (leader)

After setting up their tents at the Dunkeld Campground, Coralie, Di D and Di P visited us at Ararat. Helen, coming from Rutherglen, detoured to our place. Then we moved on to Great Western to see Val's scarecrow - "Charlotte's Web" exhibited at Garden Gully Vineyard. Thirty eight artistic pieces were on display and Val's creation was a highlight in the collection: a huge web woven between two tall gum trees with the spider lurking, one crow already captured!

Touring to Dunkeld, we kept a lookout for the large flock of handsome brolgas in a paddock that had stopped the girls earlier that day. Ken and I missed that spectacle.

Sandra had booked our large table for twelve at the Gourmet Galley at Dunkeld which offered fine dining. Conversation, laughter and wine flowed easily.

In the morning Helen photographed the assembled bike riders, Sandra set us on the back roads out to Corea Winery and a couple of cars travelled the 17 km road for us to transport any/all the purchases. We were all welcomed by an outdoor fire but we hurried inside, lured by the aroma of red grapes fermenting in the large open vat. Cee Blackwell poured generous wine samples served with tasty nibbles. Then three pots of steaming, fragrant soups were served with continued wine tasting. Lovely.

Full tummies and carefree spirits weren't enough to keep us warm on the ride back as by now it was raining steadily and a cold wind was blowing. The mountains were shrouded by low grey cloud. Warm showers at the campground were appreciated.

We gathered again at the camp barbeque for a good evening meal, then retreated gratefully to the warmth of Sandra's holiday house to settle in for an episode of "Doc Martin".

During the weekend we mixed in walks up the Piccaninny, Mt Sturgeon and/or meanders around the scenic Arboretum.

A wonderful weekend together at Dunkeld and thank you Sandra for organising the happy event.

Marg



Grampians—Mount Lang and Teddy Bear Gap: 3–4 May 2008

Walkers: Peter and Kerry T (G), Mabel M (W), Diane D (G&W), Neville B (G), John Van G (G; leader). G=Geelong, W=Warrnambool

Easter Saturday 3rd May: “The climb up to Teddy Bear Gap was no picnic”

Some morning drizzle and low cloud at Jimmy Creek campsite as the group gathered and readied themselves for the walk. These dull starts seem to be par for the course, cannot seem get a sunny start of late. We made a quick car shuffle and water drop before starting the steady climb up to the gap. The real climbing then began after picking up our water at the gap. First there was hill feature 595 to give us view into what lie ahead for the weekend. We had lunch overlooking Green Gap. The going was slowish over the sharp ridgeline with lots of scrambling required. The views as ever on this range did not disappoint. Mt Lang drew closer as we climbed hill feature 640 and then we descended into camp in the next saddle. This was a quite a good choice as the site was sheltered and flat with little undergrowth. Peter and Kerry were trying out their new pup tent expecting tight conditions in camp. It was good for only one really and with two you needed a can opener to get out in the morning.



Easter Sunday 4th May: “Sunny Morning for a Lang of a good time”

The ridge had eased a little and the scrambling of the yesterday was behind us. It was a short but solid climb up hill feature 749 and then up to the main cleft peak of Mount Lang at 917 m. Spectacular views at this point and very worthwhile. The descent was a little tricky at first over some convoluted ground to get down to the next saddle which was one of my alternative exit points. It was an excellent point to get off the range so the decision was made here to drop packs and ascend to hill feature 825 and return for lunch. After lunch it was a steep decent down to the 4wd track which took us out to the Second Wannon Creek where we had parked a couple of cars next to the tourist road. An excellent walk over a spectacular part of the range.



John Van G

Mt Eccles walk: 31 May 2008

Walkers: Di P, Graeme, Heather, Helen (leader), Peter, Rosalie

The weather was a little daunting when the group departed for Mt Eccles NP, however it cleared quickly to a sunny morning. After morning tea (with the blue wrens), we walked the crater track around Lake Surprise with a brief detour into the lava cave.

Along the walk we commented upon the damage to trees due to the storms in April. We stopped for a few minutes to observe a pair of eagles roosting on a dead tree across the lake - unfortunately my binoculars were not very strong but did give us a little better view of them.

A welcome drink stop at the summit gave everyone the opportunity to appreciate the 360 degree views - Mt Napier, Portland, etc. As we continued, many wallabies were seen grazing near the track but were completely unafraid of us.

We continued down the steps to the lake edge track which was well worth the effort.

After lunch, we walked through the collapsed lava canal to the Natural Bridge. The vibrant green of the mosses against the stark grey of the rocks was very striking. A new access walk to the Natural Bridge has done away with the scramble down the rocks to the base of the bridge—one which actually improves the site! The new information boards also gave a clear description of the processes which formed the bridge and the lava canal.

Again we climbed up to the summit of Mt Eccles on our return to the car park. Thanks to everyone for making the day a very enjoyable experience.

Helen

Wyperfeld National Park: 6–9 Jun 2008

Walkers: Bob, Chris, Fiona, Helen, Liz, Lothar, Mike, Peter, Rosalie

Nine people headed north to Wyperfeld on Friday, and set up camp at the Wonga Campground. We were Lothar and Chris (organisers), Peter and Rosalie, Mike & Eliz, and Helen from the Warrnambool Walkers, and Bob and Fiona from Camperdown. We quickly put up our tents, started the fire, opened a bottle of red, and made our evening meal. The ambiance was great with flocks of Galahs flying overhead, the pink colour of the sky, and the warmth of the fire to make us all welcome to this beautiful place.

Saturday morning at about 9.30 we set off walking to Black Flat and the Tykil Nature Walk to the Western Lookout and then return to the Wonga Campground along the Outlet Creek Track (about 20 km). On Sunday morning, we walked the Desert Walk through different plant communities including Black Box on the flood plain, Red Gums and Porcupine Grass growing on the sand and mallee Eucalypts. In the afternoon, we walked the Discovery Walk to Devils Pools (nearly dry), and Lake Brambruk dry lakebed, and returned via the Mount Mattingly lookout.

Thank you, Lothar, for once again organising an excellent 'Warrnambool Porkers' long weekend at Wyperfeld. I enjoyed the chicken and veggie soup, scrumptious Sunday roast and even delicious pancakes cooked in the camp kitchen. Also enjoyable were the long walks through the desert, the bird choruses waking us in the morning and the delightful company. *Eliz*

We enjoyed our first visit to Wyperfeld, great walks, diverse vegetation and bird life, wonderful company and divine food. We shall be back. *Peter and Rosalie*

Again I have enjoyed the vastness and solitude of this fantastic park. It is a fantastic place where you can reflect on life and recharge your "batteries". Despite having done the walks before, there is always something new to



see. The company and food again measured up to the Walkers high standards. Well done Lothar and crew! *Helen*

The desert is a new experience for us. We have been amazed at the rapid changes in vegetation, and have learned to look in different ways at the things around us. Thanks to all for welcoming us along on the weekend. *Bob and Fiona*

A blissful couple of days spent around the camp managing the campfire. I spent many happy hours arranging the logs and staring into the coals. Great unwinding, pleasant company, lovely meals and gentle rain on the tent on the last night. What could be better? *Chris*

Mike



Grampians—Red Man Bluff: 7–8 Jun 2008

Walkers: Peter and Kerry T , Mabel M, Diane D, John B, Gordon E, John VG (leader). (A mixture of Geelong Bushwalking Club and Warrnambool Bushwalkers)

Saturday: “Red Man Bluff was more for billy goats”

After gathering at Jimmy Creek campsite we set out for our start at the beginning of the Mt. William Rd. The walking track marked doesn't really exist. Not that it mattered. Following the Bovine Ck. was easy and quite picturesque especially later when the sides narrowed into more gorge like proportions. We headed up the sides shortly before the falls in order to cut across the 4wd track and avoided the very steep ground behind the falls. Just below the battlements we found some tracks but not the one we were looking for in this rough country. After contouring around the 7th dial we headed west to a saddle and finally found the track and promptly crossed it to climb up the large and open rock slabs of the Red Man Bluff. The climb was steady and afforded great views of the Serra Range to the west. At perch rock we spied the local inhabitants which were a group of 15 to 18 goats on the nearby ridge. We certainly had walked over plenty of their droppings and it seemed that they we were now doing well post fire. Further climbing onto the ridge put us at Red Man Bluff at 1017 m and 700 m above the valley. A good camp within a stones throw of the summit was made. It proved to be quite sheltered from the wind which roared up the bluff all night. This cold damp wind had us in bed early.

Sunday: “Red Man Bluff is on all the postcards for a reason”

Spectacular views from our camp in the morning. Going to bed so early meant that getting up before dawn was necessary. Staying in a tent for 10½ hours is not one of my strong points. The rewards were great views over the valley with your morning cuppa. This area had been burnt and the stiff, blacken branches were all that remained in most areas which resulted in very black hands, faces and gear. This burnt area stopped just short of Middle Gap where pushed through the final bit of untouched scrub and dropped down to the Mt William Road and the end.

John VG



Grampians—Mt Stapylton loop: 14 Jun 2008

Walkers: Coralie, Di P, Linda C, Linda H (leader), Lothar, Peter, Viviane

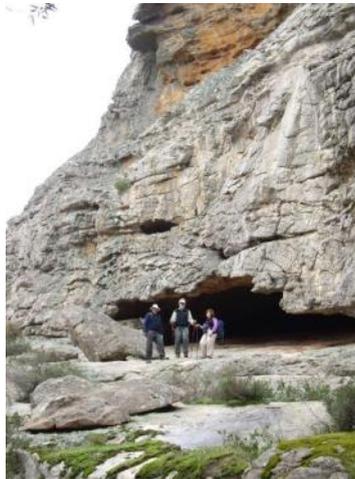
This would be my favourite day walk in the Grampians. It presents a challenge but at the same time provides the walker with some of the most spectacular scenery, variety in flora and fauna you could possibly encounter in a day walk.

The day started early with everyone meeting at 7 am at Koroit. We only took 2 cars as we wanted to reduce the cost of fuel as much as possible. First stop was Cavendish for a coffee break; however when we left the shop Di noticed that one of her tyres was just a little flat on the bottom, so Lothar and Peter quickly had it changed. Di discovered a screw embedded into the tyre so was grateful she noticed it before we travelled much further.

As we approached Mt Stapylton there was quite a thick cloud overhanging the Mount but by the time we left the camp ground the mist was lifting and we were presented with a glorious day which lasted to the end.

The first part of the walk was fairly flat as we made our way towards the main track just at the base of Bird Rock where we stopped for a very late morning tea. From Bird Rock the climb was steady but not too difficult. The final ascent did pose a challenge for those not used to rock scrambling, but full credit to those inexperienced walkers who rose to the challenge and achieved success at the top.

We stopped briefly for lunch; there was a slight breeze which was enough to make it quite cold.



The descent down offered a different type of challenge. By the time we reached the bottom one of our members discovered that she had worn out the bottom of her walking pants due to the bum sliding down rocks. However in good humour we all had a chuckle.

Thanks to everyone for such a great day, many laughs and hopefully plenty of votes for the leader in the “Leader of the Year” challenge.

A special thank you to Coralie for words of encouragement and support to the walkers who found it difficult at times and to Peter and Lothar for their subtle physical support when needed.

Linda

