

## Grampians—Halls Gap weekend: 12–13 Jul 2008

*Walkers: Helen, Irene, Linda C., Linda H (leader)*

After a week of heavy rain I was very reluctant to go ahead with the Halls Gap weekend. If it wasn't for the fact that we had booked and paid for a cabin I would have cancelled. The 4 of us arrived at the caravan park at 6 pm, unpacked and headed straight to the Hotel for tea. We all agreed that there must have been a change of owners or chefs because the meals were not up to the usual standard.

The next morning we drove to Sundial Car Park and headed towards the Pinnacle. It was bitter cold but not raining. I had to stop to try and work out what the strange noise was, finally it dawned on me, and it was water pouring down the streams. After a week of rain all the creeks had water gushing over rocks and waterfalls. It was exhilarating, we were so excited. "How lucky were we?"

At the Pinnacle we rushed out to the lookout and rushed back. The wind was like ice on our faces and we could not stand still. We decided not to stay for long and made our way to Wonderland Car Park for lunch. This second section had a lot of work done on it after the fires; there were new wooden steps and stainless rails, obviously designed for the tourists. At the Grand Canyon the waterfall at the top was roaring as huge volumes of water gushed over the top, there were large areas of white foam at the base of the various falls.

At the Wonderland car park there are new toilets and new tables, what a luxury. Whilst we were eating, the wind changed direction, and once again it became icy so we finished our cuppas and headed for the final stretch down to Halls Gap. Once again the water astounded us in areas like Venus Baths and the Stony Creek.

Back at the camp ground we downed our packs and went straight across to the shops for coffee and cake. That night we shared salads and sweets and had a BBQ. Next day we woke to sunshine. "How lucky were we?"

We drove to Tandara Road and started the walk up Boronia Peak. Immediately we noticed the range of flowers, hakeas and heaths and Correas were abundant. We had to keep stopping to view the majesty of nature at its best. There was even a patch of purple hardenbergia out in full bloom, absolutely stunning. After completing this walk, which took us 3 hours we headed to the new Brambuk Cultural Centre for lunch, the most beautiful Tomato and Mushroom soup with wild herbs and Focaccias.

Thank you to Linda C, Irene and Helen for a fabulous weekend; plenty of good walking, good food and wine and great company.

*Linda H.*



## **A Warrnambool weekend with Bayside Bushwalking Club: 26 Jul 2008**

**Around Childers Cove:** Alan L, Barb S, Craig S, Fay B, Fiona P (W), Gill B, Graeme C, Graeme W (W), Helen A (W), Joanne L, John M, Josephine G (W), Julie S, Kate W, Kevin F, Linda H (W), Lothar S (W, leader), Margaret P, Masako M, Max N, Peter M (W), Phil D (W), Rosalie M (W); (W)=Warrnambool Club; all others are from Bayside.

We assembled at the Tourist Info Centre then headed in convoy (of 5–6 cars) to the Childers Cove car park where we were joined by Graeme W. For over 3 hours we followed a variety of “tracks” along cliff tops, the beach and a shower at Sandy Cove, more cliff tops and finally the stony beach (at Dog Trap Bay?). At our morning tea stop at Murnane’s Bay, Peter Murnane also gave a brief history of the early Murnanes.

*Lothar*

**Tower Hill circuit:** Alan L, Barb S, Coralie G (W), Faye B, Fiona P (W), Gill B, Graeme C, Joanne L, Josephine G (W), Kate W, Kevin F, Linda H (W), Liz H (W), Lothar S (W, leader), Mabel M (W), Marg F (W), Masako M, Max N, Mike H (W), Peter M (W), Phil D (W), Rosalie M (W), plus some from Bayside who didn’t sign the second lot of forms.

We assembled at Tower Hill for a BBQ lunch at about 1:30 pm. A big crowd! After a couple of showers we finally started the walk. The circuit is the route taken by the Wednesday walking group – a fair bit of up and down that takes in most of the scenic lookouts and hills. As usual the views were breathtaking; many wattles were also in full bloom and there were plenty of kangaroos, wallabies and even koalas about.

*Lothar*

### **Christmas in July dinner**

“Met him at the dance and my heart stood still, de do ron ron ron, de do ron ron” they sang joyfully, crammed on Izzy’s dance floor, outrageous



headgear bopping as they twisted the night away. The singer encouraged them, trawling her list of olden day's hits, while waiters mopped up the debris of an enormous meal. And there were presents too! Santa came to thirty-plus walkers on Saturday night. No stress, no family fights – what more could you want?

*Chris*

Thank you to all who participated in Saturday's activities. It was a fantastic day and it was so good to have the Bayside club enjoy it with us. Also a real novelty having so many participants on a walk! Pictures for the Sunday walk from Cannon Hill to Logans Beach (and Proudfoot's) are also included.

*Lothar*



## Northern Grampians: 7–11 Aug 2008

*Walkers: Ken F, Linda C, Lothar (leader), Marg F, Peter M, Rosalie M*

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup>: Boronia Peak.** In Halls Gap we visited Rosalie's sister and husband for coffee and cake before heading off on our walk. We passed the sections of track that we helped fix a year or so ago. The bush was also recovering nicely from the fires. We didn't linger at the top – just enough to take a couple of pics and wave to rellies – before heading down again. In a sheltered spot we had lunch then returned slowly to the car. Afterwards, we had treats in Halls Gap then drove to the Emu Holiday Park in Wartook and set ourselves up in cabin #2. Later we went for a sunset stroll and had vegetarian curry and rice for tea.

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup>: Mt Stapylton Circuit.** Wildflowers were in full bloom. As we went clockwise around the circuit the weather changed slowly from a fine mist to a heavy drizzle. When we reached the Y point we decided on the safer option – not to continue to the top but instead to complete the circuit. The rain got steadily worse but eventually stopped as we neared the car. At the cabin the new gas heater worked a treat so we set up an impromptu Chinese laundry. Later that afternoon we drove to Horsham to replace a broken buckle. Oh, and to have coffee and cakes at Jas! We went on another sunset stroll to take a few pictures. Dinner was spaghetti with a tuna/vegetable/tomato pasta sauce.

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>: Briggs Bluff.** *The weather looked promising and we were not disappointed. On the walk up to Beehive Falls the path wound its way through wattles in full flower, bringing us to the foot of the falls which had an amazing amount of water cascading over. Photos were taken and then we climbed upwards and onwards to the Bluff. The views were stunning and we found many different plants and much bird life. We had lunch, enjoyed the spectacular views and on returning to the cars agreed that we deserved coffee and cake (at Wartook Pottery). Back at the cabin our own Gordon Ramsey (Lothar) and assistant chef (Peter) cooked the best roast lamb in the camp oven. Roast lamb and a good wine was the finish to a very pleasant day. I think this should have been called the gourmet Grampians weekend.* Linda C

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup>: Mt Difficult?** The weather was somewhat foul so instead of the planned walk we did the less risky touristy stuff: A second drive to Horsham for coffees and high GI snacks, a visit to an outdoor shop, a walk to and around Mackenzies Falls, and then to Wartook Pottery



for coffee and cake. Too wet so no sunset stroll today! We had veggie soup for tea and finished the evening with many merry rounds of “Kings Corners”.

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup>: The Fortress.** We were joined today by Ken and Marg. The track was initially sandy and flat but after veering right we had a steady climb. At a vantage point we could see snow on some of the peaks. The weather was still ideal for walking so we decided to continue to the camping area – up, up, then down, down we went. We had lunch under the massive overhang in the camping area. We decided not to explore the Fortress proper. Instead we headed back uphill and then slowly descended back to the carpark. We said our goodbyes and 5 minutes after leaving the heavens opened. Lucky timing! Afternoon tea at Madigans in Penshurst was a fitting treat on the way home.

*Lothar*



## Timboon Rail Trail: 9 Aug 2008

*Walkers: Coralie G (leader), Di P, Fiona P, Graeme W, Helen A, Irene H, Linda H, Mabel M*

There were 8 club members on this walk and with Coralie in charge we set off from Glenfyne with somewhat dubious weather reports around us, but the lure of lunch at the Timboon Rail Shed we set off with abandon..... It is an easy walk with few challenges but the history is really amazing and there are several tracts of original bush amongst the dairy farms.

The actual railway line was constructed in 1892 with 5 stations between Camperdown and Timboon, 34 bridges and 84 culverts. The remnants of the trestle bridges add contrast to the vistas and we were blessed with sunny patches which really made the bush sparkle. The Curdies River Trestle Bridge is one of a few surviving structures of its type in Victoria and is classified by the National Trust.

We powered the final 4 km and were met by Mabel who had kindly offered to meet us so avoiding the eternal car shuffle. I might add that she had already ridden her bike 60 km. Lunch was delicious and we were home before the onslaught of rain that hit as we approached Warrnambool.

*Di P*



### **Dunkeld 3 Peaks Challenge— Mt Abrupt, Mt Sturgeon, and The Piccaninny: 30 Aug 2008**

*Walkers: Coralie G, Fiona P, Lothar S (leader), Marg F*

The numbers were fewer this year than the inaugural event held in 2007 but the participants were no less keen. Fiona P, Margaret F, Lothar and I met in Dunkeld early on Saturday morning ready for serious walking. We tackled the big one first, Mt Abrupt (Muddadjug), with overcast skies threatening above.

Climbing steadily we reached the summit in good time. The cold, blustery weather didn't encourage us to stay too long and we descended rapidly. Fiona, barely recovered from a respiratory infection, decided that one mountain was sufficient for her so we all drove back to Dunkeld for lunch.

In the cold conditions we ate in the pavilion at the caravan park where Marg had spent the previous night. Waving goodbye to Fiona, the three of us then set about bagging Mt Sturgeon (Wurgarri). On the way back we detoured along the flat sandy section to the Victoria Valley Road and the Piccaninny (Bainggug). Descending to the Piccaninny car park we found a number of orchids. The greenhoods and Wwax-lips were the most numerous, but we did spot a few leopard orchids thanks to a tip off from the friendly caravan park manager.

Coffee at the Mountain View (please remove muddy boots as we have carpet inside!) Cafe finished a delightful day. Thanks Lothar for organising the activity. It is a worthy event on a number of fronts – exercise, wildflower spotting and social so let's hope in 2009 a greater number of walkers will join in to enjoy annual spring Three Peaks Challenge.

*Coralie G*



## **Mt Sturgeon: 10 Sep 2008**

*Walkers: Ken F, Linda C, Liz H, Lothar S, Marg F, Peter M, and Rosalie M*

Wednesday morning we joined other retirees Linda C, Lothar, Peter, and Rosalie (who are in training for an extended walk in Nepal next month), and Liz H. Lothar set the pace taking us up Mt Sturgeon. There were frequent pauses to admire a variety of wildflowers, including Greenhood and Wax-lip orchids. There were gorgeous heaths, grevillea, egg and bacon pea, wattle and Thryptomene all flowering. Perfect weather, soaring eagles, great views from the top, and cuppas as usual!

On the return we took the turnoff to the Piccaninny climbing to the summit and continued across to the car park (in search of donkey orchids) and then back along the Halls Gap road to the Sturgeon car park.

We drove into Dunkeld for coffee, lunch, and a picnic at the playground. It was a happy couple of days for us, wishing Dianne a happy relocation and to Lothar and party a great adventure trekking in Nepal.

*Marg and Ken*



## Bridgewater Bay to Portland Lighthouse: 13–14 Sep 2008

*Walkers: Chris, Di D, Di P, Helen, Linda H. (Leader), Lothar.*

**Saturday:** The walk started at the Blowholes, where a big swell was creating quite a spectacle. The gush of water exploding over the rocks was massive. We continued onto the Petrified Forest which is always amazing to see and read of the history behind the formations. The remainder of this part of the walk follows the cliff face towards Bridgewater Bay. The day was spectacular with the sun shining, the water crystal clear and wonderful company. There were many photo opportunities and the walking was slow but enjoyable.

Upon arrival at the Kiosk everyone indulged in lunch and coffees. At this point the day walkers headed back to Warnambool and due to the steps which take you off the beach at the end of the Bay having been washed away, the overnight walkers were dropped off up the road.

We came across Trewalla Camp fairly quickly and decided to stay there rather than push on and go to Mallee Camp. The site was in desperate need of maintenance, especially the toilet area. (More on that later) After selecting our site, pitching tents and having a cuppa, we spent the rest of the afternoon down on the beach exploring the coast line.

**Sunday:** It was a clear night and quite warm, until the change came through and we woke to strong winds and rain. We packed in the rain with everything getting wet. Diane went to the toilet only to discover that the roof leaked which made it difficult to sit comfortably.

We headed off, fully protected from the rain and the cold but nothing could prepare us for the wind. Fortunately the wind was behind but with our packs on it was very difficult to remain upright. We did not stop for our first break until we got off the beach and climbed back up the cliff face (the rain had stopped at that stage and we were able to relax and enjoy the coastal view). Our second rest spot was nestled in amongst some trees and we were able to remove our packs and coats and have a look around the area. We rugged up again as we could see the next wave of storm coming towards us. We came to a section of cliff walk which was quite dangerous. There was an immediate drop to the ocean on our right. The wind was gale force and we could barely walk. We had to lean into the wind, which was OK until it eased up fractionally which was when we lost balance and teetered around hoping not to fall off the edge. Fortunately at this stage we saw the Lighthouse which renewed our lack of energy. At the Lighthouse we had lunch freshened up a bit and made our way home.

Thanks to those walkers who joined me for the weekend. It was very enjoyable. *Linda*



## Major Mitchell Plateau : 20 Sep 2008

*Walkers: Dianne F, John L, Marg F, Diane D, Clive M, Janice L and Coralie G*

On an overcast morning, we set out from the Major Mitchell turntable undecided as to what to wear. It was cold BUT there was going to be a 1.8 km uphill stint. At the first corner there was some rearranging of gear and then it was all steam ahead to the summit.

We walked steadily to Boundary Gap where a late morning tea was enjoyed. The steep track to the top of the Plateau was easily followed as the freshly painted yellow markers were plentiful and distinct. Lunch was taken at the First Wannan camp site now dominated by the sight of a green galvanised iron toilet across the creek. Water was running freely and Diane's wooden puma was still lurking in a tree (ask her to show you sometime).

Mindful of the long journey ahead of us still we set out across the Plateau soon after eating. Track finding was relatively easily especially with several experienced spotters behind the leader. Unfortunately it appeared the promised wildflower garden here was not evident; it was too soon for many recovering species or perhaps it had been too cold over the winter.

The descent along the ridge and down into Stockyard Gap was as tricky as ever and people were intent on watching their every footstep. No major mishaps were experienced although Clive moaned about the climb to the helipad ("Wasn't it supposed to be all downhill?").

In the shadows of the late afternoon we skirted the lower foothills of the southern end of the Mt William Range. Here wildflowers were more abundant. Heaths, wattles, running postman, several varieties of pea and even the odd orchid were spotted in the more sandy areas next to the main tourist road.

In fading light we reached the cars at Jimmy's Creek; our bodies telling us we had done a fair day's walking! John kindly drove a contingent to Mt William to retrieve the cars whilst Clive and Dianne enjoyed a cuppa and waited patiently for the return of their rides.

*Coralie G*

