

GSWW—Bridgewater Lakes to Cape Bridgewater Kiosk: 14 Jan 2009

Walkers: Rosalie & Peter M, Lothar S

It was a stinking hot day on Tuesday and we hoped that the cooler weather forecast for Wednesday morning would arrive. It did. We had a coolish overcast morning but the cloud cover started to disappear in the afternoon. A perfect day for walking. We drove down in 2 cars and had a drink at the kiosk. We left one car there and then drove the 5–10 minutes to the lakes, stopping along the way to climb the hill with the fantastic view (ie back along the GSWW).

The walk is always interesting. I thought we might encounter a snake near the lakes – but that didn't eventuate. Storms have washed away a lot of the beach sand near the cliff faces making it difficult for GSWW walkers to get off the beach. Since last doing the walk the wind turbines have sprouted as well as a house or two. The Springs campground now has a brand new 2-sided shelter with a picnic table and benches, and we had lunch there. There's been a "recent" rock fall along the access path to the springs but Peter and I managed to get down to the springs for a look-see. There was plenty of water still trickling out of the rocks.

We saw many seals at the Cape and spent quite a bit of time observing them.

After another 45 minutes we reached the kiosk. We had a milkshake and then picked up the car and drove home. Thank you Peter and Rosalie for a great mid week walk!

Lothar



Tasmania's South West Cape: 15–23 Feb 2009

Walkers: Linda (leader), Irene, John, Glenda, Julie and James (Grampians Bushwalking Club), and Karen (Hobart Bushwalking Club)

“A WALK IN THE WILDERNESS”

We all met at Hobart on the Sunday night for an introductory meal. We all did not know each other so it was a good ice breaker. Boy did we have fun that night!

The following morning we all met at Cambridge airport and after paying various fees etc we boarded. The flight was truly magnificent. There was no down or up drafts so it was smooth flying to Melaleuca. Flying over the various ranges gave quite an interesting perspective of the wilderness we were headed into.

After alighting, the valley we were in was actually nothing like I had expected. Button grass was the main vegetation with the occasional outcrop of heavy vegetated knolls and rises.

We found the Nissan Huts for walkers and some camped in one whilst others camped in their tents. One of the huts was the original built by Deny King especially for walkers. That evening we were visited by the resident spotted quoll which kept us entertained for some time.

The next morning we all headed off towards Cox Bight. The first 2 hours was spent on duck boards which keep you off the mud and helps to protect the vegetation underneath. The last 1 1/2 hours was on a well defined track which gradually wound its way down to the Bight.

There was cloud cover all the way but as soon as we hit the beach out came the sun and it was quite warm. Tents were pitched and we all explored the environs. Point Eric was to the far east of the beach where there was another camp site. Beyond Point Eric the South West Coast Track heads towards the Iron Bound Ranges which rise in the distance. Behind the camping area was Freney Lagoon containing fresh water. It was truly a pristine environment. The following morning we made our way back towards Melaleuca to the junction which would take us west to the Cape. The view back to the ocean which we had left was breathtaking.

From the junction we started to have to wade through sections of thick, black mud, some of which was relentless. The vegetation was changing. There were more sections of dense



growth where water was flowing down gullies and not quite as much button grass. By mid afternoon we came out at New Harbour. The track came out at the junction of a small river, before we knew it James and Julie were in the ocean. We all recuperated and walked along sand to the other side of the Bay where we found the camp sites, but no toilets (it was a matter of dig a big hole). Once again tents erected and off to explore. Just fantastic! Along the edge of the sand there were numerous animal footprints, wombats, quolls, lizards and probably Tassie devils. Unfortunately the ocean had a red algae bloom. Along the waters edge there were 2 types of oyster catchers, hooded plovers, plovers and seagulls. There were pippies in the sand which the birds were having a feast on. During the afternoon fishermen, who were anchored in the Bay, came in with a box of tinnies and a bag of chocolate coated sultanas. Just amazing! We cooked tea on the beach as the sun was going down and you truly felt like you were the only people in the world.



Next morning it was decided to split the group into 2. Three of the walkers were going to continue on and stick to the original itinerary whilst the other 4 had to alter their plans. Everyone, bar one, walked onto Hidden Bay. The walk over only took 2 hours but it was through some forest areas with huge trees untouched by man (or woman). If I was overcome by New Harbour this Bay blew me away. The sand was white and squeaked as you walked on it. The river beside the camp site was crystal clear and we were able to take some wonderful photos. Reluctantly John, Irene and me walked backed to New Harbour leaving the other 3 to continue.



This left 4 of us to spend another night at New Harbour. The following morning we started the long trek back to Melaleuca where we were greeted by the volunteer Yellow Bellied Parrot watchers. Volunteers stay there for 2 week periods and tag and record the activities of these most precious birds. There is quite a substantial bird hide, where we were able to spend some time observing the activities of many types of birds.



It was a long wait before the other group returned to Melaleuca with some fantastic photos. They were certainly tired but full of chatter about where they had been. The last night in the hut was a nightmare for all 10 occupants. There were 5 snorers, 3 fartars, and 10 sleeping bags which rustled every time someone moved. We were all waiting for the first light as an excuse to

finally get up. Two planes arrived at 8 am and wanted to return with passengers. We were not scheduled to return until 10 am so there was a mad panic whilst 3 of us quickly packed up and caught the plane.

I could keep writing but lack of space will prohibit that. I would like to finish off by saying that this trip has left me in awe of the area and the early settlers, most importantly the King family. There is a description in the book which best sums it up: “The size and the scale of the landscape evokes a profound sense of wonder, but also induces a keen awareness of the insignificance of the individual.”

Little incidents that happened:

Irene: “My god you look like Dick Smith” as some poor unsuspecting male was grabbed and swung around. “No not me” was the reply. Then “Yes I am, yes I am!!!” Irene replied “Well g’day, I’m Irene H...” as she grabbed his hand and shook it.

James: “Julie, where did you get that hat!” After a rebuff by Julie, we then had to instruct James on relating to women to earn brownie points.

Julie: Referring to James as Daryl all the time. (Not his name!!!)

Linda: “Irene I just want you to keep walking and not stop or look back” Irene stops. Linda louder “Irene, just keep walking!” Irene panics and does a little dance on the spot. Linda shouts “JUST KEEP WALKING”. Yes a snake was between us!!!

Karen: Returned from a walk on the sand with 2 fishermen. What’s more, cray fishermen, but NO crays?

Linda



Clean Up Australia Day: 28 Feb 2009

Walkers: Coralie, Helen A (leader), Lothar, Michael T

We met at the Wangoom Store at 8 am and proceeded to clean up both sides of the road for several kilometres towards the east. The long grass made it difficult to access or see all litter and there was the concern of snakes! Lothar won the “prize” for the most unusual items – two very weathered arm chairs! We also cleaned the Wangoom Falls car park before depositing about 10 bags of rubbish (mainly plastic bottles and take away food containers) at the Wangoom Tip. A big thank you to Steve Johnson for allowing us to do this. It was then back to the Wangoom Store for a well earned coffee. Thanks again to the participants for time and effort to improve the environment.

Helen



GSWW—Portland to (near) Cubby's Camp: 1 Mar 2009

Walkers: Mabel (leader), Linda, Helen, Lothar & Irene.

1st leg of The Great South West Calendar Year Challenge (GSWCYC)
Portland to Blackwood Road – near Cubby Camp

I think we all know Sorrel Wilby the acclaimed adventurer, filmmaker, author, photographer and artist. Her career to date includes a long list of achievements including: the world's first complete traverse of the Himalaya, a 17,000km solo bike ride throughout Asia and other extreme feats. Sorrel has published numerous books recounting her journeys, such as the highly regarded: *Tibet - A Woman's Lone Trek Across a Mysterious Land*. I write this hoping that some of you have read that book so that you will understand this report.

'Om Mani Padme Hum' (translation: 'Hail the jewel in the lotus') is a six syllable invocation (mantra) of Avlokitesvara, one who is invoked as the Protector from danger. It is claimed that one who recites this mantra will be saved from all dangers and will be protected. Sorrel recited this mantra as she trekked alone across Tibet. It's an easy mantra to recite while you are walking as it fits nicely into your steps and keeps you going.

This walk started out well with the obligatory lattés, then off to the start at the Portland information centre and we than headed east.

“Mabel the sign is over here!!!!”

We wound our way through Portland's suburbs – “Mabel the sign is over here!!” eventually getting to Dutton's Way. “What do you mean we have ONLY gone THREE kilometres.....”

'Om Mani Padme Hum' 'Om Mani Padme Hum' 'Om Mani Padme Hum'



At last we found some bush and headed into it very enthusiastically. This didn't last very long and we were all trekking along road again, 'Om Mani Padme Hum', 'Om Mani Padme Hum', 'Om Mani Padme Hum'. It wasn't working. I was not being protected or saved from the dangers of the bitumen.

As I was walking along many thoughts were passing through my head, apart from 'Om Mani Padme Hum'. Taking up most of the time was thinking about the trip we had just completed in South West Tassie and how different this walking on dusty tracks and bitumen was to last week being ankle deep in mud and getting a few leeches attached to various parts of my anatomy. These thoughts bought me back to the reality of how very dry our environment is at the moment and how very careful we have to be.

Into and out of the bush again but this time we found the railway line. Not the most comfortable of places for the bottom whilst eating lunch. Once the end of the track was in sight the other members of this party took off like horses bolting for home. I think they had that cafe in Portland on their minds.

Thanks Mabel, and the others, for an entertaining Sunday, and a special thanks to Sorrel for helping me get through this walk. It is good to have completed the 1st leg of the GSWW but I don't think I'll be rushing to do it again.

Irene



The Glenfyne to Timboon Rail Trail: 14 Mar 2009

Walkers: Coralie (leader), Helen, Irene, Linda, Lothar, Mabel, Peter, Rosalie

The railway line to Timboon was opened in 1892 after 3 years of construction and was built to serve the pioneers of the Heytesbury Forest who were living throughout the area as farmers, merchants and saw millers. It was officially closed in 1987. First introduced as a trip by past Warrnambool Walking Club members Peter and Consie McPherson soon after its closure, it has been walked (and written about) many times by the Club. Hence this time participants on today's jaunt chose to give you some reflections of the morning's walk.

Peter and Rosalie enjoyed their first walk on the Timboon Rail Trail. Beautiful bush; lots of birds chirping. The hardest part was dragging Peter away from the magnificent old railway bridges. (Apparently he also had met before the engineer who has the job of repairing all the old trestle bridges in Australia and was happy to chat with us when we reached the bridge at the Curdies River.)

Following the rains in the morning the whole track became alive with bird life and song (Linda).

The reward for walking in the rain was the smells and freshness of the bush (Mabel).

A forensic examination of a dead beast on the track was very enlightening. Was it a mouse? No! It had long legs like a kangaroo – problem was that it was the size of a very small marsupial! Did it have pouch? Can't be a female as it has an "appendage" said one! Peter reckoned it was an endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot. (Helen)

"You gotta be dreamin" was Lothar's response to 'wildlife guide' Irene pointing out where the sugar gliders had 'made' marks on the trunks of messmate gums.

The last word goes to Irene: What more needs to be said apart from "Great lunch"!



Around Lorne weekend with Bayside: 20–22 Mar 2009

Walkers: (Bayside) Anne M, Barb S, Carol H, Di C, Elli B, Faye B, Gary H, Heather A, Jenny M, Jocelyn W, Julie S, Kevin F, Liliana C, Max N, Roseann L, Masako M; (W'bool) Coralie, Helen A, Irene, Linda C, Linda H, Lothar (leader), Peter, Rosalie

When the Warrny Walkers arrived at the Cumberland River Holiday Park many of the Bayside crew were already there setting up their tents, caravan, or moving into cabins. We quickly set up our tents and camper trailer and chatted, recalling the great “Christmas in July” we had with them last year. Later we had a combined BBQ in the “prison” (a shelter with big iron bars on the doors) before retiring for an early night.

We all met at 9am to hear about the day’s activities before hopping into the cars and driving the 2 kms down the road to the Sheoak Falls carpark. We offloaded all the walkers and gear and then drove to Qdos and back for the required car shuffle. In our absence a few walkers did Tai Chi exercises!

The day was to be quite hot and heavy going. There was hardly-any to no-water going over any of the falls. We walked to Sheoak Falls, Swallow Cave, Castle Rock, Sheoak Picnic Area (where we had lunch), Henderson Falls, The Canyon, Phantom Falls, (some but not all detoured to) Allen Dam/Reservoir, and finally to Qdos. Some stayed here for high GI drinks and cake while others left for greener pastures.

In the evening we all went to the Lorne Hotel for dinner. Later, some of us found an icecream shop that was still open! It was still balmy when we arrived back at the campground so we sat near our tents until we/I couldn’t stay awake any longer.

After a great night’s sleep and some rain, we packed up and then drove to Sheoak Picnic Area for Sunday’s walk to Lower and Upper Kalimna Falls. The cooler weather made the walking pleasant and the night’s rain had delivered just enough water to the waterfalls. A very gentle walk and a pleasant way to finish off the weekend!

Many thanks to all participants – you made it a great weekend. No doubt we’ll be seeing many of you again in July!

Lothar



GSWW—Blackwood Road to Fish Holes Road, beyond Cutout Camp: 29 Mar 2009

2nd leg of The Great South West Calendar Year Challenge (GSWCYC), about 20kms

Walkers: Coralie, Irene, Linda H, Lothar, Mabel (leader)

I just want to let you all know that I am forgoing my Sunday morning coffee and the reading of my current book in bed so that I can experience the GSWW in one calendar year and write these reports for you. I hope you are all suitably impressed and feeling guilty that you are not joining us. (I suppose I should also tell you that I am using these walks as training for the Jatbula Trail, which a few of us are heading off to do in July.) With that all said, cars were shuffled, boots were donned and maps were adjusted and we headed off **WITHOUT** lattes. It took me a few kilometres to get over this fact and get my head into walking mode and not grumpy mode through lack of latté.

For this part of the walk we started under the power lines before Cubby's camp where I was reminded of the line out of Shakespeare's Hamlet, which I thought was "Alas poor Yorick I knew him well" (which fits quite well into your steps as you walk, but not as well as Om Mani Padme Hum). I have since discovered after some investigation the line is actually "Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy." (This doesn't fit into walking at all). The line is a meditation on the fragility of life and looking down at the skull leaning against the GSWW sign I was wondering if this was an omen for the day.

A few k's into the walk we stopped for a drink and to look at the map to be told that "I'm not sure where we are but do you want to look at the map"!!!! After due discussion and much pointing at different parts of the map we headed off again, I consoled myself with the fact that there was only one track and we couldn't get toooooo lost, although the picture of that skull at the beginning of the walk was looming large in my head.

As lunchtime was drawing close the orders came thick and fast for, logs to sit on, shade, grass and lattes, as very few of these were available we settled for shade. I think by this stage the leader was starting to wonder why she was dragging these followers along especially when the statement of..... "What do you mean we have **ANOTHER 2 HOURS** to go, I have to go home and cut the grass, and what about the girls"!!!! (that's the chooks



by the way) came out of an unnamed person's mouth. As we all settled the President down and enjoyed our lunch break, peacefulness fell over the group. Just being out there in the bush listening to the birds and enjoying the fresh air was adequate compensation for missing out on my sleep-in.

A bit further down the track, after spotting yellow tailed black cockatoos, we meet up with a lone walker, struggling along with a very unbalanced travel backpack with bits and pieces hanging off every available strap and wearing sneakers. This was the second day of his 14 day walk.....hmmm.

You will all be pleased to know that we all made it to the end and have now completed 40 kms of the GSWW's 250 kms. By the way this part of the walk was through bush land all the way with slightly undulating areas at times. There is no water in any of the creeks and the whole area is tinder dry, a bit scary really.

Thanks Mabel for putting up with us and making the day enjoyable.

Linda

P.S. we did get home to the chooks and all was well.

