

The Dunkeld area of the Grampians: 10 Oct 2009

Walkers: Coralie G, Lothar S, Mabel M, and many other senior citizens and volunteers

We had a fantastic time! The weather was perfect for the Seniors Week outing. Coralie led one group around the Arboretum, and Mabel led a big group (33–34) from the Piccaninny car park to the Mt Sturgeon car park. A bit of a struggle for some. There were lots of orchids and other wildflowers about. Lunch was in the park opposite the Tourist Info Centre. It was fully catered and lavish. Yummy - I even had a couple of slices of mud cake and glasses of champagne!

After lunch Coralie and I climbed Mt Abrupt. Perfect climbing weather. We didn't finish until after 5pm and so had to skip cake and coffee. Never mind—I made up for this glitch the following day with a return visit to Madigans in Penshurst...

Lothar



Wurdale/Bambra loop: 11 Oct 2009

Walkers: Kevin F, Chris H, Glenda M, John M, Brenda R, Cynthia S, Glen S, Graeme W, Cheryl W (combined Geelong & Warrnambool Bushwalking Clubs)

Wurdale is just south of the Wurdeboluc Reservoir, while Bambra is north of Deans Marsh. Most of us met at Moriac but we picked up a couple more at the Wurdale Hall. We started the walk a few kilometres into the bush from there.

In the morning we went up through the bush on the ridge immediately west of the Wormbete Creek (which was flowing for a change), finally reaching Daryl Hoffman's farm at the top (behind Jindah Park). Daryl identified mountains in the distance and answered walkers' questions about his house, which he had built from bluestone salvaged from the old Mathieson homestead west of Wurdeboluc. We ate our lunch in his garden, not expecting this degree of hospitality but savouring it all the same.

In the afternoon, we returned through the bush down the valley of the Wormbete Creek, mostly off track but with only light undergrowth. Nature provided a highlight near the finish in the form of an unexpected koala. Coffee at the Moriac General Store completed a fine day.

John M

Ararat Golden Gateway Festival Walk over Mt Langi Ghiran: 18 Oct 2009

Walkers: Diane D, Coralie G, Ken F and Marg F

Diane, Coralie, Ken and I joined many Grampian Bushwalkers, locals and visitors for this year's annual event. We met at a farm shed on the eastern side of the mountain to be served a cooked and/or continental breakfast. Lucky ticket holders won glider flights. Ken drew a Montara Chardonnay, thank you!

One hundred walkers split into three groups for 3, 7 and 11 km hikes. Greg led our group over the mountain up through the eucalypt forest on tracks at first that were muddy after the good rain in recent weeks. Later we went through the bush, over dead logs and lichen and moss covered rocks. A keen eye saw the low-growing Bird Orchids. Later on Greg pointed to a cluster of Spider Orchids.

SES members were on hand to secure the walkers and GBC were among the guides.

At the high point, but not the actual summit, the GPS noted 908 m. The landscape was a patchwork of green cereal crops, vivid canola and yellow fields of dandelions. The Grampian Range stretched out and the wind farm outlined the Chalicum Hills. That may have been Mt Emu on the eastern horizon.

On the descent we paused at the stonewalled water race and again at the reservoirs, passing the old small dam that is close to the picnic and camping ground. There, local service club members served us barbequed meat, bread and fruit salad. After the good lunch we were bussed back to our cars on the other side of the mount.

The bus took the scenic route, via Buangor. A great day.

Marg

PS Look out for the 2010 walk on next year's Walk Calendar. Come for the weekend, to camp at nearby Green Hill Lake. Wildflowers are prolific along the walking tracks in the Ararat Regional Forests.



A weekend in Melbourne: 24–25 Oct 2009

Walkers: Helen A, Marg F, Coralie G (scribe), Linda H and Irene H ; Organiser: Sandra D

The drive to Melbourne on Friday afternoon hit a snag near Point Cook. Due to a fatal crash, traffic had banked up and was travelling at a snail's pace. From the back seat, Helen navigated a scenic route through Williamstown and we missed the worst of it.

The apartment in St Kilda had a small kitchen but where was the fourth bed? This was soon sorted out and four of us made our way into the city where we spent a delightful two hours watching "Mao's Last Dancer". Dinner was eaten back in St Kilda at our favourite eatery "Toppolino's in Fitzroy St.

At eight o'clock on Saturday morning we were all set for the drive to Belgrave if only the automatic gate would open and allow us out! Fortunately this was promptly fixed and we met Linda and Irene near the station an hour and a half later. A visit to a local cafe for coffees all round and we began the walk.

Of course it was uphill even to the starting point. We took Coles Ridge Road, an "easy 2.2 km to Grant's Picnic Ground" the sign proclaimed. The path was wide and Sherbrooke Forest contained many beautifully tall eucalypts. Lunch was enjoyed in a rotunda at the Alfred Nicholas Memorial Gardens in Sassafras. This shady, botanist's paradise had a wonderful ornamental lake at the bottom of its steep sides.

Leaving the gardens we continued back in the forest visiting ferny glades and small waterfalls and then descended via the Hill Climb Track to the tavern at the base for a much appreciated 'cold one'. Whilst it was a relatively short distance back to the start of the walk, the Lipscombe Break, nearly 'broke' us and threatened to rob Sandra of any brownie points she may have earned earlier in the walk. However, once at the top it was a downhill trot to the station (though it was still a steep uphill back to the cars).

Farewelling Linda and Irene, the rest of us had a quick drive back to St Kilda. Unfortunately, soon after returning, Helen was struck down by a migraine and had to take it easy. Sandra, Marg and I hit the streets of St Kilda and were impressed by the good behaviour of people enjoying their night out and by the number of police walking the beat (in fours).

The smell of bacon and eggs greeted us next morning with Sandra 'cooking up a storm' in the kitchen at the apartment. We enjoyed a brisk walk along the beach front and coffee in Ackland Street before heading once more, into the city. The Leonardo Da Vinci exhibition "Anatomy to Robots" entertained us for a couple of hours and then we hit the Arts Centre Sunday Market. After lunch we toasted to a well executed weekend and vowed to do it again next year.

Thanks especially to Sandra for organising accommodation, walks, background information on attractions and driving. A superb effort!



GSWW—Blowholes to the Cape Nelson Lighthouse: 7–8 Nov 2009

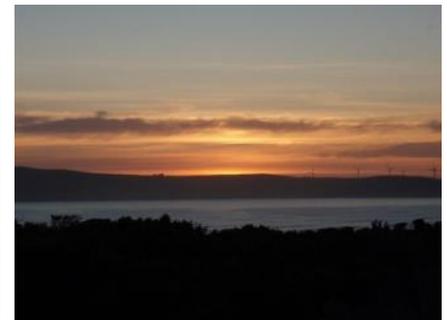
Walkers: Bronwyn B, Coralie G, Di D, Di P, Dina S, Linda H, Lothar S

Sat Nov 7th

Coralie, Lothar, Di P, Dina, Bronwyn and I met at the old tourist information centre carpark and travelled to the blowholes on a predicted hot day to start our walk. As Coralie and Bronwyn did the car shuffle some of us went to look at the blow holes, I had never seen them so calm. The sea was a beautiful aqua colour and the waves were almost a blue white. It was very calming watching the fine spray from the blowholes and in no time the girls were back from the car shuffle and we were ready to start our walk.

Slathered in sunscreen and floppy hats we set off already feeling the heat. We were soon looking at the interesting formations of the Petrified Forest. High on the cliffs looking out across the sea we were delighted by the colour and being very exposed without a tree in sight for a little relief from the hot sun, a break at the seal colony was appreciated by all. The seals were delightful to watch as they lazed about on the rocks below and were very easily spotted in the clear water. The tour boat that takes people up close disappeared into a cave and even a seal pup was spotted catching the spray from an occasional wave. After a bite to eat we now had the Bridgewater Kiosk in sight. We were on snake alert as snakes had been previously spotted in this area but we did not come across one at any time we were walking.

A big shady tree was a great place for lunch followed by cold drinks or coffees. We had a hot road bash: the usual route along the beach was not advised because it was washed away.



Low scrub led us to the welcome sight of Trewalla Camp where Linda H had walked in to camp with the overnighers. Di P, Dina and Bronwyn were leaving us at this stage and Linda and Coralie walked out with them to do the lengthy car shuffle.

A pleasant evening was had at camp and we decided to get up early on Sunday to get the bulk of the walking over before the extreme heat predicted.

Sunday 8th

We all walked out to the cars and swapped our overnight packs for day packs and decided that Linda and I would drive to the Lighthouse at the end of the walk and walk back towards Lothar and Coralie avoiding the long car shuffle. It was very hot walking from our end with hard hot rocks under foot. It was very exposed but now and then relief when we entered the rare Soap Mallee stands. The sea was beautiful and a shipping container and a few small craft were spotted below. Coralie and Lothar had a pleasant walk along Murrells Beach on firm sand, climbing a steep staircase to get back on the cliffs where they eventually met up with Linda and me in the low scrub. We had a snack then headed back towards the lighthouse passing the tall wind turbines that spoil the look of this beautiful area. The hot rocks were hotter by now and my feet felt like sizzling steak on a barbie and fortunately the lighthouse was now in view.



Lunch at the lighthouse was delicious and the water supplied by the attentive waiter was appreciated by all. A film crew were filming a feature movie in the area and lots of trucks, cables etc were everywhere in the vicinity of the lighthouse so it will be interesting to see the movie when it is released.

We would like to thank Mabel who had done the planning of the walk but was unable to join us.

Diane

