

Timboon Rail Trail—Glenfyne to Timboon: 3 Apr 2010

Walkers: Dina, Doug, Coralie, Ivan, Helen, Mike, Liz, Linda, Mabel, Lothar, Irene.

On Saturday April 3rd, a group of 10 walkers gathered at Glenfyne to walk the Timboon Rail Trail. The weather was perfect for walking, being mild in temperature, with the sun breaking through the clouds soon after starting the walk. The walkers set off at a brisk pace, which was maintained throughout since the trail was of a gentle gradient and quite clear of undergrowth. For the most part, the trail was quite broad, narrowing where the track skirted the now disused trestle bridges. The rhythm of the walk was disturbed somewhat when Mabel suddenly yelped and started a little jig – leeches! One slippery little sucker had well and truly attached itself through her sock and onto her lower leg. Out with the salt! The rest of the party then doffed boots and socks with a total of 8 leeches being found in various degrees of attachment.

The walk concluded with lunch at the Timboon Distillery where we were joined by Chris and Betty. Eleven pairs of eyes watched as Coralie ate her meal which arrived well before everyone else's. Some of the group were even becoming a little “cranky” waiting for their tucker, but at last the masses were fed, all except one. The octogenarian of the group was fed 20 minutes after the rest of us. Eleven pairs of eyes then watched as Doug finished his meal in record time “There's other things I can do besides walk fast” he said. But while the service was somewhat lacking, happily the food was very tasty.

Many thanks to our leader, Mabel, for organising the walk, the walkers being Helen, Linda, Lothar, Liz and Mike, Ivan, Coralie, and Doug.

Dina



Six Mile Creek Walk: 8–10 Apr 2010

Walkers: Coralie & Marg plus others

A community event organised by Project Platypus with Concongella Landcare and Wimmera Catchment Management Authority.

The walk followed the Six Mile Creek from its origin in the Ararat Hills near Dunneworthy to where the Creek runs into the Wimmera River near Joel.

A highlight for me was to be driven up Anny's Hill at sunset on the first evening to watch the sky turn orange, pink maroon and purple as the Sun sank behind the Grampians, sending long streaks of light between Mt William and the Black Range. Mt Ararat and the communication tower on One Tree Hill stood out and we watched the lights of Ararat come on.

This was a bushwalk with a difference for Coralie and me. Our camping gear, deck chair and esky were loaded onto the support vehicle, leaving us with a daypack carrying lunch, rainwear and camera.

We climbed over numerous barbed-wire fences as we passed through neighbouring properties. Often the farmer would accompany us for a while, telling of the history of the farm and pointing about their own and Landcare's initiatives to combat soil erosion, creek bank degradation, fighting rabbits, foxes and weeds. Not to mention the years of drought since the 1996 floods.

Spending three days walking over the hills and beside the Creek was such an enjoying adventure. Thanks to Coralie, the hikers and special thanks to Bernie, Chef Extraordinaire and patient event co-ordinator.

Marg F



Wurdale/Bambra loop walk: 18 Apr 2010

Walkers: John M (Leader) plus eight other Geelong Bushwalkers, Lothar

The details are the same as for last year's walk.

On John's walks you can always rely on a section being off track and today's walk was no exception. The Geelong crew picked me up at the Wurdale Hall at about 9:40 am. We then drove a few kilometres south into the State Forest to the start of the walk. The Wormbete Creek wasn't flowing this year but there was a waterhole or two. We stopped on a concrete bridge for our morning tea/banana break before continuing up a ridge. We scrambled over a fence surrounding DH's farm and walked across fields towards JH's farmhouse. We gingerly passed bulls, cows and calves before settling down to lunch beside the carrel. We then followed a slightly different return route to last year—still off track and still with only slight undergrowth. Mind you, I must have brushed against a few prickly bushes as I spent part of this morning pulling 3 small splinters from my left hand!

Afterwards, the Geelong walkers again went to the Moriac General Store for coffee whereas I went to Birre Café (in Birregurra) for a meat pie and a ginger beer—gourmet fare for sure!

Many thanks to all the Geelong walkers for their great company. And many thanks to John for another great walk. I hope that both he and Glenda have a successful move to WA and that we will be able to catch up with them again next time we travel to the West.

Lothar S



The Grampians track maintenance and the Grape Escape: 1–2 May 2010

Track Maintenance workers: *Linda H, Coralie, Helen, Mabel, Dina*

Friday. We met at the Halls Gap Hotel for a most enjoyable meal and a few wines.

Saturday. We met the rest of the crew (about 25 others) at a campground near McKenzie's Falls and followed the Park Ranger along a fairly rough road to about 5 kilometres past Boroka Lookout. Here we divided into groups to cut a new track through the bush to create "Wartook Lookout." This track is only 500 metres long but it provides absolutely magnificent views over Lake Wartook and several other wet areas.

At lunch time we were pleasantly surprised to meet up with Janice, who was doing a reconnaissance trip for a walk she is conducting later in May. After lunch our group divided up with Coralie and Dina walking to Boroka Lookout and then down into Halls Gap. Mabel and Helen remaining with the working party whilst I caught a lift back to Halls Gap.

Saturday night was a bit of a hoot. Dina returned to Warrnambool whilst Di D arrived with a huge pot of luscious soup for the workers. We started the evening with several rounds of soup and garlic bread, as well as a few wines. Feeling rather full we all went for a short walk. When we returned to the cabin none of us felt like the BBQ but we all felt like hoping straight into the sweets which had been prepared by a friend of mine. It was a delicious self saucing chocolate pudding, YUM YUM! As well as some more wine. After the dishes we all had to go for another walk!

David, from the Grampians Track Maintenance group is keen to have several smaller groups during the year rather than one large activity, so we will see what happens with that.

The Grape Escaper: *Linda H, Coralie, Helen, Mabel, Diane D.*

Sunday morning we divided up into 2 groups for a walk. One group climbed up the face behind the camp ground to the Pinnacle whilst the other group walked behind Halls Gap along the creek.

We all met up at the Grape Escape at midday for lunch. What can you say about complete indulgence, beautiful food samples and wine, lots of purchases were made. By 2 pm we were all full and made our various ways back home.

Thank you to those who came, it was really great fun. I am looking forward to doing it again next year.

Linda H

West of Golton Gorge: 8–9 May 2010

*Walkers: (Geelong Bushwalking Club) John G, Peter T, and John VG (leader) ;
(Warrnambool Walkers) Bob D, Coralie G, Diane D, Fiona M, Lothar S*

Saturday: “Panther Country”

This weekend had been a long time coming. Many times postponed but finally we had people together but Kerry was missing so we had to mother Peter as best we could. The Warrnambool walkers outnumbered the Geelong walkers in this group which climbed steady up through the eastern edge of the gorge and got warm very quickly. Reached the flatter areas around the Copper Mine track campsite and then followed the track for a short distance to the edge of a plateau. Leaving the track here we headed cross country to the rocky and exposed western edge. Good views to Mt Stapylton to the north and the plains to the west. It was cool which was good as we were carrying all our water for the w/e and a few clouds threatened but never eventuated.

We followed along the range, scrambling at times, to a major break in the cliff line. Here there was a reasonable pool of water following recent rain however not something to rely upon. Further along we were getting good views of Briggs Bluff and Mt Difficult.

Late in the afternoon in a saddle I declared it the campsite. I had scouted around a little further but decided that this was as good as it gets around here. We would much rather be in a place with a view than down in a hole in the scrub somewhere. It took a little work for our largish party but it did have north/south views and the sun came out to boot.

Sunday: “View from the Saddle”

After a comfortable night we walked in high scrub to Pulpit Rock. We had a good poke around this rock formation and while getting up might be possible getting down would be a big ask. At this time Coralie noticed that her map case was missing. She went back towards the campsite with Diane while we continued on east thru the light scrub. We crossed the Pohlner Road and hit some heavy scrub around the Golton Creek before scrambling up and onto the ridgeline. From up here we headed north back towards the gorge.



At lunch we scanned the Pohlner Road below for signs of Coralie and Diane who were to come out that way. It was rugged going on this range but a little better just off to the east. At the northern edge of this range we scrambled down a dry water course which was a break in the cliff line and came out on the Copper Mine Track right where Coralie and Diane were. They heard us crashing thru the bush and waited. We returned to our cars via the gorge for a very scenic end to a great weekend.

Thanks to Coralie for the suggestions for this walk. It is a rugged, picturesque and interesting area worth visiting and exploring.

John VG

For this sort of off-track bush-bashing and rock scrambling activity you generally need to wear long pants and shirt, gaiters, and don leather gloves to brush aside the dense undergrowth/regrowth and/or thorny bushes. You also need to be reasonably fit and be able to carry a full overnight pack with enough water for a couple of days.



Pyrenees Endurance Walk: 15–16 May 2010

Walkers: Coralie, Di D, Lothar, Marg

In two cars we travelled on the Pyrenees Highway turning off at Elmhurst. The car shuffle took over an hour but the drive was scenic as the vineyards were in their Autumn splendour, the paddocks were green, and the hills and sky blue. Lothar fashioned me a walking pole whilst he and Di waited.

On the early parts of the walking track we needed to keep eyes peeled to locate the sparse marker poles with orange triangles. The track was covered in leaf litter and shed bark. The trail ascended through tall Iron Bark forest to meet Smith Track. We continued climbing to reach Black Range Track, another vehicular road.

Back on the walking track this was now clearly defined due to trail bikes gouging out the dirt track. We stood aside whilst groups of three or four riders sped by, revving to ascend the steep gradient. (We muttered amongst ourselves!)

Reaching Camerons Campground we were relieved to find that we had the area to ourselves. Wood and gumleaves were gathered and soon Diane had a warm campfire burning. Lovely. We pitched our tents and gathered around the fire near the shelter to drink hot soup and coffee before preparing dinner.

Sunset was at about 5:30 pm. We sat around the fire, looking up into the heavens. The sky blackened, revealing a star-studded cosmos. The Southern Cross and the Milky Way were nearly overhead. Orion low in the western sky. Coralie pointed out a satellite traversing south and later a spectacular shooting star sparkled for a couple of seconds as it plummeted.

Sunday morning was fine again, though cloudy. There were many more ridges to climb and steep descents into damp gullies. The creeks were not flowing however. A fascinating array of fungi thrived. "Saffron Cups" were clustered around tree trunks. There was a weird and wonderful assortment of spotted and frilly toadstools growing on bark, tree stumps, and the track. Occasionally a chorus of raucous white cockatoos broke the bush silence.

On the steep track beyond Old Tiger Cat Track engines then headlights warned us of the approaching pack of trail bikers who were enjoying the challenge of riding on the narrow



walking track. But they are a danger to walkers and their skidding tyres damage the track.

There was plenty of up and downhill walking before we crossed Mt Avoca (747m). We then had about 1.5 km of serious descent, passing adjacent sheer rocky cliffs of No 2 Creek as we approached Waterfall Picnic Ground where our car was parked.

My thanks for such good company on the walk, the lessons on map reading and everyone's alertness to keep us on track when the markers were not obvious. The weekend was another great adventure for me with the Warrnambool Bushwalkers!

Thanks, Marg



The Grampians—Mt Sturgeon: 19 May 2010

Walkers: *Ian F, Jim F, Ken F, Linda C, Lothar (leader), Marg F*

We had fantastic weather for this midweek walk up Mt Sturgeon. Plenty of sunshine, very little wind, dry track, etc. After a drink in Dunkeld we drove to the carpark and started our climb. We took our time going up and enjoyed the views along the way.

At the peak we had lunch and took a few photos. There weren't any eagles about but we did spot a wallaby nibbling on some bushes.

Back at the cars Marg offered everyone a slice of homemade fruit cake. Yum! Ken and Marg then headed towards Halls Gap whilst the rest dragged themselves off to Madigans in Penshurst...for the obligatory cake and drink. A very pleasant end to the walk!

Thanks to all for a most enjoyable day out.

Lothar



The Grampians—Mt Abrupt: 9 Jun 2010

Walkers: Ian F, Ken F, Linda C, Lothar (leader), Marg F

We met in Dunkeld at 10:30 am and planned the walk over a cuppa. Thermals, raincoats, and overpants would be needed as it was cold, rainy and windy. We then drove to the Mt Abrupt carpark and started the walk.

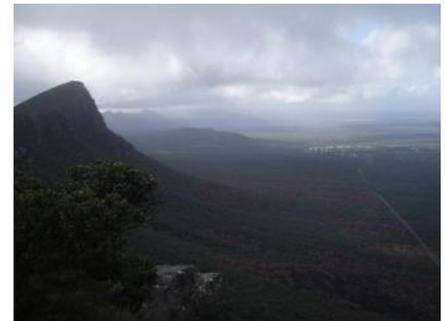
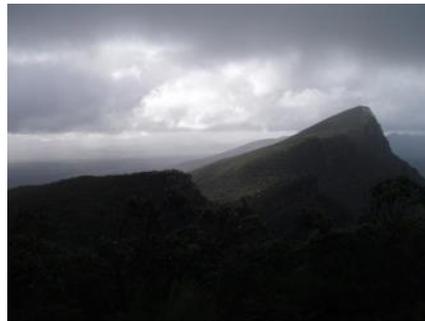
On our way up we had brief glimpses of the distant fields and hills through the fog and occasional drizzle. The rocks were a bit slippery and we had to be more careful picking our way up the slopes. We were going to have lunch at the top but it wasn't pleasant there—spitting rain and too windy with no views at all. I took a couple of pics and then we started down again with even greater care.

On the way down the clouds lifted for a few minutes and we were able to look up and see the Mt Abrupt peak (for the first and last time on this walk) and also Victoria Valley. The view down to the carpark, Signal Peak, and the surrounding burnt patches of bush was also spectacular. We finally had lunch amongst some trees before descending back to the carpark.

Back in Dunkeld we changed out of our wet clothes and had cups of hot soup in the picnic area opposite the visitor info centre. Then it was farewells and back home....except for the obligatory stop at Madigans in Penshurst.

Many thanks to the Rosebrook/Orford/Ararat walkers for a making it a great Warrnambool Walkers day out!

Lothar



Larapinta Trail: 25 Jun to 1 Jul 2010

Walkers: Marg and Lothar

It was well worth revisiting this part of the NT.

Marg and I travelled up by car in 3 solid days. Clever Chris flew up by plane and we met her at the airport before driving West to Glen Helen Gorge. It was a glorious day and the cliffs on either side of the ranges shone in the sun.

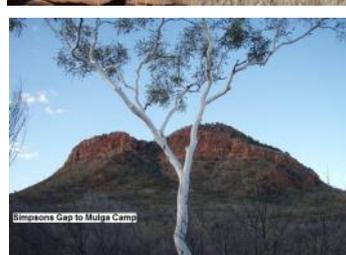
Over the next 2 days Marg and I completed the Ormiston Pound walk (almost twice) and the return walk up to Mount Sonder. We then did 3 days of overnight backpacking from Simpsons Gap to Standley Chasm. Over this 5 day period the weather gradually deteriorated and on the last day we walked in to Standley Chasm completely soaked in spite of wearing full wet weather gear. Fortunately Chris was waiting with warm cuppas, cake, and dry clothes. This could have been the day where the minimum and maximum temperatures were identical—both 9°C.

In between the day and overnight walks we even managed to call into the Wilderness Park (in Alice Springs) to look at flora and fauna and watch their raptor (birds of prey) performances. Excellent stuff!

Marg then flew home. Chris and I were going to spend an extra couple of weeks in the NT but the heavy rain overnight (and the forecast of more rains to come) dampened our spirits so we also packed up and headed home...by car.

Many thanks to Marg for joining me on the walks and to Chris for her excellent support crewing.

Lothar



Port Fairy to Warrnambool Rail Trail tree planting at Koroit: 26 Jun 2010

Participants: 14 Friends of the Rail Trail plus Coralie, Diane D, Di P, Dina, Ivan, Linda H, Irene H and Peter M.

The weather was terrible as I woke in the morning thinking that no one would turn up. We decided that the BBQ would be on our back veranda; at least people would be dry and warm. In the trailer were 750 trees all eager to be planted.

At 10:15 the first of the volunteers started turning up well covered in their raincoats with all kinds of planting implements. By 10:30 everyone was there and work started. Very quickly individuals found their areas of expertise with some digging, some planting, some putting the covers together, some allocating the covers and some hammering them in. It was poetry in motion.

By 11:45 the last of the trees were in the ground looking like little soldiers all standing to attention. I invited everyone back to our house for the BBQ which Irene and Di P had ready and waiting. Hot food, coffee and cake (thanks Di) were thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Thanks to all who came out in very unpleasant conditions and gave of their time to a most worthy cause.

Linda

