

Great Ocean Walk—Wreck Beach to Princetown via the new realignment: 10 Jan 2011

Walkers: Helen A, Jim F, Linda H (leader), Lothar

After trying to book into a part of the GOW (unsuccessfully) I decided to offer a one day walk and explore the new realignment which opened in December 2010. The lady from Parks seemed a little hesitant when she said that she “thought” the realignment was complete but I decided to take the risk. We left Warrnambool at 8:00 am and left one car in Princetown then drove to the Wreck Beach car park. I had checked with Lothar about the tides so we were prepared for a low tide. I certainly would not attempt the beach section unless it was a low tide. When we climbed off the beach we stopped at Devils Kitchen Camp site for an early lunch. By this stage it was drizzling constantly so we were quite happy to have a dry area to sit down under.

A couple of hundred metres back down the track was the new realignment. The walking was sensational. Parks had mulched the trees removed and laid it on the track, it was lovely and soft. The vegetation varied from dense tea tree to swampy marsh. There were boardwalks over the swamps so there was minimal impact.

Overall, I was extremely impressed with the design of this new track which finished just before the Princetown Camping Ground. Not to have to walk on the Old Coach Track was delightful. I will be offering this walk again at the walks planning meeting in February so keep your eye on the calendar, it is well worth the day trip.

Thanks to Helen, Lothar and Jim for your wonderful company and coming to my rescue with the leech.

Linda



Warrnambool to Port Fairy: 26 Jan 2011

Walkers: Bob D, Di P, Fiona M, Helen A, Ian F, Jack, Jim F, Linda H, Lothar S (leader), Marg F, Peter M, with helpers Chris S and Irene H

Chris and I drove to Port Fairy to do a car shuffle, picking up Helen and Ian in Port Fairy before driving back to Warrnambool. We met the others at 8 am at Thunder Point and then started the walk. We hardly had any wind and the sky was overcast—perfect for walking. 5 hours at a brisk pace is required to complete the 25 km walk and we were all up to the task.

Past Shelly beach we were able to leave the cliffs for the beach, and after a couple of rock scrambles we were able to stay on the sand for the rest of the day. The going was made easier by firm sand left by the very low mid morning tide.

We had a couple of rest stops before getting to the Killarney picnic area (near the oval). Di and Linda were waiting there for us. The caravan park at the oval seemed jam packed. We sat at the picnic tables and had an early lunch in the shade.

After lunch we completed the rest of the walk along the more interesting part of the coast. In Port Fairy we were met at *The Hub Cafe* by helpers Chris and Irene. We had a leisurely recovery session (see photo) before piling into the cars for the drive home or to Thunder Point.

Many thanks to all for a great Australia Day walk!

Lothar



Loch Ard to Sherbrooke River: 6 Feb 2011

Walkers: Diane D, Linda H, Irene, Coralie, Leanne (prospective member), her daughter Emily and niece, Issabella.

I hesitate to call this a 'walk' as the terrain was flat, the paths paved and well formed and the distance was a very easy 6 kilometres.

As we approached Port Campbell the sky looked threatening and rain drops splattered on the windscreen. Looking skywards, Diane confidently predicted it would clear soon so the 'cappuccinos first' option was ditched and we headed for the Loch Ard carpark.

In breezy, cool conditions we donned coats and headed to Thunder Cave and the Blowhole. The relentless sea pounded the cliffs, slowly eating away at the foundations below us. The fenced loop track at Broken Head provided more great views.

A little further on, a gently sloping path led us to the mouth of the Sherbrooke River and a small beach. On a sheltered, rocky platform we enjoyed morning tea and carrot cake. We returned to the cars and rid ourselves of unnecessary gear before walking out to the Mutton Bird Island viewing platform. By now the sun was shining and Irene, Leanne and Diane were putting their cameras through their paces.

The next stop was the Loch Ard Cemetery. Along with many locals, the only four bodies recovered from the ship wreck are buried here. We then headed down steps to the beach where we observed a great number of stalactite-formations above the caves here.

We finished our tour with the Island Arch Circuit where the major highlights were the Razorback—a long, eroded, holey finger of rock and Irene, Emily and Issabella performing leaps for the 'Jet Star' jump photo competition. I'll keep you posted as to their success!

Lunch at Port Campbell rounded the morning out. The trip home was obviously a smooth one judging by the gentle snores of all but the driver!

Coralie G



Boronia Peak: 21 Feb 2011

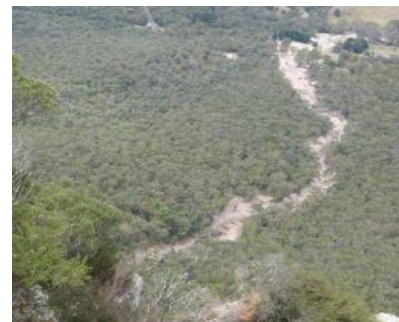
Walkers: Marg, Lothar, Jim & Mabel (leader)

It is heartbreaking to see the effect the severe rain storm has had on the Grampians. The creeks all suffer from the effect of the raging water—washout out/undermined banks with trees and debris everywhere. However, it is the landslides that have done the most damage. The Dunkeld/Halls Gap road is closed with a huge landslide at Mt Abrupt. The Mt Victory road is also closed. A huge section of the one-way road to the Silverband Falls has been washed away and that road is also closed. Lake Bellfield is full with many trees under water along the side of the lake. As well as Boronia Peak, the west side of the Chatauqua Peak and the loop along the Fyans Creek at Brumbuk were the only ones open in the Halls gap area.

After the Jazz Parade and in bright sunshine we set off for the short climb up the peak. The views from the top were superb. We could see quite a number of landslides on the other side of the valley include a large one near The Pinnacle. Marg was able to locate the old track and for most it was easy to follow down. Keeping with the porker tradition we completed our outing with coffee and cold drinks at Brumbuk cafe.

On my way to Halls Gap a few days earlier I walked up Mt Sturgeon. There is also a large landslide coming from just below the rocky escarpment going right down to the river and narrowly missing the house that is near the river. I also did the walk up Chatauqua Peak. From the rocky top you get a good view of the Elephant's Hide and Venus Baths. There appeared to be at least six landslides that ended up in the Venus Baths area. I believe that Parks is aiming to have the Macey's Peak track up to the Pinnacle open for Easter but I fear it will be a long time before the Grampians is back to full health again. The Northern Grampians fared much better – Stapylton area is open. You can also go up Beehive Falls to Briggs Bluff but no further – the Mt Difficult area is closed.

Mabel



Clean Up Australia Day: 5 Mar 2011

After meeting at the Wangoom Store at 8 am, the decision was made to clean the road from the Wangoom Falls back to the Store. The falls still looked impressive despite the drop in the river level.

We collected 12 bags of litter – 6 of which consisted of recyclable materials, mainly cans and beer bottles. Diane found the most unusual item – a printer for a computer. Coralie and I rescued a kitten trapped in a skip at the tip by piling up our litter bags so that it could climb out.

We then adjourned to the store for a well earned coffee. Again, a big thank you to those who helped out.

Helen



GSWW—Complete 14 day circuit: 6–19 Mar 2011

Walkers: Bill, Collette, Dennis, Ella, Helen, John, Kaye, Kevin, Lindy, Lisa, Lothar, Marilyn, Mario, Mark, Seppi, and Friends Gordon and Nevin

The Friends of the Great South West Walk put on the complete 14 day (250 km) circuit a couple of times a year. The very modest \$220 cost includes transport of all your gear and food from campsite to campsite, camping (including Nelson), and free tea/coffee. You just walk with a daypack. Most had a hot shower at the end of the day using portable showers. We had a campfire every night. A gas fired fridge was also at our disposal for fresh goodies.

It was my second complete circuit and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I met a fantastic group of people – from seasoned walkers, couples, to mums who just wanted to give it a try. We had belly laughs every day and night. We swam in and had a boat ride on the Glenelg River, a roast dinner, pancakes with strawberries and cream, a few drinks, and great dining at the Nelson pub and at the Bridgewater Bay Cafe. Ok, Ok, a few of us got blisters and/or picked up a leech or two, and we had 2 wet days...but I would highly recommend it to anyone!!

Lothar

PS Mallee camp is being relocated 2 km closer to the Lighthouse



GOW—Wreck Beach to Princetown: 26 Mar 2011

PART OF THE GREAT OCEAN WALK

The walk started at the Wreck Beach car park. We headed down the steps, thankful we were going down and not up, and once we hit the sand we started walking towards Princetown. The sand was very soft but the tide was out so we were able to find a few hard spots. This is such an interesting part of the coast where there is evidence of ship wrecks all along the beach. Anchors and other parts of the ships are visible and on the right day some magnificent photos can be taken.

At the end of the bay we made a climb up to one of the huts on the Great Ocean Walk, where we had lunch. Whilst we were there we had a look at the view from the camp site nearest the cliffs—it was breathtaking.

Following lunch we made our way back to the new realignment and continued on. I can't speak highly enough of this new section (with its own black and white wolf and equally mysterious feral owner). There are seats at sections which provide stunning views and great photo opportunities. The rest of the walk was uneventful until a very quick snake slithered between two of the walkers as it made its escape. Hearts were pumping at this point.

We finished at Princetown where we ordered various drinks. We had just sat down when about 8 other walkers arrived after us and we did not even hear them, just amazing.

Linda