

## **Narrawong—Surrey River to Fitzroy River: 8 Jan 2012**

*Walkers: Jim and Lothar*

This 15 km walk/run is a fund-raising event organised by the Portland Life Saving Club. For \$10 you get a lift back in a bus to the start and aid a worthy club.

Everything went fine for the first half - clear skies, a breeze on our backs and firm sand for walking on. Towards the end though, we had squalls with rain.

The festivities back in Narrawong were somewhat subdued as many participants and spectators left after the walk/run. The remainder huddled under verandas in the rain. The BBQ sausages were excellent as usual.

*Lothar*

## **Mt Abrupt: 15 Jan 2012**

*Walkers: Jim F, Kate, Ken F, Mabel (leader), Marg F, Peta, Rob, Sue*

The walking track up Mt Abrupt had been reopened just a few days earlier after being extensively damaged during the January 2011 floods. Parks Victoria has done an absolutely superb job, not only repairing the track but also stabilising the hillside where large landslides gouged out huge valleys. We wondered how they managed to position the big stones to form steps and banks – it is quite amazing the work they have done. If you are in the area it is worthwhile to go and have a look – all the landslides occurred in the first section of the track. Congratulations Parks Victoria.

The damage has opened up the track and you now get more views of the countryside as you climb up that first section. We were fortunate to have perfect weather and very enjoyable company.

After a coffee in Dunkeld, we finished the day with a stroll around the Arboretum.

*Mabel*



## Port Fairy—Griffith Island, dinner, movie: 20 Jan 2012

Yes, we had three activities on the one day all in Port Fairy.

**Number One:** a walk around Griffith Island. I never tire of this lovely short walk especially this time of the year when the Mutton Bird holes have chicks; the ocean is at its best and a slight southerly breeze blowing. We even saw a few wallabies that just sat up and watched us walk by.

**Number Two:** a meal at the Star Hotel. I have never eaten in the Bistro before and I was very pleasantly surprised. All taste buds were catered for at a reasonable price.

**Number Three:** a movie (The Hunter) at the Reardon Theatre Port Fairy. Unfortunately this was not what we had hoped for. We had just settled down when the projectionist came out to tell us that he could not get the projector to access the movie on the hard disk but he had another lovely film for us, but it was subtitled. Further problems with the projector and the DVD followed!!! By this stage some of us had had enough so we left. They did reimburse us, which paid for our coffee and cake down the street. So unfortunately, activity three was a bit of a non-event.

We did however welcome a new member to our club, Lucee.

*Linda*



## Grampians—Jazz Festival weekend: 11–12 Feb 2012

*Walkers: Di D, Coralie G, Helen A, Linda H, Lothar S (leader)*

Helen and I left Warrnambool at 7:30 am—plenty of time to drive to Halls Gap, set up the tents, have a cuppa with the others, and then watch the 11 am jazz procession up and down the main street. As colourful, noisy and wonderful as ever!

We then split into two groups: Helen and Linda did a loop walk to Brambruk and Chatauqua Peak, and Coralie, Di and myself walked up to the Pinnacle and back. We took our time going up as Di was doing training with a 20 kg pack on her back. The views from the top are always amazing. Lake Bellfield appeared full to capacity. We had a quick lunch and then returned to the campground.

After the mandatory drinks, ice creams, and vanilla slices from the bakery, we sat on the fringes of the festival tents and listened to some jazz. Coralie and Di eventually left, leaving the rest of us to have showers and then make our way to the hotel bistro for some hearty meals. Afterwards we soaked up some more jazz before retiring.

On Sunday we packed early. Linda returned home whilst Helen and I drove to Tandarra and then climbed Boronia Peak. We made it to the top without any difficulties, but along the way met a few people who had stopped short of the peak because of the "difficult" rock scramble. A very enjoyable walk with great views of the Halls Gap valley from the top.

On the way home we stopped at the picnic area in Dunkeld for lunch.

Many thanks to all for a great weekend!

*Lothar*



## Levy's Beach to Proudfoot's: 25 Feb 2012

*Walkers: Coralie, Dina (leader), Jim, Julie, Lothar, Lyn, Rob*

On a very warm Saturday morning, eight hardy souls gathered at Levy's Beach car park to start our walk. The first section was beach with sand that was relatively firm, followed by a rocky area where numerous bird species gathered. Whilst I usually have a good explore of the rock pools, the temperature was such that, on our regular rest stops, we headed for shade afforded us by some of the larger rocks. We had a brief photo stop at Thunder Point, then off to the Pavilion, where 2 of our members indulged in ice-cream!! Wonder who?? Others decided to have a bit of a shower with their clothes on!

The group continued along the foreshore path of Lady Bay to Ritchie's Point, turning inland to Proudfoot's, where we sat with our chilled drinks under an air conditioner in the bar. Bliss!!

Thanks to Lothar, Coralie, Sue, Julie, Lyn, Rob and Jim for joining me in such trying conditions and remaining cheerful throughout.

*Dina*



## Barneys Castle: 10–11 Mar 2012

*Walkers: Bill, Di D, Coralie, Rosemary (Geelong BWC)*

*“Barney’s Castle Circuit. An off-track walk. Carry water for weekend. Some rock scrambling and some walking on formed tracks. Beautiful campsite up high.”*

Sound innocuous enough. An off track walk. Like a conversation which meanders around the main theme to peruse the peripheral ideas allowing the possibility of navigating over to more interesting topics. No harm in that, is there?

The route skirted the southern edge of Lake Bellfield to an old tunnel under the William Range. Then we turned south along the choked floor of a long gully, after a while gaining the ridgeline in the hope of easier progress. Soon we had reached open rock slabs high above Bellfield and found a delightfully elevated camp site. A full moon and warm night completed an enjoyable day.

Next morning we pushed through to the top of the cliff face of the Barbican Walls and a summit trip to Barney’s Castle to enjoy the sensational views of the Dials, Redmans Bluff and the Serra Range. Gaining Barney’s Creek we had a refresh and paused to work out where we were. Our destination proved to be barely 50 m away—a tribute to fine navigation and route finding skills.

Along the way I became acquainted with the finer points of Grampians’ acacia, hakea, and grevillea species. Scratched to bits, actually. The recent fire has now skewed the populations of these prickly plants in their favour. They dominated the entire understorey on the rocky heights. I expect my knees to soon sprout propagated plants from all the embedded vegetative material.

This adventure was enjoyed by Di D, Coralie, Rosemary (Geelong) & Bill.



## Tasmania's Central Highlands: 17–27 Mar 2012

*Walkers: Diane D, Fiona & Bob D, and from Geelong BWC John VG, Kath G, Kathleen W & Veronica P*

**Day 1:** After a scenic tour of appropriately named Meander and a coffee at Mole Creek, we left the end of Mersey Forest Rd, near Lake Rowallan at 1:45 p.m. and headed for Grail Falls. First 1 km was not too bad then a river crossing over a suspension bridge, 3 km steep up hill, through Beech forest to Chapter Lake and Grail, magnificent falls, real powering. A photo shoot and then a steep rock climb up the left hand side of the falls. With full, 10 day packs, this was a challenge. Once at the top we then had over 1 km of bush bashing over a cairned route in light rain to find a camp site. As it had already gone past 6 pm we eventually settled on a rocky outcrop, above Chalice Lake with magnificent views. We set up camp, cooked and ate in the rain. Straight to bed.

**Day 2:** We donned day packs and headed off around Chalice Lake with an aim to climb Cathedral Mt. We bushed and we bashed around the lake, up and down inlets until at 1 pm we turned back, two ridges away from the peak. Approximately 1 km to go but as the terrain was so tough we knew we would not make it there and back by dark. The group split on the return, the wimpy walkers (Bob, Kathleen, Kath and Fiona) and the swimmers (John, Veronica and Di). Four decided to walk back around the lake whilst three of us decided to take a short cut and swim across to our camp. Back at camp we got dried and dressed, wrung out our wet hair and put on the billy. It wasn't long before the walkers returned and we all sat on the warm rock shelf above the lake in the sun for afternoon tea, beautiful. The weather was good so cooking was a communal affair this evening, followed by cheese cake provided by John. We sat on the rock watching the setting sun and listening to Lamb frogs.



**Day 3:** We packed up in good weather and headed back through the scrub finding the water under the Chalice Lake outlet crossing down a metre from when we saw it two evenings before. Great views and photos from the top of the falls. We then had the arduous climb down the side of Grail Falls, again with heavy packs. We missed the track at the bottom of Grail so then spent an hour bush bashing our way up, hard work. With all the part tracks it was clear that we were not the first to do this. A well-earned lunch was on a rock overlooking Cloister Lagoon. From here we found the track to Junction Lake, it was very rough and rugged. We arrived at the elevated camp site overlooking Junction Lake at 3:30 pm. and decided to stay. Again a very pleasant evening, other than the leeches. Most of us had a rinse in the lake—nearly all were joined by the friendly neighbourhood leeches.



**Day 4:** Broke camp in light rain and stopped briefly at Junction Hut before crossing the Mersey River. This was to be the first of several creek crossings, one of which we were unable to find rocks or logs appropriately placed and it was off with boots and socks. We found a track for the first half of the day but the going was tough as it was so overgrown. At the outlet of Lake Eros was an interesting floating logs river crossing where we were able to practise being lumberjacks. Towards the end of the day, we were constantly in very thick scrub, climbing over or under fallen trees and getting caught in the thick of it. The wind was quite strong. Lunch was on a high point, sheltering in the shrubbery, followed by another hour or so trackless and in scoparia. We ended up finding a possible spot to camp amongst the shrubbery at the north end of Lake Payanna. The wind was quite strong, making it very cold. Excellent views of the Lake, Mt Spurling and “Mt Jupiter”.

**Day 5:** Cold and windy night, but clear. My washing mostly dried. We got organised and headed off for a day walk up Mt Spurling. The first section to the ridge was dense scoparia and tough going. As we pushed through we encountered dense pandanas and beech forests. By now the rain had started, just to add another dimension to the already tough going. On reaching the top we only stayed for a few minutes, enough time for Bob to phone for a weather report. It was not good. We had climbed up the north face and had it been a good day, the view and the lake on top would have been a lot more amazing. The weather report was all bad and getting worse, snow predicted at 900 metre tomorrow then 700 the next day. It was so cold, we decided to hightail it back to camp for a late lunch. On reaching camp we each made a bee line for our tents where we stayed for the rest of the afternoon. That evening it was decided to change plans and get out. The water around our camp had risen dramatically.

**Day 6:** We packed up our soggy wet tents and gear and headed back to Junction Lake in heavy wind and rain. It was tough going through the scrub once more, cold, wet and slippery. We stopped for an early lunch as soon as there was a break in the weather on a small isthmus on the edge of Lake Artemis. A really nice camp spot. Fuelled up we pushed on, arriving at Junction Hut mid-afternoon. Di and I opted to sleep in the hut whilst the others set up their wet tents once more. It was quite cold so we set about getting a fire going in the hut, this became the communal kitchen and social point where the next few hours passed quite pleasantly, rotating wet socks, cooking and holding a belated St Patrick's Day quiz. Everyone's a winner. Bob dressed for dinner and distributed the prizes.

**Day 7:** Awoke this morning to about 8 cm of snow. It wasn't long before the campers were in the hut and the routine of breakfast and packing began. Today was going to be a challenge. We set off a little after 9 a.m. into heavily falling snow which predominately got heavier as the day wore on, although there were a few breaks where the sun shone through momentarily, and the views and scenery were amazing. At this point we were travelling at 1 km per hour, it was tough going and navigation was a bit trickier. John was out front pushing through with Di for most of the day. The water levels had risen dramatically which made each water hole, creek and river so much deeper and the low swamp areas turned to mini lakes so it was hard to determine where the holes were. Many feet were sunk—not a dry foot to be had. We had not stopped for lunch, it had been too cold, so we had just nibbled snacks when possible—including a short but cold stop at the track junction that we had missed on the way in. We finally made it back to the cars at 6 pm on Mersey Forrest Rd and still snowing, the cars now white.

**Summary:** The walk was hard but worth it for the magnificent scenery, especially having been able to see it in sunshine and then white with snow. So, so beautiful. And, did I mention the leeches!!!

*Veronica*



## Gourmet Walk from 12 Apostles to Princetown: 24 Mar 2012

*Walkers: Coralie G, Di P, Helen A, Mabel M and Sue M*

The weather looked threatening as we left, but the thought of “goodies” overcame all qualms. At the new lookout at the start of the walk, we noticed that is now extended through to Gibson’s Steps and there are plans to extend it further to the 12 Apostles complex.

After photos were taken it was off to Princetown. Again evidence of track construction to bypass the 4WD section was a pleasant surprise – the track would come out at the bridge.

After coffee, we farewelled Coralie and proceeded to Gorge Chocolates (new premises!) and on to lunch at Apostle Whey – very enjoyable cheese platters! Of course wine goes well with cheese so it was off to Heytesbury Ridge for sampling!!

The very successful day was concluded with coffee (and cake for some!) at the Timboon Distillery (no room for schnapps!). Thanks to all for again making this a very enjoyable day.

*Helen*



## Beeripmo Circuit: 31 Mar to 1 Apr 2012

*Walkers: Kate, Mabel (leader), Marg, and Sue*

This turned out to be an ideal weekend for novice backpackers – great weather, small camp fire and no April fool jokes.

When we arrived at Richards camp site we wondered if we were at the wrong spot as Ballarat University Outdoor Ed students were in the middle of a boot camp. We hurriedly got ourselves organised and escaped into the peace of the bush and hard work as the track steadily climbed up to the waterfall. We soon adjusted to carrying the weight of an overnight pack and with a steady pace and frequent stops we arrived at the walker's camp about 3.00 pm. We all enjoyed a leisurely evening around a small camp fire and early to bed.

Next morning the mist rolled in as we were packing up camp but it had cleared sufficiently by the time we got to Buangor look out for us to get a reasonable view of Langi Ghiran and towards the Grampians. We soon completed the walk and were enjoying coffee in Beaufort by 2.00 pm.

The next novice back pack weekend walk will be 12 & 13 May somewhere on the Great Ocean Walk.

*Mabel*

