

The Grampians—Asses Ears (Track Maintenance) and Stapylton circuit: 7–8 Jul 2012

Walkers/Participants: Coralie, David (from the Grampians Volunteer Group), Diane, Helen, Linda, Lothar.

Report 1: Sat. July 7th - Track Maintenance

Asses Ears was the location for this particular working bee. A fairly short track but well overgrown with thick vegetation. It was a steady climb up but we did not notice as we were all bent over chopping into the vegetation. It was fairly heavy work but we were well fuelled with morning tea and a cuppa in the morning and then a good break at lunch time. Di was on the motorised hedge clippers and David was on the chain saw, these activities were really hard yakka. The Grampians are on the verge of a magnificent display of wildflowers and we were privileged to site some early blooms. Unfortunately we were unable to complete the whole track, much to everyone's disappointment, but we have committed to David to go back later in the year, probably late November early December to complete it.

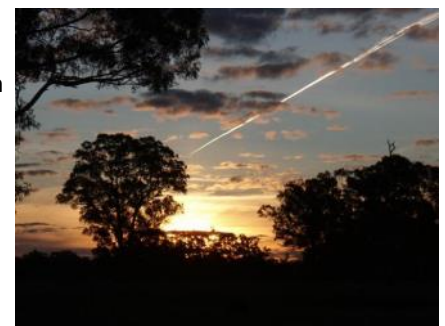
We had a discussion about why we do this every year. As a community everyone has become so interested about 'self', 'what's in it for me'. Parks provide us with a magnificent resource and I feel that to give up 1 day a year to put something back into the Grampians is little to ask.

Linda

Report 2: Sunday July 8th - Mt Stapylton Campground circuit walk

We started our walk at Mt Stapylton Campground and walked the lovely track through to Pohlner's Road. Heavy rains since the last fire in that area had helped with the growth of the vegetation and now the views of the Mountains are beginning to be covered. The Banksias had lots of flowers on them and the Grampians thryptomene was beginning to flower.

Not long after crossing the road we took the left track towards Mt Stapylton. As we climbed we were pleased to see a little creek running. The Mt Stapylton amphitheatre wall with its patina of iron oxide was spectacular and the giant fractures in the rocks were very interesting.



Passing Bird Rock it was not long before we made the decision to continue with the circuit and not divert to do the summit. We noted that in some areas Austral Grass Trees were dying but in other areas they were thriving.

Our descent was adventurous with steep rocky ramps and steps to keep us alert. The views were great and we continued past rocky cliffs until we were back to the start of our loop and back on to the campground again.

Diane D

PS: Friday and Saturday nights we all stayed in a cabin at the Emu Holiday Park. Friday night we had dinner in "town". Saturday night we had a Moroccan dish cooked by Linda on a slow cooker....yummy!



Mathiesons Road/Flaxman Hill to Bay of Islands: 15 Jul 2012

Walkers: Bob D, Di P, Dina S, Fiona M, Jim F, Lothar (leader), Rob C, Sue M

We struck it lucky – windy, but much <1 mm rain. We reckon that somehow the forecast 1–5 mm all fell in Warrnambool. We met up with Bob and Fiona at Boat Bay just after 9 am, rearranged gear and passengers, then drove in 2 vehicles to the cliff tops at the end of Mathiesons Rd. 15 minutes later we were on our way.

After about 5 minutes we stopped to look at and photograph a large dead frog. Not long after that we diverted from the management track to go down to the beach. A 5 minute walk in the sand would be our only beach walking for the day.

About 15 mins further along the management track again saw us diverge – this time along a track that was in parts overgrown with coastal wattle. We reached Flaxman Hill without too much hassle. The Trig Point located here is no longer standing upright – it's now on its side and one of the skinny legs can be seen from a distance.

We panicked when we saw what looked like a squall heading towards us and we all donned our full wet weather gear. But it was a false alarm – very light stuff for next to no time. It wasn't long before we became overheated and pulled the gear off again.

We spent the day walking along the management track, diverging along less used tracks to the cliff tops to take in the views. There was some absolutely spectacular scenery and it only got better as the day progressed. Check out some of the photos!

We arrived at Boat Bay around 2:30 pm, walked to the lookout and back, had a cuppa, and then returned home. Thanks to all for a great day out!

Lothar





Christmas in July at Apollo Bay: 21–22 Jul 2012

Walkers: 19 Bayside BWC and from WBW, Coralie G, Di P, Dina S, Helen A, Linda H, Lothar S,

Recently we spent a weekend with the Bayside Walkers in Apollo Bay. Accommodation was provided at the luxurious Apollo Bay Eco YHA. I would recommend this to anyone wishing for a short break in Apollo Bay and its surrounding countryside.

On Saturday we walked part of The Great Ocean Walk from the Cape Otway Lighthouse to Aire River. A detour to Rainbow Falls was attempted but alas we could only look from afar as the tide was lashing the rocky point.

That evening a Christmas feast was prepared by Di P and a small band of helpers. Roast turkey and the trimmings, all manner of vegetables and the excellent plumb pudding and brandy sauce to finish. A truly sumptuous repast! Santa (aka Lothar) made an appearance to hand gifts to the happy and sated walkers.

Sunday morning a shorter walk was organised from Marengo to the Shelly Beach Carpark. Some of the group departed at this point; other elected to complete a circuit walk from here.

Our thanks go to Di P for her considerable efforts on the catering front and organising the event, and to Lothar for the leadership of the walking component of the weekend.

Coralie



Alpine Trip—Mt Bogong circuit: 10–12 Aug 2012

Mountain Creek, Staircase, Michell Hut, Bogong summit, Cleve Cole, Eskdale, Mountain Creek.

Walkers: Bill P (leader), Mabel M

Swapping from snowshoes onto crampons to tackle a minor crux beyond Pollux, we gained the summit ridge, where a rather different realm opened up before us. We had enjoyed views of the Main Range and Kosciusko in pleasant sunshine on the way up. Now we had the Bogong High Plains before us with Feathertop on our right and, in our face, the forecast southerly wind of 40–60 km/h.

Menacing rich purple grey clouds now enveloped and shotgun pellets of ice nailed us. I had difficulty standing upright in the wind with the added profile of a pack. I was concerned the hood of my jacket would tear off and snugged it tighter. All loose snow had been blasted off the ridge and the wind had polished and hardened the icy crust. A summit bid was out of the question, and destination Cleve Cole was a question not even asked.

A corner of Mabel's pack cover lifted, and immediately it was torn off and lost forever. I opened my mouth to yell, but my lungs were instantly evacuated by the wind in a venturi effect which stole both my words and my breath. The surface underfoot was icy and we were pelted mercilessly with wind driven ice particles. Marvellous!

We carefully traversed east along the ridge and descended Eskdale spur into the security of the trees and wearily established a base. At night a robust collection of skiers, snowboarders, walkers and mountaineers converged around Michell hut. It seemed as if every man and his dog were there. (There was indeed a much loved dog, completely oblivious of National Park rules!)

Next day was a lightweight trip to Cleve Cole hut via the summit in challenging, but more moderate conditions. A few pleasant hours were spent basking in front of this interesting hut in sheltered conditions. Mindful of the unstable weather, we tore ourselves away and snowshoed back to our base in the softening snow until we were ultimately chased down the spur by a tail wind.

Sunday was a descent off the mountain via Eskdale spur and lunch at a Mt Beauty bakery, then home.

Post script: On the day we ascended, the Falls Creek weather station, at a lower elevation than Bogong recorded a max wind gust of 96 km/h and a min temp of -7°C and a max of -10°C . Marvellous!

Bill P, Mabel M



Tower Hill Wattle circuit: 25 Aug 2012

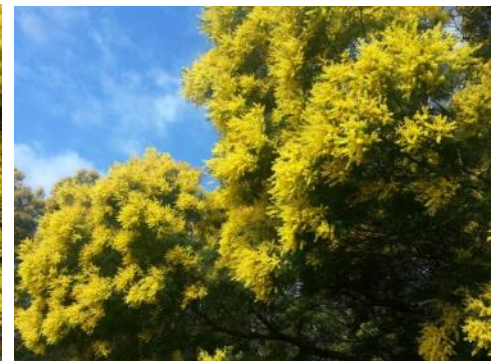
Walkers: Di P, Helen A, Lothar S (leader), Mike H, Rob C

We had gale force winds and driving rain the day before so it was with relief that we arrived at Tower Hill to a glorious day. The 2 hr walk was a 3-leaf-clover shape taking in the island, the last volcano, and the lookouts.

Nature definitely thinks it's Spring: all the animals were about—well at least plenty of birds, emus, kangaroos and snakes were. And the wattle was in full bloom but just a little past it's peak. Absolutely splendid nevertheless! The lakes were all full including the one just below the round VIC. The views across the water were stunning. And all just on our doorstep!

Afterwards we had coffees at the VIC. Thank you all for making it such a pleasant morning!

Lothar



Bay of Islands to Peterborough: 28 Jul 2012

Walkers: Coralie, Helen, Lothar (leader), Mabel and Rob

This walk has views of this beautiful coastline that are equal to, if not better than that further east on the Great Ocean Road. We commenced at the Bay of Islands and were fortunate to see it in one of the brief moment of sunshine that was enjoyed between the short squalls.

Only the best known views along this part of the coastline are accessible on proper tracks. To view the rest we followed animal tracks, bush-bashed, walked along the sand or the cliff edge and in some parts were on the sealed road.

We were fortunate with the weather that had not looked at all promising when we left Warrnambool and we were able to enjoy our lunch in the picnic area at Peterborough. A short walk that was enjoyed by all who participated! Thanks Lothar.

Mabel



Timboon Rail Trail—Camperdown to Glenfyne: 9 Sep 2012

Walkers: Jim F, Leo R, Lothar, Val R

Outlook, fine 17 degrees, sunny. A welcome change from the recent windy weather.

Our walk (Leo and Val) started at 10.00 pm on the Saturday night when we realised we had no bread to make sandwiches to take with us for lunch. So, into the bread maker went our current favourite mix 20% wholemeal flour, 40% soy and linseed flour, 40% dark rye flour, and a handful of rolled oats just for fun. Timed to finish at 6.30 on Sunday, giving it time to cool down and make sandwiches. Of course, we should have realised that Lothar and Jim had checked out the Cobden bakery, ascertained that it is open on Sundays, and had every intention of making that the lunch venue.

The Timboon spur line never actually started in Camperdown, but diverged from the main line about 2 km west of Camperdown, and passes west of Lake Gnotuk and Lake Bullen Merri. There is some problem with access for the first 6 km of the trail, so it is best to start the walk at Naroghid Road. The actual walk is as expected of any rail trail—very gentle slopes, no steep hills. However the trail has become quite naturalised with attractive bush along most of the track. Apart from two farmers crossings between Naroghid road and Cobden you are unaware of most of the surrounding farms.

There was the compulsory detour in Cobden to the bakery. The pie connoisseurs gave the pies the thumbs up before we continued on with walk.

For the first 6 km or so after Cobden the trail runs parallel to the road, but the thick bush blocks any view of the road. The last 4 km or so is away from the road and passes through some attractive wetlands, with lots of bird life.

We finished at Glenfyne at what was the Glenfyne rail siding. Overall, an easy relaxing walk on a very pleasant day. Of course there was another compulsory stop at the Cobb Lounge in Camperdown, where it was agreed that the coffee was better than the coffee at the Cobden Bakery.

Leo

