

Port Fairy to Killarney or Warrnambool: 12 Jan 2013

Walkers: Helen, Kate, Linda, Liz, Lothar, Mike, Rob, and Vivienne. Heather (a friend of Liz) and husband joined us along the way

We set off from Port Fairy at 1 o'clock, for what turned out to be a generally overcast, pleasant temperature, wind on our backs beach-bash. The glider over the ocean and the yachts off the point were soon left behind as we yacked along the beach.

Lunch was being munched after an hour, at the first rocky point.

Five of the six who planned to stop at Killarney did so, with Liz deciding that the magic powers of the bandage on her knee were working and that she could proceed. We continued on our merry way on firm sand. Just before the west mouth of the Merri was declared half way and another nibble stop. Then eastwards, eastwards, eastwards to our next stop. This was interrupted by 13 horses (plus riders) coming out of the dunes and sauntering along the water's edge. Nearer to Point Levi, the cheeky sea decided our shoes need cooling down, and snuck up on us every so often.

Of the mobile fauna, there were the usual collection of little birds and gulls keeping just ahead of us. Five or six families of oyster catchers were spaced along the beach. And of the no longer mobile fauna, one seal, one penguin, one big bird, two small birds, and a whale were of note.

While it had been a very pleasant days walking, we were not sad to reach Thunder Point (at seven). Car owners were then re-united with their vehicles that were littered along the coast. Lothar, thank you for a pleasant day.

Rob C

The end of lunch;

the half-way stop, trying hard not to look at ...

... where we've come from ...

... and where we have to go



Grampians Jazz Festival weekend—Boronia Peak and The Pinnacle: 9–10 Feb 2013

Walkers: Carolyn F (visitor), Helen A, Irene H, Linda H, Lothar S (leader), Marg F.

Helen and I arrived in Halls Gap in time to have a coffee, watch the Jazz Procession in the main street, meet Carolyn, and then drive to the Big4 to set up tents. While Irene and Linda set up their tent, gear, and had a break, the 3 of us took off to Boronia Peak. Jazz music seemed to drift up as we climbed higher and higher. Helen rested in the shade while Carolyn and I climbed to the top and enjoyed the views.

Back down and near Tandarra, Marg was waiting for us. And then we were 4 on the way back to town. Was the place jumping! We caught up with Irene and Linda, had refreshments, and eventually drifted back to the Big4 for showers. Carolyn and Marg said their goodbyes. Dinner in town was quiet but delicious, and after a brief Jazz interlude we headed back to Big4 for an early night.

We left Linda and Irene's vehicle at Wonderland then all headed to the Sundial carpark. We detoured to the Lakeview Lookout, then rejoined the track to the Pinnacle. Once there we had a break before winding our way (mostly) downhill back to Wonderland. The views and gorges along the way are always outstanding!

Back in town, it was lively. Inside the bakery there was a wall of customers 4 deep. Nevertheless I didn't have to wait too long for lunch...and a French Vanilla slice.

Many thanks to all for a great weekend!

Lothar



Mt Langi Ghiran and the Great Dividing Trail: 16–17 Feb 2013

Walkers: Saturday: Graeme, Kevin, Mike, Marg (Grampians); Coralie, Diane, Helen, Jim, Lothar, Rob (Warrnambool); Sunday: Brett, Coralie, Graeme, Helen, Mike, Marg

Mt Langi Ghiran 16/2: The original plan was modified due to the weather forecast. We parked at Langi Ghiran picnic area and followed the familiar (to some of us) track up to the Reservoir then continued close to the water race to the stepped lookout. Smoke haze to the West but we had good views of the Pyrenees and vineyards down on the foothills.

Cloud cover kept the walkers comfortable so we pressed on, tackling the steeper slope on a rough 4WD road and on to the flat slab of granite near the summit that gave us another lookout. This time across the Western District, Kevin's cropped paddocks and Challicum Wind Farm were seen.

A few drops of rain fell at lunchtime but Lothar quelled that by pulling on his pack rain cover. Rob added to our lunch treats sharing home-grown, sweet, seedless, plump grapes.

Back at the car park we rehydrated at the picnic round and then again at 'The Vines' Café in Ararat. We dispersed at 4 pm from the Library Car Park. Thank you all for an active and social day out.

Great Dividing Trail 17/2: By 9.30 am the sun was beaming down from a cloudless sky. One Tree Hill and the ridges could wait for another day; instead we followed the recently posted "Great Dividing Trail" markers that leave from Ararat Railway Station. This took us through Alexandra Gardens & Fernery around the lush cricket oval and across to Railway Road and as far as The Majors Road on corrugated gravel. The trail crosses the Western Highway into McDonald Park via the Main Divide Road; deviations on Peter's Track and Nildesperardum then back to the Main Divide gently ascending all the time. Ahead were the slopes of One Tree Hill that is marked by a communication tower and a memorial to the early pioneers - for us to explore another time. We took to the bush behind the houses in Picnic Road, down Crebbins Lane and gathered pace at the prospect of coffee and a cool drink at Chalambar Golf Course Club House.

Sitting back in chairs on the deck was a nice place to reflect on another good day out together. We applauded Ken and his partners as they hit off on the 7th tee as we walked back into town.

Marg



Grampians—Mt Abrupt 2 Mar 2013

Walkers: Coralie (leader), Di D, Helen, Bob, Fiona, and Rob

The Warrnambool mob set off at 7.40 after 5 minutes spent de-childising Di's back seatbelt. Highlights of the trip to Dunkeld were a paddock full of broilgas (a common summer practice apparently) and the cloud bank on the west of the Grampians formed by the cold, strong, easterly wind.

The Terang/Cobden two were there before us. Legs moving up the Mt Abrupt track at 9. The landslips have a little more vegetation in them, but they are still impressive. How to survive zucchini was the top topic for the walk.

A fire at the top of Mt Abrupt was started by lightning on 14th Feb and was put out by rain. The Hamilton Spectator website has a photo of it by Pat Cameron under the heading *Abrupt erupts*. The extent of the fire was apparent when we got to the ridge. We shared the hazy view from the summit with an eagle soaring above in the strong winds.

From then on, with the temperature getting warmer, it was downhill all the way to the cars, reached at noon. Lunched at Dunkeld, purchased eggs from a road-side box, and arrived home at 2. A very pleasant 'keep-your-fitness-up' walk—thank you Coralie.

Rob



Great South West Walk: 3–16 Mar 2013

Walkers: Jeff McD, Lothar, Marg F, Rosalie McD, and 9 others

Just a short report on this 14 day walk. It is put on by the Friends of the GSWW and the \$300–\$380 cost is well worth it. They transport all your gear and food and you only need to walk with your day pack. We walked about 13–23km/day, and yes, 12 of the 14 days were in incredible heat. A record for me is that I went for a swim on 6 occasions!

We had a fire most nights and so had plenty of boiled water for drinks, washing, and showers, etc. Our fearless leader Gordon would meet us for morning tea or lunch and supply us with fresh local apples, boiled water, and our chairs. Tea/coffee/milo/sugar/milk was included. Gordon also prepared damper and pancakes for us. We also had a supply of cool-cold drinks from the portable fridge or iced esky. We did the 14 days in style!

Most of the walkers were seasoned walkers but there were a few - like Rosie - for whom the multi day experience was entirely new. She - and the others - completed it without drama...and really enjoyed it. Well done! It was fantastic walking with such an enthusiastic and supportive group.

All the camp sites now have new shelters and most have new toilets. Mallee camp has been relocated and is probably the worst camp. The too small and raised tent sites have a clayish surface and leave your tent, etc., with a shitty colour when it rains. Two camp sites (Post and Rail, Murrells) have closed and been replaced by Battersbys.

Lothar



Grampians weekend: 15–17 Mar 2013

Walkers: Linda (stayed Friday and Saturday nights), Helen (stayed Saturday night), Coralie, Diane, Mike and Janice (day walkers for Saturday only)

The initial intention was to have this weekend at Mount Staplyton; however, due to the continuing hot weather I was very reluctant to have the walk in such an isolated area, hence the shift to Halls Gap. Other walkers are going to write about the climb up to Boronia Peak in the morning and the climb up the front face to the Pinnacle in the afternoon. My job is to write about walking from Sundial Car Park to the Pinnacle.

Helen and I took our 2 cars to the car park as we were meeting the others at the Pinnacle and they were going to walk back with us. As we were driving up I noticed that the beautiful clear skies were very rapidly turning black. I realised a change was on the way but I was not prepared for the onslaught we were about to experience. Within 5 minutes of starting the walk, light drizzle was coming down. Rain coats were put on very quickly. Then the heavens just opened, the wind was really strong but the temperature was still quite mild. Usually this walk provides a lovely view over Lake Bellfield and surrounds but we could not see that far ahead of us. The main difficulty was that the rocks became very slippery as the moss got wet. About 15 minutes after we reached the top the others arrived, everyone was drenched. We found shelter under a cliff face and extra wet weather gear came out. We started our trip back to the car park slipping on rocks but generally having a good time. We felt pretty smug in our wet weather gear as we passed other walkers who had absolutely nothing to protect them, but they seemed to be enjoying themselves as well.

Once back down in Halls gap we went for coffees and of course vanilla slices to die for. It was a really enjoyable day. Thanks to all who came.

Linda



Great Ocean Walk—Gibson’s Steps to Princetown and return: 30 Mar 2013

Walkers: Coralie, Diane D, Helen (leader), Jim, Kate, Linda

Despite the gloomy weather forecast, we started off in fine, sunny conditions. The re-vamped parking area of Gibson’s Steps was quite impressive, as was the new walking track to the lookout – the views are always spectacular. The track deviates from the old 4WD track near Princetown which is a 100% improvement. It winds through tall, coastal vegetation giving occasional tantalising glimpses of the river.

Whilst having lunch at the bridge watching families fishing, the “Easter Bunny” produced eggs for all. The squalls held off on our return until we were a few metres from the cars. It was then back to Port Campbell for the obligatory coffee and cake!

Thanks to all for making this an enjoyable day.

Helen

