

Trip Reports

Lake Bellfield, Sundial Peak, Bugiga Campsite, Lake Bellfield: Sunday 18 September

Walkers: Rob, Ross, and Mabel (leader)

After a week of winds and heavy rain creating floods and landslides in our region we were very fortunate to have a beautiful day for walking. The Grampians looked refreshed with the wildflowers on show. The photographer in our group tried very hard to resist taking photos of every flower encountered but eventually gave in and took a few!

On the way up to Sundial Peak we met a large commercial party: 16 walkers and 2 guides. They were on a two day walk, many experiencing their first overnight camp having stayed the night at Bugiga Campsite.

We had great views of Mt Rosea and down into the Halls Gap valley and beyond. Lunch was at Bugiga Campsite but it was too cold to sit in the wind-tunnel of a shelter.

The track back up towards Sundial Peak from the Silverband Falls Road had even more cairns marking the beginning and had signs of frequent use. The riddle was soon answered when we met three young men coming down the track. It is used to access a rock climbing area and there is a cairn about half way up the track showing where to go to the rock climb.

A short drive into Halls Gap for ice cream and/or coffee completed a very enjoyable day.

Mabel

The picture shows the large animal-proof cage under each camping platform, the access hatches to which have been permanently shut due to their finger trimming potential.



Mt Abrupt track clearing: Saturday 1 October

The Yellow Band featuring Coralie (on loppers), Rob (on snips), Jim (on spade), and David (on rake). Supporting cast David W (Grampians Walking Tracks Support Group)

A dubious start in rain after another night of heavy rain meant David drove us past many full creeks and flooded paddocks until Peshurst after which the weather cleared for the rest of the grey day. We reached the Abrupt carpark at the appointed time of 10 am, listened to ParksVic's Matt's safety spiel, donned our yellow vests, grabbed our instrument of choice and set off—two groups: the drainers and the snippers. The snippers benefited from the absolutely superb snipping done a year ago and sped ahead of the drain enhancers. There was not too much to snip: a few plants were encroaching on the path and others simply required aesthetic shaping. Some trees had fallen across the track—all but one was removed, it being too large for the pruning saw. The snippers reached the top at 12:30, admired the vast expanse of water and canola below, and decided that lunch would be in a less windy place. The drainers and snippers were re-united where the track reaches the ridge. We returned to the cars, still fine tuning the work done. A reasonable number of flowers were in bloom: David W showed us some clumps of the purple *Calectasia* below the car park.

Rob



Now that's a drain!



Russells Creek Trail: Saturday 8 October

Walkers: Rhonda, Linda and Dina

This Saturday morning was a testament to the best of Spring, pleasantly cool, sunny and no wind!! The walk started at Ardlie Street and progressed through to Whites Road. Note was taken of the water levels in the creek (which had recently been in flood), the new flood mitigation walls, and all the birdlife in the area. We met and spoke with numerous cyclists, walkers and their pets, and indulged in our coffee and cake at the "Pig and Pie" shortly before the end of the walk. Sorry, no photos were taken as we were too busy chatting!!

Dina



Fortunately your editor has archival photos from one of the Wednesday bike rides. The path crosses to the other side of the creek at the black pole.

Federation Weekend, Northern Grampians: 8–9 October

Tour guides: Rob, Mabel and Janice

The Wimmera Bushwalking Club did a wonderful job of organising this year's Federation walks. As well as the usual hazards of fickle-minded bushwalkers, they had to contend with months of rain that resulted in some of the routes being impassable. Mabel was leading Walk #7—Wartook to McKenzies Falls. Even more was underwater than on the test walk. Her altered walk visited four waterfalls, with a bit more driving and bit less walking. Concerns that my Walk #13—Deep Creek might be up Deeper Creek meant I (and Janice) led Walk #13A—Mount Staplyton on Saturday. Sunday went as planned and I led my harem of 9 up the-by-then-same-depth-as-previously Deep Creek.

The just about 300 walkers on the twenty routes were spread far and wide accommodation-wise. We three camped at the Staplyton campground only 10 minutes drive from the weekend's venue, the Laharum oval. The campground had reopened 2 weeks before and had a good supply of mosquitoes. Precisely where the tents are meant to be pitched isn't obvious, but each site has its own table and a shared-between-two fireplace. A bit raw still, but a superb view.

For those with white name tags, Saturday's open-air dinner was a tasty spit roast and a tantalising choice of desserts. David Roberts, the Grampians head ranger, gave an informative talk on the Grampians Peaks Trail. The comment I found most interesting explained the large amount of stonework planned for the track: they want to make the track as fire- and flood-proof as possible to avoid having to remake it.

The weather for the weekend was kind, fine both days, a sprinkle overnight, and windy on Sunday. The Grampians did themselves proud with flowers and views. It was a very pleasant weekend. A hearty thank you to the Wimmera Bushwalkers, Laharum caterers, and all the helpers for this excellent event.

Rob



The Waterfalls Walk, Federation Weekend: 8, 9 October

Over the Federation weekend I spent two delightful days leading two walks to four waterfalls. The wet weather that caused my original walk to be cancelled meant we were seeing some of the waterfalls in the Grampians in their full splendour. It was such a contrast to what we are used to seeing with little or no water coming over the falls. Even though each day's walk was a series of very short strolls everyone who participated had a very enjoyable day.

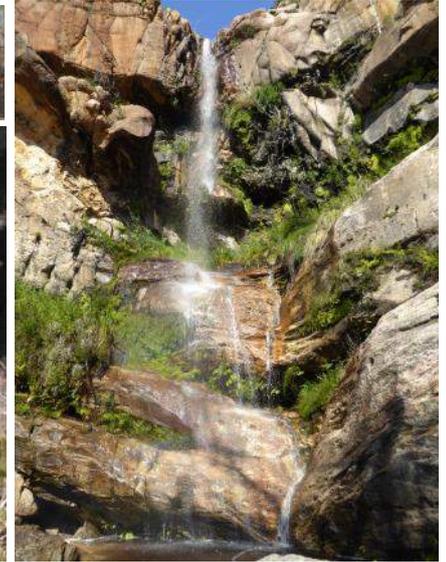
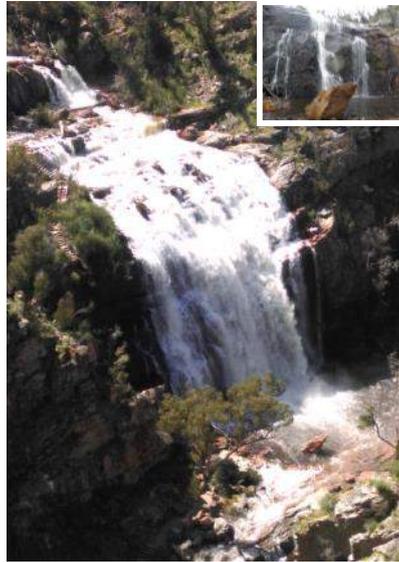
Thank you Grampians for putting on a spectacular show. Congratulations to the Wimmera Bushwalking Club for organising an excellent weekend.

Mabel

Top left: McKenzies Falls; insert 5 weeks before

Top right: Beehive Falls

Bottom: Fish Falls, on the weekend and 5 weeks before



Three Peaks Challenge: Saturday 15 October

Up to the challenge: Kate, Linda, Lothar (leader) and Rob

Many thanks to Linda for double checking and finding out that the Three Peaks Festival was actually on the Saturday and not Sunday! Hence we left Warrnambool at 7:30 on SATURDAY, picked up Kate and met Linda for coffee and hot chocolate in Dunkeld.

Then it was up **Mt Abrupt!** Rob took his trusty bowsaw with him to remove a known obstruction that hadn't been cleared by our track maintenance crew two weeks earlier. After that the walk was straight forward. A bit windy though!

For lunch we went to the festival grounds opposite the Dunkeld Info Centre. The paella was delicious as was another coffee from the general store ...

After lunch we left Linda at the festival and looked for native orchids around The Piccaninny carpark. From there we walked towards **Mt Sturgeon**. We saw more orchids along the way. Once we'd climbed Mt Sturgeon we headed back to **The Piccaninny** and reached the top using the recently rebuilt path (as part of the Grampians Peaks Trail). Kate and I celebrated our 3 peaks achievement by each drinking a Henkel piccolo...while Rob only had the pleasure of returning us safely home.

Many thanks to all for a great day out!

Lothar

*Challenge completed
Reconstructed path up The Piccaninny*



Four Otway waterfalls: Saturday 22 October

Walkers: Rob (chief appreciator), Lothar, Viviane, Linda and (guest) Sharon

The recent rain suggested a visit to some of the Otway's waterfalls would be worthwhile. As we drove there, my psychic powers were proved beyond doubt when I answered Lothar's "I have two critical questions ..." without the need to hear the questions: we were soon having coffee at answer number 1, Lavers Hill. Answer number 2, Gellibrand, had to wait until after we had the four waterfalls under our belts.

It had been raining on and off as we followed the Great Ocean Road, but just before we reached the Triplet Falls carpark, it hailed heavily, fortunately stopping just as we did. We could hear the wind in the trees above us, but it was calm below as we wended our way through tall tree ferns along the track to Little Aire Falls and Triplet Falls.

We drove to the Beauchamp Falls carpark for lunch. It promptly started raining, which by design lasted just as long as our munching in the car did. After our down and up walk to these falls, it was a short drive to Hopetoun Falls. This, the most arduous of the walks, was a full 50 metres from the cars to the viewing spot although some opted for the many steps down to the bottom.

It was a pleasant four or so hours of walking, with the falls all being close to their best. Three members of the party were hoping to be excused from step-ups at their next gym session. Can't think why.

Rob

*The Falls:
Little Aire 2014
Little Aire
Triplet
Beauchamp
Hopetoun*



Trip Reports

The plateau walk from Hell: Sunday 30 October

(or never take Rob & Kate across The Major Mitchell Plateau at the same time)

Participants: Marg F, Janice, Rob, Kate & Coralie

I am convinced it's THEIR fault! Every time I lead a trip across the Plateau with Kate & Rob in the party, the conditions are atrocious. They **seem to be** the common factor.

The day started well; the sun was out, breezy but not too annoying. Thanks to Ken Farrar assisting with a car shuffle we were able to commence walking quite early at the Jimmy's Creek end. Meandering along the roadside on the flat, we were all entranced by the abundance of wild flowers. Spider orchids were a special treat, especially for Rob, who as usual, was after that perfect shot.

As we climbed steadily to the Stockyards, the clouds appeared to darken. We ate lunch on the lee side of the narrow ridge leading up to Durd Durd. By now, the wind was more forceful and we needed to watch our step to avoid sudden gusts blowing us off course. Lunch came with the bonus of imaginary candles and Janice's cupcakes to celebrate someone's birthday.

Upon reaching the edge of the Plateau, the rain started. Rain jackets duly appeared from capacious day packs. When the rain became more insistent and horizontal, over-pants were donned. The wind by now was howling, the clouds barely above the tree tops.

Intermittently the gales would cease but never long enough to seriously consider removing rain apparel. Somewhere in the stumbling across to a brief stop at the First Wannon camp ground, hail added to our woes. Approaching Mt William, light snow flurries commenced. By the time we reached the cars, most of us were keen to change into our dry, warm clothes. However, Mother Nature decided she had not finished with us and hailed on any flesh that dared to expose itself.

It was a long and taxing trip but somehow our marvellous walkers kept up their good cheer and relished the challenge. It was certainly an experience to remember and next time I'm foolish enough to attempt another such trip, I'll be closely scrutinising the 'guest' list!

Coralie



Port Fairy to Killarney: Saturday 5 November

Apparently, there was much indecision from walkers as to whether walking in the terrible wind was going to be enjoyable, but eventually six hardy souls arrived at Port Fairy for this beach walk of 7 km. The sand was reasonably firm, though at times, we needed to scurry towards the dunes to avoid getting wet from a sea that occasionally refused to believe it was low tide. We seemed to arrive at our destination very quickly, so obviously the conversations were absorbing! Coffee and nibbles at *Basalt Wines* concluded the morning's activities. Thanks to Rob, David, Viviane and visitors Mary and Sharon for coming along.

Dina



Warrnambool to Camperdown: Wednesday 9 November

Riders: (WB) Rob, Mike, Helen R, (ex-WB) Herb, (Wed regulars) Mike 2, Fred, Lester, (others) Ian, Rob 2, Richard, and Bob

The Wednesday riding group was a little more adventurous than usual: a 78 km ride done in three easy stages. Eleven of us set off from Warrnambool for a 22 km ride though the Framlingham Forest to our first nibbles stop at the Hopkins River. Next was another 23 km to Terang for lunch, arriving, despite my best efforts at the tail to slow the pace down, about half an hour earlier than anticipated.

Two retraced their route home. The rest rode the remaining 33 km via Noorat to Camperdown, and more specifically, the Cobb Loaf Café. We tried hard not to think about the one weak link in the plan: would the nine bikes fit into the goods van? That could only be resolved when the train arrived and fortunately they could! We returned home in comfort, without needing to activate plan B, C or even D. It had been perfect weather, the countryside was lush, only a couple of minor hills, and most of the route hadn't been done before: it was indeed *a grand day out*.

Rob



Paddling from Moleside to Simsons Landing: 20–23 November

Admiral David; crew Diane, Steve, Rob, Dina, guests Garry and Dave

The seven of us travelled to Winnap near Dartmoor on Sunday afternoon to our bunkhouse camp where we spent the night, hosted by Ross & Marg Atkins of Paeston Canoe Hire.

On Monday morning the canoes were delivered to our starting point of Moleside on the Glenelg River. After our car shuffle between there and that night's campsite, we paddled downstream in our flotilla of two canoes and three kayaks. By the time we rounded Wild Dog Bend, the early jitters of the novice paddlers were gone.

Morning tea at Saunders' Landing and lunch at Pritchard's saw us well on our way to the night's destination. A koala was spotted dangling in a tree and a swimming blue tongue lizard was passed. Later a copper head snake swimming across the river added to the interesting paddle. Bush on both sides of the river enhanced the pleasure of the trip.

At 4 pm we arrived at Battersbys after covering 18 km. With tents pitched and camp fire going, we had time to explore the area enjoying its beauty ... and to put sticks at the water's edge to see how the tide was changing. The high tide in the mornings made for an easier, less muddy embarkation.



Tuesday morning on the river was magnificent—clear and still with wallabies seen feeding on the fresh grass. The car shuffle on the River Road posed a challenge due to the recent rains, although our on-board spade helped pass the obstacle. The paddling conditions were perfect, with the limestone cliffs becoming higher and more prevalent. Some interesting caves were seen on the river with their stalactites. The 14 km paddle to Patterson’s Canoe Camp was quickly done, allowing plenty of time to set up tents and again enjoy our bush campsite and camp fire.

Raucous squealing was heard during the night and we woke to find that possums had had their fun with our provisions. Again the river was smooth as glass and the presence of the wallabies and sound of the birds added to the beauty of our location as we headed off for our final 18 km paddle to Nelson. We stopped at the Princess Margaret Rose Caves kiosk for a welcome coffee break, and then at Donovans in the South Australian section of the river for lunch. Despite the wind getting up, we made good time, arriving at our final destination of Simsons Landing about 2 pm.

A sense of achievement was felt by all as we reached Nelson, realising that we had paddled the 50 km from Moleside to Simsons Landing while enjoying the magnificent scenery of the Lower Glenelg National Park.

David



Trip Reports

Bridgewater End of Year do: 2–5 December

Lothar:

Coralie, Dina, Helen A, Linda, Lothar, Mabel, Rob, and Ross appeared to thoroughly enjoy themselves, consuming pancakes, egg & bacon muffins, bircher muesli, kilos of prawns, potato salad, paella, roast turkey and vegetables, and fruit salads, not to mention the meals at the kiosk and Isabellas, and all the drinks and nibbles and other indulgences. The weather was excellent for walking but a bit too cool for swimming, and the swells pounded onto the cliffs and shore in spectacular fashion. The stretch of coast between the Bridgewater Lakes and the Cape Nelson Lighthouse — part of the GSWW — always provides us with three days of first class walks. The Coastal Camp has proved to be an excellent EOY venue for 3 years running. Cheers, and a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!!

Linda:

I cannot let the year finish without a comment on the end of year do at Bridgewater. I have attended this function for the last 3 years and I am constantly amazed at the amount of preparation Lothar puts into it. Not only the walks planning and camp booking but especially the catering and cooking. It's an enormous effort on his part and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his willingness to do this for us every year.

To which all of us can but say “hear, hear”



Prinetown to Devils Kitchen: Saturday 19 November

We all met at the Prinetown Recreation Reserve to commence our walk to Devils Kitchen on the Great Ocean Walk. The weather was fine but a stiff breeze was blowing. There are some magnificent views on this walk; looking back towards the 12 Apostles, it's easy to understand why the official walk start at Apollo Bay and walks towards the west. The track was not in good condition, in fact in some places it was barely visible with bracken waist high. Two members stopped after our morning break and returned home while the rest of us continued onto Devils Kitchen and the room with the most amazing view. After lunch we all sat on the cliff face admiring the area, then we continued our walk back. It was a most enjoyable walk with good company and of course good coffee.

Linda

Port Fairy to Warrnambool: Saturday 17 December

Rob and I were the only takers, so after a hot chocolate at Bohemia we boarded the 2 pm bus to Port Fairy. We started walking before 3 pm with a stiff breeze pushing us along, and a falling tide. We had an early dinner at The Cutting sitting down out of the wind and overlooking the old Merri River mouth (pictured). We must have powered along after that as we got to Thunder Point shortly before 8:30 pm. As luck would have it we spent the last 2 minutes walking in a sun shower with an enormous double rainbow overhead. Many thanks to Chris S for the transport and to Rob for a great afternoon/evening hike.

Lothar

PS: Monday's paper explained the many beached black 50 gallon drums we saw www.standard.net.au/story/4363184/drums-on-beach-spark-hazmat-investigation/?cs=73.



Bellarine Peninsula and the Blues Train: 9–10 December

We all met in Queenscliff with three of us sharing a cabin at the Big 4, two were in their caravan at the recreation reserve whilst one member had booked into a guest house. We had arranged to meet at the station where the Blues Train departs. After sharing a few drinks our carriage number was called up to pick up our meal and go onto the train. Then the music started and the train moved on. The music was a mix of Jazz, Blues and a little bit of Pop. After 30 minutes the train pulled into a station where we all had to change carriages and were entertained by different musicians. This happened two more times during the 3 hour journey. The best carriage for us was the dance carriage where the young musicians were amazing—one of our group is certainly a party animal. A shuttle bus took us all back to our accommodation, it was a great night and well worth the effort.

My comment for the bike riding on Saturday highlights how after a very short ride, 2 kilometres to be exact, a certain member of our group decided we had ridden far enough for a coffee break. However his wife made us go 3 kilometres, we were very parched by then!!

Linda

Six of us, Linda, Irene, Ian, Sharon (prospective member), David and I, met in Queenscliff on Friday evening to take the Blues Train to Drysdale. Firstly dinner and drinks at the Queenscliff Railway Station, and then we were off. Four carriages and four quite different Blues Bands. A fun evening was had by all, and we all even managed to stay upright, dancing on a moving train!

On Saturday we met at St. Leonards to ride along the Bay Trail, through Indented Head to Portarlington. A return trip of 30 km. What beautiful views we had all the ride: across the Bay to the Melbourne CBD and the You Yangs. At Portarlington, we had lunch at the Grand Hotel, and most people indulged in the Portarlington mussels.

On Sunday, David and I rode to Drysdale along the rail trail, and met my brother there for lunch at the Zoo Cafe in Drysdale. A return ride of about 40 km.

Thank you to everyone who came along for a great weekend!

Gwenda

