

Beach walk—Surf club to Whale Platform and return via Proudfoots and Grannys Grave: Saturday 6 April

Walkers: Jim, Lothar, Mary and Rosalie (leader)

The forecast rain had gone by 8.30 am and at low tide we headed off from the surf club along the beach towards the whale platform. With trial and error we found that the sand was quite firm right at the water's edge, although we had to scamper out of reach of rogue waves.

The Hopkins River mouth was closed so we negotiated the 'crossing' by way of a rock scramble or a brief paddle. Continuing along the beach and up the stairs to the whale platform we watched a large group of people celebrating (something) on the beach with flags/banners/ribbons. Then down the road, across the bridge, along to path beside the Hopkins to Proudfoots which had notified us beforehand that they were to close that day for family reasons.

We headed back through Scoborio Park and by road to Granny's Grave carpark, then Lothar led us cross-country through bushland—long grass (with occasional golf balls) to the caravan park and the surf club carpark where we met Chris and adjourned to the Kiosk for coffee. A pleasant way to spend the morning.

Rosalie



Meeting the Four Peaks Challenge: Sunday 14 April

Participants: Linda, Lothar, Kate, Graeme, Lucee, Coralie, Janice and Clive

Congregating at the Lower Shelter at the base of Mt Leura, the organisers of this challenge—the Friends of Mt Leura—immediately invited us to partake of a cuppa and biscuit and to peruse the display documenting the restoration of the Leura/Sugarloaf complex by their group.

Soon after the welcome by Friend, John Fallon, we started out to conquer Mt Sugarloaf. Everyone settled into their climbing rhythm and we were soon posing for a group photo at the top. Some people descended quickly, off piste, while others took the long and winding route down.

In warm sunshine, we arrived at the next summit, Mt Leura, to marvel at the view and the success of the revegetation undertaken over the last 20 years. Back at the bottom shelter we said goodbye to Linda and the rest of us drove to Derrinallum for a coffee at The Front Paddock.

It was then on to Mt Elephant to tackle the steep track to the top peak. Unfortunately, the community efforts to revegetate Mt Elephant have been less successful than those on Leura, for a variety of reasons, so the inside of the volcano is starkly bare. From here we walked along the edge of the cone for other great views before descending via an even steeper route. Lunch was enjoyed in the Visitor's Centre. Clive left us after lunch to work on his farm; for those still left, it was on to Noorat.

In surprisingly calm conditions, we circumnavigated Mt Noorat in an anticlockwise direction. The highlight of this volcano was the eagle's nest lower down in the crater. By this stage the number of other community participants was low; perhaps they had already come and gone! We finished the four peaks by mid-afternoon and declining the offer of a 'cold beer' in the Terang Hotel with the organisers, we headed home.

Coralie



Byaduk Caves and beyond: Sunday 20 May

Collapsed lava tunnel admirers: Rob 📷, Coralie, Lothar 📷, Gwen

Just as we had reached the final hole-in-the-ground of the standard tourist walk we spotted a Ranger. He turned out to be one of Coralie's ex-students, who was based at Portland, and was looking for goats in preparation for a possible eradication program. The adjacent farm had shot over 200 last year. We met him again at the end of our walk: he had found a group of 15, plus the four we saw.

After talking for much too long, we set off on our rambles towards the impressive stone fence corner that provides a useful guide to the position of the first big hole. Half the party skirted that hole around its edge, the other two went into it to look at how big the "cave" portion was and then up the other side. More impressive big holes were oohed at, as well as a couple of boutique small holes, and even a few big depressions that had not achieved hole-status. Going into another hole and under one narrow bridge was done on the return leg. Our most easterly point of the walk was a long band of rocks, presumably the edge of a lava flow.

We drove to the quarry at the end of the Mt Napier road for a late lunch. Digestion was improved with a one hour walk to the top and back for a hazy view: lots of burning off. We had seen a few kangaroos and some incredibly fast wallabies on the morning's walk, but no koalas. As I mentioned that I'd seen koalas from the road previously, Gwen said "koala". She spotted another one soon after. Then Coralie spotted one—the challenge was on. Coralie found one more, and almost immediately Rob added one more to the tally: 5 in 5 km.

Alas the hoped-for coffee stopping place at Penshurst was closed, but events that make a trip memorable weren't over. In an oscar-winning performance Coralie indicated in no uncertain terms that there was an urgent need to stop the car: she had found a full leech on her clothes. No doubt beamed down from a space ship since I had assured everybody there would be none. Just where it came from is anybody's guess—there were no bite marks.

Rob



The Major Mitchell Plateau the easy way—Kalyrna Falls to First Wannon Creek: 1 & 2 June

Leader and forecaster: Janice; participants and *sceptics* : Kate, Coralie 📷 and Rob.

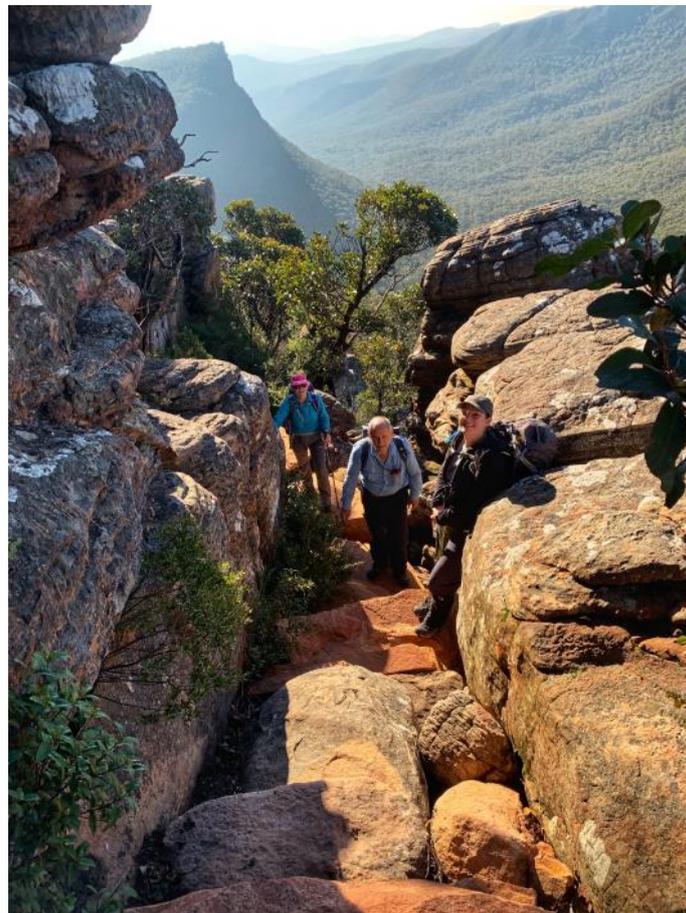
The week before this trip was very wintry and reassurances about improving weather were not enough to allay concern about overnighiting high up on the Major Mitchell Plateau. A long night in the tents was avoided by deciding to make a return trip to the Plateau on Saturday and to enjoy a campfire before retiring to our tents in the refurbished Kalyrna Falls campground.

Following a leisurely start under [Blue Skies](#), we slogged our way up the steep fire track to the stone steps that marked the start of the short section into Boundary Gap, gracefully ascended the Grand Staircase, scrambled up and over the tricky rock ledge, and were able to enjoy our lunch basking in the sun and [Blue Skies](#) on the edge of the Plateau. With plenty of [Blue Sky](#) ahead we were able to skip across to the campsite, saunter on to some favoured lookout points, and admire the stunning contrast of grey clouds forming below [Blue Skies](#).

Progress on our return was slowed as we debated the best way to negotiate the descent off the tricky rocky ledge, but we were still able to sweep down the stairs under [Blue Skies](#), to stop and admire the flow of water over the Kalyrna Falls, and to erect tents before dark.

We took advantage of continuing [Blue Sky](#) on Sunday morning to undertake some reconnaissance of the lost Bomjinna Track from Mitchell Road and can report that despite navigational challenges we did eventually find our way back to the cars, and were tucked up nice and warm having lunch at the Moyston General Store before the [Blue Sky](#) disappeared as forecast.

Janice



Glenfyne to Timboon: Saturday 15 June

Participants: Coralie, Rosalie, Kim, Rob, Gwen, Jim, Mary, Lothar, Graeme and Janice.

The club has been walking this trail for many years and it is still a favourite, half day amble. The weather was cool but fine when the group started at Glenfyne around 9.20 in the morning. Those who had waited in the chilly outdoor shed near the Glenfyne Hall while the cars were shuffled, strode out purposefully and the group soon spread out as everyone found a comfortable walking pace.

We reassembled at the 'historic culvert' and a few of us climbed down the staircase to view the brickwork in more detail. Further along the trail (between some of the overgrown, bypassed bridges on Power Creek) we noticed evidence that some track maintenance had been undertaken. However, this didn't stop Rob and Rosalie carrying out some further 'improvements' along the way.

Snacks were eaten at the shelter prior to the restored trestle bridge over the Curdies River before the last, slightly uphill push into Timboon. A quick check on the group by an incredulous leader revealed that no one had become leech bait despite her dire warnings that no party had ever totally escaped their rapacious jaws.

After a delicious lunch at the Provedore Café and dessert at the Ice Creamery in Timboon, we departed for home. Many thanks to Graeme and Janice for facilitating the car shuffling and to all for their enjoyable company.

Coralie



Mt Abrupt: Sunday 23 June

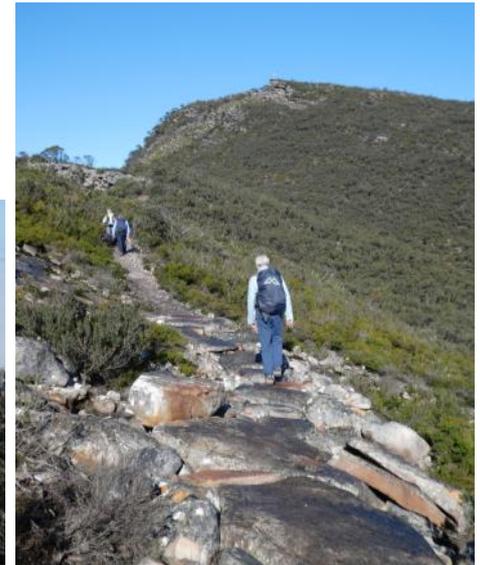
We set off on a chilly and foggy zero degrees morning with a foretaste of what was to come: a superb mystic lake over the Warrnambool region as we drove round the high spots of Tower Hill. Not surprisingly, we managed only one glimpse of our destination over the fog on our way there.

Once on foot, we climbed steadily upwards on the well defined, though somewhat rock strewn and many stepped path, and soon had spectacular views of peaks and wind towers peeping through the mist-covered plains.

After an hour and a half we had reached the top where we enjoyed the views in all directions: the fog to the east had almost disappeared, the Victoria Valley's fog was thick and showed no signs of disappearing, and there was fog as far as the eye could see to the south, with only Mts Rouse and Napier poking above it. Our stay at the top, however, was brief as the glorious sunshine was not strong enough to counteract the cold wind.

On retracing our steps, we met quite a few groups of walkers, somewhat surprising in the cold conditions. The walk concluded with coffee and lunch at the Arboretum. Thanks to Rob, Coralie and Jim for a very enjoyable day.

Dina





Halls Gap loops: Sunday 30 June

Participants: Coralie, Lothar, Rob and Rosalie

After consulting booked walkers and the weather forecast, it was decided to move the proposed walks to Sunday. According to the barista that day at the Brambruk Centre, 62 mm of rain fell in the 24 hours prior, so it was probably a good call.

Tearing ourselves away from the good coffee and the warmth of the centre, we donned day packs and headed towards the Fyans Loop. We branched off towards Boronia Peak

and started the steady climb. We met lots of other groups en route, no doubt enjoying the chance for a decent stroll without being swamped by torrential rain.

In an attempt to beautify the summit, I picked up a 'thoughtfully' placed stubbie and inverted it to remove its contents. Unfortunately, I hadn't factored in the wind direction and copped a drenching. Jokes about my drinking habits were met with a scowl; much funnier in hindsight (if you didn't happen to be the person who smelt like a brewery for the rest of the day!)

Following lunch in the outdoors area at Brambruk, we drove to Halls Gap township. We commenced the Chatauqua Loop at the town oval. After the recent downpour, Clematis Falls were well worth the short side trip. Continuing upwards Rob and I were surprised at the amount of track work evident since our last walk here. We thought it likely that this was the route the GPT would funnel thirsty and/or hungry walkers into the township.

Rosalie, determined not to miss 'bagging a peak', led the way across the spiny summit. After a short scramble we were atop and admiring the view to Bellfield to the south and the goats by the track below. We passed them soon after: the goats looked at us disdainfully, barely moving their positions.

As time was short, we bypassed Bullaces Glen and headed back to Halls Gap for the drive home. Luckily the kangaroos and wallabies were well behaved, and we arrived safely home just after dark.

Coralie

