

## Behind Lady Bay and beyond: Saturday 3 October

Walkers: Rosalie (leader) 📷, David, Theresa, Graeme, Coralie 📷, Mary, Jim, Kim, Lothar 📷, Ali

Thanks to Rob for providing the map and notes for this relaxing ramble away from the much peopled concrete pathways. Starting from Proudfoots carpark, features included: a small sandy beach beside the Hopkins River and picturesque parkland; the Simpson Street rail bridge painted with butterflies and bees; several vegetable and ornamental gardens enhancing the track along the south side of the railway; the rail bridge over Otway Road (with Jimmi Buscombe's wombat and emus); a well-mown track almost to the Flume carpark; and great views of the surf beach from the sandy track beside the sewerage pipeline.

Beyond Granny's Grave we actually walked on a bush track before reaching the Hopkins Bridge. As we had booked a coffee date at Proudfoots at 11am, there was ample time to stroll along the river's edge to the Blue Hole where we inspected a mosaic and a mural, both illustrating the problem of discarded litter. The reward of coffee ended our two hour walk, a length preferred by many participants. The weather was not yet hot and the party of ten voted it an enjoyable morning.

Rosalie



## Yarram Gap ↔ Christabel Ruins: Saturday 10 October

*The lucky ones: Rob, Christine, Rosalie, Janice, Clive, Coralie, Graeme, Ali*

The drive to Yarram Gap was worth it in itself with the Grampians reflected in the mirror-like lakes along Toora Rd. The route south from the Gap along the ridge line doesn't muck about—almost immediately a steep climb. Next, of course, was a descent where, at the bottom, we came across the new GPT track. It avoided the next hill—we being tough didn't. Further along the ridge we re-met this embryonic track and there was little point in not following it. After a few more ups and downs we came to a Bunnings store—not as well stocked as that on the Major Mitchell Plateau a few years ago, but one with soft drinks as well. Soon after the developing track petered out and, while we had no need for the pink and blue markers of the proposed route, we did look for them.



Lunch was at the same magnificent view spot as last year. As we looked down to the green paddocks that were our destination, Janice said “Look, those are the camping pads for the new campsite.” It became immediately obvious why previous searches for the proposed site had been unsuccessful—we were looking in the wrong spot. Since finding the campsite was one aim for the walk, it also meant there was no need to visit the site of the Christabel ruin—what callous hikers we are to cast aside paying our respect for the beautiful partly built building so soon after its demolition.





The new Wannan camp site is at the northern end of the open paddocks that are to the north-east of the ruins. We could see where tents will be pitched and where the loo will be. There is even a short vehicular track to Lynch's Track, something which made the walk easier.

After that, all that was left was the long slog along Lynch's Track, possibly with more interesting features than last time. Much frog croaking since there is a lot of swamp to the west of track. And of

course after all the rain, it was a full swamp—a flowing Wannan clearly visible in one spot beside the track. There was only one longish puddle on the track. Some walked through it; others “walked” around—the quote marks are code for there was minor scrub in spots. The final and only creek crossing along the track had no such options—it was wet feet.

Perfect weather, good views, many temporary lakes in the plains below, and enough orchid photographers to blame for this shorter route taking half an hour longer than last time!

*Rob*





*Former Church of Christ*



*Presbyterian Church*



*Revival Centres International*



*New Life Christian Church*



*St Pius X*



*Raffety's Tavern*



*Freedom Church Warrnambool*



*Kardinia Church Warrnambool*



*Shamrock Hotel, Dennington*



*St John*



*Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*



*Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses*



*Flying Horse Bar*



*Crossroads International Ministries*



*Our Lady Help of Christians*



*Gateway Church*



*Cemetery*



*Warrnambool Warrnam Thai Buddhist Temple*



*Warrnambool Seventh-day Adventist Church*



*The Vic Hotel*



*Saint Joseph's Church*



*The Salvation Army Warrnambool Corps*



*Christ Church*



*Trinity Lutheran Church*



*Sanctuary Baptist Church*



*Warrnambool & District Baptist Church*



*Former Temperance Hall*



*Hotel Warrnambool*



*Uniting Church*



*The Whalers Hotel*



*Extreme Life Church*



*Western Hotel*



*Royal Hotel*



*The Cally*



*Macs Hotel*



*Liber8 Church*

**Faux Saints and Sinners ride: 11 October.** Our cyclists are usually in St Arnaud this weekend for Flor's *Saints and Sinners* ride, so named because each town passed through had a church for the saints and a pub for the sinners. Rosalie and Rob (with Linda and Irene in spirit) rode this poor consolation version — a 30 km ride from Bunnings to Dennington and back, passing 22 churches/meeting rooms, 10 hotels and 4 “others”.



## Thunder Point ↔ Levy's Point: Saturday 17 October

Walkers: Rob 📷, Kirsty, Christine, Rosalie, Mary, Lothar 📷 and Gwenda

The last time I led this walk it was a day of rising floodwaters—today's walk had floodwaters falling. Regardless, the result was the same: we had to divert around the lowest part of the rail trail by the Merri, tempting though it was to practise wading. And one person did: Rosalie checked the depth of the first impediment and found it was about 8 cm shallower than on her bike ride the previous day. While that added a tick for unexpected entertainment, there was a lack of enthusiasm for us to repeat the exercise—we opted for a dry socks diversion. Lots of water still covered the Merri's flood plains but it was obvious that it had been much deeper.

We had nibbles in a sheltered part of the track just before the beach. A few hooded plovers were seen. The strong wind was not a problem being behind us as we walked along a reasonably firm beach. Grey sky for most of the time. Temperature fine. A most pleasant walk of 3 hr 20 min covering 11.2 km (fortunately both Rob and Mary's Mapouts agreed) or 12 km (Kirsty's watch) or 9.7 km (Gwenda's phone).

Rob



## Sturgeon and The Piccaninny: Saturday 24 October

Naturalists: Mary, Rob 📷, Lothar 📷, Rosalie, Ali, Christine with Dina remotely

Our leader, Dina, put in an apology at 7:15 on account of the snuffles. Who needs a leader anyway, they'll only try to keep the party moving when there are so many orchids to find and photograph. Which could account for the fact that our most enjoyable 10 km walk took 5½ hours. Mainly not raining but occasional misting rain and the odd short shower sums up our ascent. The cloud was low, often quite low, but we still had good views of the large expanse of water in the Victoria Valley, of the plains below, and albeit not that often, of the top of Mt Abrupt. The wind was strong and we retreated from the summit of Sturgeon post haste for morning tea under the rock overhang. Lunch was just before the Victoria Valley Rd when Lothar spotted a large fallen tree ideally positioned for well-spaced diners. After lunch was generally sunny for our walk to The Piccaninny and back to the cars. Coffee in Dunkeld.

Rob







## Boronia Peak: Sunday 1 November

Pax: Lothar (leader 📷), Chris M, Jim, Mary, Kirsty 📷, Rosalie 📷, Theresa

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that we had to endure wearing masks for 3 hours all the way to Halls Gap, except for the few minutes in Dunkeld while we consumed refreshments.

Melbourne Cup weekend—Halls Gap was teeming and so we opted for Boronia Peak instead of the Pinnacle.

It was a beautiful sunny day but a bit cool as we headed to Tandara Road and the start of the track. It wasn't long before we shed our outer-garments. The steady climb to the top became increasingly more difficult and we often stopped to catch our breath. At 1.15 pm we eventually stopped for lunch at a rocky lookout spot.

Afterwards, a 15 minute ascent led us to the top with brilliant views of course. But we had very little time to linger. The seemingly endless time we had before the bus left was shrinking rapidly and we had to hurry back. We needed to stop less often on the way down. The girls sprinted ahead and were able to purchase refreshments but the slower boys made it back only a minute or two before the bus pulled up. We cut it very fine! Fortunately we had a 15 minute stop in Dunkeld to look forward to. Many thanks to all for a great day out.

*Lothar*



## Prinetown to Devils Kitchen and return via Wreck Beach: 3 & 4 November

Overnight hikers: Diane, Mabel, Chris 📷, Coralie 📷 and Janice (Leader)

Promoted as ideal for the beginner overnight hiker, this walk had five of us dusting off our unused overnight packs for a couple of shorter days on the Great Ocean Walk.

The challenge of carrying a full pack was increased as the forecast 26 degrees soon turned into at least 30 with no sea breeze. But, undeterred by warnings about the resident tiger snakes, we donned gaiters and headed off into the afternoon sun.

The 7 kilometres into camp were slow, so slow that we all disputed the accuracy of the track measurements. We took advantage of every shaded spot on the trail, and tried out every seat with a view to catch the slightest breeze. It was too hot even for snakes, as the only one spotted was a beautifully banded young tiger.

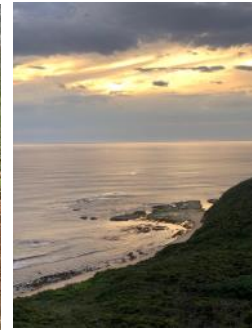
Hydration was a serious business once we got into camp, recent significant birthdays were celebrated over tea and cake (individual portions), and mosquito coils made outdoor dining enjoyable before we gathered on Christine's balcony (at site 8 for those familiar with the camp) to watch the sun go down into a flat silver sea.

Grunting koalas provided the overnight entertainment. We were packed up early to leave our heavy packs behind and descend onto Wreck Beach which was beautiful in the misty rain. The exposed rock platforms were fossicked in, the anchors admired, and of course, the 366 steps climbed up to the return track through the bush.

Fortified by a leisurely morning tea we returned along the now shorter track in mild conditions to the cars at the Gellibrand River car park and off to a late lunch at Port Campbell. The issue of actual track distance remains to be resolved by careful measurement on the next trip.

It was great to catch up and share tall tales and true about our previous overnight exploits.

Janice





## Wannon and Nigretta Falls plus more: Saturday 7 November

Walkers: Rosalie 📷, Rob 📷, Mary, Lothar 📷 & Chris, John (visitor)

Recent rains prompted this visit to some features created by volcanic activity.

**Wannon Falls:** At the Falls, water cascades over a basalt lava cliff. Although less spectacular than a few weeks ago, they were nevertheless worth seeing. Upstream we noted the concrete weir and estimated the position of a former ford, both of which might provide access to a walk on the farther bank at lower water levels. The ramble down stream to a more distant viewing spot was rewarded with swarths (almost) of donkey orchids and chocolate lilies as well other herbaceous natives.



19 October



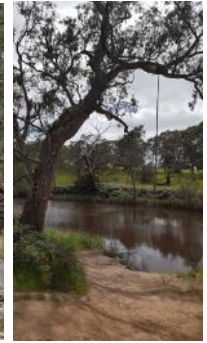
29 May



7 November



**Nigretta Falls:** The site around the falls is thought to be the location of a super volcano; these falls are always more interesting with different views from various aspects. A colourful sign at the top of the steps illustrates numerous native flowers of the area. Above and beyond the falls, a weir appears to mark the end of a long swimming pool on that part of the Wannon River.



**Lake Hamilton:** We ate lunch on its shores before a circumnavigation which included an inspection of a sundial depicting indigenous artwork, symbols and stories. Unfortunately, the sun remained shy behind clouds so we were unable to verify the time of day. Instead we practised on several pieces of exercise equipment placed strategically on this fitness circuit.



**Byaduk Caves:** Some of us checked out these huge holes in the ground (formed from collapsed lava tubes) and the historic stone wall. The view and indeed the access scramble into Harman No. 1 cave is rather marred by overgrown scrub.



**In summary:** A pleasant day, always good company, but more driving than walking in these times of no car pooling.

Rosalie



*Stand on the appropriate month spot. Where does your shadow fall among the 12 hour-circles?  
Damn, no sun—check iPhone.*





## Port Fairy and surrounds: Saturday 14 November

Our group mustered at the Information Centre in busy Port Fairy—the market was on and it was the first weekend that City folk were allowed out—and went over the Moyne River bridge to East Beach. We strolled along to its end at the river bank, which we followed back to the foot bridge. We crossed the river and walked along the other side to Griffiths Island, which we duly circumnavigated. We saw one wallaby and mum, dad and two adolescent pied oyster catchers.

As the coffee van was conveniently located near the island causeway, we stopped at the nearby picnic ground to have our drinks (and some fun in the playground for our youngster) before ambling back to our cars. Thanks to Rob and Chris, David, Gwen, Kim, Vera and Tylie, Rosalie, and Theresa for a very relaxed stroll round Port Fairy.

*Dina*



## Trestle Bridge, Curdies River to Timboon: Sunday 22 November

Participants: Coralie 📷, Graeme, Theresa, Lothar 📷 and John (visitor)

When John rang to book in, he was hoping for a tough walk. Graeme, on the other hand, was sporting a recurrence of an old back complaint and was just hoping he made the distance. Those who have walked this path before will know it is on the easy side, especially as we left from the famous trestle bridge over the Curdies River.

We completed the 5 km to Timboon in humid conditions and all thought an ice cream would give some cooling relief. Alas it was not to be, the ice cream parlour only opens at noon on Sundays. Thwarted, but undaunted, we headed to the main street in search of coffees.

The Power Creek Reserve on the Peterborough side of town was unfortunately closed. Looking through the barriers we could see a track through the reserve had been resurfaced as part of the works starting on the Timboon-Port Campbell extension of the rail trail coming from Camperdown.

The bike riders in the club will be pleased to know that they will soon have further tracks to explore.

After lunch in Timboon, we returned to the cars by early afternoon.

Luckily, the rain and thunderstorms held off until we were driving home. An easy but enjoyable ramble with a very sociable group.

Coralie





## Major Mitchell Plateau: Sunday 29 November

*Walkers: Rob, Mabel, Janice, Christine M, Rosalie, Kirsty*

It's a little hard to wax lyrical in this trip report, but it was, as Christine texted from her hospital bed, a beautiful walk. That despite her having slipped on the rocky Mount William Picnic Ground Road about 1.3 km from the Kalymna Camping area, the end of the walk. Her ankle was presumed sprained at best, broken at worst, and the latter, a broken tibia and fibula, it proved to be.

Chris couldn't walk when supported by two of us. 000 was called and an ambulance, a police car, two SES 4WD vehicles, two paramedics and six SES officers arrived quite promptly, bearing in mind that they had started about 40 km away in Ararat. We watched a very professional example of patient care as the paramedics checked Chris and gave her pain relief. Then it was onto a stretcher, into a 4WD to bump down to the camping ground to be transferred to the ambulance for the drive to Ararat Hospital. There her foot and ankle were neatly bandaged (but couldn't be x-rayed), she was given more pain relief, and left in my hands to be driven back to Warrnambool. Our almost immediate stop, at 10:15, was for a much needed Big Mac. Chris was admitted to Warrnambool Hospital on the Monday and the bones pinned etc on Friday. Chat to Chris if you want more of the gory details—it's her story.



So let's concentrate on the first 12 km of the walk. I had hoped that the walk would proceed at a reasonable speed because I thought the flowering season would be over. Complete delusion—all types of flowers, even some orchids. The highlight was a sea of blue flowers and white flowers at the Stockyard. We followed the standard route from the Stockyard to Banksia Hill. The GPT will take a new route, the end points of which we saw. Lunch was at Banksia Hill, not Durd Durd as planned—there were, as I said, a lot of flowers to slow us down. The weather was generally overcast, but the views were good. Lots more flowers on the Plateau, with the cutest being the fairy aprons in some wetter areas beside the track. There were not many flowers on the lower eastern face as we descended—the biggest flower of all was the Kalyrna Falls.

*Rob*





## Mt Richmond to Tarragal Caves: Friday 4 December

*Strollers on this pre-EOY-do walk: Rob, Mabel and David T*

We met at 9 at Portland Airport where David, who had been caravanning at Nelson, showed a most practical way of parking same in a car park not designed for caravans. We then drove along Telegraph Road, leaving a car at the end point of the morning's walk (Malseed Road) and the other at the start, Noel's (walking) Track.

This easy, pleasant walk through forest is not spectacular, save for the Ocean View Lookout, but only has one uphill section to the summit. We finished at noon, retrieved the other car, and lunched at the Bridgewater Lakes.

The afternoon's walk was shorter (6 vs 10 km). We drove one car to near the Tarragal Camp and followed the GSWW to the caves and lake. A most enjoyable walk, with more flowers than the morning, including trigger plants that towered above the quite tall bracken. The final descent with its vast view must be one of the best panoramas on the entire GSWW.

More car work got David to the Airport for his drive home, and Mabel and me to the still open Bridgewater Kiosk for coffee.

*Rob*



## Cape Bridgewater: 4–6 December

Participants: Ken, Kim, Linda, Lothar 📷 📷 📷, Mabel, Mary, Rob 📷, Rosalie 📷, Shirley

Circumstances were conspiring against an EOY do at Cape Bridgewater with COVID-19, broken limbs, and predicted foul weather being just some. But in the end we had 9 starters—6 of whom made it through to Sunday lunch at Isabella's at Cape Nelson.



On Friday we arrived at the Coastal Camp, stocked the fridge, and set up tents, caravan, and a couple of bunk beds. The weather was still excellent as we made our way down to the kiosk...only to discover that it was actually shut—I'd been led to believe it would be open. Despite that disappointment, the view of the bay was as splendid as ever and the flock of terns busied themselves looking for food. So did we and ended up having a pleasant dinner of fish & chips on the balmy Portland foreshore surrounded by noisy seagulls.





The tents rattled in the wind that night. After Rosalie arrived we had a hearty breakfast of egg, bacon & cheese muffins then headed to the Blowholes carpark for the walk east towards the seal colony. There were plenty of seals around the reefs along the way and at the colony rock there were quite a few sunning themselves. There were some flies. We got back to the camp just as the rain started.



After prawns, potato & egg salad, and bubbly, a few hardy souls braved the elements and walked from near White's Beach along the spectacular coastline to the Blowholes. Kim and Rosalie returned home.





The oven didn't conk out this year but it took forever for the turkey and vegetables to bake. We had dinner shortly after 7 pm. After our poached pears we had a Kris Kringle and a pleasant evening.



The wind blew and the rain came down that night but I had a surprisingly good night's sleep. In the morning I was able to pack up the tent without much rain or wind. After a breakfast of leftovers, pancakes and muesli, Linda returned home and the remaining six drove to Yellow Rock to drop off some vehicles and then continued on to the Cape Nelson Lighthouse. We walked from there along the rugged coastline back to Yellow Rock. We'd donned full protective weather gear but soon got too hot. The raincoats were off and on a few times but the weather was surprisingly pleasant most of the time. We drove back to Isabella's for a farewell lunch.

Thanks to all for again making it a great weekend!

*Lothar*



Copious thank-yous to Lothar for the weekend, the food, the cooking, and keeping track in a 4-D spreadsheet of just who would be there to eat what and when.



## A day out in Camperdown: Saturday 12 December

Participants: Jim, Kate & Zac, Lothar

Jim and I caught the early train to Camperdown, had a coffee, then met Kate and Zac at the start of the walk up to Sugarloaf and Leura.

We were expecting a temperature in the high 20s later in the day but at 9:30am it was still very pleasant for walking. Zac slept most of the time on mum's back, but fussed a tiny bit when we stopped for morning tea.

The views from the twin peaks of the Maar were excellent.



We finished the walk in no time at all then Kate and Zac drove home. Jim and I walked into town, had lunch in the bakery, then headed out of town towards the Botanic Gardens. It was a bit of an uphill slog and it was getting warmer. We eventually made it to the lookout beside the gardens but lacked the time to explore them.

We raced back downhill into town, had some refreshments under shady trees, then walked to the station for our ride home.

An enjoyable day out!

*Lothar*

## Mount Abrupt: Saturday 19 December

Walkers: Rob 📷, Marg, Kirsty 📷, Lothar and Dina

Dunkeld at 9, on the track at 9:15, first orchid stop at 9:25: beside the track were hordes of delicate duck orchid flowers with a long stem and a single small leaf at its base. Much ohing and clicking for the next few hundred metres as we passed more plants, both by themselves or in groups. Magnificent. Other than that there were few plants in flower for the walk.

We continued upwards. There is a new sign at the junction with the still-closed track to Signal Peak and more steps had been added between that point and the ridge and maybe a bit further. Views were good although a bit hazy. Large patches of water were still in the plains to the east and west. No wind at the summit meant we stayed there longer than on the last few ascents. It was most pleasant sitting there, as several other groups also found, but alas, we had to descend eventually, something done quicker than the ascent.

A final farewell to the orchids, then a drive to Dunkeld for a pie in the park as a late lunch. A grand day out, even after we realised that it was less than a week to Christmas.

Rob

