

Tower Hill: Sunday 1 January

Participants : Angie, Christine, Lothar (leader, 📷), Rob 📷, Rosalie 📷

We met in the Tower Hill picnic area and started our walk shortly before 9 am. It was going to be a very warm day.

We headed along to the Lava Tongue Track hoping to see some snakes, but no such luck. Once on the island we diverged onto Telegraph Track, and then Ridge Track, before returning to the Lava Tongue Track.

We headed to Echidna Track, then diverged along a mountain bike trail, past the seldom visited hidden lake, and struggled to follow the overgrown path to Turtle Track. From there we followed more mountain bike trails along a ridgeline (with views) before climbing up to the rim of the Last Volcano. We had some great views along the way.



Finally, we headed back to the vehicles. It was getting quite warm by now so we decided to curtail the walk. We'd managed to see a couple of emus, a koala (in a banksia!), a shingleback and, everywhere in glorious abundance, the results from all

The nearby coffee shop was closed so unfortunately that was it for New Year's Day!

Lothar



Mouth 2 Mouth: Sunday 8 January

Walkers : Coralie 📷, Janice, Katrina 📷, Lothar (leader, 📷), Rob 📷, Scott

We got to Narrawong just on 8 am and registered ASAP for this fund raiser for the local surf lifesaving club. There were no food or drink vans in—oh no! No coffee! Maybe later?

We boarded the bus to Fitzroy River, received information and instructions, and left just after 8:30. We reached the small campground by the river at 9, disembarked and started our walk.

The first milestone is always crossing the Fitzroy River at its mouth. It's usually shoes and socks off, cross, then put them on again...or walk barefoot. Or in my case it's putting garbage bags over my legs and wading across. Only 50% successfully this time. I had to undo my left boot and wring out a sock before feeling comfortable enough to continue.

The 14 odd kilometres were completed in three stages. We had a glorious wide beach with firmish sand and a cooling headwind for most of the way. At the "bar with no beer" we climbed the sand dune to have a quick break and observe the deteriorated condition of some animal bones. We then scurried back to the beach to walk the last few kilometres to the Surrey River. By now we were well behind the other walkers.



The last stage was going over the sand dune and the new bridge, and doing an anticlockwise half-circuit of the oval...to come in last. Not only were we last, but we could actually see the food van in the last stages of being dismantled. So no lunch. And it was already over 30°. We sat under a gazebo and rested. Well, some of us rested. Others poured ice cold water down necks...

Distraught by the lack of food and refreshments, we headed to the Bay of Whales Gallery and consoled ourselves with cakes, drinks, air-conditioned comfort, splendid views, and fantastic paintings.

Thank you all for a great mouth to mouth!

Lothar



Ryan's Den to Milanesia Beach: Sunday 15 January

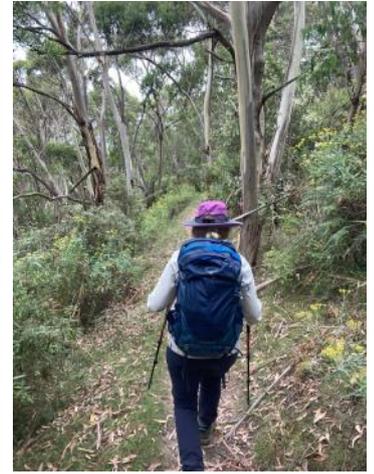
Participants: Coralie 📷, Christine, Rosalie 📷, Pauline, Janice, Kate, Katrina 📷 and Rob 📷

The predicted extremely hot weather prompted a change of day and venue from the advertised program event and a coastal, but not beach, walk was chosen.

With 9 eager participants, competition for the 8 car spots was keen. Gentleman Lothar gave up his place to ensure those who had not visited this venue could join the trip.

A few kilometres past the Wreck Beach turnoff we left the cars roadside and commenced the 1.5 km steep descent to the Great Ocean Walk (GOW) proper. Once there we decided to turn west and visit Ryan's Den walkers' campsite. After taking photographs of the wonderful views and refuelling here, we headed east, back along the GOW passing several groups of overnight and day walkers on our way.





This section of the GOW provided us with an interesting mix of coastal bushland, ferny gullies, and spectacular views of the ocean. There were also enough changes in elevation to ensure a good cardio and strength workout and participants noticed the effect on their feet, calves and quadriceps.

The berries that previously provided the *raison d'être* for the hike became more abundant the closer we got to Milanesia, but in tight green bunches, most still weeks away from full maturity. A few black ones were spotted however, and quickly consumed. A couple of close encounters with snakes by Rosalie and Katrina and a fox lurking on the track provided additional excitement on the way.

After a quick lunch and exploration of the surrounds of Milanesia Beach, we retraced our steps to our GOW exit point and plodded uphill in the warm afternoon to the cars. A visit to Port Campbell for ice creams and coffee completed an enjoyable day.

Coralie



The Springs: Saturday 21 January

Walkers: Christine, Lothar (leader 📷), Mary, Pauline, Rob 📷, Rosalie 📷

We left Warrnambool at about 8 am, and travelled in 2 vehicles to Cape Bridgewater, had drinks at the kiosk, then let the passengers climb the stairs to the upper carpark whilst Rob and I dropped off a vehicle at the



Blowhole carpark. We then re-joined the others and proceeded to the lookout overlooking the seal colonies. There were quite a few on the rocks below and there was a strong odour on the wind.

We stopped briefly at a number of seats and lookouts, including those of the Petrified Forest, the Blowhole, and the twin lava pools, before eventually arriving at the GSWW Springs camp for a late lunch. Ah, bench seats, table, shade, toilet, perfect!



After lunch, Christine and Mary stayed on the track whilst the rest gingerly descended down to the Springs. It was fairly tricky trying to find a way through and over the sharp rocks to the distant lava pools. Rosalie and I gave up first, and Pauline and Rob turned back after about 10–15 minutes. Maybe next time we should bring crocs and just walk through the shallows.



We regrouped on the track and returned to the Blowholes carpark. We'd talked about the Bay of Whales Gallery in Narrawong for afternoon tea but time had slipped away a bit so we just ferried everyone back to the Cape Bridgewater kiosk and had refreshments there instead.

Thank you all for a great day!

Lothar



Mt Sturgeon in a clockwise direction: Saturday 28 January

Walkers: Rosalie and Rob 📷

Because the walk would be finished by noon, the forecasted very hot afternoon was not a problem. All the same, to be prudent, the departure time was altered mid-week to be 7 am instead of 7:30. This immediately caused the forecasted temperature for Saturday to drop by 3 degrees! As it turned out the temperatures were (1) 26° at the car park at 8:15, (2) 23° at the summit at 9:40, and (3) 28° back at the car park at 11:00. So, as expected, it was a pleasant day for walking and, as always, it was a pleasant walk.

Food-wise Dunkeld was a disaster: the General Store was shut (as we had been warned), the Old Bakery was temporarily closed, and Izzy's doesn't open until 9. As a result we started walking even earlier than planned going in, as the preview said, a clockwise direction with the aim to determine which was the better direction for this delightful loop. The next page discusses that ad nauseum.

We met two of the six hikers doing the three-day Griffin Fireline to Dunkeld leg of the GPT—optimists, they had left camp at 6:30 to be sure to get to the bakery before closing. We met them again at Izzy's as we were buying our ice cream reward for our excellent walking. We also met three sets of two people on the walk and suggested to them it was worthwhile doing the walk as a loop. Instructions were given. Only one had heard of the loop walk but was not sure where it was—there is nothing at the car park about the loop but there are signs at the summit. We met a few more walkers near the car park, but we had no time to stop to talk to them. By then we were on a self-imposed mission, namely to finish walking by 11 am, something that was achieved with a minute to spare.

Then it was off to Dunkeld for the previously mentioned ice creams and, after that, to our homes for 12:45 lunches.

Rob



Botanic Gardens—Albert Park—Russell Creek Trail: Sunday 5 February

Walkers: *Mary (leader), Lothar, Coralie, Rob, Geoffrey S, Rosalie*

It was an early start for this 8 km Sunday morning walk around town. The six walkers commenced walking from Russell Creek and went through the Botanic Gardens to view the recently opened restoration work on the Garden's original well and surrounds. With ample lighting to highlight the depth of the well and a glass dome it provides a focal point of interest in the gardens.

The walk continued on to Albert Park passing several sporting venues before arriving at the Japanese Gardens on the south east side of the Park. This area was created to acknowledge Warrnambool's connection to sister city Miura.

Leaving Albert Park we continued around the Racecourse precinct passing twelve abandoned shopping trolleys along our way to Brierly Reserve. The walk then followed the Russell Creek walkway to our starting point with a diversion for coffee at Mortlake Road's *Pig and Pie Bakery*.

Mary



Looking for birds at Levy's Point: Saturday 11 February

Participants: Lothar, Rob, Coralie, Christine, Rosalie and Ken

Six intrepid twitcher-walkers gathered at Levy's car park at 9 am, all equipped with binoculars. Ken carted along his old spotting scope for good measure. The weather was not as fine as expected but the fog cleared courtesy of a persistent breeze. Even if the sun did not shine, at least any rain held off for the duration of the walk.

Ken's main aim was to check out the hooded plovers and look for a specific pied oystercatcher, one that had been rescued after a plastic ring had cut its leg. That took place over a year ago and when the bird's tag was checked against a data base, it was found to be over 30 years old. We were lucky enough to spot the same bird (with its identifying leg tag).

One of the apprentice twitchers was the first to spot the hoodies. The scope was duly assembled to get better views. The Kelp Gull however stole the show with everyone now totally confident to tell the difference between Kelp and Pacific gulls (the Pacific, however, remained elusive on this occasion). Red-necked Stints



appeared while we were observing some hoodies in the scope and gave Ken an opportunity to expound on this tiny bird's migration from Siberia to Australia every year. A lone Gannet was spotted and Crested Terns were in abundance.

The soft sand on Levy's provided the calf training exercise and some rock-hopping was attempted by a few while others hiked over promontories. Coralie had to plod back along the sand before we reached Shelly Beach as she had another engagement—no doubt even more of the soft sand would have done wonders for her fitness.

The group skirted around the new sewage system development—still an eyesore. We all fervently hope that a replanting program will help replace much of the lost native scrub in the area. The most dangerous section of the walk did not involve snakes or cliffs but crossing the edge of the golf course and avoiding enthusiastic "drivers".

Back on the Merri Canal we were disappointed not to see any of the usual suspects i.e. cormorants and egrets which are normally some of the dominant specimens there. The apprentices were encouraged to listen out for the Clamorous Reed Warbler and the Golden-headed Cisticola—both sound and sight of these two were duly noted even though the spelling of the latter proved problematic. In contrast the Little Grassbird was not heard. Ken's excuse was the wind was "bothering" his hearing aids—pathetic really! Black swans were our last sighting before returning to our vehicles and receiving our reward of Rosalie's nectarines.

Ken

PS: The 32 species seen were *Silver Gull*, *Kelp Gull*, *Hooded Plover*, *Crested Tern*, *Red-necked Stint*, *Gannet*, *Pied Oystercatcher*, *Sooty Oystercatcher*, *White-faced Heron* (abundant), *Black Duck*, *Chestnut Teal*, *Moorhen*, *Black Swan*, *Corella*, *Singing Honeyeater*, *New Holland Honeyeater*, *Red Wattlebird*, *Magpie*, *Magpie Lark*, *Little Raven*, *Brown Thornbill*, *Grey Fantail*, *Red-browed Firetail* (finch), *Superb Blue Wren*, *Willie Wagtail*, *Golden-headed Cisticola*, *Clamorous Reed Warbler*, *Welcome Swallow*, *Blackbird*, *Starling*, *Sparrow*, *English Goldfinch*



Lake Elingamite to Lake Purrumbete: Saturday 18 February

Participants: Coralie, Mabel, Janice, Clive, Jim, Rob, with guests Elaine, Diane, Jack and Elwyn

This cycle trip has become a firm favourite on the Club's calendar since it was introduced to us by the Camperdown Bushwalking Club in 2020. That year a strong easterly wind made the journey to Purrumbete hard work but returning home, a breeze.

This year we cycled in nearly ideal conditions—a pleasantly mild temperature and light winds. After a sharp, uphill push out of Lake Elingamite it was then downhill to join the rail trail southwest of Cobden. Skirting around the back streets of Cobden we re-joined the rail trail for as far as Adams Road. Fortunately, the muddy puddles that beset us on that road last time had dried, and we zoomed along in an easterly direction to pick up Tesbury Road.

We soon met Mabel, riding out from Purrumbete, and she joined us in wending our way to the Lake Edge Café. As it was too early for our lunch booking, we sat outside on the undercover deck in glorious sunshine to enjoy a coffee. Some indulged in a cake or scone. Lothar and Chris arrived by car at noon and lunch was served promptly soon after.

The return along County Boundary E Road required a little more effort as it was into the breeze. However, once we hit the rail trail at Naroghid it was a downhill run into Cobden. Here we did some bitumen bashing until we reached Oates Road to climb slowly to return to our cars at the Lake Elingamite Campground.

Everyone completed their section of the ride safely and the complicated bike carrying arrangements

worked smoothly. Thanks to Jack, Mabel and Jim for their flexibility which enabled people to ride as far as they wished.

Coralie





GSWW—Cubby's Camp to the coast: Saturday 25 February



While earlier predictions of 36° for the day were no more, the temperature was still 25° when Rob, Rosalie and Lothar set off. After some rain and an hour later it was 18° at the Holiday Lifestyle Henty Bay on Dutton Way. We left one car there and, after looking at the weather radar, decided that a slight delay would increase the chances of a dry start. A deviation to the Heywood bakery seemed the obvious choice.

From the car we needed to walk four hundred metres to Cubby's Camp. We said "hi" to two Geelong sisters on day two of their complete GSWW. In the camp site we saw two hyacinth orchids, well past their prime, but hyacinth orchids none the less. And once at the camp our walk could officially begin. It goes without saying that as we left the camp it immediately started to rain—only gently and something that happened for short periods during the day. We were certainly drier than the 19 mm for the 'Bool. Besides, wet vegetation shows off the forest at its best.

From the camp we went back to the car, along the road for a short while, and then onto the track into the forest. Almost at once we saw hyacinth orchids 3 and 4 ... and soon after 5 and 6 ... and soon after that 7, 8 and 9 ... and <aren't you glad there is an editor> ... and finally we saw hyacinth orchid number 75. Yes, that's right, 75 of the them in 14 km! Who'd be counting you might ask. We all were, enthusiastically, as

we blundered along the track not looking where we were going, our eyes flitting left and right to be the first to find the next one, with each plant only added to the tally after all six eyes had seen it.

There was much more walking through treed sections on foot tracks than I had anticipated. That's not to say there weren't sections besides the train track, on roads, and even an old Princes Highway. We had a view of a large swamp with a couple of spoonbills among the many birds on it. There were large houses, paddocks, animals and all the usual suspects found on ten-acre blocks. We past the promised rose nursery. The hoped-for finale of a spectacular blue view across Portland Harbour was a grey fizzer.



After the car shuffle, we went our separate ways: Rob went to Heywood with its parking congestion due to its *Wood Wine and Roses Festival* (last Saturday of February) for the vanilla slice seen in the morning while Rosalie and Lothar went to the *Bay of Whales Gallery* for cheese cake and, damn it, a bright blue sea under a blue sky. It was a very pleasant walk, much better than we all expected. Certainly worth doing, although maybe a month earlier so the hyacinth orchids are in their prime. Did I mention we saw 75?

Rob



Clean Up Australia: Saturday 4 March

Crew: Coralie, Rosalie, Christine M, Lothar & Chris, Mary, Rob, Gwenda and guest Khyl

The leader promised a ramble along Russell Creek with very little rubbish picking up involved. Boy did she get that wrong! Perhaps she underestimated the fearlessness, determination and eagle-eyedness of her crew.

Metal bits and pieces, a camp chair, an old keyboard, the inevitable cardboard & plastic drink containers and lots and lots of beer cans were retrieved from drains, the reeds, the creek edges and even the grassy verge of the path itself. Nearing the two hour mark a halt was called and coffee was enjoyed at the 'Pig and Pie' on Mortlake Road.

The rubbish was later duly sorted, much able to be recycled, and the survey to the Clean Up Team completed and sent. Despite Rosalie taking 3 bags to bin with her garbage, it will take another WCC collection cycle for it all to be properly disposed of. Note to self: Organise a pass from the WCC to allow a free 'Cleanaway' visit next year!

Thanks to all the diligent crew named above for a very worthy effort.

Coralie



Deakin Uni to Lava St: Saturday 11 March

Amblers: Rob, Christine, Rosalie and Mary

“Time waits for no man.” The same applies to buses and passengers. Our problem was quickly resolved. We set off through the maze of university buildings and soon reached the Hopkins River at its reflective best. Several bird species were seen as we ambled along the bank on the prettiest part of the walk. A kayaker and a four were rowing upstream (and seen again when we reached Proudfoots).



But all too soon we had to leave the river and wend our way past houses, the owners of which are no doubt cursing the advancing tide of houses on the grassy hillside opposite. The paddock section came next, with its diagonal pad to the train tracks kept in good condition by joggers. In a few years there will be a made trail for the next leg, besides the rail line. Until then the informal track gives an interesting walk to Simpson St. Good views as we returned to the river.



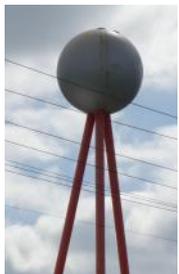
Disaster! Proudfoots opens at 11. Not good news when the time is 10:15. With heavy hearts we headed for the Hopkins mouth. Across the river at Blue Hole there was a vehicle which could have been a coffee van, or maybe not, or maybe it was, or maybe not, *ad inf* Caffeine deficiency symptoms were starting to show. Whatever, we were walking further away from the van—no going back now.

To make up for the coffee let-down we decided to miss the dune section of the walk and started on a more direct route to town. But like the magi following their star we suddenly realised that we too could follow a star—or to be more precise, the ball on the tripod over Fletcher Jones, a known site of a coffee van!

We turned north as we navigated towards our “star”. We saw a train as we reached the tracks, marvelled at the toilet garden of the Warrnambool East school, and were soon sipping the products of the Pleasant Hill coffee van. All that remained was a walk along Lava St to bus #3’s departure point, arriving with spot-on timing three minutes before the bus that would take Chris home. An enjoyable morning in perfect weather.

Rob

... and by way, it was a coffee van we saw across the river.





A beach stroll from Mathiesons Rd: Saturday 18 March

Participants: Rob 📷, Graeme and Lothar 📷

Given the extreme weather forecast for the south-west, a location specific risk assessment was done before starting this morning-walk. Along the coast 27° to 30° was predicted for both 11 am and 2 pm. No lightning was forecast. So we set off at 8:30 on our 3-hour 10-km walk westward along the beach at the end of Mathiesons Rd and back on the maintenance track beside farm paddocks.

A good time was had by all in a agreeable temperature. A west wind (rather than the predicted north) was in our face for the first hour. Calm for a while until a strong south wind started about 20 minutes before the end, presumably heralding in the change.

Navigation and what to visit was dead easy—I simply put Lothar into auto-pilot mode and off we went. Although the tide was low, timing was the essence for a dry easy scuttling around the one point where rocks meet the sea. Birds were few. Two hooded plovers were seen and reported to BirdLife Australia in response to their request for bushwalker sightings of same. Fox foot prints were seen at the end of one beach. A cray boat was making about the same speed as us as it put out pots. All in all we had the place to ourselves and, as I said, we had a most enjoyable walk.

Rob



Glenfyne to Timboon: Saturday 25 March

Participants: Rob , Rosalie, Lothar, Ken, Shirley, Christine, guest Phil, Gwenda (last half), and the winner of the most steps award, Hugo.

An old faithful walk with all the usual things seen—see previous reports, ad infinitum—and one that always provides a relaxing walk through its narrow strip of forest. The important things to report are that lunch was on the outside back deck of the *Providore* and that dessert at the Timboon Ice Creamery rounded off a satisfying day.

