

Wetlands near Dunkeld: Sunday 2 April



Participants: Lothar 📷, Rob 📷, Rosalie 📷, Di D, guests Di F and John L, and, from Wimmera Bushwalkers, Ann and Warren

Rosalie, Rob and I drove the back way through Caramut and met the others in Dunkeld. After a quick coffee or hot chocolate we drove in convoy to Walker Swamp. We climbed the tower to look at the magnificent views and tried to identify distant birds ... unsuccessfully.

We donned our backpacks and headed off to Gooseneck Swamp. Along the way we detoured to the sandbagged dam wall (right) that was stopping Walker Swamp from draining.

The terrain was fairly flat and we were easily able to walk without having to traipse through long grass. Debris on fences and tree trunks indicated that the water level was at least a metre lower than last year—possibly October when the swamps were all flooded. We saw many ducks and swans.

Brady Swamp's water level was also low but there were plenty of birds, albeit in the distance. Royal spoonbills? White necked herons? Pelicans? Plenty of swans, and on the edges, emus and kangaroos.





We headed westward towards the Wannon River. We didn't quite get to where the river should be, deciding to return as the vegetation was getting increasingly thick. We skirted past Gooseneck Swamp again, reached the road, and made our way back to the cars. Under 10 km total according to Rob.

The two Di's and John went on to do other things whilst the remaining five drove to Dunkeld for lunch. After that, straight to Bryan Swamp. As with the other swamps, the water level was quite low but there was an abundance of swans and other water birds ... which we may have been able to identify if only we were closer! No brolgas unfortunately.

Ann and Warren went their way to Halls Gap whilst the remaining three of us returned to Warrnambool. Thank you all for a great day out!

Lothar



Worn Gundidj Indigenous Nursery and Victoria Park: Wednesday 5 April

Botanists: Rosalie ✍️, Coralie 📷, Pauline, Lothar and Chris S

The Worn Gundidj Indigenous Nursery at the corner of Rooneys Rd and Braithwaite St is a retail and wholesale nursery of indigenous plants. We were interested in those that can be used as bush foods. Our guide John introduced us to many species, the leaves of which yielded refreshing flavours useful in salads or as vegetables – we sampled minty, strawberry or salty tastes, and some of the hydrating succulents, including the juicy fruit of Pig Face. We were told the leaves of the Gumbi Gumbi tree when treated carefully served as a medicine for cancer and other ailments, as also were parts of correas and several other plants.

Chocolate lily and other lilies as well as the murnong are useful for their tubers but plants were too precious and small for us to dig up and sample. We were shown the self sufficient wall garden displaying many of the plants for sale as tube-stock at low prices. We also met Emily who has been a chef and she explained the uses of packets of prepared seed mixtures, notably the wattle seed mixture popular in scones and other recipes, not to mention the various ice cream flavours produced by Timboon Ice Cream and available in different sizes and prices. It was an interesting and informative hour, with many thanks to John.



Next we enjoyed a coffee break at the very popular Coffee Treat Hole in the Wall in Cooper St with seating outside before heading off to Victoria Park between Hyland St, the Showgrounds and Aitkins Rd. For one who has the park as her backyard, I was surprised that the rest of the group had little or no knowledge of it.

First we circled the West Warrnambool water tower with its striking murals of Kaninda, an African refugee, Darashini, a refugee from Sri Lanka, and Dora, a migrant from Ireland — google ‘our story mural Warrnambool’ for their interesting stories. I had the pleasure of watching these murals being painted by Claire Foxton in 2019.

Then to the Orienteering Art Trail —a series of ten bollards zig-zagging down to the lower end of the park. Each bollard has three QR codes, the black one giving the next bollard’s coordinates (which can also be seen through peep-holes in the structure). The other two QR codes give information about projects and local points of interest. This trail was installed late last year, the completion of a project including the Council’s Youth Services section, students from the WAVE school, and the contracted artist as facilitator; it brings some fun to the park. Of course we had to check out some of the plantations and identify a few plants useful as indigenous food, as well as some problem invasive weed species. This park is well worth a visit.



Sun set and moon rise: Thursday 6 April

Hopefuls: Lothar, Rob, Rosalie, Pauline, Trevor (guest)

We met at the von Guerard lookout as planned but due to the cloud cover (and rain) we were unable to see the sunset or moonrise.

Poor planning!

The picnic area was damp and we set up our director's chairs under cover. By the time we'd cooked and eaten our snags the drizzle had stopped.



We walked around the island on the boardwalk, and then went to the corroboree area.

Unfortunately, we didn't see any kangas or emus but we did see a couple of koalas, a possum, a ratty like marsupial (?), and countless frogs.

A lovely evening was had by all!

Lothar



The Gables Carpark to Princetown: Monday 10 April

Participants: Gwenda (leader), Lothar and Rosalie

On one of Lothar's Wednesday walks we visited The Gables Lookout and Wreck Beach. This inspired me to tackle the inland route of the Great Ocean Walk from The Gables carpark to Princetown. They must have heard we were coming as the track had been recently cleared. There was a small rocky descent near the beginning, but otherwise quite easy walking. Lots of lovely viewing points along the way, especially from the toilets at the Devils Kitchen camp. A few rain showers early in the morning and a heavier one at morning teatime, but we were safely under the Devils Kitchen shelter.

A lovely way to spend Easter Monday, followed by coffee and cake in Port Campbell on the way home. Even with a well cleared track it was still possible for Lothar to bring a leech, attached to his lower leg, home with him. Lucky Lothar!

Gwenda





Five members took up the challenge and made their way to Camperdown in cool, rainy conditions. Oh dear, that certainly didn't bode well for enjoyable walking. But the sky cleared soon after arriving at the Volcanic Education Centre where we were warmly welcomed by members of the "Friends of Mt Leura" who had also, much to our delight, organised a coffee van!



After looking around the education centre and sustaining ourselves with a hot drink we set off with many local participants for the first two summits of Mt Sugarloaf and Mt Leura. Both easy climbs on well formed tracks and providing many opportunities to stop and catch ones breath while enjoying the magnificent views of the lakes and mountains in the distance.



Then it was back to the carpark and another visit to the coffee van before setting off to Mt Elephant. We decided to have lunch at the Mt Elephant visitors centre before attempting the climb. The ascent was made slightly harder due to the rough track and gale force winds. However, we managed to walk around the rim to the trig point and descend without any mishap. Once again, the views from the top are breathtaking but due to the strong wind we did not linger for too long.



Mt Noorat was my favourite for the day. Although it was very windy at the top, the clear skies enabled us to have excellent views of the lakes and mountains in the distance. The crater is entirely circular and is one of the deepest in Victoria.

Although we were the first to arrive in Camperdown for the Challenge we were one of the last to finish. This was probably due to the fact we took in the rim walks and we tended to chat and procrastinate!

This was my first go at the Challenge and I highly recommend it to anyone who hasn't had a go. Thank you to the organisers for this very enjoyable event.

Christine

*For those who realise that every "deepest" needs to be qualified, at 85 m to 150 m Noorat is the **deepest scoria enclosed crater** in Victoria (and possibly Australia) according to vro.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/glenreg.nsf/pages/eruption_points_noorat*



Moonlight Head ↔ Ryans Den: Friday 21 April

Slip and sliders: Janice (leader), Rob and Coralie.

As Warrnambool's cool and fine weather began to deteriorate into incidental mist by the time we reached the Allansford turnoff, I was starting to regret my decision to reschedule the walk from Saturday to Friday. The weather only got worse and wetter as we climbed into the Otways, and we glumly anticipated the sauna-like conditions inside our rain gear as we traversed the slopes ahead. Luckily as we descended out of the cloud at Moonlight Head there was enough blue sky to leave coats in packs. OK, I thought, not so bad for the first hike in my new boots—a pretty impractical powder blue pair from Kathmandu. (I really wanted red ones but they don't make that colour any more.)

The illusion of fine walking conditions was quickly shattered as we faced the first of the steep muddy slopes that had to be carefully negotiated all day. Did I mention the pale blue boots? Alternating slithering, slipping and sliding with staggering and sweating, we shared surface reports and safety tips with the several groups of Great Ocean Walk section hikers who were coming towards us. We had a good chat with walkers in a multi-generational group of about eight—they were celebrating a daughter's sixth birthday with her first overnight hike, a family tradition.

Fortified by an early lunch we sallied forth back along the treacherous track. Layers of clay and mud of various hues—black, grey, yellow—built up (stained) on our (add pale blue for me) boots/runners, and added to the difficulty of getting a grip. It wasn't all mud though. We spotted several different types of fungi (one with a stem about the thickness of my arm) and we noted a possible footpad that may have lead down to Hiders Beach with its intriguing history as being the short term residence of a William Fountain in the 1890s.

After 177 floors and approx 12km we were back at the cars and off to Port Campbell to enjoy coffee and cake [right] and the contemplation of a return trip to find Hiders Beach.

The weekend clean up of my pale blue boots and gaiters took almost as long as the hike itself and was only 90% successful.

Janice



Janice and her sister had made a cake the day before and, in the interest of reducing the calories in the house, brought some for the hikers.

Magic Rock: Saturday April 29

Participants : Khyll, Lothar (leader), Simone

We left Kepler St at about 8 am. On the way to the end of Buckleys Rd we passed the Lake Gilliear racetrack on our left. Things were in full swing there, and we were to have a noisy background for the first half of the walk.

We ventured off the main walking track to have a closer look at the cliff tops then continued along the fence line, reaching the fisherman's hut and turning south to the cliffs. We took lots of photos and viewed the surrounds, including Magic Rock, from various angles. It is such an amazing rock!

The return walk was thankfully free of racetrack background noises. We completed the whole walk in a little over 3 hours and elected to skip the coffee afterwards. We had a great morning out!

Lothar



Timboon ↔ Schultz's dairy: Saturday 6 May

Participants : Christine, Lothar, Mary

The plan was to cross paths with our cycling group on their way to Port Campbell but they cancelled so it was just us three.

We crawled up the hill into Timboon. The speed limit here is 60 kph, but 20 or so cyclists and 3 support vehicles with flashing lights were in front of us at much less than half that speed. They all turned off exactly where we had planned to turn off—the toilet block.

It transpired that they were all from Adelaide, heading to Melbourne on a 1000 km 7-day fund-raiser "Ride for Change". They had raised \$100,000 and still looked quite fresh on day 6, Warrnambool to Queenscliff. The excitement didn't end there. Were they all looking at a koala in the trees? No, their photographer's drone was stuck there, high above in a dead tree. They had no luck getting it down while we were there.

We drove around the corner to the start of the walk. The track south is relatively new here and, what we all hoped it would be, leech free. We took no chances though and either wore gaiters or tucked our pants into our socks. It was a surprisingly pleasant walk to Schultz's dairy. There were always trees on at least one side of us, and the road traffic was very light. We had raincoats and umbrellas to keep off a couple of bouts of light rain.

We seemed to cover the 6 km distance there in no time at all, and at Schultz's enjoyed excellent coffees, cakes, and an Opa's toastie. We extended our stop a bit to let a downpour pass and to chat with another couple of cyclists who were doing a Port Campbell to Timboon return ride and were chatting on the phone to some CFA buddies about the possibility of retrieving said drone from the tree.

We returned to Timboon in a dry state and had delicious lunches outside the *Provedore* in the sun. Thank you.

Lothar



West Barwon Dam ↔ Lake Elizabeth: Saturday 27 May

Walkers: Rob, Lothar, Rosalie, Pauline, and Chris

The walk follows two of the many mountain bike trails at Forrest. Today we did the opposite to previous walks by starting on trail #3 and returning on #2. This meant that we would be mainly facing oncoming cyclists and, as it turned out, had a better way to do the walk because it reduced the number of slippery downhill sections.

Not much different from normal: driving there with sun in the eyes after sunrise, refreshments at the general store on arrival at Forrest and at the Forrest Brewing Company after the walk, sun in the eyes for the drive home, though that was minimal thanks to cloud cover.

We started walking at 9, pleased that we hadn't bought our golf clubs and swimmers, since both activities are prohibited. Met four groups of cyclists and a few tourists on our way to Lake Elizabeth.



We arrived there at 11:20, a time deemed suitable to eat none, some or all of one's lunch. The other four waited patiently for 30 minutes while I inspected a small lake 120 scrubby metres away [top left p10]. I'd noticed it in a satellite image—it just begged to be visited, something I expect the more sensible would rightly ignore.



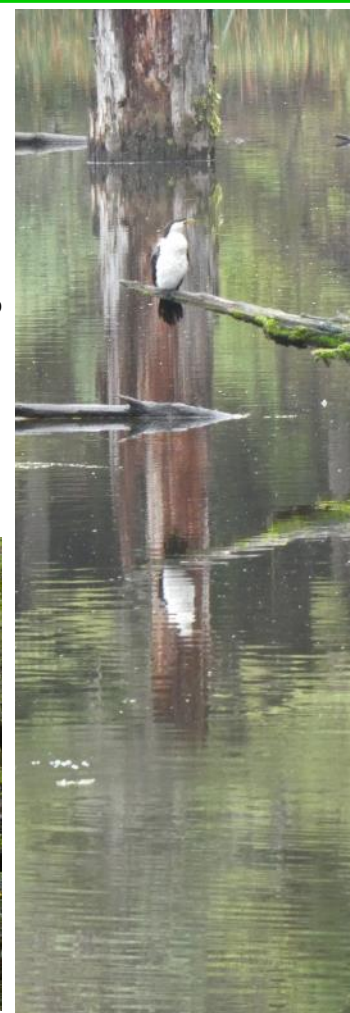
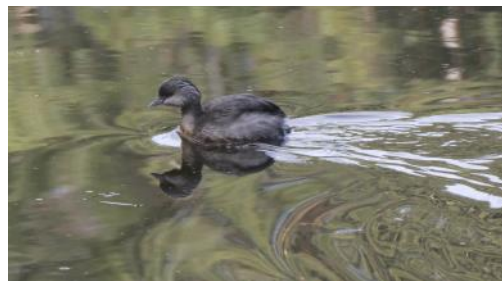


Then we did the “loop walk” around the lake and, depending on our previous actions, ate all, some or none of our lunch.

The return via trail #2 was a stress-free way to finish the walk. After the obvious need for an ascent to go from the east branch of the Barwon River to its west branch it was a gentle descent back to the car, with glimpses of a silvery dam through the trees.

It was a delightful 6 hr walk: no rain, some sun, not too cold, not too hot, only a little wind near the end, vibrant greens everywhere from tunnels of tree ferns to towering eucalypts, perfect reflections of same on the lakes, and almost complete silence, save for an occasional squelch, squelch, squelch of shoe on path.

Rob



Halls Gap: 2-4 June

Participants: Christine, Katrina 📷, Lothar 📷, Pauline, Rob 📷, Rosalie, Scott, Trevor

We all arrived in Halls Gap on Friday afternoon except for Rob who joined us bright and early on Sunday morning. Once we'd settled in, we headed for Katrina and Scott ... and McCoy's ... place at their relatively palatial pyramid Grampians Getaway accommodation. We had a wonderful BBQ and evening.

On Saturday we started walking along the track behind Halls Gap. We diverged and walked as far as the saddle on the Boronia Peak track before returning and continuing on to Brambuk. It was raining by this stage. It didn't help that Brambuk was closed due to renovations ... and the cafe was also closed. We returned to the caravan park.

After lunch we drove to Borough Huts and walked, rain free, along the Mt Rosea track. We wanted to get to and explore the Burma Track but in the end, we ran out of time and so just returned. A lovely walk! That evening we went to the Spirit of Punjab for an amazing dinner.





On Sunday we left one vehicle at Wonderland carpark then drove to the Sundial Peak



carpark. We visited Sundial Peak, then explored the cliff tops on the way to the Pinnacle. Christine headed directly to the Wonderland carpark whilst the rest of us headed on to the Pinnacle, a much visited attraction!

Katrina and Rob took the path down the cliff face to where Scott and McCoy were waiting in Halls Gap. The rest of us had a quick lunch then headed through Silent Street and past a couple of waterfalls down to the Wonderland carpark. Unfortunately, the Canyon detour was closed due to rockfalls. But still, a spectacular walk!

After picking up the cars and walkers we made our way home. An event filled weekend!

Lothar



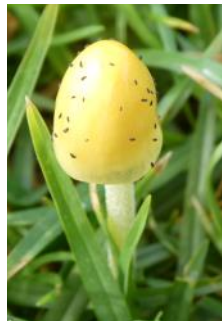
Mathieson's Road and Childers Cove: Saturday 3 June

*Warrnambool Bushwalkers: Rob 📷, Mike, Coralie 📷, Graeme (leader), Norbert.
Ballarat Bushwalking and Outdoor Club: Glenda, Andy, Jane, Judy, Theresa,
Chris, Mary.*

For this joint walk both groups met at the relatively new public facilities at Nullawarre before driving to the end of Mathiesons Road at Nirranda South. Despite some wet and dreary weather early that morning that led us to question “is this a good idea to go walking today”, the rain stopped and the weather cleared quite promptly at about 10 am—as the BOM predicted.

After parking at the entrance to the coastal reserve, the group walked, and occasionally slid, down the steep and sometimes quite slippery track from the car park to the beach below the cliffs. Nature put on a good display with a quite heavy sea running, a spectacle that impressed our inland Ballarat colleagues. Despite quite a high tide, the group was able to walk west along most of the length of Three Mile Beach before walking up a track through the cliffs. Chris from the Ballarat Club indulged one of her likes by taking her boots off and walking in the shallows for the length of the beach.

The group returned to the cars on the management track along the northern boundary of the coastal reserve enabling the serious walkers to get a few kilometres of fast walking.



The group travelled to the Childers Cove area for lunch and some afternoon cliff-top walking. Lunch was eaten at the picnic tables above Murnane Bay. Unfortunately the toilets there are closed. The group walked the short distance to the actual Childers Cove, but the high tide and frequent high waves prevented us from walking on its beach. However we had a good discussion on the naming of Childers Cove. The barque *Children* was [wrecked in 1839](#) on a reef at the cove's entrance. Childers is Irish dialect for children. Is that where the name came from? Among other things [Hugh Childers](#) was MP for Portland in 1856. Was it to honour him? Why this bay? Who knows!



We then explored the cliff tops to the east of Murnane Bay. This area has spectacular views of cliffs and rock stacks that largely can only be seen on foot and certainly rival the 12 Apostles coastline. We finished with a down and an up of the steps to Murnane Bay's beach. Warrnambool last walked with the Ballarat club in 2016 when they were scoping the GPT. The consensus from both clubs today was that we should endeavour to have further joint walks sooner than that.

Graeme





Around Yambuk: Sunday 11 June

Relaxed strollers: Rob 🗺️📷, Lothar, Graeme

I hadn't explored the Yambuk area, and so that seemed a suitable place for a short stroll on the holiday weekend that celebrates the birthday of my wife's 19th cousin once removed. Thanks to Lothar and Graeme for joining me on my "whim".

We climbed to the lookout above the carpark and then descended by the 33 m slide, with pants mopping up the dew. Next was to follow the track by the south of the estuary to reach the closed river mouth. Many birds were there including three hooded plovers and some (pictured) double barred plovers. We headed west along the beach but after 10 minutes decided that we were there to enjoy ourselves rather than to suffer on the steep, soft sand. We turned around. East of the mouth proved to be much better walking. On the drive home we detoured to look at The Craggs where it is made very clear that walking along the beach to Yambuk is a huge no-no!



The Hamilton to Coleraine rail trail on bicycle: Saturday 17 June

Riders: Rob, Diane, Jack and Fred

Mabel was fending off the lurgi and so Rob led her ride. Shepherds would have been very worried by the amount of red in the glorious technicolour sunrise. Cyclists might have been worried too were it not for their extreme confidence in the BOM's prediction that the rain would arrive after noon.

We started at 9 from Wannan Falls, near midway along the trail, and were soon gradually gaining altitude on its recently cleared section south of the highway. The advice on this section's condition has gone from "suitable for walkers" to "rough but beautiful". It provides an agreeable contrast to the rest of the trail. The volunteers who look after the trail have done a good job.

In the main the rest of the trail is smoother and goes through open farm land with many large red gums—an iconic landscape. We almost lost traction on one boggy section near Coleraine, even though we were going downhill. We met some walkers.

After a nibble stop at the station we returned along sealed back roads, reaching the falls at 13:11, dry!! While we were having lunch the rain started and gradually increased. By 14:00 it was pelting down. We didn't do any more riding that day.

Rob



The Redgum Track— Coleraine to Wannon on the rail trail: Saturday 17 June

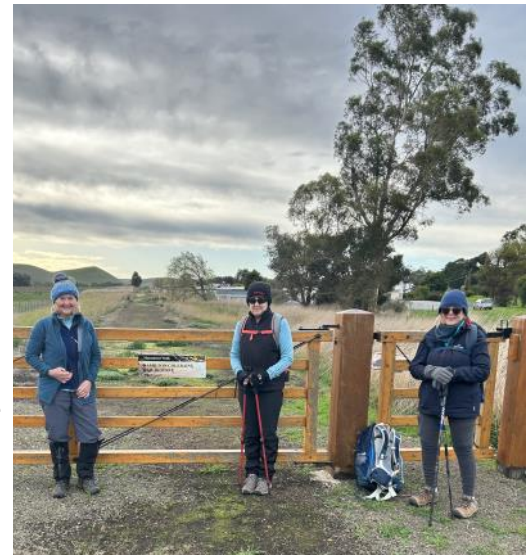
Walkers: Coralie 📷, Christine, Pauline, Trevor 📷 (guest, handy gate-opener and photographer)

Barry had warned most of the regular Archie riders that this was not an easy trail. The predicted weather deterred many others who might have joined the ride. I decided to walk, not counting on a 5.45 am phone call from a sick Lothar to lead it. After a small hesitation and zero preparation, I thought “How hard can it be? It’s on a rail trail”.

We drove to the Coleraine Railway Station. *It’s a rail trail; it must start there!* Well there was an old bike with a Redgum Track sign nearby but it wasn’t exactly clear where it went next. After some deliberations and asking of locals (thanks Trevor), we made our way to a very obvious starting gate on the main road into Coleraine.

While it’s not the smoothest ride in places, it’s a very scenic walk. The rolling hills were green, the information boards spaced beside the track were informative, and the weather was bracing. The track requires squeezing through narrow posts or, if riding, opening gates. There were a few signs warning of holes big enough to swallow riders.

After 4 kms we met the cyclists sliding down the hill towards us. We were a little daunted to find they had ridden 12 km from Wannon. Apparently Lothar had intended shortening the route by parking a car along a bisecting road. *Someone should have read the instructions more carefully.* Ah well ... nothing for it but to keep walking!





At 12.00 pm we were seriously hungry. Lunch was supposed to be at Hamilton but we were still 6 km from Wannon. The entire edible contents of our packs were consumed. Luckily there were beautiful redgums, interesting farm country, and numerous water birds and parrots to keep us entertained. The pace slowed and Christine's still recovering leg from a previous walking injury was not enjoying the extra, unexpected distance.

Finally a number of houses became visible besides the trail; we were approaching Wannon. Unfortunately a more serious drizzle commenced and raincoats were required. More unfortunately, we overshot Wannon Falls and blundering about in the rain, had to back track. I tried to ignore the mutinous undertones and didn't dare suggest any viewing of the falls.

After more than 16 km and around 2 pm we reached the cars in

a somewhat sodden condition. Retrieving the Coleraine vehicle we made straight for the Penshurst pub where hot chocolates and sausage rolls were consumed next to a roaring fire. As we dried out, all was forgiven ... almost!

Coralie



After looking at the falls, I (Rob) was waiting in the picnic area for the other riders when the walkers arrived to start their car shuffle. Coralie thought she'd seen cyclists in the camping area. My three, as it turned out. It appears there are 2 toilet blocks in the Wannon Falls Reserve!



Koroit: Saturday 24 June

Tourists: Mary (guide), Rosalie, Coralie 📷, Lothar & Chris, Pauline, Trevor 📷, Jim, Campbell (guest), Rob 📷, Gwenda & Hugo

It was a chilly start as we assembled on the Tower Hill rim at 8 am ready to wander around the village. The Moyne Shire Heritage Trail Brochure provided a guide to help identify significant points of interest.



Starting on Anzac Avenue we made our way towards the historic buildings, the most notable being the Koroit Convent (circa 1907). Its new custodians are currently undertaking major restorations so it will be amazing to see this large building restored to its former glory. Improvements to the surrounds and gardens already provide a beautiful backdrop for this building.

After a short walk from the Convent we entered the Botanic Gardens, designed by William Guilfoyle and containing several trees classified by the National Trust. We viewed some of these trees especially the noteworthy Dragon Tree and the Captain Cook Pine.





From the gardens we continued to the main street. Along it we identified several buildings dating back to the 1800s. We then headed to the former railway station, closed in the 1970s but now restored to provide a community hub for Koroit residents.

After viewing the latest improvements to this area, especially the new BBQ facility, we headed to our coffee stop at the Art of Tea. Fresh date and ginger scones straight from the oven proved very popular.

With enough sustenance to get us through we continued on the walk past the Koroit Post Office—the former home of well know author Henry Handel Richardson (circa 1889)— then the former Court House (1901), the State School, and the Bega Factory, formerly the Koroit Butter Factory (circa 1889). After a brief stop at the Common School and Historical Society Rooms we passed some large Edwardian and Victorian homes and remnants of old cottages on our way back to our starting point on the rim.

An enjoyable 7 km walk. And we escaped the rain!

Mary

