

## Tower Hill: Monday 1 January

*Participants: Rosalie, Rob, Christine, David with Brett and Michelle, Campbell, Pauline, Dennis with Kathy, Janice, Helen, and Norbert.*

Well, that was fun! Thirteen (!) of us turned up to welcome the New Year with a two-hour stroll at Tower Hill. We started with the Lava Tongue walk, then continued on to the Lake Edge track seeing lots of swans and other water birds on the calm waters. Then, with the help of Rob's and Janice's phone navigation to choose the best track, we made our way up to Lothar's lookout to enjoy its splendid view. En route we were spied on by emu, a mother and child koala, and kangaroos. Back at the picnic ground we had to celebrate with Cadbury's Favourites, which we kept safe from the investigating emu. Someone's

fruit and cherry bun was not so lucky!

*Rosalie*



## Rail Trail and Shelley Beach: Saturday 6 January

Walkers: Gwenda (leader) and Hugo, Pauline, Dina, Mary, Coralie 📷, Rosalie, Helen, Norbert and Christine

A very pleasant morning walk was held starting at the Harris St entrance to the rail trail. Up the rail trail to Younger St, crossing the river, and up and into the practice area of the golf course. Through the scrub, until we reached the Sewerage Treatment Plant. It's now necessary to walk around a huge sand dune that has been created, I think, to camouflage the expanding treatment plant. Up to Shelley Beach, where to our surprise we met Christine. Back along the track to Thunder Point, Pickering Point, and the front beach. Coffee time was looming, so the Pavilion kiosk was our choice, before returning to our starting point.

Gwenda

They're both wearing my hat!





From the Fitzroy to the Surry:  
Sunday 7 January



On Saturday, the daunting forecast for heavy rain, storms and lightning prompted Lothar to change this fundraiser from “club walk” to “cancelled but go yourself if you want to”. Sunday’s 6 am forecast was not as pessimistic, down Portland’s way at least, so I (Rob) decided to go. While there was no rain on the walk, it wasn’t good walking weather: very warm and humid. Only 21 on the bus that took us from Narrawong to near the mouth of the Fitzroy River. Changes to the estuary meant it was easiest to get our feet wet thrice on our way to the beach. No problem—the water was only ankle deep. Taking one shoe off and hopping was one person’s approach. The other walkers were soon well out of sight. So too were their foot prints due to a slightly rising tide. While many birds were on the rivers, the beach only had some gulls, a pair of pied oyster catchers, and three magpies. As usual, weevils were seen on the sand. Remembering the reason for last year’s non-lunch, I didn’t visit the whale skull. The 20 minutes saved meant that sausages were still being served by the CFA when I finished. A big thank you to the organisers for putting on such a well run event at such short notice.



There was also a [kids colour run](#).

## Mt Sturgeon circuit: Saturday 13 January

*Walkers: Rob, Cam, Lothar, Rosalie, Dina, and Christine*

A toss of a coin determined our direction around the circuit—anticlockwise, which some thought was the better way. It was an overcast day and ideal for walking, both for us and the many fellow walkers. Views not as crisp as could be. Only a few flowers in bloom, a few birds, a few more fungi than expected, and, certainly not at all expected, one hyacinth orchid flower. A good time was had by all, especially since we were in the car when lightly spitting rain started soon after we finished.

*Rob*



## Clifton Beach to Gibsons Tunnel: Saturday 20 January

Walkers: Rob 🦋📷, Lothar 📷, Robyn, Campbell and Rosalie 📷.

Our sandy bush track down to Clifton Beach left the Great Ocean Walk 2 km from its old finish. Low tide and firm sand made for easy walking under towering cliffs with some impressive stalactites, through the horde of tourists disgorged by Gibsons Steps, past Gog and Magog to reach the end of the beach with its grilled-up [Gibsons Tunnel](#) under the 12 Apostles Lookout. We returned to the Steps, ascended, and followed the GOW to our cars and Campbell's pod-coffee-making demo. The only blot on the landscape was the 12 Apostles' unfinished [Saddle Lookout](#). Lunch was at Port Campbell's beach watching Nippers and the crowd in general.



*Gog, Magog and agog walkers*



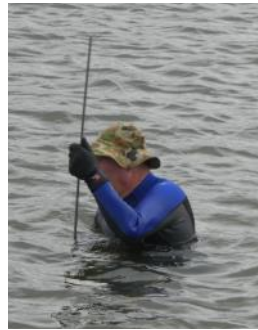


### **A Stroll around Warrnambool: Sunday 28 January**

*Participants: Rosalie, Rob, Christine, Mary, Dina, Gwenda accompanied by Hugo – woof!*

Leaving Cannon Hill at 9 am we followed various paths through the bush to the Hopkins River. Gwenda and Hugo tried valiantly but unsuccessfully to walk along the river's shore-line before joining us on the bridge. A brief visit to the Blue Hole, then back on the north side of the bridge where a man in the river was poling for bottles! A pelican and cormorants and a visit to the dinghy pontoon slowed our progress to Proudfoots which, alas, had not yet opened. Up to the Simpson St bridge and beside the rail line to where a plastic orange tent indicated the recent bone discovery site, then along Bostock St to Wilba's—nice coffee—on Nicholson St near its corner. Through Warrnambool East school to see the Toilet Garden, and once again across the railway line, shortly before the 11.44 train went through. Back to Cannon Hill at midday – the two hour stroll turned into an enjoyable three hours.

*Rosalie*



## GSWW—Cubby's Camp to the Coast: Saturday, 3 February

*Orchid hunters: Rob, Lothar, Rosalie, Coralie*

Seeing pristine hyacinth orchid flowers was the motivation for this walk, the timing being three weeks earlier than last year's walk when we saw 75 aging flowers. Alas it was still not early enough. Nonetheless we saw 101 hyacinth orchid flowers. The tension was palpable as we crossed the Princes Highway, a kilometre from the end: would we hit the ton!



Unlike last year's rain-induced pre-walk bakery stop, the cloudless day meant an earlier start to walking (8:30) and hence an earlier finish (13:16). A good thing too, since the temperature was nudging 30° by then. Regardless, it was a good day's walking, mainly in shade and on rustic tracks.

On the side trip to Cubby's Camp before we started our journey to the coast we found the first three of our hyacinth orchid flowers.



Although we were only a few metres from a road, we had forest on one side of the track most of the time. Sometimes it was forest on the other side too ...



... and sometimes it was farm land.



In the final forested section we crossed the Princes Highway and made our way over a stile to the Old Princess Highway for the final descent though farm land to Dutton Way and our waiting car.



We road-bashed a couple of times and train-track bashed too.



But at the final gate, there was an inspection committee—we obviously passed muster since they let us pass with no problems.  
*Rob*

There were some ripe blackberries and a very recalcitrant “friend”.



It's not often one's hike takes you past a rose nursery.



*PS1: when we returned to the start, three more orchids made the total 104—they were unnoticed when we parked the car.*  
*PS2: the Heywood bakery's penultimate bee sting met its match.*



## Two Mile Bay (2MB): Saturday 10 February

Walkers: Rob 📷, Rosalie, Campbell, Robyn 📷, Coralie, Graeme

Port Campbell's Discovery Trail was the first part of the walk: up the steps, a squiz at the town from the new cantilevered bike path, and then along the Trail to 2MB Rd. We had many views of the coast towards the 12 Apostles, all glary from the sun reflected by the sea and hazy from sea spray. Then it was the not-done-before part for most: down a bush track to the coast and along the rock ledge that fringes 2MB, a couple of metres above sea level.

At the eastern edge of the ledge we saw cliffs and breaking waves. At the western end we walked beside spectacular cliffs. In between were 2 km of the most enjoyable rock ledge and beach walking.



Mosquito larvae were in one of the many small pools along the ledge. Seepage from the dune was the main source for these pools, with some water coming from sea spray. The many small salt-encrusted hollows suggested that waves hadn't reached the shelf in the last few weeks. A barnacle-encrusted tree trunk was proof that the waves weren't always benign.



The option to follow the track up to the headland at the west end of 2MB was declined. We retraced our steps arriving back at Port Campbell for a noon lunch in the shade of the surf club.

After coffee or ice cream we set off for home. Our first detour went along 2MB West Rd to visit the previously mentioned declined headland and look down on where we'd walked. The haze was less and we could just make out the 12 Apostles—a different sea-side view which, on a much clearer day would be very good ... through binoculars.

The second detour looked at the stacks in the Bay of Islands from the boat launch area, reminding us that we hadn't visited the headland to the west for a while.

*Rob*



## Gaul's Cave: Saturday 17 February

*Participants: Coralie, Lothar, Jim, Helen, Pauline, Ali, Campbell, Rob*

A 9 am start from Blue Hole saw 3 walkers meet 5 more at the Whale Platform. Apparently, the soft sand was not to everyone's liking.

Walkers in a variety of footwear, or bare footed, then ambled along the beach to the rocky platforms at the eastern end of Logan's Beach. Here feet were covered as we negotiated the often spikey and slippery rocks. We all admired Helen's dexterity in traversing this area in thongs.

At the 'throat', a narrow chasm in the rocky ledge, Rob took the high road while the rest of us dived with the incoming waves as we stepped across the break. Even on an outgoing tide the swell was big enough to catch most of us and ensure toes were a little damp.



All reached the cave and journeyed through the arch to admire and photograph the sea-sculptured rock formations and mini caves beyond.

On the return journey, a few Hooded Plovers, Oyster Catchers, and numerous gulls were spotted. Rob recruited Pauline, Campbell and me to scale the rocky ledge above the throat; the only challenge being the short climb down. A pile of beach refuse started by Ali was consolidated into a few packs and bags as we made our way back to the Logans Beach Viewing Platform and coffee at the Fletcher Jones Gardens.

Thanks to Rosalie for researching tide times and organising the walk even if she was unable to be with us on the day.

*Coralie*



***From Warrnambool 1888: Biographical sketches of many of the prominent residents of the town and it's immediate neighbourhood***  
***Gaul, Alexander*** was born in Banffshire, Scotland, and came to Victoria in April, 1861. From Melbourne he proceeded straight to his present property, where he has successfully devoted himself to the cultivation of general farm produce up to now.

## Clean up Australia Day: Sunday 3 March

Participants: Coralie, Rosalie, Khyll, Dina, Jim, Mabel, Lothar, Mary, Robyn, Rob.

Once again, the Russells Creek Trail was chosen as the venue for our clean-up efforts. We divided into pairs to tackle the length of the track and were underway by 10 am. Some groups finished early but the middle sections of the trail proved to be the most 'trashed-up' and others had not quite finished by the time a halt was called.

Coffee and melting moment biscuits were enjoyed at the 'Pig and Pie' on Mortlake Road. Along with the usual cans, food wrappings and dog poo bags, Rosalie & Robyn found 3 recently consumed 'Johnnie Walker' bottles and Mabel picked up a credit card.



In the afternoon the rubbish was re-sorted so that glass bottles and recyclable containers could be disposed of more appropriately. The remaining 6 bags were placed near a WCC bin, and these were collected the next morning. A total of \$3.60 was donated to the RCH's Good Friday Appeal.

Thanks to Chris S for providing transport, WCC for the prompt removal of our bags, and the dedicated club rubbish removers.

Coralie

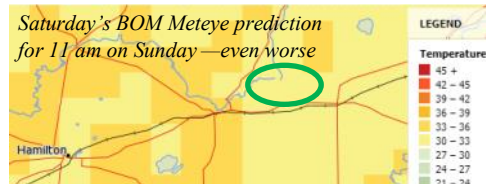


## A walk beside the Wannon River: ~~Sunday 10~~ Friday 08 March

*Carpe Diem*. In this case, the day seized was two days earlier than the one scheduled. Over the week the predicted temperature for 11 am on Sunday was closely watched as it nudged closer and closer to 30°. People were cancelling as a result. In contrast, the prediction for 11 am on the Friday was 24°. It was 12° at the 9 am start of the walk and 22° at the noon finish. It was a grand morning of bushwalking.

A car shuffle is needed for this walk, from its end on Lynchs Crossing Rd near Walkers Swamp to its start on the Wannon River Road. For a driver the obvious choice is 17 km on good gravel roads. A cyclist might prefer going 15 km via Childs Lane, on good gravel except for a 2 km section that cuts through the impenetrable swamp around the Wannon River—crossed but not sighted. Dried mud crisscrossed with many embedded kangaroo foot prints rivals cobblestones for discomfit.

The first half of the walk—to Brady Swamp—kept close to the Wannon River. Unlike [last October's walk](#) when the river was full and much more picturesque, the river was dry with only one large pool seen. But nonetheless it made for very pleasant off-track walking. Kangaroos abounded and their trails were as good a way as any through the generally sparse vegetation. So too was the dry river bed.



Unlike last October, the waters of Brady Swamp no longer blocked progress. It was easy walking along the swamp's edge, sometimes on the dry bed, sometimes in the majestic red gums that lined the shore. The Wannon River was crossed, precisely where is anyone's guess, but presumably near the vegetation that had an ankle-deep layer of sandshoe staining water under it.



After Brady Swamp came Gooseneck Swamp with lots of water and lots of water birds. The Glenelg Nature Trust must be proud of their [restoration work](#) on this swamp. Its dry edge was followed for a bird watching spree for a while before kangaroo paths helped with the walking to the fence line and the usual route to the car.

*Rob*



## A Peterborough Ramble: Saturday, 16 March

*Walkers: Robyn (leader), Mabel, Graeme and Rob*

We started slightly later to catch low tide, and because not everyone loves early starts. Admiring the views from the golf course we were impressed with their ingenuity in fitting a course in the limited area. Continuing along the clifftop, many more views were admired. We saw several hooded plovers at the Bay of Martyrs, including 3 chicks. The tide was out, so no wet feet, but too low for good fishing apparently. Back in Peterborough for a leisurely lunch, the coffee at the general store passed muster and Rob surprised all choosing a pie. I was quite impressed as we managed to turn a 4 km walk into 9.66 km by way of a few deviations.

*Robyn*





## Base Camp at Aire River West: 14–17 March

Walkers: Gwenda, Christine and Rosalie 📷



**Friday 15:** We drove to Cape Otway Lighthouse to start our day walk to Aire River—about 13 km. We first visited the Cape Otway Cemetery to view the graves of lighthouse keepers' families and shipwrecked sailors. We continued on to the first track junction and took the path to Station Beach and Rainbow Falls. Lots of sand walking at this time. We went back to the main track and on to Aire River and our camp. It certainly reached the top temp of 24°.



It certainly reached the top temp of 24°.

**Saturday 16:** We drove to Johanna Beach and walked this section in the reverse order to try and beat the day's heat. We started with a 2 km beach




walk in the cool of the morning, crossing the Johanna River. A long, steep climb took us up through a eucalyptus woodland and along the clifftops, past the Castle Cove lookout and back to Aire River. It certainly reached the top temp of 29° as we reached our camp. About 15 km.



**Sunday 17:** After our breakfast, we packed up our camp and headed to Port Campbell, where we indulged in coffee and cake. Thank you Rosalie and Christine for a wonderful camp with 2 days of walking. We plan to do another 2 days of walking about the same time next year, from Johanna Beach to the Gables Car Park, probably with the base camp at Johanna Beach.

*Gwenda*

 **Timboon ↔ Port Campbell:** Jim, Mike, Rob, Jack and Fred **Saturday 23 March**

 **Timboon ↔ Schultz's:** Lothar, Norbert, Mary, Pauline and Suzanne

The last of Lothar's three sentences report has the most important information of any activity: *Thank you all for a lovely walk! 5 cyclists and 5 walkers! The walkers had refreshments at Schultz's, and later at the Timboon Ice Creamery.*

Jim's report, had he not delegated it, would have been similar: *it was a lovely ride with refreshments at Port Campbell and lunch on the back deck of the Provedore in Timboon.*

Not that I need to add much more. The cyclists set off about 15 minutes after the walkers and passed them 15 minutes later. We reached Port Campbell with its *Crayfest* well underway, but in time for the grand parade. Our return was helped by the south wind. Lothar's car had gone by the time we finished. A glorious day for being outside.

*Rob*



## GPT—Halls Gap to Borough Huts: 24–25 February

Ali 📷 wanted to do the Grampians Peak Trail over the year, as weekend walks because of work. She put it on the program over five weekends. By coincidence Mabel also had doing the GPT in weekend bursts on her wish list. She signed on immediately. Rob thought this was as good a way as any to fill in a few weekends.

Bright one morning the three of us meet at Halls Gap together with four well wishers (Coralie, Janice, Lothar, and Julie from the Grampians Club) who came with us as far as The Pinnacle.

The three overnigheters continued to Bugiga campsite, overcame the challenge of pitching tents on the weird camp platforms, and cooked tea at the entrance to the wind tunnel that purports to be a communal shelter. The next day Mt Rosea was reached followed by an enjoyable descent through rocks and trees before the long, uninspiring descent to the bridge over Fyans Ck at Borough Huts.



## GPT—Borough Huts to Jimmy Creek: 16–18 March

*Walkers: Alas none, or at least not with packs and even then only for one day and for half the distance*

A week before this walk Ali's neck started playing up and we postponed the walk in the hope her neck would soon improve. So Mabel and I (Rob) could go on Robyn's ramble around Peterborough. But delightful as that walk was, it didn't provide the training needed for our 4-day Easter walk. On this leg of the GPT, Mabel had been looking forward to visiting The Dials, last visited by her on a scrubby route umpteen years ago, and so her Sunday walk to Mt Abrupt morphed into our day walk from Borough Huts to Mt William carpark.



Summary: lots of slab walking, some narrow pack squeezes along the ridge of The Dials, the impressive cairn on Redman Bluff, cloud covered the summit of Mt Rosea until noon and hot thereafter, good views to the north, south and east.



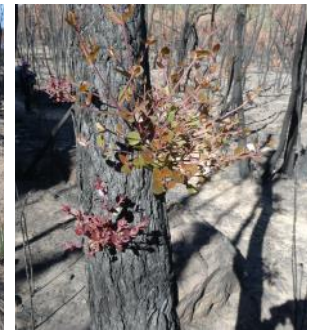
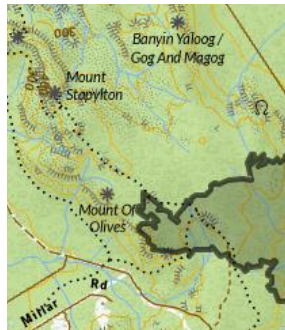
## GPT—Mt Zero to Halls Gap: 29 March to 1 April

The sun had just risen as I (Rob) approached Glenthompson and this view of a vast mystic lake before the hazy Grampians. Ali's neck was still playing up. So it was Mabel and I who met at Halls Gap, drove a car to the Mt Zero carpark, and started on what promised to be three very hot days. They were.



Being Easter, all campsites were occupied. The largest group of fellow walkers was a party of six 18-yr old girl scouts who had organised their walk with some planning to do 4, 6 or even the full 12 days of walking. We never heard them being silent.

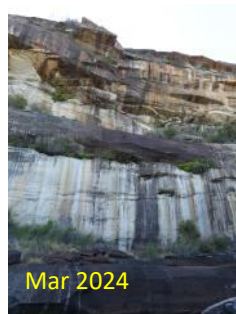
**Day 1** starts steeply up a slab of rock before dropping down on a track to a section giving views of the climbing areas, with Taipan Wall already busy. And so the day continued as we alternated between slabs and track, with a few built rock steps and unbuilt rocky bits thrown in for good measure. Highlight had to be walking through the bushfire damaged area. There was no water in the creeks we crossed.



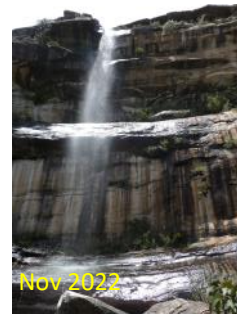
On 13 February fire burnt across a kilometre of the GPT on its way to Dadswell Bridge. Fire retardant on the rocks before we reached the blackened ground whose only green was singed Xanthorrhoea. But a closer look found some gums had already sprouted growth.



Barigar site 8



Mar 2024



Nov 2023



**Day 2** was a steady climb to the Gar campsite. The day's highlight, had the creeks been flowing, would have been Gar Falls #3 as the photo I prepared earlier shows.

Each of the three campsites for this walk had a communal shelter (in our case filled with six girls) and ten wooden platforms well hidden from each other. Having some extra cord is very prudent for pitching a tent since the platforms are not all the same size.

Of all the campsites on the GPT, Gar, must be the clear winner. Set along a small cliff with more cliffs as a backdrop it has an unsurpassed view to the north and west. As the sun set, most were sitting on the rock edge opposite their campsites admiring the spectacle.



**Day 3** had no real highlights: good views of Lake Wartook and the plains to the east. It wasn't too steep, and had the usual combination of slab rock, dirt track and rocky track. It did, however have a significant lowlight, namely the heat.

**Day 4** was cooler and had rain predicted. The first two drizzles came at convenient overhangs. That luck ran out about an hour before we reached Halls Gap—you may have seen pictures of the Stawell Gift. If the Mt Difficult Road is improved, I can thoroughly recommend the part of the GPT from it down to Halls Gap: a good track with expansive views along a cliff top at its start, manageable sets of steps, and a gentle descent through the forest.

