

Saints and Sinners bike ride: 12–13 October

Three club members (Mike, Liz and Rob) and 13 other riders from Warrnambool, Koroit and Port Fairy travelled to St Arnaud for the annual Saints and Sinners bike tour. This was the 21st such ride, so the pattern of the weekend has been well rehearsed. A joyous group of 61 riders pedalled down the main street behind the lead car. We were provided with clear directions at major intersections. The weather was fine, and with little wind this year.

On Saturday, the tour took us to Bealiba for lunch via the historic Logan Pub, and then returned to St Arnaud via Emu. Sunday morning had us riding to Kooreh and Carapooee. Congratulations to Flo, Wayne and their volunteers for a well organised tour again. Thanks to the country women who provided the four meals on Saturday and Sunday.

Mike



***Preparatory Pack Walk:
Sunday 20 October***

Alison, guest Deb and I (Coralie) walked out along the Great Ocean Walk from Gibson's Steps towards Princetown in the Port Campbell National Park. With packs loaded to the suggested 12 kg typical carrying weight for the 3 Capes walk, we moved swiftly along the undulating track and reached the Gellibrand River for lunch.

Once there, we could view the new bridge to the Princetown campground and the wetland estuary. Return via the same route afforded spectacular views of the 12 Apostles.



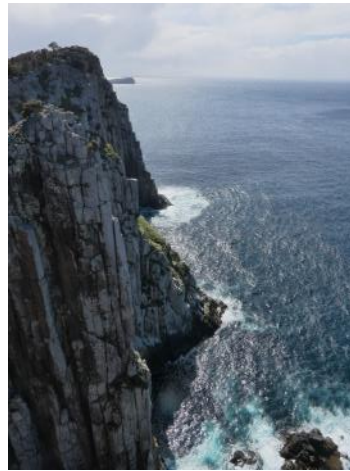
3 Capes Track: 29 October to 1 November

Ten of us—seven club members (Christine, Coralie, Ali, Janice, Clive, Campbell, and Rob) and three of our friends (Paul, Lisa and Deb)—signed up for this “marquee event” organised by Christine. A more expansive report to celebrate the good time we had will be the December newsletter. For now this brief description will have to suffice.

The [3 Capes Track](#) on the Tasman Peninsula covers 48 km over 4 days and 3 nights as it goes from Port Arthur to Fortescue Bay via Cape Pillar and Cape Hauy. Three “hut complexes” provide shelter and cooking equipment, and so reduce pack weight.

A wet landing at the end of the boat ride from Port Arthur to the start of the track.

Surveyors Camp, the first, is less treed than the two others. The two sleeping blocks are on the left and the kitchen areas right.



The walk ends on the shore at Fortescue Bay where a bus takes you back to the start.

A swamp walk with a bonus orchid walk: Saturday 9 November

Participants: From Camperdown—Bob, Caroline, Fiona, Jenny, and Michelle. From Warrnambool—Lothar, Shea

The day was overcast, not too hot or windy, and there was no rain. Just perfect for walking on this joint walk with Camperdown.

We met the Camperdown walkers in Dunkeld then drove in convoy to Walker Swamp where we climbed up the tower for better views. There hadn't been much rain for months and water levels were relatively low. Quite a few ducks about but no swans.

We walked along the road then entered the national park through the access gate. The grass was short so walking was easy. Gooseneck Swamp had no water that we could see—it was just a green field and devoid of waterbirds.

Fortunately, Brady Swamp had some water in it, but waterbirds were too far away for easy identification. The Grampians skyline looked stunning.

All up, we saw a fox on Brady Swamp, a number of kangaroos and emus, and heard lots of bird songs in the background. Not one snake.

We had lunch in the park in Dunkeld before heading to the Piccaninny Carpark. Duck Orchids! Wow! We climbed up to the peak, relaxed, then descended to Victoria Valley Road. After a car shuffle we said our goodbyes and drove home.

Thank you all for a great day out!

Lothar



A Peterborough Ramble: Saturday 23 November



Five intrepid souls—Robyn (leader), Rob, Lothar, Coralie and guest Sladjana—braved the forecast and walked from Peterborough to the Bay of Martyrs and back. Occasional detours from the track down to the beach for walking/paddling. The views were stunning as always. We managed 9.16 km including the diversion for lunch. It wasn't even that hot (in the ocean).

Robyn



Déjà vu on Destination Durd Durd? Mission accomplished on 1 December 2024!

Participants: Rob, Coralie, Deb, Barry (prospective member), Janice (leader)

A year ago exactly our attempt to visit Durd Durd was aborted half way up due to unexpected rain, unpredicted cold temperatures and surprisingly low cloud levels. Sunday December 1 looked like 2023 all over again as we donned our wet weather gear before the 3 km trudge up the track through the mist to the Stockyard. "Oh no...another fail!" I rued.

But not all was lost. Blue and white flowers slowly emerged through the cloud at the Stockyard and bird orchids were soon spotted by the eagle eyed. What a relief! Last year we came hoping to see a repeat of the carpet of wildflowers that had captivated club members on the previous visit in 2020, but were disappointed by a dreary grey scene devoid of colour in the drizzle.

A little more cheerful we slogged up the slope to Banksia Hill, the traditional morning stop and where we turned back in 2023. But this group was not to be deterred. After finding us a sheltered spot to refuel, Coralie continued to



take it for the team as she saw off the snake and carefully brushed moisture from the bushes with her clothes as she lead us along the overgrown track. Like a homing pigeon Rob dutifully took on leadership through more beautiful blooms to the summit cairn at Durd Durd.

Photos were taken to prove that the two first time summiteers (Deb and Barry) had made it. It was a very quick turnaround in the wintry conditions and we were on our way down quickly. A hasty lunch was had at the morning tea spot. Further down, the weather had cleared enough to see the valley and so we visited the Durd Durd campsite. After 12.7 km, a 725 m climb, and a couple of close encounters of the leech variety we were back in the car following the siren call of coffee at Izzys.

Thank you to all participants for their positive contribution—it kept us marching towards our objective. It was very satisfying to defy the conditions and make it to the top this year. The flowers were a bonus as were the better road conditions. I certainly appreciated the lack of yellow sticky clay on my car that last year required an entire afternoon to clean off!

Janice



Thunder Point to Levys Point: Saturday 7 December

Point to Point and back: 6.6 km, 6:30 to 8:30.

Evening strollers: Robyn (leader), Lothar, Dina, Campbell and Rob

I thought an evening walk on a lovely summer night would be nice for a change. I still think so. While this wasn't a perfect summer evening, it was a pleasant, not too windy, walk. *Robyn*



Merri River and Shelly Beach: Saturday 14 December

Twitchers: Ken (chief ornithologist), Barry, Gwenda, Jill, Liz, Lothar 📷, Mike, Mary, Sladjana

Meeting at Callum Close at 9 am, the first issue to resolve was the racking and stacking of cars in and around the neighbourhood. After checking on the number of binoculars and sharing telescope and tripod, the intrepid 9 set off. Exiting the back gate we rolled down toward the Merri but paused to check out the birdlife on ponds nearby.

Through the scope we identified the Sharp tailed Sandpiper, which is a species of concern. It migrates from breeding grounds in Siberia to spend summer in Oz before returning in March/April. Other species noted were Pied (black necked) Stilt, Purple Swamphen and Swamp Harrier (our only raptor for the trip).

Further along the canal we listened for Clamarous Reed Warbler and Little Grassbird. We crossed the footbridge and strolled through the new development there. A house constructed of shipping containers was pointed out before we walked down a mowed path and eventually entered a narrow track through the coastal scrub. In due course we emerged at a high point on a dune looking down at the Southern Ocean.

Dropping down to the sandy beach we started to see shore birds such as Pied Oystercatcher and Hooded plover. After a tricky trick hopping around a headland we could see Shelly Beach in the distance. All we had to do was ascend onto the beach plateau. After Shelly we checked on progress of the extension to Warrnambool's sewage treatment plant. Slowly we circumvented the perimeter fence and wondered at the widespread clearing that had taken place around the development. Crossing the edge of the golf course we made our way back to the Merri to return to our start. On the way we ticked off Little Pied Cormorant, Chestnut Teal and Pacific Black duck. The group enjoyed their stroll and returned home a little more bird wise.

Ken

