

GSWW—Murrells Beach to Yellow Rock: Saturday 5 April

We, Rob, Robyn, Dina, Claudia and Kyle, took advantage of the last day of Lothar's GSWW highlights. Our group of five met his group at the lighthouse and walked with them to Yellow Rock—the usual enjoyable walk.

Lothar generously offered us a ride to Murrells Beach so that we could walk an extra 5 km along the GSWW to our car at the lighthouse. The west side of the cape is a contrast to the morning's east side walk.

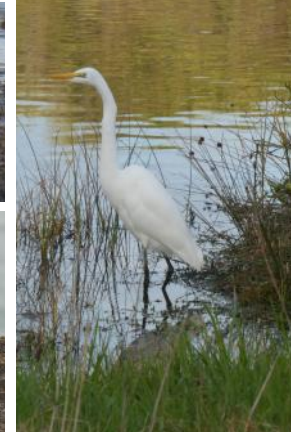
Rob



Shelley Beach loop: Saturday 12 April

Participants: Ali, Dina, Mary, Suzanne, Pauline, Claudia, Mabel, Rob, Coralie and, for the BBQ, Gwenda and Trevor

The party split immediately with some going along the beach to the breakwater and the others road bashing. Reunited we went to the end of the breakwater. The bridge over the Merri was next, followed by the usual track to Thunder Point and, with a few diversions, Shelly Beach. The return to our start, Petanque Court on Pertobe Road, was by a tortuous but none the less pleasant route. Our BBQ was accompanied by Ali's salad plate. Slices by Ali and Coralie topped off a most enjoyable evening.



Four Peaks Challenge: Sunday 13 April

Acceptees: Rob, Rosalie, Mabel and Lothar

Fewer people this year than last, perhaps because of the hot weather forecasted (and achieved). We were the first customers for the coffee van. After some words about the day from the organisers, the mob set off, soon to be spread far apart. Views hazy from both Sugarloaf and Mt Leura. Temperature hot.



The big question on the drive to Mt Elephant was “lunch before or after the climb?” We set off for the ascent, clockwise as we’ve found is best. It was not only hot, but the wind was also very strong. Since the rim is not that wide and drops steeply on either side much concentration was needed with a corresponding loss of enjoyment. The time spent on the summit could be measured in nano-seconds. Lunch was at the bottom in the visitor centre chatting with some Ballarat bushwalkers.

All that was left was Mt Noorat, done in a clockwise direction for a change. Wind slightly less and the wider rim made for a pleasant climb. Some steers lying in the shade begrudgingly moved to let us pass. Temperature had come down by 7° when we reached the bottom—challenge achieved! Thanks to the Friends of Mt Leura for organising this, their sixth challenge.

Rob





Port Campbell ↔ Two Mile Bay: Saturday 26 April

On the shelf: Rob, Dina, Lothar, Kyle, Christine and Pauline

We crossed the bridge over Campbell Creek and started up the steps, with our seat-testing-pair checking each set. At the top was a notice of the temporary closure of the Discovery Walk due to a recent geological movement. It had a map of the temporary detour that we followed. Decommissioning work related to the Minerva gas field was very obvious.

Next, it was down a fisherman's track to the rock shelf that forms the edge of Two Mile Bay. For a rock shelf it was easy walking to its western end despite the odd puddle.

We returned the way we'd come, reaching the only important destination that mattered at 11:45—Grassroots Deli Café —and so beating the lunchtime rush. On the way home we drove to the end of the Two Mile Bay West Track to look down on the morning's walk. Home at 2 pm.

Rob



Mt Sturgeon Circuit: Saturday 3 May

Participants: Coralie, Rob, Khyl, Geoff, Spirit, Claudia, Simone and Dina

We set off from the carpark in a clockwise direction (at the suggestion of our two esteemed Committee members) for this circuit over Mt Sturgeon's summit, and Shock! Horror! without any coffee to start the walk, as the leader didn't want one!

We enjoyed perfect walking conditions, taking our time to enjoy the views and take photos ++, and cajoling numerous of the party to stand daringly atop boulders (though they were perfectly safe).



There were few flowers, mainly heaths.

The descent was taken with care due to its rockiness, and with fewer pauses for photos.

The consensus was that clockwise was the easier direction to walk. Lunch was in the park at Dunkeld, where Spirit explained something about how to obtain higher quality photos on inter-phone transfers (over the top of my head!) and where most members agreed that Quillo "fried egg" potato chips do taste like fried eggs!! Overall, a very enjoyable day.

Dina



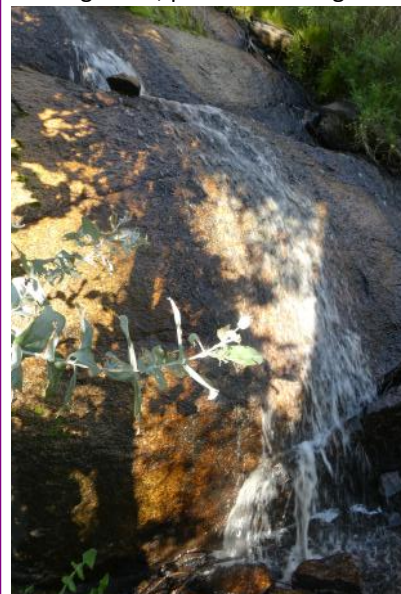
The Beeripmo Circuit: Saturday 10 May

Participants Rob, Coralie, Janice (leader)

This walk has been a regular destination for the club over the years and this was our first foray back there since the fire of Feb 2024 when 95% of the Mount Cole State Forest and Buangor State Park was burned.

Signs of the fire were evident from the start at Richards campground where the charred chimney is all that remains of the substantial shelter.

The track climbed gently but steadily over the running creek, past the flowing falls and through



regenerating forest to high vantage points with wide views of the Western District. Distracted by the panorama of scarred slopes we passed Grevillia Lookout without even noticing if the critically endangered Mt Cole Grevillea (*Grevillea montis cole*) had survived.

Onwards and upwards we tramped, skirting the Sugarloaf and across to the hikers camp to dine at one of the new tables and admire the upgraded fireplaces.

Past Mugwamp Camp and, as we turned for home, we met groups of



walkers coming up in the opposite direction. Surprisingly they were accompanied by their four legged canine friends: an *Outdoor Adventures with Pets* trip through the Mount Cole State Forest where dogs are allowed, presumably avoiding Buangor State Park where they are not.

And then it was time for the down, down, downhill run along the appropriately named Long Gully. The lack of understory bushes has opened views to the creek at the base of the steep slope. Previously this section involved several inelegant scrambles around, over and under large fallen trees, but now the path is largely clear and a convenient ladder has been installed to tame the last hurdle.

My mapping app showed we completed the 20 km circuit in 5½ hours. The track itself is in good condition and hopefully the club can continue to run trips there to see how the forest recovers over time.

Janice



GPT—Griffin Fireline to Cassidys Gap: Saturday 17 May

Walkers: Rob, Deb, Janice, Coralie, Mike and visitor Gina

This part of the GPT was not burnt in the fires, but its access road, the Griffin Fireline, was the southern edge of control. While vehicular access to the road is still verboten, Easter saw access being allowed for walkers. Rob and Janice took the opportunity to reacquaint themselves with this, the FedWalk they'll lead in October. It was still the pleasant walking they remembered despite the showery weather.

We started from the Griffin Picnic area on the main road. The area to the east and west of it was burnt. Leaves sprouted from the trunks of many but not all of the burnt gums. The many, many burnt Xanthorrhoeas with their green mops were remarked upon. "Their flowers will be a sight in Spring" was the universal chorus. And perhaps even earlier since we saw the start of four flower spikes as we left the Fireline for our climb to the ridge—gentle at first but then steeper as we climbed 400 metres in 3 km.

Considering the weather, there were reasonable views most of the time, both of the plains to the east and of the Victoria Valley/Range to the west, depending on which side of the ridge we were. A sunny burst around noon proved to be a sensible time for lunch. After 2 km sidling along the ridgeline, we started our descent with more on and off showers to reach the Djardi-Djawara camp. Un-shuffling the cars was followed by a visit to Izzys where fortunately the fried egg-flavoured chips were not noticed until half of us were out the door.

Rob



Explore Hamilton: Saturday 24 May

Participants: Coralie, Claudia, Viviane, Rob, Campbell, Gwenda, Simone, Khyll and guests Rosalie C & Belinda

Ten walkers descended on the Grange Burn Wetlands after a coffee stop at the Penshurst Bakery. After reading a notice

board detailing a small pre-Hamilton settlement in the vicinity, we enjoyed a short stroll around the perimeter of the wetlands. A variety of water birds were making use of the available water in the swamp.

At the Old Hamilton Cemetery, we followed a guided walk suggested in the brochure created by a Green Corps group from Portland. This route highlighted the resting place of many district identities and families involved in business, agriculture, and civic works. Cam was able to add a local perspective as we stopped to admire and read the emphasised headstones and vaults found there. Many notional chocolate frogs were awarded by the leader to those who spotted funerary symbols mentioned in the briefing at the start of the walk; Claudia being a stand-out observer!





At the Botanic Gardens we undertook a clockwise circuit to take in the many notable features of the Guilfoyle-designed garden featuring sweeping lawns, curved paths, a lake and garden beds. We paused at the wishing well, the cottage and sensory garden, the glass house, flight aviary and the ornate Thompson Fountain. Not long after 12 noon, we lunched in the rotunda near the garden's centre and admired the surrounding majestic, large trees.

After eating, half visited the Hamilton Art Gallery to view an exhibition of architecture, landscape painting and photography connected to projects by local architect Graeme Gunn. A spectacular 3-D projection of the Grampians was a highlight. This group squeezed in another coffee & cake session at the delightful Thompson's Tavern in Gray St.

The other half spent time walking off their lunch along Grange Burn before we all returned home mid afternoon.

Thanks to Khyll and Simone for driving passengers, Cam for his insightful additions to the commentary, our guests Rosalie & Belinda for being brave enough to join us, and the rest for your interesting company.

Coralie



Lake Elizabeth: Saturday 31 May

Participants: Rob, Rosalie, Dina, Claudia, Khyl and guest Belinda

Wonderful—no sun in the eyes on the 7:00 to 8:45 drive to coffee at Forrest's General Store. The walk started at the West Barwon Dam, its water level very low. Navigation is fairly simple: walk in the opposite direction to the cyclists on mountain bike route 3 and back on route 2.



Well that was last time. We saw new signs for cyclists spruiking routes 12, 13 and a couple more. The GPX route from our previous walks suggested route 2 had become route 12 with a similar fate for route 3. Only one-third right: when home we found that route 3 had been split into routes 13, 14 and 15.

The new “wrong way” signs became the standard way for confirming we were on the correct track. We were, after all, going in the opposite way to the one cyclist who was riding towards us.



We were soon at the Lake Elizabeth car park. We continued past the small lake—always smooth and reflective—on our way to Lake Elizabeth and lunch. The circuit around the lake was as tree-ferny as ever. Kyle and Rob saw a platypus from the lake's “beach”, the same spot where David T and Rob saw one in 2018. Gloating aside, the other possibility is a rakali (water rat).

And so the return. After the initial climb from the car park, the rest of the walk was easy along route 12. Hot chocolate for some and a beer for others at the Forrest Brewery. Good vanilla slices too!

Rob



Tower Hill Circuit: Saturday 7 June

Alas, cancelled, too wet.

However, as the photo shows, Thursday's 3 km return walk to the southern end of the lake to check the box thorn-water line interface had perfect weather. The roos are doing a good job keeping the route through the box thorn clear.

An alternative to walking along 300 m of Lake View Road walking received a tick.

Rob, just waiting to reschedule the walk



A Warrnambool stroll from Lake Pertobe to Japanese Garden and back: Sunday 15 June

Participants: Rosalie, Spirit, Jim, Coralie, Gwenda, Rob, Viviane, Claudia, Neal (visitor), Christine and Robyn

Eleven! Yes, that's right. Eleven of us enjoyed the perfect weather which followed a freezing Saturday. We left from the Beach Kiosk at 9 am and walked through the caravan park to the Flume. Here we investigated native plantings which are gradually rehabilitating the area behind the dunes, thanks to the efforts of Landcare and other volunteer groups.

Then it was across Merri St to Ocean Grove, Barkly St, Fletcher Lane etc to Fletcher Jones Gardens. Unfortunately, the leader had not checked with the owner of Pleasant Hill coffee van: it was closed, but fortunately Wilbur's was just around the road so we could revive with the necessary coffee partaken back at the Gardens.

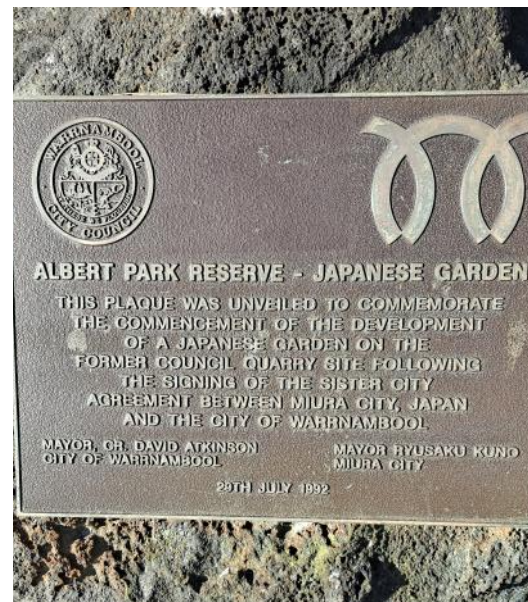


We dribbled across the highway to Craig St, a shorter and more pleasant route to Albert Park than Derby St. Across the Pony Club jumps area and some bushland to the relatively unknown access to the Japanese Garden. This garden was developed in the 1990s in acknowledgement of the Sister-city relationship between Miura in Japan and Warrnambool—a beautiful site for contemplation and some respite.

Then along Cramer St, Fenton St, and across Moore St with access to the Russells Creek trail which we followed until we left it to go through the Botanic Gardens. No further navigation needed—it was back via Swan Reserve and Liebig St to Cannon Hill, a look at the Vietnam Vets memorial, and down the hill to Lake Pertobe.

A relaxed and social walk of 10 km in 3.5 hours including coffee and comfort stops. And Jim was home in good time before a family lunch!

Rosalie



Lake Linlithgow Ride: Saturday 21 June

Riders: Coralie, Rob, Linda, Irene plus guests Diane, Peter, Fred, Jack, Lynn and Steve

In weak winter solstice sunshine, ten riders set out from Lake Linlithgow rugged up against the bitter winter. A prior coffee stop at the warm Peshurst Store only served to make us feel colder.

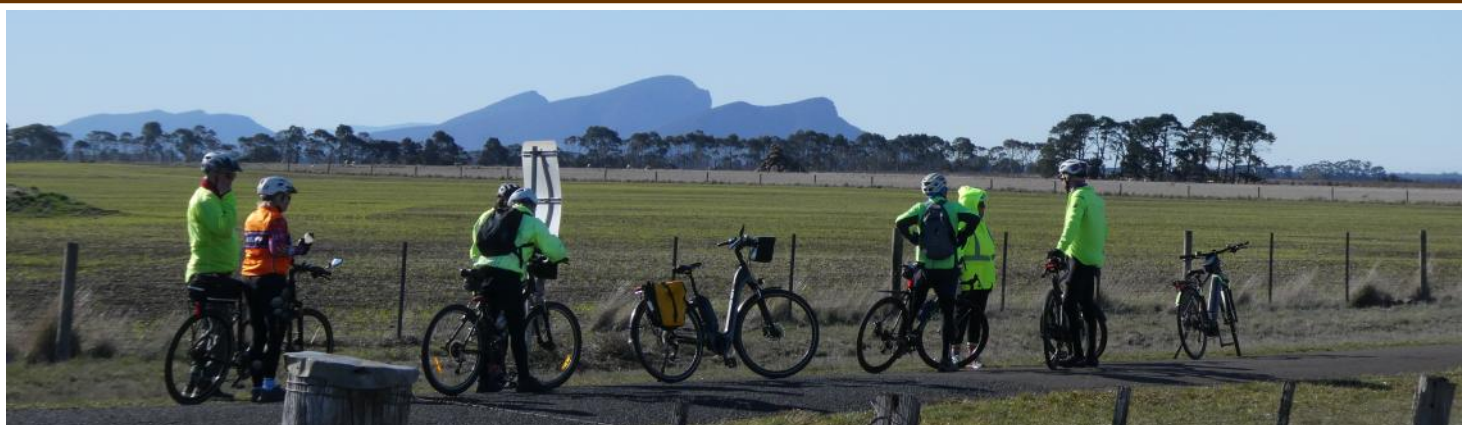
Cycling south from the Lake to the Peshurst – Hamilton Road, we crossed onto the Tabor Road. Riders were happy to explore the bluestone church and nearby cemetery at Tabor before heading northwest towards Tarrington.



Following the narrow back roads, the cycling was usually pleasant except for a few sections where wind resistance was an issue and those riders without assist cycles warmed up.

After a pit and refuelling stop at Tarrington we headed north to the Hamilton – Chatsworth Road. This route gave us wonderful views of the Grampians and was a little busier than other roads had been. Just beyond Lake Kennedy, we parted company with Linda and guest Diane who took the quick route back to the warmth of the cars.





The rest of us turned north, hit a vicious northerly and crawled for the next 3 km until we reached the North Lake Road. Here we regrouped, some taking photos of fox carcasses strung along a fence line, before continuing to circumnavigate the lake.

At the Linlithgow Fire Station, visitor Peter spun us a line about his connection to Lord Linlithgow via the wrong side of the bedsheets. Suitably entertained, we continued our journey past Krause Swamp and Lake Bullrush before returning to our starting point.



Lunch was eaten in the lee of the cars; Linda and Irene enjoying hot food (thanks to a car warmer oven); the rest making do with sandwiches, hot drinks and camp chairs retrieved from the vehicles.

Thanks to all for their good company and enthusiastic support on this ride.

Coralie



Signal Peak: Saturday 28 June

Five walkers—*Rob, Coralie, Dina, Campbell* and visitor *Nuno*—met on a beautiful, mainly sunny and windless day, to walk to the top of Signal Peak, about a 400-metre ascent. The pace allowed for time to absorb the fantastic views, as well as plenty of conversation. We returned on the same path as we climbed up, meeting quite a few younger walkers striding up to both Signal Peak and Mount Abrupt. The walk done, some of us ate a late lunch in Dunkeld, whilst others travelled home.

Thanks for the company, a great day out.

Dina

