

## Moleside to Pritchards along the GSWW: Saturday 4 October

Walkers: Rob, Lothar, Khyll, Sladjana, Maree and Jenni

First stop was the Heywood bakery. Then the car shuffle between start and finish. A quick look at the thundering Moleside Creek Falls and off we went on our 13.6 km walk in perfect weather.

The route meets the river at four points: Moleside Canoe camp when some canoeists were setting off, Wild Dog Bend at the right time for morning tea, Sanders Landing perfectly placed for lunch, and finally Pritchards. There are a couple of good river-viewing spots along the route and frequent glimpses of the river through the trees.

Only a few flowers were out. As for animals, a wallaby mum with a full pouch, two snakes, a koala wandering up a track and another at Pritchards. A few water birds and a couple of kookaburras eyeing off picnickers were about the sum of the avian flock.

We stopped at the road-side river viewing spot en route to the most important part (for some) of the trip: the Heywood bakery again!

Rob



## Fedwalks: October 11–12

Bushwalking Victoria's annual get together, *Fedwalks*, was based at Halls Gap this year. We helped by providing leaders and whips for some of the 20 or so walks each day. The Mt Sturgeon walk was well and truly in our hands: Mabel and Lothar for Saturday and Rob and Lee from Camperdown for Sunday. Rob and Janice herded four others from the Griffin Fireline to Cassidy Gap on Saturday. After one of Sunday's whips had to drop out, Mabel earned extra brownie points by offering to be replacement, and things were shuffled so she could be whip on the Briggs Bluff walk, the one she had booked to do.

Mabel went to Saturday's dinner. The Chief Ranger in the Grampians spoke about their hope for having the middle section of the Grampians Peak Trail open for day walkers (my emphasis on day) by November. Another speaker spoke about a project to improve the lot of the endangered squirrel glider (similar to but larger than sugar gliders) in the northern Grampians.





Rain occasionally threatened, and there were a couple of drops, but the downpours held off until we were in the cars heading back to Halls Gap.

October is orchid month in the Grampians and there were enough seen to slow some walks. By far the most spectacular floral display was the forest after forest of grass trees in some burnt out areas. As for the other burnt areas, very bleak, as the photos of the GPT around Yarram Gap show.

*Rob*



## A Mortlake Meander and Mount Shadwell: Sunday 19 October

Rob, Rosalie, Ali, Helen, Carol, Pauline and Geoff —and a few “ring-ins”— namely Seona Murnane, Sue Potter and my sister Marg Jeffery met for a meander through the Mortlake township and then a walk up Mt. Shadwell. Sue is very active with the Mortlake and District Historical Society and she kindly offered to join our walk and share her insights and knowledge.

We meet outside a pub—very apt but regrettably closed. It was 10 am on a Sunday! The meander followed the well-developed Mortlake Heritage Trail which predictably included quite a few bluestone buildings—many having been built in the 1850s and 1860s. Some remain in pristine condition, albeit sometimes re-purposed. Others have been “modernised” at different stages. A mix of makeovers, e.g. Federation style, 1940’s brick and a classic 1970’s brown brick façade on the Mortlake Hall/Mechanics Institute.



Marg and I went to Mortlake High School when it was peaking with the population “boom” due to Second World War soldier settlement. And we are descendants of one of those many Scots families that arrived in Mortlake in the early 1850s, with the family’s original 1855 bluestone cottage (see left) remaining in almost original condition and style. And “on the heritage trail”.

As well as the base historical information—sometimes via plaques on the façades of buildings—some “added material” was offered, some valuable and some WTF! Key contributors of this included Pauline, Sue and the Jeffery contingent.

The morning was not long or arduous but—while being a bit biased—a rather “jolly ramble” of a local town that many of us just pass through. We did wander through the local Sunday market and were suitably “fed and watered” at a Mortlake institution: Clarke’s Pies.

The day was not all dead flat as we then walked up Mt Shadwell. This has always been privately owned and nowadays the owners allow the local Lions Club to host a fund raiser walk, with a requisite sausage sizzle, etc. A bit like a regular Sunday but NOT at Bunnings!

A few “pinches” on the climb up were compensated by the different views: first to the north, then to the west, and finally to the south. Teasing us until we got to the top to get the 360-degree view. There began the discussion on which hill, mountain or pimple was what. A few of us were spatially challenged and may have benefited from a compass!

A few stories, a walk, a dip into local history, a mount with a view, and a Clarke’s pie. Could be a lot worse. Thanks to “all and sundry” for what was my first “leader of the pack” foray. And a very special thanks to Sue Potter.

*Campbell*



## Colac by train: Saturday 25 October

*Participants: Robyn, Rob, Lothar, Coralie, Sladjana*

We set off on a fairly packed train. First stop in Colac was the Laneway Cafe, next the information centre. The walk proper began along the creek going to the lake, went further east along the lake edge track for a while before turning back. Quite a few birds in evidence.

We enjoyed the [Small Art Treasures](#) set throughout the Botanic Gardens—we fluked the first day of this annual fortnight display—and also the flora, particularly the Bunya Bunya trees. Unfortunately Lake View Cafe is closed on Saturdays but having seen the Colac rainfall total for Sunday we definitely went on the right day.

We strolled further west along the path beside the lake to the edge of town. It was then time to head back for a belated lunch and to catch the train—less crowded this time. Rain started at Camperdown.

*Robyn*





## Linton to Haddon Rail Trail Ride: Sunday, 2 November

On the first Sunday in November, three club members and seven guests hit the Linton to Haddon Rail Trail, and it was nothing short of delightful. The day was overcast, the air was crisp, and the trail gave us the perfect mix of history and scenery.

We rolled out from Linton, following the old rail corridor through bushland and farmland. Unfortunately, Jack didn't get far when he noticed a flat tyre. Fred rode back to Linton with him to use the tools on the bike repair station, but a replaced tube was quickly punctured again. At that stage they gave up and Fred rode back to Skipton from where the pair started to retrieve their ute.

The rest of us enjoyed the downhill section to the Clarksdale Reserve, where we stopped briefly to admire the reedy lake in the bird sanctuary below. It was then on to the famous Nimmons Trestle Bridge majestically striding a small creek. We sent 'newbies' Lynn and Steve down to view the bridge from below; they didn't thank us on the way back up.

We cycled into a headwind past the Scarsdale picnic and amenities area and onto Smythesdale where there was evidence of its former gold mining glory days. Lunch was taken at the nursery café *In the Sticks* at Haddon before the return journey.

This was much faster due to favourable winds and we were able to reunite with Fred and Jack, though the punctures kept coming. Two more were recorded by journey's end.

Thanks to all participants for a great day out.

*Coralie*



## Prinetown to the 12 Apostles: Saturday 8 November

Walkers: Claudia, Coralie, Rob, Lothar, Spirit, John and Ciaran

We started at the Prinetown carpark where we luckily were able to get some coffee and snacks from a food van there. After the car shuffle to get a car at our finishing point, we crossed the wetland besides the Gellibrand

River to reach the Great Ocean Walk. We followed this to the visitor's centre. It was incredibly windy and we were very lucky not to get wet. The track was undulating with some spectacular views. We were able to checkout the new lookout at the Twelve Apostles visitor precinct before heading to Port Campbell for a relaxing lunch at *Grassroots*.

*Claudia*



## Beeripmo circuit: Saturday 15 November

Crew: Deb, Coralie, Pauline, Lothar, Rob, Janice (leader)

This was a repeat of the autumn walk earlier this year with the aim of taking in the contrasting spring conditions. Undeterred by navigational issues on the way up where a road closure at the site of a bad accident a few days earlier was still (incorrectly) shown on the nav systems we arrived a little late.

Inspired by the promise of Lothar's brownies as afternoon tea and a reward for our effort, we headed off full of enthusiasm. The first challenge thrown up by the season was the water crossing required to traverse the bridge at the very start of the walk. High water in the creek covered the bridge and evasive action was taken to avoid wet feet. The gradual but unrelenting up and then more up to Raglan Falls were the next challenge faced, but the higher than usual water levels provided a nice contrast to the dry falls that are usually seen. More up and up to the lookout, with the challenge of high humidity due to the wet spring and thick regrowth adding to the degree of difficulty.



A breather over an early lunch provided expansive views across the still blackened slopes to verdant paddocks on the plains and a proliferation of wind turbines now obvious in the distance. The conditions were tougher than expected and the wise made a decision to take the brownies and run.

The others continued on up and up, with wildflowers and the (genuine) sighting of a koala providing a distraction from all the ascending. Tantalising photos of said brownies were shared out of kindness. Then it was time for all that descending to the car park where the news that the road was not in fact closed made the trip home, sans brownies, uneventful.

Thank you to Coralie for driving and Lothar for the brownies—we take your word for their deliciousness and restorative powers.

*Janice*



## Yarram Camp on the GPT: Saturday 22 November

Warrnambool: Rob, Janice, Coralie, Ciaran and guest Julia

Camperdown: Lee, Kel, Helen, Corrine and Gary

Access to the middle section of the Grampians Peaks Trail was allowed for day walkers in early November—after the [100 Mile GPT](#) race. The winner covered the distance in 21:19:21 hours and the last of the finishers in 49:50:19. The best time of those who did it as 4 sections over 4 days was 16:34:29. Ours was a more leisurely 10 km stroll done in 4:50:38. Primary reason for the walk was to see how the Yarram Camp had survived the fires; secondary reason to see the regrowth.

Equal numbers of Warrnambool and Camperdown walkers met at Dunkeld. Coffees for some, an exotic potato chip buying spree for another. Then off to Yarram Gap. The flower spikes from the burnt grass trees by the road were no longer white but still a spectacle.



Apr 2024



Nov 2025

The highlight of the walk had to be the vegetation and the lack thereof. Certainly the lack of foliage showed up crags that weren't normally visible from the track and much bare, rocky ground on the slopes. But there were some slopes that were bright green, possibly simply bracken in spots. Most of the trees that had sprouted after the fires were quite bushy, but dead skeletons abounded. There were a surprising number of species in flower, all small and some almost deciding "damn the leaves, flowers are more important". The flower-addict photographers had a field day.

As for fauna, Julia gets the prize for her lizard spotting, Kel had the thrill of a snake slithering past her while she was taking a rest, one wallaby, and another walker who had seen an emu and chicks.

The camp site, our lunch spot, has survived with little apparent sign of damage, although we couldn't get a good look because the shelter and toilets are closed in anticipation of work being done.

All in all it was a pleasant day that showed the benefits of the occasional joint club walk.

*Rob*

