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Beechworth Midweek Walk - Lake Sambell to Lake Kerferd - Feb 2012

This turned out to be a day long event for our walking troupe. We drove to Beechworth and started with a picnic style morning coffee near the start of the walk close to Lake Sambell. A 26 degree day with high humidity and a 5 km track that follows Spring and Hurdle Creek to Lake Kerferd lay ahead of us. We passed old mining sites with deep vertical shafts and Pattersons Dam that used to supply water for mining. From there the walk followed a vehicle track build to service the water pipeline to Beechworth . After lunch at Lake Kerferd we walked back to our starting point minus the short unplanned detour we managed to do on the way up. The group of 14 closed the day off with afternoon tea at one of the local cafes. Nearly 11kms!! Well done everyone!

by Maartje H

Canoeing the Goulburn River from Rafferty Bend to Aquamoves, Shepparton - 19 Jan 2012

While Richard Graves stood with furrowed brow calculating whether there were sufficient canoes a merry band of 12 adults and 7 children gathered at the SAC shed on Sunday morning All was well and with the canoe trailer well loaded and several atop the vehicles we headed off to Rafferty Bend. The day was rapidly heating up and sunscreen and hats the order of the day as the canoes were carried down the bank. We were soon on the river: A colourful parade of nine canoes with Chris Halpin keeping any speedsters in order and Richard with a watchful eye on any stragglers. Once on the river it felt cooler and with a slight breeze from time to time it was perfect paddling weather. The youngsters pulled their weight paddling along steadily. It was so pleasant and with a steady current it was tempting to just float along enjoying the birdsong and spotting night herons and kingfishers from time to time. From time to time there were plenty of snags to paddle around or through, enlivening the journey. Maartje and Barbara were extra busy as Maartje had decided to rid the river of drink cans come what may! A stop was made near the boat ramp in Mooroopna and everyone enjoyed a late morning tea before paddling on to the ladder near Aquamoves bringing our trip to an end. With the low river level it was quite a job to haul the canoes up the bank but there were plenty of hands to assist. Those staying prepared for lunch while Arthur took the drivers to pick up the vehicles. As a newie it was a delightful way to spend several pleasant hours on the river with a great group of people. I'll be going next time!

Many thanks to Arthur Fennell who assisted with the car transfers and checked we were on track at Mooroopna.

by Barbara B

Murray River Canoe trip - 15-16 Oct 2011

Ten enthusiastic SAC canoeists, including 5 new members, gathered in bright sunshine early Saturday morning at the foot of Tocumwal's bright new bridge. Expectations were high, as was the Murray River. In fact the Minor flood warning level was generating a little nervous anxiety amongst the team.

Apart from the flood warning, conditions were absolutely perfect - warm sunshine with a little head wind. All was set for a wonderful day, and so it was.

The trip had commenced at the Club Shed on Friday afternoon with a small convoy towing the new canoe trailer up the Goulburn Valley Highway to Ulupna Island. A base camp was set up on the sandy levee bank, not far along the Island track near Doctors Beach. The camp site had been reconnoitered the previous week by Howard and Di - an important



precaution given that much of the Island camp spots had been under water for some months. The grassy bank made for a comfortable camp, except for the hay fever sufferers! However the company was very welcome - Koalas all around, many birds, few bugs and helpfully no snakes.

Day 1 saw the team set off in our 4 Canadian canoes and the Dagger, with only a lunch, sun screen and water to pack into the cylinders. Tocumwal to Doctors Beach covered 16 river kilometres and with a healthy river current was covered in a couple of hours paddling, plus a couple of extra hours of swimming, lunching, sun baking and snacking. Really easy!

Day 2 took us from the base camp down to Morgans Beach Caravan Park - another 16km along the Murray. More sunshine and good company made for another special experience.

Len and Chris made wonderful camp attendants, fire wardens and car shufflers - we can certainly vouch for their services and their help made the trip so much simpler and manageable. Many thanks to both of you, and indeed all the participants for a great weekend.

by Chris H

The Grampians - 5-9 Oct 2011

What a beautiful part of Victoria to camp, rest and explore. With many native wildflowers looking their best, the Grampians in October provides some of the best sightseeing and walking tracks in the state. Before arriving at the Mt Stapleton camping area we had already spent 2 days camping at Halls Gap. We managed a couple of easy walks as well as a 4 hr commando style climb and descent to The Pinnacle. So by the



time we arrived at Mt Stapleton to join the Adventure group we were looking for a few quiet days! We must have been dreaming!

On the Friday, 12 very brave or should I say 'crazy' walkers took off early to climb the highest point in the Northern Grampians, Mt Difficult. On a beautiful sunny day we drove to the carpark and commenced our walk. All in high spirits eager to get going and with the leaders (our young enthusiastic walkers) setting a hot pace we were well on target to set a new world record. The more experienced walkers however managed to organise several refreshment stops along the way as well as time to take in some awesome views. We were soon very aware of just how this mountain obtained its name. Difficult by name but very Difficult by nature!!!

Not to be beaten we continued our march to the top with lots of friendly conversation and an interesting search to find a Geocache hidden somewhere near the top. We had lunch at the top while soaking up the 360 degree views on offer, making the climb all worthwhile.

The journey down although easier still called for a committed effort. After about 6 hrs of climbing, scrambling, hopping, jumping and a bit of puffing we made it back to the carpark all in one piece. A super day and a super effort by all involved.

Other walks took the group to Mt Zero, Hollow Mtn and the Asses Ears.

This was our first camping adventure with the club and we really enjoyed the fun and friendship shared with everyone.

by Mark, Anne, Josh & Tim

Mt Black Wildflower reserve, Rushworth Forest mid-week walk - Sep 2011



The weather report was rather ominous with rain, thunder & lightning forecast for later in the day. Eight of us headed off anyway, as we could always have a coffee in Rushworth if the weather turned really bad. After driving through light showers on the way out, we had a short comfort stop in Rushworth and then headed down the Graytown Road to the Friesland Diggings where we made a short exploratory look around the old gold diggings & various mine shafts, some of which were quite deep with no fences around them. We then drove to an unnamed dam on the south east corner of the Mount Black Wild Flower Reserve, had our customary coffee and headed off on a northerly compass bearing cross country in drizzling rain with the occasional rumble of thunder. We had

walked about 2.5 kilometres when the heavens really opened, so it was decided to return to the cars by the shortest cross country route. Whilst off track walking in this area is quite easy as the undergrowth is light, we all were fairly wet by the time we arrived back at the cars, had a quick lunch and decided the Motto Cafe in Rushworth was sounding good. All in all it was a very pleasant social outing and thanks to Chris, Robyn, Peter, Cathy, Dianne, Howard & potential new member Rae for your company. The wildflowers, Grass Trees (xanthorea), mine shafts and the iron bark forest was well worth visiting. Would have been even better in good weather.

by Richard G

Cathedral Range State Park - March 2011

There were warnings about logging noises near the Cooks Mill Campsite, so we decided to book some spots at Ned's Gully. Problem is, you can book and pay on line, but it's still first in first serve when you arrive. It's a walk in camp, which means you have to lug all your stuff across the Little River on a suspension bridge. Forewarned about the party animals in one corner of the campground, we invaded some other camp's personal space on the other side, and then in turn had our space invaded by an unpromising bunch of boys lugging in slabs of beer as the campground filled up. Fortunately they were quiet drinkers.

The Cameron family arrived soon after us and once camp was set up we headed up to Ned's Peak. It was a hot and sweaty climb up and I mean a soaking wet kind of hot and sweaty. The slopes were recovering from the fire well and there were Rosy Hyacinth-orchids flowering. There were few views on the way up, or at the top, and Elizabeth, who was still feeling crook from a cold, waited near Ned's Saddle while the rest of us climbed to the summit.

Moara, Taryn and Trinity raced down the hill, looking forward to a swim. Sure enough we iced our hard working muscles in the freezing cold waters of the Little River. The current was strong enough to carry you off if you leaned back in the water, but we didn't lose anybody. Everyone was hungry for spaghetti and the obligatory burnt marshmallows before an early night to bed.

Karen, Pete and Mark showed up early on the Sunday morning and we were soon off on another adventure, nearly losing the Cameron's in the very crowded Cook's Mill Campground before we had even started. We left a car at the Jawbones Carpark and headed up through burnt hills to Sugarloaf Saddle. It seems that most of the park except the campgrounds and a thin strip along Little River was burnt in February 2009. The pine plantation in the middle of the park has been logged and is presently bare. The facilities are all brand new at Sugarloaf Saddle Car Park with a space age picnic shelter and loos.



Of course, being a "family" trip, we chose the Well's Cave route up Mt Sugarloaf. Sure, it's rated "very hard" but we didn't want the kids getting bored! Soon we were hoisting them up cliff faces and leading them along ledges suitable for launching hang gliders. It took quite a while for all 12 of us to scramble through the cave but we managed it without any permanent damage. Some (adult) nerves began to fray though as we reached the "high, open and exposed places". I think the helpful tree that used to exist in the trickiest place has been burnt away. Jill, Greg and Pete went for the hairy, airy route, Mark scabbled up a chimney, Elizabeth got a leg up, and the lighter members of the group were airlifted up the crack by Richard and Pete.

Anyway, it took us about 1¼ hours (guide says 30 min) but we made it to the top at midday with bodies intact and minds just a little shaken up. The countryside shows signs of recovery all around, including new houses on the hills above Buxton, although there was still one forlorn looking burnt out ruin visible below.

No time to rest! It was getting hot again. We thought we'd better cover some of the Razorback Ridge before lunch. Elizabeth, Mark, Taryn and Moara (the rabbits) took off, enjoying the scramble along the rocky outcrops but overall it was still slow going by the time all of us passed

each obstacle.

Lunch was in the shade of some rocks. It was getting a bit late in the day, but we were past the point of no return. The further we went along the ridge the easier the walking became and the faster the rabbits wanted to go, led by Elizabeth whose walking speed was proportional to the size, darkness and speed of approach of the thunderclouds building up around us. Poor Trinity (4years old) hardly had a chance to rest, so Richard gave her the one and only piggy back for the whole day. What a super walker she is!

We reached the Farmyard at the same time as the rain, so afternoon tea was cut very short. The rain became steadily heavier as we descended off the ridge, but fortunately there was little thunder and lightning. Those that didn't have or didn't bother to put coats on were soaked and cold by the time we reached the car at Jawbone's car park. Even still, Fiona and I were hot enough for a swim back at camp before tea (sausages and more marshmallows) and the rain stopped.

Monday morning was time to pack up, but while we waited for the tents to dry we stretched those sore "downhill" muscles with a stroll along Little River towards Cooks Mill. We went a little past MacLennan's Gully and most of us saw a lyrebird on the way back.

The deciduous trees in Marysville's main street seem to have survived the fire, and there is a lot of building going on although much of it unfinished. We purchased lunch from the bakery and took it out to Steavenson's Falls. There certainly are excellent views of the falls at the moment and there will be until the trees grow back. Last on the agenda was the obligatory ice cream in Alexandra.

by Jill C

Gabo Island Adventure - July 2010

Eight intrepid club members enjoyed a very peaceful weekend on Gabo Island in early July. Gabo is 14 Km from Mallacoota at the eastern tip of Victoria, close to the border with New South Wales and only 500 metres off the wilderness coast of Croajingalong National Park. Terry and Alfred provided the vehicles and we were able to drive through to Mallacoota. This allowed a restful exploration of this delightful inlet and a chance to stock up on provisions.

Access to the island can be by boat or aircraft and is entirely weather dependent. Richard chose to book the sea option with the local abalone fishermen - and the 'Shark Cat' trip was absolutely exhilarating. Fortunately we made it safely across - although some would have preferred to be stuck out there still.

The island supports significant colonies of seabirds, including one of the largest Little Penguin rookeries in the world. It is also home to lots of other bird species, migrating whales and a noisy seal colony at the base of the lighthouse. We thoroughly enjoyed all these sights and more. The Little Penguins put on an amazing display. They are nesting over much of the island and are apparently helped in this by a small herd of beef cattle who keep the grasses in check.

The lighthouse was constructed in 1861 from the locally quarried pink granite and provides amazing colour contrasts with the green landscapes and blue seas. The lighthouse facility has long been automated and the Keepers heritage-listed residences are now managed by Parks Victoria for tourists. We were greeted on arrival by relief Ranger 'Curly' who like many Mallacoota tradesmen needs to run a couple of jobs in winter to survive in business. He was very friendly and packed our bags (and food) into his ute for the 2 Km trip to the lighthouse. Being adventurous we opted to walk.

The accommodation was first class ... "an improvement on the usual bush walking expedition. A bed with sheets, a shower with hot water and a toilet with a view..." was Cath's grateful observation. Maartje and Chris provided nourishing meals for everyone and the wine of choice Chateau Cardboard because it travels so well! Fortunately we did not have to rely on the group fishing skills - no luck whatsoever.

Many thanks to all who participated and especially to Richard for his leadership skills. A highly

recommended trip.

by *Chris H*

Midweek walk to Kinnairds Wetland, Numurkah - 23 June 2010



Twelve midweek walkers took the short drive to Numurkah to explore Kinnairds Wetland. In cool, but comfortable walking conditions we set out from the bridge in Melville Street, walking along the southern bank of the Broken Creek, often passing under River Red Gums and next to planted understorey shrubs. After crossing a footbridge, a gravel road led us to the Southern carpark of the Wetland.

Following our mandatory morning tea break in the picnic shelter we welcomed the arrival of Gary from the Moira Shire. Gary has been involved in the development of the Wetland since its inception and has a great depth of knowledge of the project. He explained that the Wetland consists of 100 hectares of natural and constructed wetland and is part of the Muckatah Surface Water Management Scheme involving a 600 square kilometre catchment area beginning in Yarrowonga. Gary accompanied us on the walk, providing expert guidance and information.

We walked the Young Redgum Trail, continued on the Red Gum Walk and returned via the Wetland walk along constructed walking trails with occasional boardwalks. We passed through areas of mature old trees and viewed areas of River Red Gum regeneration. Wild ducks swam on the flooded open areas.

A particularly peaceful section was the Northern Bird Hide which was surrounded by water following recent environmental inflows. Black Swans could be seen nesting. A large Golden Orb spider had established a home in the Hide and was viewed by most walkers from a comfortable distance.

As we progressed around the circuit we saw a kangaroo grazing and a brown falcon in full flight. The design of Squirrel Glider nesting boxes which are placed in some trees was explained by Gary. Over 300 bird species have been recorded in the Wetland, hence the importance of habitat provided by vegetation such as Lignum bushes. Although Red Gum trees naturally dominate the Wetland, there are still some examples of Yellow and Grey Box trees.

We are very grateful to Gary Deayton for giving us so much of his time and knowledge. His obvious passion for the project helped bring it to life. Following a well earned lunch, we returned to our cars via the northern bank of the Broken Creek.

by *Graeme and Kerry*

Midweek walk to Golden Mount - 28 April 2010

The mid week walk for April saw 13 of us heading to the Strathbogies for another enjoyable walk; this time up Golden Mountain. The stop at Violet Town was memorable for how long it took us to get our coffees and for bumping into Leigh Egan's riding group, already enroute back to Shepparton after haven ridden to

Euroa and Strathbogrie. The story is Leigh rides 800 kms a week!! As someone said "he may as well ride to Sydney!" We reflected that we were glad of our motorised four wheels as we climbed upwards in glorious sunshine through the beautiful countryside; surely the Strathbogries have to be one of Victoria's best kept secrets. What better place to take visitors than for a drive through this very Australian countryside.

The hilly landscape and short steepish climb from the car park near the old gold mine, was quite a contrast to our walk the month before when we strolled along the flats of the majestic meandering Murray. T'was great to get our hearts pounding and feel the invigoration of being in the hills. The climb was worth it as the view from the lunch spot was quite spectacular across Bonnie Doon to Lake Eildon. However, too soon the cloud cover and cool wind meant we didn't dally long and we ventured down again through the spectacular towering gums with their scars from the fuel reduction burns.

Marj again successfully navigated us through the forest tracks with a quick stop in the pine plantation to take photos of the white spotted red toadstools of fairy tale fame (alas no fairies, elves or pixies were to be seen). We also had a brief glimpse of two wedge tailed eagles devouring a carcass before we disturbed them, unfortunately, without a chance of a photograph. We then emerged again to traverse the Goulburn Valley plains back to Shepparton.

It was good to have two new walkers this month and to know that the notice in the Shepp News does work. Hopefully we and those regulars who missed this walk, will all be on deck for our May walk when we venture to the Yea wetlands.

By Dianne H

Canoeing the Goulburn River - Shepparton to Reedy Swamp - 28 Feb 2010

It dawned a fine day, the 28th February, which, after a wet previous day, boded well for the small party of SAC canoeists. Richard, Maartje, Christine and Len were at the SAC shed by the time I arrived at 8:30. They had already completed the car shuffle, depositing Richard's car with the canoe trailer on the Goulburn near the south end of Reedy Swamp.



Two Canadian Club canoes and my ancient 1 person kyak set off from the steps near the SAC shed on the Goulburn River in Shepparton. The early morning air temperature was brisk, but the water was still at a warm summer temperature, so Christine and Len's brisk pace soon had us removing our outer layers.

We passed under the Midland Highway bridge and marvelled at the tents set up right under the bridge. Not exactly a peaceful spot to count zzzzz's, but probably out of the hot sun, close to city action, low rent and even had water views.

With the soon approaching clean-up Australia day in mind, I thought I could do my bit early, so I started picking up the odd floaty caught along the bank. Even though I had the sporty coupe of the canoe world (and relative youth also on my side), it didn't take too many diversions to pick up rubbish and I soon found I was trailing way behind the old Canadians. I had to ignore most of the rubbish from there on, otherwise I would have been so far behind our trip leader he would have had to call the SES to look for me.

It wasn't too hard to turn a blind eye to Shep's stormwater telltales, as the natural feature that runs through our backyard is stunningly beautiful in places. Especially the spot where the river takes the long way round the rock weir, the overhanging native trees and the abundant aquatic plants give a glimpse of the condition that the river can be returned to. A few kingfishers, cootes and dragonflies were about the only wildlife seen, along with the odd fisherman or two.

After a short morning tea break beneath some houses on the Boulevard, we pressed on. Some of us had a glass of wine or two on order at the annual Taste of Tatura Food and Wine festival, so while we were quite happy to be on the river enjoying the exercise and fresh air, our taste buds were getting restless.

As we got towards the end of the trip, Richard was faced with some conflicting information between the GPS and his eyes and map. However, it wasn't long before the GPS was ignored in favour of us making eye contact with the car and trailer. A valuable lesson in programming the GPS at trip start was also learned.

While the landing spot didn't have the convenience of a platform and stairs, two large logs provided a useful, if not somewhat precarious place to leave the river. After some fine balancing work, some huffing and puffing to get ourselves and our trusty water-steeds up the steep bank and onto the trailer, we all agreed that the early start provided the ideal conditions in February for canoeing on the Goulburn. It also allowed us enough time in the afternoon to get another, albeit less physically healthy, activity, in on the day. Cheers!!!!!! (hic)

Thanks to Richard for organising the adventure and all for your company.

By Bruce G

Lake Cobbler Camp - 21-22 November 2009

Sipping cool drinks watching the sun set behind the trees and the shadows creeping up the side of the tent, with the kids out like lights we relaxed - at home that is! After 2 days of almost constant rain our Lake Cobbler SAC trip was over. It started on Friday 22nd November with a total fire ban and 36 degrees C, threats of thunderstorms and damaging winds - only hard-core adventurers would set out to the high country of the Alps - our puncture-prone-president, Richard G, The Zimbies (Richard, Fiona and 3 kids) and the trip organizers, the Smith/Clapps and 2 kids. We met at Benalla and travelled in convoy (luckily as there were far too many little roads off to the side to keep track of!). The countryside changed from flat, brown stubble to rolling hills and greener pastures, to vineyards, to tall eucalypt forests with hairpin bends and precipitous drops. At the toilet stop in Whitfield, Richard G. heard a hissing sound and discovered a rapidly deflating tyre. This was speedily fixed with a plug at the local garage. The car-sick whingeing in the back was given a respite by a fallen tree over the road shortly afterwards which was pulled to the side, but Richard G. heard yet another hissing of another tyre deflating as he headed back to his car! All the girls went wild-flower hunting while the boys took an extra-ordinarily long time to change the wheel. There were donkey orchids, trigger plants and Daniella to name a few (thanks to Jill) in a profusely colourful display. The journey continued with everyone crossing their fingers that there were no more punctures! Lake Cobbler was a beautiful serene sight at the end of the journey with no other campers (they had believed the weather reports!).

The tents were erected speedily in drizzle, rain coats donned and cold snacks consumed (fire-ban still in place!) under the semi-dry tarp. The hut was inspected and provided a dry spot for a game of cards then early to bed. Two thundering crashes were heard during the night as red gums hit the ground - thankfully not on any tents or cars. The tents kept us mostly dry despite constant rain throughout the night. Lake Cobbler was a lovely sight shrouded in mist for all of 5 minutes before the clouds descended and that was the last we saw of it. Jill and Greg packed up for a 4 km walk to Mount Cobbler. 4 kms isn't long but she failed to mention that it was all up! The kids started off very keen crossing creeks and wobbly tree bridges but the novelty began to fade towards the top of the climb despite a steady dribble of treats. Trinity (15kgs) was piggy-backed most of the way but the other kids (ages 5-9) did a great job of it. Unfortunately there was no view to be had at the top as we were in the clouds, treat supply was diminishing so we headed back! Squelching back into camp Richard G got a lovely fire going (fire-ban technically over!) in the hut. Sitting in the shelter in front of a warm fire with the rain pouring down outside, one couldn't have felt more comfortable or content.

Waking to more rain the tents were packed away soaking and the slow descent down the slippery mountain track tackled. Greg and Jill's car pulled to the side at the Paradise Falls turn-off and we came up beside them and wound

down the window. Greg wanted to know if we were keen to do the 45 minute walk to the falls - apparently spectacular after rain - if you could see them! We politely declined. After closing the window Richard C commented that "those guys are just too hard-core for us!" With our kids in their damp, soot covered pyjamas and us in our only clothes just damp and not soaked, we could not rise to the challenge of another walk in the rain!! They didn't do it either and we all headed back to Shepparton where the tents were re-erected to dry off in the sun. Despite the rain everyone had an enjoyable week-end camping and thanks to Jill and Greg for planning it.

By Fiona and Richard

THE VIKING with Benalla Bushwalkers 7-8 November 2009



Viking Saddle on the Saturday and then continue on, up and over the Viking on The Australian Alps Walking Track to Barry Saddle the next day. This was going to involve a very lengthy car shuffle, which thankfully two members of their club had volunteered for.

So at about 9.15 seven hikers bid farewell to our drivers and headed up the rocky foot track to Mt. Speculation. We paused to enjoy the panoramic view and could take in a preview of what the day's hike held in store. I was starting to salivate in anticipation! We followed a faint trail along the spur and soon began a very steep, plunging descent down off the mountain to Catherine Saddle. On the way down I somehow managed to get my boot caught on a tree root and go for a somewhat out-of-control tumble, twisting my ankle in the process and thankful that a tree prevented me falling further. This was not the start I was looking for – barely half an hour into a fairly tough two-day walk and here I was strapping up my ankle and hoping it would somehow hold up for the rest of the trek. It sure slowed me down to a bit of a hobble, but while it was warm it was ok.

From the saddle we climbed up and over Mt. Despair, which was surprisingly clear and easy to follow. A lunch stop on a spur on the other side of the summit afforded a great view of The Razor, with its huge sloping rock slabs protruding starkly into an azure sky. The next part of the walk involved some rather tricky navigation, which certainly kept Terry, our leader's full attention. By late afternoon we finally located the critical point, where the faint trail turns away from The Razor and heads south towards The Viking. This final section also proved to be slow going with huge strips of bark and sticks from the Alpine Ash trees (burned in the last bushfires) littering and often obliterating the way, not to mention entangling boots. We finally made it to a very pleasant campsite, nestled some 400 vertical metre below the Viking. It was after 6.00pm and had been a long but enjoyable day. But our walking wasn't over yet as there was a 20 minute hike down from the saddle to the headwaters of the West Buffalo River for water and a most refreshing wash. After dinner we admired the sun setting on the mighty Viking, turning the rugged cliffs to a vivid burnt orange. As darkness gathered there was a rapid exodus to the comfort of tents and a good night's sleep.

It was up and at 'em early next morning and we were soon steadily climbing up through the tree line and the conglomerate cliffs of the Viking, with views improving all the time. Eventually the path up through a scrubby gully led us to a chimney, where we had to pass up packs and make a 4-5 metre scramble up to the top of the cliffline. From here the view was fantastic! We could retrace our path from yesterday's trek and clearly see beyond back to Mt.

Cobbler and Mt. Buffalo.

Continuing on was rather slow going, as so often happens in a wilderness area, the track was rather obscure. We were very grateful for the occasional marker to reassure us we were on the right track. Once we got to the end of the summit plateau we had to negotiate two extremely steep gullies that led us down off the Viking and we all managed without any major mishap. Eventually we arrived at Barry Saddle and all cheered when we saw two vehicles waiting for us. Doug was ready to help us celebrate a successful trip with an assortment of cold soft drinks, beers and even a thermos of tea. Thanks heaps Doug, that beer was like gold!

So completed a terrific walk and I am greatly indebted to the Benalla Bushwalkers for inviting me along. My sincere thanks to all for being such a friendly group and making me feel so welcome. It would be good if we could foster more participation with our neighboring clubs and I can certainly recommend Benalla as a great group to go away with.

... *Brendan C*

MURRAY TO MOUNTAINS RAIL TRAIL BIKE RIDE 23-25 October 2009

We all travelled to our camp spot on Friday with some arriving and setting up as early as 2pm and the last to arrive at about 8pm. It was good to have everybody there to get organised for the car shuffle on Saturday morning and also to have a pleasant evening chatting and catching up with each other.

We camped both Friday and Saturday nights at Pioneer Bridges 2km SW of Everton. This is a camping area on the Ovens River – a sandy beach by the river, pit toilets, very tall poplar trees, long grass, a picnic table, mobile phone access and dogs are allowed. Free camping. It was close the road but once the local traffic stopped on evening it wasn't noisy. The river was very high and running fast but it had been at least a metre higher. Good to see some water!

Marty brought along a gas BBQ, long table, some spare chairs, lights and a cool box and fridge that we could all use so we had all mod cons.

The Bike Ride:

As there were only 6 riders plus Marty and Steve not riding we loaded up two vehicles on Saturday morning with bikes and people to travel the 60kms to the Bright Railway Station. Marty and Steve then drove back to camp leaving us to ride the trail without having to worry about a car shuffle which was a great help.

Riding Day 1, Saturday:

Bright, Porepunkah, Eurobin, Ovens, Myrtleford, Gapsted, Bowmans, Brookfield, Everton. We stopped at all stations so that we could regroup as we were all travelling at different speeds. It was a beautiful warm sunny day. There were quite a few others on the trail travelling in either direction. We left Bright at 10:10am had our cut lunches at Myrtleford and there was also the opportunity to buy a coffee. It is a very pretty trail, lots of interesting things along the way. We arrived back at camp at 3:45pm. Total Distance: 58.3 km for the day.

That evening we all took advantage of the BBQ and prepared our tea using it. Marty also took some wood along and lit a campfire which provided for a very convivial evening.

Riding Day 2, Sunday:

Pioneer Bridges back to Everton and the Rail Trail, Everton Station, Tarrawingee Station, Londrigan Station site, Bowser, Wangaratta (Apex Park). The weather forecast was not so good for today but the morning was lovely again – very pleasant riding conditions. This section of the ride isn't quite as picturesque as yesterday but still very pleasant because everything is lush and green. Stopping all stations again – just as we got to one station a pair of magpies decided to dive bomb some of us as we rode thru just adding to the excitement. We all survived unscathed though. We arrived at Wangaratta about 11:30. There was still one car that had to be collected from the camp site as Marty and Steve had collected one of the other cars.

Total Distance: 34 kms for the day. As we headed down the highway on our way home we noticed that really strong winds had developed. By the time we got to Shepparton they were gale force. We were extremely lucky to complete the days riding when we did!

Participants Riding: Chris & Len, Richard G, Lea W, Patricia P, Suzannah T.

Camp Minding and Relaxing: Marty and Steve.

Thankyou to you all for a great weekend.

by Chris T

MID WEEK WALK - SHEENS CREEK (Euroa) 28 October 2009

On quite a warm day a group of 12 mid week walkers followed the almost unused road track along the ridges and valley of Sheens Creek in the Strathbogies, a very picturesque setting with panoramic views of the surrounding area. The Patersons Curse (Salvation Jane if you come from SA) was out with a vengeance and whilst it looked very pretty, it was also evident what a problem eradicating it will be. We had a bit of fun on a creek crossing, but all survived without getting their feet wet. The magnificent Red River Gums provided much needed shade when required.

A fairly lengthy day's walk, followed by a reviving coffee in Euroa to sooth the sore muscles at day's end.

by Richard G

MIDWEEK WALK - MOUNT BLACK - 27 May 2009

Elaine led a chatty bunch up Mt Black for the May mid-week walk. Mt Black is just west of Nagambie on the Graytown Road and nestles in the new Box-ironbark National Park. All together we had 10 walkers. After an interesting drive into the access area, we walked up Mt Black in the morning and admired the view - a rich reward for a fairly challenging climb.

It was a beautiful day with very clear visibility all the way across to Mt Major with the Waranga Basin in the foreground. Returning via a track loop we enjoyed lunch back at the base area and then proceeded up to Melville's Lookout in the afternoon.



This is a very picturesque picnic spot and well worth a repeat visit. A nice coffee by the banks of the Goulburn River at the Chinaman's Bridge Caravan Park cafe was a social way to break the home journey - a great day had by all.

Chris H

HUME & HOVELL WALKING TRACK - 6 to 11 Oct 2008

Back in 1824/1825 a couple of blokes by the names of Hamilton Hume & Captain William Hovell and six assigned convict servants and a selection of bullocks and horses explored a way from Appin (Sydney) to Corio Bay Port Philip (near where Geelong is today) and return. I guess little did they think that 163 years later a walking track would be established in their memory. But that's what happened in 1988 when after quite a number of years in the planning by various enthusiasts the "Hume & Hovell Walking Track" was opened as a bicentennial project. Today's walking track commences at Yass and finishes at Albury, approx. 450 kms.

On the 6th October 2008 nine SAC members (Richard, Brendan, Lea, Cathy, Brooke, Bruce, Susanna, Marty and Greg) set off to follow their footsteps along a short 60 km section of the track between Wee Jasper near the SE end of the Burrinjuck Dam and the Goobarragandra River near Tumut. This section covers some amazing sections of bush land, flowering trees, river gorges, cascades and also goes over the highest point on the track of just over 1100 metres in altitude. Approximately 80% of the track has been specially cut benched walking track and the remainder

forest roads and 4WD tracks. Our plan was to do it fairly easily at about 13 kms a day over 5 days. In actual fact we (or should I say the others) did it in four days. My knee gave up the ghost on the 3rd day and that was the end of the walk for me. Fortunately Marty has volunteered to meet us at each night's campsite with his 4WD vehicle. A real godsend as Greg also could not do the first day after a fall on slippery rocks shortly after we arrived at the Wee Jasper Track head.

The first day was possibly the most demanding with a 700 metre vertical climb in the first 4 hours. That was a bit of a test for tight muscles and heavy packs. It was decided after the end of day three that the last 20kms could be done in one day instead of two, with Marty taking the overnight packs in his vehicle and the remaining seven walkers taking day packs. It took them 7 hours, a good effort as it had quite a bit of ups & downs. The weather was just about perfect with clear skies, light winds and temperatures in the high teens/low twenties. We had a short shower of rain shortly after arriving at our starting point, after which it remained fine for the rest of the trip. Prior to commencing the walk the Ranger warned us to be on look out for snakes, we only saw two which livened everyone up. Also after he returned home Bruce found that a bush tick had attached itself to him.

The track has formal constructed campsites with pit toilets and undercover areas and access to water at approx one day intervals. We were somewhat spoilt by Marty as he carried folding chairs, had the fire alight when we got in each night and a shower available if we wanted one.

He always had nibbles and availability of a cold drink for those who wanted one. He had even dug a bush dunny at our one informal bush campsite. The track is well signposted throughout making navigation very straightforward. Track notes and maps and a guide book are available (for a reasonable price) through the NSW Dept of Lands office in Wagga Wagga.

Altogether a great walk, good company with lots of laughs. What else could you wish for.

Richard

MIDWEEK WALK - LIMA FALLS - March 2008

Wednesday 26th of March, six mid-weekers met at 9.00am - not a bad number considering two of our usual stalwarts are out with injuries (we wish them a speedy recovery) and a third is wandering around China. So with GPS, and a complicated looking map we passed Toorour, turned off into a pine plantation and without much ado found ourselves the track for Lima Falls. Down the steep, zig-zag track we went to find a little water actually flowing over the falls. This was obviously due to the recent rain, which also gave off the pleasant smells that only freshly wet bush can.

We headed back to the cars, with the intention of having lunch at Rocky Ned's Lookout. As it turned out we had lunch trackside and then it was time for some bushbashing – straight up! Fortunately we eventually found a track, which led us to the lookout and some great views of the valley, sunshine to the east and rain heading our way from the west. We got back to the cars rather wet, but there were no complaints.

We got back to Shepparton about 4.30pm. How far did we walk? We don't know and don't really care, because it was a great day. Thanks to Peter our GPS man and drivers Cathy and Val.

Marj T

HIKING IN THE GRAMPIANS - April 2008



Marg and I met up with Helen, Lea and Pattie at the Happy Wanderer Caravan Park at Wartook to begin a wonderful week away, hiking in the Grampians. As luck would have it, we enjoyed perfect autumn weather with warm, sunny days and crisp nights, ideal for sleeping.

Our first hike was my long time favourite – the Mt. Stapylton / Hollow Mt. traverse. This is a true rock-scramblers' delight. We started sedately with a 500m climb up the rocky shelves of Flat Rock and a pleasant stroll through a beautiful amphitheatre towards Mt. Stapylton, admiring the stunning Taipan Wall aglow in the afternoon sun. The pace and wow

factor picked up considerably with a climb to the summit of the mountain, with some airy, exposed sections, that offered a great bird's-eye view of where we'd come from. From here there is no marked track as such and one must traverse the hair – raising spur that links up with Hollow Mountain. The going is very slow and requires lots of team effort, route finding and good nerves, particularly when crossing the three yawning ravines that have to be negotiated along the way. At Hollow Mountain there is a scramble down off the spur and into the magnificent caves, which give the mountain its name. The last section requires lying on your back and crab-walking under the low overhang to eventually emerge into the sunlight. The walk is completed with a descent down through some beautiful cliffs to the car park. I must congratulate the internal fortitude and teamwork showed by all in completing this magnificent, but rather testing traverse.

Our second day took us on a climb to the summit of Mt. Difficult, which gave us fantastic views both ways along the range and down to Lake Wartook. The highlight of this walk is the 1.5 km rock – scramble along the base of the cliffline that protects the summit. Here the towering sandstone cliffs take on absolutely stunning colors and feature some excellent wind – scoured caves. After returning to camp and a very late lunch we went for a drive to visit nearby Zumsteins, Fish Falls and the iconic McKenzies Falls, which were surprisingly, still pumping impressive cascades of water.

The next day we bid a fond farewell to Lea and Pattie who unfortunately had to return home to the dreaded work commitments. Meanwhile Helen, Marg (sporting technicolor bruising from a fall the previous day) and I headed off to Bee Hive Falls and an 11km hike up to Briggs Bluff. We were again treated to beautiful weather and rugged rock formations, which are a great feature here in the northern Grampians. Lunch on top of the bluff offered wonderful views down to Roses Gap, some 400m below us.

Thursday was moving day and we shifted base down to Halls Gap. Along the way we took in a short hike to Reid's Lookout and the Jaws of Death – the amazing rock formation overlooking the remote Victoria Range. Another side trip to Baroka Lookout gave great views down to Halls Gap, nestled in the glacially carved Fyan's Creek Valley.

Over the next couple of days we completed walks to the Pinnacle, in the much visited Wonderland and Boronia Peak which were a pleasant change of pace from the more rugged walks of the north. Come Sunday it was time to head back to Shepparton, thus completing a most enjoyable week of hiking. Many thanks to all participants for your great company and cooperation in giving a helping hand when needed and making it possible to tackle the more challenging sections along the way. I hope you all enjoyed it as much as I did.

Brendan C

WILSON'S PROM walk - March 2008

Chris, Lea and I enjoyed the scenic drive Friday through the hills, on the drive to Wilson's Prom. The houses overlooked the Back Beach which most of the group explored in the evening. Last minute lesson on packing the "Pack" before hitting the sack ready for an early rise. Great weather. Walkers marveled at the regrowth since the bush fires. The board walk through the rain forest was an amazing man made path. Sealers Cove was a welcome sight. The horror stories my fellow walkers fed me about getting to Tidal River late, after high tide, and having to swim through 2 metres deep water with my pack on, had kept me plodding on!

Great relief to find ankle deep water with stepping-stones. Still I got stuck sitting on a rock, fearing I was going to go head first standing up with the weight of my pack, needed a hand up! We settled under a shady tree with magnificent view of the cove for lunch. The walk/ climb to Refuge Cove was even more challenging, not only physically but mentally as you have to watch for every tree root, leaves and stone, so not to trip or slip. I was coping okay though my knees were not. Finally the beautiful Refuge Cove, now I know why we have stomped 4+ hours up and down and around mountains to get there! As we waddled through the sand with our heavy packs, past the 'Boat people', sitting back in their comfy chairs sipping wine and beers. I felt like a penguin on parade!

The Graffiti wall an interesting idea that clearly works. I didn't need the thermals as the weather was mild. I was pleased with my food and water rations, being a first timer that was a challenge in it's self.

We watched with interest the activities of the boat people (owners of fancy fishing boats with big fishing rods and motors) Pleasant evening (I was pleased with the presence of a toilet hadn't expected to have one.) Comment was made as we left next morning of the lack of wild life presence. 15 minutes into our walk we awoke a tiger snake soaking up some morning sun; don't know who got the biggest fright. Another snake later in the day found by the fast walkers, (not I) needed coaxing off the track via large tree fern frond. We all remarked on how fresh the 'day walkers' coming in the opposite direction smelt. I'm guessing we didn't smell that flash. Some young boy walkers (12/13 yrs)

with overnight packs came scurrying up the rocks as we took a break. When asked if they were on their own they said "our parent are miles back, they've probably just started", a couple of minutes later some red faced parents trying to catch up with the boys came puffing up the rocks. There was plenty of shady walking most of the time through the lush rain forest but the last couple of km was open to the very warm sunny day. Making the end of the 16.8 km walk very tuff, the car park a very welcome sight!

I work in an aged care Hostel. I had been telling the residents about my big walk, so I washed and repacked my pack and wore my hiking gear to work the next day. At morning tea I pulled everything out of the pack explaining what it was for as I went, I set up the tent and demonstrated the mattress etc. They marveled at it all. I felt like a magician! It was worth the effort from the amazed looks of disbelief on their faces, and the laughs, to the stories they told me of their adventures, and boy have they had some adventures. One lady told me the next day "I didn't think you were ever going to stop pulling things out of the Bag"

Helen F

Mt Buffalo camp - Feb 2008



The Graves's, Heupermans, Smiths, O'Briens, myself and a family of ducks enjoyed each others company at Lake Catani camping ground. It is a popular camping site with good facilities. Kids enjoyed themselves climbing rocks, mountains and through caves. Buffalo has great walks, views and climbs for children and the more adventurous. The days were lovely, will pack some woolies next time for the nights though. I will defiantly go back as there are so many great walks to do and it is a great place to stay.

The young ones completed walks to the Monolith and The Cathedral. Elizabeth even led the way to the Chalwell Galleries with its very narrow passages, encouraging the even younger ones to keep going. It was great to see the children having

so much fun on this challenging walk!

Thank you to those who participated in the weekend. I'm looking forward to Wilson's Prom and the Grampians.

Helen F

Canoeists bring rain!! - Feb 2008

Intrepid SAC canoeists brought much needed rain to Shepparton and districts (sadly nothing in Tatura) on Sunday the 3rd February.

Lead by Club President Richard, the party included five other club members - Alfred, Maartje, Marge, Robyn and Chris - and two guests, Mal and Faye. The day started out quite warm and humid at Murchison where we disturbed an enormous swarm of hungry mosquitoes. Fortunately Marge had remembered the trusty insect repellent (horse strength no less) which worked a treat.

Along the Goulburn River we paddled, very much enjoying the peace and quiet, waving to small numbers of fisherman. The consensus was that we were lucky to be enjoying such a well kept secret!! The lunch break brought a welcome rest - some of us hadn't canoed for a long time and some never before. The sandy river bank was the perfect setting until the cattle herd arrived to share it with us.

Richard demonstrated his superior leadership skills by unwrapping his GPS and showing us exactly where we were

and how far we had to go - reassuring given the slowly building storm clouds above.

The paddle finished in Arcadia with a little race to the bank as the clouds began dumping. Then back to Murchison to collect Alfred's car and home - a great afternoon.

Chris H.

MACALISTER SPRINGS FROM MT SPECULATION - JANUARY 2008

Dave R and Greg L left a drizzling Cobram on Friday afternoon bound for camp at the foot of Mount Speculation, which is about a four hour drive with a stretch of the legs at Lake Cobbler on the way. Arriving in the dark we waited a while to see if the rain would ease before putting our tent up, but no such luck. It rained all night, sometimes very heavy. Saturday morning after a very quick breakfast we walked up Mount Speculation but unfortunately, when arriving at the top, you could not see very much with all the clouds hanging around. There were lots of different types of wild flowers to be seen but due to the cold they were closed up. We even saw some snow daisies growing on Mount Buggery. It was a very hard stretch as the rain was getting heavier. It was also getting colder and when the wind changed direction at the Crosscut Saw, the rain was coming from below us which was quite amazing. Towards the end of the Crosscut Saw we ran into some day walkers who had come from the hut at Macalister Springs. At this stage I was very wet and cold and exhausted with Dave handling the conditions quite well. On arriving at Macalister Springs hut we had a change of clothes and I jumped into my sleeping bag to get warm and slept for nearly five hours before waking up and having tea. More very heavy rain overnight turned the walking into a very heavy slog on Sunday with the track well and truly awash. Sometimes we were walking in water up to our ankles. It was a magnificent trip though across those mountains. Luckily we could see a lot more. It was amazing to see the steep drop offs on the Crosscut Saw.

Some day I would love to do it again, on a fine day of course. Unfortunately we did not see any wildlife, only wombat deposits on rocks. The Dandongadale Falls were a sight to be seen with water flowing down overhanging rocks like the Niagara Falls.

Greg L

Great Ocean Walk - Nov 2007



The author who promised to write up the first-day report did not live up to his/her promise (we will not reveal his/her identity!!!). But the editor can reveal that the group participants were Chris K, the brothers Richard and Geoff G, Maartje and Alfred H, Judy M and Greg L. On Wednesday 7/11 we drove to Bimbi Park at Cape Otway where Richard had organized some cabins. On Thursday we drove in convoy to Moonlight Head where local surfie Leigh picked us up in his 4WD bus and dropped us off at a 4WD track leading to Ryans Den. Alfred noticed at that time that he had forgotten to bring his day pack so he had to bludge on the supplies carried by the rest of the group. We walked from the Ryan's Den to Moonlight Head, an enjoyable walk through gullies and over cliffs with great ocean views. Our vehicles were waiting for us and we came back to home-base at Bimbi Park for a well-earned dinner and a good sleep, only interrupted by snorting koalas (at least, Richard claimed it were the koalas, not him !!).

After the "disastrous" event of the first day (the

forgotten back pack!!) we all left crisp and well-supplied with lunch goodies in our day-packs. Leigh was waiting for us with his little 4WD bus and we departed in convoy to our final end-of-the-day-drop-off-point at Princetown at the mouth of the Gellibrand River, parked our own vehicles and jumped aboard Leigh's bus.

The Gellibrand was in flood and we followed it for a while on a back-road, the "Old Great Ocean Road", with beautiful views of the flooded river flats. After drop-off at the "Gable" we said farewell to Leigh and stretched the old muscles that were still aching from yesterday's walk. The description promised "moderate to easy" walking, which sounded much better than yesterday's "strenuous-to-difficult".

First stretch was down on the beach with coastal views, rock pools, old shipwreck remnants (anchors and winches), and fresh-water seeps coming out of the rocks; very enjoyable walking indeed. After about 4 kms the track left the beach and found its way up the cliffs where we had lunch at the National Park camp site, called Devil's Kitchen. Beautiful views (again); keep in mind to come back one day!!

The afternoon was a bit more of a test. The track followed a 4WD track on top of the ridge with occasional views of the sea and good views inland over the Gellibrand Valley. Ups-and-downs and sandy stretches soon took their toll and the total 8 afternoon kms turned out to be a bit more of a challenge than anticipated by some of the group members. But at arrival at the cars most still had enough energy to do a short side-walk to the Gellibrand mouth which was impressive because of the flooding; looked as big as the Murray!

On the way back to camp we had the (by now) traditional coffee stop at Lavers Hill. Back at camp most put up feet and relaxed but Judy/Alfred decided that it was time for some additional beachcombing and came back with stories about abalone poachers. Alas, we will never know the truth about this story.

Mid-week Bike Ride - Oct 2007

Meeting at 9:30 am in the car park near Billy's Bakery in Mooroopna, 3 participants, Maartje, Richard and myself, set off for some exploratory as well as some reconnoitered bike riding. We followed the road down behind the Royal Mail, onto a track that took us under the railway line. It was a bit of a push up the embankment but once up we passed through the gate into the Mooroopna Common.

We then followed the tracks along the river towards the far end of the Common. Here we passed through another gate, up and down through some washaways following the tracks around to Raftery's Bend. Here we followed the fence line along an animal track, passing our bikes over the fence to access more bush tracks heading now for the Mooroopna/Toolamba Rd. From here we followed the railway line back to Mooroopna for coffees and cake at Peaches Café where Len joined us (not riding due to a broken ankle).

It was a warm but pleasant day, with some cloud cover so not too hot. The bush had a touch of green so didn't look too drought stricken. We traveled about 18kms and it took about 2 hours – lots of talking of course!

Thanks to the participants company.

Christine T.

Kayaking the Goulburn River - March 2006

We couldn't have ordered a more suitable weekend of weather for a white water kayaking adventure. Prior to the trip, a work colleague had warned me about the crisp cold water of the Goulburn River at Eildon (and of the eddy's and shear lines – but that bit will come later) So to have 30+ temperatures in late March made the risk of a dunking in the Goulburn not too bad fate. After connecting the canoe trailer, Neville and the

Gills headed over the Strathbogies to Alexandra and arrived at Blue Gums before midday. Andy and Gerard had arrived some time before that, but with the caravan park fairly full, there was plenty of entertainment to keep them amused.

I thought I knew a thing or two about kayaking on rivers, but the Yarra River really is quite small compared to the Goulburn during the irrigation season. Anyway, our first training session saw Neville ably instructing four boaters on the joys of draw strokes, balancing the kayak, rescue strokes and hip tilts to lean the kayak across the flow direction as we paddled across the current. Our first session ended with a training capsizing to test our reactions when hanging upside down under water from a kayak. We also had a go at deep water boat rescues (no bank required!). Lucky the weather was warm, although the river water temperature was probably as warm as it gets each year.

After lunch, we did a car shuffle and left the trailer and car down at Thornton. Back at Blue Gums, we launched our boats and then tackled the rapids. The top half is relatively gentle, and we all passed through OK. Above the grade 2 rapids, it was thought best to take the 'discretion over valor' path, so Pete and Andy carried their boats around. After shooting the rapids and surviving, a moments inattention saw me practicing my 'get out of the upside-down boat' routine again. I then guessed that I must have been caught in the eddies below the main rapid. Better practice some more rescue strokes and think a bit quicker.

The paddle down to Thornton was very pleasant, if uneventful, and some well deserved beers and dinners were enjoyed back at Blue Gums. The Gills opted to stay in a room in the dormitory building, which was a good spot because it came with a fridge and kitchen. We also heard some inspiring fishing stories from a couple of locals and were thus motivated to drop a line next morning. However, the pondage did not give up any fish to us, so it was back to kayak school for our first morning session.

This session involved getting Miranda onto the water in the K2 with Neville captaining the ship. The rest of us then learned about entering the current across the eddy line, with draw stroke and leaning downstream. We then tackled the upper rapids and learned how to enter the current, and leave it downstream of objects in their eddy current areas. However, I was not quite getting the hang of leaning over without capsizing, so I had a couple of swims to finish the morning session. Peter showed how far his skills had developed, when he was able to rescue my paddle whilst navigating the rapids and bring it back across to the bank.

After lunch, we had our last paddle, which involved shooting both sets of rapids and using all the skills we had picked up over the weekend. Peter, Andy and I showed how accomplished we had become by not capsizing and then Nev showed how much more we could accomplish by showing how easy it is to paddle in and out of the rushing water in the main parts of the Rapids. We then dragged the boats up the bank, and worked out that it would save a lot of effort to move the trailer to the boats, rather than the other way round.

Thanks Neville for your patience and instruction over the weekend. I not only faced some of my own fear over capsizing a boat in the middle of rapids, I also gained some confidence in the rapids and gained some respect for the power of flowing water. On the falling out score, it was Peter 1 and his Dad 3. (My excuse is that Peter does not have as much mass sticking out of the top of the kayak, thus making it harder to capsize!)

Bruce

Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail - 12-13 November 2005

Nine budding cyclists met at Lilydale railway station on Saturday morning – arriving in 6 cars – Alfred and Richard from Tatura, Christine and Len from Mooroopna, Andrea from Toolamba, Lea from Shepparton, Patricia from Bacchus Marsh, Evan from East St Kilda and Penny from Pascoe Vale.

After leaving our cars parked at the railway station, and in almost ideal riding conditions, we set off through the Lilydale shopping centre to the start of the "Warburton Trail". This track follows the alignment of the old railway line to Warburton some 40 kms away. After an initial uphill climb for the first two kms or so, the next half of the ride was largely down hill which made riding a breeze and good fun. Not surprisingly Alfred was soon busting for a coffee & it was not long before we made a fairly lengthy stop for refreshments. The shop we picked must have been low on staff as we had nearly a 45 minute stop at this point. Then on the way again through picturesque farming country, crossing many roads which kept us on our guard as many of the crossings did not have gates or rails to slow us down and some cross roads were quite busy.

As the day progressed the number of cyclists and pedestrians increased and it was often necessary to ride single file to avoid those coming the other way. This is obviously a very popular track and well worth the effort to traverse it.

After rest stops for lunch etc we arrived at the Warburton Caravan park at about 2.15pm where we had booked two cabins (albeit 150 meters apart), giving the car drivers ample time to catch the bus back to Lilydale to retrieve the cars and get back to Warburton (via the Launching Place pub for a lemonade). Evan departed the group at this point leaving 8 of us to enjoy evening dinner at a local Polish Restaurant. Excellent food at very reasonable prices with a selection of Polish beers from 5.5% to 7.00%.

After walking back to our accommodation in lightly drizzling rain we settled down for the night with a few sore legs and muscles. It was pleasant to be lulled off to sleep with the sound of rain on the roof.

Sunday morning saw the group further split up with Lea & Pat & Andrea & Penny returning for home early. Some of us had breakfast at a local B&B on the river bank.

Following which Chris drove the 3 boys to the top of Mount Donna Buang from which they freewheeled their bikes downhill the 17 kms back to Warburton at an average speed of 42.5kph. Alfred hit 55kph at one point. The air was very cold and the road wet at times which made high speed riding a little precarious on bends. Exhilarating good fun though. We then drove home via the Acheron Way to Alexandria, Merton & Euroa.

Thanks Christine for organizing a great weekend. Good fun and good friends - just what being in S.A.C. is all about. We must do more of these relatively easy rides. There are a number of good rail trails in Victoria that we can explore.

Richard G

Faithful Creek Falls - Midweek Walk - June 2005

Back in June a group of seven walkers enjoyed a great hike in the Strathbogies - to the Faithful Creek Falls. To reach this area, we drove out of Euroa on the Strathbogie Road turned into Harrys Creek Road then Broughtons Road. We were fortunate to have the experience of a local guide who lead us through an area we hadn't walked in before.. We crossed through some private property to the creek. The walk was through interesting, timbered country. Some areas were quite rocky and we had to watch our footing to avoid rabbit burrows.

It was forested along some of the creek and there were areas of natural growth, young trees, but we were dismayed to find some areas quite close to the creek had been bulldozed. We crossed the creek several times before reaching the amazing falls in a less forested area.

The water flowed over a sheer drop of approximately 20 metres then meandered around the huge boulders below. It is a beautiful spot on the creek and our guide informed us there is always water there. We climbed down on to the rocks below the waterfall and soaked up the beauty and atmosphere of the place as we ate our lunch. We walked back along the creek before returning to the cars. We thank Marge Thompson for arranging the guide and leading us to this beautiful place.

Rivers Walk - Echuca - July 2005

In July, four walkers went to Echuca. We walked a circuit of about four kilometres. Starting from the wharf,

we walked north along the bank of the Murray River to the junction with the Campaspe River which we then followed, returning to the wharf via the Echuca High School.

This is a very pleasant walk through the tall red gums and the many house boats moored along the banks of the Murray as well as the old steamers plying the waters provide plenty of interest.

After enjoying a leisurely lunch in the sun, watching the activities on the river, we returned to the car and drove east out of the town along the Echuca- Bangerang Road to Stewarts Bridge which crosses the Goulburn River. We left the car on the road and walked through the forest where some wattles were just beginning to bloom, to the junction of the Goulburn and the Murray Rivers, a spectacular sight. We continued walking along the Murray and returned to the car.

We drove along McDonald Road to the Murray Valley Highway, visiting 'The Golden Cow' in Tongala for coffee, on the way back to Shepparton. Another very enjoyable day.

Cathie M

Tree Planting at Lurg (near Benalla) - Regent Honeyeater Project 27-28 August 2005

Well, we worked our butts off! After Ray Thomas gave us a very interesting talk on the tree planting projects he has been organising, Judy decided to organise a club trip to assist on the tree planting weekend on 27/28th August at Lurg. Len and I, Judy and Ted, and Lea and Alfred joined the SAC contingent meeting at the Benalla PO at 9am. All the tree planters, about 70 or so people set off in convoy to the tree planting site. We were given instruction as to how to plant the trees and divided into two groups – the diggers and the planters. And did we work. It was a beautiful sunny day, couldn't have asked for better weather. We had breaks for morning tea and lunch as we worked our way up the little creek to where last years planting had stopped. On Saturday night we were treated to a sumptuous meal and some people went bushdancing – I don't know how they did it – I was exhausted and stiff and sore.

On Sunday, back out to the property at Lurg for more planting up the other creek. Not as many people turned up on Sunday! So, more planting and a BBQ lunch to finish up the day. Over the weekend we planted nearly 4000 trees and shrubs – a mammoth effort. We had a great time doing it as well and hopefully with the restoration of the habitats the Regent Honeyeaters, the sugar gliders, phascogales will return and grow in numbers over the next few years.

Mt Howitt & The Crosscut Saw Hike - 28-30 Jan 2005

ZILCH was the theme for this walk, from early the first day to late each night.

It started warm on Friday as we four stretched our legs along the old track beside the Howqua River where ZILCH vehicles are now allowed. Less than an hour and we were at the start of Howitt Spur filling up our water bottles from the ZILCH polluted stream. The first few kilometres were relentlessly up with ZILCH flat spots for breathers. Fortunately there was some cloud in the sky and a nice breeze, but ZILCH rain despite the thunder. Lunch on top as the breeze died to ZILCH, then down to Macalister Springs to camp. Tents outside the 'A' frame hut, ZILCH people inside so we whiled away the afternoon eating and talking and later learning to play ZILCH (see below).

Next morning there was ZILCH cloud in the Wonnangatta valley as we dawdled out to the Crosscut Saw admiring the scenery all the way. Mt Speculation looked a long way off with ZILCH flat sections along the way. Packs were dropped at the top of Thorn range/Stanleys Name Spur and only lunches & coats carried, except Denis had ZILCH raincoat. The cloud and thunder came closer and little rain showers caught us as we met a few other walkers, but ZILCH lightning. At Mt Buggery the heavens opened and ZILCH was spared its intensity. Lunch was a wet affair and with views down to ZILCH we about-faced back to our packs. A few hours later we were re-loaded and climbing down the steep pinches on Thorn range to reach

our night's camp, now with rain back to ZILCH. But it didn't last and as soon as camp was reached the merciless heavens opened again so it was tents up and inside with ZILCH time to spare. Two hours later it was over, just in time for tea and a few rounds of ZILCH by a lovely fire. And it was ZILCH dishes for 3 out of 4 again - freeze dry meals were very popular ("Just add 1 cup of hot water to pouch and sit for 10 minutes").

Denis claimed there was a wombat snooping around camp during the night, probably looking for those ZILCH dice. Now just a nice stroll along the spur and down the old 4WD track to the Howqua River, with almost ZILCH navigational problems. Thanks to Brendan, who had ZILCH beard and almost ZILCH hair, for leading the walk. Great company and competition was also provided by Sandra, who used plastic bags to keep her feet dry in wet boots, and Dennis, who by the last lunch still didn't have ZILCH gas in the first of 3 stove canisters he had packed. As for me, I had done ZILCH overnight hiking for five years but survived, just.

Watch out for Brendan and his six dice (and almost ZILCH-sized scoring paper) on your next trip.

Greg S

How to play ZILCH

Take 6 dice.

Roll them.

Ask Brendan what your score is.

Trust Brendan.

Roll again if Brendan says so.

Pass on the dice when Brendan says to.

Continue until the first person reaches 10,000 points.

Let Brendan catch up to leader.

End. Play again.

Razorback Ridge to Harrietville walk Sat 13th November 2004

The weekend of 12th – 14th November was spent at Freeburgh Cabins and Caravan Park near Bright. Despite heavy overnight rain on the Friday we awoke to reasonable weather on the Saturday morning with sunshine breaking through the clouds intermingled with patches of blue sky. A group of seven had decided to take up the challenge of the 22km hike along the Razorback ridge from Diamantina hut to Federation hut and on along Bungalow Spur, descending via Wombat Gap, towards Harrietville, with an optional diversion up to Mount Feathertop if conditions allowed.

Three vehicles left the caravan park around 9am, the plan being to leave two cars at the end of the walk to allow an easy journey back to the cabins at the end of the day. With the help of Cathy and Pete, who didn't

come along to partake in the walk, we dropped off the cars and were then able to get to the start of the walk at Diamantina Hut, driving up the Great Alpine Road. Conditions didn't look too great at the start and there was snow lying on the ground, which was great for snowball fights! The walk leader and vice president of the club, Judy, stepped out of the car and decided instantly that there was too much of a nip in the air for her liking. Despite words of encouragement from the rest of the group she decided to wimp out of the walk and abandon the rest of the group, returning to the warmth of her cabin! Thankfully Ted agreed to take over as leader of the walk and so six of us, Ted, Sandy, Richard, Alvin, Jack & Catherine, enthusiastically set off on the track at around 10.15am.

We were met by wintry conditions at various points along the track to Federation Hut, with icy winds and snow biting hard in the more exposed parts of the ridge, but conditions improved at several points and we were able to get dramatic views of the surrounding mountains and down into the valley below. On either side of the track could be seen amazing stunted snow gums, iced over white by the freezing conditions, with icicles hanging from the branches. It felt like a winter wonderland scene.

As we passed the turn off up to Mount Feathertop it was decided that the 3km return journey and 200m of ascent to the top would not reward us with stunning views, as the peak was shrouded in cloud, and so a decision was made to continue on to Federation Hut.

On approach to our planned lunch stop at the site of the former Federation hut (burnt down in recent fires), snowfall was quite heavy, and so we continued to a slightly lower elevation. Suddenly the weather cleared with blue skies and sunshine appearing so the group decided to stop for lunch and a well deserved rest at around 1pm. Ted was heard to comment over lunch that it was just as well Judy hadn't come along as she would have been whinging about the cold conditions all of the time! That's Queenslanders for you...can't cope with a bit of snow and ice!

After an enjoyable lunch we continued along Bungalow Spur and descended via Wombat Gap towards Harrierville, passing through stands of Woollybutt trees still recovering from the recent fires in the area. At lower elevations lush green vegetation could be seen with abundant ferns and lots of colourful spring flowers. During the descent the snow turned to rain for a while but eventually we were greeted again by blue skies and sunshine towards the end of the walk and we arrived back at the cars at around 4.30pm. Catherine and her feet were heard to breath a sigh of relief! Everyone agreed that it was an enjoyable and invigorating hike as we made our way back to the caravan park for a well-earned rest.

Alvin M

GRAMPIANS Walks 16-17 October 2004

Four eager walkers headed off to the Grampians on Friday for a two night base camp at Troopers Creek. On arrival we just had time for a brisk walk to the Tilwinda Falls. Luckily campfires were permitted, as it was very cold. The tents were icy in the morning and the campground had suddenly become very populated in the late hours of the night.

DAY 1: After a leisurely breakfast we set off to Mount Difficult. A great photo shoot at the Wind Cave and then a steady climb to the base of the cliffs. Following the cliff base we passed several rocky watercourses, a small overnight stop area and then a rock scramble to the Mt. Difficult summit, 808m high. Fantastic views! We continued along the cliff wall and headed to Briggs Bluff. A 400m-metre drop over the rim on the northern face was quite amazing. Then onto Beehive Falls. Lots of lovely ferns! Looking back you couldn't believe that there was a track to follow. A steady descent to the Roses Gap Car Park and retrieving the car left in the morning. A great day, 16 km in all.

DAY 2: On to the Mount Hollow Car Park. Leaving the car park we witnessed lots of rock climbers setting up for the day. We started with an easy climb to the base of Hollow Mountain and then rapidly gained height, having to belly crawl to get out of the mountain cave system and on to the top of the range. Then our first ravine. With feet placed into foot holds it was relatively easy. Then on to the second ravine. Again it required careful foot placement and a steady hand. By the time we got to the third ravine the girls

expressed interest in the slightly longer route. It is possible to step across but but.... We then continued along to the top of ridge and at Mount Stapylton had lunch. The views were spectacular. On the way down Bird Rock took our fancy. At Flat Rock we were able to observe rock climbers and abseilers in action. Then a brief road walk back to the car. 6km in total but I can assure you it seemed like more.

Thanks go to Brendan who happily shared his expertise with all and the other campers Sandra and Dennis for their enthusiasm. A rewarding weekend!

Cathy M

DAY WALK FROM MOUNT HOTHAM DOWN TO HARRIETVILLE - 7 March 2004

On the 7th March Ted, Richard and myself headed off to do the walk from Hotham at the Razorback from Diamantina Hut across to Federation Hut (10.2km), then down to Bungalow Spur and into Harrietville, a total of approximately 22kms (23 kms when counting the kilometre to the Harrietville pub for a revival refreshment).

We were ferried up to Hotham by Judy and Kathy – who then went off with the lovely Alice to have a look at Mount Hotham and Dinner Plains resorts.

It was a warm – but not too hot – Sunday when we headed off at approximately 10.15am to start the walk along the Razorback. There were a lot of cars parked on the side of the road, so we knew that there would be a lot of company on the walk (apparently there were at least 30 tents staying overnight at Federation Hut on the Saturday).

The path was easy to follow but you still had to look where you were putting your feet. There were some great vista views across to Mount Buffalo and the surrounding ranges. We had just missed the wildflowers by about 1 month as there were still some remnants of the flowers where we were walking (that is a walk for next year). The snow gums are slowly starting to rejuvenate after the fires as most of the area was burnt from last year's summer fires. The walk to Federation Hut was reasonably easy going and it was great to see a lot of young people with their packs coming back from Federation Hut. The one complaint was that there was not any water and you had to walk another half an hour to Bungalow Hut where there was a spring with water. The hut [Federation] had been burnt down during the fires and there is a new toilet facility there but no other conveniences.

We decide to go on to Bungalow Hut for lunch and replenish the water bottles for our walk down into Harrietville (10.3km) from Federation and down hill all the way – with some burnt areas also on the track. We made it to the Harrietville car park at 4.30pm feeling very proud of our achievement as it was the longest that any of us had completed in a day walk. So we really enjoyed the beers at the pub when we walked the extra kilometre. Overall a great day and a real sense of accomplishment with our aching legs and backs.

... Chris F

Mid Week Walk at Sheen's Creek, Euroa - 28th April 2004

Marj, Frances, Anne, Rae and Cathie travelled to Euroa and met Betty, Linda and Doug for morning coffee and were treated to delicious muffins and anzac biscuits made by Betty.

Linda and Betty were not well enough to walk but Doug agreed to meet us for lunch and provide a shuttle car for the end of the walk.

We began the walk at Sheen's Creek road near where Linda and Betty had once lived. The walk was along a

made track and took us through a valley surrounded by the rolling hills of the Strathbogie Ranges which are very, very dry. We crossed through private property to Sheen's Creek which had running water in it. We walked downstream to some falls which splashed down over four levels of steep rock. We sat below the falls on the rocks beside the creek to eat our lunch.

We continued walking to re-join the track lower down to where Doug had parked his car.

It was a short walk of about 7.5 kms which three of us extended as we walked towards our lift home. We all enjoyed the day thanks to our leader Marj.

... Cathie

Bonding at Mt Howitt - 17-18 April 2004

What happens when you send 13 walkers from the sunny, parched plains to the distant mountains for a weekend? Nature throws up something completely different, that's what.

The original idea of an overnight walk up and down Mt Howitt was thwarted by the lack of water up on high, so Richard changed it to an "easier" base camp weekend with two day walks. Friday night we 2 & 4 WD all the way past The Bluff and Mt Lovick to Lovicks Hut, where we pitched tents by headlight amongst the horse and cattle dung and snowgums.

Saturday dawned foggy and damp so most of us started (and as it turned out, ended) the day in long pants and plenty of layers. The objective was Mt Howitt via Mt Magdala, a modest daywalk we thought. The views along the way are fantastic, if I remember rightly from the last time I was up here, but today it was all up to the imagination. The track went up and down and up and ... and was sprinkled with rocks just to test us. The showers came and went, and the wind grabbed at us anytime we got near the ridgetop. Glasses fogged up and gradually everyone's feet got wet. From the treeline below Howitt's summit we made a sprint for the bare top, had 30 seconds in the freezing wind, then back down again to the shelter of the trees for the quickest lunch ever. Over seven hours after we left we straggled back into camp to find Lovick's horse group had ensconced themselves in the hut we had been coveting all the way back. Some jumped in to bed to warm up while the rest had a cuppa and started dinner before it got dark. While we milled about in the cold a kind soul by the name of Trevor rolled up and made a beautiful fire from his store of dry wood, something we hadn't even bothered to attempt in the wet. The rain held off most the night, so standing around the fire was quite a pleasant way to while away a few hours over a cold mug of red.



Saturday Sunday



It was cold in the tents overnight but surprisingly there was no snow on the ground in the morning. Over breakfast the clouds parted and the sun came through, which made all the difference (except for the stiff legs). Not feeling up to another 18+km hike we instead opted for a stroll from Bluff Hut up to Mt Eadey Stoney, the first high point on the Bluff range. The views were nearly as great as we should have got the

day before. From there it was home to a good soak via a Mansfield bakery. Thanks to the 13 for their company on my first long walk in 4 years - Richard, Pat, Sandy, Sandra, Denis, Arthur, Brendan, Leon, Neville, Lee, Ted, Susanna.

...Greg S.

Bellarine Peninsula bike ride 13-14 March 2004

It promised to be a good weekend but only 3 members signed up !! Anyhow, not discouraged by the lack of interest, Richard, Alfred and Maartje departed Tatura on Saturday afternoon to drive to Queenscliff (e?; the name for the Burrough is with an extra 'e'). The new highway to Geelong is a breeze and we soon arrived and found a site on the recreation reserve campground, put up the tents, took off the bikes, and "hit the town". We dug into the fish and chips, and pulled up into the pub to finish the meal with a dessert and coffee before hitting the sacks for a good night sleep.



Sunday morning we were joined by our friend Rob (originally from Tatura but now in Geelong) and took off to Point Lonsdale, via the beach to Ocean Grove (coffee!). Had a quick look at Barwon Heads (Sea Change!) and turned inland, north to Drysdale where we arrived about 2pm at the steam train station. Rob and Alfred decided that the train was for the 'weaklings' but Richard and Maartje could not stand the temptation and bought a ticket back to Queenscliff. After another cuppa in town, the train departed at 3.30 and Rob and Alf saw the train disappear over the horizon, in spite of their efforts to catch up. However, 16km and about 50 minutes later we got the troops together again in Queenscliff and farewelled Robert.

All together a (more or less) relaxing day; nearly 60km for the "bikie-diehards" and a bit over 40kms for the "trainos". We arrived home with slightly sore bottoms but refreshed minds.

And stay tuned to the SAC calendar; in October there will be a "BLUES TRAIN" from Queenscliff to Drysdale vv!! Wouldn't it be good if we could get enough people together to fill a train carriage to eat, drink and dance the night away ?!?!??

... Alfred

NUMURKAH AREA BIKE RIDE Jan 2004

On Sunday 11th January, 9 of us met at Numurkah to participate in a bike ride. The weather was very pleasant, just right for riding, - sunny with a light breeze. On departing the township, we proceeded along some very pretty waterways - lots of birds, trees and shady areas. From here we passed thru a swampland area that is being developed by the local community - apparently it is an award-winning venture. The area is very interesting and we were able to ride our bikes thru it along newly formed tracks.

After leaving this area we rode along some dirt roads, thru attractive dairying country - every thing looks so good compared to last year during the drought. We reached Mononchinos winery about 11:30 - that's lunchtime in my book. There is a lovely set up there with a BBQ, tables and chairs. You can buy a glass of wine or a cappuccino. We all took cut lunches but next time we'll have a BBQ. It was difficult leaving the winery but we then headed off back to the cars - about 10 km. We travelled about 26 km which was an easy day getting home early to do some jobs around the house.

Thanks to Len for organizing the trip and Richard, Juliette, Sandra, Leah, Alfred, Maarjte, and one other lass whose name I can't remember for participating.

MID WEEK TRIP REPORT for 2003

We continue to have between ten to sixteen walkers at each of our walks. Some of our walks had to be changed on the day because of bad weather. The walks this year were mainly in the Warby Range State Park, Strathbogie and Euroa. When you live in a flat place like Shepparton we try to head for the hills as often as possible. Our last walk was on the Friends Track in the Warby Ranges. The track took us to the Kwat Kwat Lookout where we had lunch. The last lot of rain had brought out a great show of wild flowers. There were patches of bright colours in every direction. The smarter ones in our group knew all their names. The day finished off at a cherry farm where they were picking the first lot of fruit. The owners gave us a talk about the industry and where the cherries were sent to. We hope to see all our walkers when the first walk is in February 2004.

... Norma.

Canoe Trip around Lake William Hovell, upper reaches of the King River 26 October 2003

As a "newbie" to the Shepparton Adventure Club this was my first experience on a trip with the club, my only contact being a phone call with Scott B who advised me on what to bring, (comfortable clothing, thermal underwear and lunch) where to meet (at the car park in front of Shepp Library at 8.30am). I was apprehensive 1. About my fitness level, 2. How I would fit in with the group, 3. If there was a mishap that I was wearing my best underwear, 4 That it wouldn't be raining all day as the weather all week had been miserable. Scott had assured me that comfort was extremely important and that fashion was not an issue.

The group included: Neville, Scott, Tracy, Richard, Dan, Peter, Sue, Lachlan, Belinda and Kayleen. We drove in groups Benalla then onto Lake William Hovel and arrived around 10.30. Sorted out canoes and who was going with whom and stowed our all important lunches. Neville gave us informative instructions on safety and basic strokes and techniques. We set off around the shores of the lake toward the mouth of the King River paddling a little way up the river back to the shore of the lake for lunch before and paddling back to the cars our trip taking about 4 hours.

We then watched Neville as he went white water rafting and demonstrated his not inconsiderable skill on the lower reaches of the King River. Then onto one of the wineries of the King Valley for a little wine tasting.

I needn't have worried the weather was magnificent, the scenery beautiful, wonderful camaraderie, no mishaps and Scott making quite a fashion statement in his brightly coloured thermal underwear as outerwear.

... by Kayleen G.

NAGAMBIE WINERY BIKE TOUR Saturday, 27th September 2003

We met near the Chinaman's Bridge Caravan Park, Nagambie, travelling to Nagambie in various cars and utes with bikes on the back. The directions were Turn right at the Heathcote-Chinamens Bridge Road big green sign. Travel

down this road turning right into the Chinamen's Bridge Caravan Park road. Park near (not limiting the access) to the water standpipe on the right about ½km down this road. We all arrived at 9:30 am ready to set off on our adventure.

WHAT WE BROUGHT:

Bikes: the best style of bike for SAC trips is either a hybrid or mountain bike but with some skill a road bike will be OK – you just need to be wary of loose gravel and sand. A few gears are always handy for hills but there won't be many on this trip and if all else fails you can always walk! Various types of bikes were used – hybrids, mountain bikes and of course Sue R was on her faithful road bike. Helmets and cut lunches were the order of the day .

WHERE WE WENT:

We had lunch at the Mitchelton Winery after travelling along the Graytown road until we came to the Major Mitchell trail where we turned left. This road was dirt, which had just been graded, but it wasn't too bad to ride on. It was winding, with small farmlets dotted along the way. Some of the properties looked like weekenders. The route followed along the northern most edge of Puckapunyal Army Base - its amazing how big it is. There were lovely camping areas along this road, along the Nagambie Lake/Goulburn River backwaters. At this spot we stopped for nibbles – lollies, chocolates, nuts, scroggin being the order of the day.

We just about got blown off our bikes along the stretch of the route just before Mitchelton. The sky was black and the wind gale force. On arriving at the winery we found a sheltered spot near the winery buildings after deciding it was too cold to eat in the picnic shelter.

After lunch we checked out the wine tasting and the art show. Then everybody headed for the restaurant for a hot cup of coffee! We had a great time nattering away with our cuppas. After a short while here we set off for Chateau Tahbilk. This ride was quite pleasant as the weather had cleared a bit and the road was a bit more sheltered. After checking out the wines here and exploring the old wine cellars and the antique equipment on display we continued on for the 5km back to the cars.

SPEED OF TRAVEL: As always, we travelled at the speed of the slowest participant. Some got ahead but waited within a reasonable distance or at the next corner. Others had problems with their brake cables after leading the pack all morning and were miles behind after the last winery and couldn't work out why!

DISTANCE: About 35 km.

XC Skiing - Mts Buffalo & Hotham - 26-27 July 2003

Well, I didn't get any interest from SAC members for this trip so Len and I and at the last minute, Alfred and Maarjte with whom we met up with at a Shepparton Art Gallery on the Thursday night prior, headed up to Harrietville for the weekend. When we arrived at Harrietville, the town was covered in a light sprinkling of snow. It looked like Christmas! We could have skied across the front lawn of the house we were staying in!

On Saturday, we headed up to Mt Buffalo. We knew the road to Hotham had been closed to midnight on Friday night so decided to head for the mountain with the easier access. The snow report said the trail up to the Horn had been groomed so we thought that would be a good start for the first days ski.

Travelling up the mountain was beautiful. The snow was all over the trees, and as bad as the fires have been, the contrast between the blackened trunks and the white snow was very effective.

We headed off up the Horn Road – it hadn't been groomed. This was a real test of our fitness! The snow was fresh and sticky. It stuck to the bottom of our skis in 6 inch lumps. Of course, I had left the Mr Sheen in the car. One spray of Mr Sheen on the bottom of the ski will stop balling up of fresh snow for a reasonable distance. Re-apply as it wears off. Not sure what it does to the environment though! We ploughed our way up to the Horn, we were exhausted by the time we got there. We saw a couple of black cockatoos on the way up, and a few people on the way down who were taking advantage of us breaking the trail. The ski down was OK but we had to stay in the tracks we had made to get any speed up.

We had lunch in the shelter, watching the down hill skiers on the slopes outside.

On Sunday, we headed off to Mt Hotham. Of course the snow was really low. Chains were fitted to 4 WD vehicles as well as 2 WDs. Conditions were good up the top after a scary bit on the road on the way up where it was a white out in clouds and we wondered where the road was! We skied around Wire Plain. The trails were all groomed on that side so it was much easier skiing than the previous day. It really was a great weekend with good weather and heaps of snow.

Christine T

XC Skiing – Falls Creek – 2-3 August 2003

Neville organised this weekend in conjunction with YHA. Accommodation was at the Mountain Creek Lodge on Friday and Saturday nights. I must say the girls who organised the trip certainly had everybody well organised for each days skiing and are to be congratulated on the feast they prepared on Saturday night for 35 or more people.

Len and I couldn't get there for Friday night due to work commitments so we headed up to Falls Creek on Saturday morning thinking we might catch up with the group on the mountain. We rang Neville on his mobile when we got to Windy Corner and he said his group was heading out on Heathy Spur so we decided to go that way too. Well, I think Neville was having troubling keeping up with them, so we didn't have a hope of catching up.

The weather was beautiful and sunny but there was a stiff breeze across the spur cooling us down. We found our way onto the groomed trail, much to Len's liking and skied out nearly as far as Mt Nelse. We didn't want to go back by the road, so went back the way we had come which had some good downhill sections. We had lunch on a rock out overlooking Mt Nelse and watching all the skaters fly around the track.

On Sunday, we followed a few more of the groomed trails, aiming to get our money's worth from the Trail passes. I was amazed at the extent of the snow grooming and would have liked to follow all the groomed snow to see where the trails went!

When we were having lunch we met up with some Shepparton people who were camping out over the weekend. It was great to see them up there. I am not sure if they are paid up members of SAC or not – they will know who they are and perhaps we can encourage them to renew their membership!

With so much magnificent snow on the ground I only wish more SAC members were attending the trips. The YHA people are a bunch just like us (even though they come from Melbourne) and I would like to encourage members of SAC to join their trips and keep the skiing going as an activity for our club. Neville has done great work in organising a cooperative approach to ensure that we are covered by Public Liability Insurance on ski trips.

Christine T

ANZAC WEEKEND IN MARYSVILLE 2003

A three-night base camping trip took place over ANZAC weekend in the scenic mountain resort town of Marysville. There was a good turnout with Richard, Fiona (the Zimbies), Peter, Cathy (& baby Alice), Ted, Judy, Brendan and Alvin staying for the full three nights. Mary Jane, Craig, Camilla & Louise arrived on Friday morning and Barbara and the girls met up with the group on Saturday. Richard and Sue joined us for a day walk on the Friday. Ted headed down to the campsite on Thursday afternoon to set up camp. Cathy, Alice and the Zimbies arrived at camp late afternoon after an enjoyable visit to Healesville sanctuary on route. Alvin picked up Judy, Brendan and Peter after work and, after grabbing some food, arrived at the campsite around 8-30pm.

We awoke to the sound of squawking cockatoos & Alice (only kidding) on ANZAC day morning after a chilly night. The sun was shining and after breakfast we headed into town to meet up with Richard & Sue for a day hike to the spectacular 80m high Steavenson falls, one of Victoria's largest cascading waterfalls.

After a photo stop we headed on to the Keppel track where we followed a fairly steep foot track around seven hairpin bends. We broke for a relaxing lunch at De La Rue lookout with glorious views of the township and Cathedral range, our destination for the following day. Mountain ash trees and huge tree & ground ferns abounded as we continued the hike along the remainder of the track back to Marysville. A good day was had by all and we headed for the bakery for a well-deserved indulgence. The evening was spent sitting around a campfire; chatting, drinking, eating and admiring the amazingly clear star filled night sky.

Saturday we awoke to another glorious sunny autumn day. After breakfast we all headed off to the Cathedral range to meet up with Barbara and girls. The hike began from Ned's Gully camp and picnic area. A steep climb up through a forest track, with the distant sound of lyrebirds, led us to Ned's saddle. Barbara's two girls led the way and reached the saddle first, where a well-earned rest was enjoyed by all. Alvin decided to continue up to Cathedral peak while the rest of the group and children walked on to 'The Farmyard', which was named for the lyrebirds in the area. Brendan heroically volunteered to retrace his steps back down to Ned's Gully to pick up a car and drive around to meet the group at the other end, to save a 5km hike back to the cars. Views from the top of the narrow Cathedral ridge were spectacular and colourful king parrots could be seen flying among the trees.

We awoke to a damp, cloudy Sunday morning, which reminded Alvin of a summer's day in Scotland. Some of the group headed to the bakery for a hearty breakfast during which time the clouds darkened and persistent rain set in. After meeting at the bakery for a mid morning coffee the group decided to abandon thoughts of a hike in the rain and split up to made their own way back home after a very enjoyable weekend.

Many thanks to Cathy and Judy for organising the trip.

... Alvin

MID WEEK WALKERS

On Wednesday 26th the mid-week walk came to Euroa. We had ten walkers who met at the Seven Creeks park where we enjoyed a "cuppa". To start the day off. the walkers headed south along the creek but sadly without a lot of water. This took us through the caravan park along the Apex walk track to the "rockies". We continued along the creek, involving a little "bush bashing". The creek being dry we could cross it without much trouble, taking us on to the Strathbogie road and up the Balmattum Hill to the Rotary rotunda which gives you a lookout over the creek, Euroa and the freeway.

We returned back to the creek walking along the other side back to the park where we had lunch and a chat.

After lunch some of the party dispersed for different reasons leaving us with four walkers. Those walkers headed north or downstream if there was water. This took us along the second stage of the Apex walk still on the creek down to the butter factory, which was on "Hot Auctions" on T.V. We crossed the bridge and back along the other side of the creek back to the park where we had a chat and all went our own way.

A great day was had by all.

Betty, Linda and Doug

YARRA TRAIL BIKE RIDE April 2003

Who said that the adventure club had to stick to the bush? On April 6th 2003, Cathy, Neville, Richard, Scott and Tracy plus 5 Melbourne friends (Luke, Richard, Rob, Dan and Nadia) cycled the Yarra River Trail from Westerfolds Park in Templestowe into the busy Sunday markets at Southbank.

We could not have asked for a better autumn day - 25 degrees, sunny and not a hint of a head wind. The only challenge we faced was finding a park amongst all the dog owners arriving at Westerfolds Park for obedience training (for their pets that is). Peter and Alice decided that they would meet us at the lunch stop leaving the rest of us with a scenic ride to the Boat House at Fairfield. The trail follows the Yarra for most of the trip to Fairfield with the exception of a short ride beside the Eastern Freeway near the Kew golf course and a climb up Yarra Boulevard for a great view of the city. The mountain bikers probably added a few kilometres though in their search for the few dirt tracks and jumps along the main trail.

Following lunch and a few beers for some, the remaining 9 (Dan left us after lunch) tackled the remainder of the ride - initially along Merri Creek, then re-joining the Yarra at Dights Falls. Most of us had never been past the Collingwood Childrens Farm, a small "farm" so close to the centre of the city, until that point. The trail gets narrower closer to the city and some care is necessary to avoid pedestrians and on-coming cyclists. However, the only incident occurred just metres from the finish when Rob attempted a celebratory mono but ended up with the bike on top of him! He was nice enough to call out so that the rest of us and several bystanders got to witness the crash. (Apparently that was the first of two identical stunts!)

After trying out the Soutbank food courts, the group split up with Peter, Cathy, Alice and Richard heading directly back to Shepparton and Tracy, Richard and Scott catching the train to Eltham to complete the short ride back to the cars. Neville rode off to have a quick look at the shops while Luke, Rob and Nadia set out to catch a show before returning for their cars. The bike trail from Eltham to Westerfolds was apparently quite a challenge in the dark (apparently the organiser forgot to suggest bringing lights) but all returned safely.

In all the Yarra River Trail is 35 km long and offers some great cycling in the city. It can be done on road or mountain bike and there are some good opportunities to refuel along the way.

Scott

Cape Barren Island, Bass Strait Dec 2002

Wayne had looked at Cape Barren from Flinders Island several times over the past 2 years and had it on his agenda for a while. So on Boxing day a group of 7 keen and enthusiastic walkers met up at the airstrip at Cape Barren to start the expedition and explore the island.

Cape Barren Island is located just off the coast from Flinders. We had flown in from Leongatha on a small plane flown by Flinders island pilot Gordon. Wayne, Melinda, Neville and Sam (from Melbourne) on the first flight at 8 am and Sue, Alvin and me, coming from Tatura, on the second at 11 am. The flight took about an hour and we had beautiful views of the Gippsland coast, Wilson's Prom and Deal Island on the way down.

In my own succinct manner (I once managed to describe a 5-day walk in 50 words for which I still occasionally get abused by the trip leader) I will describe the trip under a few well-chosen headings as follows:

- Wallabies

There were hundreds of them and most of them very smelly and very dead. Walking the first few kms away from the settlement (population about 50) it smelled bad, flies galore and it did not look promising for the rest of the trip. The islanders apparently like a bit of target shooting. Luckily they seem to confine this sport to the local suburbs and after about 5 km the smell disappeared and so did (most of) the flies.

- Walking, walking

We had planned to do about 10-15 km per day. We knew water could be a problem but had a fair idea of where we could find it. The plan was to make a loop anti-clockwise around the western part of the island. This involved mainly track-walking around the south and north coast but also a 10 km rock-hopping coastal section and a 10 km cross-island bush-bashing south-north section. As it worked out the water we had been told would be found at the end of the island crossing was not there and the day turned into a 25 km slog in steaming hot weather that challenged the stamina of many of the 'expedition' members. The little puddle we found in the end tasted beautiful and not too many of us worried about the quality, especially as Wayne assured us that wallabies are intelligent animals that do not use their water supply for toilet purposes. As the water point was overgrown and dark we could not check his theory but

the next creek some kms down the track proved him wrong; the water was saturated with wallaby pooh !

- Food

This was excellently organised. Wayne had put together a menu we want forget easily. Fish in coconut milk with rice, spaghetti a la Wayne, bread sticks with cheese, fish and other goodies (the sticks lost some of their crispiness after 4 days hanging from the backpacks) and other 'Wayne Bites' (I wish he was as good-looking) the names of which I have forgotten. All this topped up with what we found in the 'bush'; Wayne found three abalone that we consumed in the soup and Neville, Alvin and me feasted on oysters from the rocks and mussels and limpets (the latter was an experiment that I tried; they look disgusting but taste actually quite nice) during the last day while the rest of the group decide that it was time to climb a mountain.

- Blisters

Plenty of them around on the trip. You should have seen Sue's little toe and Alvin's feet!

- Water

Enough about the animal input under the 'walking' section. We had water from a rainwater tank in the settlement, seeps on the beach (a bit salty), brown tannin-tainted stagnant water holes, and some slowly flowing trickles that go by the name of 'rivers' on the map. Definitely not a place for people with weak stomachs; nobody got sick though !!

- Mount Munro

At nearly 700 metres this peak was on the itinerary for the 2nd day. However, the well defined track on the map turned out to be non-existent and very densely overgrown with tea trees (some very prickly too !). So we turned back and the mountain was attacked again on the last day by the 4 keenest group members (Sue, Wayne, Melinda and Sam) while the rest stayed at the beach and stuffed themselves with oysters.

- Brownie

- We did not see many of the locals (about 5 in total) and most were not too communicative. 'Brownie' was an exception. After the second day walk, just after arriving at our camp site for the night (a dry lake bed behind the dunes) a motor bike turned up and its rider provided us with optimistic information about the abundant water resources on the island. He was a member of the Brown family, he told us. After that encounter and subsequent searches for the elusive springs and waterholes ("if you can't find water in the creeks, just go up a bit and look for duck holes !"), Brownie's promises were often quoted while checking the falling water levels in the bladders and bottles.

- New Years Eve

We were picked up at 7 in the morning of new year's eve by chartered boat from Lady Barron on Flinders (I still recall the expression on Neville's face when the shipmate rolled out the ladder for us to climb aboard; OK, she actually was very good-looking Neville !).

We hired a car from Gordon the pilot (a man of many talents; owns a farm on Flinders, a farm in Leongatha, runs an airline and works behind the bar at Lady Barron. The girls in the group reckoned he showed potential and was kind of all right!) and toured the island in comfort in a rusted rattling minibus. And the 'grand-finale' of the tour was the party at the Lady Barron pub with Tassie rock band, 400 locals, excellent wine, beer and BBQ and fireworks thrown in at midnight. A good time was had by all (if I remember right)!!

Next day Gordon woke us up to fly us back to the main land. It had been an experience not easy to forget. Next time the east part of the island Wayne !! And thank you for organising it all.

MT. FEATHERTOP TRIP

It went like this:

- .. We got up really early on Saturday Morning, me, Cathy, Brendan and Sue
- .. We drove to the bakery in Bright and gorged ourselves on pasties and stuff
- .. Slogged across the Razorback in terribly bright sunshine
- .. We totally ignored the spectacular views, as we were completely intent on getting there
- .. Got there, collapsed
- .. Ate, set up camp, collapsed again
- .. Got up, crawled towards the summit, didn't make it.
- .. Seen some snow, it was steep and scary.
- .. Meanwhile Cathy pressed on to the summit, but we don't think she made it. She came back hallucinating about naked people dancing around up there.
- .. Then it got cold.
- .. Went to bed.
- .. First wind
- .. Then rain
- .. Then thunder and lighting
- .. And hail
- .. White out
- .. Got up, packed up bailed out and went home.

MID WEEK WALKS (2002)

Our mid week walks continue to be popular with ten to fifteen members coming along each week. We were in Beechworth last may, starting our walk at the powder keg and winding our way through the hill at the back. The walk was quite steep in parts with huge rocks all around us. As usual we finished up at the Beechworth bakery before heading home.

Our walk in June was out to a farm in Nathalia. Very dry and rough in parts. We walked to the end of the property then back along a very empty creek bed.

July saw some of the walkers meet Francis Luff from Numerkah out at Loch Garry for a good walk on flat ground. Once again every tree in need of that rain that we are all longing for. Some walkers went to Noosa to walk with Jan. One of the highlights was the three days we spent up in the Bunya Mountains at the back of Kingaroy. Our thanks once again to Jan for all the work she puts into these trips.

Norma

WEDDERBURN TRIP *July 2002*

On the evening of July 27th, 2002 we set off from Shepparton to our destination-Wedderburn. Wedderburn is a dying gold mining town that once was a hive of activity. Chris and Len, Tony, Monty, Angie, Dave and Di all experienced an extremely enjoyable weekend in the bush at Wedderburn.

We set up camp on Friday night on a property 12 kms North of the town. The campsite was above a dried creek bed but was extremely pleasant. We did not have many conveniences except for an outside toilet but none of us were perturbed at the lack of shower facilities-we didn't mind being unhygienic for two days.

A good night's sleep was had by all and on Saturday morning we were ready for action. We had a leisurely breakfast and organized ourselves for the bike ride into Wedderburn. Di has done this ride many times in her youth and enjoyed the memories this was creating. Everyone coped with the bike ride famously and rode into town with plenty of energy. A couple of snacks along the way boosted our sugar intake and kept our energy supplies high. The tour of Wedderburn consisted of the caravan park, high and state schools, main street, eucalyptus distillery and the local market. Our next step was Di's mum and dad's home where we had lunch and left our bikes whilst we hiked through the bush to another eucalyptus distillery. We checked out the plants, trees and wildlife when walking through the dry scrub. This land is not unlike the Flinders Ranges but not as rocky. This country can be extremely dry at times and carting water is not unusual. Di's father has been transporting water for his sheep for many months and it does not look like there is any relief in sight. Lets all pray for rain, as the situation is becoming desperate. Spirits are high however and positivity is a far better approach especially when we return from our hike to a lovely afternoon tea. Mrs Hayes had cooked for weeks for this feast and everyone enjoyed the delights that covered the kitchen table.

With our bellies extremely full we mounted our bikes ready to return to our campsite. The trip did not take long and we were soon relaxing with a wine and bikkies by our campfire. We all enjoyed a barbecue meal, told jokes, and played games?? And with sleep begging we all retired for the night.

During the night we had some rain but not enough for the surrounding farms. We did however have to dry our tents off under the haystack before packing them into the vehicles.

Our next destination was Melville Caves- an area of granite rock approximately 20 kms from Wedderburn. These rocks always remind me of the movie "Picnic at Hanging Rock". It is a lovely interesting area and we climbed to the top and walked around the road back to the picnic grounds. A barbecue lunch was had by all and we then said our good-byes and departed for home with everyone agreeing the weekend was great. Lets hope we can have another one in the future.

Di

CAPE CONRAN *March 2002*

From Shepparton, it's a seven & a half hour trip if you drive with Ted & Judy & Cathy, nine & a half if you drive with Richard & Sue & a day and a half if you go with Alf & Maartjee. Cape Conran is an exquisite coastal park hidden away in Far East Gippsland. Parks Victoria with a resident Caretaker, flushing toilets and cold showers, administers the Park – you have to heat up your own water and pump it up into an overhead tank if you want a hot shower. Our bush mechanic Ted even repaired the hand pump, which had broken. Campsites have tap water, fireplaces with wood supplied by the caretaker at a reasonable price – he even lent us his axe. We kept a 10 litre dixie on the fire so hot water was available at most times.

Our well-sheltered campsite was only one minute's walk from the ocean beach; hence we spent a fair bit of time

swimming, sunbaking and generally just beach combing.

Activities available, which some or all of us did include, swimming/surfing, walking, bike riding, estuary canoeing, bird watching (both feathered and non-feathered varieties). For those interested, there is also surf fishing, snorkelling and board riding. The wild life is prolific and any food left unattended soon disappeared, whether it be in the mouths of possums, kookaburras, magpies, goannas (monitor lizards) and the like.

The birds and possums were so very tame that they would feed from your hands. The monitor lizards would roam around the perimeter of camp all day just waiting for an opportunity for a free feed. A hysterical sight was a metre & a half long monitor lizard entering Alf & Maartjee's tent and Alf's frantic efforts to get it out again. A family of kookaburras entertained us with their antics, one sat on Richard's head, washing themselves in a bowl of water we put out for them to drink and the piece-de-resistance was one kookaburra having a wash in a bucket of water whilst Ted was carrying it.

Weatherwise we were just so lucky, with lovely warm sunny days and only one morning when it rained.

Apart from activities already mentioned, other away from camp activities included 4WD trip to Bemm River via Gorge and return to camp via Orbost and the obligatory cup of coffee. A counter lunch at Bemm River, checking out a bush camping haunt that Sue & Richard used to frequent well before married bliss days, Counter Tea at Marlo Pub and taking in the beautiful coastal scenery around the Snowy River estuary & ocean entrance.

The Snowy River valley must surely rank amongst the most fertile & picturesque in the country.

All in all, good friends, good fellowship and a very relaxing week.

For most of us it will not be the last time we venture there.

CANYONING - BUNGONIA STATE RECREATION AREA March 2002

The Friday night of the Labour Day weekend saw Neville, Jill, Brendan, Cathy, Sue and myself head off for the Bungonia State Recreation Area, 35km east of Goulburn, for an adrenaline fun packed weekend of canyoning. It was 2.00am Saturday morning before we finally arrived, erected tents and got some well needed sleep. Craig, Bill and Ian (another Zimbie) had arrived a few days earlier to make sure they tackled all the canyons in the area. They were knocking on our tents 8.00am Saturday morning. After dragging ourselves out of our sleeping bags and sorting out all the required gear we were finally on our way. The group was split into two with Craig taking Cathy, Sue, Ian and myself and Neville taking Jill, Bill and Brendan. We didn't meet up with Neville's group again until that night back at the campground.

It's only a short walk from the campground to the start of most of the canyons. Walking out is another matter - straight up. We tackled the "Jerrara Falls" canyon while Neville's group tackled the "Bungonia Falls" one. After only a few minutes scrambling over rocks we encountered our first rock pool and wet suits were the order of the day. Ian tested the water by jumping straight in - the rest of us happily waded across. A few minutes later the real fun (fear) started as we had to abseil down a 30 metre high waterfall. Craig was in great demand - Can you check my gear? Have I got the harness on the right way? The "scary" part for me is waiting around until it's your turn to abseil. Once on the rope, it's a great sensation making your way down to the bottom even though you're a little bit tentative (a little bit!!!!) and people below are trying to help you - "lean back more" (like hell), "place the soles of your feet against the cliff face" (no way), "don't hang onto the rope with your left hand" (I'll tip upside down).

We continued on down the canyon (experts at this stage) at great speed only to encounter an army group in front of us who were developing that comradeship, team spirit and personal confidence in each other as they abseiled down the 70 metre drop that awaited us. So, we sat down and had lunch. This drop required two abseils and Craig went down first to ensure all was OK. We then bypassed the army and the last abseil, made our way along the canyon and walked up the "red track" (straight up) back to camp.

Neville's group arrived back shortly after. The campground was like a motel with hot showers, flushing toilets and a communal kitchen - were we all ended up and indulged in a few "drinks" (and a few more for some) after dinner.

On Sunday we tackled "Bungonia Falls" canyon and Neville tackled "Jerrara Falls". This proved to be more exciting than the day before with longer abseils and a number of rather high water jumps - "it doesn't look that high!!". A little scare with the other group as they hadn't arrived back in camp by 8.30pm. They were just taking their time. On Monday we all packed up and started the long trek back to Shepp. Many thanks to Neville and Craig for taking on the responsibility and giving us the opportunity to participate in an exciting adventure.

... POB

RASPBURY SPUR RENDEVOUS Jan 2002

The long weekend in January 2002 will be a memorable occasion for all who joined Dave and Di trekking through the bush at Gaffney's Creek.

Friday night saw a tired group of guys getting to bed too late and we heard this comment many times during the next two days. That right Dave?

Saturday morning was a reasonable early start and our plan to walk along the mule trail to Wood's Point were thwarted due to happenings out of our control. Despite the change of plans the walk up Raspberry Spur along Germes Spur, then down to the Goulburn River along the mule trail to Chinamen's Bend proved to be an enjoyable alternative.

Along the trail Steve was having a few problems with shin splints but carried on like a real trooper, as did Sue with a hip problem. She walked with the strength of two men with her never say die attitude. As for Richard, well he had a few irritations, but I might add he walked extremely well both days.

Sunday night saw him go down like a ton of bricks and we are not sure what to blame for this. Was it the water, the bolognaise or maybe the company he was keeping?

Alf, the garbie muncher was in fine form with his high fitness level and good sense of humour.

Dave certainly led the hike with the knowledge of a bushman. Do you think this man needs a map? No way. He can work his path through any scrub. All agreed!!

The night spent at the Goulburn was great. Sue, Richard and Di enjoyed a swim and spa at a very pleasant campsite. We all had a sumptuous meal, relaxed by the fire and retired at around 8.30pm as we wanted to get an early start the next day.

On Sunday we hiked away from the Goulburn to Army track and along the road to Knockweed Bridge. This part of the hike was to be the most boring and taxing but a guardian angel called Andy saved the day. We all piled into his vehicle for the 10km journey back to the shack. Everyone was tired after our hard day's walk. Ha Ha.

On Monday we hiked up the back of Dave's block to the mine. Dave gave a tour of this area with Sue, Alf and Steve gaining some information about the A-1 mines but unfortunately not finding any gold.

I would class this hike as medium and you would need a high level of fitness to enjoy it. Let's hope you an

join Di and Dave next time for the trek to Wood's Point via Army track.

--- Dianne R

MT BUFFALO - Our first Adventure Club outing – Nov 2001

A Trip to Mt Buffalo on the 24th and 25th of November 2001 was, after many months, chosen as our maiden trip as it seemed a conservative and safe option. It was also our first chance to use a new swag that had also been purchased many months before. This swag was seen as a necessity after an unfortunate encounter with mosquitoes at Loch Garry earlier in the year. After much planning, and packing of the little Hyundai to capacity, we arrived around lunchtime on the Saturday to find a note of welcome stuck to a car from our fellow adventurers.

We expected our fellow members would have been up since daylight trekking the Australian Alps so it was no surprise to find an empty camp. What did surprise us however was the direction of their return. The group sauntered in from the Chalet, where they had spent most of the morning after sleeping in, commenting on the quality of cappuccino and eats consumed.

The weather had been fine but cool, however rain was forecast during the night and as we weren't sure just how the new swag would perform, plan 'B' was to do a Lock Garry and if the going got tough, or wet, jump in the car and drive home.

We spent a restless evening waiting for the rain; however, in looking back we should have been more concerned about the local wildlife.

The Park boasts of it's wildlife and most of it visits the camping ground at some time during the night to clean up scraps, (some of which have yet to be consumed), upsetting camping gear and generally creating an adventurous atmosphere for all.

We were awoken by one of these disturbances to hear the sound of something running quickly to escape camp. The sound of the running heading our way got louder and closer and we braced ourselves for the oncoming disaster. Would you believe we had set up the new swag on the wombats long proven escape route, and with not even a "sorry mate" or "are you O K" from the damn animal we were trampled.

Now many people have ran over wombats however few can boast of being run over by a wombat and surviving.

We will not name our fellow members in appreciation of the their warm welcome and fine company on this our first adventure.

John and Robin P

Canoeing The Lagoons Near Chateau Tahbilk, Nagambie - 2001

We set off to meet the rest of the group at Nagambie at 11am. What a civilised hour! Len and I headed off to the Gym at 7:30 am on our bikes, planning to do a workout before hand and then ride home and set off for Nagambie. All went well until we got to the gym and found it doesn't open until 8:30 am on Saturdays. So we rode home again!

We all arrived fairly close to on time at Nagambie then headed off to the start of the trip. We put in at a spot with fairly steep banks, so that was our first exercise for the day! Up and down the banks with gear, sliding the canoes down. We took all the cars to Chateau Tahbilk where we were finishing the trip - this didn't take

long.

At the first bend of the river near where we set off there were 7 pelicans sitting watching what was going on. As we paddled closer to them, they gradually flew off - it is absolutely amazing watching them take off - it is like a huge jet liner but only using the power of the air and feet on the water.

It was very gentle paddling, a beautiful day, light wind and sunshine. The bird life was incredible. On the few canoe trips I have done, this surpasses them all for the variety of bird life - ducks, herons, shags, willy wag tails, swifts. The lagoons were very picturesque, water weeds, red gums, vineyards, farmland along the banks of the trip. We had lunch along the way on a mown stretch on the end of the river (there were grapevines nearby). Then we paddled on towards Chateau Tahbilk. We arrived there later in the afternoon and after carrying the canoes up the track to the cars, we sampled the wines and explored the wonderful old cellars.

At this stage we all went our own ways. Len and I were happy to head home as we had plenty of things to do before Christmas. It was a really beautiful day, very relaxing and thanks to the other participants we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. Thanks Jan for organising a great trip.

... Christine and Len T

Mt Piper with the Mid-Week Walkers - 2001

This was a trip to Broadford to walk to the top of Mt Piper. This is a steep solitary mountain rising to 440m between Tallarook and Mt. Wilson and this cone shaped mountain provides the backdrop for the township of Broadford.

Fifteen walkers made the trip stopping for a coffee break at Jeffreys Lane just off the old Hume freeway. Then setting off through bushland on the slow trek along the marked track towards the summit. Quite a few wildflowers beside the tracks and the sun was shining through the trees. The climb was worth it as the views from the top were breathtaking. Pretty Sally, Mt. Disappointment, Mt. Hickey and Mt. Wilson were all there before us. We stayed up the top and had lunch. Just great weather and good company made this an interesting day

Norma

FOLLOWING THE MURRAY TO THE MOUNTAINS RAIL TRAIL WITH SCOTT - 2001

On the Friday night we all piled into the minibus which was going to take us to the Bright Caravan park although at times we wondered whether we would make it with the noises that the bus was making. Rob and Denise followed behind making sure none of the bikes fell off. On the way we enjoyed a birthday cake to help celebrate Pip's 10th birthday. We even had candles for the cake which lit up the bus quite nicely. We did eventually make it to the caravan park and so did the bikes. Sam and Sue enjoyed sleeping under the stars while the rest of us were in our tents. The next day after a leisurely breakfast and a morning cuppa at the bakery in Bright we headed off on our adventure bike ride. Scott and Rob had already left to leave the transport at Myrtleford. It was the most beautiful day which made riding along the track which follows the Ovens River to Porepunkah even more enjoyable. From Porepunkah we rode on the bitumen sealed trail through Eurobin to Myrtleford passing the old tobacco kilns. It is a wonderful way to experience the Ovens Valley. After a most relaxing lunch by the Oven's river in Myrtleford we decided that our next meeting place would be the Gapstead winery. When we arrived we saw Alfred sitting in the minibus which was not a good sign. The winery was closed! We then continued along the bike track for a little distance before we

turning off onto the Buckland Gap Road . Maartje missing the turnoff rode some extra kms along the track, which actually sounded rather nice. None of us realised until we were quite a few kms along the Buckland Gap road and we had initially thought that her slow leaking tyre had really let her down. At this stage the minibus became quite useful especially when we had to tackle a couple of kms uphill. There was even a steep warning sign for cars. I actually walked up and wasn't much slower than those idiots who were determined to ride all the way. Well done to Peter, Justin, Rob, and Sue who did not get off their bikes until they reached the top. The ride down to Beechworth after that hill was a real dream. We couldn't believe when Pip, our youngest, who rode all the way to Beechworth with her proud dad, Mike, came off her bike just before the Beechworth Caravan Park. Luckily no serious injuries were sustained to Pip but unfortunately her new birthday top suffered a hole.

After hot showers and pre dinner nibbles and drinks we took our sore bums and ourselves to the local pub to enjoy a meal we all felt well deserved. We thought Neville hadn't eaten for a week with the amount of food he consumed.

The next morning we went our separate ways and enjoyed what Beechworth had to offer. We all gave the famous bakery the flick due to long cues and ended up at the corner store for morning tea. From Beechworth the bike track went basically downhill towards Everton. The very easy riding downhill was enjoyed by all. This was obviously a popular part of the track as we came across quite a few family groups. At one stage we had a group discussion about which way to go. I, with Peter and Sue, was crazy to follow the mad dutchman Alfred as we ended up going mountain bike riding. It was actually quite fun for a short distance. During this part of the track we came across a group looking at something of interest. It ended up being a tunnel where Ned Kelly was meant to have hidden at one stage. We had a lunch break at Everton and then continued onto our final destination of Bowser.

We all had a wonderful time and many thanks go to Scott for organising the successful weekend and to Tracey for helping with the driving of the minibus.

Cathy B

Johnson's Hut Ski Trip 28th - 30th September, 2001

This annual trip was booked again, and out of the magical hat we ended up with the Football Grand Final Weekend. It has finally dawned on me that this is why nobody else wants to book this weekend - I for one don't care, much preferring to be out on the Bogong High Plains than putting up with all the football '.....'.

Even though this snow season has been very lean, there was still plenty of snow on the side of Mt Nelse to have a few runs on. There was not enough to go for a ski tour though. We all headed out Friday night, the earlier group consisting of Sue, Chris and Steve in one vehicle and Len and myself in the other vehicle. The others, Pat with Richard and Peter, set off later. Due the ski season officially closing prior to the weekend, the road to Omeo was open and we didn't have to pay entry to Falls Creek either, so we were able to drive as far as we could to near the locked gate on the Nelse Fire Track. We walked from there in bright moonlight - we didn't need our torches. The night was quite mild but the wind did pick up as we approached the saddle near Mt Nelse. The first group arrived at the hut at about 10:30pm, settling in and thinking about going to bed when the later group arrived about 3/4 hours later. They must have kept up with Pat's fast pace to catch up so quickly! So, of course after much conversation and a few drinks to warm up, we all went to bed about 12:30 pm. Then the noises started. I couldn't understand how everybody else slept through the sound of rats gnawing loudly all night and then fighting with each other early in the morning - I still haven't worked out what they were eating on Friday night.

Saturday dawned bright and sunny but the intrepid group of night walkers rose a bit later. By about 10:30, we had our lunches packed and set off for the side of Nelse to pass the time with a few runs up and down.

The snow stayed good all day, not turning to slush by lunch time. The sun shone but there was a stiff breeze all day keeping the temperature down. We headed back to the hut during the afternoon, sitting and relaxing in the sun passing the time of day. As it cooled down, we followed the sun over to the snow grass and once it got too cool there, we lit the fire outside the hut. Later, gourmet meals were prepared in the hut and consumed with much wine and frivolity. After everybody went to bed, the rats came out to play again. This time the gnawing continued loudly and I finally found that they were destroying a plastic container. I put it away in a rat proof cupboard for the rest of the night hoping they would find something quieter to chew on. They did - they chewed two holes in Sue's pack and one hole in Pat's pack! They appeared to be after the chocolate that was in the packs.

We had a similar start to Sunday, those leaving packing up their gear, doing a few runs on Nelse and then back to the cars and home. Len and myself were staying on for Sunday night so we decided to walk to Roper's Hut and back for a bit of exercise. It was pleasant walking, but the wind was still strong. We met up with an English couple from Sydney who were exploring the high plains for their holidays. We checked the log book in the hut seeing that Peter and Cathy had passed through earlier in the year. The return walk was better as the wind was behind us. When we got back we decided to try out the shower - Len boiled up some water and poured it into the camp shower. It was lovely to be fresh and clean again. That night we decided to feed the rats. I thought that if the food was easy to get they may not be so noisy! They really enjoyed Sue's Cherry Ripe that they had nibbled on the night before but I left them two slices of bread but they only took one - perhaps they were full!

It started raining during the night. We woke and had breakfast, packed up and cleaned the hut. The rain was still pouring down. By 9:30 we decided it wasn't going to clear so we put our wet weather gear on and set off for the car. We were pleased we didn't have to walk all the way to Fall's Creek in the rain. We were absolutely soaked, my Goretex coat failing miserably - it is very old, I think I might have to shout myself a new one for Christmas. By the time we drove to Mt Beauty, it had stopped raining.

Once again, a very relaxing weekend with good company, fresh air and plenty of exercise.

Christine

Larapinta Trail - PART 1

West MacDonnell National Park - Alice Springs - 2000

It's been a long time coming - but finally a report on our trip.

About this time last year, Sue R, Andrew and myself went to Alice Springs for some walking on the Larapinta Trail. The Trail is being constructed in stages and when complete will extend approx 220 km west from Alice Springs. The trail is broken up into 12 sections and our aim was to do sections 2 and 3 over 3 days and sections 9 - 12 over 6 days . Over the 10 days of walking we covered approximately 170kms in 10 days!

Upon arriving at Alice Springs and visiting the Tourist Information, we realised some rescheduling was needed due to recent rains and closure of sections of the track. After many combinations and computations, we were able to juggle all the people doing our drop offs, so that we could fulfil the walk without missing anything. We ate a great meal at a cowboy style pub - fab food, great wine. Our accommodation was at a backpackers in the centre of town, which we quickly realised probably wasn't our best decision. We were regularly awoken by others and at 4.00 in the morning we couldn't work out whether people were going out or coming in - not a great nights sleep. We spent the next day at the Dessert Park, as well as enjoying another local experience waiting for Andrew to have some stitches out at the hospital and then cruising the accommodation around town to find somewhere else to stay when we get back from the walk. Dinner was had at a Great Swiss / Mexican restaurant in town - strange combination - fantastic food. It was now that we realised that the second focus of the trip after bushwalking was "The Pleasure of Food!!"

Walk One - Sections 12 to 9

Day one - Mt Sonder 1380m- 16km

We were picked up by Charlie, the guide who was to take us on the trip (approx 3 hrs) to section 12. We decided to do this trip in reverse (section 12 - 9) as it fitted in better with an overnight stay and food drop at Glen Helen Homestead. We arrived at the beginning of our walk at Redbank Gorge, where we pitched our tents along Redbank Creek and then spent the day climbing Mt Sonder. Views of scalloped ranges, ribbons of green vegetation following the creek across the plain, Mt Razorback and Mt Zeil in the distance. This was an 8 km walk of reasonably difficult terrain including steep ascents. The area is very remote and tranquil and the only people we came across were a fit Dutch couple who were part of the Dutch Underwater Hockey Team!!!! The final arrival at the top of Mount Sonder was awesome and the 360° views were magnificent. We were able to get views of Mt Giles, ranges, valleys, plains as well as have a good look at what we would be tackling over the next 5 days. The descent was rather rapid and hard on the knees. We returned right on dusk and a well earned meal of freshly made minestrone was on the menu.

Day 2 - Redbank Gorge to Rocky Bar Gap - 10 km

A relatively easy day of 10km, we cruised along to Rocky Bar Gap at the foothills of Mt Sonder. The vegetation varied from spinifex and Mallee Eucalyptus to dense woodlands, where we stopped on a creek for lunch. Our campsite was a tranquil spot, along side a creek bed. On dusk we were visited by a group of curious wild horses, who stood and watched us inquisitively for a short time before galloping off.

Day 3 - Rocky Bar Gap to Glen Helen Homestead - 18km (not counting walking around looking for tracks)

Not one of our better days - overall we lost the track 3 times, making for a long day. The wet weather had made track signs very difficult to see around water due to them either being washed away or hidden in long grass. The day began with us losing the track, a climb which proved hard work, but great views of Mt Sonder again, as well as Glen Helen Gorge in the distance and a treacherous climb down (and one slight fall needing attention). We lost the track again and decided to head for the Davenport Creek, which we were to cross, only to find the track again a couple km's away. The tracknotes discussed a dry riverbed crossing which was actually a flowing river providing much relief from the heat and frustration of the day. After an added walk to find a crossing of the river below our heads, we headed off again with some difficulty locating the track. A few km's from Glen Helen Lodge we reached the great Finke River, which was looking glorious especially since the sun was beginning to set. We reached the highway which was flooded due to the height of the Finke, so it was off with the boots for a wade - we'd made it this far with dry feet, there was no way we were getting wet boots now! A casual stroll into Glen Helen Homestead on dusk and our bunk style accommodation, showers and gourmet meal and drinks - after the big day we had, this was absolute heaven. Our night was spent sitting in the lounge talking to locals and enjoying the comforts.

Day 4 - Glen Helen Homestead to Ormiston Gorge - 16km

The day started with a delightful breakfast at the homestead and a walk around Glen Helen Gorge. We had spent some time the previous night with the Homesteads Helicopter pilot, so we were able to con him into taking us in his ute back across the Fink, therefore eliminating the boot thing of the previous night. The mornings walk included two river crossings, with one causing us to lose the track again. The day continued with a gradual climb away from the lush growth surrounding the rivers to quite barren, dry walking tracks. The afternoon heated up, requiring drink stops nearly every half hour, when we were able to find something that looked like a tree and shade. It wasn't until the end of this walk that we found out the temperatures were in the mid 30's therefore giving us the reason why we were exhausted all the time - we thought we were just unfit!!! The last few km's we came striding into the Ormiston Gorge area, along with a number of wallabies that were racing along side us. The campsite was great, with great facilities such as toilets and shower. In the evening we were picked up by the staff from Glen Helen Lodge to go back to the Lodge and have a few drinks and listen to a live band they had performing that night. Along with us there was 6 of 9 doctors on a walking trip, 2 bike riders who had ridden from Bathurst and a German guy who works for Germany's largest outdoor store - a very fun and interesting night was had.

Day Five - Ormiston Gorge to Summit Camp Spot - 14km

Started the day with a walk around Ormiston Gorge, packed (including water which we needed to carry) and caught up with the other campers before heading off. We arrived at the beginning of our walk to find the path now covered with water. An attempt to cross, resulted in us sinking to our thighs and a quick decision to find another route. We needed to climb a ridge and down a gully, which took an hour, added 1 km to the walk, but we had only made about 100m progress on the map. We continued with a pleasant days walk until we reached the climb to the summit. With

plenty of puffing and panting we reached the top but still had 3km to reach the camp spot. We stopped walking with about 1km to go and 1/2 hour light left, so we could pitch our tents on a very narrow rocky path. The sunset and sunrise on top of the summit was glorious - making all the puffing and panting worth while. It was only through the night that Sue and I realised that we had been bitten by hundreds of mossies coming into camp on dusk - approx 200 bites each.

Day Six - Summit Camp Spot to Ochre Pits - 17km

This was our first real early start (8.30am almost) because we still had a big day plus the extra km we didn't do the night before and we had a scheduled pick up at the Ochre Pits that we desperately did not want to miss. The day started with a very steep descent from the summit. We had some beautiful river crossings and through some spectacular valleys. Sue commented on how lush the area was, compared to the previous years walk. Mid afternoon we reached the Inarlanga Pass which was an important watering point and ceremonial place for local Aboriginals. We climbed through the gorgeous rocky Pass, which seemed an oasis in the desert with the abundant plants and pools of water - we would have liked some extra time to spend in the area. We now had 4km of easy walking to reach the Ochre Pits and our scheduled lift by Charlie. We kept a good pace and arrived with 5 mins to spare - good timing! Our trip back to Alice included a stop at Coles to get some Tea Tree oil for all those mossie bites - one bottle didn't last long!! We went on to our new accommodation - Toddy's Backpackers where we ordered a pizza, which we had delivered to the bar - how nice!

This finished what was a great walk through some spectacular country side which we were often in awe of.

The final part of the trip report will be in the next newsletter.

Andrea F

Larapinta Trail - PART 2

Sunday

After our first walk was complete, we hired a small 4WD which we didn't believe we could fit our luggage and ourselves into - literally sardines in a can!!! We spent the morning and our money at the Alice market, got some real drugs for our mossie bites and headed out to the East MacDonell Ranges. We visited all the tourist spots along the way - Emily and Jessie Gaps, Corroboree Rock and finished at Trepina Gorge and set up camp at the Rockhole campground. We did the Chain of Ponds Walk which was only 2km but took us 1 1/2 hours because we spent heaps of time in the gorge exploring all the wonderful rock pools (another oasis that we loved). We had the campsite to ourselves and enjoyed the luxury of a table and benches to sit at.

Monday

We were up early (our early anyway!) and did the Trepina Gorge Walk, which was a round trip of 18km. This walk included a steep climb to a ridge top walk resulting in great views of the East MacDonell Ranges and then down into the Trepina Gorge creek bed which had limited water flow. We rested with lunch, admiring the sheer cliffs of the gorge before heading back along the road and the spectacular views of the hilly surrounds. We crammed back into the car and headed further east to Arltunga, which is the site of Central Australia's first town, born out of a gold rush. All that is left in the town is a Pub (of course) where they have camp site accommodation. We started our stay with a few drinks, before pitching tents and showering - how nice! We had a great local steak and few more drinks for tea to finish off a great day.

Tuesday

The day began with a great cooked breaky at the pub and then we headed to the Arltunga ruins. A small gorge nearby, Joker Gorge, was a lure for lunch. The area included a few more ruins associated with Joker mine and a pleasant gorge including wildlife like wallabies and lizards, for our lunch time pleasure. We finished the day at Ross River Homestead, for a drink and wandered about, planning another trip to visit again, before heading back to Alice. It was Italian for tea and the Red Ochre restaurant for sweets where native foods are incorporated into some great desert creations.

Walk 2 - Sections 2 - 3

Day One - Simpsons Gap to Mulga Camp- 14km

We joined a tour group in order to be dropped off at Simpsons Gap, where a second walk began after a quick look around the Gap. A great days walk was had, since there was not much climbing. Lunch was had at Bond Gap, a narrow walled gorge with a deep water hole, with plenty of time to reflect and admire the beauty. The interruption by a very strange individual, got us on our feet and away again. A great track for walking though at times the grass height was up to our underarms, making for a funny site along the track. The day was spent walking mainly on open areas grassy flats or low rocky hills. We made it into the Mulga Camp fairly early and had time to relax and explore. The campsite was amongst a Mulga forest and including tables, toilet and water tank - heaven!! We shared the camp with another guy walking on his own - though he headed off to bed really early - we couldn't work our why???

Day Two - Mulga Camp to Jay Creek - 17km

An easy walk across remote country under the huge slopes of Mount Lloyd brought us to Jay Creek in the early afternoon. A very open camp site, on a windy day was not so inviting, so we decided to continue along the track for another few km's to make for an easier third day. We continued along Jay Creek gorge, which is a cutting through the Chewings Range. A deep permanent pool known as the Fish Hole was the beginning where the rocky gorge floor narrowed to only a few meters. We climbed over a ridge and into a mulga forest where we camped for our final night of the walk.

Day Three - Jay Creek to Standey Chasm - 10km

We made our way to the Tangentyere Junction where the track splits to a high route along the Chewings Ranges or the alternative low route through the central valley. We took the ridge top climb as we had been told is worth the effort. An hour's climb straight up resulted in spectacular views of surrounding mountains and the winding timber-lined Jay Creek. On top of the narrow ridge, the wind was blowing wildly and we had to rug up, putting on coats and mittens. Walking was made difficult due to the winds, as each foot was placed with precision on the narrow ridge. The views weren't enjoyed as much as we would have liked, as we were keen to make our way down and get out of the wind. The steep climb down came into the Mesic Gully with lots of growth including cycads and palms. A much earned lunch by a creek and then another fabulous hour climbing through springs and gorges to reach the Angkale Junction, a creek junction at the northern entrance to Stanley Chasm. We decided to take the ridge climb above the Chasm as we were fearful that the Chasm might be full of water after all the rains. A huge climb was endured with the time ticking away and our scheduled pickup constantly in the back of our minds. A wrong turn led us back into the chasm with no where to go due to the water. We climbed back up and across the ridge where we found the track again (1/2 hour wasted - tick, tock - time running out). We eventually climbed into the entry of the chasm to meet our guide with relief that they hadn't gone without us. The bus was full and very crammed with our packs, but we made it back to Toddy's after doing a tour of Simpson's Gap (where we started) as part of the organised tour. Another scrumptious meal at the Mediterranean Café - who'd believe Alice would have such wonderful cuisine.

At the end of two weeks walking continuously on rocks (from small rocks to huge boulders) and hard on our feet, we were none the worse. Many people commented on how Sue and I looked with our many spots - but amazingly they stopped annoying us after a while. This final night brought an end to our fantastic trip, which we loved every minute of. The variety in the landscape we witnessed was magical and I know I have fallen in love with the surroundings and country side. A marvellous trip which will be long remembered - thanks Sue.

Andrea F
