



Ben Cruachan Walking Club

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ISSUE 235 — Newsletter of the Ben Cruachan Walking Club — June 2024



Walkers line up and approach Mt Wellington [Images: Peter Jennings] - see page 5



Ben Cruachan Walking Club



Committee Members 2023/24

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Tracks & Conservation:	Joe van Beek	
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A0004849G

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Club Committee meets on the second Wednesday of even numbered months

The Annual General Meeting is at 7pm on Wednesday 10 July 2024 at Maffra Community Sports Club, 122 Johnson St, Maffra 6pm for meal. RSVP Monica Scicluna 08 July 0431 777 460

The next Committee meeting is at 7pm on Wednesday 14 August 2024 at the Maffra Community Sports Club, 122-126 Johnson Street, MAFFRA.

**Welcome to new members:
Margaret Dawkins, Chen Shujun, Di and David Woodcroft**

Presidential Footnotes

My Tenth Post

In the April newsletter we were looking forward to the Combined Gippsland Clubs weekend based at Licola on 11th and 12th of May. As expected, over 40 people attended from the Ben Cruachan, South Gippsland and the Strzelecki clubs. There were eight walks on offer over the two days although an alternative had to be arranged for one of the walks on Sunday due to the state of a section of the Tamboritha Road. Special thanks to Joe, our convenor who was ably assisted by Judy while Jenny, Kerry and Nicki assisted with cuppas, Jack and Heather ran the trivia and many others pitched in in various ways such as helping with the BBQ. You'll see some of the walk reports later in the newsletter.

Rules and Guidelines (R & G)

On two occasions this year I have been asked about bringing a dog on a walk; this prompted me to check our Rules and Guidelines which state No dogs or other animals are permitted on any Club walks / activities. I think this clause is in our Rules and Guidelines for good reasons. We are usually out in natural areas, away from dog-friendly tracks and there is the potential for interaction with native animals, in addition, we also need to consider other people on a walk who might not like the presence of a friendly pooch.

While checking this out I read the rest of the Rules and Guidelines on our website and suggest that you have a look too, especially at this time of the year when memberships are due for renewal with a requirement to sign an 'Acknowledgement of Risks and Obligations.'

BCWC birthday

I have put a walk to the summit of Ben Cruachan on the calendar for Sunday 30th June to celebrate the club's 59th birthday – it will also be the first of our 60 days of walks – one down 59 to go! See the walk calendar and see you there!

AGM in July

The management of our club relies on the generous commitment of time by several club members. We have a committee of fourteen which, interestingly, is about 10% of our membership. There are some heavy duty positions and some light duty positions.

The Management Committee of the Club consists of the following elected office bearers: President, Vice President, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Publicity Officer, Newsletter Editor, Walks Coordinator, Tracks and Conservation Coordinator and up to five Ordinary Committee Members.

If you would like to become involved please contact me – alternatively, leading walks is a great way to become involved.

*You're off to a great place, today is your day.
Your mountain is waiting, so get on your way*

FINALLY

In my December Footnotes I completed the series of the twenty bushwalking commandments – for a pearl of wisdom this time I have borrowed a line from our neighbouring Strzelecki Bushwalking Club.....

"Of all the paths in life you take, make sure a few of them are dirt"

Peter

Wirilda Fungal Ramble

Date: 01 June 2024

Leader: Judy van Beek

Report: Joe van Beek

Friends of Tyers Park invited BCWC members to join them on a Field Day in the Park. The field day on Saturday 1 June was to explore the rich variety of Fungi in Tyers Park with Eileen Laidlaw. Seven members of BCWC participated in the ramble. Maybe it wasn't even a ramble as every few steps we were discovering more and varied fungi and spending time to discuss and photograph them.

We met at the BBQ shelter at Tyers Park and made our way to the start of the Wirilda Walking Track in sunny calm conditions. Within metres we sighted our first fungi. Eileen knows plenty about fungi and knows how to find them. She found fungi where we had walked past not seeing anything that looked like a mushroom or a variant thereof. After a while we collectively got our eye in and were soon asking Eileen to explain what we had found. Eileen would give us the Latin name, point out the distinguishing features and explain where each fitted in the fungi family. Within a few hundred metres we had sighted over 30 different variety of fungi. An unusual one was

a fungi that grew out of a grub. Somehow the spore gets into the head of the grub.

On returning to our cars, we found the BBQ shelter full of people in medieval costumes. We retreated to the Tyers BBQ shelter for our lunch. Thanks to Eileen for sharing her knowledge.



Walk Reports

Mt Wellington

Date: 18 February 2024

Leader: Peter Jennings

Report: Clare Snell

Walkers: Chris, Trevor, Col, Belle, Sue, Michael, Geoff, Jason, Ian, Richard, Kerry, Chen, Graeme, Clare, Peter.

With the walk to Mount Wellington summit planned for the Sunday, we arranged to meet at Thomastown campsite along Kelly's Lane on the Saturday afternoon. Tamboritha Road up to the campsite was a bit bony at times but, nonetheless, it was a beautiful drive past Licola through the dramatic ranges and eucalyptus forest. Plenty of campsites were available as we staggered in during the afternoon, with some people enjoying a walk down to Shaw Creek to admire the cascading water into a lovely billabong [for anyone keen for a refreshingly cold swim]. Most had set up camp by the time the cloud rolled in late on Saturday afternoon, making for a moody campsite scene. A good gasbag was had by all and yummy barbeque dinner with some delicious, shared treats set us up for the walk the next day.



We set off for the McFarlane Saddle car park at 8am so we could be on our feet and across the plain at a reasonable time for people to head home that afternoon. The weather gods provided a beautiful clear start to the day, and it felt warm from the get-go. The Wellington Plain Track had a nice display of summer wildflowers, with yellow paper daisies, delicate white wildflowers and the purple trigger plant. Dunsmuir Hut ruins provided a good talking point about the previous life of the plains – supporting cattle – and how the Alpine Peatlands still face many challenges to survive. The evidence of previous bushfire in the area could be seen in the

slowly recovering snow gums still showing signs of being burnt.

Mount Wellington was off to our east and yet we seemed to be walking further away from it! A morning tea break was held at the unofficially named Picnic Point (Snack Point according to the previous walk report), with walkers vying for the limited shade. Chris had outsmarted us all with her own hiking umbrella set up. As we approached the Moroka Gap Track it becomes obvious why we needed to have this seemingly longer walk, with the Moroka River gorge's steep walls now on display. A gradual climb brought us to the Mt Wellington 4x4 track and we made our way to Mount Wellington peak. With a height of 1,634m, the views were spectacular in all directions. Cloud sat over the coastal plain so we could not see out to the ocean this day, but it was still a fantastic view.

After lunch we set off back to the cars, enjoying the walk from a different perspective. We made great time, covering around 15km in about 5 hours. Some of us unfortunately had to head home that afternoon for work the next day, with others enjoying another relaxing night camping. As Peter mention in his president's report in the previous newsletter, it was a great mix of new and older club members, and we all enjoyed the weekend immensely.



Mt Hotham Weekend

Date: 01-04 March 2024

COBUNGRA DITCH CIRCUIT 12km

Sunday 03 March

Leader: Wendy Batey

Report: Peter Jennings

Walkers – Wendy, Geoff, Debbie, Kim, Jenny, Liz, Chen, Colette, Nicki and Peter.



The walk was “made up” by Geoff and Wendy in the comfort of the Wangaratta Ski Lodge on Saturday night with the idea to make a composite loop that included 6km of the Cobungra Ditch.



We set out from the Lodge for the short drive to the Wire Plain car park where our walk commenced in perfect, sunny but cool conditions. For a bit of cardio exercise we walked to the Ditch via two ski trails, the Christmas Hill and West Access Track but once on the ditch the gradient was (not surprisingly) a very gradual fall to the Brandy Creek Mine.

The Cobungra Ditch was originally constructed in 1883-84 by the Cobungra Gold Mining Company employing approximately 120 men to bring water from near present day Hotham to the Brandy Creek goldmine for sluicing operations. Along the way there are many places where the ditch had to be cut through solid rock and in other parts there are still plenty of instances where the dry stone walling is intact.

At the end of the ditch we made our way to the



Dargo Lookout for lunch where we found some “eco hypedomes” – a new-fangled way of glamping in the mountains. Apparently fully catered and an optional hot tub!

After lunch, back to the cars – an excellent walk in perfect conditions – our thanks to Wendy and Geoff.

MOUNT LOCH AND BEYOND 12km

Saturday 02 March

Report: Nicki Jennings

Walkers – Colette, Kim and Nicki



On a beautiful clear day three walkers left Hotham and headed to Mt Loch as part of the club weekend at the Wangaratta Ski Lodge. This 12km return walk was an alternative to the Razorback / Feather-top walk that others had chosen. Mt Loch at 1,865m sits high on the Great Dividing Range. We followed a very stony four wheel drive track with spectacular views across to the nearby Razorback where our fellow club members were walking. We could even see them as they made their way along the ridge line towards Mt Feather-top at 1922m.

Mt Loch was just a short diversion off the track and yielded spectacular 360° views of the Victorian Alps. We watched as low clouds spilled over distant mountains in the east. Small alpine plants clung close to the ground to minimise their exposure to

the extremely harsh winters. We continued past Mt Loch for a few more kilometres of undulating track. There were fur-filled scats that appeared to be wild dog or dingo as well as rabbit scats. We also shared the track with a small, shy snake at one point. We lunched on a grassy patch beneath a stunted snow gum at about the 6km mark. On the return walk as we neared Hotham we looked unsuccessfully for a nearby cairn marking the tragic death in 1967 of Charles Derrick of the Wangaratta Ski Club. He died from exposure while trying to ski from Bogong to Hotham. It was hard to imagine such conditions on such a perfect sunny day with all the chair lifts standing idle and deserted.

Our thanks go to Geoff and Wendy for organising an excellent weekend.

TOWARDS FEATHERTOP 16km

Saturday 02 March

Report: Jenny Bull

Walkers – Peter, Geoff, Jenny

Peter, Geoff and Jenny left the lodge which was shrouded in fog at 8.30 am, drove to the roadside parking at Diamantina Hut and stepped out on the Razorback track at 9am. It was Peter's 70th birthday and perchance he was born at 9am. The fog had lifted and we spent a lovely day enjoying the spectacular high country views. At about 1.5 kms out at Geoff's advice we took the southern alternate track skirting the base of a steep exposed hill and avoiding a hard slog. This path then rejoins the track. Same on the return journey. Unbeknownst to us, the Mt Loch crew across the valley kept an eye on our progress. We did 8 kms out, lunched in a shady gully which was also home to a large flock of Yellow-faced Honey eaters, then returned. "Peeky" (Peak finder app on Pete's phone) was put to good use. Mt Fainter, Fainter South, Mt Bogong and the Jaithmathangs. Clear views of Mt Buffalo all the way. There were a lot of hikers out due to the perfect conditions. Early on it was mainly trail runners doing a quick out and back. We were surprised by the number of people (?tourists?) from all over the world. We returned by about 3 having completed 16 kms.

Nyerimilang Hereitage Park

Date: 09 March 2024

Leader and Report: Monica Scicluna

Walkers: Monica, Trevor, Marian and Suzie

It was going to be 38 degrees today so we started the walk at 9.30am. After the lookout, we meandered to the old farm with its display of old machinery. We then went along the walking track, on one side the beautiful Gippsland Lakes and on the other side



large shady trees,

We had morning tea near the shore of the lake. From there we headed back along the salt marsh track and then turned onto the Whistling Kite track. This is an easy walk with the homestead in view.

After looking through the homestead, we sat on the verandah and had lunch. It was so relaxing with a lovely sea breeze. After lunch we headed to the jetty down the 95 steps. It was just starting to heat up when we left for home. Thanks to my walking companions who braved the forecast.

Bentley Plain

Date: 15-18 March 2024

Leader: Peter Jennings

Report: Elizabeth Davis

Walkers +/- Campers: Nicki and Peter, Sue and Michael, Rob and Josie, Philip and Elizabeth, and Ros and Graham (visitors)

Ten of us from Friday afternoon on, ventured up to Bentley Plain, which is part of the Nunniong Scenic Reserve, about 40 kms N.E. of Ensay. This campground must be one of the best around with several firepits, a toilet, several tables, a small hut and a large picnic shelter with a good fireplace and we were lucky enough to have it to ourselves! Which was just as well as we had two camper trailers, two tents and a pop-up vehicle.

This was planned as a relaxing weekend, and the lovely daytime temperatures ensured this, though the nights were very cold and on Sunday night we had to retreat to a fire in the picnic shelter because of unexpected rain.

Saturday was spent walking, running or driving to various points of interest nearby - the fire tower, the Washington winch, and Moscow Villa.

On Sunday, Peter led us on three short, quite different but fascinating walks.

The first was the Douglas Reserve Walk, north and slightly uphill from Moscow Villa. It consisted of giant alpine ash and woolly butt forest, and masses of dianella which must be spectacular when flowering. The highlight of the walk was a rather incongru-



ous massive steel bridge crossing a creek and huge fallen tree.

Back to the villa, then south onto the Bentley Creek Walk which is a loop through damper terrain with lots of healthy spagnum moss beds, a few leeches, and again rather incongruously, a visitors book halfway along.

The third walk was the Bentley Plain Walk, starting just near the camp. It is more open country with views of nearby hills, quite a lot of evidence of deer and wombats, and through lots of just past their use-by date yellow everlastings. The track went to a pretty, deeper section of Bentley Creek then circled back up a steepish hill to the main road, with a short stroll back to camp.

The three walks were all on well-maintained tracks, good signposting, and with lots of good boardwalks in good order. Some of us stayed for another night of camping - it was so hard to leave! Thank you so much P.J. for a really enjoyable and relaxing weekend.

Bryces Gorge Overnighter

Date: 15-16 March 2024

Leader: Oliver Raymond

Report: Gary Watts

Walkers: Oliver, Gary, Chen and Ian

Glorious morning to start our hike – cool, crisp, calm and clear. Oliver and I met Chen and Ian at Glenmaggie just before 9am for what was to be a different camp. For everyone. Oliver hadn't met either Chen or Ian previously and I had only met Ian once prior.

Yes, they had come prepared with 1 pack as heavy as any 75ltr full pack could be by the way the struggle to move it into the car looked. During this moment we were asked if other foot wear might be required. Slippers, if I recall correctly. Quick as a flash Oliver responded with "Take what you like. You're carrying it". Problem solved for the newbies

first date on an overnighter.

All stowed away, Oliver drove towards Licola which was to be our first stop and stretch. Quite a lot of interaction to familiarize each other and snippets of the hike were offered. The road was easy enough to travel on and not a lot of traffic.

Once we got off the bitumen though, it was a different tale. Took all your effort to keep your mouth closed as the road was in very poor condition. So it became a slow drive with a stop at the Bennison Lookout. Always quite impressive to look out over the valleys and mountains. For the rest of the slow bone-jarring, dodging and weaving, traversing across the road, Oliver got us to the carpark in good spirits and it was still the morning hours.

Oliver and I were saddled up with our packs while the newbies were trying to lift the BIG pack onto Chens back. Ohh!!! Grunt. "Very Heavy" was a disconcerting comment even this early in the day. Sheet signed and away we trudge at a nice easy slow pace. No rush as it wasn't too many kms to camp if your pack wasn't too heavy!!

We reached Piemans Falls. Not a lot of water was spilling down the face. Still quite spectacular to see the sheer rock faces and gorge. Here we stopped for lunch and a recoup, with quite a few photos in the mix. At this break I decided to put my 2 bobs worth in with the big pack carrier.

Straps need to be adjusted shorter/tighter to have the pack evenly loaded across hips & shoulders. With this done, surprise at what a change it made. Bigger smiles all round. And comfortable. What I didn't know was that all the gear had been borrowed from another hiker. Happily we hiked on while letting through a group of 3 day walkers who were definitely in a hurry.

As we neared the lookout to view the camp area, we could see the 3 bodies sitting in our area that Oliver had perceived as our campsite. "Look!! They are in our spot" was passed softly through tight lips. On arriving there, the trio was on the move so we selected our preferred positions not too close to the escarpment. We had plenty of space between us.

Oliver and I were straight into setting up our sleeping quarters and making our selves at home. A bit of firewood collecting ensued.

Ian, aka Our Budding Bush Tucker Man, had slung up his tarp between a couple of trees. Arranged his sleeping quarters a fair way underneath for air flow while Chen was puzzled on how his borrowed tent was assembled. Eventually, with some guidance, his tent was erected to much joy. Lots of room in there. At this stage Oliver pipes up and tells them about the possums grunting and running amuck last time he was here. Did the eyes widen with that info!! Make sure you put all your food and gear in the tent. Quick as a flash were the side ways glances.

We all pitched in to get more fire wood for later



on. I suggested that we should have a cuppa before we walk to the bottom of the gorge. So I got out my portable fuel cooker basically brand new i.e. minimal scars, and set it up with metho and lit it. Billy on - out it went. Oh, must be the wind. Same deal again. Various comments and questions were made on how it should be assembled. "Where's the instruction sheet?" was asked. Huhh!! What's that when your out here. Some more positive comments, a few positional adjustments and problem solving input. We were in business eventually. Hot Cuppa achieved.

Oliver leading off, we headed to explore the bottom of the gorge. Not a well defined track but we knew the general direction from those who had been down there before. We left the billy and other water containers at the creek to get later. Safely, we made it to the bottom to be presented with some amazing views, a magnificent little water fall and rock pool. Many photos taken and eventually we succeeded in getting a group photo -- thanx to Chen's technical expertise.

Time to head back so I took the lead with Ian then Oliver following back up the original track. Unbeknownst to us, NOT Chen for only he knows how he found his own track. 50 metres up the hill I rested on a log and waited for everyone to catch up except no Chen. Asked the question, "Was he following? Should of been. Hmmm". Started calling out to him. "Chen, where are you?" Many times. No replies. Here I am thinking that he is still down at the bottom and I'm going to have to go back down. Then we heard some stumbling and cracking of branches and our Chen appears -- rather worse for wear. His comments varied from "I thought I was lost" (Well, you were) to "I must of taken the wrong track" (Obviously) to "How did you guys know which track to take?" (Well!!!) Then he says, in a manner of disbelief, he was heading off to way over there pointing along the eastern wall of the gorge until he heard my voice. Luckily we kept calling. Another small lesson learnt -- keep your eyes on the walker in front of you. Even

at 20mtrs where Chen appeared, you couldn't actually see him. Whew. All good now.

Well, we followed our instincts and nose that this is the rest of the track and again we missed another turn just above the creek. Yes we were able to recognize the drop off and had to back track a little. How easy it is to miss a not-so-worn track. Collected our water containers and happily made it back to camp with more wood. A few more collections gave us enough for the campfire. Didn't take long and we had it flaming away. Sitting or laying around watching the billy boil with plenty of banter was the order of the day. But the cold air started to creep in ever so sneakily but it was coming. Slowly we had all ambled off to bed by 9.00 as the fire died down.



Well it got very very chilly for an autumn night on the mattress. I thought my nose was going to snap off at one stage very early in the morning. It was cold alright.

Next I hear Oliver is up before sunrise as per normal and he tells me he is going to light the fire cause he is freezing. Next thing I hear Chen is up as the fire takes hold in the very breezy Northerly. So I got up and walked over to the fire in shorts & no shoes on. Chen exclaims, "Aren't you cold?" and I reply, "This



isn't cold, just very cool". He then relates his first night fighting with a sleeping bag and not being able to get warm even with all his clothes on especially his feet froze. Wished he had a hot water bottle and MORE Socks. You're carrying it. We had to laugh it off. Priceless moments.

I packed up, fire out and everyone rugged up to break the chill. We continued on to complete the circuit on a very narrow, overly thick, tussocky trail. AND the sun hadn't reached this side yet so quite brisk. No wonder we were very, very cool during the night. The ground was covered in frost and a light fog. It was absolutely picturesque walking through this continually changing terrain taking the odd photo as we went.

Then it happened. Oliver fell over in front of us all. My brain went into overdrive. What has happened up there to the ol'e codger? When I reached Oliver, he was sitting on his butt fiddling with his boot laces and having trouble at that. Cold fingers. "What's happened?" "Don't know. Just over I went but I can't move my feet".

I had a look to see what the issue was. The laces on one boot had got caught up in the top lace-up hook of his other boot. So it is to be expected that you very quickly fall over especially on such a narrow deep track. Untangled and rectified the lace problem by tying the boots up to include the top hook this time. Using that hook as part of the lace up supports your ankle as well as stops something like that happening. We were extremely blessed that this incident occurred on the flats with plenty of soft padding to fall into compared to that happening on the walk in along the cliffs. Just another little item to be alert to when you are out doing what you enjoy.

Stopping at Guy's Hut to do a photo shoot, explore and fill up a water bottle as well as strip off a few layers of warmed up clothing. Marvellous now.

The rest of the walk was pretty uneventful other than taking in the scenery and changes occurring as we entered the line of snow gums from the thick tussocky plain we came from. Just fascinating at how quick it changes and the low ground coverage thins.

Not long to go now. Packed the gear into car and it was agreed we should drive back via the Thomson

Camp from the top road. A slow, roughish track that took quite a while for us to reach the camp site. So we didn't get to avoid much rough road just varied scenery. Back out onto the main road, looking forward to the bone and teeth shattering experiences ahead. Oliver doing the right thing trying to avoid the odd bigger bumps. Then out of nowhere some idiot in a camouflaged ute roars past us. No tooting or warning just rounded us up. What's up with these clowns. Any way we passed them down the track which looked like they were changing a tyre. Oh bugger. And it happened twice. I can't say Oliver was driving any slower than any of us would on such a lumpy bumpy road.

I can honestly say it was a weekend of experiences that I will smile about when thinking of the many scenarios on show for one of the perfect weekends to do an over nighter ..

Well Done Guys

Heart Morass

Date: 23 March 2024

Leaders: Anne and Monica

Report:

Walkers: Anne, Monica Peter, Robyn, Marian, Lynette, Mary, Sandy, Geoff, Chen, Corey, Sue

By 9am the expected 12 people met at the Swing Bridge, about 5 kilometres south of Sale from where we were to commence our walk in the Heart Morass State Game Reserve. We spent the next few hours pleasantly wandering through the flat open country sometimes on the gravel road. At other times on one of the small side tracks that Anne knew about. We were surprised by the amount of water remaining in the lakes probably due to the heavy rains late last year. Butterflies and grasshoppers were plentiful. However, very few of the pesky ones such as mosquitoes or flies bothered us. Saw plenty of wild birds as well such as swans, eagles, pelicans and few ducks. Obviously, the smart ones had already left ahead of the shooting season in April.

Couldn't complain about the mild weather either. About 22-24 degrees for the day. As part of the journey, we met Gary Howard from Field and Game who



managers the game reserve. He was informative and spent some time with us sharing his extensive knowledge of the background and history of the reserve. Finished at approximately 2pm having walked about 14 kilometres.

Cope Hut

Date: 23-24 March 2024

Leader: Kerry Knights

Report: Debbie Smith



Walkers: Kerry, Richard, Dan, Becca and Debbie

The historic Golden Age Hotel in Omeo was our meeting point and lodgings for the night. After a drink on the sunny verandah, we dined on a delicious pub meal before turning in for the night. Then across the road in the morning for breakfast at the Crazy Cow Café and Bakery.

After one false start (involving fuel) we made a hasty trip up the mountain to meet our transfer at Loch carpark, Mount Hotham. The ever-reliable Snow Dog Transport was there waiting for us at 8.30am sharp. We settled into the comfortable vehicle for our long road trip through Harrietville, over Tawonga Gap and then up the mountain to Falls Creek and our destination, Cope Hut.

Before donning our overnight packs, we made a short detour to check out Cope Hut. Unlike other mountain huts, Cope Hut was the first purpose-built tourist structure on the mountain. Built in 1929, the hut provided accommodation for eight skiers with a good water supply and magnificent views down the valley.

We then set off over the wide-open spaces of the Bogong High Plains. The remnants of the magnificent wildflower display were evident, with the golden everlastings nodding in the gentle breeze. Kerry set a cracking pace and before long we were at Cope Saddle Hut. This little structure with its distinct red roof was being given a makeover by volunteers from the Mountain Huts Association. New weatherboards

and a new tin roof were the main tasks. They hastened to add that the new roof would not be painted red. The jury was out on whether this was a good thing or maybe not.

A little beyond Cope Saddle we found a lovely shady spot on the hill under a grove of snow gums. This was our chosen spot for lunch. This patch of snow gums appeared to have been untouched by the bushfires that had obviously affected many of the other trees on adjacent slopes in past years.



The iconic Pole 333 was our next waypoint. This pole marks the intersection of four walking tracks. We turned left to Dibbins Hut, whilst others resting at the pole had the option of Weston's Hut, Tawonga Huts or back to Cope Saddle Hut. This pole also marked roughly the halfway point to our campsite for the night.

We had settled nicely into the walk and were now able to fully appreciate the magnificent scenery. We were enthralled by the imposing views of Mount Feathertop seen from a different angle. As we walked on Mount Hotham came into view. It looked like it was 'just there' however we all knew we had some serious walking to do before it was within our reach.



Soon after Pole 333 we began the big descent to Dibbins Hut. We went from open plains to longer grassy vegetation and then we descended below the

tree line as the track gradually became steeper. The track had recently been cleared for which we were very thankful otherwise it would have been quite overgrown in places. After a little while we reached the junction in the track marking the Cobungra gap and with whoops of joy we arrived at our destination for the night.

We set up camp close to the unused tent platforms and beside the banks of the upper reaches of the Cobungra River. It was an idyllic campsite with the sound of the running stream, copious fresh water and abundant firewood. It wasn't long before the fire was lit (aka the campers TV) and we settled back with food, hot drinks, and a sense of wonder at our achievements and our surroundings. It's times like this when you truly appreciate being happy, healthy, and free.

It was a clear but cold start the next morning with ice forming on the tent as quick as it was being shaken off! However, after a very orderly pack up, we set off for the climb up Swindlers Spur appreciating the cool air. It was a long haul up the spur with hearts pumping and muscles burning. After regular breaks we made it to the top and after a brief celebration we pushed on to Derrik Hut for a well-earned rest. Here we gathered our thoughts and prepared for the last leg of our journey back to Loch carpark.



We ambled back up to Loch carpark with tired muscles but with a real sense of achievement. Our time in nature had renewed our spirits and given us a great sense of 'it's great to be alive'! Thankyou Kerry for organizing and leading what was a fantastic adventure.

Hermits Cave and Koalas

Date: 20 April 2024

Leader: Peter Jennings

Report: Monica Scicluna

Walkers: Peter, Nicki, Frankie, Libby, Ian, Marian, Anne, Robyn, Geoff, Lynette, Corinne, Elizabeth,

Col, Julie, Monica, Ken, Kerry & Debbie.

We met at the back of the Port of Sale, where four cars convoyed to the start of the walk. The 16km walk was through ancient sand dune country with mostly open Yellow Stringy bark forest, which has been logged in the past but had had significant time to regrow into tall trees. The vegetation changed often as we crossed old waterways with deeper soil, or passed through less fertile sand sections. Peter showed us remnants of the old saw mill.

One of the waterways had cut a steep bank and hidden away was a man-made tunnel into a cave that had been used to live in. We searched for koalas but none were sighted. The local koalas are very important as they are descendants of the original population and have a more varied gene pool than the translocations from French or Phillip Islands.



We were entertained during lunch by Peter presenting an animated retelling of the story of Edwin Eastwood who, in 1977, kidnapped a teacher and 9 children as well as other adults he acquired on the way and hid in the forest while awaiting for his bizarre ransom demands to be met.



It was such a fabulous day weather wise and a great group of walkers. Thanks Peter for a wonderful walk.

Tambo Bluff

Date: 27 April 2024

Leader: Trevor Clues

Report: Anne Wilson

Walkers: Trevor, Anne, Ian, Chen



Thank you Trevor for organising this most interesting walk and arranging the perfect weather!



After travelling from Sale to meet Trevor at Swan Reach, we proceeded by car to the start of the Wallaby Creek Track. The track was well formed being created originally to construct the sewage pipeline so the walking was very easy with no trip hazards under foot. The track led us to Tambo Bluff and Lake King where we paused to take some photos.

Then we set off along the water's edge with its pebble foreshore and the going was far more challenging with lots of dead trees and branches blocking the path. At times the choice was either to scramble up the steep cliff or get our boots wet wading through the water. I chose the water option of course! Some kind person had gathered some of the debris and fashioned it into a very interesting structure.

The next stage of the walk was climbing the 100 steps and we were rewarded with a wonderful panoramic view of the Lakes area and distant mountains with Trevor pointing out the various landmarks.

We then continued along well-made walking tracks back to our parked car and proceeded to drive to Shaving Point at Metung to have our picnic lunch. Trevor explained that this spot was called Shaving Point because there is a deep channel very close to shore which the captains of ships used to utilise almost shaving the shoreline as they proceeded. This channel is in fact that deepest section of the Gippsland Lakes system.

Gippsland Combined Clubs weekend

Date: 10-12 May 2024

Reports: see the supplementary newsletter 235b

Fungi and Lichen Walk

Date: 19 May 2024

Leader:

Report:

Walkers: Monica, Lynette, Ian, Richard, Sue and Sue.

If one ignored the miserable weather, it was a great day for a walk searching for fungi and lichen examples in the Morwell National Park. Approximately ten of us turned up at the entrance followed by members of the Friends of Morwell National Park plus a couple of park rangers. A highlight at the start was the koala sitting beside by the track near the entrance ready to welcome us in. After a short welcome from the FMNP people and talk from the rangers, we headed off.

As luck would have it, our first delight was a decent size patch of ghost fungi just a few metres down the track. Best time to view this sort, we were told, is at night because they glow in the dark. Must return during the evening at a later date. As the walk progressed, we came across a variety of lichen and fungi types. Some small and delicate plants, others large and impressive. Saw a few orchids too, another koala and few birds.

By halfway through the park the group had become strung out along the paths so it was fairly slow going. Surprisingly, the landscape is quite diverse. Changing from rainforest to some more open woodland. The winding trails were not difficult and after about 3 hours of walking we returned to the entrance. We did not manage the Bill's Creek trail probably due to the wet drizzly weather and the slow pace. Most of us headed off straight away.

Walk Previews

Distance	Hills	Tracks
S -- Short <10km	1-3 -- Easy, suitable for beginners	1-3 -- Graded open terrain. Well formed tracks and paths
M -- Medium 10-15km	4-7 -- Medium, reasonable fitness required	4-7 -- Bush, minor scrub. Some rock hopping, scrambling
L -- Long 15-20km	8-10 -- Hard, strenuous. Fit walkers only	8-10 -- Bush, thick scrub. Rock hopping, scrambling, creek crossings, use of hands
X -- Extra long 20+km		

Please register with the Walk Leader before the day of the walk.

see website for further details - <https://www.bcwc.au/walks/upcoming-walks.html>

Walk Name	Date	Leader	Contact
Combined Club Walk: Big Creek Basin, Noojee	29/06/2024	Tim Rothberg	0427 595 331
Ben Cruachan Summit Walk	30/06/2024	Peter Jennings	pnjennings@gmail.com; 0428 230 444
AGM	10/07/2024	Monica Scicluna	joe.monica@hotmail.com; 0431 777 460
Larapinta Trail	13-27/07/2024	Robyn Kercher	rkercher@outlook.com.au; 0400 529 407
Strzelecki Ranges	13/07/2024	Sue Wielgosz	starwielgosz@gmail.com 0432 681 610
Angusvale - Jurgenson Point	20/07/2024	Clare Snell	Snellclare12@gmail.com; 0451 923 159
Snow Shoe Shuffle	11/08/2024	Joe van Beek	joevanbeek@bigpond.com; 0411 749 799
Committee mtg	14/08/2024	Robyn Kercher	rkercher@outlook.com.au; 0400 529 407
Hazelwrod South	17/08/2024	Monica Scicluna	joe.monica@hotmail.com; 0431 777 460
Billy Goat Bend - Den of Nargun	24/08/2024		see the website
Billy Goat Bend - Jurgenson Point	07/09/2024		see the website
FedWalks2024 Wilson Prom	11-13/10/2024		https://fedwalks.org.au