



Ben Cruachan Walking Club

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ISSUE 233 — Newsletter of the Ben Cruachan Walking Club — December 2023



The view from Mt Oberon and walkers admiring the aforesaid - Wilsons Prom weekend - see page 5

Ben Cruachan Walking Club



Committee Members 2023/24

President:	Peter Jennings	0428 230 444
Vice-President:	Elizabeth Davis	
Secretary:	Robyn Kercher	secbcwc@gmail.com
Member Sec:	Ken Free	memsecbcwc@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Marian Matchan	
Publicity:	Kerry Knights	
Newsletter:	Jack Winterbottom	newsbcwc@gmail.com
Walks Coordinator:	Geoff Mattingley	walkbcwc@gmail.com
Tracks & Conservation:	Joe van Beek	
Committee:	Monica Scicluna, Janine Muir, Rob Paterson, Clare Snell, Jodie Wigg	

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A0004849G

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Club Committee meets on the second Wednesday of even numbered months

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

Welcome to new members:

**Richard, Sue and Heather Ladley,
Mick Beckers**

Presidential Footnotes

My Eighth Post

END OF YEAR XMAS FUNCTION

We met at Maffra and it was interesting to see our fellow walkers in their civvies rather than their bush gear – we brushed up OK for the occasion. I gave a brief summary of the year's activities which included about forty walks organised by seventeen leaders, leader training, wilderness first aid, website update and four social club nights – quite an active year!

A highlight was the awarding of a life membership to Ken Free. Ken's not sitting back though, he continues to play an active part in the club as membership secretary, walk leader and is leading the task group to make some improvements to the website.

WALKS, WALKS AND MORE WALKS PLEASE

For some reason our walks calendar is looking rather sparse in the coming months. Geoff, our walks coordinator recently circulated a request for walks with about eighty suggestions, he received some good intentions but no dates to put on the calendar. One of the good things about leading a walk is that you get to choose the walk and the date(s) so if you've read this far, how about it? Send your walk preview to the walks coordinator at walkbcwc@gmail.com

THE TWENTY BUSHWALKING COMMANDMENTS – fifth installment.

17. Thou shall include three types of food in thy pack – proteins, carbohydrates and fats

18. Thou shall keep dry sticks in thy tent during the dark o'night for a quick fire the next morn.

19. Thou shall keep thy back to thy fire if using the warmth of ye flame to keep warm.

20. Thou shall keep light items low near thy hips when hiking on trails and heavy items low near thy hips when rock hopping.

With that, I'd like to wish everyone Merry Christmas, happy New Year, all the best for 2024 and I hope to see you on a track somewhere.

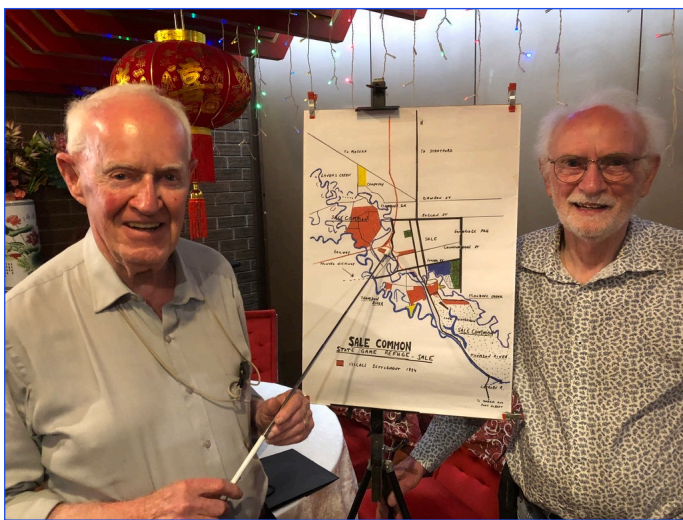
Peter



Club News

Social Night with Peter Synan

On Wednesday 11 November 2023, after enjoying a meal and socialising with fellow members, we were royally entertained, enlightened and historically educated by renowned local historian, Peter Synan. He discussed the 150-year history of the Sale Common and Sale Game Reserve including the role of local identities giving us a real picture of how life was in the 1850s through to present day and the challenges each generation had to deal with along the way and, believe it or not, the significant role that Sale Common played in the town as, literally, a lifeline for widows and returned soldiers. It was fascinating. Peter [left] is pictured with Ken Free.



Sixtieth Anniversary Year

Our club will be 60 years old on the 23 June 2025 which means our sixtieth year commences on, say, 01 July 2024. Next year. Watch this space for updates of what may be on. Although 60 years is, perhaps, not as significant as 50 or 75, it is a diamond year so deserves diamond-coloured recognition. At the committee meeting on 11 October, we heard about the plan for a club Larapinta Walk in early July 2024 (EOI article in the August Newsletter) to be lead by Robyn Kercher which will give us a 12-day head start to 60 walking days in our sixtieth year. Become involved. Lead a walk! Contact the Walks Coordinator for more details.

BCWC Website

The website has been freshened up by John Cox and a committee headed by Ken Free is looking at how/where we can make it easier. The committee meeting on Weds 13 December heard of various changes that can be easily implemented. These will include making the site much easier to navigate with

any page no more than 3 clicks away! Some pages have become redundant over time and will be removed. Ken's sub-committee will make recommendations to the February committee meeting. If you have suggestions, please get in contact via Ken's Membership Secretary email address on page 2.

Walks Program for 2024

On page 9 of this newsletter, you can see that we are bereft of walks for the first few months of the year. Keep an eye out on the website as there are walks planned but without dates due to various circumstances. That said, there is always room for an extra walk. If you have lead one before, how about leading another. Searching for inspiration as to where? There are many on the website at <https://bcwc.au/walks/walk-previews-and-plans-archive>. Most importantly, let Walks Coordinator, Geoff, know of your intentions to lead a walk. Email him at walkbcwc@gmail.com

Christmas in December

A great time was had at the Maffra Club.



Walk Reports

Lonely Bay

Date: 21 October 2023

Leader: Trevor Clues

Report: Maz Matchan

Sun shining, birds chirping, Trevor accompanied by John, Jane, Ann and Marian headed off down a grass covered track, with ferns, fallen timber on either side and heaps of bark covering the track, at times we had to climb over fallen trees blocking our way. We meandered along through the bush with big gum trees looking down on us, then wow, the views across the water were magnificent, we were looking across the Aboriginal Trust property in one direction with views back to the settlement of Lake Tyers in the other. We moseyed along, overlooking the water, the odd boat passing by, a few water birds feeding and flying about. We settled ourselves at a picnic area for an early lunch and interesting conversation. We then headed along an 4 x 4 track through the bush back to our cars.

After dropping John and Jane back in Lakes Entrance, Trevor, Ann and Marian decided to do a walk along the North Arm. We walked over the bridge back in the Bairnsdale direction and turned sharp right along the waters edge on an old unmaintained track. The track was nearly washed away in parts, vines entangled over other vegetation hanging down over the track. At the end we climbed westwards up a steep road, views looking back down across Lakes Entrance were fantastic. You got a real prospective of just how narrow the piece land that Lakes is built on really is. So then down the steep hill and returned to our cars.

Thanks Trevor for a great couple of walks and turning on the good weather.

Wilson's Prom Weekend

Date: 27-29 October 2023

Organiser: Monica Scicluna

Mt Oberon Summit Walk

Date: 27 October 2023

Leader and Report: Janine Muir

Walkers: Liz, Sue, Michael, Maureen, Maurice and Janine

We set off from the Telegraph Saddle car park about 2.15pm in high spirits and lovely weather - although it was so windy at times we half expected to be blown to Tasmania up the top! For most of the 350m climb we walked along a vehicle track,

followed by a step climb and rock scramble, before popping out to the most amazing views. It was busy up the top but thankfully not windy at all - and the views... did I mention the views!!! Maurice went for a climb around the rocks, encouraging me to do the same - and I sure was super glad for the prompt. Fun times. After about 20 or so minutes sitting, chatting, photos and just generally taking it all in, we made our way back to the steps to start the descent. The weather was still glorious, but as we got lower the freezing cold wind really took hold. Before too long we were back at the car, adventure complete (time now 4.20pm). Many thanks to everyone who joined this walk - your company was greatly appreciated.

South Point

Date: 28 October 2023

Leader: Janine Muir

Report: Clare Snell

Walkers: Janine, Briany, Lynette, Liz, Micheal, Clare

A strict 7:30am start was needed if our small group was to successfully tackle the planned 36km (yes you did read that correctly) from Telegraph Saddle, down through the centre of Wilson Promontory to mainland Australia's southernmost point, imaginatively named South Point, and then back to Tidal River campgrounds via Oberon Bay, all in one day. Our fearless leader devised a comprehensive plan, which was tracked though the day with a fancy Garmin satellite watch, you can see our impressive stats at the end of this report.

We set off heading down the Saddle, with the delightful white flowering kunzea (*Kunzea ambigua*) providing a delicious smell in the air. The Saddle isn't known for being the most exciting part of the Prom, but the easy walking set us in good spirits for what was ahead. We made it to Roaring Meg campground in good time, arriving before our scheduled time of 10:30 and had our first official break of the day, having previously only stopped briefly to make use of the wooden chairs provided at the Junction.



We walked through the beautiful eucalyptus forest over an undulating track with spectacular granite outcrops. We glimpsed the wild Bass Strait and the impressive granite islands jutting out of the wild sea along the track.

Our arrival at South Point was made more special with a dramatic sky highlighting the wildness of the place. We quickly wiled away half an hour marvelling at the stunning rock formations and keeping an eye out for a possible whale, which alas was not to be. This meant we were now on scheduled time and had to get cracking to make sure we made it back in time for the evening barbecue.



We roamed back to Roaring Meg where we had a quick lunch. Many photos were taken along the way of the late spring wildflowers still on display.

From Roaring Meg we had a decent climb back to Telegraph Junction where we turned off for Oberon Bay. A couple of us recalled it being a bit of a slog through soft sand down to the campsite but fortunately a decent track made the walking pretty good, and we were back ahead of schedule. We had a quick stop at the Oberon campground where lots of sugary treats were shared around. A highlight of the walk was to be had on Oberon Beach with an echidna spotted on the sand, which tried to burrow into the sand for safety as we approached. We had our one and only water crossing of the day, with some taking finding the perfect spot to cross very seriously.

Our final rest was had on a rock on Little Oberon Bay, where we watched a crow stealing a chip packet out of unsuspecting beach goers bag. The wind had picked up by now, but we all enjoyed the break with our legs starting to feel tired. We had the final push back to the campground but the spectacular views made the walking very enjoyable. We made it back by 5:30pm, with tired bodies but a wonderful shared experience, crushing the amazing challenge

we had set ourselves.

Stats

Avg speed 3.6 km/hr

Avg moving speed 5.0 km/hr

Oberon Bay

Date: 28 October 2023

Leader: Monica Scicluna

Report: Debbie Smith

The weather was a little fresh for the 11 participants at first with some cloud cover. A perfect day for a coastal walk.

From our lodge accommodation in Tidal River, we set off for a 12km return hike taking in Norman Beach, Little Oberon Bay and then Oberon Bay. The beautiful white sandy beaches, turquoise waters and the magnificent granite tors that are a prominent feature of the Prom made for a very pleasant walk.

Oberon Bay was chosen for lunch with the prospect of getting wet crossing the running stream the deciding factor for most. Three walkers who were up for the challenge decided to continue on and return via Telegraph Saddle car park. This involved an extra couple of kms and a 3km climb up to the car park where Monica provided transport back to the lodge.

The others regrouped after lunch and returned along the same trail. The magnificent scenery was just as beautiful on the way back, with the sun coming out just in time to light up those magnificent views. A great day was had by all – thanks Monica for taking care of all the details so that we could have such a wonderful weekend.

Three Bays: Squeaky Beach, Picnic and Whisky Bays

Date: 29 October 2023

Leader: Monica Scicluna

Report: Kerry Knights

The annual Wilsons Prom weekend concluded on Sunday with the Three Bays walk.

Leaving George Robinson Lodge it was a pleasing stroll on a well defined track, with twelve hikers enjoying perfect hiking conditions. Meandering through the camp ground, they crossed Tidal River footbridge, with reflections from the inward tide providing photo opportunities. The track rose towards the headland. Views to the towering mountains and enticing bays were seen through gaps in the dense foliage. Upon cresting the headland, hikers were met with sweeping views of Squeaky Beach, and the promise of more epic landscape ahead. Lichen covered rocks met the azure ocean, with waves gently lapping the shore. Walkers enjoyed premium sand along the beach, with the sound of waves an accom-

paniment to the footfall and convivial conversations.

The ever changing vegetation of the headlands revealed a rare orchid, thanks to the eagle eyes of one hiker. This has been confirmed as *Thelymitra benthamiana*, the Blotched Sun Orchid (aka Leopard Orchid). These are endemic to Wilson Promontory and western areas of Victoria.



Blotched Sun Orchid - Kerry Knight

Upon arrival at Whisky Bay, hikers enjoyed a fine repast, including some particularly delicious banana cake, before either retracing their steps back to Tidal River or strolling on to the available vehicle.

'The Prom' has a special place in the hearts of many Victorians, and the hiking available over the weekend confirmed what a natural treasure the Park is. Thanks to Monica for arranging this weekend, and for all those who participated.

Vereker Lookout

Date: 28 October 2023
Leader: Monica Scicluna
Report: John

Commencing from the Five Mile Road car park, we walked along a single lane gravel road for about 200m to the 'Vereker Lookout' sign on the right. This is a track in good condition track rising steadily then levelling out before a T junction where we turned right after which we had a steady rise with well formed steps (none loose) and views to ocean along the way Left at a small gnarled tree and continue to the lookout. At 300m altitude among boulders, the lookout provides extensive views to the ocean. It

was 6 km return, 3 hrs max, on good dry clear track with moderate vegetation limiting exposure to wind. Watch for 3 [or so] head-bumping branch-overhangs along the way!

Balook & Cyathea Falls

Date: 05 November 2023
Leader: Peter Jennings
Report: Elizabeth Davis

Walkers: Peter, Elizabeth, Geoff, Sue, Collette, Peter, and Sherran.

It was a cool, showery and misty morning when we left the Visitors Centre car park for our 20km walk through the Park, which was declared in 1903. Whatever the weather, it is a stunning park with mountain ash, daisy bushes which were in full flower, lots of leeches, steep banks and gullies of tree ferns with their crowning spring growth, lots of leeches, lichens and fungi, and lots of leeches.

We wound our way along well marked and maintained tracks for 8km, including Diaper Track, named after the previous farming family there. A lyrebird ran across the track, a young wallaby was prepared to stand and watch us for longer than we were him, and we heard lots of kookaburras and whip birds.

We emerged onto the main Balook bitumen road and walked 15 minutes to the Cyathea Falls picnic area where we had lunch under cover and dried out wet leech infested waterproofs on handy posts.

Following lunch we walked the 15 minutes to Cy-



athea (scientific name for tree fern) Falls, passing some huge beech trees, one of which is believed to have roots over 1000 years old! Back at our lunch spot we decided we had seen enough leeches and so we returned to Balook 10km up the bitumen rather than the damp narrow walking track - harder on the feet but also easier to look around and admire the bush.

Beautiful tame rosellas greeted us back at the cars. Thanks PJ for a great day!



Cyathea Falls

Port Albert

Date: 12 November 2023
Leader: Monica Scicluna
Report: Marian Matchan



The sun was shining, light breeze in the air. Monica, Maureen, Mary, Marian, Ann, Lisa and Trevor headed off along the foreshore towards our destination "The Fish & Chip shop". The sand was firm making easy walking, lots of erosion was visible along the high banks with Banksia plants washed away and lying on the beach. The beach became a little boggy so we climbed up the bank and walked along a

path still with views across the water. We then turned a little inland on a narrow path through the tea tree which sheltered us from the wind that had picked up a little. There was heaps of pigface just coming out in pink flowers, other yellow and white plants that we could not identify. In the mud of the track there was perfect foot prints from kangaroos or wallabies that obviously use this track often. We could see the town of Port Albert in the distance as we came out of the tea tree and walked along a well made track between the houses at the edge of town and the water.

We had now arrived at the Fish & Chip shop, built on the edge of the bay, it was quite busy inside so we sat on the decking out the back overhanging the water. We all filled our bellies with fish, salad and plenty of chips. A handy tip: When you order fish and chips and end up with heaps of chips over, wrap them up and take them home, pop them in the freezer. When ready for a fix of chips, spread some out on a plate, stick them in the microwave and heat for 30 to 50 seconds. I have it on good authority that they do not come out soft and mushy but remain crisp and crunchy.

With full bellies, we retraced our steps back to the cars. The wind had picked up by this stage and wasn't as pleasant as earlier. We covered 11kms for the day, great company, good conversation and a wonderful leader. Thanks Monica.

Buchan Caves Reserve

Date: 22 November 2023
Leader: Robyn Kercher
Report: Ken Free

Walkers: Robyn, Colette, Geoff, Ian, Ken, Nicki, Peter.

On an overcast but pleasant Wednesday, 4 of us travelled from Sale and met up with the Wy Yung/ Eastwood contingent of 3 at the Buchan Football and Netball Reserve for what promised to be an enjoyable day walk in the bush around the Buchan Caves Reserve. On the drive into Buchan, the blackened tree trunks were a reminder of the devastating bushfires that swept through here in the summer of 2019/2020.

Our walk commenced on a veritable superhighway of concrete pathway complete with solar powered lights every 50 paces, presumably funded by post-fire rebuilding funds. Soon after entering the Caves Reserve, we turned onto the Moon Hill Walk which got our collective hearts pumping and led to a lookout vantage point. On the way up the hill we diverted to Moon Cave and shortly afterwards stopped for a photo at the Devil's Punchbowl, a collapsed cave system. At the top of the hill we had panoramic views of the Buchan Valley, with the Buchan River

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.bencruachanwalkingclub.com/upcoming-walks.html>

Walk Name	Date	Grade	Distance	Leader	Contact
Hotham to Harrietville	05-07/01/2024	mod - hard	22km	Kerry Knights	kerryknights@aussiebb.com.au; 0431 462 464
Mt Hotham 4-day weekend	01-04/03/2024	various	various	Geoff Mattingley	geoffmatt@aussiebroadband.com.au; 0429 084 216
BTAC - Zeka Spur	26-29/01/2024	https://bushwalkingvictoria.org.au/btac/			btac@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au.
BTAC - AAWT	23-25/02/2024	https://bushwalkingvictoria.org.au/btac/			btac@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au.
FedWalks2024 Wilsons Prom	11-13/10/2024	various	various		https://fedwalks.org.au

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below us and clearly defined limestone seams on the hills opposite. Signage on the hilltop informed us that the locally indigenous Buchan Blue Wattle (*Acacia caerulescens*) is classified as vulnerable under Federal Law and threatened under State Law. Since the 2019-2020 bushfires, a program of revegetation has seen large numbers of Buchan Blue Wattles planted on sites within the Reserve.

From Moon Hill we walked uphill in a north-westerly direction passing through quite thick and healthy looking regrowth consisting of a mix of species including Prostanthera (native mint bush) with masses of white flowers. At the top of the hill we turned west and joined the Northern Arm Track which initially descends steeply to our first creek crossing (without water!) before following uphill a relatively new fence on the boundary of the Reserve. Despite the grass being greener on the farm side of the fence, it was on our side that we encountered wildlife: firstly, quite a handsome red bellied black snake and secondly, an equally handsome and well-nourished goanna. Both reptiles seemed happy to pose for countless photographs before we carried on our trudge up the hill.

Before reaching the top of this hill, we took a left turn (south) onto a well maintained track through

quite healthy bush. After around 1½ kms we turned down Junction Track and then took a right turn onto Granite Pools Track which had a number of creek crossings, again with no water. At a rather picturesque crossing of Spring Creek it was agreed that this was an ideal spot for lunch; a stop which was timed to the second by our intrepid leader!

Following lunch, we ambled through the bush for about 200 metres, crossed Spring Creek once more and with a scramble uphill to the spot where once there was a viewing platform (pre fires), we had a great view of the Spring Creek Waterfall with no sign of water, falling or otherwise. The final section of the walk was a gentle amble on the Tea Tree Track back to the Visitor Centre with the option of ice creams before taking the concrete superhighway back to the cars.

This was a very enjoyable midweek walk with interesting vegetation, some history, a few challenging hills for those of us in need of a good workout and some reptilian wildlife. Thank you Robyn for a great day in the Buchan bush.