



Ben Cruachan Walking Club

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ISSUE 232 — Newsletter of the Ben Cruachan Walking Club — October 2023



Walkers stride along in the Colquhuon Forest see page /

Ben Cruachan Walking Club



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Club Committee meets on the second Wednesday of even numbered months

The next Committee meeting is at 7pm on Wednesday 13 December 2023
at the Maffra Community Sports Club, 122-126 Johnson Street, MAFFRA.

**Welcome to new members:
Sherran Howlett, Sandra Tozer**

Presidential Footnotes

My Seventh Post

SCAM ALERT

An email purportedly from me has been received by some members of the club asking them to purchase \$400 worth of iTunes vouchers then send a scan of the bar codes to a dodgy email address. Please ignore and delete – I don't need your money!

OUR EUROPEAN TRIP

Nicki and I are home from our Rugby World Cup tour and trip four weeks early due to an intermittent back problem that I have that flared up whilst in France. My condition deteriorated over a few days to the point where I became immobile. A doctor attended me in our hotel room and after a pain killing injection prescribed a program of heavy duty anti-inflammatories and pain killers to allow me to come home in relative comfort. I am moving quite freely now but have booked in for a scan to see if we can find the problem and hopefully fix it. The Wallabies are also home – for a different reason.

OCTOBER COMMITTEE MEETING

Joe gave a report on the great track clearing work that the voluntary group, BTAC does (Bush Tracks and Conservation). The Gippsland BTAC activities are often listed on our Walks Calendar. If you would like to get involved I'm sure Joe van Beek would like to hear from you. You can also check out their activities at this website <https://bushwalkingvictoria.org.au/btac/>

BCWC is hosting the **Combined Gippsland Clubs' Walks** next year. It will be a mini Fedwalks based at the Licola Lions' Village, most likely in April. Keep an eye on the walks calendar.

We have started planning for the Club's 60th year (2024-25) which will culminate in a celebration in June 2025 on the summit of Ben Cruachan. Apart from the celebration, the idea of renewing and updating the toposcope on Ben Cruachan mentioned last newsletter has been raised with Parks Victoria who is supportive. It was also suggested that we plan sixty days of walks during 2024-25. Robyn Kercher's Larapinta trip (likely in July) will be a good start with twelve days to get us started.

WALKS CALENDAR

There are plenty of gaps on the walks calendar between now and Christmas for those who would like to lead a walk.

THE TWENTY BUSWALKING COMMANDMENTS – fourth instalment.

13. Thou shall carry chocolate for thy energy and mental health needs.
14. Thou shall consider wood, water, ground condition and shelter when choosing thy campsite.
15. Thou shall carry thy first aid kit and emergency ration of rice (or carbs).
16. Thou shall know how to use and carry thy map, compass and Personal Locator Beacon.

Peter

Club News

Social Night with guest speaker

On Wednesday 11 November 2023, after enjoying a meal and socialising with fellow members, we will be historically educated by renowned local historian, Peter Synan. He has written a number of books on Gippsland history and in recent times co-ordinated the restoration of the Sale Water Tower and the Sale Powder Magazine.

Peter will discuss the 100-year history of the Sale Common and Sale Game Reserve including the role of local identities.

This will be a great evening full of bonhomie and elucidation. The venue is our usual haunt in Traralgon, Wan Loy Restuarant, 6B Church Street, Traralgon. RSVP by Monday 09 November to Monica Scicluna on 0431 777 460 or joe.monica@hotmail.com.

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 (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.

FedWalks 2023 Trentham - Wombat State Forest -

This event ran last weekend based at the Trentham Sports Ground Reserve (in Trentham). 220 walkers participated in 20 walks ranging from Easy to Hard, all within 35 kilometres of the ground. A bit different from the Licola event in March last year! Four Ben Cruachan members either walked or helped organise plus a houseful of Strzelecki members participating in various roles too. As no club had put its hand up to organise the event, an ad hoc committee was formed a year or so ago to "just do it". Robyn Shingles (current Strz member and BWV President) was the convenor of the event, Col Purchase (Essendon BWC) was Walks Coordinator, Jack Winterbottom (BCWC) did the booklet, Martin Norris (Strz) the maps plus Mark Summers and Gail Davies (both Gisborne BWC) gathered up all the other jobs and Gail Greenwood (Essendon) and Jenny Hosking (BWV) providing lots of input. We met the new Executive Officer, Richelle Olsen, who will bring enthusiasm and a new perspective to running BWV. Previously, she had run

a private bushwalking club!

The nerve centre for the event was based at the brand new Trentham Football and Netball Club rooms. We were the first non-footy club event held there. It was an excellent spot, there was camping available and there were about 20 toilets and 3 showers available! No-one was caught short. Saturday was a nice day but Sunday dawned cold, windy and drizzly. Some walkers either decided to stay warm and dry or change the walk they were going on. This meant, due to low numbers, two walks were rolled into one. The misty drizzle went across the show-ground at a fair clip (30-40 kph) but spirits remained high on the walks and it dried off during mid-afternoon. The army of kitchen volunteers, very ably run by Di, provided a rolling afternoon tea on both days.

More volunteers served the meal for the event on the Saturday evening during which we heard from Jeff McDonnell (Bayside) whose club is organising the 2024 event aided by Melbourne Bushwalking Club. The brand new, massive flat-screen TV was eventually tamed with a steam-powered computer to show Jeff's "advertising" presentation. Guest Speaker was Peter Yates, anthropologist and garlic grower, who lives locally. He showed a beautiful video of local environmental images including floodplains, red gums and revitalisation and talked about aspects of left brain/right brain and mythopoetics - a hypothetical stage of human thought preceding modern thought - the language of the soul and how bushwalking can be a way to tap into our right brain potential.

It was a great weekend with no dramas, with friendships renewed and formed over a common interest of walking in the bush. Next year's venue could inspire you to take part. There will be other Ben Cruachaners there so you will know someone.

FedWalks2024 - Wilsons Prom

Planning is well underway for this event which will celebrate the 90th anniversary of BushWalking Victoria. The venue is Tidal River. Accommodation for 300+ attendees has already been organised and secured thus circumventing the Parks Victoria booking system and guaranteeing accommodation for the weekend (roofed, powered and unpowered sites). Booking will be open later next year. The plan is 15 walks with a maximum of 20 per walk. Bayside and Melbourne Bushies are having a reconnoiter week in December to get it all into place. This is bound to be a terrific event. Keep an eye on the FedWalks website <https://fedwalks.org.au> (yes, it currently has 2023 info on it. That will change as the 2024 committee gets things going - be patient) and there will be an update in each BCWC Newsletter.

Walk Reports

Walhalla

Date: 12 August 2023



Old Port Trail - Port Albert

Date: 19 August 2023

Leader: Belle Deacon

Report: Clare Snell

Walkers: Belle, Marian, Clare, Peter, Colin, Ian, Trevor

With a scheduled departure of 9am from our meeting point in Sale, it was lucky we were running right on time, as we had an unregistered walker turn up just before we were about to leave! After some quick back and forth, we found that a misplaced digit in the phone number meant the walk leader did not receive the request to attend the walk. This is a

good reminder that if you haven't heard back from the walk leader about your attendance on the walk, check you have contacted them correctly!

We set off for the pleasant country drive down to Port Albert, with grey skies promising the possibility of a shower. On arrival we set out, most with our raincoats on, to meander along the coastal trail. Very quickly we spotted a sea-eagle circling, one of the many different birds we saw along the way. The flora was just as interesting, with stands of beautiful old grass trees amongst gnarly banksia forest. The coastal heath provided good protection from the gusty winds, and we had plenty of opportunity to get down onto the estuary's edge. Peter shared a bit of the recent history of the area, and we found some old glass pieces in the sand from the bottles that would have come from one of the many watering holes that used to be along the trail.

We arrived at Port Albert, and quickly got a seat at the local fish and chip shop. We had a tasty lunch, with some choosing to eat their packed lunch. Hot tip, if you are ever at the fish and chip shop here, a single serve of chips is plenty for 2-3 people! After warming up a little inside, it was time to head back the way we came. It is always interesting to do the same walk in a different direction, you get a new perspective, and the mangroves were now more prominent. We took a quick detour to check out a plaque for Angus McMillan, but it has now been removed. It would be great to get some information in its place about the First Nations' people and their stories of the area.

Well done to Belle for her first walk as a walk leader. We are all looking forward to doing many more with you in the future.



Mississippi Track

Date: 20 August 2023

Leader: Debbie Smith

Report: Kerry Knights

One of the joys of bushwalking is reconnecting with nature, often in the company of like-minded people, and being reminded of the natural treasures which abound in Gippsland.

Mississippi Track, near Bruthen, is one such destination. It fills a hiker's heart with delight, and coupled with the perfect weather conditions, had 18 happy hikers completing some 14 km in fine style. Mississippi Track follows the old tramway route, alongside the creek, from the Quarry down towards Lakes Entrance. Hikers met up at Bruthen, drove to Bruces Track, and from there was a car shuffle along the gravel road to Log Crossing Picnic area.

The Quarry on Mississippi Creek was opened by the Coate Brothers in 1904. Granite was needed to renew and reinforce the man-made entrance to the Gippsland Lakes, originally constructed in 1889. The Tramway, built by hand, involved several deep cuttings to create an even grade. The end of the tram line was at the head of North Arm, near Comers Landing. Blocks which could weigh up to 5000kg were moved on to barges which carried them the 6 km or so to The Entrance, where they were strategically placed. The original sides of the waterway at Lakes Entrance had been reinforced with timber, which eroded over time, having succumbed to the perils of hungry insects.

However, today, no such fate befell the hale and hardy walkers. A gentle breeze rustled the leaves up high, with the sound like a cascade of applause, as we began the hike. A wide and gentle path wound through spectacular eucalypt forest, with bursts of wattle in bloom adding contrast to the thousand shades of green. Tree ferns stood as sentinels along the track. Lichen dusted tall tree trunks. Birdsong resonated through the bush and sun lit the gossamer threads left by spiders in the branches. Bees and other insects provided a background of hum and buzz, with the smells of blossom and the bush prominent. The happy chatter of hikers added a hubbub to this landscape. Remnants of rails and sleepers were evident along the track.

Having strolled some 8 km or so, we arrived at the Quarry for an early lunch. This amphitheatre of space had an interpretive sign, an original set of wheels with axle and a pleasing slab of polished granite embedded in the platform. The walls of the quarry rose grandly, with ferns, grasses and mosses slowly reclaiming the site. Following lunch, and soon after the arrival of mosquitoes, we continued on to the end point. A couple of sharp inclines tested legs and lungs, particularly so soon after resting, with the characteristics of the bush changing with



the different elevation. Hooded Orchids had popped up along the track, and Kookaburras called to each other. Before long, we rejoined the Rail Trail, and a pleasing and gentle 2 km uphill found us back at the cars. From there, a short drive back to Bruthen had us perched at a local café enjoying a hot drink and some delicious cakes.

Thanks, Debbie, for choosing such a special part of the area to share with us all.

Jack Smith Lake

Date: 27 August 2023

Leader: Peter Jennings

Report: Marion Matchan

Walkers: Peter, Ann, Stephen, Catherine, Candice, Penne, Sally, Debbie, Colin, Geoff, Sandy, Julianne, Jim, Libby, Briany and Marian.

Sixteen enthusiastic walkers headed off on the 17.7km trek as a few rain clouds threatened a bit of moisture. Not far along a sandy old 4x4 track with spindly vegetation on either side of the track, we encountered our first, and thankfully only, snake for the day. A big Red-bellied Blacksnake, no danger as it was happy to slither off the side of the track when it heard the sound of our thunderous footsteps approaching. Not far along we paused. Peter enlighten us to local history of involvement of ESSO-BHP in the 1980s where part of Danny Boland's property was leased by BHP where they welded lengths of pipes together for the oil rigs. Pipes were sealed, pulled through a purpose-built gap in the dunes, then floated off by massive tug boats. The Basslink electricity inter-connector enters mainland Australia near this site.

We then walked towards Hoddinott Hill (named after an early European settler), the landscape was of coastal scrub, with tea-tree bushes with their roots protruding across our path, "wham one man down", well actually it was a female, tripped over some roots, thankfully no injuries were reported. We paused at the top of Hoddinott Hill for morn-

ing tea. Rising some 29m above sea level, the hill has a densely wooded gully on the ocean side and farmland to the west. A bit further along the track we pause for more history. Peter told of the significance of the old pine tree we were passing. The tree was part of the Boland homestead site and a depression in the land indicates where a water well was once located. Once electricity came to the region, around 1950/1960, the Boland family moved their home some 3kms across the paddock.

Not that further along the 4x4 track, we veered left to come out into a big open plain with huge tussocks, samphire and pigface just starting to regenerate and some sea shells scattered around. This was a large dry lake bed with foliage in reds, browns and greens merged in the distance. Kangaroos bounding across the landscape to escape the approaching humans.

Upon meeting another 4x4 track, after pausing to drag out the raincoats as a misty rain had begun to fall, we turned towards the area known as Red Hill. This site is significant to the local Gunaikurnai First Nations People, a tragic tale of the Warrigal Creek massacre, which followed the explorations in the 1840s of Angus McMillan as he sought a route from the high country around Omeo to the Gippsland coast. Landholders and the Aboriginal people were in conflict, whole families were massacred. With the government officials due to travel though the area, the remains of those killed were reportedly taken to what is known as Red Hill and buried. The site is fenced off to deter people from disturbing the dead. We sheltered under a few trees for lunch, then moved onto the next landmark. The site of a swashway installed many years ago, it is a weir-like barrier in the natural water course. It's presence was contentious, as its purpose was to manipulate the lake water level but it has now fallen into disrepair.



We soon headed for the surf beach for the 7km home run along the beach. The waves crashing on the sand had a charming effect, the tide was coming in so there was little chance to walk on the really hard sand. The beach, in pristine condition with

no debris, was glorious. The two-hour walk passed quickly. We returned to our cars and after a bit of a natter, we all headed home. A big thank you goes to Peter for organizing a fantastic day and also sharing his knowledge of the local history of the area.

Mt Hedrick

Date: 16 September 2023

Leader: Clare Snell

Report: Elizabeth Davis

Walkers: Clare, Belle, Marion, Geoff, Catherine, Liz, Briony.

We left the pretty Huggett's BBQ area on a stunning summer morning in spring, starting with an easy stroll on a good path through thin black wattle bush. Soon we came to the upward winding track through interesting rocky outcrops to Mt Hedrick. The mountain itself is unmarked and Geoff told us it really is a high ridge. The views to the north, including Ben Cruachan and lower cleared farmland, were spectacular.

The track then went down steeply to a dry creek bed with some cleared and fenced land on our left belonging to the Phillipsons Trust. Back uphill again on the rough, stony track and we stopped short of our destination to eat lunch in the shade, then continued to the long, rocky, overhanging ledge of Huggett's Lookout. We enjoyed the view here too, like that at Mt Hedrick but higher.

A very steep climb from here, circled us back to re-join the track just before Mt Hedrick. The bush is of course very dry, but we did spot a few remaining wildflowers - hardenbergia, yellow and white paper daisies and flowering prickly wattle, and there were also lots of birds - kookaburras, pigeons, whip birds, and a wedge tailed eagle.

We retraced our steps back to the car park, grateful to Clare for her comprehensive reccie and Geoff's knowledge of the area, for not getting us lost on the myriad of tracks in the area. And, of course, it's great to have a meteorologist as leader so the weather can be specially ordered! Great walk, thanks Clare!

Lost Gorge

Date: 23 September 2023

Leader: Rob Paterson

Report: Geoff Mattingley

Walkers: Rob, Ken, April, Louisa, Geoff, Robyn, Ruth, Graham, Monica, Dan, Maurice

With the promise of a sunny day, 11 of us gathered at the Den of Nargun car park to commence

our walk. Rob gave us some of the National Park history - on the 14th of October 1936 a bushwalker and writer named Robert Henderson Croll wrote to S R Mitchell the then Chairman of the Council for the Preservation of National Monuments requesting that an area of land near Glenaladale be preserved to protect its natural splendour and beauty. It was another 26 years before the Glenaladale National Park was declared, later to become the Mitchell River National Park. The best known feature of the park is probably the Den of Nargun, but there are many other places of equal interest that are not so well known.

We walked down the path towards the river, with a short detour into Deadcock Den, on Woolshed Creek below the Den of Nargun. Heading towards Billy goat Bend, after only 200 metres the track crossed a shallow, dry, rocky creek bed - apparently nothing of any note. Here we turned left and commenced walking up the rocky creek bed, which later turned out to be marked on maps as Bull Creek.

To our amazement, we were soon walking through a spectacular mini-gorge, with the creek enclosed by high rocky walls - the vegetation becoming more rain-forest like, with vines, moss and further up, huge tree-ferns. The going was very slow, what with navigating the rocks and dealing with vegetation such as the "wait-a-while" vine. Although the creek wasn't flowing, there were plenty of pools, one of which was examined in depth by your correspondent when a previously tested foothold gave way. The rest of the group generally kept dry feet. Thankfully the rocks we walked on were mostly dry - the walk would have been much less pleasant if they were slippery.

The trickiest part came in the form of a waterfall perhaps 4 metres high with no obvious way around it. A trickle of water from the creek ensured that the entire face of the fall was wet and thus slippery. With help from the more agile members of the party we all managed to get to the top, a bit muddier than before.



Past the waterfall the rocky gorge walls reduced in height and we were able to have lunch in a sunny spot. About 600m further we were easily able to climb out of the gorge, through open forest to inter-

cept a very old vehicle track. This took us to our previously shuffled car on Park Road, with a short drive back to the rest of the cars.

Thanks Rob, for a great walk to a stunning location, all the more special because hardly anyone else knows about it. Perfect weather and an excellent group.

Wirilda Combined Clubs' Walks Walk 01

Date: 15 October 2023

Leader: Joe van Beek

Report: Geoff Mattingley

The Combined Clubs' Wirilda Walks is an annual event supported by Friends of Tyers Park (FoTP) where BCWC and SBWC join together to undertake walks involving the Wirilda Walking Track. The other two walks, a 24km circuit walk undertaken by 7 walkers and the classic 14km end-to-end walk of the Wirilda Walking Track undertaken by 9 walkers did not attract any BCWC walkers.

Walkers: Oliver, Geoff, Sandy, Wayne, Amanda, Wayne, Elise, Jesse, Andre, Natalie

With the promise of a cool day with late rain, 11 of us gathered at the Wirilda BBQ shelter for Walk 1 of the 3 Combined Clubs' walks for the day. Four of the group were BCWC members, the other seven were all visitors.

Starting at 9.20 on the Wirilda Walking Track, after 700m we turned off onto Red Box Track, a steady climb through pleasant open forest to a vehicle track at the top of the ridge. This track followed the boundary between forest and cleared country, with expansive views of the Latrobe Valley at various points. Another track took us into the forest, and from its end there was a steep, indistinct path downhill to a cave eroded into the conglomerate rock. Not everyone did this bit!

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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
FedWalks 2023	21-22/10/2023	lots	variable		
Lonely Bay	21/10/2023	S-3-3	5 km	Trevor Clues	valmai51@bigpond.com 0428 564 559
AAWT Duane Spur	26-29/10/2023	BTAC			btac@bushwalkingvictoria.org.au
Wilson Prom Weekend	27-29/10/2023	various	various	Monica Scicluna	joe.monica@hotmail.com; 0431 777 460
Balook, Cyathea Falls	05/11/2023	L-4-3	19 km	Peter Jennings	pnjennings@gmail.com; 0428 230 444
Social Evening	08/11/2023	scrummy		Monica Scicluna	joe.monica@hotmail.com; 0431 777 460
Christmas Lunch	26/11/2023	digestive/festive		Monica Scicluna	joe.monica@hotmail.com; 0431 777 460
Mt Wellington	01-02/12/2023	L-4-3	16 km	Peter Jennings	pnjennings@gmail.com; 0428 230 444
MMWT	03-15/12/2023	various	220 km	Joe van Beek	joevanbeek@bigpond.com; 0411 749 799
FedWalks2024	11-13/10/2024	various	various		https://fedwalks.org.au

continued from page 8 From here we retraced our steps to the start of the cleared land, then took another track (Blairs Rd) further into Tyers Park. After crossing Pipeline Track, we went off-track downhill for 450m to intercept the Wirilda Walking Track. The well-defined track, with occasional steps at the short steep bits, gave us an easy walk through the Tyers Gorge to our starting point. Joe had organised to boil the billy for afternoon tea at the BBQ shelter - a pleasant way to finish the day. The rain held off until we were driving home. Thank you to Joe for a great walk to a great location - Bushwalking Victoria's information page describes it as "the Latrobe Valley's best kept secret". And thanks to FoTP for the cuppa.

