



# Ben Cruachan Walking Club

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ISSUE 230 — Newsletter of the Ben Cruachan Walking Club — June 2023





# Ben Cruachan Walking Club



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### In This Issue

- 3 President's Footnotes
- 4 Club News
- 5 Walk Reports
- 14 Walk Previews

## Club Committee meets on the second Wednesday of even numbered months

The next Committee meeting is at 7pm on Wednesday 09 August 2023  
at the Maffra Community Sports Club, 122-126 Johnson Street, MAFFRA.

Welcome to new member:

Colette Branch



# President's Footnotes

## My Fifth Post

We've had a very busy couple of months since the last newsletter – let's get into it!

We had twelve of our members and one Strzelecki member at the leader training – a successful day with six new members now ready to take on walk leadership. It was suggested that for their first walk (or two) they team up with an experienced leader to guide them through the process. As a follow-up, John Hillard (one of the presenters) has offered to run an “in-the-field” navigation session and Belle has kindly offered to get access to an orienteering course near Buchan that the RAAF uses. Ten of those at the leader training have expressed interest; numbers will depend on the availability of instructors.

Joe van Beek gave an excellent presentation on McMillans Walking Track at the joint event organised at Heyfield. There were approximately thirty present including thirteen club members. Petra Wood from Wellington Shire who was in attendance was most impressed by our club, McMillans Walking Track and the work that BTAC does. She asked me to attend a Tourism Discovery event at Heyfield and district search for a life after timber. Joe backed up a week later with a presentation at the club social night in Sale about the South West Walking Track.

Since the last meeting we had set up a dedicated email address for our Membership Secretary. Ken reported that memsec@gmail.com is working well and being used for the 2023 membership renewals. We also decided at the meeting to adopt a new website address as the current .com addresses will be phased out by 2025 in favour of .au addresses. Our new address will be www.bcwc.au which will be implemented with the launch of the upgraded club website which John Cox has almost completed. John has done an incredible amount of work on this project for which we are very grateful. Geoff reported that we'd had eight walks since the last meeting; Ken reported that we have 146 members and Jodie reported that we have 24 new Facebook members for a total of 474.

We had a terrific day at Maffra to learn about wilderness first aid. Sixteen members attended and were very ably led through the theoretical and practical aspects by three experienced local Ambulance Victoria paramedics, Jo O'Doherty, Deb Ray (a BCWC member) and Sandra.

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The AGM will be held in Sale on 12th of July. While all positions will be declared vacant, there are a few where the incumbents have said that they won't be seeking re-nomination. If you have an interest in helping to run the club, please get in touch with me.

### **THE TWENTY BUSWALKING COMMANDMENTS**

No room for the third instalment this time.

*Peter*



# Club News

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



**GET INVOLVED!**

## Annual General Meeting 12 July 2023

The AGM will be held at The Star Hotel, corner of Macalister and Raymond Streets, Sale at 7pm. Dinner is available from 6pm. RSVP Monica Scicluna on 0431 777 460 or joe.monica@hotmail.com by Monday 10 July. New members of committee are always welcome. Chat to Monica or President Peter Jennings if you are interested.

## May Social Night

A terrific social night with 20+ attendees gathered at the Star Hotel, first time venue for the club, for a fine feast and an excellent presentation by Joe van Beek on his recent fully supported walk with the Friends of the Great South West Walk. Once the hamster-driven, steam-powered laptop had done its mandatory triennial update, we were taken into the inner workings of the GSWW. Joe's talk was divided into three parts: 1. The route and walk, 2. The Friends of the GSWW and 3. The experience of the

walk itself.

1. The walk is a circuit with one half of the 220kms inland from the beach through forest and beside the Glenelg River whilst the other half taking one from Nelson back to Portland along the beach or on the cliffs overlooking the beach.

2. The FotGSWW number over a hundred and do weekly maintenance on the track, a case of serious devotion to their Walk.

3. The experience of the 12 participants (including Barry Goulding from GDTA who has done MMWT with Joe) lead by Sue Sharp (also a MMWT survivor with Joe) was uplifting. People from various walks of life mixing for 14 days was a highlight. He thoroughly recommends the walk either independently, as a group or supported.



## Walk Leader Training

Fourteen members from Strzelecki and Ben Cruachan clubs with a wide range of experience from vast to not-a-lot gathered in Sale for a day of leadership training. John Cox and John MacDougall led the day covering all sorts of stuff including navigation (with a compass!!), how to get unlost, dealing with emergencies, preparation for a walk etc etc with robust conversation and plenty of exercises (mental - not physical) and scenarios to demonstrate effective walk leadership. Participants thoroughly enjoyed their day.





# Walk Reports



## Track 96 and Mt Moornapa

**Date:** 15 April 2023

**Leader:** Janine Muir

**Report:** Robyn Kercher

**Walkers:** Janine Muir, Geoff Mattingley, Clare Snell, Liz Owen, Peter Jennings, Nicki Jennings, Craig Baldwin, Toni Baldwin, Sally White, Briany Noonan, Debbie Smith, Liz Davis, Libby Balderstone, Steve Rodgers-Wilson, Robyn Kercher

Janine promised us a challenging hike with a distance of 19 kilometres and plenty of steep climbs, so it was fantastic to have a large group on this walk who were prepared to take on this challenging day.

We met early for those who had to travel, getting to the Blue Pool carpark at 8:20. It was great to see so many of our club members car-pool – thanks to Debbie who drove Geoff and me to the start of the walk. It was not long until everyone was assembled, and Janine briefed us on the walk, safety and Clare volunteered to be the Tail-End-Charlie.

The weather was predicted to give us showers, but remained perfect through the day, in the Goldilocks zone, not too hot and not too cold. There was even some sunshine at times breaking in through the clouds, and very little wind.

Track 96 was relatively steep, and gave us the vantage point so we could look down to the views of the pool and Freestone Creek below. The bush track was typical of Gippsland with scrub tall trees and a lovely lemon coloured fragrant wattle in bloom in some areas. It was a cleared walking track with Janine at the front so we had no difficulty with navigation, just a little difficulty with the steep grade to help with our training plans!

Ten-mile Track was wide and clear, and led us up to the fire tower at Mount Moornapa. Our lunch spot had lovely views, particularly of Ben Cruachan and we found comfortable spots to sit in groups and have a relaxed chat. Beautiful dark grey clouds provided a dramatic backdrop to the extensive views of the ranges, but we all correctly predicted we'd get

back before rain would start.

The walk back was mainly along a 4WD track, so it was easy to get home, although again the decline made us watch our step as we went. The 880 metres of ascent and decent were handled well by all the walkers. I didn't hear any complaints about the steep paths at the end of the day, everyone was happy to be challenged, a little tired, and satisfied with their efforts.

Thanks to Janine for leading our intrepid group on a beautiful and challenging day walk.

## Ramshead Range – Kosciuszko NP

**Date:** 20-25 April 2023

**Leader and Report:** Helmut Tracksdorf

**Walkers:** Lynette Newman, Becky Horsham, Helmut Tracksdorf

The Ramshead Range is located within the Snowy Mountains of the Kosciuszko National Park and extends from near Mount Cobberas No. 1 in Victoria, towards Thredbo in NSW and beyond. There are numerous peaks within the range at around 2100 metres, with the highest being Mount Twynam (2196m) located north of Blue Lake. The more commonly recognized peaks are South Ramshead (2052m) the Rams Head (2193m) and North Ramshead (2177m) all distinct in their own way.

This walk was originally scheduled in November 2022 but extreme weather conditions meant it was postponed to April 2023. Six members registered originally but, unfortunately due to a variety of reasons, several withdrew leaving 3 brave souls to tackle the walk.

The weather forecast indicated perfect conditions with top temperatures of 10°C and minimums of minus 2°C. Certainly better than the blizzard conditions that were forecast back in November!

So, with spirits high, Becky and Helmut set off in one car travelling via Cann River, then Bombala where we picked up Lynette to complete the trio and continued to Jindabyne and beyond, arriving at the delightful Thredbo Diggings campground – our destination for Day 1.

The next morning, we packed up camp and headed for Dead Horse Gap via Thredbo to start our adventure. John Martin, who was to co-lead this walk is very familiar with the area but was unable to attend so Helmut deferred to using the Avenza App to lead the way. He led the group towards our first peak for the day – South Ramshead. Unfortunately, the track did not give us a gentle introduction to the range and the gradient was steep from the very start. By the time we reached the summit 2 hours later we were



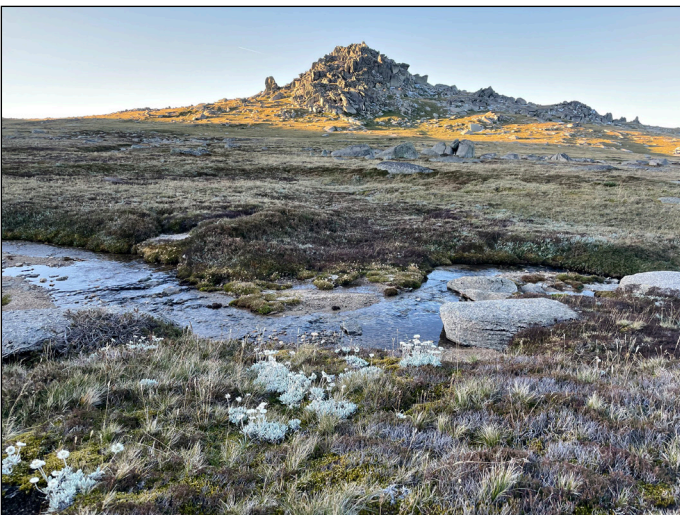
effectively pooped! Nevertheless, the views were worth the effort, and we were now above the tree line with clear walking ahead – or so we thought!



*Lynette and Becky on the summit of South Ramshead*

After taking in the views our attempts to drop off the summit were thwarted, and we found ourselves backtracking down the way we had come up. This proved frustrating as we were losing height in our attempts to traverse around the side of the summit to make headway to our next destination, North Ramshead peak, 2.5km away.

Reaching a saddle, we stopped for lunch near a small stream and recharged our batteries. From then the walk proved a little easier and after passing central Ramshead reached our destination below the summit of the North Ramshead peak which proved a pleasant campsite for the night beside Merritts Creek.



*Merritts Creek and North Ramshead*

Day 2 started early with frost and ice around camp, but the sun soon rose warming our spirits and drying out tents. We were underway by 9am towards the next peak along the range – North Ramshead – but not before making a small detour off the ridge to visit Cootapatamba Hut located some distance away down a steep incline to the valley floor below.

## **Ben Cruachan Walking Club**

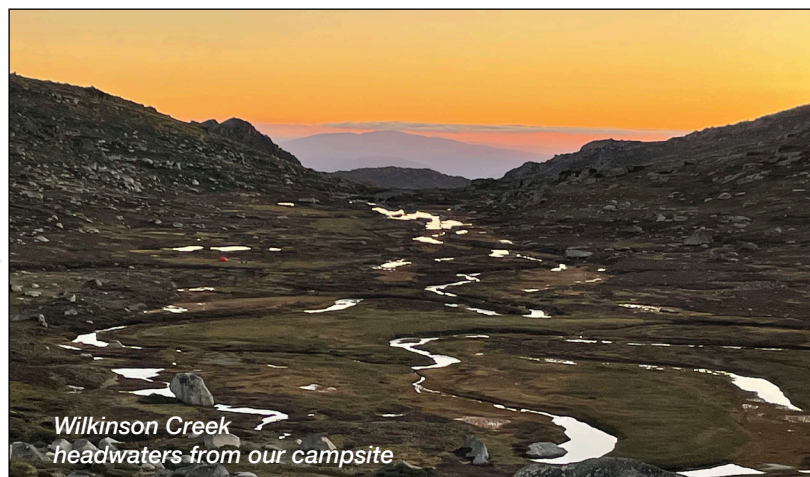
It soon became apparent that this hut was further away than it looked. Upon reaching a point where we could clearly see the bright red hut, we promptly decided we were close enough to take a quick photo and return to the ridge. Visiting Cootapatamba Hut would have added an extra 2 hours to our journey and the best option was to get to Wilkinson Creek early before the throng of the long weekend wanderers arrived.



*Becky with Cootapatamba hut in the distance*

Back on track we headed straight for the Kosciuszko Steel Walkway and joined the throng of day walkers enroute to the summit of Kosciuszko, located 6km from the top of the chairlift above Thredbo at Eagles Nest. We connected with the walkway approx. 1.5 km from Rawsons Pass within 30 minutes. Rawsons Pass represents the junction of the track from Charlotte Pass and the Kosciuszko Steel Walkway. This is located 1.5km below the summit of Mt Kosciuszko itself. After a short stop, we continued towards the summit but turned right onto the Main Range Track, bypassing the summit in favour of reaching our destination for Day 2 – Wilkinson Creek.

Within the hour we turned off the main track at Muellers Pass and headed down into the headwaters of Wilkinson Creek. There are ample camping spots available here, but the trick is to find the best spot. Having arrived early in the afternoon we settled into a prime location amongst the boulders halfway down the slope and set up camp right next to a crystal-clear mountain stream. The views were fantastic



*Wilkinson Creek headwaters from our campsite*



with Muellers Peak behind us, Mt Townsend up the valley, Abbott peak opposite and the entire vista of the headwaters of Wilkinson Creek below us (see previous page). A very pleasant spot, especially with the perfect weather and calm conditions prevailing.

After setting up a base camp we simply wandered around exploring the area and then watched as numerous other hikers arrived and settled into the various camp sites dispersed around this location. This would be our base for tomorrow as well. That night after dinner and when the sun set, the temperature plummeted, reaching a chilly minus 4°C according to Lynette's thermometer. The next morning ice covered the small tarns and frost was evident on the grass. Water bottles left outside tents had iced up confirming the chilly conditions.

Day 3 was a rucksack-free day. The plan was to do a circuit of the main peaks surrounding the valley and then return to base. Muellers Peak, Mt Townsend, Alice Rawson Peak and Abbott Peak dominate the area so, after a leisurely but chilly start to the morning, we set off to conquer! We summited Muellers Peak first with great views of Lake Albina below and beyond towards Mt Jagungal to the north. Then we headed down the main spur towards Mt Townsend taking a deviation to the right towards Alice Rawson Peak but settled for the minor peaks prior to reaching Alice Rawson as the views down into the Geehi valley were simply stunning. Turning back towards Mt Townsend, we stopped beside a small creek to boil the billy and enjoy a break. Then it was onwards and upwards to Mt Townsend which at 2209m is only 19m lower than Mt Kosciuszko itself at 2228m. It is worth noting that Mt Townsend is a more worthy peak than Kosciuszko by the sheer fact that its summit is more pronounced, and the ascent via a boulder field presents a greater challenge.



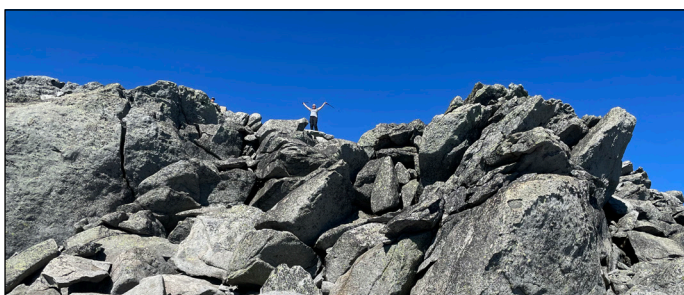
*Wilkinson Ck and a pyramidal peak*

After taking in the views, we scrambled down the boulder field turning left towards Abbott Peak. At first there was a track, but we soon lost it and simply made our way down off Mt Townsend as best we could to the headwaters of Wilkinson Creek itself. By the time we reached the creek, Abbott Peak held no interest and so we ambled down beside the creek back towards our base camp. But not before exploring the headwaters of the creek where it runs parallel with Hannells Track. Wilkinson Creek opens into a major waterway with crystal clear waters and what appears to be great fishing spots for mountain trout. Although none were spotted, small native fish (Galaxias?) were present.

A small waterfall and an unnamed pyramid peak were highlights along this section of the track but



*Lynette reflecting on the scenery*



*Becky on the summit of Mt Townsend : Group at Summit cairn*



with what appeared to be threatening clouds rolling in we beat a hasty retreat to our campsite amongst the granite boulders above the valley floor. Within a short time, the clouds dispersed, and we enjoyed another pleasant evening watching the sun go down with amazing reflections coming off the numerous rivulets below.

The next morning, we rose early and after packing up camp were ready to depart by 8am. According to Lynette's temperature gauge it was minus 6°C!!! A small tarn covered in ice crystals near our campsite certainly confirmed it had been cold overnight.



Early morning ice crystals with Mt Townsend in background

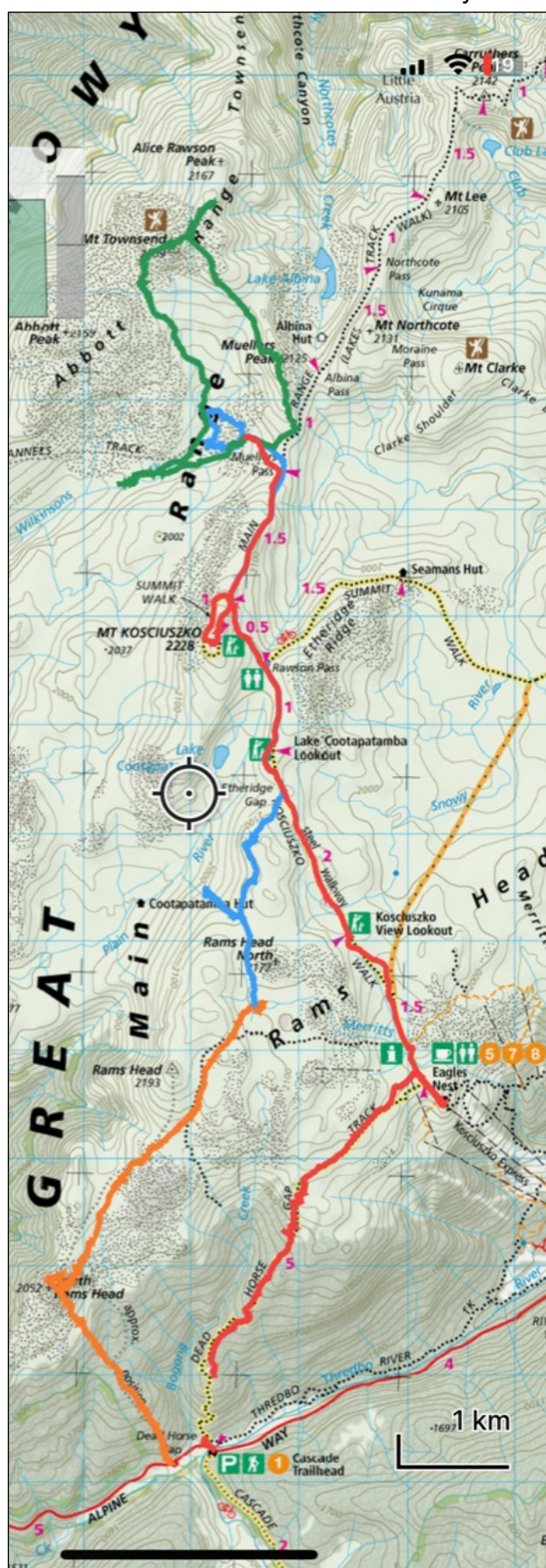
We headed back up to the saddle and joined the main track turning towards Mt Kosciuszko. Within the hour we were at the junction of the summit track. Dropping our packs, we walked the last kilometer up to the summit only to find that major construction work was being carried out. Apparently, the track is being "upgraded" to allow for people with disabilities to access the summit. We took the obligatory photos and after admiring the views headed back down and proceeded along the 6km Steel Walkway that leads back towards Thredbo. We were all looking forward to enjoying a hot cuppa at the famous Eagles Nest café which is located at the top of the chairlift above Thredbo. After an hour and a half of walking and greeting a multitude of walkers heading towards Kosi one can imagine the disappointment when we arrived at the door to be greeted by a sign that said "Eagles Nest Closed". WTF? Wait 'Til Friday!



Not happy Beck!

Becky decided, after some discussion, the disappointment was so great she was going straight down to Thredbo (via the chairlift) to approach management and give them an earful. Ly-

nette and Helmut, being pacifists, took the soft approach and went back to the junction of Dead Horse Gap Track only a short distance from the café. This meant we would be able to avoid any confrontation with resort management plus our car was parked at the bottom of the track. This and many other tracks in the region are currently being upgraded with lots of natural flat stones laid down along the track. Unfortunately, while they may look good, walking on these hard surfaces is not easy on the feet, especially if carrying a pack. The result being that one tends to walk beside the track – which ironically defeats





the purpose of the upgrade! Within 2 hours we were approaching the end of our adventure and the end of our walk, back at Dead Horse Gap.

The Ramshead Range and the surrounding peaks were certainly worth exploring, especially when the weather and hiking conditions are perfect. The terrain which is predominantly above the tree line can still prove challenging, but navigation is relatively easy when visibility is clear. Over 4 days we had effectively covered 40km of terrain within the Kosciuszko NP.

One can thoroughly recommend the area to any walker as there are numerous hiking options available to cater for all abilities. The campsite at Thredbo Diggings proved a pleasant and affordable accommodation option, with a price of \$6 per night per site. However National Park entry fees also apply.

Thanks to Lynette and Becky for taking up the challenge and hopefully enjoying the experience. I for one certainly did.

PS: Yes, we did stop at Thredbo to pick up Becky!!!

For a map of the route, see page 8. Day 1 – Orange; Day 2 – Blue; Day 3 – Green; Day 4 - Red

## BTAC versus Crooked River

**Date:** 21-24 April 2023

**Leader:** Joe van Beek, Peter Maffei

**Reports:** JvB (BTAC Convenor)

On Friday afternoon nine hearty volunteers (including 3 from BCWC and 3 named Peter) met up



Left: before



Right: after

with Daniel Ball, Forest Management and Roding Officer, at the DEECA Depot in Dargo for a welcome and briefing in preparation for their work on the Crooked River section of McMillans Walking Track. It was anticipated that this would be a challenging weekend of track clearing because of its remoteness, difficult access and unknown condition; and so it proved to be. Capable 4WD vehicles were required to get to either end of the 13km section of the track. All camping gear, supplies and work equipment had to be portaged 4km up the track to a make shift camp. There are no recognised camping sites along this section of the track, it took some effort and ingenuity to find and make a camp site not too far from water, tents were strung out along the track. Participants were instructed to “Pack light and compact in a backpack; a small tent, dare I say dehydrated food, limited luxuries. Be self sufficient for camping and all meals except the Friday BBQ”.

The team was pleasantly surprised to find that the first 4km up from the Stonewall end was easy walking having been cleared in recent times, as was the first kilometre and a half from the other end off White Timber Spur Track. Over the weekend the team chain sawed the logs off the whole length of the track leaving some easy-step-over ones and thoroughly cleared a bit over 3km including some dense patches of blackberry. They also did some step cutting and track benching to make walking easier. There is still some 4.5km of track that needs further work in the near future. Blackberry is an issue, it is in patches over the whole length of the track. Spraying would be desirable.

Fine weather blessed the team for the whole of the duration and they enjoyed being on this historically significant track constructed by gold miners in the 1860s through the stunning scenic steep sided Crooked River valley. The benched track was constructed, at places high above the river, to a high standard with dry stone walling still in good condition in some sections.

The volunteers contributed a total of 336 hours to this activity. Thank you to Daniel and DEECA for their contributions and support; the BBQ goodies, which were enjoyed on Friday night at Bulltown and on the



track for lunch on Saturday, the use of trunk radios and access to their depot at Dargo for getting organised and parking cars and the BTAC trailer over the weekend. And thank you to the volunteers for their time, effort, achievement and camaraderie over the ANZAC weekend on the Crooked River section of McMillans Walking Track.

## Blond Bay

**Date: 26 April 2023**

**Leader: Rob and Josie Paterson**

**Report: Chris Marshall**

After meeting at the Bairnsdale Racecourse, Rob, Josie, Ann, Ian, Geoff, Trevor, and myself headed to the Blond Bay State Game Reserve. (This reserve has allocated hunting periods so people need to check before doing a walk there). We parked the cars in the middle of the reserve and set out on a spectacular autumn day along sandy tracks to see some of the best and most extensive areas of Grasstrees locally.

We passed through the Banksia woodland and Grasstrees on our way to Storm Point, where we enjoyed a view of Loch Sport across Lake Victoria. We then headed back to the cars along another sandy track through more Grasstrees. This track had a particularly large Grasstree which the track divides around. After reaching the cars, we headed to Wattle Point on Lake Victoria to have a picnic lunch. Thanks Josie and Rob for taking us on a lovely walk.



## Blue Pool / Peregrine Lookout circuit

**Date: 29 April 2023**

**Leader: Monica Scicluna**

**Report: Debbie Smith**

Walkers: Monica, Anne, Ian, Andrew, Debbie, Colin, Nicki, Jennifer, Kym, Anna and Liz

The Briagolong State Forest was the setting for this very pleasant 8km circuit. We set off at 9am from the Blue Pool carpark along the Freestone Creek. This area was a gold mining area from the mid-



1860s through to the early 1900s. An old mine shaft was seen along the track which was fenced off and boarded up for obvious reasons.

It was great walking weather, cool and overcast when we set off, with the fresh smell of overnight rain in the air. The walk along the creek was initially rocky underfoot with a small climb up to the look-out overlooking the Blue Pool below. From there it became gently undulating and easy underfoot. This part of the track forms the southern end of Track 96 (60km one way) which originally serviced the needs of miners during the 1800s and early 1900s linking Briagolong and Gladstone Creek to the goldfields at Lees Creek and Granite Creek.

At McKinnon Point we left Track 96 and stopped for morning tea on the banks of the lovely Freestone Creek. With the high cliffs as a backdrop this made for a very pleasant stop. We then pondered how we would cross the creek without getting wet feet. So, with the aid of some very welcome walking poles and some rock hopping we all made it across without mishap.

We then made our way along the Peregrine Walking Track which is a well-constructed and nicely maintained track winding up, through magnificent Sunshine Wattle in full bloom, to Peregrine Lookout. Here we admired the view over Freestone Creek whilst we ate an early lunch. Unfortunately, there were no Peregrine Falcons to be seen today.

After lunch we made our way back to the Blue Pool along the Freestone Creek Track through dry open forest made up of predominantly Red Box,



Stringybark and Ironbark. A nicely placed plank across the creek below the Blue Pool allowed for another dry foot creek crossing. This brought us to the conclusion of what was a very pleasant walk lead by our trusty leader, Monica. We then regrouped at Briagolong for a final chat over a quick coffee before the trip home.

## Lost Gorge

**Date: 14 May 2023**

**Leader: Rob and Josie Paterson**

**Report: Kerry Knights**

Participants : Peter & Nicki, Peter, Piero, Lynette, Peter C, Neil, Liz, Colin, Michael & Lesley, Angela & Georgia, Kerry, Marion

There are some walks that are an absolute privilege to participate in, and The Lost Gorge is certainly one of those.

Extensively recce'd by Rob and Jose, the walk is offtrack and draws on Rob's extensive knowledge of the area and his past work with Parks Victoria. Rob described it as one of the few undisturbed areas in the National Park, and others later spoke of how spectacular it was.

Once the logistics of the car shuffle had been addressed, an enthusiastic group of 17 walkers left in cool and sunny conditions, taking the well-known public path towards the Mitchell River. Spirits were high in anticipation of what the trek might reveal, and we were not disappointed.

At a nondescript location along the path, we turned in towards the bush. Dodging branches, clambering over rocks, and being immersed in the pristine and primal landscape, there was a deep sense of being so fortunate to experience the Gorge. In the words of our Leader, the walk "just gets better-er".

The moist ecosystem supported mosses which festooned from branches, delicate fungus emerged from tree branches and water trickled along the creek, between clear pools. Tall trees provided the canopy shelter and vines were prolific, catching some walk-



ers by surprise as we negotiated slippery rocks. The cool conditions prevailed during the trek, with the high rock walls keeping temperatures steady.

The walk had been listed as Challenging, and the two significant points where climbing rockfaces was needed was, indeed, particularly challenging ... but worthwhile.

The first climb was slippery, with the supportive nature of club members shining through, by both encouraging and assisting others. The next climb was The Waterfall, some 15 m or more of vertical climb. Some walkers tried circumventing this obstacle and found the bush hard going. However, all basked in the glory of achievement upon reaching the top.

Further along the creek, mythical Nargun Eggs were found, their dark shapes protected by the underside of branches.

As we slowly continued along the Gorge, the landscape changed. Towards the exit point, another nondescript turnoff, the air warmed and the foliage along the trail edges was more tea tree, and then later eucalypt. A gentle hill to a disused 4WD track, and then we were striding out toward the cars. Having not lost anyone on the walk, we bundled into the cars and returned to the start point.

Accolades flowed for Rob and Josie for sharing this special part of the Mitchell River NP with us.

## Billy Goat Bend / Jurgenson Point

**Date: 20 May 2023**

**Leader: Marian Matchan**

**Report: Nicki Jennings**

Walkers: Lauren, Di, Colette, Debbie, Lynette, Ken, Peter, Nicki, Liz, Colin, Marian

A walk along the Mitchell River is always a treat of spectacular river views and rich riparian vegetation. We began the walk standing on the cliff tops of the Amphitheatre with the Mitchell River glistening below and low clouds hugging the mountains beyond. The first section of our walk was a steep descent down a rocky hillside where poles gave reassurance to many while others contemplated the return up this mountain at the end of the day.

As we descended closer to the river the vegetation thickened and there was evidence of recent track clearing by Parks. Weeping grasses and correas edged the track with a backing of tea tree and cassinias. Towering eucalypts and occasional kurrajongs provided intermittent shade. The track dipped up and down along the river bank until we reached the tributary of Cobbannah Creek. It started to drizzle as we contemplated the creek crossing although the creek was low and was easily crossed. A few years ago this same walk was



## Hermit's Cave

Date: 28 May 2023

Leader: Peter Jennings

Report: Patrick Platt



abandoned at Cobbannah Creek as it was too high and fast flowing to cross. This time Marian and Ken had checked the water levels before and we progressed with ease.

Some of the track after Cobbannah Creek was along a rarely used four wheel drive track. This allowed us to stretch out our legs after the steep ups and downs we had been treading. We arrived at the rocky beach of Jurgenson's Point in time for lunch. Here Sandy Creek flows into a wide bend of the Mitchell. The calm water held a perfect reflection of the trees on the far bank and it was a beautiful place to rest and dine. Some walkers enjoyed skimming rocks across the river. Peter, after claiming the title of the best skim, retired before he dislocated his shoulder. We found a sad little sight in the form of a deceased antechinus (at least that is what we later confirmed it to be). It was as small as a mouse but had a very long pointed jaw with sharp teeth. The fur was grey and it had a soft white underbelly and shortish tail. It appeared to be a male which we later learnt mate themselves to death leaving the female to raise a large batch of young. Oh dear!

We retraced our steps in the afternoon. The day had become fine and we progressively shed layers of jumpers as we walked up and down again. The final climb back up to the top of the Amphitheatre spread the group out a bit and we all knew our legs and hearts had gained a good work out by the time we reached the cars. As usual the various pedometers, Garmin's and devices all registered different distances, however there was some consensus around 15km walked in total. Thank you Marian for an excellent day filled with some of Victoria's best scenery along a major free flowing river.

Walkers: Peter, Nicki, Ian, Marian, Anne, Terri, Liz, Robyn, Tony, Sue, Belle, Colette, Gabrielle and Patrick

Many questions were on walker's minds before this walk in the Mullungdung State Forest area. What was the story behind the fugitive kidnapper Edwin Eastwood who hid his hostages here in the 70s? Who was the 'hermit' that dug a cave to live in? How many Koalas would we spot? Is it going to keep raining?

The 15km walk was a 'Viva' tour of the many human and natural features of the forest. The area is ancient sand dune country with mostly open Yellow Stringybark forest that had 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. 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.

Not long into the walk Peter spotted a koala.



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. Its location was recorded and Gabrielle took an amazing zoom photo to submit to SKAT (Strzelecki Koala Action Team) <https://strzkoala.australianmap.net/years/2023/>

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.



And the rain did hold off for a very enjoyable discovery tour of the forest.



## Fungi Ramble - Wirilda - the Magic of Mushrooms

**Date:** 03 June 2023

**Leader:** Jim Stranger / Eileen Laidlaw

**Report:** Jim Stranger

Early June is close to peak fungi season in Tyers Park. Six walkers from Ben Cruachan Walking Club joined six others on the “Fungi Ramble” hosted by the Friends of Tyers Park. We were fortunate to have Eileen Laidlaw as our knowledgeable and enthusiastic mycology guide. Within the space of a couple of hours Eileen was able to identify close to 30 different species. These included fungi of all shapes and sizes – coral, cap, cup, slime and caterpillar (one that erupts from the body of an insect pupae underground and sends up an erect fruiting body). Colours ranged from bright reds, yellows, blues, oranges and purples to less spectacular browns, whites and blacks. We fortunately avoided an identification exam at the conclusion of the day as Eileen’s technical botanical descriptions were information overload. On return to the BBQ shelter in Wirilda Park, we stepped back in time to the sight of dozens of medieval warriors in full costume ready to go to battle. Our plan had been to finish the day with a BBQ lunch at Wirilda however, considerably outnumbered and unable to match their weaponry, we adopted Plan B, adjourning to an alternate location in Tyers township. Thank you Eileen for a most enjoyable day.



## Wilderness First Aid Training

**Date:** 18 June 2023

**Report:** Peter Jennings

Three Ambulance Victoria paramedics held a Wilderness First Aid Training day for sixteen of our members on a chilly day in June. The paramedics Jo, Sandra and Deb had all worked in remote and wilderness settings over many years. The course was comprehensive and tailored to the unique circumstances that bushwalking first aid can present.

Participants were guided on how to cope in a medical emergency when professional help may be ten hours or longer away. The course covered a wide range of health issues that may occur while out walking. We also had practical training in Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation, the use of defibrillators and remote emergency shelters. In the afternoon were bandaged each other up for a variety of broken limbs and strains. We also learnt how to warm someone up who may be suffering from hypothermia with only the items a bushwalker may typically carry. We now know how much space a helicopter needs to land and how to help prepare a landing pad. Hopefully we will never need this service.

It was an excellent day which was particularly relevant to the many and varied first aid situations bushwalkers may have to face. Our club gives a big thank you to the three paramedics Jo, Deb and Sandra who volunteered their time, equipment and enthusiasm to help our members.





# 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
Ben Cruachan 58th	01/07/2023	S-4-3	4 km	Joe van Beek	joevanbeek@bigpond.com; 0411 749 799
AGM	12/07/2023	Yum	Social	Monica Scicluna	joe.monica@hotmail.com; 0431 777 460
Bosworth Road Rec	22/07/2023	S-2-2	5 km	Trevor Clues	valmai51@bigpond.com; 0428 564 559
Snow Shoe Shuffle	05/08/2023	M-7-7	11 km	Joe van Beek	joevanbeek@bigpond.com; 0411 749 799
Jack Smith Lake	27/08/2023	L-3-4	17 km	Peter Jennings	pnjennings@gmail.com; 0428 230 444
Social Evening	13/09/2023	Ripper	50 m	see website	
Wirilda Track	14/10/2023	3walk	various	see website	

