



WARBY RANGE BUSHWALKERS Inc.

FUN . FITNESS . FRIENDSHIP

NEWSLETTER : April, 2020

warbybushwalkers.org.au

Since the last Newsletter much of our walking program has been thrown into disarray by excessively hot weather and/or bushfires.

The Mount Feathertop walk in December was cancelled over concerns about safety, given that there were a number of spot fires in the high country at the time.

As well, the poor visibility would have deprived us of those evocative 'blue-upon-blue range-upon-range' views that are a hallmark of walking in the high country.

The double-loop of the lake walk at Benalla (January 4) was also cancelled, mainly because of the ambient heat (over 40C), as well as the declaration of a Total Fire Ban on that day (traditionally the club does not venture out on such days).

The much anticipated walk to Mount McLeod (in Mount Buffalo National Park, January 19) was also cancelled, as was the Mount Dunn walk, also at Mount Buffalo.

Hopefully, this is now all behind us, and we can all enjoy the Autumn Walks Program to the full.

Corowa to St Leonards : December 5

The days preceding this walk were a bit wintry, but the 5th of December proved to be the perfect day to get out and enjoy a stroll alongside the Murray River. We had a beautiful sunny day, with a strong breeze, and temperatures in the mid 20s.

Having made it to Corowa, we parked in Rowers Park (opposite the now defunct Ball Park Caravan Park) and got ourselves ready for an 11km 'there-and-back' walk.



Having crossed the historic Foord Bridge, we curved around to the left bank of the Murray, and after a short while, enjoyed a nice morning tea.

We then continued on to the Federation Bridge, and from there to

the Grantham Bend Reserve. This is a popular camping area in the warmer months, and there were a few early birds already there, staking out their claim for the holiday period.

Lunch was enjoyed on a grassy bluff with plenty of shade, and great views of the Mighty Murray.

From here, we had planned to continue from Grantham Bend, up the slope, to St Leonards Winery, but ran out of time to do this, so we made our way back to Wahgunyah, and then Corowa.

Afternoon tea in the shade of a peppercorn tree finished off the day, and we were back in Wangaratta at 3pm.

There were 14 participants for the walk, 11 club members, and three guests – two from Albury, and one from Wangaratta.

For the technical people, my GPS recorded 16700 steps, 11.3km covered, and 830 calories burnt.

Many Thanks to the crew for making this a very enjoyable, and friendly, day out; particular thanks to Anne and Rae for collecting all of that litter left by careless campers. [Chris]

Christmas Party, 2019

Our Christmas Party was held on Friday the 13th of December, at the Bowmans Murrumbidgee Memorial Hall.

There were 45 members in attendance, and we enjoyed a nice BBQ, good friendship, some tall stories and a video presentation. Many Thanks to everyone who helped organise this successful event.

Annual General Meeting, 2020

It's that time of year again, and you need to save the date: Monday 23rd March, 6pm onwards, when our 'AGM and Social Catch up Gathering' is being held at the Old Town and Country Tavern Function Room, corner Greta Road/Mason St, Wangaratta.

Dinner is from 6pm, (order from the menu), followed by a short AGM starting at 7.30pm - see the attachment for more details.

As well as electing the committee for 2020-2021, there is a proposal to raise the membership fees for singles from \$35 to \$40, and the family membership from \$65 to \$70 (Club memberships become due at the AGM).

Long time member, and founding member, Adrian Twitt is our Guest Speaker, and will take us through the interesting history of our club.

After this, there will be a discussion re the options for the Club's 2021 week away.

Please book in with Anne – Mobile: 0427 576 664 by Friday 20th March.

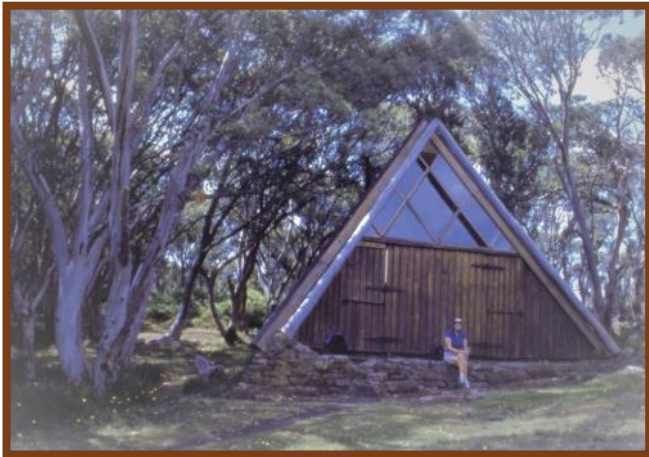
Federation Walk 2020

This year's Federation Walk will be held in the Victoria High Country to the north of Licola, a small village on the banks of the Macalister River.

The Combined Gippsland Bushwalking Clubs will be hosting the event, and accommodation and meals will be provided at the Licola Wilderness Village.

Accommodation is in cabins containing 3 or 4 bedrooms, with bunk-style accommodation. An all-inclusive package (including meals and accommodation will be available as part of the registration process). More details can be found at fedwalks.org.au

Popular walks in the area include Bryce Gorge, Pieman Falls, Moroka Gorge, Vallejo Ganther Memorial Hut (see photo), Mount Howitt and Lake Tali Karng.



Stanley State Forest area : January 18

There were 15 of us on this walk, and the plan had been to do a walk on the Mount Buffalo plateau (Mount McLeod). However, due to the fires, the national park was closed, so rather than cancel the walk altogether a different venue was organised.

We met in Wangaratta at 7.30, and in Beechworth at 8am. From there we drove together through to Yackandandah, and out along Bells Flat Road. The walk started and finished at the reservoir on Yack Gate Road, and we set off at about 9am.



The walk was an 8.7km loop, on the west side of Yack Gate Road, along gravel bush roads and tracks, wide enough for cars (we met two).

Some sections were on the steep side, an ascent and descent of about 250m, manageable, but definitely a work-out.

The route of our walk meandered through native forest, with views of the

hills in the distance, and a couple of bridges over little creeks; we had our morning tea at one of them, which was very pleasant. There was plenty of birdlife, and the bush looked fresh and green.

By 11.30 we were back where we had started, after 2.5 hours on the trail.

To end the walk we drove to a park in Yackandandah where we enjoyed our picnic lunch, and chatting of course. [Marita]

Week Away : 2020

Our week-away venue for 2020 is the Mornington Peninsula, and our accommodation will be the Iluka Retreat and Camp, near the beach at Shoreham, where we have booked two lodges, Warrawong and Aulua, for 6 nights from 19/4/20 - 25/4/20.

More information on this great event can be found on our website; see Walks Program, then Annual Week Away.

Beechworth Historic Park : February 1

This walk was unfortunately cancelled due to very hot conditions.

Beechworth has an average of just over 1000 mm of rain per year, but over in Southland in NZ, the same amount fell in just 48 hours earlier this week, where six of our club members were starting the famous Milford Track!

Our adventurous members were planning to walk the 53.5 kms over four days, but only managed to cover 1.5 kms before the heavens opened, and over one metre of rain fell in two days!

There was subsequent massive flooding, with parts of New Zealand's South Island being cut off after torrential rains washed away roads. This forced the evacuation of 2,000 people, and saw the country's Weather Service issue its first ever red weather warning.

So instead of walking one of the most acclaimed, and beautiful, tracks in the world, Kerri Davenport and the crew had to return by ferry to Glade Wharf on Lake Te Anau, to the township of Te Anau. What bad luck!!

Bon Accord Walk : February 16

Fifteen of the nicest club members joined my walk in Harrierville. Our destination was the Washington Creek junction with the Ovens River East Branch, along the Bon Accord Track. This was a replacement walk for the Mt Dunn and Monolith loop I had planned on Mount Buffalo.



The Bon Accord Track leads all the way to Mount Hotham, and the section we were walking certainly was a picturesque part of the walk. Before the Great Alpine Road was built this was the route taken by walkers, horse riders and pack horses.

I began the walk with my usual information for all involved, I mean misinformation. This is largely for Ann's benefit. Today I stated the walk would take us from an elevation of about 510m to a little over 800m.

In fact the highest point we reached according to my GPS was a mere 666m with Washington Creek being lower at 601m – or 602 if you stand on the bridge.

This reverse psychology on my part was to have walkers prepare mentally for a climb. A climb that would never eventuate and they would complete the walk with ease.

We were walking by 10am and the weather was cloudy and quite humid. The forecast of a possible thunderstorm was looking less likely once we were underway. From the picnic area carpark, we walked beside the river to the start of the Bon Accord Track.

Jeanette filled in the obligatory intentions book. My intention was to return with fifteen walkers. Preferably the same ones with which I began the walk.

Along the route we passed two walkers who said they turned back due to a fallen tree. Our group pressed on regardless. The fallen tree ended up being not so problematic that some additional manual pruning would allow us to proceed. Once all the group had successfully navigated the obstacle, we took morning tea after an hour of walking.



During this section of the walk, a small black snake passed between me, who at the time was leading and Jeanette. This usually happens with snake encounters, and being walker number two in a group is never the safest position.

Another small fallen tree required some knee bending to manoeuvre underneath. It's in situations like this you learn about the skills of club members. If we ever have a limbo night I want to be on the team with Erin (yes, she did have to bend her knees) and June (who is known to be made of rubber). All members managed the obstacle, although some always need a little more encouragement. Come on Irene, too rye aye, come on Irene too rye aye...

After an estimated 5km, the view of the Ovens River East Branch could be seen in the valley below. Peter pointed out the entrance to a disused mine to the right of the track, and after two hours we had reached the junction with Washington Creek.

It was now midday, and lunch was taken at this point in beautiful surroundings with the shallow creek flowing moderately.

Sandi added a little extra fruit to her diet by consuming some blackberries on the other side of the bridge. She was telling me of her recent trip to New Zealand with other club members. They were the ones who experienced the torrential downpour while attempting to hike the Milford Track. My recollection of her story

is that they only made it out alive by constructing some makeshift raft, and navigating the rising rapids to safety.

Before departing this location, the usual group photo was taken. Angela, our newest member, declined to undertake the club initiation ritual. You know the one, where you are required to remove your socks and shoes, and brave the cool waters of a north east water creek or river. Never mind, next time, and off we went returning the way we had come.



Angela did establish one of the club's best wildlife experiences. Ahead of her on the track was the world's largest wombat, eating along the track. We were only a couple of metres from it, and it was oblivious to our group.

Numerous photos were taken, albeit not the wombat's best profile to begin with, but after a little patience more rewarding photos were available. It was unusual for it not to be bothered by our group.

Peter and Adrian suggested that perhaps it was like many of us; old and a little deaf. We needed to pass, and after a short grunt like sound (I assume from the wombat, and not Gerri) it scampered to the side of the track, just a metre from us as we walked by.

The tail end of our group, Chris, Yve, Cecily and Jeanette had an additional experience with a lizard. From all accounts it was of moderate size, had had quite brilliant patches of orange on its body.

Perhaps it was a pigment figment of their imagination, because despite my efforts to google for more information, it remains unknown as to exactly what it was.



Our return walk experience was of increased sunshine, and the earlier humidity had diminished.

We reached the start of the Bon Accord Track, and signed off in the intentions book with all fifteen original walkers safely accounted for.

The pace quickened from here as Pat's afternoon cuppa was not far away.

However on this occasion she had a little competition, with the local ice cream and sorbet shop open for business. It was an extremely closely fought battle, but as usual nothing outdoes Pat's afternoon refreshments.

Today's walk was 12km and completed in about 4½ hours with stops.

Thanks to everyone who participated, and I hope to see you on my Mount Dunn and the Monolith walk next. [Michael]

Bushwalking and GPS Navigation : May 23-24

This event will be conducted by Bushwalking Victoria at the Centre, Chisholm Street, Wangaratta, and adjoining parklands (Merriwa Park, and Kaluna Park). See the attached PDF, our website, and Facebook page for more info.

Lake Moodemere : February 13

Lake Moodemere is part of a cut-off meander of the Murray River, and is a popular area for camping, bird watching and water sports.

This nice little (9km) adventure began at Pfeiffer's Winery, where the 17 participants met up, having driven from Wangaratta, Albury and Rutherglen.

Setting off, we crossed over the Sunday Creek bridge, and headed for the Murray River, having said Hi to some of the many turtles that live in the Creek.

Scrambling through a couple of gates, we were now a few kilometres from the Mighty Murray, where we stopped for a quick drink (the ambient temp was about 30C, so we needed plenty of water).

A few more kilometres through the delightful riverine woodlands, and we were alongside Lake Moodemere, ready for morning tea.



The lake was full, and was a beautiful contrast to the many dry areas of the North-east.

After loitering, and chattering, over morning tea, we headed back to the winery, making a total walking time of about 2.5 hours.

Once back at Pfeiffer's we settled in their picnic area (scene of four

markets each year – one for each season), bought some of their lovely chardonnay, and relaxed after our 'strenuous' walk.

A pleasant return drive to Wang, and we were home by 3pm.

[Chris]

Maria Island

This interesting island is located off the south-east of Tasmania, and presents a great mix of natural history, human history, and excellent walking venues.

Access is easy, via a short ferry ride, and once on the Island there is a variety of rustic accommodation to choose from in the main township of Darlington.



From here, there are many different walks to choose from, easy, medium and hard. Highlights (apart from the great walking terrain) are the convict history, great views and fascinating wildlife.

As an alternative to doing your own thing, there is the option of book a walking holiday with the Maria Island Walking Co, or the Tasmanian Walking Co. Both offer fully escorted tours from Hobart, with walking guides, accommodation and plenty of local knowledge.

Falls Creek : February 28, 29 and March 1

Westons Hut. Our Falls Creek weekend was based at the Myrtleford Ski Club, and from here 21 adventurers ambled across the High Plains to Weston's Hut, where Eric Weston's daughter Mary Goldsworthy explained about the construction of the hut in 1932.

Our own member Trevor Turnbull, was able to fill us in on the rebuild after the hut was lost in the 2006 fires.



Harrys Stephenson's book *Cattlemen and Huts of the High Plains*, and Klaus Heuneke's excellent book *Huts in the Victorian Alps* also have more details of the Hut.

Stephenson's book has been out of print for many years, but many libraries still have a copy (when it was in print, it broke all records for sales of a self-published book in Australia).

Another great book is *Cattlemen of the High Country : The Story of the Mountain Cattlemen of the Bogongs*, by Tor and Jane Holth.



The hut was accessed by driving to the camping area/day visitor area at near Pretty Valley Pondage, and after walking along the Fainter Trail, we headed south-east to AAWT Pole 333, we veered right, making a descent towards the Hut, and the catchment of the West Kiewa River.

Whilst we were enjoying ourselves hearing about Westons Hut, a smaller group had walked out to Tawonga Huts, and after we all arrived back at the ski lodge, the festivities began.

The 28 club members present celebrated founding member Adrian Twitt's 20th leap birthday on that day, the 29th February, although the youngster was not actually there.

Many remarked that Adrian was clearly, physically just out of his teenage years, but had achieved so much in only two decades!

As well as these birthday celebrations, Judy and Bob were congratulated for having achieved almost 50 years of being together!!

Rocky Valley Stream. The walk for today was to have been in the area of Kelly and Fitzgerald Huts on the high plains, but this didn't happen because of bushfire damage near those two huts.

Plan B was to walk from Bogong Village to the point where Spion Kopje Fire Trail crosses Rocky Valley Stream, and then return to our cars via the popular loop around Lake Guy.

Rocky Valley Stream forms a major part of the Kiewa River, and rises in the heart of Victoria's Alpine Region; its catchment area includes much of the Bogong High Plains, as well as parts of Mount Bogong itself.

Setting off from Bogong Village, we all passed comment on the low water level in Lake Guy, and continued round to the Pretty Valley Stream bridge. Having crossed this scenic alpine waterway, we took the steep-ish track off to the right that leads to a roadside pull-in on the Bogong High Plains Road.

Taking the sign-posted Spion Kopje option from the pull-in, we

ambled along to the Rocky Valley Stream, following a little used forestry track (the track is gated and locked at the start so there was little chance of meeting any vehicles).



The track provided enticing views of Rocky Valley Stream before we actually arrived at the water, and once there we had morning tea, and indulged in a few riverine antics, despite the chilling cold water.

Although this walk can be completed at any time of the year, springtime is probably the best. Walking in springtime has several advantages, such as wattle blooms and generally higher water levels in Rocky Valley Stream. The combination of wattles and plenty of water provides visual as well as audible effects.

Returning to the roadside pull-in, we made the relentless descent back to the environs of Bogong Village, and Lake Guy, only to find that the lakeside walk is now closed.



The hydro electricity operator (AGL) has safety concerns about the track, in particular the stretch that passes through the dam wall, so that was the end of our outing.

Distance covered (according to my GPS) was 9.5km, and the time taken for our group of 24 was about three hours. [Chris]



**WARBY RANGE
BUSHWALKERS Inc.**

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Been Away on Holidays???

or

In Summer Hibernation???

or

Simply need an excuse for a night off cooking??

Come and join

The Warby Walkers

for our

'AGM & Social Catch up Gathering'

When? Monday 23rd March

Where? Old Town and Country Tavern Function Room

182/174 Greta Rd; Wangaratta

Time? Dinner from 6.00pm (Order from the Menu)

Following the dinner (order from Menu), and a brief AGM (starting at 7.30pm), – Our guest speaker is Adrian Twitt. Adrian will speak about the History of the Warby Range Bushwalking Club. Another part of the proceedings will be a discussion about the options for the club's

'Week Away' for 2021.

RSVP: *Please book in to Anne by Friday March 20th*

Phone or sms your name to Anne: 0427 576 664

Easy!! Just e-mail now lurganne@bigpond.com



WARBY RANGE BUSHWALKERS Inc.

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Come Along To 1 or 2 Days of Training by Bushwalking Victoria!

Dear Fellow Bushwalkers of North East Victoria,

We warmly invite you to take advantage of this **local** opportunity for Bushwalk leadership skills training, and/or to use your Smartphone to find your way home! **Register for either day, or both.**

Saturday 23 May: LEADING BUSHWALKS-ESSENTIAL SKILLS

- Leadership skills
- Walk planning
- Risk management
- Conducting the walk
- Navigation
- Incident management

The day's training is interactive and includes some practical navigation exercises, discussion about scenarios and the role of a leader. All levels of experience welcome, it's a good opportunity to refresh/update your knowledge - whether as a leader or participant of group hikes.

Bushwalking Victoria provides a handbook for each participant, and you have access to a compass, maps, and presentation material for the day. You will be sent a small pre reading item to read before the day after registration.

What to bring?

Lunch, pen, pencils

Wet weather gear – waterproof coat, walking shoes / boots (for the practical navigation exercises).

Sunday 24 May: Learn to use your SMARTPHONE for NAVIGATION, anywhere, anytime

(GPS owners could use this course to practise their skills with their device).

In this workshop, we will look at how GPS satellite navigation works – the theory, practicalities, advantages and limitations. We will discuss a variety of smartphone mapping/navigation apps, including Avenza, maps.me and Terra Map. **Maximum 16 Participants -register now!**

What to bring?

BYO lunch, smartphone (or GPS device), ruler, pencil, pens, wet weather gear, boots, hat

Detailed course notes, activity sheets and maps will be supplied

After registration, participants will be sent detailed instructions on phone setup. Preparation and pre-reading must be completed before the workshop. Participants must already be familiar with basic map/compass navigation and be conversant with their own electronic device; that is, be able to update software and install new apps. Participants are asked to provide the make and model of their smartphone (or GPS) at registration.

Registration to Anne: lurganne@bigpond.com (include phone make/model for navigation training).

Cost: \$5 per day. Registration Closing Date 17 May