



**WARBY RANGE
BUSHWALKERS Inc.**

FUN . FITNESS . FRIENDSHIP

NEWSLETTER, December 2020

warbybushwalkers.org.au

Welcome to the last newsletter of the 2020 Walking Year; hopefully it will be a better year in 2021, as many of our plans for this year were thwarted by the covid-19 pandemic.

A reminder that this year's Christmas BBQ will be held on Friday, December 11, starting at 6pm, at the Bowmans-Murmungee Hall, accessible by turning off the Great Alpine Road (or Buckland Gap Road) onto the Murmungee-Bowmans Road.

Specifically, from Wangaratta, take the Great Alpine Road, and drive 31 km to the Bowman-Whorouly intersection, then turn left onto Bowman's Rd (signposted Bowmans-Murmungee Hall).

BYO drinks and meat for a BBQ. Crockery, cutlery and chairs are provided.

Please contact Anne Ford, phone 0427 576 664, or email lurganne@bigpond.com, to book in; bring either a salad or sweet to share. BYO BBQ.

As well as a nicely varied Walks Program (already emailed) there are two 'not to be missed events' - a weekend at Bright, and our annual week away.

The weekend at Bright will be based at Camp Crusty, where there are cabins, caravan sites and camp sites, but it's also feasible to travel up for the day.



The organiser of the weekend is Anne Turnbull, 0409 208 218, or email turnbullanne@gmail.com; you will need to book your own accommodation at Camp Crusty, Bright Cabin & Caravan Park: phone 5755 1154, or 0418 528 631, or email to campcrustybright@gmail.com.

Walks on offer include a selection of short to medium walks around Bright and Wandiligong. For example, Morses Creek to Wandiligong Diggings 10k; Cherry Walk 6k; Canyon Walk 4k; Wandiligong Historic Town Walk 3k. [AWTGS-2].

Annual week away : 2021

Our annual week away for 2021 (postponed from 2020) takes in the great coastal scenery of the Mornington Peninsula. More information on this great trip can be found on our website; the registration form is on Page 8 of this Newsletter.

Walks co-ordinator for the week, Robert Chard, posted this info,

"I am thrilled to be preparing the Club's Mornington Peninsula walks for our week away.

Walkers of all abilities will enjoy the spectacular walking trails, views of peaceful bays, wild ocean coastlines, tranquil bush and local history.



Being a coastal region, the elevation of most walks is easy to moderate, usually distance of the trail determines track grading.

The fourteen-kilometre Sorrento Ocean Beach to Bridgewater Bay walk, as well as the Bushrangers Bay to Fingal Beach track, are on the walk's program. Both walks offer spectacular cliff top views of the coastline, rock platforms, small bays and birdlife.

Walkers will also enjoy the hilly terrain around Red Hill and Arthur's Seat National Park with views of rural properties, majestic old pine trees, wetlands, wildflowers and wildlife.

All walkers will have the opportunity to undertake a section, or the entire challenging twenty-six kilometres, Two Bays Walking Track, the longest continuous walking track on the Mornington Peninsula from Dromana on the Port Phillip Bay to Cape Schanck.

A twelve-kilometre circuit track around Port Nepean will also be explored.

On this circuit, walkers can read about Australia's military history, a historic quarantine station, and Harold Holt Memorial while enjoying the stunning views of coastal vegetation, and bay views, of Port Phillip Bay and Bass Strait."

A message from our President

As we come to a close of 2020, we can look back on a year that presented many new challenges. This has impacted all of us in many different ways, and challenged some of our habits and expectations. I dropped off my exercise routine as working from home and gym closures meant a loss of discipline and diet, so consequently I have some work to do ahead of me in 2021!

COVID -19 restrictions required modification to our walking schedule, and we rediscovered favourite local walks—and added new ones. My particular thanks to Chris, Bob and Lesley (and everyone else) who provided options for people to join regular local forays. It has been a good year for gardens, and for pets, who have benefited from our attention.

I have a new family member, Toby—a cheerful, energetic Border Collie who you might meet on an occasional walk. (I am thinking of developing a new member category for four legged companions - what do you think?).

Others have enjoyed the blessing of new grandchildren (am I jealous?). Congratulations Andy and Jill, Kerri and Paul - and any others - I hope you are able to enjoy a special first family Christmas with your new grandchild.

Some of us have had accidents (fortunately Pat is on the mend), and others surgery (hang in there, Bob—you will be back climbing mountains with new vigour). Take care of yourselves, and be patient with your recovery, we look forward to seeing you all back in good health. We will all have much to catch up on, at one of our forthcoming events or hikes.

I hope many will be able to join us for our Christmas gathering at the Bowmans-Murungee Hall, where we will be sharing a BBQ picnic on the lawn. Adrian Twitt will also be taking us on a Group History journey - an account planned for our 40th Anniversary celebration, which had to be cancelled.

We will at least be able to mark the close of our 40th year, and remember our historical connection to the protection, and enhancement of the Warby Ranges, and the many years of comradeship, and shared enjoyment, of our wonderful natural environment in the North East since then.

Best wishes for a healthy and happy summer, and family holiday season, I look forward to enjoying many more walking adventures with you in 2021. Cecily Fletcher

Reform Hill and Mosaic Trail : September 20

Eight of us, and two furry friends, Ted and Toby, met at Jones Reserve Myrtleford to begin our walks on Reform Hill. Rain held us up for a while, but we made use of a local cafe for coffee, hot chocolates and other drinks til it was over.

We set off on the Reform Hill Lookout track, past mine shafts and the old quarry, and finally reached the top, with great views over Myrtleford, and a cloud covered Mt Buffalo. We had morning tea, before descending a short distance below the lookout to the Gully Track, and followed this track past lots of wildflowers to the Poverty Reef Loop, our second walk.

This track led to a smaller lookout, and again great views over Myrtleford, and the surrounding countryside. Heading back, we passed the Poverty Mine site, then further round the old Myrtleford reservoir, the Hume and Hovell monument, and the Reform Hill mine site.



Reaching the cars after our six kilometre walk, we drove around to Apex Park, the starting point for our Mosaic Trail walk, and we were joined here by one more walker.

After a leisurely lunch, we walked to Rotary Park, and back, looking for the mosaics, a quiet four kilometre stroll alongside the river.

Eight tired hikers were glad to return to their cars, all agreeing it had been a good first walk after six months in isolation. Our ninth hiker, not so tired, is looking forward to more walks with the club. [Erin]

Falls Hotham Alpine Crossing

The Falls Hotham Alpine Crossing is to receive more funding (\$15m) for enhancements to the trail, including overnight amenities, and improvements to the pathway itself.



All of this is thanks to the state government's *Victorian Tourism Recovery Package*.

Sock Liners

Sock Liners are intended to be worn under a more bulky sock (such as those made from merino wool) and are designed to keep our feet dryer, and cooler, for longer. Several outdoor gear manufacturers (such as Mountain Designs) are now making these handy accessories.

Warby Ovens NP Killawarra Walk : September 24

The first mid-week walk since COVID restrictions began to ease for regional Victoria, the second time round, was enough to encourage fourteen walkers to stretch their legs.

A cloudy day, with a forecast temperature of 12 degrees, with no rain on the radar, would make the planned 12.5km walk very agreeable.

The destination was a short drive from Wangaratta towards Peechelba and the Warby Ovens NP at Killawarra. The loop walk involved walking around the billabongs, small creeks, the Ovens River, some mighty old trees and birdlife. With this walk having no elevation to negotiate, and some fitness levels below par, quiet collective sighs could be heard through face masks, which I am sure were also concealing huge smiles.



As with most walks there should always be some element of mystery or surprise. We ended up with both. The first was that it was a mystery as to how a medium sized walking group, all with maps, can walk past the first required turn off.

The second, is it is genuinely no surprise when you consider all of the walking, talking and gawking that was happening prior. If anyone believes in reincarnation, I am sorry to have to tell you this, but we are all coming back as sheep.

This navigation mistake started to make the natives restless. One mildly agitated Scandinavian, who shall remain nameless until the next sentence, suggested morning tea. That was decided, and taken welcomingly by Marita, and the rest of the group.

The nearby Boundary Creek at Frosts Crossing Track with huge logs for seats, made a most comfortable place to rest.

The group retraced its steps back to the earlier missed turn, which later led to Yellow Creek Track.

A short link track in an eastward direction enabled us to join Niklaus Track, and finally the Ovens Track. Lunch was taken nearby at Gravel Point, a popular spot with its sandy-muddy beach.

After lunch, it was along this section that we walked alongside the Ovens River for a few kilometres. In places the river is quite impressive in its width and large river gum trees.

The cooler weather had the advantage of keeping mosquitoes at bay, and snakes away. The white cockatoos however were a different story. As a bird they do not have a lot going for them.

Despite being part of the parrot family, they missed out on the glorious colours, and a musical bird call. Instead they are plain white with a patch of yellow feathers on top, and that ear-splitting screech.

I think they are the human equivalent to a loud punk rocker with a mohawk. Even the raucous storytelling, and carrying on, of siblings Sonia and Sandra were not enough to drown out the cockatoos, despite their best efforts and risqué conversation. Some of which might make a white cockatoo blush, and give it some colour.

Future concerns over used masks, and their disposal have been

solved by ladies in the group. It would appear that they will make adequate swimming costumes, or underwear. A perfectly sustainable management plan rather than adding to landfill.

After some 14.6km in under 4.5 hours we reached our starting point, and the location of our cars at Francis Road, where walkers were rewarded with snakes of the confectionery kind.

This was my first walk in this part of the Warby Ovens NP, after having lived here for over twenty years. The Ovens River in this location is a sight to appreciate, and the easy tracks make it accessible to everyone. If you are yet to visit this part of our region, I can unreservedly recommend it as an enjoyable way to spend a few hours. [Michael Braendler]



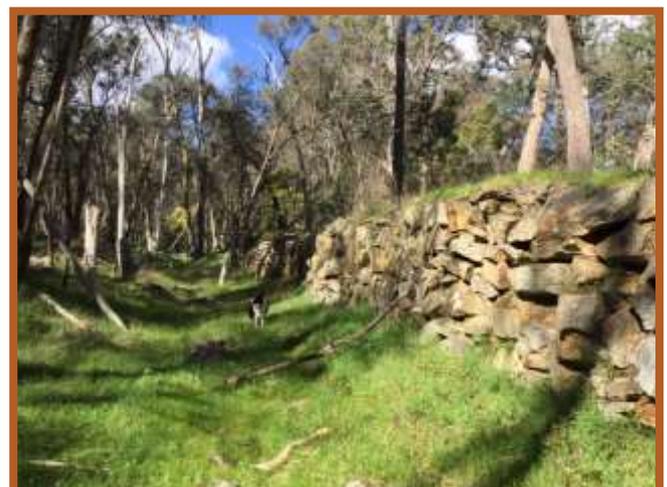
Magpie Creek Historic Area : October 4

Magpie Creek Historic Area adjoins Wooragee, a formal gold mining town, and is located about eight kilometres north-east of Beechworth, with many interesting relics from those boom years.

The Beechworth-Yackandandah railway line was opened in 1861 (closed in 1954) and this walk covered several aspects of this history; that is gold, and the railway.

A total of 17 walkers attended the walk, along with three local history experts; four members completed the short walk, accompanied by a local history expert, and 13 members, divided into two groups, completed the long walk.

We started at the Wooragee Primary School, on the Beechworth-Wodonga Road, and progressed along Factory Lane, Fanning Lane and Birtles Lane, enjoying the rural landscape, to the Magpie Creek Heritage Area (MCHA), a distance of four kilometres.



The faster group was led through the historic area by Cecily Fletcher, passing the picturesque Chinaman's Dam, and onto the heritage listed rock walls, built by the Chinese miners, a distance of about two kilometres.

Gerri Boland led the other group through the Heritage Area, arriving at the MCHA shortly after the faster group.

June Brown led the shorter walk group through the historic area, in the company of two local experts.

We all enjoyed morning tea/lunch at the rock walls, taking care with physical distancing, as per Covid-19 regulations.

A local farmer allowed the walkers, heading back to Wooragee Primary School, to walk through his paddocks, which shortened the return distance.

We had all returned to the school by about 12 midday, so it was a 3.5 hour walk, ideal given that the weather was warmish, with a maximum temperature of 27C.

The only challenge was the crossing of Magpie Creek, inside the Heritage Area, which we all managed without mishap.

There is no signage, or defined tracks, in the MCHA, and someone with knowledge of the area is needed to lead a group.

[Gerri Boland]

[See the Victorian Heritage Database (<https://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/about-heritage-in-victoria/victorian-heritage-database>) for more details on the Heritage Area.]

Mount Meg : October 18

The intended walk for Saturday was held over to the next day, due to wet weather, and so, on Sunday the 18th, twenty walkers, ten in each pod, were booked into the walk at Mount Meg Conservation Park, near Thoona, in brilliantly cool, but sunny weather.

Mount Meg has no tracks other than animal tracks, and requires plenty of log and rock jumping, and scrambles through bush and woodland for walkers.



Participants observed plenty of wildflowers, and while there was evidence of kangaroos, wombats, echidna and other fauna, only one large wallaby was sighted. Some deer damage to trees was also noted.

Perhaps the highlight for us, were discoveries of ancient aboriginal rock wells, carved over centuries to provide reservoirs for essential water supply, for former occupants of the country.

Views across lush green fields of wheat, canola and other crops, added to the interest in this walk. The Mount Meg Conservation park is a relatively hidden jewel in our district. [Adrian]

Killawarra Forest Camp : October 27

As usual during the pandemic, we met at Rotary Park for this walk, and then travelled in convoy to the start, at the Forest Camp, Killawarra.

The distance planned for the two walks was about eight kilometres (2 x four kilometres), and we had a warm, and humid day, with a grey/blue sky.



The eight of us had morning tea in the gazebo at the Camp, and then headed south for the first of our two loops, a designated wildflower walk that lead off to the south from the Camp.

Walking time was about an hour, and we enjoyed the ironbark forest, and its collection of wildflowers.

Lunch was held back at the gazebo, and then a smaller group headed off to the north for the second loop, also about an hour in duration.

This route followed forestry tracks, passing through some beautiful stands of ironbark, and crossing Irishtown Creek.

Both loops are rated as easy, and it was a lovely day out. [Chris]

Cup Day: November 3

There were three Cup Day walks this year (due to the Covid-19 pandemic) all of them based at Wenham's Camp in the Warby Ranges, followed by the traditional Cup Day celebrations.

Walk 1 was from Wenham's to Salisbury Falls, and return. There were nine people on this adventure, and we headed north on the Friend's Track, around to the Alpine Views Track, and then descended to Boilerwood Track, to reach Salisbury Falls for lunch.

After a rushed meal, the group started back on the trek uphill to Mt Warby. The wildflowers were magnificent, the views were terrific, and the company was excellent on this 12km walk.

If we go back to Wenham's for Cup Day, I will start the longer walk an hour earlier, so as to allow a more leisurely and enjoyable walk, and lunch, without rushing our last few kms. And, of course, there was only a deadline because it was Cup Day. [Jeanette]

Walk 2 was along Hoysted's Track. Six club members headed off for this 7km adventure, pushing through the now very thick flowering native plants, and weedy scrub, on their way to Booth Road, via the boardwalk.

Then it was down the rarely visited Hoysted's Track Loop, which cut through a sea of blooming wildflowers, with millions of everlasting flower heads, rejoicing in the fine weather after the substantial spring rain. [Andy]

Walk 3 was Friends Loop. This was a group of six, mainly new members, and we set off on this easy 5-6km, warm afternoon amble.



Many stops were made to read the signage, and admire the wildflowers, and birdlife. Lots of everlastings, chocolate lilies, blue bells and donkey orchids delighted them along the way.

A detour was made to Kwat Kwat Lookout for lunch, overlooking the very green Ovens Valley, and it was then a sprint to the 'stalls' in time for The Cup. They just made it by 3pm! [Karen]

The horses were drawn, and allocated for the sweep, and the radio broadcast started with "They're in the gates". The winner of the sweep was Cheryl Hoysted (someone with a long family history of race winners).



Then everyone with a gorgeous hat (including Rod Davis) was in the circular hat parade, and the judged winner was Ann Brain, who had created a delightful feature of sprigs of wattle placed among a decorative red mesh. Ann is a recycle whiz, with a former orange bag.

My thanks to Andy and Karen for leading their walks. An enjoyable social time during, and after, the walks was had by all. [Jeanette]

Orchard Track Loop : November 7

Ten bushwalkers completed the Orchard Loop Walk in the Stanley State Forest. This was a lovely walk, with some good views, and many wildflowers in bloom at the time. I'm not familiar with all their names, but definitely donkey orchids, milk maids, and some other orchids; this spring has been good for the wildflowers.

Our first stop on the walk was at Bates Dam, where we checked out the Lookout, and the storyboard with the mining history. We then continued on Jensens Track, climbing to a lookout point at the top of the hill, where we enjoyed the views, and morning tea.



Continuing along Jensens Track to Six Mile Road, West Dingle Track and Orchard Track, we had great views out over farmland on the floodplains.

We reached Tully Road, and then turned down an unnamed track, where fallen logs provided a lunch spot, before continuing to West Dingle Track, and winding our way back to Lady Newton Drive.

This is a fantastic walk, mostly sheltered in the forest, which was very pleasant to be in, and on good tracks/gravel roads, with some steep sections.

Lesley had previously provided detailed track notes, and maps already marked for our walk, and our GPS measured the walk at approx 8.5k. [Jeanette]

40th Anniversary

September 2020 marked the 40th Anniversary of the first ever bushwalk of our club, a cross-country 'off-track' route that finished at Pine Gully.

As part of the celebration of that event, Andy Kimber, and the Wangaratta Chronicle, kindly organised a feature article on our Club, and that article is accessible via the link shown below.

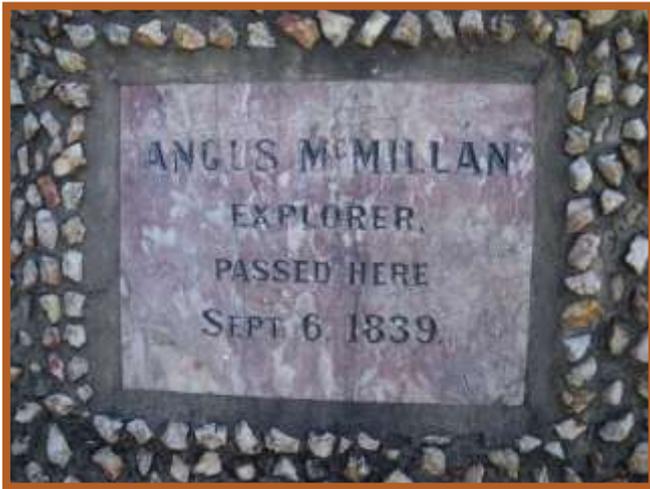
Our celebrations have been muted by the pandemic, but, as mentioned in Cecily's message on page 2, we are on track to have a formal occasion at the Christmas gathering.

[http://warbybushwalkers.org.au/wp-content/uploads/WC280820-18_LOW_RES.pdf]

McMillans Track

Angus McMillan (1810-1865) was born in Scotland, and migrated to Australia in 1838. He pioneered much of what we now call Gippsland, and his memoirs show that, like many migrants, he had a great love for his adopted country.

In 1988 a 210km long distance walking track was created in honour of McMillan's adventures. This great walk leads from the junction of the Great Alpine Road, and the Victoria River Track, eastwards to the small community of Woods Point.



Up-to-date details can be found in the excellent guide book *McMillans Walking Track*, produced by expert guide book authors John and Monica Chapman, and the Ben Cruachan Walking Club in November. See bencruachanwalkingclub.com for more details.

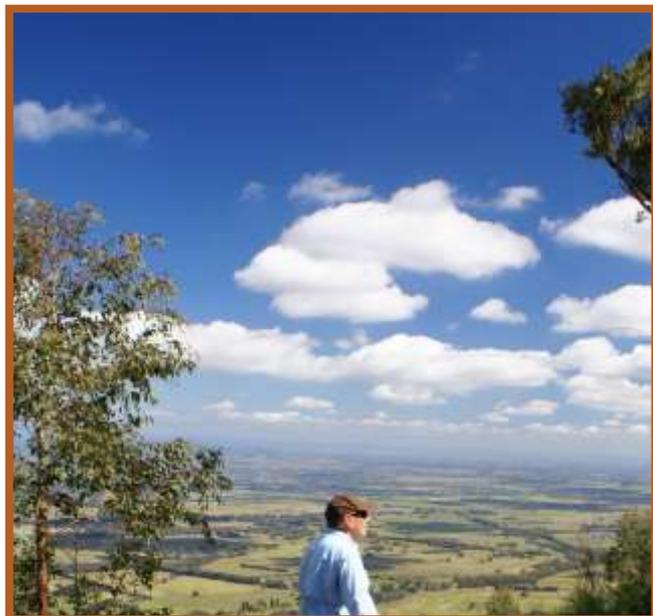
Flagstaff Road : November 22

There were a total of 13 walkers on this adventure, so we walked in two groups, so as to follow the current COVID-19 restrictions. As the day was predicted to be warm, with a storm brewing, we set off about 8.15am, to beat the heat.

The walk started just off the Great Alpine Road, near the intersection with Buckland Gap Road. We walked uphill along Flagstaff Road, having our morning tea break at the junction where Flagstaff Road meets Orton's Track.

After morning tea, one group walked back down to where we had started from, that made their walk about 6km.

The other group continued on Orton's Track, and then onto Orton's Spur Track, which is rather steep. Once it met up with Flagstaff Road again, we turned onto it, and walked back down to where we had started from.



This made a total of about 10km, with a 270m ascent and descent. The road was well maintained, and it's relatively safe walking as far as snakes go, as you have good vision of where you're walking.

We enjoyed the views in both directions, up the valley to Mt Buffalo, and also of the Murrumbidgee Basin. And of course it was great to catch up with each other. [Marita]

Walks on the Stanley Plateau

The Stanley Landcare Group is developing a series of walk around the Stanley Plateau, targeting both those who enjoy a longer walk (14 kms), as well as those who prefer a shorter walk.

The walks feature unexpected views amidst forest settings and plantations; 95% of the walks utilize old tracks, lanes, unmade roads and the like.

The Landcare Group has applied for funding to improve some signage for the walks, to interpret impacts of mining, bushfire, and flora and fauna.

Maps brochures and greater details are in the process of being developed, and in the meantime groups like ours might enjoy walking in the area, and offering feedback as to how things could perhaps be improved.

More details can be obtained from the Secretary of the Landcare Group (Tony McDonald; 0432-513-927), as well as from two PDF files which I can email to you (they are too large to lodge on our website; about 10MB). However, a partial image of this information is shown on the next page.

[Chris M, webmaster, 0418 503 802]

Parks Victoria : Warby-Ovens NP info

Parks Victoria have produced a new, six page, Visitor Guide detailing the main features of the Warby Ovens National Park.

All of the popular walks are detailed, along with heaps of other useful info about the Park. See our website (under *Useful Links*) for a download of this handy document.

New Walking Guide

As previously advised by email, the Rural City of Wangaratta has released a new publication covering a series of walks within the Rural City, and this is now available for pick-up from the Council Offices, and the Visitor Information Centre.

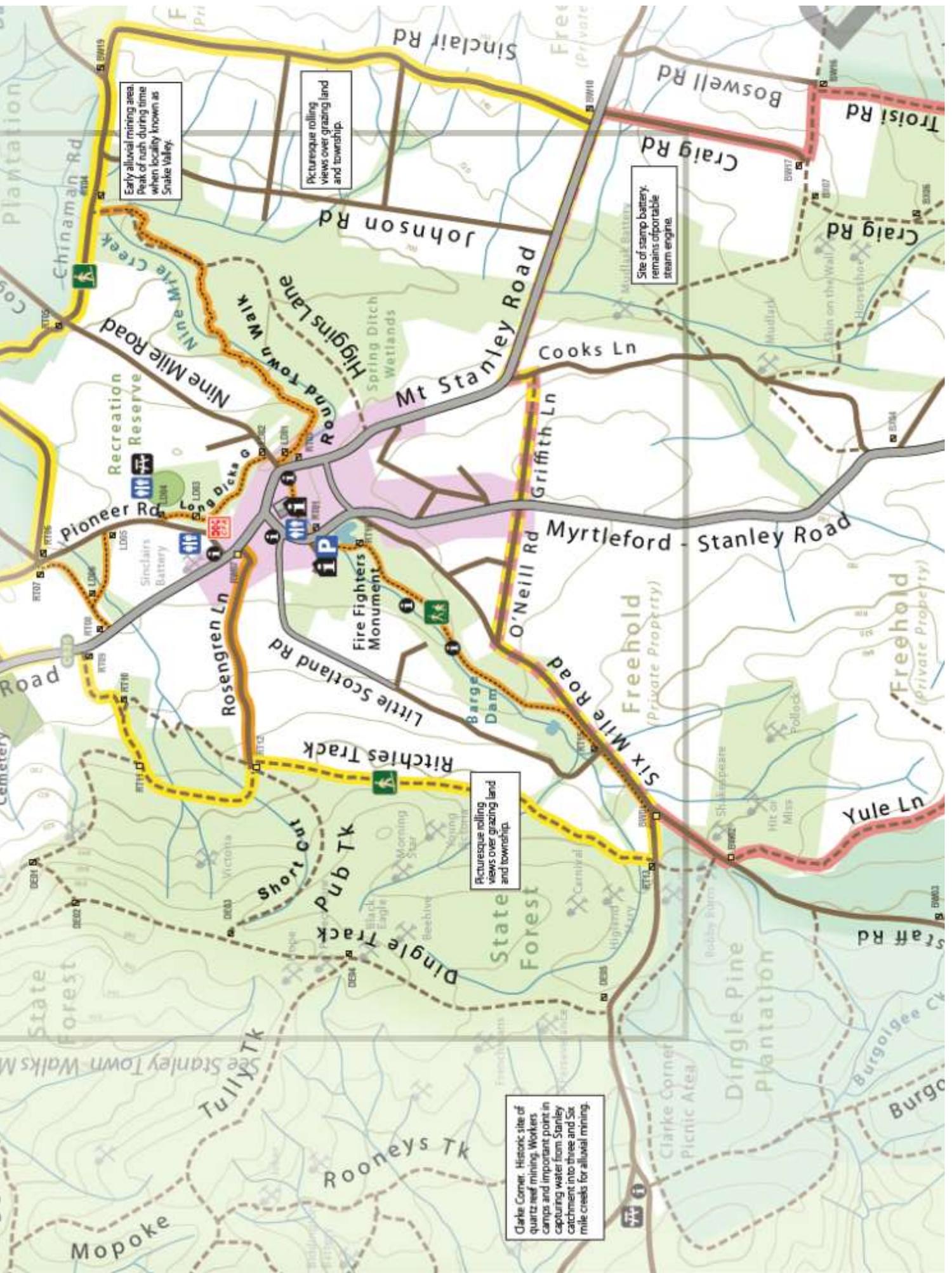
The guide covers many areas of interest, ranging from Eldorado to the Warby Ranges, to the King Valley, and the Rose River Valley.

The booklet is in a handy pocket sized form, following the style used in the similar publications by the Indi and Alpine Shires.

The guide, in PDF format, is also available for download from our website (under *Useful Links*).

Car Pooling

With the lifting of some of the restrictions imposed by the covid-19 pandemic, Bushwalking Victoria has issued some guidelines for the resumption of car pooling; these are, only four persons per car, plenty of ventilation (air-con and/or open windows), minimum distances to be travelled, and the wearing of masks in the vehicle.



Early alluvial mining area
Peak of rush during time
when locality known as
Snake Valley.

Picturesque rolling
views over grazing land
and township.

Site of stamp battery.
remains of portable
steam engine.

Picturesque rolling
views over grazing land
and township.

Clarke Corner. Historic site of
quartz reef mining. Workers
camps and important point in
capturing water from Stanley
catchment into three and six
mile creeks for alluvial mining.



WARBY RANGE BUSHWALKERS Inc.

FUN . FITNESS . FRIENDSHIP

www.warbybushwalkers.org.au

Registration Form : 2021 Week Away - Sunday 18th April - Saturday 24th April

Mornington Peninsula

Name:

Address:

Phone: Mobile:

Email:@.....

Emergency contact: Relationship:

Phone number:

Please tick any special **dietary requirements**, or relevant health issues:

- Vegetarian Gluten Free
- No red meat No chicken
- No fish Other
- Allergies

Indicate your **room preference**:

Room type Room Buddy/s

Singles Couple

All attempts will be made for your preference, as much as possible.

To register: Send completed and signed this Registration Form by xxxx.

o To: c/o Cheryl Hoysted, 1 Scott Street, Wangaratta 3677 0419 005 062; or E-mail to: choysted@gmail.com

• Pay deposit of \$150 per person

o Payment to be made by Direct Credit:

o BSB 633 000 Account No: 110647799 Ref: W-A + Your name

• The balance of \$250 will be required by 28 Feb 2021.

Acknowledgement of Risks and Obligations of Members

During the week away to minimise risks I will endeavour to ensure that:

1. Each activity is within my capabilities
2. I am carrying food, water and equipment appropriate for the walks/activities.

In addition:

1. I will advise the activity leader if I am taking any medication or have any physical or other limitation that might affect my participation in the walk/activity
2. I will make every effort to remain with the rest of the party during the walk/ activity
3. I will advise the leader of any concerns I am having, and
4. I will comply with all reasonable instructions of club officers and/or the walk/activity leader.

Signature Date...../...../ 2019