

MELBOURNE
BUSHWALKERS INC.

ABN 14 396 912 508



THE NEWS

#852

March
2022



Capturing the approaching storm, Mt Fainter South - L Wykes

WE ARE A MEMBER OF



Members of the Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc meet on Wednesday evenings between 6.30-8.30 pm in the club rooms at:

Mission to Seafarers Victoria
717 Flinders Street
Docklands

Visitors are always welcome!

General correspondence should be directed to:

The Secretary
Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc
PO Box 1751
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

www.melbournebushwalkers.org.au

Next committee meeting: Monday 7 March

The News of the Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc (The News) is published monthly, and is the official newsletter of Melbourne Bushwalkers Inc.

Editor: Deb Shand

Calls for expressions of interest for club activities and extended trips, walk reviews, articles, poems, news items, photographs of Club events, reports of new gear, book/ movie reviews, letters to the editor, advertisements, et cetera are always welcome. However, the Editor reserves the right to edit contributions where space, clarity or propriety dictate, and to maintain editorial consistency.

Note: photographs should be sent as separate high resolution files which are capable of being edited.

Please send your contributions as unformatted text files by email to news@mbw.org.au

Closing date for receipt of material for The News is the 21st of the month.

Advertisements should relate to bushwalking (e.g. gear, maps, trips, tours, health and fitness etc.). These may be published subject to space availability and Editor's discretion. For current advertising rates contact the Editor at news@mbw.org.au

New members

We welcome the following new members:

Fiona Carr
Annette Alafaci

Ross Hutcheson
Prabhu Delli

Louise McDonald
Hiroko Nakano

Leigh Wykes
Sonya Mackenzie

Speakers needed for club nights

We are looking for speakers for our monthly wine and cheese club nights. Have you got an interesting trip to share, or do you know of someone who could speak to us about matters relating to bushwalking or the natural environment we explore on our activities? If so, please contact president@mbw.org.au with your ideas!



Would you like your trip photos featured in the newsletter?

Due date for contributions to April News: 21 March
Email: news@mbw.org.au





Wominjeka!

Wominjeka means Hello/Welcome in the Woiwurrung language of the Wurundjeri people of Kulin Nation (Naarm/Melbourne area). Another (and perhaps more accurate) translation for wominjeka is 'to come with purpose' a definition I think is more powerful and reflective of the way we can approach coming together.

I hope you had a great summer with plenty of time spent in nature on some local, regional, or interstate hikes in the month of February the dry seasons of Biderap. During the months of Biderap the weather is hot and dry, the Bowat (tussock-grass) is long and dry, female Common Brown butterflies are flying, and the stars are high in the south at sunrise. I was reminded of the season if Biderap in the Kulin Calendar when seeing butterflies in large numbers accompanying me on a recent hike.

As I am writing this column I am reflecting on the past 12 years and words including code red for humanity, biodiversity loss, International Climate Action, the Road to Glasgow, pandemic, vaccination, omicron. Again, the year was once more dominated by the pandemic, but in December we were finally able to celebrate our 80th anniversary with a year delay. For the 80th anniversary we had a fund raiser launched to

raise funds to plant 500 trees as a long-term legacy for the club. In 2021 we reached our fundraising goal and the planting day is set for 18 September 2022. More information and details of the event will be shared with club members closer to the date. I hope many of you will use the Sunday walk to join in our tree planting efforts. The more people come the more we can share the work and joy. In their biomass and soil, forests are powerful carbon storehouses. For our planting day, the trees planted will be natives and usually indigenous to the region. The benefits of planting local species include lower maintenance and inputs (including water), suitable habitat for local wildlife, improved biodiversity (eg. increased bird life), higher survival rates, improved water quality, improved erosion control and habitat for insect and bird predators. Over its lifetime, the average tree captures 268kg of carbon. With your financial support and members actively planting trees in September, we are reducing our carbon footprint and leaving a legacy for our club in memory of our 80th birthday.

2021 was also the year where we as a club took meaningful steps to contribute to reconciliation as an Australian based bushwalking club. You can't reconcile anything, with anyone, without an open dialogue. It means reflecting on our current situation, listening to, and learning from First Nations perspectives, and working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The journey, in our own backyard, is perhaps our most important yet. It's a journey that will help take us towards a better, more inclusive, and fairer Australia, one that acknowledges, respects and celebrates the oldest living culture on earth. Melbourne Bushwalkers' members are encouraged to share an Acknowledgement of Country at the commencement of all activities and additional information including first nation and custodian name are now included in the activity preview. The highlight of our journey so far was welcoming Uncle Ringo to our 80+1 anniversary. It was a privilege to be standing with him on the land of the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation, and I am very grateful to Uncle Ringo for his warm Welcome to Country and the smoking ceremony he conducted for us.

Looking back at the past 12 months, MBW has seen a return of our Sunday bushwalks and broader walking program as well as our social monthly night in person. It's an understatement to say that the past years have been difficult. Whether because of the unrelenting COVID-19 pandemic, an increase in extreme weather events due to climate change and the Code Red for humanity or mounting threats to our ecosystems.

As we are nearing our AGM, I want to remind members to consider joining our committee for the period 2022/23. As I have done before I would like to ask you to get involved in the club activities. In addition, I would like to invite you to attend the AGM on Wednesday 23rd March 2022 in person or to consider a Proxy Form if you are

Noticeboard

unable to attend in person. Please ensure that it is properly signed and is handed to the Chairperson before the commencement of the meeting, or if sent by post or email, is received by the Secretary (secretary@mbw.org.au) no later than 24 hours before the meeting.

I will step down as the MBW President at the AGM after 3 years. I will continue to support the leadership transition and support the committee in climate change and environmental initiatives as well as returning as a leader later in the year.

It has been one of the greatest privileges of my life to serve MBW. The purpose and people at this club make it special. I would like to thank all MBW committee members past and present, for their passion, skill, commitment, and friendship. I leave the role of president in a much stronger position and with great momentum.

In closing, look after yourself, stay connected with friends & loved ones and spend time in nature.

Dabakarn (Go slowly in Noongar)

Susanne
MBW President

Membership Secretary's Report 2021

Halina Sarbinowski

Reviewing our membership at the end of December best reflects how the club's membership is travelling. As at December 31, in 2019 our membership was 515, in 2020 it dropped to 450 which was considered quite robust considering the impact of COVID-19, and in 2021 it was 482. This reflects both the loyalty of club members and also the interest of potential members. Our temporary membership has more than doubled in 2021 to 111, compared to 51 at the same time in 2020.

Although we have not advertised the club's Sunday bus program this year on "Meet Up" we have had a steady stream of visitors wanting to participate in the club's activities. It is great to see the current interest in walking in the outdoors.

The club implemented a 50% membership discount for members who nominated their membership of another club as their home club. This has been taken up by 13 members.

The committee is recommending that membership fees remain unchanged for the 2022/23 membership period, however, we will be reviewing family membership fees for the 2023/24 period. The rates for family memberships took into account the savings of printing and postage when only one newsletter was sent to each family unit. With the introduction of newsletters being emailed to members, these savings no longer apply and need to be reviewed.

It is great to be out walking again, to be able to meet up with old friends and to create new ones as we do when participating in club activities.



General Walks Secretary Report 2020-2021

Stuart Hanham

As with 2020, last year began normally. However, starting in February, four Corona lockdowns, the longest one lasting for about 3 months, again disrupted our program. Despite many cancellations, the number of activities in most categories, actually increased over the previous year.

On our day walks program, 65% of **Wednesday** hikes went ahead (3 more than in 2020), 55% of **MOFs'** walks (+3), 73% of **TOFs'** trips (+4), 56% of **Saturday** hikes (+4), and 58% of **Social** walks (+3). An extra **Historical** event also took place. For extended activities, 49% of **Pack Carries** occurred (an impressive 15 more than in 2020), 44% of **Base Camps** (the same number as previously), an extra **Walk-in Base Camp** and an extra **Lodge** trip. 50% of **Training** events happened (the same as in 2020), there was an extra **Conservation** activity and an extra **Canoeing** trip. However, no **Skiing**, **Cycling** or **Track Maintenance** events took place.

For our highest attendances, the **Wednesday** group had 16 hikers on the One Tree Hill, Ferntree Gully walk, while **MOFs** had 13 people on the Braeside Park and Waterways trip, and **TOFs** saw 18 walkers do the rounds of Golf Courses in Kew, Ivanhoe and Alphington. The **Saturday** group had 20 attendees for their Mt. Macedon/ Hanging Rock activity, and the **Social** walkers had a turnout of 14 at the Willsmere Park-Darebin Creek event.

Looking at extended trips, 15 hikers tackled the Great South-West **Pack Carry**, and 13 did the Beginners' PC on the Beeripmo Track. **Base Camps** at Lord Howe Island and Port Campbell, both attracted 13 people, while the **Walk-in Base Camp** at Wilsons Prom Lighthouse, saw 12 attendees. Our ever-popular annual event, Christmas at **Camp Eureka**, had a peak attendance of 24, with a daily average of 18. However, our most popular activity was the Easter **Lodge** trip at Mt. Hotham, with 31 hikers.

Another big event was the Club's 80th birthday (+1 year) **Historical** activity, which finally went ahead at Birdsland and Mt. Morton, and attracted 25 people. The Docklands **Canoeing** trip for 2021 had 18 paddlers, and a First Aid **Training** course included 19 participants.

From October onwards, our program recovered strongly from the final lockdown, thanks again to the determined efforts of our coordinators and leaders. In particular, there was a surge in the number of Pack Carries, while an impressive variety of other activities was offered. Encouragingly, this good work has carried over into 2022.

Federation Weekend 2022 Bookings

The Federation Weekend, postponed from November last year, due to Covid concerns, is now approaching on **Friday 25 March to Monday, 28 March**. The event was booked out very quickly in 2021, but 17 of our members managed to reserve a place. However, since then, some people have cancelled their bookings. The Fedwalks website states that those on the waiting list for new bookings have been contacted regarding vacancies. To update our records of who is still going, who is driving and who needs a lift, can you please e-mail me at gws@mbw.org.au We hope that this very special event will finally take place, this March.

Stuart Hanham
(General Walks Secretary)



March Reminders

Mick Noonan

This month, given the focus on the AGM, we only have **two short reminders for Leaders** and a reminder of the **safety equipment available from the Club**. If you are attending the AGM and need a whistle, then they are available on the night for \$2 each.



Accessing Private Property: The leader is responsible for obtaining the landowners permission to cross private property before the walk. Gates must be left open/shut as they are found on all walks and particularly on private property, and livestock should not be disturbed. If the walk has been done before the trip report should provide the contact details for the landowner.



For major popular walks the permission to use private property has generally been pre-arranged by the organisation responsible for the walk, eg. the Heysen Trail in South Australia. Generally access to private property is not allowed in the declared fire season. When the walk crosses a rifle range, which are nearly always on private property. then either re-route the walk out of gunshot range or, after gaining access permission, provide body armour for all participants. Our private property policies are covered in By-Law 2.7 and the Guideline for Leading a Day Walk.

Safety Equipment Available to Borrow: The Club has both **PLB** (Personal Locator Beacons) and modern **GPS** (Global Positioning System) devices available to borrow for using on upcoming activities or to become familiar with.

P.S. Remember to spot the interloper above!

Advance Notice: X-C Skiing-Rover Chalet-Bogong High Plains - 5-13 August 2022

Doug Pocock

Once again, we have been offered the use of the Rover Chalet for a week's X-C skiing. The chalet is an 11 km ski in from Falls Creek so is well away from the crowds. The chalet is well fitted out with a commercial grade kitchen, mattresses for sleeping on in the loft, internal toilets and hot showers. There is a washing machine and a drying room. 240v power so you can charge your phones even if reception is restricted. We run the week with a voluntary roster covering all the chores that need to be done, cooking, cleaning, wood chopping, bread baking etc. We try to organize full day trips every day taking lunch with us, usually at least two standards, an easier and a harder. If the weather is lousy we often play around on sheltered slopes near the chalet, perfecting (in my case trying) telemark turns.



The week includes a hall to sleep in on Friday night and a bus up and down to Falls Creek. To ski in we have to carry our fresh meat and vegetables, all the other food is stored in the large pantry in the chalet. To go in you need to have had experience on skis and to be able to carry a pack. The pack can be kept fairly light as you don't need many clothes because you can wash and dry them up there. If you are interested talk to me (5964 4581)

More Meet and Greet Volunteers Needed!

Mick Noonan

One of the aspects of our Club that new members appreciate is the personal welcome and information session we provide for visitors on Wednesday Nights in the Clubrooms. This '**Meet and Greet**' is provided by members who volunteer to assist. Many new members comment on how welcoming they found their first experience and its importance in their decision to join our club.



We have a regular turnover of volunteers providing the Meet and Greet and the amount of information conveyed can vary with their own club knowledge and experience, and how they understand their role. It is important that we have consistency in the information provided which is outlined in the club's Meet and Greet Checklist.

We are providing a **training session** to ensure there is consistent information provided depending on the visitor's experience, and to ensure our volunteers are confident and comfortable in their role. This is a great time to seek additional volunteers to join our current group of 16 to provide everyone with the skills and information required. We are lucky to have Margaret Curry as the trainer. Margaret is a very experienced Meet and Greet volunteer herself and knows the club "inside-out"! The training session will be for the current and new volunteers. The details are:

The Mission to Seafarers Clubrooms

6:30-7:30 Wednesday 27 April

(all social and training activities require members to be double vaccinated)

So, if you would like to assist in providing this important service and get new members off to a great start then **why not give it a go!** To discuss the role and/or attend the training please contact Judith Shaw who is our Meet and Greet Officer: judithshaw@protonmail.com

The night will also be a regular Wine and Cheese Night with an interesting presentation, so you are very welcome to stay on after the training if you choose!

Victorian Autumn Fire Outlook Overview

Mick Noonan

The fire outlook is relatively benign again this season with Victoria having a normal outlook except for the Alpine and Eastern Ranges areas where there is a **lower than normal** outlook due to good recent rains. La Nina is easing, rainfalls are expected to be normal but temperatures higher than normal particularly in the western parts of the state. For the forecast for each state read the full report:

[Bushfire Seasonal Outlook for Autumn 2022](#)



Mt Fainter and Mt Jim from Pretty Valley – 22-26 January

Jeanette Burnett

With so much change and uncertainty in everyday living, it was an achievement for the group to meet at the Pretty Valley Campsite for some hiking in the High Plains ... so much cooler, so vast, so rugged and so calmingly familiar.



We were prepared with wet weather gear and various levels of fitness as we headed off to Mt Jim. Above the tree line, we were surrounded with fields of wildflowers. The wealth of nature knowledge within the group had us learning species names and characteristics. The High Plains Creek Falls looked pristine, and like all water sources up there, a chilling relief to sweaty backs and hot feet. The campsite, at the base of Mt Jim, allowed for a village of tents set among very, very old huge gnarly snow gums.



The following morning most of the group headed out for a day hike down to Blair's hut and the Kiewa River West. The river was a welcoming rest stop, and some enjoyed a cold and refreshing dip. The climb back to camp was challenging with full sun and over 600m of up-ness. Settled for dinner we were entertained by a pair of Flame

Robins tending to their young. Afternoon thunderheads rolled in and gave a special atmosphere with lightning and thunder surrounding us.

The next camp was to be at Little Plain campsite. We decided to head closer to the Fainters, however, and the size of the group saw us split sites. Choosing a suitable place for your tent is a personal matter but there were those in the "Snow Gum Vista Estate" and a few down on "Ant Tussock Creek".

The side trip to the Fainters occurred after a decision point discussion whilst huddled under trees. The weather had closed in. The positive thinkers in the group took credit for the clouds soon parting, allowing for great views of surrounding landmarks. Again, the entertainment of the evening was dramatic cloud formations and storms.



The final day was spent hiking the Jaithmathang Range and back to the cars. As the track was overgrown, considerable time was spent navigating through the thick covering of Bossiaeas. The group looked like a line of straggly long legged spiders high stepping upwards. There were some weary legs.

The Fainter fire trail came into sight as we dropped off the Range. Those weary legs soon found new energy as, like on most long hikes, the horses bolted to the cars. This hike was a soothing experience... the familiarity of the terrain, the rhythms of pack hiking, and the ever enduring beauty of the High Plains ... some things don't change.

Thank you to our leader, Ian, and fellow pack carry enthusiasts for making it possible.

Kosciuszko–Main Range–Jagungal-Derschkos Hut - 22 - 26 January

Tamsin Davidson



Four of us headed off at lunchtime on Saturday 22 January - our leader Rachel, John, Jo (Rachel's friend from Dubbo) and me. We were enormously grateful to Therese and Susannah for so generously travelling up to NSW to do a car shuffle for us. It saved us many hours of driving both before and after the walk and it was lovely to have their company, albeit briefly.

We departed Dead Horse Gap and had barely walked 25m before we encountered the Bogong Creek without a bridge. In my case at least, pack down, boots off, crocs on, creek crossed, crocs off, boots on, pack on and then the walk really began. We headed straight uphill on a steep track, a mix of stairs and zigzagging and surrounded by snow

gums. A random ski lift chair placed at a viewpoint was an amusing find along the track.

At the top we joined the throngs of day trippers traipsing along the raised metal walkway between the Thredbo Chairlift and Mt Kosciuszko. It was somewhat disconcerting, the closest we'd been to so many unmasked people for nearly 2 years and the wind was blowing their breath in our direction! Mt Kosciuszko is not an especially imposing summit, but we all made it and took the obligatory photos. Our camp on the first night was in a broad valley just north of Kosciuszko, below Muellers Pass at Wilkinsons Creek.

We had gloriously sunny weather again on Sunday and the views of Lake Albina were superb. The raised metal walkways were in use again – although hardly the most natural track surface, they certainly protect the environment from the constant pounding of all the walkers and trail runners. At Carruthers Peak we left the hordes of day walkers behind and embarked on our real adventure. Being above the tree line, there was virtually no shade, and the sun was strikingly hot on us as we walked.

Sunday night we camped at Consett Stephen Pass. In the early evening, we were surprised to be greeted by a solo bushwalker arriving at our camp. Even more surprising was the fact that Rachel and John already knew her. Ngaire was undertaking a solo AAWT adventure and had met Rachel and John on Melbourne Bushwalkers' Stronachs Camp to Rumpff Saddle walk in late December.

The next day Ngaire joined us as we walked off track from Consett Stephen Pass via the Rolling Ground to near Schlink Pass. It was slow going at times, making our own route through the scrub. We tried to avoid the clumps of prickly *Richea continentis* and the boggy areas, but the alpine mint bush (*Prostanthera cuneata*) was easier to step through and had a lovely scent.

We were all very happy to make it to our lunch spot at Schlink Hilton. There was welcome grassy shade on the side of the hut and a bubbling creek just metres away. After lunch and a relaxing break, we said goodbye to Ngaire, crossed the dirt road and headed straight up the hill, creating our own path again. Monday evening we made it to Mawsons Hut. Not related to its Antarctic counterpart, but rather named for Herb Mawson, who built the hut in 1930.

On Tuesday we crossed the Valentine Creek and traipsed up some long valleys before stopping for lunch at the base



Along the track

of the Jagungal range. We studied the mountain range and pondered the optimal route before setting out. Strangely, once we were underway, the steep ascent somehow felt easier than the long valley walks. Dark clouds and thunderstorms threatened as we made our way across the top of the range before arriving just below the summit. The science teacher among us deemed it unsafe to climb to the summit in a brewing thunderstorm. The rest of us decided to risk our lives in the pursuit of glory and raced to the top for some quick photos. The science teacher subsequently did a solo climb to the top once the threat of being struck by lightning had passed. There was a general consensus in the group that the Jagungal summit was far more special and meaningful than the Kosciuskzo summit.

We were spoilt with an actual track down the mountain, but the rain started again. By the time we made it down to the Tumut River, we were all absolutely saturated from pushing our way through the very wet and extremely overgrown track. At times only our heads were above the scrub. Given the inclement weather, we abandoned our plan to camp at the river and instead continued onto Dershkos Hut. Although we still slept in our tents, it was bliss to be able to cook inside the hut and sort out our bedraggled packs and belongings.

We awoke on Wednesday to a foggy morning, but it soon cleared to a mostly sunny day. Our walk concluded with 14kms along a fire trail back to our cars at the Round Mountain Hut walking track, off Tooma Road.

It was a marvellous few days. We had the constant company of march flies, issues with dicky knees and ankles and the sun beamed down on us with minimal (if any) shade available, but the mountain views were simply magnificent, and we walked through an abundance of beautiful wildflowers every day. Many thanks to my fellow walkers for making it such a memorable trip, but particularly to Rachel who led us superbly and whose navigation skills ensured we made it home again!



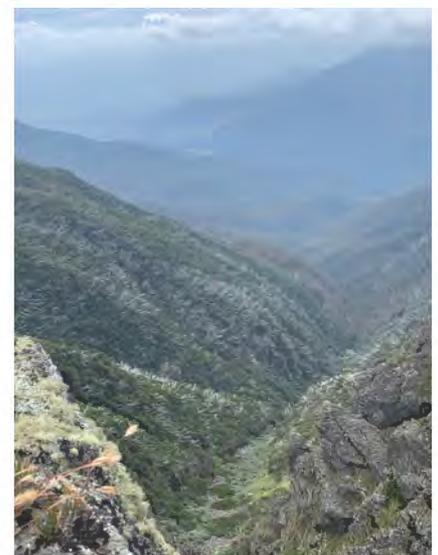
Mt Bogong-Cleve Cole-Ropers Hut-Grey Hills - 26-30 January

Bettina Brill

I had done this walk the previous year with Claire and what a difference it was. Firstly, the previous year it was very hot while the forecast this year was for tetchy weather with thunderstorms.

Ten Melbourne Bushwalkers were to set off on this walk, but numbers started to dwindle. Three had to stay home due to Covid, either having symptoms or recovering. That left seven. The weather forecast seemed to put three more hikers off who decided to only do the first of the four days.

We camped at Mountain Creek campground the night before and seven of us started early from Mountain Creek to Cleve Cole Hut via the Staircase, 1400m ascent, a distance of 12.5km with spectacular views. The big guy was shrouded in clouds, however, so we gave the summit a miss and marched on to Cleve Cole Hut. The weather was very humid which made the ascent a bit



Along the track

challenging. One of our walkers felt quite unwell and could not continue and another member kindly volunteered to descend with her. That left five of us to continue.

We camped at Cleve Cole Hut and got up to a great sunrise. Two of our hikers were going to descend again, and another had injured a knee that was swelling up, so decided to descend as well. And then there were two!

The early mist lifted, and Claire and I walked on in beautiful sunshine along the T-Spur down to Big River. The water level was slightly up but quite manageable. How enjoyable is that ice cold water on sore feet! We continued up along the track to a deserted campground at Ropers Hut. Only two more hikers from Falls Creek turned up later in the afternoon. The forecast thunderstorm finally arrived in the evening and gave us a spectacular light show while we were snug and dry in our tents.

It was misty and a bit wet when we set off next morning up the fire track and along the Spion Kopje fire track to the turnoff for the Grey Hills. By that time, we were surrounded by fog and had to rely on our navigation skills to find the track and continue on to Mount Arthur. Showers on and off made for a short lunch break and we moved on to our next camp at Bogong Creek Saddle. Two hikers we had met on the T-Spur two days earlier had come from the other direction and also set up camp. On cue the clouds lifted, and we were treated to a nice sunset with views towards Mt Buffalo. Strong winds blow along the saddle, as I also recall from last year, and put our Mont tents to the test which they passed without trouble.



Next morning, we set off in mist up the Quartz Ridge towards Mount Bogong. No more rain, and clouds lifted every now and then quite dramatically to provide views of the surrounding mountains. The wildflowers up on top were quite a treat. From the top we descended along Eskdale Spur and then followed the rather long stretch on Mountain Creek Road back to the cars, path blocked shortly by the only black snake we saw in the four days and 56km.

Thank you, Claire, for organising this great walk and your company, and thanks to Agajan, Angela, Bernadette, Deb and Fang for your company on the first day.

Wilson's Prom Base Camp – 30 January-1 February

Judy MacWilliams

The Prom has long been what I have called the “most beautiful place in the world!”. I recall those times when, with a family of four little kids in tow, we camped in rudimentary tents and, to cope with feeling somewhat bored in walks in the northern region, I began looking with much more attention at the foliage and flowers I encountered. Thus grew a lifelong fascination with Australian plants and some years of successful propagation. All thanks to the Prom. But, 25 years ago, walking the Milford Track in New Zealand resulted in a toppling of Wilson's Prom from that “most beautiful...” place. However, on our recent trip, with 23 bushies from the Club, the Prom took back its first place - it IS the most beautiful place in the world – for me.



Along the track

Most of us arrived around midday. Bern and Jill had booked Arthur Lucas Lodge, which accommodates 26, but they capped it at 13, as a Covid safe measure. This was a terrific option for those of us who were needing/wanting to take a break from setting up camp. But 10 others either tented or luxuriated in their RVs.

On Sunday afternoon, Jill, our leader, had planned a walk up Mt Oberon, but it was in cloud, hence no views. So, we all undertook that iconic walk to Squeaky Beach, with some continuing on to Whiskey Bay. It was very humid so most of us finished off that afternoon with a fabulous swim in beautiful Norman Bay. I've rarely braved the ocean at the Prom - too cold - but that humidity gave me and others the courage necessary. It was fabulous.



Monday we all set off with the plan to walk the Lilly Pilly track and Mt Bishop, with an option of continuing on to Pillar Point. Another very warm day but beautiful Lilly Pilly is so shaded that it is very manageable. Now, I've done Lilly Pilly many times - I thought! Never realizing that what I'd done is baby Lilly Pilly - just to the loop at the bridge and back. The full walk is 5.5 km, with a gradual climb for most of the track beyond that bridge. I wasn't going to attempt Mt Bishop (7.4km) - expecting tough inclines. But Jill assured us that the track was fine and that we were well on the way anyhow. Up we went, me leaving my pack behind! It was so worth it - it was mostly shaded, there were gorgeous views and then, that fabulous feeling that comes from stretching oneself beyond comfort zones. Next destination was Pillar Point, for those more intrepid than I. That beach was calling me though, and several others too, so we parted ways at Lilly Pilly carpark and enjoyed another tumble in the waves - sorely tempted to bribe some kid for a go with their boogy board - but resisted.

Our last day, Tuesday, saw us all at Port Welshpool at 9am-ish for a full daytrip around the Prom with Wildlife Coast Boat Cruises. I wasn't expecting too much, thought I knew the Prom pretty well and that it would be a leisure ride, perhaps a bit tedious (so took a book). Well, not so! A very informative captain and his brother, both locals, kept up a full commentary, with a few political views tossed in. Do you know who was the Wilson of Wilsons Prom? Bass and Flinders recommended the name Wilsons Promontory to Governor Hunter, honouring Flinders' friend from London, Thomas Wilson. Little is known of Wilson except that he was a merchant engaged in trade with Australia. Seal hunting was conducted in the area in the 19th century.



Getting out of Corner Inlet was a bit hairy, then we were out into the ocean, passing towering granite cliffs, the iconic Lighthouse, past the most southern tip of the Australian mainland, on to Kanowina Island seal colony, home to hundreds of Australian and NZ fur seals. Then full bore (and I do mean.. FULL bore), ahead to the monolithic Skull Rock, which the captain prefers to Uluru. It was fascinating. The incredible Shearwaters, better known as mutton birds, were prolific and dolphins periodically did their joyful dances for us.

A 2 hour visit to magnificent Refuge Bay just topped everything off - some swimming, some walking, some just lying on that beach, me daydreaming. Two hours whizzed by. All up, a fabulous trip and many thanks to Jill for her organizing and her gentle leadership.

My First Pack Carry Experience: Mt Feathertop –

11-13 February

Hiroko Nakano

Beginning our weekend walk at the Mt. Hotham visitor carpark on Saturday morning, the 13 members (and leader) of Melbourne Bushwalkers gathered in a circle for our preparatory talk. Our leader for the upcoming walk was Ian, who, if we had been in the film, 'Lord of the Rings', would have been Gandalf (minus the facial hair) – our wise and omnipotent leader for what I anticipated to be quite an adventurous journey ahead for the next 2 days. I looked around at my fellow members: everyone looked like calm and capable long timers.



I knew I was in for a big learning curve this weekend as a complete newcomer as this was my first pack carry experience. Doing a pack carry hike was something which I had considered doing for a few years, and now, the opportunity and serendipitous timing finally signalled my readiness. Whilst we shuffled together to form a loose circle, I discreetly asked a fellow Bushie standing next to me as to what length I should ideally have my newly purchased trekking poles. A gently spoken woman with a lovely kind face offered a quick lesson to educate my curious and very green mind. (See Lesson 1) We all trundled out on the path over the summit of Mt Hotham towards Diamantina Hut which was to be the beginning of our walk along The Razorback.

Here, my romanticised decision to wear my newly purchased Akubra hat for this walk, intended to fulfil my fantasy of a self-invented character "The Japanese-Australian lass from Snowy River", quickly demonstrated as not the most pragmatic decision. Winds blew strongly and I decided to take it off in fear of losing my new hat. Realising I had arrived with fatuous optimism, I shoved my Akubra on my chest in between my backpacking front straps (see lesson 2 and 3). The winds on this day I later found out were blowing at around 40km/hr, detected from the closest weather station at Mt Hotham.

We walked in a line on our pilgrimage along The Razorback, led at a consistent pace by Ian, who walked spiritedly and with the ease of a young gazelle for about 11km to our base camp located along the Diamantina Spur where we would sleep overnight. I felt like more of a cumbersome mountain donkey with my gear, a sleeping mattress and tent strapped and flapping on both sides of my backpack (See Lesson 4a and 4b).

The terrain throughout the walk was breathtaking beautiful and spectacular, with lush green valleys, exposed peaks, and low grassy plains as far as the eyes could see. This was one of the main reasons why I loved spending time outdoors, whether it be going on hikes or freediving in open oceans. I'd lived for the past year in the heart of Melbourne city, surrounded by my mod cons and tall straight-edged buildings, and whilst I appreciate the convenience and material luxury of what urban life can offer, being in nature is where I find my greatest sense of calm and peace. I strongly sense that this is where my greatest connection of spirituality is, where trees are my cathedrals and ocean reefs are places of solace, that these are the places where my God is found. It is a place where I can remember my existence, to bow down and be humbled at the greater natural earthly forces at work - and be a part of everything, to let go of my sense of ego and be nothing at the same time.



Reaching the summit of Mt Feathertop on Saturday afternoon after walking about an hour from our base camp (4.5km from our start) was extraordinarily beautiful and worth the challenging walk, which I was later told was a fairly mild walk in terms of levels of difficulty. Beautiful clear skies highlighted the pointy

Along the track

green treescapes along surrounding peaks running into lush valleys below. I felt like I could shapeshift into a bird and fly into this huge vast space before me. This was a sense of palpable freedom! Fortunately for my human self, I didn't jump into the ether...

My Lessons:

Lesson 1: How to use trekking or walking poles.

I learned my wrist and arms should be parallel to the ground with my elbows bent at 90° when holding the poles for a correct height. From here, I practised what felt like the correct stride to match and hand placement according to upwards or downwards direction of a ground surface or slope. I felt, at times, that I wobbled in a Mr. Bean-like fashion, but my inner grasshopper reminded me to be patient to continue practice.

Lesson 2: Wear a hat appropriate to the conditions.

Whilst an Akubra looks as fittingly Australian in the great outdoors as akin to a sausage dripping with tomato sauce between two slices of white bread at a backyard barbecue, I discovered it does not work to wear an Akubra on a hike. The brim of the hat proved to be too wide and was constantly being obstructed by the rear of my backpack above head height. To look up or down meant craning my neck with slight rubbing pressure in abnormal degrees so I would feel like I was a wonky rubber-necked stork if I needed to look in any direction other than straight forward which, when one is hiking, is a lot. I was advised to buy either a flexible hat from a disposal store or a hat with neck protection. Advice noted.

Lesson 3: The Lesson of Two Shoelaces.

I believe there is always a shiny silver lining in every cloud, and in this case, if Lesson 2 was my cloud, then Lesson 3 was my silver lining. After sharing with some of my fellow explorers my quandary of how I could manage to walk and wear my hat in the blustery wind without it blowing off and plunging, forever lost, into the huge valleys below, one thoughtful person extended a simple solution of offering two shoelaces which she had in her kit and tied them together. I was able to place it along the brim and twirl around the leather band of my hat and for the remainder of the journey, I could tie the shoelaces together under my chin, thereby wearing my hat safely without concern of it being gripped into the mighty windy hands of nature.

This was my first gentle and invaluable lesson in generosity of spirit. I realised this was a fine example of how the extension of one's thought and generosity within the group of Bushwalkers can offer solutions to however minor the problem may appear to be. One very small token gesture or object can offer much relief to another. My lesson here was to remember to carry a pair of shoelaces from now on, and offer what I can, when I can, to my fellow bushwalker.

Lesson 4a: Invest in ultralight hiking gear.

It is worth the effort, for weight, during walking and later on when using the gear, for ease and comfort. Although the initial outlay may appear expensive, I learned from my first walk why smart walkers keep the size and weight minimal. When I write that with my sleeping bag and mattress strapped on the outside of my back pack that I not only felt like I looked like a mountain donkey carrying saddle bags, I also felt as silly as one too when I realised that no one was carrying gear outside of their back pack for a reason: the unevenness of weight and swinging motion of my external bags during this walk meant extra effort to keep balance, and also the 'swishing' sound of these became akin to a dripping tap that was constant. Aaargh!

When all of one's heaviest main gear, ie. the tent, sleeping bag and mattress is teeny weeny enough to fit into the size of two hands, it meant everything could be tucked into our tortoise shell home of one's backpack. When we reached our base camp on Saturday afternoon around 4:30pm and set up our homes for the evening, I went on a personal research mission of our group to find out what people were using and why. Whilst I had whittled my dehydrated food meals down to a fine art, all my other gear was way too heavy. My next task when possible is to minimise my 16kg+ of gear down to around 10kg.



Lesson 4b: Have temperature-appropriate gear.

The weather on the Saturday night dropped down to 2.8°C. After getting a very cold backside after an hour or so of lying down, I stopped pretending to myself that I wasn't cold and threw my thermals, another woollen top layer, a Goretex Jacket and my beanie on. I had a look at my sleeping bag tag which wrote 'ideal temperature 5-10°C'. I thought that when I bought this sleeping bag years ago it could deal with lower temperatures, and I had not checked it before I went. I was reminded that my memory, thinking and actual reality are all sometimes on very different levels - I did not sleep very much that evening, due to my cold butt. Remember to do a current reality check, very important!

When our group dispersed and our weekend together finished, the journey home unwound with tired but lively chats with Halina, Ian and Prahbu. I got home, unpacked, and immediately began to research online to gather the golden eggs of my garnered knowledge offered by the Wise Elders of my Bushwalking Group, in preparation for the next outdoor adventures ahead. To Infinity and Beyond!

Cape Liptrap – 5-6 February

Kim Cowie

After spending a wonderful Friday afternoon swimming at Venus Bay, followed by a great meal at the Tarwin Lower pub, thirteen Melbourne Bushies awoke to brilliant sunshine on the first day of walking which seemed in stark contrast to the stories of rain, wind and sleet which accompanied tales of the previous hike by Melbourne Bushwalkers through the Cape Liptrap Coastal Park. This Park follows a narrow strip of coast from the lighthouse to Venus Bay and has a mixture of high cliffs, magnificent beaches, banksia woodland and vibrant blue and green water.



Day One of walking began with a drive from Venus Bay to Cape Liptrap, offering magnificent views past windfarms and over paddocks towards the western length of Wilsons Promontory. The short walk from the car park to the start of our track was graced with a couple of kites – the bird kind – soaring an updraft.

From the first moment, the track itself offered the group all the challenges that could be thrown; ducking under the low coastal scrub, climbing over trunks, and making our way down steep inclines to the rock shelf below. Following the rock shelf and marvelling at the different geological formations of limestone and basalt, we rock hopped around points and traversed small pristine coves until we reached Morgan Beach, where we ascended the dunes to follow the cliff line past some spectacular cliff faces.



Dropping back down through dunes, we continued on firm low tide sand for around two kilometres until we reached a freshwater stream running down to surf, where we set up camp in the dunes. After a swim in the surf, a soak in the stream and a meal in our dune camp, we had the pleasure of watching the sun set over the water and fell asleep to the sound of the waves.

Our second day consisted of a half day walk along firm sand to Venus Bay, where a swim and fish and chips were the order of the day, before the long drive back to Melbourne.

Upcoming activities

March 2022

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|--------|--|-----|---------|--------------------------------------|
| Thu 3 | TOF: Backroads of Wandin | Pvt | E | Doug Pocock |
| 4-6 | PC: GOW: Marengo to Cape Otway | Pvt | E/M | Gina Hopkins |
| Sun 6 | DAY: Lake Elizabeth to West Barwon Reservoir | Bus | E/M&M | Richard Long & Catherine Mulvany |
| Mon 7 | MTG: Club committee meeting | Pvt | | Susanne Etti |
| Wed 9 | DAY: Greens Bush | Pvt | E/M | Michael Quinn |
| 11-15 | PC: Northern Prom | Pvt | M | Judith Shaw |
| 11-14 | PC: Mt Buller via West Ridge | Pvt | M/H | Robert Ian Mair |
| Sun 13 | DAY: Mt Alexander-Black Wallaby Rocks | Car | M | Deb Shand |
| 18-20 | PC: Mt Clear circuit | Pvt | M | Mark Simpson |
| Sun 20 | DAY: Wirilda Track | Bus | E/M&M | Robert Ian Mair & Halina Sarbinowski |
| Mon 21 | MOF: Royal Park Wanderer | Pvt | E | Sandra Mutimer |
| 22-6 | PC: Great South West Walk | Pvt | M/H | Jill Allen |
| Wed 23 | MTG: Annual General Meeting | Pvt | | Susanne Etti |
| Thu 24 | SOC: Boyd Park | Pvt | soc | Merilyn Whimpey |
| 25-28 | BC: Federation Weekend - Licola | Pvt | E/M&M/H | Stuart Hanham (coordinator) |
| 25-27 | PC: Barmah National Park | Pvt | M | Robert Ian Mair |
| Sat 26 | DAY: Sugarloaf Reservoir | Pvt | E/M | Maureen Hurley |
| Sun 27 | DAY: North Brisbane Ranges-Spring Creek | Car | M | Jopie Bodegraven |
| Wed 30 | DAY: Moonee Ponds Creek | Pvt | E/M | Richard Hanson |

For detailed preview notes and program updates, please refer to the activities program on our website:
https://mbw.org.au/mbw_activities/MBW_activities_program.php

