

# The *Catholic Walker*

April 2025

*The Magazine of The Catholic Walking Club of Victoria Inc.*



*Rose the photographer.  
Mt Hotham Base Camp  
Photo: Corrie van den Bosch*

# From the Editors

**T**his issue of *The Catholic Walker* brings you another 20 Great Walks, completing the 70 Great Walks project for the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of publication of our magazine. In fact, we received 71 G W's! Thank you for the warm response to this project, which has evoked a variety of responses from readers: admiration, appreciation, amusement, astonishment...as well as, for some, regret that we can no longer scale those heights or carry those packs so far. If any of the G Ws have prompted further memories (as you will see with Tom's piece on page 14), please send them to us.

We continue the reprinting of an article from each decade of the *Walker*, with a hilarious piece by Andrea Luscombe about a ski trip in 1978.

We received this beautiful message from Corrie recently: 'Thanks to you both for the gift of our beautiful magazine. I love the photo on the cover of the December issue, of Tom avidly reading the latest issue. I think many of our members could be similarly photographed as we look forward to each issue.' Thank you, Corrie, and thank you for your thought-provoking reflection for our Lenten journey, 'Sowing Seeds of Hope in Dark Times'.

From the editorial team we wish you a happy and blessed Easter.

*Joan Kenny and Janet Wilkinson*

## **April**

2<sup>nd</sup> Peter Matheson, Mark  
Thompson  
9<sup>th</sup> Wanda Fitzgerald,  
Rosalie Padovan  
10<sup>th</sup> Davan West  
13<sup>th</sup> Ineen McIndoe  
14<sup>th</sup> Janet Wilkinson  
27<sup>th</sup> Peter Cosgrave  
27<sup>th</sup> Janice Sisson  
28<sup>th</sup> Theresa Thomas  
29<sup>th</sup> Mary Conheady, Margaret  
Cosgrave

## *Birthdays*

### **May**

2<sup>nd</sup> Lisa Bowyer  
11<sup>th</sup> Peter Naughtin  
15<sup>th</sup> Barbara Piaskowska  
18<sup>th</sup> John Schwarzman  
19<sup>th</sup> Phil Murray  
20<sup>th</sup> Krystyna Derwinska  
25<sup>th</sup> Ann Thompson  
26<sup>th</sup> Tony Frigo  
31<sup>ST</sup> Marianne Trigg

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# From the President

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*I*n recent weeks we have enjoyed the brilliant sunshine of an Australian summer. (It has been a little too brilliant at times and our activities have been modified accordingly.) We have still enjoyed day walks, pack carries and a base camp at Marysville. The hot weather has challenged us to change our walking pattern with 8am starts, which had us back in camp before the hottest part of the day.

At the recent base camp we celebrated some significant milestones for some of our members and this reminded me that our Anniversary Day is coming up on **4 May** when we usually acknowledge these events. So please, if you know of any members who have some 'significant milestone' such as a zero birthday, or anniversary, let someone on the committee know. Some of our members are often a little hesitant to announce these things themselves!

This week we gathered to mourn the death of and celebrate the life of Jan Maher. It was a great celebration of a valiant woman who had enjoyed life and especially the Australian bush. The presence of so many club members—both from now and from then—spoke not only of the influence of Jan in the lives of many but also of the depth of friendships that bushwalking gives to us.

At our committee meeting we mentioned again the importance of all walkers carrying with us a copy of our Emergency Contact and Medical Information form. I know this is a rather sombre thought but it could well be that you or I have need of this at some time in the future. It would be so much easier for everyone if the leader could easily find this form neatly folded in a clear plastic packet (sandwich bag perhaps) in the top pocket of our pack. So, before we head out next time, could we all check that it is there, please?

Looking forward to seeing you on the track with the above mentioned in your pack!

*Bernadette Madden*

# More '70 Great Walks'

*Here are another 20 memorable activities from our 70 Great Walks collective. You will notice that the original recommendation last year of '30 words or fewer' was ignored by all but the earliest contributors!*

52. Rose Thomas

## **The Welsh Village, September 2022**

This classic walk in the Castlemaine area, enjoyed by our club members many times over the years, prompts memories of visits on prior occasions. The obligatory visit to the local Das Kaffeehaus (The Mill, 9 Walker St, Castlemaine) ensures that the apfelstrudel will never be forgotten.



*Exploring the ruins at  
the Welsh Village  
Photo: Peter Wilson*

53. Celinda Estallo

## **Walking by Melbourne's Waterways**

### **Fairfield Boathouse - Abbotsford Convent**

From Fairfield Boathouse, cross Yarra Bend Road and down the dirt track. Peaceful river views, red river gums, golden wattles and areas of great significance. The old industrial factories along the Yarra replaced by residential and warehouse developments. Collingwood Children's farm and the Abbotsford Convent (which now includes a café, Arts Precinct and Steiner School) nearby. Refreshments at the Boathouse always delightful.

## 54. Quentin Tibballs

### **Christmas-New Year at Mt Hotham, 2022, 2023**

The CWCV staying at Asgaard the last two Christmases. The lodge carries memories for me going back 50 years and the times I shared building it with my three brothers; it was great to share this lodge with my friends in our club. *[In 2024 CWCV members stayed at Tanderra Lodge, Mt Hotham, and J. B. Plain camp, while Quentin and members of Melbourne Bushwalking Club stayed at Asgaard Lodge.]*



*Meeting at Asgaard Lodge, Mt Hotham, December 2023*

*Photo: Sophie Wilczynska*

## 55. Barbara Nankervis

### **Walking with the 'Big Time' Walkers, 1992, 1993**

My first backpack walk was Tom's Christmas Walk. The highlight was walking with 'the Big Time' walkers and camping on Mt Bogong for the last sunset of 1992 and the first sunrise of 1993. It was the start of many great backpacking trips with the CWCV.

## 56. Sophie Wilczynska

### **Loch Sport, March 2016**

Especially memorable was the **night yacht race**. We were waiting in total darkness for yachts to appear and suddenly far away the sky got illuminated,

then more lights came around the corner of the canal and came towards us, and then all the big yachts, with illuminated sails, glided and paraded in front of us. Magical!

57. Sophie Wilczynska

### **Cape Conran Coastal Park, March 2014.**

I drove with Barbara and Ellen. As usual we talked all the time, a bit of Thelma and Louise style; got to the place thanks to Ellen's grounded thinking 'Turn left NOW, Sophie.' Beautiful weather, lovely cabin, lots of magnificent Banksia trees, swimming in Yeerung Gorge, walk to Salmon Rocks and West Cape, extra attraction: stingray!

Lovely walk around the mouth of Snowy River in Marlo, wading through sometimes deep waters, so I had to hold Ellen's hand for she was afraid of water.

Dinner in Bemm River pub was memorable too, in company of wild, strong fisherman. Haha!



*Wading to the mouth of the Snowy River  
Photos: Joan Kenny*

58. John Hempenstall

### **Mount St Gwinear, Winter 19??**

The fairly large group, led by Rob Giebels, set off on a clear day of cross country skiing, however a visitor slowed the group down considerably to the point where the light faded and most of the party skied the last few kms by

sighting the trail marker posts by moonlight. The visitor was extricated on a skidoo by the park ranger.

59. John Hempenstall

### **Errinundra National Park, Cup Weekend 19??**

A very long drive to get there, party no sooner setup camp when the sky turned black and fire embers started dropping down, a quick decision was taken by the leader, Joe De Giorgio, to evacuate to the coast as there are not many escape routes from such a remote location. We ended up at Cape Conran camping ground for the next few days where the group felt it much safer to do some coastal walks.

60. Carmel Merrey

### **Yark to Yea (or from any spot between Yark and Yea)**

The first time I turned up for this annual walk, which is a fundraiser for the Missionary Sisters of Service, I received such a warm welcome and met so many people who had a connection to my Tasmanian family, some of whom were members of our walking club. By the end of the day I was 'told' that I had completed my first of four introductory walks, and the rest is a lovely history of beautiful enjoyable walks.

61. Marg Cosgrave

### **Main Yarra Trail Bike Ride**

Alphington to Petty's Orchard Return, February , 2024

On our two-wheeled friends we cycled my favourite Melbourne bike ride. It's the green corridor I love, with its river gums, billabongs, bird calls and being riverside. Pedalling 41km offered a fun and satisfying challenge. And the cake selection at the rustic cafe in Petty's Orchard never fails to delight.

62. Shirley Wilson (née Ford)

### **The Baw Baws**

One weekend in the late 1960's, Vera Newberry (née Williams) and I joined a pack carry group.

We were all having our breakfast at the campsite when my three-person tent (shared with Vera) blew down in a gust of wind. All the young men laughed, but we had slept all night in a perfectly secure tent. We will never know, but did someone quietly pull out a peg or two ???

### 63. Harry Twining

#### **Walking the Never Never**

Cradle Mountain NP, The Never Never, Walls of Jerusalem NP

We have done many great walks over the years, probably the most memorable were two walks in Tasmania in 2007, eight-day walk with family and friends, 12 of us; and a five day CWCV adventure in the same area in 2014 with six members, Greg and Wanda, Adrian and Mel, Alan and myself.

Starting at the top end of Lake Rowallan, crossing the Mersey River on long wire suspension bridge, then following the very beautiful Mersey River valley upstream past towering Cathedral Mountain and through lovely beech forests, past Lees and Wadley's huts, and scrambling uphill to the Overland Track near Du Cane hut, then on to Hartnett Falls, where we picked up a faint unmarked track that took us past numerous waterfalls to wade across the Mersey River, then climb up to Junction Lake hut into Walls NP.

Then to Hartnett Falls where we picked up a faint unmarked track that entered the Never Never, a narrow steep-sided valley past several waterfalls, then to wade across the Mersey River.



Rest of the walk was across high Central Plateau past Lake Meston and Lake Adelaide to Trappers Hut, then descend back to our transport...

*Adrian at Wadleys Hut  
Photo: Harry Twining*

64. Rose Thomas

### **Sunshine History Walk, July 2022**

This walk was delightfully unique in that it was designed especially for our walking club, inspired by a keen interest in indigenous and more recent local history. It was encouraged by one of Sunshine's esteemed local historian/authors and lauded by members of a local Environmental Conservation Organization (which has gained some new members as a result of this walk).

65. Peter Wilson

### **A wonderful walk in Big Time country**

Tom's 2010/2011 Christmas New Year Walk—Four days in the Snowy Mountains. Tooma Reservoir – Patons Hut – Pretty Plain Hut – Wheelers hut. Early on – a crossing of the fast-flowing Tooma River. Oops – who fell in? On through glorious alpine country to camp at Pretty Plain hut. Discovery of a snake under Alan Rose's tent when he packed up. No harm to Alan or the snake that made a hasty retreat. On to Wheelers Hut – an archetypal cattlemans hut – set in the snowgums on a gentle slope with a view to the mountains. Then a final push back to the cars at the reservoir. A wonderful walk in Big Time country!

66. Carole Donnell

### **A memorable walk in Werribee Gorge in the midst of Crowds, Covid and Challenges. June 2020**

The prospect of a day liberated from Covid lockdown lured hordes (literally thousands, according to Corrie's report in the *Walker* August 2020) of walkers and scramblers to the majestic Werribee Gorge.

Here are my memories as a comparative newcomer to the Club and a first timer to the Werribee Gorge:

- the rocky, rugged, raw beauty of the Gorge
- the patience of walkers at several points where one way traffic meant waiting in a long line to cross the jagged and narrow cliff faces. We needed to cling to steel cables and carefully check for safe footholds, so it was one walker at a time—all in view of a crowd of onlookers. How conscious I was that I was a novice walker!

–the adrenalin surge of scrambling across the damp, slippery rocky outcrops, initially trying to also manage walking poles. The Club spirit of support, encouragement and helpfulness quickly came to the rescue for several of us

–the delight and enjoyment of completing this difficult walk, realising that thousands of others also love the challenge and beauty of our country.

*Corrie leads the way on a tricky section of the gorge. Frances and Carole in the middle section.*

*Photo: Bernie O'Shea*



67. Dean Adams

### **Flinders Ranges Trip**

In 1994 about 18 club members embarked on a Flinders Ranges trip, some of the party had left earlier to do a few days walking on the Heysen Trail. The rest of the party arrived at Wilpena Pound and met up with Alex, and picked up the walkers at the end of the section of trail they had walked. Areas we visited on that trip were Big Morro Gorge, Mt Chambers and Grindells Hut.

This was to be one of the last club activities that Anthony Murphy attended before losing his battle with cancer later in the year.

68. Mary Conheady

### **NZ Trip December 1973-January 1974**

Eleven of us hired a Toyota High Ace to transport us to walks in the North and South Islands. Overnight we joined the queue for the vehicle ferry from Wellington to Picton, across Cook Strait. I slept in the bus. We were enjoying breakfast behind the bus, with our gear spread all over the road, so that the

next car in line had to stay back. Then the Ferry Marshall called out 'Drive on, driver!' We loaded our packs etc into the bus and took what we were eating and walked aboard.

69. Paul Redmond

### **Tooma River**

Tom Buykx led a party from the CWCV into the Jagungal Wilderness Area in the Kosciuszko National Park in the last five days of 2010. The walk started and finished near the Tooma Reservoir and took in Patons Hut, the Pretty Plains Hut and Wheelers Hut.

Day Two of this walk took us from Patons Hut along Dargalls Track, into the Jagungal Wilderness Area and on to a watery crossing of the Tooma River. At the ford, the river was running fast, between knee deep and hip deep, depending on one's personal altitude.

I had long harboured a disdain for walking poles. I watched others select suitable river crossing poles from the fallen tree limbs beside the track but was indifferent to their foresight. The river at the crossing point runs in a broad grassy valley devoid of any vegetation taller than a small shrub - too late for hindsight. Ignoring a route pioneered by other party members through the water running smoothly but quickly over the rounded slippery rocks in the bed of the river.

I chose my own way, just a tad upstream. It was probably a reasonable route for someone with a pole as a third limb in the water for better stability. And so, there I was, spread eagled, chest down, a heavy four-day pack pressing me into the cold rushing water, as I slid feet first, slowly downstream in the general direction of the Tooma Reservoir, many kilometres away, the riverbed rocks providing no grip to anchor me as I clutched at one, then another.

I managed to assume a kneeling position, wondering whether to return to the near side from whence I had come or persevere to finish crossing the river and minimize my embarrassment. A guardian angel in the form of Paul from the Sydney Catholic Walking Club came to my rescue. Assuming I would want to continue crossing, he helped and guided me to the shallow quieter waters on the other side.



*Fording the Tooma River, assisted by members of  
the Catholic Walking Club of Sydney  
Photo supplied by Paul Redmond*

On regaining my composure, I thanked my rescuer and discovered that my fellow members of the CWCV were oblivious to my white-water near-death experience and were happily drying feet and emptying boots and attending to those necessary post-river crossing personal tasks. So, in wet high dudgeon, I followed one member of our group who clearly considered the Tooma River crossing a non-event and was heading off to be first at a lunch spot of his choosing.

The Catholic Walking Club of Sydney were on a much different course to us, however both clubs arrived at the crossing at the same time and also camped at the Pretty Plains Hut for one night, the first of our two nights spent at the hut.

During my ordeal, my spare water bottle, empty because we were following streams all the way to Pretty Plains, left the sinking ship and floated out of its loose pocket on the outside of my pack. I presume that some itinerant bushwalker walking the shoreline or an angler in search of some sport found this red cylinder beached or still floating in the waters of the Tooma Reservoir.

I am now into my second pair of walking poles.

70. Jan Wilkinson

### **Cycling around Rutherglen, April, 2011**

Good food, wine and easy cycling was a winning trifecta for a weekend spent cycling around the vineyards of Rutherglen. We were fortunate, too, to have the backup of a 'sag wagon' driven by Jane which could transport any purchases made of the liquid varieties sampled! Comfortable accommodation in a local caravan park and a relaxing Saturday evening pub meal capped off a 'de vine' couple of days



*Lunching in the grounds of a winery  
Photo: Jan Wilkinson*

71. Maz Raymond

### **My Great Walks**

Two weeks walking from Mt. Bogong to The Bluff. 23.12.72-2.1.1973. A week later, the Overland Track and Frenchman's Cap in Tassy.

Then December 1973, walking from Canberra back to where we finished the

Alpine Walk last year, hence completing all the Alpine Track. We were the first group in our club to complete this epic walk. In the *Walker* it was described as 'the walk of the year and will be talked about around the campfire for many years to come. A true blue Victorian bushwalker cannot dream of anything better than 11 days and 100 miles of walking along the Alpine Track.'

I must mention that there were only two girls on the first trip: Bernedette Franzke and your truly, and nine boys. Oh! to be as fit as I was back then!!!!

I was very lucky to have walked with such wonderful people from the club.

*But wait, there's more!*

Tom Buykx

### **More on the Mt Crinoline Walk**

The items by Shirley Wilson (#32) and Julianne Barlow (#44) about a Mt Crinoline walk in the February 2025 issue brought back many memories of that memorable trip. One of them is not of the walk itself, but of the leader's, Peter Wilson, report at the subsequent Club meeting.

Peter also described the long descent mentioned by Shirley and Julianne, from the Crinoline to our camp on the Macalister River. He finished it something like this: 'Late that afternoon, five o'clock or so, the first of the party reached the campsite on the river bank. Gradually the others came in, in little dribs and drabs. The last two came in at about seven thirty ... .. (pregnant pause) the following morning.'

What had happened? They had been slow descending the difficult spur and were overtaken by darkness and tiredness. They made 'camp' spreading their groundsheets and sleeping bags beside a fallen log, and slept, or at least rested, there until daylight. Then they finished their descent and rejoined the party. Great relief and rejoicing all around! And both of them kept coming on many more weekend walks.

(With apologies to the other writers about this walk, according to my map it was the Macalister River).

## *From the Archives*

As we continue the celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> year of publication of our magazine, we publish another report from a past decade—from the 70's a hilarious write up of a ski trip to the Tawonga Huts.

Getting into the Slide of Things by Andrea Luscombe, reproduced from *The Catholic Walker*, July, 1978.

### *Getting into the Slide of Things*

*F*our brave skiers set out for the Tawonga huts one weekend in July. This is their story (any similarity to what really happened is purely co-incidental):

As we set out the sun was shining, the snow sparkling, the wind blowing, our skis singing, and our hopes were flying.

The trip up was quite uneventful, apart from the fact that we nearly saw four crocodiles, three pink kangaroos, two invisible trains, and yes, a partridge in a pear tree. This followed the “white out” we had even before we reached Kilmore.

The route across to the Tawonga huts from Falls Creek involves many climbs and descents, but because we realised we were all very good skiers, that didn't worry us, in fact the sheer drops of 3 to 4 thousand feet on both sides of passes six inches wide were welcomed challenges.

The crossing of the ski tows could be regarded as having been slightly tricky; but we managed quite well with the loss of only eight downhill skiers. (An average of two direct hits each). Bodies and skis were tangled amongst cables and poles as their owners had tried to dodge us as they were pulled up the slope.

Lunchtime found us donning oxygen masks. While Cough, Sniff and I enjoyed the sun, one member of the party, disguised in this report as “I.A.N”, found it necessary to toast his sandwiches on a toaster and choofer.

After lunch, the combination of sun and work made us quite hot- even our poikilothermic leader took off his “jumpers”.

We all screamed down the slopes at speeds of 100 or 200 miles per hour (which is probably near enough to 600 miles per hour). This practice became a little safer as one learnt how to stop at the bottom without having to fall over.

After the sun had set behind the Niggerheads (Ed’s note: renamed Mt Jaithmathang in 2008), we made our final descent of the slope, picked up our packs from where we had left them near a snow pole, and headed down the more gentle slope to the huts via a snow covered road amongst the trees. This may all have been very well, but the snow had become icy: the combination of fatigue, and the frozen hard grooves made in the snow by other people made the short trip very interesting! In fact most of us got in the groove and found ourselves in a rut.

We found the huts and claimed one. Tea was had ‘round the fire in the hut, and as it was the leader’s birthday, for supper we luxuriated on fruit cake. We didn’t put candles on it; if we had, I suspect, we may still have been up there blowing, as we had only two candles. Even if we had had enough the guy who sits on top of Mt MacKay would have thought it was a bush fire!

After not having a song-a-long, one brave soul spent the night in his tent outside (we weren’t really THAT bad!), one spent the night in the rafters (does he always get that high on his birthdays?), one spent the night on the floor (with the you-know-whats, nibble, nibble), and one sensible person spent the night on the table.

In the morning we woke to hear the soft fluttering of snow on the roof- about one inch or so had fallen during the night. Our friend came in from outside and made encouraging comments to get us out of our sleeping bags, such as: “Gee it’s cold” and “It’s still snowing”.

After breakfast, we made our very own entry in the visitors’ book. We saw the entry of a party from the Club about two years previous, and one of one of the earlier Club members.

A little while later saw three of us on that almost vertical slope near the huts; in the middle of a “white out”-snow, rain and no fourth member-he was having trouble with his waxed skis, (ours had only ten feet of snow stuck on the bottom).

Back over the slopes and Pretty Valley dam, we found an SEC hut to luncheon in. We ate the last of the fruit cake, and (ugh) some Earl Grey.

Back amongst the ski tows, this time without incident, down the snow-covered road to the main road, where, alas, we had to walk on account of the lack of snow.

We set off down the road (in the car, of course!) and arrived in Strathmore at 10.15pm (yes p.m.) and notified our S&R contact.

The leader had said earlier something to the effect that he might not be able to find his way home at such an early hour; but make it we did, and what an absolutely terrific, fantastic, incredible, far out, big time weekend it had been! I only hope that next time more people come- in particular, girls, or some GENTLEMEN, who aren’t despicable, and with watering mouths, eye you off every time there is a threat that the food will run out.

Signed Andrea Luscombe, C.W.C.V., XX.X, A.B.C, P.A.V., S.S.P.S., M.Y.O.B.

## *Bike Ride: Capital City Trail and Maribyrnong River Loop Saturday 11 January*

*Margaret Cosgrave*

Alan, Pri, Bernie, Peter N., Malcom, Peter and Marg Cos (leader)

It’s westward bound from Fairfield on a very warm morning. We pedal through Clifton Hill and get onto the Capital City Trail near Rushall Station. This shared path is flat, well populated and punctuated by pedestrian lights. From Royal Park Station we cycle beside the train line to Flemington Bridge.

A couple of hair pin turns along Moonee Ponds Creek and we are up on the too busy Racecourse Road. So a parallel, quieter street is chosen to ride, which brings us to an underpass on the Craigieburn train line.

Several streets along and Peter Cos points out a four-sided clock tower. Situated in the historic Newmarket Saleyards, it was a visual time keeping piece for the entire site. Information boards, buildings and remaining stock pens speak of the old public livestock auctions. In 1944 a world record of over six million sheep were sold. It's not hard to imagine the rural atmosphere here, all the sights, smells and sounds. Today it's peaceful and residential, and we cycle along the suitably named Weighbridge Lane.

It's slower going over the bumpy bluestone cobble stones of Stockman's Way. This is lined by post and rail fences, a re-created feature of the original stock route. Animals were driven along by drovers and dogs. There is an underpass with murals to admire, it's called The Back Gate. This is where a Melbourne City Council worker counted and tolled each animal on its way to the meat works. The peppercorn trees, which shade the route, are the originals. All are reminders of 126 years of operation.

Nearby, we stop to admire how an original holding pen was redeveloped into a green Women's Peace Garden (International Year of Peace 1986). From higher ground, a peace sign can be seen embedded into the garden design.

Stockman's Way leads us directly over a former Stock Bridge. The Maribyrnong River, important to the Wurundjeri people, is tidal and salty here. From the bridge, Flemington Racecourse is over the river to our right. Looking back and left we see the CBD from the west. The route on the other side of the river takes us via wetlands and Jack's Magazine (gunpowder storage). Then we cross back over the Maribyrnong River at the jarrah lined Pipemakers Park Footbridge. We are halfway and 16 km into our ride.

With the river behind us it's up hill. Being a race day at Flemington Racecourse, we can't ride through and smell the roses. Instead, we opt for elevenses at a nearby café and ride down Epsom Road. Some more on-road cycling takes us to the Newmarket train station underpass and shops. From here, we retrace our circular motion to the Capital City Trail and our starting point. It's getting hot by the time we finish this enjoyable, historically interesting 29 km bike ride.

# *Mt Hotham Base Camp*

## *27 December 2024-1 January 2025*

*Bernadette Madden*

**T**he annual high country visit by CWCV occurred in the Mt Hotham area from 27 December. Some members camped at J B Plain while others availed themselves of the amenities at Tanderra Ski Lodge or Asgaard Lodge in Mt Hotham. A total of 18 members enjoyed walking and talking their way through the surrounding area.

This year was notable also in that our Club members joined with some from Melbourne Bushwalking Club for walks each day and for a concert/entertainment one evening.

Thanks to good planning and great walk leaders, there were multiple options for walks each day.

### **The Razorback and Feathertop in a Day**

*Corrie van den Bosch*

Driving up to Mt Hotham from the Oven Valley, I looked longingly at Mt Feathertop, hoping that I might climb it one more time before I have to hang up my boots. Feathertop is Victoria's second highest mountain. I had been there several times with the club, backpacking and camping two or three nights near Federation Hut. Could I do it again?

The first evening we met at Asgaard ski lodge to plan for the coming days. One of the walks proposed was Feathertop and the Razorback. In a day!! I had never thought of it as a day walk. It is a good twenty kilometres, up and down most of the way. Could I manage it in a day? The only way to find out was to try. Quentin Tibbells, the leader, was happy to have me, even if it meant I didn't make it all the way.

We were nine starters. I was the only CWCV member besides Quentin (who is also a member of the Melbourne Bushies). The group started off at a great pace. On CWCV walks I am considered a fast walker. In this group I was the slow one. I told Quentin that if I were to do it all the way, I would

need to walk at my own pace. I didn't expect the group to wait for me to catch up. Having done that walk before, I was familiar with the route and there was not much risk of getting lost. So most of the way up I walked happily on my own.

It was a beautiful clear day. Much of the Razorback is above the tree line we could see range upon range of mountains in every direction. Mt Buffalo was a constant presence, overlooking the Ovens Valley and our progress on the walk. Just being in that country was a treat.

I caught up with the group just as they were concluding their morning tea break and again at the famous tree on the saddle, a T-junction where the track to Federation Hut turns left and the one to Feathertop turns right. From there it is uphill all the way. At last I reached the top. The others were there well ahead of me. The wind was surprisingly cold, but just below the track it was pleasantly sheltered, a good place for lunch. It was lovely sitting there, sharing stories over lunch as we tried to identify some of the ranges within view. The nearest range is Jaithmathang, named after the Aboriginal clan of that Country. Traditionally, they came up on the high country during the summer to feast on the Bogong Moths who migrated there in their millions in that time of the year.

All too soon it was time to say goodbye to Feathertop. Quentin started off, nimble and sure-footed as a mountain goat, leaping and jogging ahead of the group. He and some of the others made it back to the cars in about two hours. A few of us



*Approaching the summit  
Photo: Quentin Tibballs*

took a slower pace and for much of the way kept within sight of each other. As the time neared 5.00 p.m. we reached the cars, grateful to rest our weary legs. I, for one, was delighted that I had been to Feathertop one more time.

Thank you, Quentin and my fellow walkers, for a fabulous and challenging day.

## **Mt Loch**

*Bernadette Madden*

The Mt Loch walkers set off on a lovely sunny morning in a freezing cold wind, with plans for variety to suit the participants. Firstly, there was a slow couple of kilometres to a turn around point for some who wished to spend more time admiring the flora of the surrounding countryside. From here, others continued along the wide track to find a sheltered spot for 'elevenses' before climbing Mt Loch. Our time on the summit was relatively short due to the temperature but we all enjoyed the panorama before us, especially the Razorback and Mt Feathertop.

We were very fortunate on all our walks in the high country this year where there was a marvellous display of wildflowers.

## **The need for a new Walk Classification!**

*Margaret Cuthbertson*

On the walks at Mt Hotham it became clear that as well as the Hard, Medium and Easy walks, there should be a new type of walk – the 'Botanical'. On the first day's walk up Mt Loch, in a biting and strong wind, but brilliant sunshine, Joan and I decided that not enough time had been spent enjoying the breathtaking views and the amazing flowers—spring having come late to the mountain this year. The fact that this turn around point was at the start of a series of steep descents and ascents is totally irrelevant!

Joan and I (with Val) took our time pointing out to each other the abundant and extensive variety of flowers and grasses, as well as stopping and enjoying the amazing views (especially when going uphill). When we saw a patch of yellow well off the path, we were both adamant we had to check it out and were amazed to find a large patch of native buttercups.



*Margaret takes time to stop and view the flowers on the  
Wonderland 'Botanical' Walk  
Photo: Joan Kenny*

This set the scene for all the walks for the rest of the Mt Hotham trip. The 'Botanicals' were given a walk of their own each day and thoroughly enjoyed getting the time to stop and enjoy the flora and scenery on the walks. We were often joined by others, especially Mary.

Back at camp each night we spent time looking at *The Alps in Flower* to work out what we had seen that day. One day after a particularly unusual find, Peter Cos used his magic app to identify the plant.

Definitely 'Botanical' should be a Classification for every Walking Club!!!

### **Cobungra Ditch Walk**

*Words and photo Marg Cosgrave*

Group A: Rose, Peter N, Maryna, Frances, Marg Cos, and Melbourne Bushies: Judith (leader), Simon, Margaret, Liz, Sylvie. Group B: Alan (leader), Cathy, Peter Cos, Harry.

You'd be right in thinking that many Alpine walks tend upwards. In this case our walk went downwards. Into a ditch, literally. First there was a car

shuffle. Then it was downhill from Tanderra Lodge along the rocky Davenport Access track. This was a steady, gradual fall until at the 1.4 km mark we turned right at the signpost. The descending stone stairs delivered us to Cobungra Ditch.

Situated in both a natural and historic landscape, this peaceful walk was of great interest. We had glimpses of peaks and the Cobungra River Valley through the snowgum woodlands to our left. The wildflower-lined trail followed the contour of the hill which was on our right. The ditch is also of historic significance because it was an artificial water course or aqueduct built in the 1880s by gold miners. The well-trodden single walking track ran either within the ditch or was elevated next to it. We had to watch our step as the stone which had once lined the ditch lay scattered underfoot.

Information boards indicated that water from Swindler's Creek flowed via Cobungra Ditch down to the Brandy Creek Gold Mine. At high pressure, the water was used to wash out dirt which was then put through sluice boxes to separate the gold. There were other interesting facts about the challenges the gold miners faced in extreme weather.

Fortunately, we experienced this sheltered Alpine walk in a snow-free month and only occasionally encountered a chill breeze on some corners. When we looked up, the sky was a vivid blue through the polaroid lenses. But mostly we had to look down to negotiate obstacles including fallen tree parts, rocks and a couple of boggy sections.



*CWCV members and Melbourne Bushies  
ready to tackle the Cobungra Ditch Walk*

*Photo: Peter Naughtin*

Lunch and inter-club conversation was enjoyed in the sun at Murphy's Creek Falls. And like the 'Happy Wanderers', we said hello to all we met who were walking the other way. At the end of the ditch, we turned right at the Brandy Creek Mine Track. It was a 500m steep incline back to the cars parked on the Alpine Road.

## **Dead Timber/ Room with a View**

*Bernadette Madden*

This walk was on the program as one of the options on Day 2, and left from Dinner Plain, via J B Plain, to the lookout on Dead Timber Track. Here we spent some time 'naming mountains'. This is always fun as they can look so different from each angle but with the combined wisdom of the group, we had a name for each one! Then it was on to Room with a View which lived up to its reputation and provided stunning views towards Mt Feathertop. Then it was a (relatively) short walk after lunch back to the coffee shop in Dinner Plain.

## **Climb to Summit of Mt Hotham**

*Peter Naughtin*

The walk to the summit of Mt Hotham was a popular walk with 29 walkers from both clubs, led by Peter Naughtin. We set off from Asgaard Lodge and took the road behind the chalets that leads from Big D to Hotham Village, a 30 minute walk. We commenced the walk from the village and began the steady climb on a good well-grassed track that leads to the communication tower that dominates the top of the mountain. This was about a 100m climb. We took a short break here to listen to one of our walkers explain the weather gauges up here used to monitor weather conditions on the mountain all round and relay information back to the BOM.

We moved on to the final section of the walk to the summit, another 500m further on. At the summit there is a cairn, a stone monument and plaque that identifies the summit peaks, and we stopped here for some time to take in the marvellous views of the Alps in all directions. The sky was clear, the sun was out and there was only a light breeze. Perfect conditions for us on the summit. Great views of Mt Feathertop, Mt Buffalo, Mt Loch, Mt Buller



*The stone windbreak was appreciated by a group of summiteers*

*Photo: Peter Naughtin*

and so many others. Many photos were taken of views and groups of walkers.

One group of the walkers from the Melbourne Bushies asked if they could walk down to the Diamantina Hut below and they headed off (with Corrie) and said they would find their own way home. The rest of us just took our time to take in the views of the Alps.

We then began our descent to Hotham Village. Some stopped at the top of the Summit Cable Car and took in the views of the village below and the ski runs on the mountain. The descent was an enjoyable steady descent, and we arrived back at the village and viewed an information board that showed that Mt Hotham was first climbed back in 1854 when Governor Hotham was the Governor of Victoria; it was named after him. The height of Mt Hotham is 1861m and from the village the ascent is about 100m.

This climb was an excellent one for walkers of all ability levels and several of the walkers, struggling with injuries and age-related limitations, were very pleased to be able to rise to the challenge of the climb to the summit of Mt Hotham.

We then returned to 'The General' (hotel/store), where we gathered for coffee. All agreed it had been an excellent walk.

## **The Huts Walk**

*Words and photo Peter Naughtin*

Walkers: Corrie, Doug, Anne, Rose, Frances, Barbara N, Peter N, Jan and Suz (Melbourne Bushwalkers)

Our small group of walkers set out from the Mt Loch car park to do the walk to Derrick Hut, about a 10km walk. The walk takes the track to Mt Loch which several of the walkers had done on the first day walk when it was really windy and they appreciated the much calmer conditions this day. The path is a steady climb up with wonderful views of Mt Feathertop and the Razorback track. When we arrived at the turn off point to Derrick Hut, we paused and decided that since it was such a calm day we would first attempt the climb to Mt Loch. This was only a further one kilometre away. Once on top of Mt Loch we were able to take in the wonderful views of the mountains around and the view back to Hotham village and the summit of Mt Hotham.

We returned to the turn off to Derrick Hut which follows a pole line down from the top into a gully about two km away. It was a wonderful walk with so



many alpine flowers everywhere to admire. We arrived at Derrick Hut in time for lunch and some went into the hut to eat while others enjoyed their lunch outside. The snow gums in this area are magnificent and we posed for a photo on the branches of an immense tree.

The return walk to the Mt Loch track was a steady climb amidst the alpine flowers again, which we all enjoyed very much. We stopped at the turn off for a rest as it was getting hot by then. The final stage of the walk was back down to the Mt Loch carpark. As the afternoon sun was fully up by then we were glad to reach the comfort of the car park resting facilities, all new having been completed over the last 12 months. Plenty of cool water available. We then returned to the lodge in our cars. All agreed it had been a wonderful walk with so many splendid alpine views and flowers to enjoy.

### **Wonderland and Christmas Hills Walk**

*Bernadette Madden*

This was a very easy walk—even for those who did the ‘longer’ version. After some days of quite hard walks, there were more people interested in this short/ easy walk than I expected. Using the ski runs in the area near Wire Plain and Howards Hut, we enjoyed the more gentle slopes and once again the abundant wildflowers in the area. We all met back at the hut for lunch. This hut is also known as Wire Plain hut but it is actually named in honour of Billy Howard—a mountain cattleman from Harrietville who built the hut in 1962. There is an historical plaque not far from the hut telling his story.

### **Evening entertainment**

*Joan Kenny*

Following the great success of Talent Time/The Variety Show in 2024, another evening of dazzling entertainment was provided by talented members of both the CWCV and Melbourne Bushies. Once again Quentin was compere of the singing/dancing/poetry recitals/puppetry etc. show.

Dinner at Dinner Plain one evening, and on New Year’s Eve at The General provided opportunities for members of both clubs to mingle ‘off-track’.

Thanks to Quentin and Bernadette for organising another wonderful high country excursion.

# *Lake Mountain Ski Trails*

## *Sunday 9 February*

**L**eaders: Bernie O'Shea and Bernadette Madden (for a 'two walks on one day' event.) *Bernie begins:*

The program said, 'An 11 Km circuit of walking in alpine country on cross country ski trails'. It also mentioned an easier eight Km option.

Of the 10 people who showed up on the day, only three (Bernie, Peter W and Priyantha) did the whole 11Km walk. Six did the 8Km version, and one person (Rob) did an in between walk which didn't include the Boundary Hut ruins.

The whole party was together until we all went out to Lookout Rock. There was low cloud and there was no view. Bernadette decided to have lunch there and return at leisure. Four of us decided it was too early for lunch and proceeded to explore further. Rob said that he would come with us to Panorama Lookout. When we got there, the same low cloud again stopped our view. We continued around the Panorama Loop until we came to the turnoff to the Boundary Hut ruins. Rob said that he had been there before on skis. He left us there and returned to Bernadette's group.

The three remaining walkers walked north following an ungroomed trail, sometimes narrow but still visible. A bit later there was a track junction where you could turn right and proceed directly to the Hut. We took the lefthand fork and continued north past the turnoff leading down to Keppels Hut. This had several warning signs telling us that any further was entering a 'remote' area with no phone coverage and difficult navigation. Not for us today! Our



track led us past the highest point in the Yarra Ranges (1490m) and south again to the hut, where we settled down for lunch, sitting either on or inside the walls of the hut. We noticed that some track clearing had been recently carried out near the hut, so we followed that to an even better lookout rock. At last a memorable view!

We then retraced our steps back to the Panorama Loop and then past Lookout Rock and down the Royston Road to our cars at Gerratys. We met the people who didn't walk very far at the Marysville pub for drinks.

*Bernadette continues:*

Lake Mountain gave us a very cool greeting when we arrived on Sunday morning – 11 degrees with a wind chill factor much lower. This soon had us in jumpers and looking for beanies which we had not needed for many weeks. It was quite a shock for the Melburnians who had been sweltering through several days of 30° +. And in addition to this shock was the fact that the coffee shop was closed!

But in true CWCV fashion, we persevered against such adversities and headed off along the Muster track – for a short distance. Then came hurdle number 3 – a missing bridge! So about turn to the Echo Flat track. We reached Lookout Rock about 12 noon and studied the 'view' – i.e. the heavy mist obscuring all but the first row of trees. For the shorter walk people it was decided that this was a good time for lunch. However, the lookout did not hold us for long as we retreated to the shelter of the trees for our repast. This point also proved to be the parting of the ways for what was now a three walks event – the more energetic (led by Bernie) headed off for the hut ruins, another medium energy ones went on to Panorama lookout and enjoyed the same 'view' as we had at Lookout Rock.

By the end of our lunch break the mist had lifted slightly ...

However, the 'short walkers' and the Panorama walkers returned to the carpark and then down to Marysville (by car) for coffee. We were joined later by the remainder of the party and all enjoyed coffee, cold drinks or Guinness depending on their preference.

*Opposite: Lunch at Boundary Hut Ruins: Photo: Bernie O'Shea*

# *Ada Tree Circuit*

## *Sunday 16 February*

*Jan Wilkinson*

*T*o look up or to look down- that was the choice for our band of seven. With Harry leading, Rob, Carole, Theresa, Roy, Khanh (visitor) and myself set out along the VHC walking track off Big Creek Road in the Yarra State Forest towards the famous Ada Tree. Looking up allowed us to marvel at the majestically tall, straight Mountain Ash forest and the tree ferns fanning over our heads; looking down ensured we could watch for trip hazards created by the leaf and bark litter, and to keep count of pesky leeches crawling up our legs! Mystery of the day- why was one member of the party the flavour of the day for them, whilst others of us hardly scored a bite?

The first three kilometres followed a gentle gradient downhill past a sign indicating where the Ada sawmill had once operated, but not a skerrick of evidence remained. At the track junction with the Upper Yarra Walking Track, we dropped down a steepish 300 metres to Ada Camp #2 where elevenses was taken. Here rusting and half overgrown pieces of metal-boilers, wheels and other abandoned bits of equipment from the timber industry of 100 years ago- provided an interesting diversion from checking for leeches. Harry's knowledge of all things railway and tramway was a bonus throughout the day as he pointed out items of interest, such as the saddle tank remains of Squirt, the smallest steam engine to haul timber on Victoria's forest tram tracks. He also had interesting photos of what the mill areas had looked like in their heyday-denuded hills dotted with basic huts and heavy mill equipment contrasted with the moist, dense regrowth we were enjoying.

After morning tea, we retraced our steps to the track junction and headed along the Upper Yarra Walking Track for approximately three kilometres to Little Ada River. Here a long log and handy rope across the river provided a means of crossing whilst keeping our boots dry. A short uphill walk from the river took us to Federal Mill campground where lunch was enjoyed at the picnic shelter there. After some discussion it was decided to proceed post lunch onto the Ada Tree via the Federal Mill Walking Track, ignoring a sign



*Harry leads the way crossing the river. Photo: Khanh.*

saying it was closed. The track meandered through attractive mountain ash forest for a couple of kilometres to a boardwalk leading to the Ada Tree. Storm damage to the boardwalk meant we had to clamber down a short section, but otherwise the track to the tree was in good condition. We caught glimpses of a giant through the trees, and as we drew close, we realised this was the Ada Tree! A first time for some of us and well worth the effort to get there!

The Ada Tree, an old growth Mountain Ash, is estimated to be close to 400 years old and currently stands about 75 metres tall, and has a girth of about 15 metres at chest height. According to the information board near it, it's of significance as it's one of the biggest trees in Victoria in terms of girth and volume. Leaving it feeling suitably humbled by its size and age, a pleasant walk through myrtle beech rainforest brought us to the Ada Tree picnic area for a brief toilet and snack break. Shortly after we rejoined the Federal Mill Walking Track and retraced our steps back to the cars. Our tracking devices said we had walked 18-19 kilometres for the day. A longish day's walk and there were a few stumbles in the latter part of the day, but fortunately no one sustained an injury. Thanks, Harry, for leading an interesting walk with

its combination of magnificent forest scenery, history of human activity in such tough conditions and a still living giant of the forest which will (hopefully) outlive us all!



*Q: What on earth are they doing? A: Spraying insect repellent on Khanh's legs to act as a leech deterrent! Photo: Harry Twining*



## Correction

'The view at Hells Window' on page 32 of the February 2025 issue was incorrectly attributed: Krystyna Derwinska was the photographer.

## *Vera Newberry Photo Competition*

Winner: 'Very satisfied with the walk', Peter Naughtin

Second: 'The spirit of determination', Joan Kenny

Equal third: 'Follow the leader', Carmel Merrey and 'Now, what flower is that?', Joan Kenny

Equal fifth: 'It's a tight squeeze' Peter Wilson, and 'We love a party', Joan Kenny. There were 27 entries in this year's competition.

# *Sowing Seeds of Hope in Dark Times*

Corrie van den Bosch

*T*his issue of *The Catholic Walker* comes to you in the middle of Lent. Last Wednesday, on our pack carry on Wilsons Prom, Roy reminded us that it was Ash Wednesday. Strange how that day and the season of Lent seems to have faded into the background. Even in our parish it received only a muted mention on the previous Sunday. In contrast, the Muslim fasting season, Ramadan, gets a mention on the daily news.

While on an interfaith pilgrimage to India in 2016, our little group of pilgrims celebrated Ash Wednesday at the Cremation Grounds on the banks of the Ganges in Varanashi. The ashes we used for our ritual came from the wood of a funeral pyre. There was something very moving about that experience: *Remember that you are dust and unto dust you will return*. Cremation fires are constantly burning in that place, bodies of loved one returning to the dust from which they came. Unlike in the ‘West’, Indian people don’t seem to be shy about their mortality.

Of course, Lent is not primarily about death. It is about *life* and how we live it; it is about refreshing our awareness of our life’s purpose, of the values and relationships we see as important and how we prioritise these in our day to day activities. In a world in which we are constantly bombarded by advertising and the 24 hour news cycle, we can easily be sidetracked in our focus. That’s why we need times such as Lent in which we are reminded to *repent*, which means literally, to *think again*; in other words, to *review*.

Lent invites us to appreciate anew what is good about our lives and our relationships and what we would like to improve on. It also invites us to do this as a community, though this is often overlooked. But we are not just individuals, we belong in a community, in a number of communities,

including the eco-system that is both our shared humanity and the natural environment. We cannot exist apart from those communities.

This year is also a '*Holy Year*', a Christian tradition that has its roots in ancient Judaism. We celebrate every 25th year as a Holy Year. This year we are invited to focus on the theme of **hope**: to be pilgrims of hope in the way we live our lives. As we look around at our world today, we can see many reasons for despair. Our news bulletins are full of bad news, of wars, oppression, poverty, violence, climate change, people displaced from their homes and homelands, and so much more. If ever the world needed hope, it surely does now.

Hope is more than optimism. It is confidence that there is more at work in our world than the evil that is so much 'in our faces'. St Paul gives us the reason for such confidence. He writes: *Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us* (Rom. 5:5). We know God does not take back what God has given. This gift of the Holy Spirit comes to everyone, regardless of who we are or whether or not we deserve it. So, as we are loved, may we also in turn love without strings attached, thereby sowing seeds of hope just by the goodness people experience in us.

During this Lent, could we consciously nurture the gift of Hope, knowing that the Love of God dwelling in us is stronger than death, stronger than hatred and resentment? In that Love we can be confident that hope will not fail.

As people of hope, we can become instruments of peace, sharing our hope with those who most need it, in the love expressed in how we live our lives. Even when this becomes costly, we can be confident in Jesus who walks the journey with us. For him, too, it was costly—his death on the cross. But God raised him from death, transformed into the Risen Christ. Such transformation awaits us too. Alleluia!

Happy Lent and happy Easter to you all.

# *Melbourne Holocaust Museum*

*Joan Kenny*

‘Everybody had a name’ (but not a grave, and not a photo) is the thought-provoking statement at the entrance to the Holocaust Museum in Elsternwick. On Wednesday 12 February eight of us were guided through the main exhibition by Dr Harry, a son of Holocaust survivors, and a wonderful guide and story teller. Afterwards we CWCVs gathered around a table at ‘The Goat’ restaurant to ‘debrief’ and reflect on the profound ‘immersive’ experience we had shared.

Our comments on the exhibits included our amazement at the systematic cruelty of the perpetrators and their meticulous record-keeping which, along with the first-hand witness of survivors, confronted us with the horrors of the Holocaust. And Dr Harry had a question for contemporaries (and us) to ponder: are you a citizen or a collaborator?

There were stories of heroism, one of which is captured in a striking statue of a man with children clinging to him—this was a man who founded an orphanage, and when the children were being taken to be annihilated he refused the opportunity to abandon them, and accompanied them to their deaths.

Dr Harry told us the remarkable story of how he arranged for the translation of a Yiddish memoir, published in English with the title ‘The Stories our Parents found too Painful to Tell’. See [henryrlew.com.au](http://henryrlew.com.au)

And there is too much to tell you here about the Holocaust Museum. We encourage you to visit, if you have not done so since it was completely redesigned during the Covid lockdowns. Thank you, Malcom, for arranging our visit.

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## *Jan Maher RIP*

Jan Maher, a Life Member of the CWCV and wife of Kerry (also a Life Member), died on 9 March.

Please remember Jan, Kerry and their family in your prayers.

May Jan rest in peace.



**THE CATHOLIC WALKING CLUB  
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*Margaret Cuthbertson and Val  
Mt Hotham Base Camp  
Photo: Joan Kenny*

**WEBPAGE:** <https://www.catholicwalkingclubvic.org.au>