

The *Catholic Walker*

June 2025

The Magazine of The Catholic Walking Club of Victoria Inc.



*Admiring Nature's work of art
The Snowies Alpine Walk, page 28
Photo: Peter Wilson*

From the Editors

The celebration of 70 years of publication of *The Catholic Walker* continues in this issue with the publication of a report from the 1980s by Gabrielle Guaran (who died in 2009) of a club expedition to Frenchmans Cap. Our modern day club walks might be rather different to that demanding pack carry in challenging Tasmanian terrain and weather, but they still provide great opportunity for camaraderie and enjoyment of our bush, as evidenced in the write ups of several club events in this edition.

Gabi's sense of humour shines through her writing, and it remains the case that a good sense of humour doesn't go astray in coping with what Nature and the situation throws up, whether it's torrential Tasmanian rain, thunderstorms in the middle of a celebratory base camp or day walk, heatwaves, or adapting a walk—mid-walk—to cater for varied member energy levels. Read on!

Recently the club celebrated its 74th anniversary with Mass, a reflection and lunch together, and was well attended. Special milestones for club members were noted. There's a truck bumper sticker that goes along the lines: Big enough to cope, small enough to care. That rather applies to our club, too!

From the editorial team, we hope you enjoy this edition, and getting out and about as the weather cools and days shorten.

Joan Kenny and Janet Wilkinson



Birthdays

June

16th Marguerite Bourke,
19th Doug Fellows-Smith
20th Michelle Reid
23rd Jane Adams

July

1st Harry Twining, Paul
Sutherland
10th Terry Shacklock
24th Claire Berriman
27th Jenny Dibben

From the President

Anniversary Day in May was a wonderful gathering of members past and present. As we remembered the first meeting of like-minded people 74 years ago, we were reminded of the many lasting friendships—and quite a few marriages—that have formed over these years. The gathering began with a liturgy (thanks to Carole and Joan) which focussed on remembering and thanksgiving for the events of the past year. We took time to remember those who have died and to reflect on the contribution each has made to our lives. Recalling past walks, camps, ski trips...sharing the stories, the ups and downs, made for quite a lot of chatter and laughter. We also celebrated some 'significant' birthdays and anniversaries for members. All in all, a great day.

As this issue goes out to members, we are preparing for the AGM on **Saturday 28 June**. This is another important date in our Club calendar, and I encourage as many as possible to come along to the meeting room at Westerfolds Park; plenty of parking and a comfortable venue for our meeting. The AGM is a social occasion as well as being necessary for life of the Club. Without the generosity and participation of members over the past 74 years we would not have anything to celebrate. So please consider making yourself available for the committee—we can guarantee that you will be made very welcome and be given all the help you need!

This is the second year for me as President, so I am officially 'retiring' as is required by the Constitution. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for entrusting this role to me for the past two years. Thank you also to all the committee members who have supported me and assisted me in so many ways. While one person gets the title, it is in fact a group effort that keeps the show on the road.

Thank you, and looking forward to seeing you on the track ...

Bernadette Madden

President

From the Archives

Browsing through 70 years of publication of *The Catholic Walker*, we have now reached the '80s. Here is Gabrielle Guaran's account of part 1 of an extended trip to Tasmania in 1987, reproduced from *The Catholic Walker*, March 1987.

Gabrielle (Gabi or Gaby) joined the CWCV in 1985, and for the next 24 years was an active member, regularly seen both on the track and the committee, including two stints as President. What she lacked in physical height she made up for in terms of spirit. She carried a pack that towered over her on 'difficult' graded walks in Victoria, Tasmania and N.S.W, and further afield to undertake walks in northern Australia and overseas, including Ireland and Scotland. Gabi lived with Turner's Syndrome all her life, and died in Epworth Hospital in 2009, aged 54. [Extract from Janet Wilkinson's tribute to Gabi in *The Catholic Walker*, May 2009].

Frenchmans Cap

Gabrielle Guaran

Rob Giebels (leader), Anne Maher, Damien Twining, Gaby Guaran, Gerardine Kyte, Hildy ?, Mary De Bruin, Peter Peters and Quentin Tibballs.

7th February 1987

We set off along the Lyell Highway, for our wilderness adventure, after spending an enjoyable evening with our hosts, Dave and Joanne Ellis. The gang donned their walking gear and after crossing the Franklin River on a flying fox, had lunch. The distinguishing feature of Tasmanian walking tracks is mud. We climbed through a rainforest to Mt Mullins and made our way to the Loddon River, which was crossed easily using a log. The sodden Loddons lived up to their name. Anne and I laughed when we discovered the mud was thigh deep in some places. To think some people spend a fortune on using the muck as a beauty treatment.

Our leader had planned to walk to Lake Vera Hut. A renegade group wanted to camp at Phillip's Creek, about an hour's walk from the hut. We set up

camp by the creek, a sensible decision as it was getting dark and the gang were exhausted.

8th Feb.

We struck camp at 10 am (what a slack mob) and made our way through rainforest and button grass to Lake Vera hut. The hut was spacious and has a good stove. We had some Staminade and scroggin before making our way across a creek where I tested my waterproof canvas pack. The track meanders around Lake Vera through a forest of gigantic trees, which include King Billy and Huon pines. I'm sorry to say I was too intent on climbing over tree roots and boulders to notice the magical country around me. The track became steeper and more difficult to negotiate. By this time, Quentin had been nicknamed the flying doctor as he was always racing ahead and stopping for a few minutes to read a book, while waiting for the rest of the gang to catch up to him.

Rob, Anne and myself discovered a lovely little waterfall in a clearing, surrounded by moss-covered trees. The scenery reminded me of "Lord of the Rings". I expected to be joined by Frodo or Bilbo Biggins. We climbed to the summit of Barron Pass and were rewarded with "Big time" views of mountains, lakes and Frenchman's Cap. We followed the track over a ridge and through a cluster of rocks caused by a landslide. After stopping to observe the surrounding wilderness we made our way to Artichoke Valley. The track finally dropped down a steep spur to Lake Tahune hut. Most of the gang reached the hut at about 8 pm. Peter and the Flying Doctor had trekked ahead and reached the hut at a more civilised hour. Peter, who climbed to the summit of Frenchman's Cap, was the only member of the gang to reach the Cap in fine weather. The view must have been superb. Quentin was sick, suffering the consequences of drinking the water from Lake Vera. I decided to be sick in sympathy.

9th Feb.

The fine weather ceased the night we reached Lake Tahune. The next two days were cold and wet. The gang spent a relaxing day at the hut. Rob, Mary, Damien and Anne climbed to the summit through mist and rain. Gerardine and Hildy made a delicious salmon mornay for tea, which was followed by Peter's custard for dessert (yummy).

The loo at Lake Tahune (if it could be described as such) is situated on a cliff face about 100 metres from the hut. As it has no walls, you would get a grand view of the surrounding mountains and valleys, except the loo is facing the wrong way. A cold wind and rain, blowing on your backside, make a natural function into an uncomfortable operation. The ranger informed us that there were plans to fly in and construct a proper loo at Lake Tahune at the cost of \$10,000.

10th Feb.

A record early start. The advance party: Gerardine, Hildy and Quentin, left the hut at 8 am. The rest of the gang left about one hour later. We reached Lake Vera Hut in the afternoon. The weather was typical Tasmania—cold and teeming rain. The little waterfall we had stopped at on the second day was now a raging torrent. We shared the hut with some young men from Operation Raleigh, a project for young people, sponsored by Prince Charles. As a community service for the project they had just completed a bridge over the Loddon River.

11th Feb.

By the last day the rain had ceased, although the sky was still overcast. We took the ranger's advice and kept to the track, wading through the sodden Loddons. Anne found some leeches. We were glad the bridge built by the Operation Raleigh team was finished, because with the rain the Loddon River was about two feet over the log we had used the first day. After climbing Mt Mullins we saw the highway. Overjoyed to see this sign of civilisation, I sprinted the last 50 minutes to the Franklin, where some of the gang celebrated the end of the walk with chocolate and scroggin.

Part 2 of the report of the 1987 Tasmania Trip was written by Peter Peters. It gives an account of The Pine Valley Walk and the group's return to Hobart. Peter concludes:

The next day, we knew what time we had to leave for the airport. But we had become accustomed to the bush, where departure an hour or two late is par for the course. So it's not surprising Rob had to drive like a maniac to get us to our flight on time.

Thanks, Rob, for being our leader.



A few months before the February 1987 Tassie trip, Gabi (second from right in the front row) joined other Club members at a formal dinner at Sealers Cove. Others in the Tassie 'gang' are Rob (first left, middle row), Anne Maher (third left, middle row) and Gerardine Keyte (first left, front row).

CATHOLIC WALKING CLUB OF VICTORIA INC.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

DATE: SATURDAY 28 JUNE 2025

VENUE: Outdoor Activities Hub and Conference Room
Westerfolds Park, Templestowe
Melway Map 33 Ref. G 1 & 2

GATHER FOR BYO LUNCH 12:00 Midday
(Tea and coffee provided)

MEETING COMMENCES 1:00 PM

Lysterfield Park

Sunday 23 February

Tom Buykx

We quite regularly have walks in this park, close to Melbourne with a variety of areas of interest. This time the program mentioned some of them in the northern half of it, but a change was made for reasons of traffic access and parking.

So, now, we met a little inside the main entrance to the park, eleven of us, in hot sultry weather. The forecast was for 30°C and the chance of a thunderstorm, both of which we got in very good measure. We were on our way a bit before ten o'clock on the Lake Track, but did not see much of the lake until the very end of our walk. There is much bush between the lake and the track. Ignoring side tracks, we came to Lamberts Track, a wide gravelly road with an old channel alongside it, and turned west, then soon crossed a road. We then came off Lamberts Track's gravel and walked on the natural surfaces in the firebreak just south of and parallel to it. We had a break at the intersection with Glen Track.

It had been gently up hill so far. That became rather less gentle when we went on, on the Wallaby Track, another but narrower gravel road. At the end of it, at a track junction with one of the many bike trails in the park, we waited for our few stragglers. One of them came up to say all were well but not quite up to the climbing in the prevailing weather conditions and would return to base. That was agreed, and the remaining 72.727% of the party completed the last and steepest bit of the climb to the trig station at the highest point in the Lysterfield Hills. We largely disregarded the views towards the city and other places of interest, preferring to plonk ourselves down in the shade of a wattle tree and have lunch.

And then it was 'downhill after lunch,' along the Granite Peak Trail. This is a lovely foot-track, descending, at times steeply, with many twists and turns to near the western end of the dam wall. After one kilometre the track crosses a deep gully by a dam wall that holds back a nice little lake. Not a sign of it on the Melway and the Parks Vic maps! The vegetation along this track, as elsewhere in the park, is the quite varied native forest, habitat to many kangaroos and wallabies, echidnas and other wild, and bird, life. It also

reflects the different uses of the area in its history. These include (in no particular order) farming (there once was a correctional farm for boys), forestry, water catchment and storage. There are several areas of spotted gum plantation, and there are many exotic garden escapees.

Along the last bit of the Granite Peak Trail the weather caught up with us and we had a brief and very thunderous downpour. Boy, did it come down, but it stopped before we walked the last bit of our trip over the lake's retaining wall. And then it cooled down a bit. We saw one of the early returners again, the other two had gone home after this trio had had a safe and leisurely walk down. So, we finished a little after two o'clock with a bit over twelve Ks behind us.

All is well that ends well. Thanks to Marg and Peter, Rob, Corrie, Roy, Krystyna, Bernadette, Pauline and Derek, and Harry for joining me on this hot walk.

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## *Edgars Creek Trails*

### *9 January*

*Rob Giebels*

**A**ndrea Luscombe recently led a Sunday walk along Edgar's Creek, starting just north of Murray Road and then on to Coburg Lake and wetlands, returning in the opposite direction. The party of eleven met at 10.30am for what was to be a gentle stroll of approximately ten kilometres of undulating tracks mainly following the creek. With many views along the way the only negative would possibly be the anticipated temperature in the mid 30's.

After five kms we reached the lake and we were envious of the ducks and cormorants enjoying the coolness of the lake water. People also brought their dogs to splash in the flowing waters of the creek. We, however, were content to enjoy the occasional breeze wafting along the valley and to refill our water bottles from nearby garden taps. A stop at a nearby ice cream shop helped to manage the warm conditions.

We arrived back at the cars having survived the heat wave and demonstrated that the club 'family' looks after each other.

# *Bundoora Park Day Walk*

## *Wednesday 5 March*

*Words and photo Alan Cuthbertson*

**W**alkers: Theresa, Bernard, Tom, Sophie, Alan (Leader)

It was going to be a hot day so we headed off by 10:00 from the entrance to Bundoora Park. The first stop was the Scar Tree, some 200 metres from the entrance. This is an old gum tree that has a large scar on the side made when local Aborigines removed the bark to make a canoe. We then headed off down to the Darebin Creek, walking between the creek and the golf course. The highlight of the walk was the wealth of bird life, which varied as we went. The first area had high tree coverage and there were a lot of lorikeets. As we moved on to more open grasslands we found magpies, currawongs, crows and even a butcher bird.

We then had a major climb (well minor really) to the highest natural site in Metropolitan Melbourne, Mt Cooper at 137 metres. (The Rialto is 250 metres.) We had a rest stop as we admired the view across the houses and factories to Mt Macedon. We then returned through Bundoora Park proper and the bird life changed again, with ducks, water hens and cockatoos. We continued to the Bundoora Homestead, which was a lovely retreat from the increasing temperature. We had coffee and then toured the art works in the building. While not to everyone's taste it was 'interesting'.

We left the oasis of the homestead, walking through the heat to the cars, getting back at 1:00 before it was too hot. On the way we passed an enormous River Red Gum which had been dead for many years. *[Photo.]* According to Google you can estimate the age, by measuring the diameter in cms at chest height. That would make it nearly 200 years old. It has been dead for probably 50 years, so would have started life around the time Captain Arthur Phillip landed at Botany Bay.



We enjoyed the walk, but were glad to have the air-conditioned trips back home.

# *Lunch and Mini-Golf*

## *Saturday 1 March*

*Margaret Cuthbertson*

**A**t midday eleven very sociable members met at the Croydon Hotel. After a very satisfying lunch we headed 10 minutes down the road to the mini-golf adventure park.

Dean, Jane, Jan and Bernadette decided to do the outside course, and the rest of us formed two teams: Carole, Maree and Doreen; Roy, Alan and Marg, to contest the indoor course; with Tony opting to watch both teams from the sidelines.

Both courses were very ingenious with 'holes' that went upstairs, downstairs, round corners and obstacles and not forgetting the water hazards. While some players were very attracted to the water hazards, Marg, Maree and Jan managed to get holes in one. The scoring was secondary to the fun we all had and it was voted a good way to spend a day.

At the very end we added up the scores. We are saying that Roy was overall winner as he got the highest score of 74, with Bernadette coming second with 72. Jane and Dean came last with scores of 59 and 55! We consoled ourselves with an ice cream after the event, and decided it should be an annual one.

## *Vale Doug Newberry*

*Peter Wilson*

Doug was the husband of our late member, Vera Newberry. Doug wasn't built for walking, but supported Vera in her walking club activities and, following her death in 2009, was keen to contribute to something that would keep Vera's name alive in the CWCV. And so was born the annual Vera Newberry photo competition, (Vera was a keen photographer) and Doug's generous donation of the photo albums that house the winning entries. Thank you, Doug, for your support of Vera and the CWCV.

# *Little Waterloo Bay Pack Carry*

## *3-6 March*

*Words and photo Roy Burns*

**L**eaders: Jan Wilkinson. Followers. Corrie, Krysia and Roy.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> March it was the drive to Tidal River for an overnight camp. Krysia and I arrived at Tidal River and checked in at the Parks office. The whole booking-in process has changed: no tickets issued for the car. We were told to 'Go find your camp sites.' Two sites were booked. On arriving at the camp sites, we had one look at them and decided that they didn't look very friendly for our small camping tents, the ground being uneven and dusty.

We drove back to the Parks office and asked a staff member about camp sites. The staff member indicated that the camp ground was booked out, although there were some sites that they held in reserve. We were directed to those sites and two of them were much friendlier for our little tents: level ground, although the surface was dusty like most of the sites. We did notice that there was some grass with trees providing shade under which we could set up our chairs and table. We set up camp. Soon after, Corrie and Jan arrived.

After setting up camp, I looked around the camping area and for a fully booked camping area, there were many empty sites. While I was at the Parks office, I did overhear some campers asking for a change in sites and indicating a camp site that was empty. The staff member indicated they could not allocate that site until the end date of its booking although no camper/s had appeared. Unfortunately ghost bookings has become a problem—people booking and not coming.

Towards the end of the day, we did the walk along Norman Beach, truly one of most beautiful beaches that one could experience. After dinner we did a walk along the board walk, spotting one wombat. We couldn't walk over the pedestrian bridge that crossed Tidal River as it had been closed, apparently the foundations were unsafe. The amazing thing was spotting only one wombat. Last time I was there you didn't have to walk far before you spotted them roaming about.

Tuesday dawned and it was a matter of a quick breakfast and drive up to Telegraph Saddle. On arriving at the saddle there weren't that many cars, so we had the pick of the best parking spots. Now it was down to the serious business of packs up and head off to Little Waterloo Bay.

From Telegraph Saddle, which is at about 212 metres above sea level, to the turn off to Little Waterloo Bay, a distance of about a 6.2km, is a trudge along a gravel road. Of course, as you walked you could distract yourself by chatting to fellow travellers and/or trying to identify some of the botanical wonders that can be observed: the Silver Banksia, Prickly Tea Tree, Silky Hakea, Dwarf She-oaks and other wonderful plants. Thankfully, initially it was downhill. At Growlers Creek crossing we stopped for a break.

We continued on to the turn off to Little Waterloo Bay. At the turn off there were two big school groups heading for the camp. We stopped for a small break and had a chat about when to have a lunch break and agreed that about 12pm would be okay, as from the turn off to the camp, we still had about six kms to go.

The track from the road to Little Waterloo Bay has its moments of botanical details as mentioned earlier and geological wonders. The main part of Wilsons Promontory is granite mass and over time with erosion the granite has been transformed into different shapes and, with imagination, one boulder appears to be the face of a person.

After our little break Krysia and I maintained a steady pace but were passed by a school group. We continued on passing the same school group, who had taken a break. As we maintained our pace, we decided that we should push on to the camp as we didn't want the school group to arrive in camp before us.

At Waterloo Bay the track turns left along the sand dunes and Little Waterloo Bay camp was only just over a kilometre away. It was 12pm so we thought about the school group and that there was no shady spot to have lunch, so we stayed with our original decision and pushed onto the camp.

On arriving at the camp we found an ideal camp site that could comfortably fit our tents and the ground was level, plus it had a bench and logs to sit on.



### *On the track to Refuge Cove*

Not long after setting up our tents the school group arrived. Thankfully, they ended up camping a bit of a distance from us although I must admit, for a school group, they were well behaved.

Corrie and Jan arrived after lunch. The afternoon was spent just meandering to the beach and chatting to other campers.

Wednesday was the day walk to Refugee Cove which was about seven kms one way. The track to Refugee Cove is much better than when I previously walked it. Thankfully most of the walk is done under the shade of trees. We did the climb up to Kersops Peak at about 390 metres. From there it was 2.6 km downhill to Refugee Cove.

On arriving at Refugee Cove we had lunch. After lunch it was a swim in the cooling waters of the cove. Unfortunately, all good things come to an end and it was up packs and the hot walk back to camp.

Thursday it was time to say goodbye to our camp and do the long hike back to Telegraph Saddle. Remember the earlier part of the article about it was all downhill at the start of our walk, well now on arriving at Growlers Creek where we had a break, it was all uphill. It was a relief to finally reach the saddle and place our packs into the car and drive down to Tidal River.

On arriving back at Tidal River, we had the obligatory hot shower. Before we departed, we met at the shop to have our last chat over coffee, and headed home. Whilst heading home we discovered that the Korumburra Hotel serves meals through the day, something to keep in mind for future trips. Thanks, Jan, for leading such a great pack carry and thanks to Krysia and Corrie for your company.

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## *Vera Newberry Photo Competition*

On Friday 21 March a very successful social evening was held at the Wilson residence for the Vera Newberry photo competition. The attendance by 19 members was appreciated by Doug Newberry, who gave a very thoughtful and deep-felt speech. The Newberry family appreciate the memories that the competition provides that keep Vera in our hearts. *[Ed. Sadly, Doug died less than three weeks after this event. See the tribute on page 11.]*

Peter Naughtin and Peter Wilson provided slide shows of photographs taken on walks, which were enjoyed and also raised a lot of friendly banter about the photographs and memories of the walks on which they were taken.

27 entries were received. Congratulations to all entrants on the excellent photos presented.

The winning photographers were, 1<sup>st</sup> Peter Naughtin 2<sup>nd</sup> Joan Kenny, equal 3<sup>rd</sup> Carmel Merrey and Joan Kenny, equal 5<sup>th</sup> Peter Wilson and Joan Kenny. *[These photos are available on the club website.]*

Thank you to all those who attended, and the Wilsons for their hospitality.

*Malcom Merrey*

# *Vale Janice Mary Maher*

*Louise Pagliaro and Erica Hillas*

When thinking of Jan, as she liked be called, these words spring to mind: serene, reliable, utterly trustworthy, quiet, relaxed, unassuming, confident, optimistic and generous. For those of us who knew Jan in the earlier days of the CWCV, Jan epitomized bushwalking. Her love of the bush was so obvious.

Jan was a great leader of walks. She exuded confidence to the novice members of her party when she led the famous 'Petticoat Safari' through the Cradle Mountain Reserve to Lake St Clair, Tasmania. Always that quiet smile on her face even when the task became tough. We left Melbourne on Boxing Day 1960 and were very fortunate with the weather. Even though we carried clothing for the extreme cold, we did not have to use them at all.

Our introduction to the park was overnighing two nights in the old-world rustic home called 'Waldheim'. This gave us the opportunity to climb Cradle Mountain, on the days in between. From the summit we had a magnificent view and it gave us an excellent idea of the country through which we were going to pass doing the Overland Track. Well planned, Jan!

The next day onwards it was, with packs up, to commence our journey south. A most wonderful experience walking through pristine country with no board walks as yet. It was idyllic with no rain, no mud. There was excitement of course when having to confront a snake quite a number of times crossing the tracks, but Jan's calm soothed the rest of the party.

Of course, as we walked through the valley there were many mountains and peaks to admire two of which we climbed- Mt Ossa and Mt Gould. Finally we arrived at Lake St Clair and what a welcome sight. After a good long rest we hitch-hiked in pairs to Queenstown. Some of us on the back of an open cattle truck. Just as well our parents didn't know. At that time the hills around Queenstown were completely bare because of the mining activities there. Jan very wisely visited the police station to ask where would be a safe place to camp for us six girls aged between 18 and 24. The answer was **nowhere**, there were too many young blokes around the place because



it was an active mining town. But the police offered Jan a hall to use which she gladly accepted. We made sure the doors were well and truly locked. What a trip it had been and we all felt grateful to have had this wonderful experience. We could never have done it without Jan as our leader. No phone, no GPS, all the information in her head.

Jan walked many walks and it was always great when she was part of the group.

She also contributed her generous time to the running of the club by serving as a secretary.

For approximately 65 years Jan and Erica, one of the Petticoat Safari's party, had been friends. Jan gave Erica the honour of being her bridesmaid. We now cherish the many wonderful memories we have of our dear friend Jan.

May she rest in peace in God's loving care. Vale Jan!



*The 'Petticoat Safari'. December 1960-January 1961*

*Back :Erica Hoglund (Hillas), Joyce Taylor, Jan Hawe (Maher), Judy Hopcraft  
Front: Louise Visser (Pagliaro), Sue Simpson*



*Anniversary Day at Westerfolds Park*  
*Sunday 4 May*

Following Mass at Risen Christ Parish, Eltham, 43 CWCV members gathered at the Outdoor Activities Hub and Conference Room, Westerfolds Park, for Reflection, Prayer, and lunch together.

Bernadette Madden choreographed the group for Peter Wilson's photo.



# *Marysville Camp*

## *11-14 March*

*Bernadette Madden*

**P**lans for a club camp at Marysville Caravan Park and walks in the area were hatched when a couple of members realised that there was a significant anniversary occurring. 1975 had been an important year for Alan and Margaret who married in February, and for Bernadette who joined Missionary Sisters of Service in March. It was decided that a party was in order, and so thirty people gathered in Marysville; some visited for the day, while many stayed overnight. As usual the program catered for many, with at least two walks each day and visits to a coffee shop. And an afternoon tea party to celebrate the anniversaries!

One night we even had a sound and light show—also known as thunderstorm—which added to the entertainment of our days.

*The celebrities*  
*Photo: Peter Wilson*



## *Saw Mill track, Keppels Hut and The Beeches Forest Walk with Harry*

*Gillian Lang*

**D**iane, Gillian, Roy, Harry, Krystina and Bernie set off from base camp to head for the high hills. With a GPS, map and Maps.Me: what could go wrong!! We made our way up the road to find the track to what had been Andersons Mill. Once we located the track it was a steady climb up and up

through forest and tree ferns. We reached our destination for elevenses. To our surprise we found the site occupied by a large SA caravan uncoupled—no car but obviously occupied by a family, two mountain bikes and a child's bike, but no sign of life; at the side of the camp there was a large campervan from WA that has toured throughout Australia, judging by its stickers.

We continued our climb up and up to reach Keppel Hut; this time, after following the 'dirt road' track we branched off onto a narrower bush track with more shade. Keppel Hut has a fire place. I cannot remember if there were bunk beds, but it was pretty basic. Just note that the toilets are not located at the Hut site but off to the side of the bush road (somewhat hidden) before the turn off track to Keppel's Hut. We then retraced our steps to return to Marysville following the river track for car pick up, and then drove to Beeches Forest Walk.

Now this was a treat! We did the circuit walk and passed through glades of tree ferns and running water. It was a walk you could embrace and bathe in the forest light. Here everyone went at their own pace and we joined up at the bridge to have a late lunch. Walking back was sad, because who knows when we will visit this beautiful spot again.

Our thanks to Harry who, despite an injury early in the walk, stoically continued to lead us.

*Here is another perspective on the beautiful 'long walk' on Wednesday 12 March*

## *Keppel Hut and The Beeches*

*Carole Donnell*

**T**he predicted warm weather meant seven of us, Harry (leader), Krystyna, Roy, Bernie, Gillian, Diane (visitor) and I were pleased we left the camp at 8.00am for our walks to Keppel Hut and The Beeches. The walk to Keppel Hut took us up a four-wheel drive track that needed to be walked with care. Growing beside the rough track was a plentiful supply of delicious, ripe, juicy and sweet blackberries—savouring them distracted us from the ruggedness of the track. After four km we reached the historic Keppel Hut, which is 1,280 metres above Marysville. It was built after the 1939 fires by

John and Jerry Keppel. From 1885 the brothers were sheep and cattle graziers in the alpine area for more than 80 years. The hut accidentally burnt down in 1983 and was rebuilt with the help of community groups. It was one of the hundreds of huts destroyed in the Black Saturday 2009 fires. The tall stone chimney was all that survived; the odd horseshoe, burnt railings from the horse yards and blackened cutlery indicated the purpose and importance of this hut for the cattlemen. By the next summer the hut had been rebuilt, along with horse yards, a picnic table, a fire place and a 'hard to find' well-appointed toilet. It was only as we began our return that we spotted its roof on the other side of the road.

A small creek gurgled near the hut and camp site and it was a protected, peaceful place to enjoy snacks, a rest and the open-air bush toilet! We were interested that the hut had been used the previous night by some horse riders and we realised that horse riders and hikers are appreciative of the shelter that Keppel's hut still provides. On our return to the cars, we were all grateful that Diane's keen eyes saw Gillian was close to a snake and her command to STOP! ensured all was well.

We then drove along Lady Talbot Drive to The Beeches walk. This walk took us deep into ancient, sacred, cool temperate rainforest. The beauty of the ancient myrtle beech giants, the majesty of the tall erect mountain ash and the lush tree ferns made for a truly natural wonderland. Much of the walk was beside the babbling Taggerty River taking us to the Meeting of the Waters where the Taggerty River and Whitehouse Creek meet. An interesting bridge,



*Photo: Gillian Lang*

built on the trunk of a huge mountain ash, spans the Taggerty River near the confluence of the rivers.

As we crossed the bridge, we saw a water bottle bobbing in a protected, difficult to reach, cul de sac of water. Roy and Harry knew it was Shirley's and so found they had a project: it must be retrieved! Checking out the possible routes down the steep, treacherous banks took a long time. It involved conversation, careful planning and risk assessment! In the meantime, some of the group had walked on to the stunning Cascades to enjoy lunch there. A couple of us stopped midway between the water bottle-rescuers and those enjoying lunch, to wait for Roy and Harry. Just as one of us set off to check they were okay a triumphant pair of 'boys' came into sight, with Harry saying he found an easy way to navigate the river, banks and rocks. Hopefully the retrieved water bottle will have special significance for Shirley given the determination and skill shown by two of our walkers!

After lunch we explored the Upper Cascades track, hoping to return to the cars through the bush rather than along the road. After a shortish walk along a beautiful track we came to a Closed Track sign, and so decided to retrace our route and take the road back to the cars. Thanks to Harry our leader and the group for two very different and wonderful walks.

## *Two Short Walks*

### *The Beeches Rainforest Walk,*

### *Taggerty Cascades and Keppel Falls*

*Peter Wilson*

**T**hese walks, described in the local Marysville Trails guide as the Lady Talbot Trails, are all accessed from Lady Talbot Drive, the road that follows the Taggerty River valley up under the western flanks of Lake Mountain. The road is named after the wife of Sir Reginald Talbot, Governor of Victoria from 1903 to 1908.

Our first walk was the Beeches Rainforest Walk—once a four-kilometre loop but now half the track is overgrown and closed. Starting at the northern end of what was once the loop, the track descends through mountain ash forest



*Photo opportunity at the  
Meeting of the Waters  
Photo: Bernadette Madden*

before entering the temperate rainforest of Myrtle Beech, Blackwood, tall tree ferns and green mosses along Whitehouse Creek.

The track follows the creek downstream, at times on boardwalks and timber bridges, to a short diversion to 'The Meeting of the Waters' where Whitehouse Creek joins the Taggerty River. From there it was over a bridge (where Shirley dropped her water bottle—rescued and returned later by Harry) and a series of steps to the Taggerty Cascades where the river plunges over huge boulders on its way down towards Marysville.

The second half of the loop having been closed it was then a little over a kilometre

back up the road to our starting point and lunch at a delightful picnic area about 50 metres off the road before a drive back down the road to the Keppel Falls Track.

This is a well-made track, climbing steadily through the forest adjacent to the Taggerty River to a lookout platform below the falls. Named after the Keppel brothers who settled in the area in the 1880s, this is a tiered waterfall tumbling over large boulders and logs down a series of cascades, draining the slopes of nearby Mount Margaret.

After absorbing the view and taken the obligatory photos it was only a matter of retracing our steps to the cars for the trip back to Marysville in time for the evening's important social gathering.

# *Short Walks at Marysville*

*Maree Slater*

**O**n Wednesday three of us (Marg C, Jane and Maree) decided on a very short walk ...to amble up and down the Main Street; then two of us enjoyed a longish peruse of the op shop, followed by a long coffee. Hence, a short walk, a short report...The End!

The second morning was a little more exploratory, as Joan, Maree, Peter R and Maz, began a short stretch of the Tree Fern Gully track beside the Steavenson River. We returned to the track junction, where we met the mid-range walking group, some of whom decided to abandon part two of their walk and return with us to the coffee shop. On route, we spent precious time reflecting in the beautiful Bushfire Memorial. Having Peter and Maz with us, who lived and worked in the area, increased our awareness of the utter tragedy that befell Marysville on 9 February 2009. We also went to the Visitor Centre. This is always a worthwhile activity, with changing displays from local artists. At the entrance, a 'not-to-be-missed' (but easily overlooked) display, is a large pottery 'gratitude bowl', crafted by a renowned potter, Alistair Whyte. The words of gratitude come from locals, and circle around the inside of the bowl – they are:

*Grateful for the kindness of others, Grateful for peace in my heart, Grateful for the strangers who are now friends, Grateful for such overwhelming love, Grateful for time to read, Grateful for village life, Grateful for a chance to rebuild, Grateful just for being alive.*

These heart-melting feelings were an invitation to add to our personal list of things for which we are grateful. And, among them, a deep sense of gratitude for our walking club.

As usual, we finished our walk with a coffee and a long chat under outdoor umbrellas at The Greenery, in the lane off the main street.



# *The Michaeldene Circuit*

*Words Frances Mongan, photo Joan Kenny*

On Wednesday evening, following our 50th celebrations, clouds gathered in the sky heralding a great downpour, which proved that my tent is waterproof! (and a certain other person's tent was not. (*Ed. See below*). The Steavenson River was flowing just a couple of metres away and despite some early misgivings it did not rise to sweep us away in its current; instead, it was flowing beautifully within its banks as we walked the Michaeldene Circuit the next day. Fears of a slippery muddy path post-rain storm were not realized; instead, we had milder weather with a little morning mist which was indeed refreshing after the heat. We wended our way through tall gums and tree ferns with the water sparkling beside us and the bird life giving us cause to pause and gaze. We were even given the opportunity to learn about fish on a very good information board, where I learnt for the first time that snags are a good thing (giving fish a place to rest and hide from prey).

Pauline and Derek were our excellent leaders, with Carole, Bernadette, Doreen, Caroline and Frances forming a happy company.

As the morning progressed so did the heat, so the thought of the cuppa at one of Marysville's cafés came into most of our minds and when we met up with more of our CWCV members, going on an even shorter walk than we were, it was a case of great minds think alike (although some even greater minds and walkers did go on to finish the circuit). After the cuppa and much

conversation there was still time to while away the afternoon sitting by the creek reading a book. Oh, the many joys of bush walking!!



P S from Bernadette:

Macpac honoured the warranty on my tent and replaced it for me after checking it out and finding that the floor was not waterproof as promised!



*The party after the party*

*The gathering at Marysville on Thursday, the day after the main celebration.*

*Photo: Peter Naughtin*

## *Vale Pope Francis*

Whilst saddened at the news of Pope Francis' death, we give thanks for the person he was and the gifts he gave us, including his ground-breaking encyclical, *Laudato Si*, on care for our common home. Here is a quote from it:

*“(p 243) At the end, we will find ourselves face to face with the infinite beauty of God... (p 244) In the meantime, we come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us, knowing that all the good which exists here will be taken up into the heavenly feast. ”*



# *The Snowies Alpine Walk*

*Two days in March 2025*

*Words and photos Peter Wilson*

**T**he Snowies Alpine Walk is a 56km multi-day walk in Kosciuszko National Park linking Guthega Village, Charlotte Pass, Mt Kosciuszko, Charlotte Pass Village, Perisher Valley and Bullocks Flat. For those who complete the whole track the reward is climbing Australia's highest mountain, wandering through wildflower meadows and walking through glacier-carved landscapes and snow gum forests.

For our trip in late March our base was the caravan park at Jindabyne where Bernadette, Corrie, Shirley and I gathered on Day 1 (the 26th ) to be followed by Carole, Maree, Marg and Peter on Day 2.

The first foray on to the Alpine Walk with Bernadette, Corrie, Shirley and I was the 10km section from Charlotte Pass to Guthega Village. This involved a rather long car shuffle, but we had plenty of time in the day. Charlotte Pass is at the end of the Kosciuszko Road and the stepping off point for several walks including the Main Range Track and Mt Kosciuszko itself.



National Parks NSW has put a great deal of effort into establishing the Alpine Walk. The track is a mix of steel walkways and steps, local stone and gravel paths that provide good walking conditions while ensuring the conservation of the highly sensitive environment within the Park.

From Charlotte Pass to Guthega the track follows the valley of the Snowy River from near its source on the Main Range to the Guthega Pondage, one of the many water

*A steel boardwalk protects the sensitive alpine environment*

storages for the Snowy Hydro Scheme. Downstream from the Guthega Pondage the river continues to the Island Bend Pondage and from there to Lake Jindabyne before being released to flow free, south into Victoria, and its eventual mouth at Marlo in East Gippsland.

In the space of the 10 kilometres or so from its source the river grows from a small mountain stream to a significant river as it is fed by numerous small streams draining the mountains either side of the valley.

The rationale for starting this walk at the Charlotte Pass end was that Guthega Village is at a lower altitude; so – downhill all the way? Well, no. The track meanders up and down the side of the valley so there were plenty of uphill sections along the way. In a final test the track climbs to a high point to a view of the village before plunging down into a gully and across a creek before the final climb to the village. A test for tired legs.

A short rest and it was on the road to retrieve the car left at Charlottes Pass and then back to Jindabyne to meet the other members of the party and to plan for Day 2 - the section from Charlotte Pass Village to Perisher Village.

Having left a car at Perisher Village it was on to Charlotte Pass Village and “packs up” for Marg and Peter C, Carole, Bernadette, Corrie, Shirley and I on the 13 km track back to Perisher.

There is only 30 metres difference in altitude between the two villages but plenty of climbing and descending along the way through a mix of open plains, snow gum forest, (sadly much of it burnt) and rocky outcrops. At times the track climbs to the top of the Rams Head Range – the divide between the Snowy and Thredbo River catchments – providing views into each valley.

Just below a saddle on the range, right on time for elevenses, we came across one magnificent snow gum that must have escaped many bushfires. With a short trunk about a metre thick and a metre tall before coppicing into seven or eight branches, the tree was a work of art with shades of orange, pink, red and grey decorating the bark.

Pressing on along the range, sometimes through stark white skeletons of snow gums killed by fires, there were increasing numbers of rocky outcrops marking the skyline until we reached the access track to the Porcupine Rocks lookout overlooking the Perisher and Thredbo Valleys. Here we were

met by our daughter Katherine and grandson Max who had walked (with Max in the backpack) up from Perisher to join us.

Some chose to rest at this point while others made the climb up to the lookout before the final descent to the Perisher Village and the drive back to Jindabyne for a well-earned afternoon tea.

Two days of walking in wonderful alpine country. My thanks to my fellow walkers for cheerful company along the way.



*A perfect spot for elevenses!*

*Among the coppiced branches of a magnificently-coloured ancient snow-gum*

***Worth a Read!*** Recently the club had forwarded to it via email a copy of Fr. James McShane's book *The Spirituality of Running*. Fr. McShane is an English Redemptorist priest and keen runner who has written the book, as he says, '... to help Christians who are runners to understand how our spiritual and physical beings are enhanced through exercise and prayer: the two are integral: if we do both - exercise and pray - we become the best we can be; the people God created us to be.' His message is equally applicable to Christian bushwalkers. The book can be ordered through the publisher, Redemptorist Publications, or from Amazon, and costs approx. \$12.80.



# *Murrindindi River Walk, with Variations!*

*2 March 2025*

*Bernadette Madden*

**O**n a bright sunny day in March, ten CWCV walkers gathered at the Suspension Bridge in Murrindindi Reserve with the intention of walking from Cascades to Suspension Bridge. A pleasant walk along the Murrindindi River, with some ups and downs. All went well as cars were organised and Brian, Barbara P, Rose C, Tom, Bernard J, Tony F, Carole, Shirley, Peter W and the leader (Bernadette) travelled to the Cascades parking area. We commenced the walk down the Murrindindi River with time to enjoy the cascading waterfall and the (rather steep) downhill start to the walk.

By lunchtime we had reached the picnic area at Bull Creek. We all enjoyed our lunch here and two members decided this was a good place to end their walk and wait for the pick-up service later in the day. A wise choice, thought the eight as we climbed the hill which was inevitable after such a nice downhill start. Then it became apparent that daylight hours might not be sufficient to fulfil the original plan, so another plan was formulated... Three walkers would go ahead and complete the car shuffle. The remaining five could continue the walk and all would meet at the Bridge.

“The best laid plans of mice and....” Well Robbie Burns was right! Along the way another two decided that another picnic area was a good place to wait for a pickup. So three CWCV walkers arrived at the Suspension Bridge to find that their three companions had collected the cars from Cascades and the walkers from Bull Creek—very efficient!

So then it just remained for one car to return to collect the remaining two walkers, and ten CWCV members were off to Yarra Glen Hotel for a well-earned libation of our choosing.

~~~~~

Welcome back,

Terry Shacklock, who has rejoined the CWCV.

We look forward to your company on the track and at social functions!

Sugarloaf Reservoir Walk

Carmel and Malcom Merrey

On Sunday 6 April 12 walkers met in cool and windy conditions at the Sugarloaf Reservoir Ridge Picnic Area carpark to take part in a short (six km) or long (13 km) walk, both to finish at the Saddle Dam Picnic Area carpark.

Following a small car shuffle and discussion, Carole, Rose, Peter N, Doug, Anne, Bernie, Bernard and Malcom left heading clockwise and Carmel, Bernadette and Maree set off heading anti-clockwise.

The long walk followed a marked trail that undulates around the reservoir and out into the extremities of the park. The track at times was uneven with numerous rabbit diggings, and one large relatively steep climb. This was the first time any of the walkers had walked the track clockwise, making it a new experience for all.

After passing the Winneke Solar farm that contains 19,000 solar panels generating 12,400 megawatt hours per year, and the Sailing Club that twice a week holds all-ability sailing classes, elevenses was undertaken along the track in an area with some good logs to sit on with a view of the reservoir. The reservoir was at the lowest level that any of the walkers had ever seen, with the launching ramp from the Sailing Club high and dry with a fair distance to the water.

Back on the track we soon found ourselves undertaking a climb to the highest point on this walk. A perfect view of the city skyline could be seen across the lake. Just over the peak we stopped for lunch in a sheltered clearing. Once everyone was fed and watered, we descended a steep slope to the reservoir foreshore and continued along an undulating track past the pumphouse; this took us past the permitted fishing area and brought us into Saddle Dam Picnic Area.

We were reunited with the short walkers, who had meandered along the bush track which led to the dam wall, and the closed but still accessible lookout, giving them a birds-eye view of the dam and water treatment plant.

They had found a lovely sheltered spot for lunch out on the point, then walked around the foreshore, enjoying the birds and the creativity of those who had been building bush shelters out of the 'preserved' timber along the high-water mark.

We all enjoyed a pleasant post-walk cuppa and chat at the Dark Horse Café.

Some 'info' about Vietnam *(After 25 weeks spent there)*

Peter Matheson

Ed's note: Peter is not long returned from another lengthy sojourn in Vietnam and shares his interesting insights into this country.

1. In cities, motorbikes (under 350cc) are the go. One sees mum, dad, and two kids riding along on the one bike. Exposure to the elements from such a young age might toughen kids up. I even saw an untethered dog, balancing on the seat, behind a woman rider!
2. Between cities, cars and buses are the go. The roads are excellent toll expressways. Most buses seem to have no seats but instead spaces where one reclines/sleeps, and these buses hold up to 30 people. In rural areas, buses stop at bus stations where there is food (vast options) and toilets available (all toilets in Vietnam have a 'hose' ready for use, but not all have paper). These stations are HUGE, I saw one which I estimate was 50m wide and 200m long. Small 12 seat buses go for short trips in the country, and the driver and complete strangers join in conversation. Very communal.
3. Crossing a road can be dramatic/traumatic as motorbikes seem reluctant to slow down or swerve to avoid one.
4. Wind farms are ubiquitous, the number of individual turbines vast. I read that Australia buys its turbines from Vietnam.
5. In rural areas one sees workers (peasants?) under conical hats in the rice fields at 6.30am. Women, mostly older, bend over with their backs horizontal like a table, no stooping, admirable, they have done that for years.
6. Rural buses often pass through a 'village' which may be 5km long but with only the one row of buildings (mainly shops) on either side. This is verified from a plane.

7. The number of shops is staggering and with 100 million people, they do good business. It seems that every second shop is an eatery as Viets like to eat out. These are mostly small affairs, but some are cavernous, holding hundreds. Eating out on the footpath, where there are table and chairs (often kindergarten size) is common. Then there are small stands on wheels with a gas cylinder and run by single persons, often women, which serve basic meals and well into the night, even on rural roads.
8. Night lights. All over Vietnam, the lighting at night is spectacular. Light poles are lit up in colours, buildings and parks exude colour. Quite lovely.
9. Islands. There are many islands off the coast of Vietnam, some are tourist destinations reached by fast ferries. Motorbikes can be hired to get around.
10. Manners or custom? No “Good mornings” or “Good byes”- Vietnamese will appear on the scene, perhaps drift into the conversation, then drift out. It’s not rude.
11. Menial tasks (but important to those so engaged). Always, when eating out, a person, often an elderly woman, sometimes a handicapped person (blind, one arm, I even saw a guy with no hands) will come offering to sell ‘lotto’ tickets. They don’t speak and just stand there waiting for a response, moving on if none is forthcoming. I guess they are employed to sell these tickets and may have no other source of income. Then there the older women with conical hats who may sweep dirt off a footpath. Others ride battered looking old bikes (gears, what are they?) and carry huge loads such as baskets of fruit, vegetables, and nuts. I spotted one old ‘girl’ somehow carrying three young boys on a battered bike. These are the ‘little’ people (no counts) of Vietnam who are simply unforgettable. I did not see dirt-poor poverty but it would exist. Even sending one’s kids to school can be too costly for some. I saw a lovely young girl, around 8 years, sitting at a small bus stop and wondered why she was not in school. It seems her parents could not afford to send her to one-while learning in class is free, appropriate clothes and school outings cost money, for some parents, too much money. A tragedy for that young girl. While on schools, I must mention that at the end of school each day, there may be 100 motorbikes outside to ferry kids home. Primary schools start at 7am and finish at 5pm. (Our kids have it easy!)

12. Living quarters. Nice homes with spacious front gardens and roomy back yards? Not in Vietnam for the plebs, who live crowded together in small, basic abodes. A timber structure is hard to find. There are magnificent houses to be seen in select areas, but these are the exceptions. These are often tall (3-4 stories) and thin as it is cheaper to build up than out. However, all abodes have plants. Vietnam resembles one large glass house such is the plant growth one sees (Tropics -> rain and heat.)
13. Markets. All over Vietnam one finds these large and small. Clothes and food abound. Picture a narrow walkway in a market and try to imagine a motorbike passing along one- I have seen this! In some tourist centres, a street will be closed off at night and market stalls set up. There are great bargains to be had at a market in Vietnam.
14. Churches. Catholic ones abound, easy to find. Older ones, as most are, were built by the French and are large edifices. Holy water at entrances is not offered. Some churches have annexes and motorbikes may be parked along one wall. Every Mass I attended was packed to overflowing, one church with an annex would have had close to 1000 attendees. The lectors have a distinct dress and the psalm is always sung. There is a Confiteor, but no Kyrie. The Gloria is sung. Usually there is a choir in the loft to help those in the pews to give loud responses where required. At the consecration in one church, instead of bells sounding, a drum is beaten in the loft and this sounds like an earthquake. If not prepared for this, one gets quite a shock. (Naturally there are many Buddhist structures all over Vietnam.)
15. The land. Jungle-like growth is common, as are coconut palm and banana trees. Highlands, mountains, waterfalls, rivers (HUGE), caves, temple complexes -much to see. Many canals have been built so boats can ply their trade along them.
16. Train. There is just the one line in Vietnam, from Ho Chi Minh city to Hanoi. In places the line is 10m from the ocean (think Kilcunda)- eye -catching. Many long tunnels through mountains, too.
17. Ethnic groups. There are several especially in the central highlands and in the north of Vietnam. Vietnamese is not their first language. Some dress in a tribal manner. They self-sustain through farming activities and may display aspects of their culture for visitors.



**THE CATHOLIC WALKING CLUB
OF VICTORIA INC.**

**Woiworung Country
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*Vera Newberry Competition
Second prize*

*The Spirit of Determination
Photo: Joan Kenny*