

The *Catholic Walker*

August 2025

The Magazine of The Catholic Walking Club of Victoria Inc.



*Shirley and Peter Wilson receive Life Memberships of the CWCV
from President Bernadette Madden at the 2025 AGM*

Photo: Peter Naughtin

See page 24

From the Editor

The photo on the cover of this issue of *The Catholic Walker* records a wonderful moment in the history of the CWCV: the conferring of Life Membership on Shirley and Peter Wilson. In addition to all the activities and roles that Shirley and Peter have filled in the CWCV (see pages 24 to 26), they have been keen readers of this magazine, and regularly contributed articles and photographs. On many occasions Peter has responded promptly to the Editor's plea for a photo or two shortly before an issue is to be sent to the printer. And Shirley provides much appreciated feedback on issues she has enjoyed reading.

At the recent AGM, the impact of the escalating cost of postage on the distribution of print copies of the magazine was discussed, as it had been at the 2024 AGM. Once again members present affirmed their commitment to continue printing and mailing magazines to those members who opt to receive them this way. As in 2024, adding a voluntary donation to the annual subs to contribute to this cost was mentioned. The Editor and Committee thank those who made significant donations of this nature in the past 12 months.

Happy reading and walking.

Joan Kenny and Jan Wilkinson

Birthdays

August

- 3 Brenda Coutinho
- 7 Bernadette Madden
- 11. Brad Sinclair
- 12 Kevin Delaney
- 13 Mel Chua
- 15 Alan Cuthbertson
- 28 Bernie O'Shea, Paul Roberts,
Carmel Merrey
- 30 Susie Buykx

September

- 1. Pauline Nicholas
- 7 Tom Buykx
- 8 Greg Fitzgerald
- 15 Adrian Jones
- 16 John Hempenstall
- 18 Louise Pagliaro
- 19 Pauline Behan
- 27 Clara Rizzi

From the President

Since the last *Catholic Walker* was published, we have successfully completed a well-attended AGM at the Conference Centre at Westerfolds Park. The members of the CWCV Committee have not changed, and I have been elected as the President. I would like to thank Bernadette Madden for the great leadership and work she undertook during her term as President, leaving the club in such good stead. I would also like to formally congratulate Peter and Shirley Wilson on becoming Life Members at the AGM. All agreed it is well deserved.

I am Malcom Merrey, a relatively new member of the CWCV. After being on the Committee for two years I am honoured to be nominated and elected as the President of the CWCV.

Carmel and I were introduced to the CWCV through Carmel's aunt, Gwen Thomas, who for many years has had a close association with the Missionary Sisters of Service. Our first walk was a Yarck to Yea fundraiser for Highways and Byways. We enjoyed the walk and the social spirit at the end of the walk, and were informed by Corrie and Bernadette that the walk was number one of the four for entry to CWCV membership. As the saying goes, and the rest is history. The club has been extremely welcoming and a great group of people to be associated with.

As we move through the year the committee has made the decision to work with Bushwalking Victoria offering three walks as part of the Try Bushwalking program. This program is to set up to introduce others to bushwalking and in the process to meet and get to know club members. This may also lead to new members joining CWCV or other bushwalking clubs. If possible, please attend these walks and assist the leaders to welcome any visitors. Details are included in the latest Walks Program.

I look forward to the year progressing, joining walks and social activities so that I can meet more members of the club, and working with the CWCV Committee and the Walks Committee.

See you in the great outdoors.
Malcom Merrey

From the Archives

Our reading travels back in time now turn to the 1990s for Paul Robert's fascinating write up of an activity that can be described as unusual to say the least, and highly unlikely to ever be repeated! His account is reproduced from *The Catholic Walker*, March, 1995.

The Commando Weekend Who Dares, Wins!

Paul Roberts

There were three of us commandos, Rob, Peter and I, prepared, gung-ho and brave (or is that silly?) enough to pitch ourselves against all the insurmountable odds that nature could throw upon us. Keeping in mind that we were going lightweight and the limit for the packs was 5 kg, we three swashbuckling heroes pondered and puzzled over how to secrete all those items necessary for one's survival, the tent, the Thermarest, choofer, changes of clothes etc. etc. In the end it was a matter of letting heroic virtue spring forth and forgoing those creature comforts we are so used to. We must have been a little lax, however, as the best we could do was to get down to 6kg. The C. in C. of our group Rob, led by example and had the heaviest pack of all.

We left Melbourne on Friday night arriving at the base of the Northwest Spur of Mt. Feathertop at 22.30. We unloaded packs and with torches aglow headed off on the long haul up to MUMC hut. It was only around 5 km, a steep climb on a sultry night and it meant that by 02.30 we were ready to enjoy a snooze in the hut. Walking by moonlight is a wonderful experience though, giving a new perspective on one's surroundings. One can hear and occasionally see numerous animals, and in the more open sections, the moon's glow is enough for one to see one's way. There were two residents occupying the hut when we arrived, one a small possum, that, if there wasn't a sign declaring its disposition, we would have mistaken for a rat. The other resident we suspect might have been a German tourist but he rose and left very early in the morning so we only crossed paths fleetingly. It was only as I was laying out my sleeping bag that I realised I had committed one of the cardinal sins of high-country bushwalking, I had left my japara behind. Being weekend commandos meant I needn't have worried too much about

its usefulness in rainy weather, but I was wondering what I would use as a pillow.

Not that much later in daylight we could see the hut in all its curious glory. The hut is a spacious dark green geodesic dome, reminiscent of an environmentally sensitive spaceship. At the hut we indulged in breakfast before assaulting the nearby slopes, and so as to ensure all parts of the body were fully exercised, I ground my way through some muesli. It is a short but steep push up the slope from the hut to the summit of Feathertop, Victoria's second highest peak. With a clear day the views were good, we could see into the Kiewa and Ovens valleys and surrounding peaks including Hotham, the Fainters, Bogong and the omnipresent Buffalo.

What is the point on a commando weekend of going up if one doesn't go down again, in order to go back up again? So, after soaking in the views for a while, we descended 800m down the well-defined Diamantina Spur track to Blair's Hut. This old cattleman's hut, situated in a small grassy glade by the banks of the West Kiewa River, was a good place for lunch. It was very tempting to stay a long while, but we had to go back up again 680m. Our destination was the all-impressive Mt. Jim. Having come all the way down to Blair's, then hauled ourselves all the way up to Weston's for a brief respite, the rest of the way to Mt. Jim was relatively easy. Rob and I managed to scale its incredible heights and to yell "Small Time" down to Peter 40m below at the base of the escarpments. Despite Mt. Jim being little more than a bump on the horizon, it afforded good views of the Bogong High Plains. Looking forward to the end of the day, we then made our way along the Alpine Walking Track to Dibbin's Hut. We found plenty of people there, but still managed to squeeze in for the night and without tents we were fairly keen to. When looking at all the gear these groups carried, I was glad for a small pack. Of the three groups we met, none of them had walked anywhere near as far, so I suppose they could afford to carry so much.

We rose the following morning to see mist rising from the grassy plain pierced by shafts of sunlight. What a place for breakfast! We didn't quite get time for the "morning service" that our co-tenants in the hut were going to conduct and had invited us to, for they were still in bed as we departed and made our way up yet again. We followed the Alpine Track up to the top and then made our way across to Mt. Loch, which afforded us views of where we

had been, up there, down there and over there. We saw three snakes as we went, all of which were about 30cm long and as skinny as one's little finger. Later in the day we were to see their grown-up cousins, uncles and aunts.

From Mt. Loch, it was over to Mt. Hotham, the summit, not the village. Hotham was the last peak to be bagged for the weekend. We bagged it fairly quickly as the occupant of the fire tower had his radio blaring. Not staying long, we made our way down to the Diamantina Hut, but finding the air inside a bit fetid, it was only a quick look before heading to the Razorback and the top of the Bon Accord Spur, our path home. After a quick lunch on top, we descended very quickly past the snowgums, into the woollybutts. We eventually came to a tributary of the Ovens River, a good place to soak the feet. As we walked back to the car we ate blackberries, apples and plums which certainly made up for the other things we had been eating. We wallowed in the comforts of the Ovens River washing off layers of suntan muck and then had tea in the pub at Bright. The walk on Friday night and to Dibbin's on Saturday was really a very long day walk punctuated by a short snooze. We walked 58km over the weekend, so felt we had earned our rest and that we could put our commando berets away for a while.

Try Bushwalking Month

Bushwalking Victoria is again organising Try Bushwalking Month (TBM), only this year it will be for the month of September, not November. TBM is an opportunity for bushwalking to be promoted to the public as a healthy, enjoyable way of enjoying nature and the company of others, and aims to encourage people new to bushwalking, or new to club walking, to give it a go.

Our club plans on offering three walks during September that will be promoted through BWV's website and other means, and hopefully we will see some new faces on these walks! Plus, we need your face on these walks to share the camaraderie of our club! Check the walks programme for walks with Try Bushwalking in the heading.

Maria Island and Mt Field NP, Tasmania

24 March-4 April

Krystyna Derwinska

Participants: Jan W, Harry, Roy, Krystyna (leader) and visitor Khan (for Mt. Field only).

Maria Island exceeded my expectations: rich history imprinted in well preserved buildings and all the ruins we got to, thanks to Harry's interest, the wildlife, especially the bandicoots' antics in the camp kitchen at Darlington, beautiful scenery and spectacular sunsets.

Highlights of Mount Field NP stay:

- Seeing how much first timers on Tarn Shelf Circuit were delighted by the beauty of it. Jan called it a top class Australian (or even world) walk.
- Staying at the Government Huts in the heart of the park always feels like a privilege. A very special place - no electricity, no phone coverage, but so cosy with an efficient wood heater. In the 1960s Sir Edmund Hillary ran a mountaineering school there. Also, the iconic Australian film *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* was filmed there in the 1990s.
- On a more personal note - 25 years have passed since I walked the Tarn Shelf Circuit with my family on the 1st of January, 2000. It was my fifth time on this great track. It is a long walk, but it wasn't any harder than 25 years ago!

Maria Island, Bishop and Clerk Day Walk, Tuesday 25 March

Jan Wilkinson

Our first day of walking on Maria Island dawned fine and mild so the decision to tackle one of the more challenging day walks, Bishop and Clerk, seemed a good one. (The name Bishop and Clerk comes from the appearance of two dolerite columns with the appearance of a bishop wearing a mitre, followed by a clergyman). After registering at the ranger's office in Darlington, we



*View towards mainland from Bishop and Clerk
Jan Wilkinson*

headed past the convict-era buildings along a wide track to the Fossil Cliffs. Here we stopped to admire the spectacular cliffs, a world class fossil site, before entering a woodland of casuarina and Tasmanian blue gum. We enjoyed a break in the shade of trees before beginning the more serious task of climbing approximately 800 metres to the summit. The track was clearly marked as it zigzagged through loose rocks, before it became a case of clambering around and over tagged larger rocks in an ever-upwards direction. About 20 metres short of the actual summit, we decided that discretion was the better part of valour and stopped for lunch at a flattish section of dolerite columns. A better spot for lunch is hard to imagine! Sweeping views across the water back towards mainland Tasmania and warm, sunny conditions meant we didn't rush away.

Post-lunch we retraced our steps back to the Fossil Cliffs, then veered inland to inspect the ruins of an engine house and brick and lime kilns. An unsealed road took us past the ruins of the engineer's house and a restored workman's cottage complete with outhouse. Easy walking along the road soon brought us back to our campsite where we could enjoy preparing our

evening meals with bandicoots scampering around our feet (and in our plastic bags on the ground) looking for food scraps! Approximately 10 kilometres of walking for the day, but we agreed the climb had been sufficiently challenging to allow us an easier day of walking the next day.

Haunted Bay, Maria Island, Friday 28 March

Roy Burns

In order to do a day-walk to Haunted Bay, Harry, Krystyna and I did an 11-kilometre pack carry from Darlington to Frenchs Farm where we could camp. At Frenchs Farm there is a house, an old shearing shed and toilets. Water supply is from a tank located next to the house. There are camping spots near the house, but Harry, in his meanderings, found a great campsite some four hundred metres away. In setting up our camp we had to collect water from the tank. The walk from our camp site to the tank passed a water hole and as it was getting late in the day wallabies, kangaroos, wombats and birds, were putting in an appearance. The animals at Frenchs Farm are bit more timid of humans than those at Darlington.

The walk to Haunted Bay is about a 20km return walk. From Frenchs Farm we headed down the road crossing a bridge. It wasn't long after crossing the bridge that we were traversing the McRae Isthmus. At this point the road becomes sandy, which slowed our pace. As the isthmus narrowed, we were able to see Riedle Bay on the east side and Shoal Bay on the west.

After crossing the isthmus, we were back on hard surface, but the pace didn't change that much as the road is rough with steep uphill parts. This part of the walk is through a woodland forest. The highest point on the road is 197 metres. The road comes to a dead end which signals the start of a track. From this point it is a 1.5km steep descent to Haunted Bay.

On reaching the end of the track we accessed a rocky granite ledge from which we had a view of Haunted Bay. *'Haunted Bay – so named because of the sound that the Little Penguins make when they roost in the nearby beaches reverberating off the giant rock faces (imagine a sea-gull attacking a squeaky toy and then imagine that sound at night, warped and echoed by rocks).'*

<https://sapphireandsommelier.com/2020/02/27/maria-island-haunted-bay/>



Haunted Bay
Roy Burns

We had lunch at Haunted Bay but didn't hear any haunting sounds made by the Little Penguins, probably due to the fact that it wasn't the roosting season. After lunch we retraced our steps, climbing the steep track back to the road. It is steep and in certain parts one had to be careful not to slip. As we walked along the Isthmus, we decided to have a look at the Riedle Bay and Shoal Bay beaches. Riedle Bay beach looked the most promising for a swim, something to remember if I were to return there.

Lesueur Peninsula, Saturday 29 March

Harry Twining

Krystyna, Roy and myself left our lovely camp on the edge of the forest at French's Farm at about 8.30am for an easy morning walk to Pt Lesueur, returning by Encampment Cove.

The highlights were: sky and cloud reflections in the still waters of the estuary that flows into Chinaman Bay, the ruins of convict cells and Probation Station, and a resident wombat who picked the best restored cell to set up home.

Lesueur Peninsula is fairly open grasslands, ex-farmland, with large trees on the higher hillside. We had great views overlooking the islands, many bays and coves, and also looking west over Mercury Passage to Tasmania's East Coast. A very interesting and pleasant walk.

*Resident wombat,
Probation Station
Harry Twining*



Mt. Field NP, Monday 31 March-Friday 4 April

Khanh Nguyen

I was invited to go walking in Mt Field Tasmania to see the colours of the Fagus tree. We were staying in a hut; my bags would be taken on the ferry and all I had to do was book a flight to Hobart. When I heard no camping was involved, the offer was too good to refuse. The hut far exceeded my expectations with a comfortable mattress, running water and a stove heater and firewood to keep us warm.

Day One we walked up Mt Field East. The morning was cold and foggy but we quickly warmed up after a long steady climb. The further up we got the rockier the path became. The fog cleared as we ate our lunch on the summit and admired the views.

Second day we completed the iconic Tarn Shelf Circuit. Once again we started in foggy conditions, but by the time we reached the ski fields we were greeted with a blue sky and our first view of the day. From there the views and scenery just got better with each step. I was so distracted by the scenery I wasn't aware my camera had fallen out of my bag. Despite retracing my steps Roy and I didn't find the camera. The circuit took a lot longer than expected as we made so many photo stops and enjoyed the views.



*Jan approaches hut on Tarn Shelf Circuit
Krystyna Derwinska*

Our third day we walked through a rainforest covered in ferns, visited waterfalls and a tall trees forest. We also dropped into the Visitor Centre to report my lost camera in case someone found it even though I knew deep in my heart it was gone forever along with all the photos stored in it.

On our final day as returned the key to the Parks office I asked if anyone had handed in a camera. Miraculously the park ranger replied “yes”. I was so shocked I didn’t know what to say. What was the chance of someone finding it after we had spent so much time looking for it? I am so grateful to be reunited with my camera and photos.

This was my first time walking in Tasmania and what an introduction to what Tasmania has to offer. It has inspired me to return and explore other parts of Tasmania. Thank you, Jan, for the invitation, Krystyna and Roy for leading the walks and Harry for being my chauffeur. What a delightful group.



*Another irresistible photo op. in Mt Field
Krystyna Derwinska*

The Reflection and Prayer for the Annual CWCV Anniversary Days includes a beautiful Litany of Praise and Reflection.

We Pray: Creator God

For all nature's beauty and gifts - *we praise you*

For the forests, mountains, rocks and seas - *we praise you*

For rivers and waterfalls, billabongs and lakes - *we praise you*

For ancient rocks and expansive views - *we praise you*

For ancient trees, for wildflowers and the abundance of plant life - *we praise you*

For our unique creatures and birds in all their array - *we praise you*

For the colours of dawn and sunsets - *we praise you*

For the majesty and mystery of the night sky - *we praise you*

For the warmth of the sun and the light of the moon - *we praise you*

For all the gifts that reveal You the creator of all that is good - *we praise you.*

The Litany continues on page 29.

Canberra Aussie Peace Walk

Saturday-Sunday 29-30 March

Words and photo Peter Naughtin

Walkers: Peter N, Shirley and Peter W, Peter and Margaret C, Tom, Brenda, Brian, Doug and Anne, Carole, Maree, Bernadette, Corrie, Jilian, Diane (V) and Christine (V).

Seventeen walkers headed to Canberra again this year for the Aussie Peace Walk. Most went by car or flew up. Peter N decided to take a more relaxing option of going to Canberra by train to Yass and bus to Canberra. Most of us stayed at the Forrest Hotel in the suburb of Forrest, quite close to Manuka village.

The majority of us completed the 12.5 km walk on the Saturday. This walk leaves from Albert Hall and takes you around the lake, up Anzac Ave to the War Memorial, around the top of the War Memorial, back down to the lake, over the Kings Ave bridge and back along the lake to Albert Hall. It rained a fair amount in the first part of the walk. We were back at Albert Hall by 12.30pm and of course, Tom was the first back, walking at his usual fast pace. Jilian and Brenda decided to do the longer walk of 21 km which took in the far eastern side of the lake. We gathered for lunch at Albert Hall and to recount tales of our walk that day. Always an enjoyable get together. People then split up and pursued interests in the afternoon. Some to the National Gallery, some to the National Museum and others went back to the hotel to rest. That evening we went to a nice Italian restaurant in Manuka for dinner.

The Sunday walk takes you onto the western side of the lake. The trail takes you through the beautiful Chinese Garden, then across to the suburb of Yarralumla where you can see a number of the embassies along the track. You then walk along a beautiful peninsula which takes you to the Siev X Memorial where we have often stopped to remember the many lives lost on the fishing boat carrying 400 asylum seekers that capsized en route to Australia in 2001. The many poles in the memorial each represent the lost life of one person whose name is written on the pole. The walk then continues around the edge of the lake and back to the Chinese Garden and on to the finish of the 12.5 km walk at Albert Hall. Several of our group

decided to do the longer 24km walk which took them to the Arboretum, then on through Black Mountain, the Botanic Garden and back through Canberra city to Albert Hall.

We enjoyed lunch together at the hall after the walk and receive our medals or metal bands to attach to medals received from previous walks. That afternoon, once again, people did a variety of things: the gallery, the museum, resting, while some headed home late in the afternoon.

Each year we seem to be lucky to see significant cultural exhibitions in Canberra. This year there were two great exhibitions to see. At the National Museum there was an excellent Pompeii exhibition which was attended by a good number of us. It was a great display of items from Pompeii, the history of the diggings there, and the story of the eruption of Vesuvius. A highlight was a simulated eruption of the volcano which took place at the far end of the exhibition every half hour. The room rumbles and then you see the cloud erupting and the lava flow coming straight at you. A wonderful experience! The other exhibition was at the National Gallery: the paintings and career of Ethel Carrick and the sculptor Anna Dangar. Two famous Australian artists of whom most of us had never heard.

We always enjoy this weekend and the fact that so many are happy to keep going to walk in Canberra shows it continues to be an important item on the walking calendar.



*The Chinese Garden
one of the attractions on Carole and Peter Cos' Saturday walk*

The Salt Path Movie

Malcom Merrey

On Wednesday 28 May, Carole, Maree, Malcom, Barbara P, Brian, Cathy and Tom met at the Classic Cinema, Elsternwick, to watch the movie *The Salt Path*. This followed the club receiving five free double passes to the movie. The recipients of the passes were decided by ballot following a request for expression of interest.

The Salt Path is the profound true story of husband and wife, Raynor and Moth Winn's 630-mile trek along the beautiful, but rugged, Cornish, Devon and Dorset coastline. After being forcibly removed from their home, they make the desperate decision to walk in the hope that, in nature, they will find solace and a sense of acceptance. With depleted resources, only a tent and some essentials between them, every step along the path is a testament to their growing strength and determination. Based on Raynor Winn's bestselling memoir, *The Salt Path* is a journey that is exhilarating, challenging, and liberating in equal measure. A portrayal of home, how it can be lost and rediscovered in the most unexpected ways.

The movie was enjoyed by all in attendance, with a lot of discussion as to whether having read the book before seeing the movie was an advantage. It was agreed that those who had read the book previously had an advantage as the book covers times missed out in the movie.

Following the movie, we were joined by Carmel for lunch and social chat at the Goat's Head adjacent to Elsternwick Station.

Fred Hillas RIP

CWCV Life Member Fred Hillas (husband of Erica Hillas, also a Life Member) died on 12 July. May Fred rest in peace. Please remember Erica and the Hillas Family in your prayers.

See Kerry Maher's beautiful obituary for Fred on page 34.

Portarlington by Ferry

Wednesday 9 April

Words and photo Peter Naughtin

Walkers: Peter N (L), Joan, Carole, Maree, Louise, Carmel, Malcom, Rose and Ineen.

It was a nice fine day when we left Docklands at 9.30 am on the *Port Phillip* for Portarlington. The trip across the bay takes 1.15 minutes and we had a smooth calm sea to take us there. Great views of the docks, Williamstown and the West Gate Bridge as we passed under it.

We arrived at 10.45 and went for morning coffee at a café close to the pier and then set off on our walk along the coast. Wonderful views of the bay and, in particular, the You Yangs in the far distance. We passed Indented Head and observed the anchor from Matthew Flinders ship on his famous journey around Australia to map the outline of the Australian coast. After an hour's walking we turned around and returned to Portarlington at 1.30pm.



We went to the Grand Hotel for lunch and were pleased to see that the hotel has had an upgrade since we were last there, with much better facilities. We had a leisurely lunch and people were happy with the menu. After lunch we checked out the local shops until it was time to board the ferry to Docklands. Once again, the journey was very smooth and we arrived back in Docklands at 5.15pm.

We have done this trip to Portarlington four times now and each time it has been a most enjoyable outing.

Kyneton – Two Contrasting Short Walks

13 April 2025

Words and photo by Peter Wilson

On Sunday 13 April a party of just five—Rosa, Rose, Roy, Shirley and yours truly—met at 8:00 am at Kyneton for two walks in the district. (An early start in view of a forecast of 30 degrees.)

First up was a walk in the Black Hill Reserve. About eight kilometres north of the town, the reserve is a 105-hectare area featuring granite outcrops rising from the surrounding basalt plain to a height of 614 meters above sea level.

<https://sites.google.com/site/blackhillreservekyneton/about> provides some history of the area.

It is believed that the first European to sight Black Hill was Major Thomas Mitchell who passed through the area on his great exploration of the southern district of Port Phillip in 1836. Squatters soon followed Mitchell and there were the inevitable clashes with the Traditional Owners / Custodians, the Taungurung people of the Kulin nation. It was recorded that at least 24 indigenous men were shot between 1838 and 1841.

Black Hill was to become an important landmark for many years as squatters marked their boundaries by it. A school was built on the southern slopes in 1872, timber and gravel were taken from 1855 onwards.

So much timber was taken over the years that the northern slopes were completely bare. In the 1960's The Macedon Ranges Shire Council began replanting the many thousands of trees and native shrubs that cover the hillside today. In 1979 a group called 'The Friends of Black Hill' was formed to aid with the conservation of the reserve and continues to this day.

There are several tracks in the reserve and first up we set off on the Circuit Track that, as the name suggests, follows the perimeter of the reserve. Two things were apparent—the reserve is still recovering from a bushfire that tore through it in 2015, and the reserve and the surrounding country are extremely dry. There are no stock in the surrounding farmland and dozens of kangaroos in the paddocks have very lean pickings.

Having completed almost the full circuit of the reserve we headed uphill on the Ridge Track to traverse the higher sections of the reserve among the granite boulders that are such a feature of the area and eventually back down to our cars for the drive back to Kyneton for part two of this trip – the Campaspe River Walk.

The first stop back in town was the Botanic Gardens for morning tea. What a contrast from the bone-dry Black Hill Reserve and surrounds to the green grass and mature northern hemisphere trees of the gardens. Revived, it was off on the River Walk that follows the meandering river from the Botanical Gardens, 3.5 kilometres to the Kyneton Racecourse.

A mix of mature oaks, elms, etc as well as native vegetation along the track makes for very pleasant walking. Given the dry conditions there was no flow in the river but a couple of weirs still had water in them for the local ducks and other water birds. One area is also a known platypus habitat, but they were not showing themselves when we passed.

After a lunch break at a sculpture park shortly after our turn around point at the racecourse, it was a matter of retracing our steps to the Botanic Gardens and then heading to Piper Street for a well-earned afternoon tea at Duck Duck Goose & Larder before heading home. My thanks to my fellow walkers for good company on the day.



City Walk

Monday 21 April

Words and photo Peter Naughtin

Walkers: Peter N, Joan, Maree, Carole, Theresa, Tony F, Doug, Anne, Diane and Christine.

Melbourne is a beautiful city to walk around and we had the chance to do this on Easter Monday. Our usual starting point is Richmond Station. This time we chose to walk up to the foot bridge over the railway lines and down to the MCG through the lovely autumn colours of the trees in the grounds around the MCG. We climbed the steps to the G and walked around the far side of the ground past great bronze statues of some of the famous sports stars who have played at this great sporting venue. The one that really caught our eyes was the statue portraying the first game of football on the grounds around the MCG way back in the 1850s, a game between Scotch College and Melbourne Grammar boys. A wonderful sculpture that shows the boys going for the ball with the umpire close by.



We crossed the great walkway down onto Birrarung Marr and up to Princes Bridge where we met Tony and continued our walk through The Queen Victoria Gardens to the pavilion where we stopped for morning tea. We then crossed the road to The Tan, and began our walk around the Tan, past the Shrine and to the entrance to the Botanic Gardens. It was time for lunch and we sat on seats under beautiful trees and enjoyed the autumn views around the Botanic Gardens. After lunch we headed across Domain Rd to the Domain Brasserie for coffee and cake. This was the best place in the area for coffee and we got a table inside the café and enjoyed good service and some nice cakes and coffee.

The final part of the walk takes you down the far side of The Tan and back to Alexander Pde. We crossed the Morell Bridge and Gotch's Paddock back to Richmond Station. A very good city walk.

Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden

Wednesday 7 May

Words Carole Donnell, photo Margaret Cosgrave

Seventeen of us gathered to explore and enjoy the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden (previously the National Rhododendron Garden). It is Victoria's premier cool climate garden. Covering almost 50 hectares, it holds many important collections and is set amongst a wonderful landscape of native and exotic trees. We were treated to a huge variety of autumn colour in the deciduous trees and took particular delight in the deep red, burgundy and crimson of the maples.

Two recent permanent displays have been added to the garden since it purchased land that was part of the former Olinda Golf Course. The first is the native Australian Chelsea Garden. Opened in June 2023, 10 years after winning Best in Show at the Chelsea Garden Show in London, it was designed by Phillip Johnson, an Olinda resident and is 20 times larger than the original display, which was the size of a tennis court. Central to the display is an enormous waratah sculpture, waterfall and billabong. It has around 15,000 plants from 400 different Australian species. These include rare and endangered species. Our group took great interest in reading the informative signage, appreciating the diversity, intricacy and beauty of the plants and savouring this spectacular garden that celebrates our unique Australian flora.

The second new feature garden, situated close to the Chelsea Garden, is the Australian Cloud Forest Collection. Designed by Andrea Proctor, its creation is inspired by the globally unique, mountain- top ecosystems of far North Queensland. The name 'Cloud Forest' comes from the phenomenon of clouds enshrouding the tops of trees. All the plants in this garden usually grow at altitudes above 1,000 metres. Wild-collected wet tropic mountain plants were propagated, grown and distributed amongst botanic gardens throughout Australia to help ensure their ongoing conservation. Australia's tropical mountain cloud forests are home to two native rhododendrons and

appropriately, they have a special place in this garden. Although the garden is in its infancy we were fascinated by the variety of small plants and hope to see their growth.

After a short break the rain, which had been threatening, came. With rain gear on and umbrellas up we set off to walk some of the longer trails in the garden. The lake was particularly beautiful with rich autumn colours surrounding it. Along the paths we passed flowering camellias and azaleas as well as some magnificent and rare trees. The flowering protea and banksia gardens were a place to stop and look carefully both at the various stages of the flowers as well as the active New Holland Honey Eaters busily flitting from flower to flower. Serenity Point provided a welcome shelter for lunch.

The group decided that, due to the inclement weather, we'd make our way uphill to the exit, to our cars and onto the Ranges café in Olinda where warmth and hot drinks were welcome. Thanks to Erica, Louise, Marg & Peter C, Harry, Krystyna, Vanna, Tom, Maree, Bernard, Joan, Theresa, Bernie, Carmel and Malcom and Roy, for your interest in the new displays, the established garden and your wonderful company.



Autumnal Beauty

New Members

A warm welcome to returning member, Maureen Hyland, and new member Mary McCarthy! We look forward to walking with you in the great outdoors!

Bike Ride – Darebin Creek Trail: Alphington-Bundoora Park and return Saturday 24 May

Words and photo Margaret Cosgrave

*P*articipants: Alan, Bernie, Bernard, Peter and Marg Cos (leader) and family visitors Ben, Tess, Callum.

Darebin Creek runs through the northern suburbs. The Darebin Creek Trail runs alongside it. Our all-electric bike group cycled off on a glorious morning towards Bundoora Park. The trail is a sealed, shared path which crosses over the creek and under roadways. Our destination, Bundoora Park, has a varied history. Its uses include: an Arts hub, a returned soldier repatriation estate after the wars, a cattle and horse stud, and was, and remains, a culturally significant land for the Wurundjeri people.

We stopped to look at a red river gum which is scarred from the removal of bark for a food canoe. Refreshments at the Bundoora Park café were followed by the wide angled views afforded from Mt Cooper Lookout. At 137 metres this is the highest point in metropolitan Melbourne. Via a short loop, we cycled back along the Darebin Creek Trail. The five members and three visitors all enjoyed our 29km ride.

*Enjoying the view
from Mt Cooper*



Life Memberships

Two Life Memberships were awarded at the AGM of the Catholic Walking Club of Victoria on 28 June, 2025. Here are the citations for each, and the replies of the recipients.

Shirley Wilson: Life Membership

Shirley joined the Catholic Walking Club of Victoria in June 1966 (Shirley Forde then) and has remained an active member of the club through the years. Shirley has enjoyed bushwalking both here in Australia and other parts of the world through the years since then.

On walks Shirley is always aware of the needs of others in the group and especially attentive to any visitors or newcomers to the group. It has been commented on by members that Shirley will go out of her way to make new members/ visitors feel welcome and be included in the group. Shirley epitomises the spirit of the Club which describes its objective as *‘the encouragement of bushwalking and other outdoor activities in a friendly and supportive atmosphere.’*

Her support for leaders—old and new—has also been commented on by members. This is especially appreciated when things aren’t going exactly to plan. Through these years of membership Shirley has consistently supported Club activities through her involvement. Although Shirley is strong walker herself (usually at the front!) she is always affirming of members regardless of their walking ‘ability’ and can be relied upon for a positive outlook regardless of the situation.

The Wilson home at Valley Parade is—and has been—the venue for many Club events including more meetings than can be counted—and supper included which appears whenever the meeting needs it! In addition to the meetings, social functions have been regularly held here—including Christmas parties, photo nights, Cup Day ‘picnics’ (even indoors because of the weather!)

Despite the influx of people, Shirley is always very welcoming to all and seems to have a house with expandable walls.

Shirley's reply:

I feel very privileged to have received this Life Membership. I joined the CWCV in early or mid 1966 at age 20, having completed my three-year Teacher Training Course. I found that the members older than I was were all very accepting. Even if I had two heads, that wouldn't have been noticed.

In January 1967 13 of us walked the Overland track lead by Jim Hooper who had cerebral palsy. The slide night was at my family home and following that my father asked when was I going to have a party at home. He must have noticed that the other dozen people were 'well behaved', or conservative, and guessed the same for the other 187 members. So we had a party a few months later.

The 1968/69 ingoing and outgoing committee party was held at my home when I became Social Secretary. In mid 1969 I became Vice President but had to relinquish that role when I was granted a year's leave of absence for the year 1970. A New Years Eve Party was held at my home either December 1969 or 1970.

In 1971 I continued to ski during Winter weekends at OLOS on Buller and participate in CWCV bushwalks in finer weather.

My membership through to the present time has been always an enjoyable time.

~~~~~

### **Peter Wilson: Life Membership**

**Peter** joined the Catholic Walking Club of Victoria in July 1964 and has been a regular participant in the life of the Club since that time. Through the years Peter has walked many miles—and then kilometres—in Australia and other parts of the world.

Peter has served the Club in many roles on the committee of management through the years—including 11 years as walks' secretary! He has had a least two stints as President. During his time on committee, Peter has contributed to many discussions, decisions and actions taken by the Club for the benefit

of members. Peter's wisdom and calm demeanour are always a valuable part of any discussion.

He has represented the Club at meetings with organisations such as Bush Walking Victoria, and has been part of the organising committee when CWCV helped to organise and run the Federation weekend.

On walks, Peter is always available to assist others as needed and it has been remarked that he is particularly helpful to newcomers to the group—helping them feel at home in the group. He is especially supportive of leaders on walks and has a treasure trove of maps which he makes available to members.

Through the years, many and varied Club events have occurred at the Wilson home in Valley Parade where Peter and Shirely have hosted numerous meetings, Christmas functions, photo nights and even the occasional Cup Day party when the weather was a little inclement.

### **Peter's Reply:**

Thank you all for this honour. It means a great deal to me.

I joined the CWCV in 1963/1964; an 18 /19-year-old young man in need of some direction in life. In the CWCV I found role models and mentors who had a significant positive influence on my attitudes to life.

And, of course, an introduction to 'the bush'. Wonderful day, weekend and extended walks that opened my eyes to the beauty of the natural environment.

Along with that came lifelong friends—and a wife and family.

I owe the CWCV a great deal and have been, and continue to be, happy to serve the Club in areas within my ability.

Thank you for this recognition—it is very much appreciated.

Our deepest sympathy to Rose Thomas on the recent death of her sister, Teresa Bennett. Please pray for the repose of Teresa's soul, and for the Bennett and Thomas families.

# *Seawinds and O T Dam*

## *Sunday 25 May*

*Words and photo Peter Wilson*

**J**ust six of us, Caroline, Marianne, Bernadette, Shirley, Roy and yours truly gathered on a beautiful morning at Seawinds near Arthurs Seat for the start of this walk. Marianne was already warmed up and ready to go, having walked up the hill from her home in Dromana.

<https://www.discovermorningtonpeninsula.com.au/fascinatingfacts/seawinds.php> tells us that Seawinds is a 34-hectare property managed by Parks Victoria with magnificent views of Port Philip Bay, the Mornington and Bellarine Peninsulas. The first European owner of the property was George Chapman, a gardener working at Heronswood, Dromana, who acquired the property in 1896. Chapman was also involved in supplying timber that was transported to Melbourne by train from Red Hill. He built a homestead on the property and his children used a horse and dray to get to school each day in Dromana at the bottom of Arthurs Seat. Some of the older trees that dominate the garden were planted by him about 100 years ago.

Work on the gardens at Seawinds was started in 1946 by the then owners, Melbourne surgeon Sir Thomas Travers and Lady Travers. In 1960 the Travers acquired five sculptures by the famous artist William Ricketts that are now featured on a rock wall at the property. In 1975 the Victorian State Government purchased Seawinds from the Travers estate and made it part of the Arthurs Seat State Park.

The first part of our walk was through the Seawinds gardens including a couple of lookouts with views over Port Philip, a quick look at the William Ricketts sculptures and a cairn erected in memory of British navigator Matthew Flinders who climbed Arthur's Seat in April 1802. From there it was a short climb to, and through, the Arthurs Seat tourist area and on a track beside the Arthurs Seat Road to the start of a path down to our next objective – this involved a mostly steady descent for 2.5 kilometres to the O T Dam.

The dam was built in 1934 by the OT Cordial Company (later Kia Ora Cordials) by building a retaining wall across a steep gully. Its primary

purpose was to provide water for irrigating the company's passionfruit and other crops, including chilli peppers.

<https://australianfoodtimeline.com.au/o-t-cordial-forerunner-of-kia-ora/> provides a history of the company and its products.

The cordial was launched as Dixon's O.T. CHILLIE, by the company that eventually became Kia-Ora. Established in 1898 as the Prahran Ice and Aerated Water Company by John Dixon, the company boasted the latest equipment for producing soft drinks including soda water, lemonades, ginger ale, sarsaparilla, tonic water, ginger beer and cordials of all flavours.

An article in the *Prahran Telegraph* in 1909 extolled the virtues of the company's O T Cordial (made with chilli peppers), calling it "non-intoxicant, ...nutritive, sustaining, and pleasingly palatable" and claiming that it "would hit the taste of temperance people, moderate drinkers, and those who desired an invigorating addition to alcoholic liquor".

The drink was evidently the answer to many an everyday health issue, from flatulence to the common cold. However, it appeared to fade from view soon after the end of World War II. Its decline coincided with the increasing popularity of another pick-me-up drink: Coca-Cola.

The dam is in a lovely, secluded valley surrounded by eucalypt forest and so, was an ideal place for lunch before the trek back up the hill to the Arthurs Seat Road and from there via Pindara Road to our cars at Seawinds. A walk of about 10 kilometres in all.

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A good day was capped off by afternoon tea at Marianne's home in Dromana before the drive home. My thanks to my fellow walkers for good company on the day and to Marianne for her hospitality.



*Great views from Seawinds*

### *Litany of Praise and thanks, continued from page 13.*

For pioneers of our Club on whose shoulders we stand - *we give you thanks*

For times of silence, prayer and reflection - *we give you thanks*

For all who have nurtured our appreciation of nature - *we give you thanks*

For the wisdom and knowledge of our elders - *we give you thanks*

For the spirit of friendship and hospitality in our Club - *we give you thanks*

For shared laughter and sorrow - *we give you thanks*

For those who lead activities - *we give you thanks*

For our photographers - *we give you thanks*

For our writers - *we give you thanks*

For our Club - *we give you thanks*

# *Torquay to Bells Beach*

## *Sunday 1 June*

*Words and photo Peter Naughtin*

**W**alkers: Peter N (leader), Carole, Peter and Marg Cos, Barbara P, Bernadette, Rob, Caroline.

The walk began at the Torquay Surf Club Car Park after several cars were taken to Bells Beach for the return trip at the end of the walk. The first part of the walk from Torquay takes you along a broad walk up to Rocky Point where you get great views in both directions back to Torquay and then on to Jan Juc Beach. We then came down from the point to the main walking track which takes you along to the Jan Juc Life Saving Club Rooms. Here you also have splendid beach views to take in.

After coming back to the track, we continued on to the extensive viewing platform at the Jan Juc beach. In both directions there are splendid views of magnificent beaches and many surfers who were out surfing that sunny day on the first day of Winter. We stayed here for some time to enjoy this view and a number of us had never seen this section of the coast line before, which added to our enjoyment. The track took us further on to Bird Rock with more wonderful views.



*Enjoying one of the finest views along the Victorian coastline*

It was time for lunch after this stop and we went down to Jan Juc village and found some undercover tables at a local outdoor café for lunch as the sun was beaming down by this time of the day. After lunch we returned to the surf coast trail that took us on the final 3.4 km section of the walk. This took us 45 minutes and we arrived at our destination at Bells Beach South end. It was full of cars and we had been very lucky in the earlier trip there before the walk to get two car spots. So many surfers had come out on such a sunny day. The walk was about 8 km. All agreed it was a splendid walk on a part of the Surf Coast. Many of us could not remember if we had ever done this before. Because we did not have to walk too far it gave us the time to take in some of the finest views you can get along the Victorian coast line.

We returned to the start of the walk in two cars and moved on to an Italian café in Torquay where we had coffee.

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CWCV Privacy Policy

Those with eagle eyes may have noticed a new addition to the home page of the club website. (Drum roll, please!) Yes, it's the privacy policy of the club!

See <https://www.catholicwalkingclubvic.org.au/WP/wordpress/> under the heading Codes of Conduct, Code of Bushwalking Etiquette and CWCV Privacy Policy.

The policy explains the why, what, how etc., of personal information collected by the club from members. Why do we need a privacy policy? In the not-too-distant-future it will be a legislated requirement for the club to have one, but in any case, it's good to know that your privacy is important and security around it is taken seriously by the club.

Birrarung Marr and Botanic Gardens Walk

Wednesday 4 June

Words Carole Donnell, photo Margaret Cosgrave

*E*leven of us met on Princes Bridge on what was forecast to be a chilly day to take a closer look at the aboriginal art along Birrarung Marr and some hidden gems in the Botanic Gardens. We were walking the day after National Reconciliation Week, hence it was fitting to acknowledge, appreciate and celebrate the diversity of Victoria's indigenous culture.

As we walked across to Birrarung Marr we soon came to a new installation introducing one of the languages of the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung people. After pausing to listen we moved on to look closely at the large eel path that refers to a primary food source for the first nations people. Its body is made up of a variety of aboriginal patterns, some of which we saw repeated on the five metal shields representing the five main language groups. We veered off the main track to see a semicircle of large, carved stones. Subsequently I've learned they were ancestor stones placed to form a semi-circular performance area, a place where ceremonial and cultural practices can continue.

We walked to the Botanic Gardens via the Federation Bells, over the Swan St Bridge entering the Gardens via the City Gate with its wonderfully decorated gate celebrating trees, wrens and magpies. We paused there to look at the large variety of plants. Harry told us about some of the Western Australian natives in this area.

After a rest we explored Long Island passing some installations for the upcoming Lightscape Exhibition 2025 (20th June – 10th August). There was a lovely view across the lake to the gardens beyond. Then it was on to Fern Gully to view three meditation spaces. I had come across them a few years ago and was curious about their genesis. I'd inquired at the Information Centre where it was suggested I send an inquiry email. I received a reply from Andrew Laidlaw, who designed the three sacred gems, and we all learned that the three meditation gardens were woven with a personal story



Enjoying Winter sunshine in the Botanic Gardens

of loss and memory. Each garden has been donated by a person in memory of a family member/s who has died.

The GROTTO GARDEN was designed for Carolyn whose husband had died. His love was their property near the Grampians and the grotto was constructed with stones from their property. Andrew's email noted that 'Grottos are a part of the rustic nature of botanic gardens and have a deep connection to a spiritual journey.'

The BIRDS NEST was designed for Meg who shared a special love for birds with her aunt. The garden with its intertwined twigs envelops you like a bird's nest and has a seat designed like a chrysalis in the centre. The chrysalis faces a beautiful fig tree on which many epiphytic plants grow.

The MOSS GARDEN was designed for Charles who grieved for two family members in the one year. Around a well spring, symbol of life and depth, are three seats for the family and for us to sit and reflect.

Everyone appreciated discovering and learning about these tucked away treasures.

Most of us were overdressed as the sun shone and the wind stilled. It proved to be the perfect day to enjoy lunch sitting on the felled oak tree branches that once grew there.

We then thoroughly enjoyed a visit to the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden – magnificent banksias, bottle trees, a fountain, a stream, a sculpture and an active kitchen garden all designed to invite little people to climb, jump, crouch, crawl and revel in the natural world. For some of us it was a new discovery, for others a chance to recall time spent with grandchildren.

We returned to the station via St. Kilda Rd. After enjoying snacks and drinks at Bear Brass in Southbank we headed home. Thanks to Harry, Marg and Peter C, Tom, Bernard and his daughter Cathy, Rob, Barbara N, Vanna and Quintin for your genuine interest and enjoyment in making it a great day.

~~~~~

## *Vale Fred Hillas*

*Kerry Maher*

*E*arly members of the club and members who were acquainted with Fred Hillas in later years, were saddened to hear of his death on 12 July, at Nazareth House, East Camberwell. Fred would have been 93 years old on July 25.

Fred joined the club in 1953 when there were two meetings each month; a monthly general meeting and a social meeting. Fred soon became very active in debates at meetings, and as a walks leader. After a year or two, some of the foundation members became pre-occupied with other interests. As a result, there were arguments about whether non-active members had the right to speak at meetings; the constitution stated that active membership could not exceed 100 and non-active membership could not exceed five percent of the active membership. At this stage Fred, the hard-working secretary, debating eloquently, fought for, and had success in introducing reforms which abolished distinctions between different types of membership, and removed the maximum membership clause altogether.

Fred served as President in 1959-60 and 1960-61 when he conducted the monthly general meetings in a professional manner. He was a regular

contributor to *The Catholic Walker*, writing in a most entertaining and informative style.

What endeared Fred to his friends was the fact that he was the kindest and gentlest of men, a man of dignity who never had a bad word for others. Humble, disliking pretence, Fred went straight to the point, often with great eloquence.

Fred was an explorer who relished getting off the beaten track, whether it be in the Victorian and NSW high country or Tasmania. As a leader he instilled confidence in party members because he thoroughly researched all details relating to a trip, whether it be a day walk or a lengthy extended trip. His compass and map reading skills were extraordinary. On one occasion, when confronted with heavy fog on the Howitt Plains he took compass bearings and led his party to the Howitt Hut.

Fred's wife to be, Erica Hoglund, joined the club in 1956 and soon became an active, member, serving as a committee member, and then as vice-president. Fred and Erica married in 1962, and like many couples at the time, gradually curtailed their active club involvement as children arrived and other matters occupied their time. Erica and Fred were honoured to receive Life Membership for services rendered to the club, and have always shown interest in the club's progress, looking forward to reading *The Catholic Walker*.

We offer Erica and her family our sincerest condolences, trusting that memories of Fred will sustain them at this sad time. Fred's involvement in the club is entwined in its history. Fred will be remembered as a man who made a difference.

*This 1959 photo by Kerry Maher appears in the 70th Anniversary issue of The Catholic Walker. It shows Fred Hillas (right) at the Snowline Hotel, Harrietville, after a walk to Mt Feathertop.*





**THE CATHOLIC WALKING CLUB  
OF VICTORIA INC.**  
**Woiworung Country**  
**PO Box 476, Eltham VIC 3095**

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*The sticker on Tony's back reads:  
I'd rather be bushwalking*

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