

The *Catholic Walker*

October 2025

The Magazine of The Catholic Walking Club of Victoria Inc.



Newport Lakes

See page 29

Photo: Peter Naughtin

From the Editors

The Season of Creation (1 September to the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on 4 October) is drawing to a close. But our awe at the magnificent power of Nature, and our joy as we discover its beauties, continues, both in our walks and the pages of this issue. The item from our Archives speaks of the ferocious intensity of the wind on a N.Z. hike; numerous reports tell of fallen logs across the tracks, and the skiers describe the beauty of the high country in a good ski season.

Harry introduces us to a rare red flowering wattle, originally found by bushwalkers. Speaking of wattles, 2025 is a superb season for golden wattles, which gladdened our hearts recently as we drove and walked through the Otways on the Club Camp at Bimbi Park, Cape Otway. And scoping a walk in Bunyip National Park this week led us along a glorious golden corridor, with occasional splashes of other colours in early wildflowers.

For daily prayers and reflections for the Season of Creation, download the 'Season of Creation' app managed by the Queensland Churches' Environmental Network. Its free, and can be used anytime of the year.

Happy walking and reading,
Joan Kenny and Jan Wilkinson

Birthdays



October

5th Lily Adolphe
13th Julie Roberts, Rose Thomas
14. Maree Slater
19th Cathy Burman,
Malcom Merrey
22nd Corrie van den Bosch
26th Shirley Wilson

November

1st Vanna Walsh
5th Julian Conheady
14th Andrew Hazell
18th Jeannie White
24th Rob Giebels
25th Kerry Maher

From the President

W elcome all to the October 2025 edition of *The Catholic Walker*.

Since the last magazine progress has been made towards upgrading the CWCV website to allow the secure holding of appropriate records and the provision of a digital means to book on to walks. This will continue to move forward; I understand this will make our systems easier to use.

Giovanna Ford, BWV Secretary, is CWCV's liaison person. I have met with her and discussed numerous aspects of running a walking club, including recent changes to privacy and consent requirements that a club must be aware of, and how these may be achieved. This will require the updating of some of the club forms.

Thank you to the Walks Committee and all members who propose, lead and organise events for the club. Our programme has expanded to include many more weekday walks, rides and social events, thus giving us more opportunities to participate and catch up with fellow members.

A date for your diary: Saturday 13^t December 2025 – this is the date for our Christmas function; please note the change, a lunch gathering at the Wilsons'. More details to follow.

At the time of sending this report to the editors, we have just completed a five-night camp at Bimbi Park, Cape Otway. This was enjoyed by all with many varying day walks offered, as well as a short pack-carry for the more serious walkers. This camp provided all that the club wishes to provide including walks to suit all requirements and plenty of socialising and fun. It can only happen with support from members, organising, leading and attending – thanks to everyone involved.

I look forward to seeing you all out and about.

Malcom Merrey

From the Archives

New Zealand has been a favourite destination for overseas Club trips. From the archives of *The Catholic Walker* in the 2000s we have selected Roy Burns' account of the Tongariro Crossing (in NZ's North Island) in changing and, at times, terrifying conditions. Reproduced from the September 2007 issue.

Tongariro Crossing - a windy affair

Words and photos by Roy Burns

'It was a dark and stormy night ...' Strange way to start an article one may say using a phrase that Snoopy used in his attempt at writing a novel, but in part it sums up one of the most significant memories of a CWCV trip to New Zealand in March 2007. Seven members, Tom Buykx, Krystyna Derwinska, Ineen McIndoe, Allan Rose, Roy Burns and Tony and Doreen Tucker decided to do a two-week tour of the North and South Islands.

Our first destination was Whakapapa Village where we intended to spend four days doing day walks. One of the more challenging walks we intended to do was the Tongariro Crossing, which is a 17 km walk through volcanic terrain.

It was a beautiful sunny day as we drove towards Whakapapa Village with a few white wisps of white clouds about. Mt Ngauruhoe and Mt Tongariro presented such a magnificent sight that Krystyna suggested that we stop and take photos as we may not have an opportunity like that again. Taking her advice we pulled over and took some happy snaps with thoughts of sunny days ahead and splendid walks to be had.

At the village we checked in at reception. While we were making arrangements for our accommodation one of our members decided to check the weather details, as two members of our group were thinking about doing a three-day hike. The weather forecast was for rain during the time that they had intended to do their trip. After a long discussion, lasting about a second, they decided to do the day walks. As the weather forecast

indicated wet conditions, we decided that we should do the Tongariro Crossing as our first walk.

The morning found us up bright and early, ready to catch the bus. The day was slightly overcast with no indications of rain. We boarded the bus ready for our magical mystery tour (Babyboomers just can't let go of the 60s and 70s). The trip to the drop off point gave us opportunities to gaze upon the slopes of Mt Ngauruhoe and Mt Tongariro, and seeing such a sight, I was itching to hit the track. Finally we arrived at the starting point of the walk.

As we gathered at the day shelter we cast our eyes towards our intended path up the Mangatepopo Valley and the steep climb to the saddle between Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngauruhoe. Clouds drifted across the mountains obscuring our view of the mountain tops. We girded our loins for the walk ahead and the promise of magnificent sights of the Emerald and Blue Lakes and the experiences of walking along the edge of a volcanic crater and walking across a flat volcanic crater.

Walking up the Mangatepopo Valley was an enjoyable adventure, catching glimpses of the Mangatepopo stream cascading over rocks and forming small rock pools, and climbing over a succession of lava flows from Ngauruhoe. With breaks in the clouds we caught glimpses of Mt Ngauruhoe,



Walking through Mangatepopo Valley

scree slopes, and rocky outcrops so formed by nature that one is just struck by the beauty of the artistic work that nature sculptured.

Before the climb up the saddle some of us did a side trip to Soda Springs. At the springs there was a small rock face that was covered in mosses and lichen which were quite impressive with so many different colours of greens going from the dark greens to the limes. Only disappointment-no soda drinks were to be had at Soda Springs.

We returned back to the main path and started the climb up to the saddle. It was a steep climb with some challenging sections, well for me it was. As we climbed we came across volcanic rock formations that were in all manner of shapes and one could use their imagination to create images of people, animals or prehistoric creatures. Thoughts of prehistoric creatures came to mind as we neared the top of the saddle. A few rain drops could be felt so we soon had our Parkas on. As we neared the Mangatepopo Saddle we disappeared into the cloud and it felt like we had reached The Land that Time Forgot. Any moment I expected to hear the roar of a T-Rex but the sound I heard was more terrifying than a T-Rex, it was the sound of the wind. It slammed into me with ferocious intensity, driving rain horizontally, which felt like small spears being shot at me by pygmies.

A quick discussion was held and we decided to press on as we could see the track and hoped the cloud would lift. The wind intensified, the rain lashed at us. It felt like nature itself wanted to strip me bare, which normally I wouldn't mind but on this occasion—no way.

As we struggled along the Red Crater's edge we passed some walkers who had decided to return. They were only wearing shower jackets and they looked very wet. As they were young I thought about throwing one of them into a volcanic crater to see if their sacrifice would appease the gods, but I couldn't summon the strength-it was hard enough to keep oneself upright.

With the rain and wind lashing at our bodies we continued along the crater's edge. We came to a point where the track appeared to split. I took the bottom track but soon found the ground very slippery and abandoned the attempt and headed up to where I thought the main track was. Ineen had followed me (that was very trusting of her) thinking I was on the right track



Onwards, with the track disappearing into the mist and the wild weather that would hit us as we reached the top.

(obviously she doesn't know me, I'm hardly ever on the right track). She came across the same slippery section that I detoured around. She decided to give it a go by deploying the lizard technique—she was down on all fours. I was bemused by the technique but thought she might need a hand. Being a good Samaritan I offered her assistance which she thankfully declined. Her kind refusal gave me permission to quickly head off, leaving her behind on all fours being enveloped by rain and mist; thoughts of writing her obituary crossed my mind.

As the wind kept up its never ceasing attempt at trying to rip off my clothes, I started to feel a chill pass over my body. A wind chill factor had entered the equation, there was no safe place to stop and put on some more layers of clothing. The wind was so strong that I felt any attempt would run the risk of losing a jacket or some other item of clothing.

For a brief moment the cloud lifted and I could see Allan taking a photo of the lakes and Ineen (phew no need to write that obituary) and Krystyna were close by, I couldn't see Tony or Doreen. Krystyna, Ineen and I descended to a plateau where we came across a large rock which provided us with some shelter. We took the opportunity of putting on some more layers of clothing.

Allan soon joined us and it was decided that he would see how Tony and Doreen were handling the conditions while we continued on.

We walked across the plateau then started descending the other side of Tongariro. As we descended there were breaks in the cloud and we started to see a bit more of the landscape. We continued on and finally reached Ketetahi Hut where a few other walkers had taken shelter. We did the same, having something to eat while we waited for Allan, Tony and Doreen, who soon arrived. After our small break we continued our descent. Soon we were out of the wind, rain and cloud to where the track opens out onto a broad tussock-covered ridge where we had a magnificent view of Lake Rotoaira, Mt Pihanga and distant Lake Taupo.

The walk down to the end of the walk was quite pleasant, enjoying the views of a thermal area that can be seen from the track and walking through a forest that felt ancient and mysterious.

After we did our big walk we intended doing other smaller day walks around the Whakapapa Village area, but the rain fell, and it fell and kept on falling for the next three days. Being so wet we stayed in the cabin which could have been a problem as one may be in danger of coming down with cabin fever. To avoid that condition we decided to do some walks in the rain. I remember one little sojourn that I did with Krystyna, who was looking for an internet cafe, the rain was so heavy that it felt like one was wading through a river. I'm pretty sure if we hadn't left the Whakapapa Village we would have grown gills!

As we departed comments were made which reminded me of another time when it was stated 'I shall return'.

*[Editor: And he did return!
Roy and Krystyna completed
the Tongariro Crossing with
Peter N, Andrew D and Jan in
2019!]*

Photo: Peter Naughtin



Warramate Hills

Sunday 22 June

Words and photo Peter Naughtin

Leader: Peter Naughtin. Walkers: Tom, Bernard, Carole, Caroline, Ben (Visitor), Bernadette, Rose, Pauline and Derek (visitor).

This walk was a new one for most of the walkers, even Tom. The hills are near Gruyere, which is about eight km from Coldstream. We met at Coldstream at the Foodworks car park, and then proceeded by car to the start of the walk in the Warramate Hills.

The walk takes you along a road going up and down at times until you arrive at the start of the uphill climb. The climb was a good steady climb up for about 30 minutes on an excellent track. On the way up you have great views of the hills. We arrived at a viewing point over the Warburton Ranges and Mt Leonard in the distance. Peter decided on the preview that this was the place for lunch later on. The walk continues up a road for a while until you come to the turn that takes you to the communication tower. Caroline had



*Overcoming an obstacle such as a fallen tree
is no problem for these agile walkers.*

led this walk in the past and told us that there was not much of a view at this tower. So we then returned to the open clearing and stopped there to rest, have lunch and enjoy the scenery.

After lunch we returned down the hill and back on the track home, but turned onto another path that led us down to the Woori Yallock Creek. We followed this track for sometime until it returned to the main trail that we had taken going up. This led us back to the entry gate where the walk had started.

We returned to Coldstream and finished the day at the Coldstream Brewery where the leader had booked a table. A very nice venue for coffee, platters, cakes or sticky date pudding!

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## *Red Flowering Wattle* *Acacia leprosa* (Scarlet Blaze)



Recently a fellow train buff, who also has interests in bushwalking, botany, and birds, told me of a Red Flowering Wattle in Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens. I'd never heard of such a thing, so I had to check it out.

It's true: I also checked out the internet, and found that there is an interesting story with this plant.

Harry

According to the Royal Botanic Gardens website, you can see a Scarlet Blaze wattle near the Observatory Gate in the Melbourne Gardens.

*Photo: Harry Twining*

# *Fairfield Boat House to Studley Park Boat House*

## *Sunday 29 June*

*Words and photo Peter Naughtin*

**L**eaders: Peter Naughtin. Walkers: Tom, Bernard, Doreen, Carole, Maree, Bernadette, and Quintin.

We had planned to meet at the Fairfield Boat House car park. However, on arrival we came across hundreds of people and cyclists preparing to leave on a ride. No car places for parking. So we drove back to Studley Park to start the walk there. The track takes you across the Kane bridge over the Yarra and then you take a left turn and follow the wide track along the Yarra River. We stopped at the Deep Rock Swimming Hole and the interesting information board about the famous dive here in 1918 when Alick Wickham broke the world record when he dived from a tower on the cliff opposite and down 205 ft below into the Yarra River (62.7 m)! A crowd of 70, 000 people watched him do the dive. The track then took us down to Dights Falls where we stopped to watch the fast-moving water over the falls. The track then turns right to take you up to Fairfield Park and on to the boat house.

We had booked a table at the boat house and enjoyed our own lunches and items purchased at the café. Beautiful views there from the balcony looking across the Yarra River. It takes a while to get served there, but the food is good. We enjoyed a long lunch as we had plenty of time on our hands.

After lunch the leader took the walkers over the Pipe Bridge and to the track that we would have taken had we kept to our original plan. A decision was made not to return along the Yarra River to Studley Park because of the slippery track along the river. So we went back across the Pipe Bridge and returned the way we had come to Studley Park. By the time we arrived back at the Kane Bridge we had walked 10 km.



# *Bellbird Dell Circuit*

## *Sunday 6 July*

*Words and photo Derek Nicholas*

*T*his is a story of attrition! Eight people braved the early morning chill behind the Whitehorse Club in East Burwood for a 13 km walk through the wilds of East Burwood, Vermont South and Forest Hill. Only five reached the end, but all made it home safely, which is the important thing. The eight hardy souls were Pauline (leader), Derek, (reporter), Rose, Ben, Bernard, Quintin, Peter N and Malcom.

The walk was a mixture of street walking and natural reserves and included the delights of the lake system in the Tally Ho Business Park, where we were treated to wonderful reflections in the still morning air.

After dragging ourselves away from the reflections and successfully crossing Springvale Rd, we explored the architecture of Vermont South on our way to a scenic lookout (hidden behind the Whitehorse Recycling Centre), where we had a well-earned drinks break while admiring the views of the Police Academy and listening to the Motocross Club.

Having briefly left the concrete, it was now time to return to the concrete for a short time until we reached Bellbird Dell. Peter left us at this stage due to other commitments. Bellbird Dell is a lovely patch of bush filled with birdlife, (although I am yet to see a bellbird there), located at the end of the Healesville Freeway Reserve. After another drinks break, Ben and Bernard left us and the five remaining headed up along the freeway reserve, detouring briefly to the Jolimont Café for a well earned coffee.

Leaving the Jolimont Café we returned to the freeway reserve and continued to Strathdon House. This house is the last surviving farmhouse/orchard property in Whitehorse and is now run by Whitehorse Council as a community centre. We were given a quick tour by Jason, one of the staff, before heading back across Springvale Rd and looping back to the cars. The survivors at Strathdon were Derek, Pauline, Quintin, Malcom and Rose.





*The 'survivors' at Strathdon House*

## *New Member*

A warm welcome to Ben Jordan, who has joined his Dad ,Bernard, as a member of the Catholic Walking Club of Victoria. We look forward to your company on walks and bike rides, Ben!

## **Reminder**

A friendly reminder that CWCV membership fees for 2025-2026 should be paid by 30 September.



Thanks to those who have already renewed their subscription! Remember, membership includes receiving *The Catholic Walker* in print or online—don't miss receiving the December 2025 issue, which is the final issue in the 70th Anniversary of *The Catholic Walker* series.

# *Williamstown to Yarraville*

## *Wednesday 23 July*

*Peter Matheson, with a few additions from Joan K*

On a July Wednesday we walked from Williamstown Station to Yarraville Station, a bit over eight km. We met at 10.30am and, after greetings, headed off on our path. The area we walked through is rich in the early history of Melbourne and we stopped often to read information offered. John Batman arrived here and thought the area suitable for a settlement (it has grown somewhat since then). This is where early arrivals of European settlers stepped ashore, and later, the influx of people from all over, bound for the goldfields of Ballarat and Bendigo. The Bunurong people would have been there to 'greet' them.

Following the coast, we came to an old Time Ball Tower, which in times past offered precise time each day at 1 pm to ships in the bay, needed for longitude calculations.

With ten of us it was difficult to find a place to sit for morning tea, so some seemed happy to remain standing. There were excellent views across the bay to the CBD and to the many yachts belonging to the local yacht club. Some of the group availed themselves of a coffee.

Heading off we found the door of the local Anglican church (Holy Trinity) open, so we went in for a look. This dates from 1874 and many up-market weddings occur here. One of us offered the comment that, except for the 'red' candle burning up on the altar, it could have been a Catholic church.

Continuing along the shore of Hobsons Bay we came to Sandy Point Nature Reserve, a fenced-off area which provides a haven for native plants and animals. *The reserve was preserved originally for its bird habitat values, with resident superb blue-fairy wrens. Along the mud flats, resident and migratory shorebirds visit here with red-capped plovers year-round and sharp-tailed sandpipers seasonally, for example. These important feeding areas are crucial to the long-term survival of shorebirds across the East Asian - Australasian flyway.* See the website for Sandy Point Nature Reserve - Hobsons Bay.

Further along the coast we passed an area where mangroves have been successfully re-established.

For ‘history buffs’ there are memorials to victims of the Irish Famine of 1845-1852, and in particular to the arrival in 1858 of 191 Irish girls and young women on *The Lady Kennaway*, as part of ‘*the Pauper Immigration Scheme between 1848 and 1850 to send female Irish teens to Australia*’. See the website for *Irish Famine Memorial | Monument Australia*.

Moving on, we passed the Newport Power Station and Scienceworks, the latter built on the site of an old sewage pumping station. Nearing Westgate Bridge, we found seating for a late lunch, and then while walking under the bridge, paused to read the plaque honouring those who died in the collapse of a section of the bridge in October 1970.

Harry then led us on a nice off-the-main streets route to Yarraville village, where we found a coffee shop large enough to cater for the ten of us, close to the station.

Ample walking and reading for this one day. My thanks to those who made their way across to the west of Melbourne to join me in this walk: Harry, Quintin, Vanna, Joan, Maree, Carole, Peter and Marg Cos and Theresa.

*Editor: the day after our visit, two whales were spotted swimming under the Westgate Bridge!*

*Exploring  
Williamstown's history  
near the Time Ball  
Tower.  
Photo: Peter Cosgrave*





# *A pleasant walk along two rivers*

## *Sunday 27 July*

*Words Tom Buykx, photo Marg Cosgrave*

**I**n the newspaper the weather forecast for this Sunday had the heading 'Showers,' then went on 'Cloudy. Very high chance of showers.' But that did not stop one handful of members (Bernadette, Caroline, Marg and Peter Cos, and yours truly) from meeting on the train in Heidelberg to go to Greensborough, to start this walk along the Plenty and Yarra Rivers.

It was very overcast, and we were dressed in anticipation of the forecast 'Very high chance...' when, from the station, we walked down to the Plenty River track, where it goes under the railway line. Here I always like to point out how high the river's water level came up one day in October 1967, when I lived nearby. Across the Plenty from the track, the road under the line was then under more than three feet of water, and that was my road to the station to go to work. So, a scramble up onto the embankment and across the line, and I got to work ok. Today the water level, though up a bit, was at least some three or four metres lower.

The Plenty River Trail follows the river down on one side or the other of it. Some stretches are older bitumen, some are newer concrete, and the link to the Main Yarra Trail is gravelly. The various sportsgrounds along the trail were busy with junior footballers. The vegetation is quite varied. There are old river red gums and other eucalypts, the wattles now will soon burst into their golden glory. There are many introduced deciduous and other trees and plants; in one spot there are several bunya pines! Elsewhere you see where tree planting has been done, but, sorry, it has not been very successful. We saw and heard plenty of birdlife, flocks of cockatoos in open grassy areas, ducks in and near the river, parrots in hollows in the trees. The most surprising sighting was of a kangaroo, high up on a steep riverbank, and not far from houses.

Beside the Heidelberg Golf Club, the trail moves away from the Plenty River to avoid the Rosanna Golf Club which straddles it further downstream. A long climb begins into an open park-like area managed by Parks Victoria. On



*Surveying the site of the recent tree fall*

the left of the now gravelly track is a pony club. We spotted a good picnic table not far off the track; lunch was agreed on. Later, gaining more height, we had good views into the Yarra Valley, to the high-rises and hospitals in Heidelberg, to the skyscrapers in the City. And then we had an obstacle on the track: a big tree had come down across it, since my survey four days earlier. But we know how to deal with these things and get over them more easily than the bike riders with their two-wheelers.

A steep-ish descent got us to the Main Yarra Trail and our way to Heidelberg. We took the shortcut through the Wetlands, which were really not too wet at all. Then it was back to concrete paths, shared with many riders and runners, passing football ovals with much activity. We left the Trail to go up Burgundy Street to finish our walk in the usual way, then made our way to the station for cars or train home.





*At the Yea end of the Cheviot Tunnel on the Molesworth to Yea Walk (See pages 26-27)  
 Peter R, Barbara P, Harry, Peter Cos, Brian, Doreen, Roy, Maree, Krystyna and Boris, Marg Cos, Carole, Bernadette and Joan.  
 The entrance at the Molesworth end of the tunnel can be glimpsed behind Maree.  
 Photo: Peter Naughtin*



# *Domino Trail*

## *Sunday 3 August*

*Words and photo Peter Naughtin*

**L**eader: Rose. Walkers: Tom, Peter N, Rosa, Bernadette, Carole, Maree, Margaret and Peter Cos, Caroline, Gillian, Bernard and Ben.

The walkers met at Trentham at the old railway station. The Domino Trail is a straight walking trail of six km from the old station to Lyonville. The railway line was used from 1880 for many decades, transporting cut timber from the many saw mills in the area and also local produce. It was also used for passenger transport.

We walked the trail and arrived in Lyonville and stopped at a local community hall for lunch. The return walk was along the same trail and we arrived back at the old station at about 2.00pm. This was a 12 km walk.

Rose then suggested that we could travel a short distance to the Trentham Falls. Some took up this offer and drove to the Falls. There is a short walk down to a viewing point where you see the splendour of the Falls, which drop about 30 metres into the valley below. We then returned to where the rest of



*Gillian, Rose and Caroline at Trentham Falls*

the walkers had gathered at the Pig and Whistle Hotel out of Trentham for drinks. The hotel was packed with many locals as it has a very good reputation. We were served fairly quickly and enjoyed drinks, cakes and desserts. The Pig and Whistle was a good find, with plenty of atmosphere and a country pub feel about it.

Many of us took the road back to Melbourne via Woodend and the Calder Highway. It was a great walk and afternoon at the pub. This is always a popular walk. Trentham is a thriving country town and a popular tourist centre.



Searching through the Archives of *The Catholic Walker*, the Editors found this unsigned cartoon in a number of issues. Do you remember seeing this before? And do you know whose work this is? If so, please tell us!

# *Falls Creek Ski Trips*

## *August*

*Words Adrian Jones and Jan Wilkinson, photos Jan Wilkinson*

**D**ue to good snow falls and favourable conditions, we were fortunate this year to enjoy not one, but two, trips to Falls Creek to enjoy cross country skiing. Adrian explains how the trips unfolded.

### TRIP ONE: August 4–11:

For over a decade our annual ski week was based at Howmans Gap Alpine Discovery Camp, with day trips to the High Plains. This year we booked Tivoli Ski Club at Falls Creek from Monday to Friday- great facilities, reasonably priced and we could step out of the lodge onto skis! Our team was to be Adrian, Jan, Sophie and Phil. Unfortunately, Phil was ill at the last minute and couldn't attend.



*Sophie, Jan and Adrian, all set to enjoy ideal ski conditions*

Monday was a travel day, Sophie by bus and the rest by 4WD. The final part of the day included two trips on foot from the carpark to the lodge with heavy packs (340 steps x 2).

The snow was consistent throughout the week: the one metre base was unusually solid, with a thin layer of soft snow on top (perfect for us). Any day you could walk anywhere without sinking in. Even on the sunny days it took until about 10.00am for any snow thaw and then by 3.00pm this was freezing again. The sun had little intensity. All trails were groomed even as far as Heathy Spur or Pretty Valley Hut and also the grooming took care of most morning ice (again, perfect for us).

Tuesday: saw excellent snow but an average day- a little windy and overcast. After a late start, we split up. Some circumnavigating the aqueduct, some down to the Dam Wall via the Nordic Bowl then around to Sun Valley and on to the Pretty Valley (McKay) Rd, with lunch at Windy Corner, before an early finish.

Wednesday: started with heavy sleet then continuous rain, which restricted our movements. We went over the dam wall but turned back to attack the Pretty Valley/McKay Rd. Lunch back at the lodge and for some, an afternoon of playing table tennis there.

Thursday: our prayers were all answered! Brilliant sunshine, no wind and fresh well-groomed snow, and that continued for the next four days! Jan and Adrian went up to the start of the McKay Loop, watching a fleet of 8 Police/SES skidoos and then another 10 skidoos with tourists, then turned back and skied to Watchbed Creek, joining Sophie for lunch at the dam wall. Sophie had spent the morning skiing to Watchbed Creek.

Friday: Sophie caught the morning bus back to Melbourne and Adrian and Jan skied again out to Watchbed Creek then back to the lodge to pack up and retrace our steps (340 x 2) down the stairs with our gear to the car before joining the Geelong Bushies (June, Joan, Naomi, Rosemary, Chris and Paul) at Howmans Gap until Monday.

Saturday: saw the party split with the women joining the 'Ski de Femme', a morning of lessons and activities, designed to encourage women to cross-country ski. The men started to ski to Watchbed Creek, but Chris tore a hammy and was taken by the ski patrol to the medical centre. Limited facilities and more serious cases, meant some quick painkillers and a bandage to strap his leg, rather than a four hour wait to see a doctor. The afternoon saw some practising skate skiing and others heading out towards Watchbed Creek and back again.

Sunday: the more intrepid party members went up the Paralyser (Big River Firetrail) and across Heathy Spur in perfect conditions. Approximately 17 kms for the day. The rest of us skied out to Watchbed Creek.

Monday: travelled home.



### TRIP TWO: August 24-28:

After the five days of perfect weather and excellent snow on our first August trip, and with 90cm of snow remaining and a reasonable forecast, what else could we do, but return! Jan, visitor Joan, and Adrian travelled up to Falls Creek on the Sunday, with the day ending sprinting up the usual 340 x 2 steps with our gear.

Monday: we were greeted with similar conditions to the previous trip- an unusually firm base with a small amount of soft snow on top, and a perfect sunny day! Jan and Joan skied up the Paralyser and out to Edmonson Hut for lunch before returning to Falls Creek via Heathy Spur. 22kms for the day. Adrian did the route to Watchbed Creek several times, (with good snow cover on the dam wall). We came across a well-known para-Olympian, Matthew Brumby, in training for the winter Olympics. Propelled only by his arms, he was single poling up slopes at twice my speed, and I was double poling!! The tracks were almost deserted. The locals said a lot of skiers were “burnt” last year with the season collapsing mid-August, so haven't re-booked despite the excellent snow.

Tuesday: we had a shocking forecast of heavy rain and damaging winds after lunch. However, the front didn't arrive until the evening. Adrian skied to



*Visitor Joan enjoying lunch in the sun outside Edmonson Hut*

Watchbed Creek (repeatedly), Jan practised skate skiing in the Nordic Bowl and Horseyard Loop, and Joan skied Pretty Valley/McKay Road. Rocky Valley Dam had dropped dramatically, with the tower almost dry and Islands appearing! The front finally arrived after dark with rain all night.

Wednesday: didn't look promising with again a forecast of rain and cold and damaging winds. However, pleasingly it started snowing instead! Jan and Joan skied the Pretty Valley/McKay Road twice on fresh snow. Adrian did his 9<sup>th</sup> trip to Watchbed Creek in bleak, very windy conditions with poor visibility. Not another skier was sighted.

#### Thursday

Travelled home. All in all, a couple of very enjoyable trips to Falls Creek with some of the best skiing conditions we have seen for a few years now.



*Please read this  
very important notice!*

**H**ere's a scary thought: what if you injured yourself on a club activity only to discover you were not covered by the club insurance policy? Ouch! Well, that would be the case if you have not signed at least once a year a copy of the club Acknowledgement of Risk (AoR) form and returned it to the membership secretary.

Gone are the days when paying your subs each year meant that you could assume you were covered by insurance. Each year at the time of membership renewal, a copy of the AoR is sent to you and it's vitally important that you sign it and return it to the membership secretary, Bernie O'Shea. This can be done by scanning the signed form and emailing it to [bjosh@aussiebb.com.au](mailto:bjosh@aussiebb.com.au) or you can send it to the club mailbox: PO Box 476, Eltham, Vic, 3095. If you have misplaced the AoR form recently sent to you for signing, you can contact Bernie either via the above email address, or his phone: 0417358569 to have him send you another one via email or post.

Without the club having that signed form from you, you are not covered under the club insurance policy. And that would only add insult to injury!

*Jan Wilkinson, for the CWCV Committee*

# *Great Victorian Rail Trail*

## *Molesworth to Yea Options*

### *Sunday 10 August*

*Joan Kenny*

*T*he logistics of this walk were formidable. Leader Bernadett Madden offered four options: Molesworth to Yea via the Great Victorian Rail Trail (GVRT)- 17 kms; Molesworth to Frogpond Rd via GVRT- 12 kms; Molesworth to the Cheviot Tunnel via GVRT- 7 kms, and Frogpond Rd to Yea via GVRT- 5 kms. As all options followed the GVRT in one direction, shuffles of walkers and cars necessitated cars being left in four locations.

The GVRT climbs fairly steeply from Molesworth before settling in to a gradual steady ascent to the Cheviot Tunnel, constructed in 1889 for trains to pass through the Black Range midway between Molesworth and Yea. This 201-metre engineering feat was built out of handmade bricks.

On Saturday afternoon Bernadette emailed detailed instructions to participants, explaining where cars were to be located, walkers deposited and picked up etc. It seemed evident that Bernadette had employed an Excel spreadsheet to plan the movements of 15 walkers, one dog, and half a dozen cars for three options (there were no takers for option 4).

When we met at the former Yea Railway Station on Sunday morning, Bernadette was employing the spreadsheet located in her brain, recalculating car manoeuvres to accommodate extra walkers added to the list after Plan A had been circulated.

Two 'long distance' walkers, Corrie and Gillian, set off first from Molesworth in light fog, followed an hour or so later by another 13 walkers and Boris the dog.

Gradually fog cleared to reveal a landscape of rolling green hills, with sheep grazing to the left and cattle to the right of the trail. A new feature of the GVRT is a series of scar trees which, carver Mick Harding explains, symbolise

the relationship of the Taungurung people to the Warring (Goulburn River) and its associated rivers, creeks and Ngarrak (Mountains).

After elevenes the '12 km walkers' settled in to their walking pace, promising to wait for the '7 km amblers' on the Yea side of the tunnel, the spot for lunch and a group photo opportunity. *See the photo on pages 18-19.*

The Cheviot Tunnel is apparently the longest rail trail tunnel in Victoria. It has no bends. From the moment one passes through one horseshoe-shaped entrance, 'the light at the end of the tunnel' beckons one forward. The quality of the brickwork in the barrel-shaped tunnel is impressive.

After lunch the 7 km amblers departed by car to meet up with Tony T (who had spent the day in Yea) at a bakery in town, while the 12 km walkers continued downhill to the cars located at Frogpond Rd. Then followed the retrieval of the cars back at Molesworth. Bernadette's planning genius was revealed once again, with no misplaced cars or walkers (or dog). Then Corrie and Gillian joined us at the bakery, looking fresh after their 17 km walk from Molesworth.

This year's walk along the GVRT replaced the annual 'Yarck to Yea' fundraiser for projects supported through the Highways and Byways (H&B) Foundation Small Grants Program. H&B was a not-for-profit set up by Missionary Sisters of Service to support projects in many parts of Australia which benefit disadvantaged people from all age groups. H&B is now managed by 'Mary MacKillop Today Highways and Byways Small Grants Program'. Although the Yarck to Yea fundraiser is no longer being held, members of the CWCV who have supported that event since 2015 expressed a wish to continue to support projects in the program. Donations were collected and passed on to Bernadette who forwarded the funds to Mary MacKillop Today, attaching a note explaining the source... Bernadette observed 'I'm not sure if they get many donations from walking clubs! I received a very nice acknowledgement back from them.'

Thanks, Bernadette for planning and leading the various Molesworth to Yea walks, and, to cap off that superb organisation, for putting in a successful request for a beautiful sunny Winter's day!

# *Gembrook-Fern Tree Track*

*Sunday 17 August*

*Words Peter Naughtin, photo Roy Burns*

**L**eaders Peter N. Walkers: Bernadette, Carole, Theresa, Quintin, Doug and Anne, Corrie, Caroline, Roy, Krystyna and Marianne.

This walk began at the Mortimer Picnic Ground about five km outside of Gembrook. The walk is a circuit walk along a number of trails through the forests of the area. The walk takes you through beautiful bushland, ferns and wattle starting to appear after the winter to show that Spring is on the way. We started on the Ferres Track from the picnic ground and walked about three km to an unsealed road. We walked down the road for about 1.6km to a sign that shows the Nichols Hut track. We walked along this track arriving at a junction. Peter explained that he had decided that we would not take the steep track up to the Four Brothers Rocks via the Nichols Hut Track because of the difficulty of the track, as he had discovered from other walkers on the preview. We stopped here for elevenses.

We took a right turn along the Fern Tree Track which started to gradually climb up for some time. We came to Link Road. The next section of the walk was a steep climb for 25 minutes. It was slippery, but we had been lucky to



*Mud, mud, glorious mud*

avoid the rain overnight and that morning. We all got to the top of the track and stopped there for lunch. This was also the highest point on the walk.

The return track is named the Steege Track and was a wide and good walking track that took us on a gradual descent to the road. I think our climbing and descent over the whole walk was around 300 metres. So, we did well with both the climbing up and descending which was gradual both ways, apart from just one steep section. We passed many tree ferns and the wattle was coming out which was great to see. On arrival at the road, we had a final section of the walking track to complete, back to Mortimer Reserve Car Park. We returned to Gembrook and went to Spencer's Café for cake and coffee, a favourite café each time we walk in Gembrook, and we were on the way home by 3.00pm. A most enjoyable walk.

## *Newport Lakes*

### *Wednesday 6 August*

*Words Peter Naughtin, photo Theresa Thomas*

**L**eaders Peter Naughtin. Walkers, Barbara N, Peter and Marg, Quintin, Theresa, Vanna, Rob, Tom, Lorraine, Doug and Anne.

This was an interesting new walk for the club at Newport Lakes. Barbara N had tipped Peter off about this walk, close to the city. We met at Newport Station and walked 1km through Newport to the Lakes sign, then into the entrance. There was an excellent information board at the entry that showed the outline of the lakes. The area has a long history that goes back to the 1860s when it was used as a quarry for 100 years for constructions, and also ballast in ships returning to England. It was then used as a tip from the 1960s. Finally, local environment groups convinced the council and the government to convert the area into a nature reserve. Over the last few decades this has been done with many volunteers and one local mayor, whose plaque we saw and who contributed so much to the project.

We took the trail that takes you around the lake. Peter then diverted the group to the stepping stones across the centre of the lake. It was a great

experience to be able to walk across large, well-constructed stones to the far side of the lake. From there we took the track around the top of the lake for great views across it. We walked back down to the stepping stones, and crossed them again to the western side of the lake. The track weaved back to the car park. It is not a long walk, but it was wonderful to see the efforts made to restore so much native vegetation and provide such a wonderful recreation area for the local people of Newport. Another feature of the area is the extensive parkland near the lake area that can be used for a variety of sporting and recreational purposes.

We walked back to Newport Station and travelled on the train to Williamstown. There is a short walk from the station to the town where Peter had found a good café on his preview for lunch. We all bought lunch there and sat outside under cover with gas heaters.

Some of the walkers decided to return to the station and home. Another group walked the 2 km around the bay to the Williamstown Beach Station and took the train from there into the city.

People were very pleased with the walk in a new area, close to the city with a chance to see new inner-city environments created for the people of Newport and others who visit the lakes.



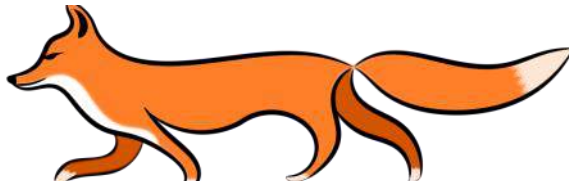
*Stepping out on stepping stones*



## *Feral animals*

*A*t the recent club base camp at Bimbi Park conversation arose about the sighting of feral animals, such as a cat spied on one of the walks. There is a website (and associated app) at which sightings, or evidence, of pest animals can be reported: <https://www.feralscan.org.au/>

FeralScan is a free community resource and is easy to use. FeralScan says that what you report may be viewed by Government agencies and Biosecurity authorities to help guide future pest management programs. And that would be worthwhile!



*Christmas Party  
Lunchtime, Saturday  
13 December*



Same place as previous years—  
the Wilsons  
New time—lunchtime!

More details in the December issue, and by email.



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

**Woiworung Country  
PO Box 476, Eltham VIC 3095**

Editors: Joan Kenny and Janet Wilkinson

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*Snow gums around Edmonson Hut  
Photo Jan Wilkinson*

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