

# The Mitchell Walker

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A membership application form is on page 5.

Issue 101

March 2023

Mitchell Walking Group is a program of Broadford Living & Learning Centre inc. 158-160 High St, Broadford 3658

*Thanks to Karen and Mary for the Mt Charlie report and photos, and to Mary and Tony for the Rubicon report and photos. Also special thanks to the leaders who made the walks possible. (Ed)*

## **Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup> 2023 – Mt. Charlie.**

On Sunday March 5, Mary, Paul, Karen Pia, John B. and John C. left Mitchell Shire to conquer Mt Charlie. An earlier attempt planned in 2022 had been thwarted by the November floods, but with a forecast for fine weather, there seemed to be nothing to stop us this time. We travelled to Lancefield, then turned down towards Romsey. After passing through Romsey, we drove along a series of quiet roads leading to the Mt Charlie Flora Reserve. This part of the journey took us through rolling hills where farmland was interspersed with patches of forest. It was a very pretty area that seemed to be kept secret from the crowds that frequent the main tourist areas in the Macedon Ranges.

At the base of Mt Charlie, we were surrounded by dry eucalypt forest with lots of small grass trees. Some of the eucalypts still showed signs of the Ash Wednesday fires forty years earlier, while others nearby seemed to have been completely untouched. At this stage we could stop and take a good

look at the vegetation as we were moving along a fairly open trail. Then as the slope became steeper, there was still a nice open trail, but it was on the other side of a fence with a sign saying that trespassers would be prosecuted. This meant that we had to

resign ourselves to 'bush-bashing' up the mountain. We fought our way uphill past more signs referring to prosecution and a suspended sheet of metal with KEEP OUT painted in capitals just in case we hadn't got the point. The forest that was initially fairly open, changed into one with a dense understory of hakeas. These hakeas were very different to the pretty Pin-cushion Hakea that is common in many suburban gardens. They were the sort of hakea with the rigid needle-like leaves, well known for the ease at which they can pierce the human skin. Every movement of a branch by one walker created the opportunity for the plant to maliciously stab the next walker following. The increase in the density of these plants seemed to be directly proportional to the increasing steepness of the slope. By the time we reached the summit, John B was bleeding from every limb. Miraculously, Pia, who was carrying the smallest pack, seemed to be the best equipped walker as she produced a small bottle of antiseptic and tended to John B's wounds.

We had lunch at the summit and we could see some good views between the trees. This seemed to contradict some of the reviews online that

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referred to zero views at the top, but there could be some confusion about where the summit actually is because we found a second cairn a bit further down the slope on the way back. Overall, the descent was much easier, not only because it was downhill but because there was more of a track and there were far fewer hakeas.

To celebrate the achievement of reaching the summit, we stopped off at Lancefield for refreshments. According to Paul's technology, we had covered 8 km but of course once the 'Hakea/Incline Factor' is applied, that probably translates to about 14 km. Thanks should go to Paul for introducing us to a special, but little-known area that is so close to home.

(Report by Karen)

### ***Rubicon walks. Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March to Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March.***

*(Walkers from Mitchell and Echuca/Moama bushwalking groups came together for this shared weekend away. From Mitchell Bushwalking Group there was Paul, Mary, Yvonne, Tony, and Sue)*

**Friday:** Early on Friday, Paul and Mary travelled over to Thornton together, and then onto Rubicon to make sure that the walks were open and to orientate themselves with the beginning of the walks. Some big logs had been cleared off the road, to their great relief.

They then went back to their campsite at Thornton and set up their tents along the picturesque Goulburn River, with the delightful tinkle of the running water; the river seemed to have quite a current behind it. While this is a lovely sound during the day, it's a bit hard to turn down the volume during the night, and of course the running water does wonders for the bladder!

We had a delicious meal at the Rubicon Hotel; they were very busy, and apart from Paul who had a mix-up with his meal, all went well. It was fun catching up with old friends and meeting so many new bushwalkers from Echuca/Moama Bushwalking Club.

**Saturday:** On Saturday, the five members of our group teamed up with 14 walkers from the Echuca/Moama Walking Club, to explore the trails of the Rubicon Valley Historical Area. The weather was exceptional, starting with a crisp morning and developing into a bright sunny day with a light breeze- ideal hiking conditions!

Today's walk was the Rubicon Heritage Walk, skilfully lead by Paul from our Mitchell group, using the All-Trails App. on his phone.

Those choosing to stay in hotel accommodation at Thornton, drove 30 km to the starting point of the walk where everyone met up. Cars were parked and after a briefing from Paul they walked several kilometres south, initially on an unnamed forestry track, through almost perfectly straight, Mountain Ash trees. On the way, the group came across an old tramway trestle bridge which became a rest spot, and photo opportunity for all.

The next part of the walk took us along the Rubicon Historical tramway walking trail. Many of the steel rails could still be seen, evidence of past logging and with some old timbers placed across the aqueduct next to the path to facilitate loading.

After a short trek along the flat we reached the Rubicon Dam. The Rubicon Dam is a 64-metre concrete-arch dam on the Rubicon River. Water flows in an aqueduct for 3.4 km. to the Royston Power Station. This, and other water



A morning briefing by Paul



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from the Royston River then travels a further 5.4 km by aqueduct to the forebay above the Rubicon Power Station.

Many photographs were taken here, and it was a perfect spot for morning tea. We were grateful to Colleen from the Echuca/Moama group who produced a delicious homemade buttered date loaf, which she generously shared with the group.

The next part of the walk was back along the tramway and aqueduct, all the way to the Royston Power Station, mentioned earlier. Some in the party inspected the structure to find it's now owned by AGL Energy, but not currently in operation. Nearby was the SEC sawmill and camp, a part

of the Rubicon Hydro-electric Scheme, which commenced in 1922 and finished in 1928. It was the first state-owned hydroelectric scheme to generate electricity on mainland Australia and amongst the first in the world to be remotely controlled. For the first ten years of its operation, it supplied almost 17% of the electricity generated by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria. It is now owned and operated by AGL Energy and contributes approximately 0.02% of Victoria's energy supply.



The next part of the walk continued along the aqueduct and tramway a few hundred meters to a fairly modern, curved walking bridge which crosses a tributary of the Rubicon River. This was an ideal viewing area and dry sitting-spot, to have lunch and fellowship. Some walkers took a short cut back to the cars from near here.

The next section of the walk is known as either Rubicon Historical tramway walking trail or the SEC tramway, and from here it's 5.4 kilometres to the Rubicon Power Station forebay, as mentioned above.

The forebay is where we dumped our packs and went for a closer look. The aqueduct finishes there, and the Penstock (or race-pipe) runs steeply down a 443m drop, over 1305 metres, to the Rubicon Power Station,

which houses two 6,200 hp horizontal single-jet generators.

Interestingly, there were the remnants of the tramway's infrastructure, going down the same hill beside the pipeline, with cables, pulleys, and even an old tram to be seen. Some of us had a good look in what seemed to be, the untouched winch-house for the trams.

The last section of Saturday's walk was on a vehicular track back to the cars, with most of the remaining people in the group having walked about 21 km. Thanks to an early start, we were able to get back to the Thornton Hotel in time for late afternoon drinks and an evening meal. I'm sure all would agree that it was a very enjoyable walk.

**Sunday:** On Sunday we walked to Rubicon Falls, past the power station, and then on to the Upper Rubicon Dam. The road was a 4-wheel-drive track and was easy walking, but with a gentle constant uphill climb. The falls were running well, and we had a lovely morning tea beside the Rubicon River. There were many logs to climb over, but it was worth it.

Echuca/Moama Club then went on to do the Cicada Walk, while Paul, Mary and the others headed for home. It was a great weekend, and it will be a great place to revisit. Highly recommended!

*(Friday and Sunday's report by Mary Adams. Saturday's walk report by Tony Cuthbert.)*



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### **UPCOMING WALKS.**

**Sunday 16th April. Anderson's Gardens and White Elephant Gully.** Leader Bec. Paul to navigate. More details soon.

**Sunday 30th April. Fryerstown to Castlemaine.** Mary and Paul to lead this walk of approximately 10 km. More later.

**Sunday 14th May. Mothers' Day.** No walk.

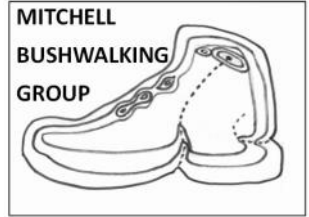
**Sunday 28th May. Mt Hickey from Davis Rd. Broadford.** Leaders Fran and Paul. More later.

*(John Brissett. Editor)*

**\*\*\* See Membership application form on the next page.**

# Mitchell Bushwalking Group

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



<i>Contact details may be made available to leaders for the purpose of organising trips.</i>			
Name:	Year born:		
Email:			
Postal Address:			
Phone:	Home:	Mobile:	Work:
Emergency Contact:	Name:	Mobile:	
Do you hold a Level 2 First Aid Certificate? Y / N		Date of qualification:	
Brief description of bushwalking/outdoor experience:			

**Acknowledgement of Risk – Please read and sign (all members over 18 years must sign)**

I am aware that my voluntary participation in any activity of this club may expose me to risks that could lead to injury, illness or death, or to loss of, or damage to, my property. These risks include, but are not limited to, slippery and/or uneven rocks, dislodged rocks, cliffs, exposure to weather and whiteout conditions, falling and hypothermia.

To minimize these risks I will endeavour to:

- Ensure that any activity I participate in is within my capabilities;
- Carry appropriate food, water and equipment for the activity;
- Advise the leader if I am taking any medication, or have any physical or other limitation which might affect my participation; and
- Make every effort to remain with the group during the activity and accept the instructions of the leader.

*I have read and understood these requirements and have considered the risks before choosing to sign this Acknowledgement of Risk. I accept that in signing this form I will take responsibility for my own actions.*

Name:	Signature:	Date:
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<b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b>	Receipt No:	Database updated Date:
<b>Membership No:</b>	Receipt issued Date:	Email notification sent Date:

The club membership year is 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 to 31st July 2023. New members May–August pay half the annual subscription. Annual membership, which covers insurance through Bushwalking Victoria, is **currently \$35.00**. For further information please email: [mitchellwalksgroup@gmail.com](mailto:mitchellwalksgroup@gmail.com)

\* This form could be posted with a cheque to **Secretary, Mitchell Bushwalking Group, 3 Hibiscus Court, Kilmore, 3764** OR Scanned and sent electronically to [mitchellwalksgroup@gmail.com](mailto:mitchellwalksgroup@gmail.com) The membership fee could be paid via bank transfer to **Mitchell Bushwalking Group** at Bendigo Bank. The BSB number is **633-000** Account number: **160294047** Please write your surname in the **"Details"** section.