

The Mitchell Walker

Upcoming walks on page 5.

A membership application form is on page 4.

Issue 108

October 2023

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

There are 2 Sunday day-walks in this edition. Also a mid-week snow camp for a small group of our members and the big Federation Walks weekend. The Federation Walks Weekend is an annual event at which walkers from all over Victoria get together to meet and share their favourite walks in a chosen district. This year it was located in the Trentham/Blackwood area.

There is also a list of upcoming walks, and important messages about membership renewal and a new emergency form to be carried by everyone in their backpacks. (Ed.)

Mt Feathertop via Bungalow Spur near Harrietville.

2nd-4th October. 2023.

In the first week of October, eight members of the Mitchell Walking Group left for the high country with the aim of climbing Mt Feathertop via the Bungalow Spur. The plan was to then go and test ourselves on the Diamantina Track. We travelled up to Harrietville in two separate teams. Mary, Tony, Yvonne and I travelled up on Sunday to allow for a leisurely start the following morning. Rene, Paul, Fran and Wayne L. were taking a more brutal, SAS style approach, leaving at 5 am on Monday and starting the trek straight after arriving in Harrietville.

With Mary at the wheel, the first team made good progress up to Milawa where we stopped for lunch at the Milawa Cheese Factory.



We travelled on through the picturesque Ovens Valley arriving at the Harrietville Hotel Motel in the afternoon. After settling into our room, (which I hasten to add had four separate beds), Mary concentrated on solving a few minor problems such as what to do when you have forgotten to bring a pair of pants to walk in. Tony, Yvonne and I went out and walked up to the Harrietville Cricket Ground then back to the Snowline Hotel where Tony and Yvonne made the most of Guinness being on tap. We also decided that the menu here was better than where we were staying, so Mary joined us for the evening meal with the good news that Wayne would now bring up her pants the following day. If we were all fully clothed we could at least give the impression of being a capable group of hikers.

After the meal we returned to our own hotel to get a good night's sleep before attempting the challenging climb. The whole idea of coming up on Sunday was so that our group would have a relaxed breakfast and be half way up the Bungalow Spur before the other group even arrived in Harrietville. In the morning, we bought coffee and muffins in the town, then spent some time discussing the possibility that for once, someone might beat Wayne to the camp site and the prime camping position. As we smugly laughed

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about this, we were suddenly interrupted by the sound of Mary's phone. It was Rene saying that their group was at the start of the track and where were we? So we ended up starting the walk as one group. We each climbed the track at our own pace, surrounded by beautiful views until we arrived at Federation Hut, where Wayne was already setting up his tent in the prime camping position.

In the afternoon, we climbed Mt Feathertop. It was beautiful as always with snowdrifts still present on the southeastern side. The good weather meant that we had clear views in all directions. We could see Mt Hotham, Mt Jim and right up the Ovens valley. Whether the people in those areas had an equally clear view of Mary's lightning but substantial wardrobe change on the peak, could not be verified.



On the way back we were in for a bit of a shock. At the far end of the camp site there were two men and one woman wearing strange tunics and footwear. They were stringing up some material between trees to make primitive tents. They didn't seem to want to talk too much and I started to worry that they might be part of some sort of dangerous cult. However, I was hungry, so I made a mental note to keep my walking poles within reach during night, and joined the others to prepare the evening meal,

Afterwards we watched a beautiful red, orange sunset from the ridge behind Federation Hut. The saying, "Red at night, shepherd's delight", was shown to be baseless because from midnight we were in the midst of a violent thunder storm. The lightning and thunder, (that was often occurring almost simultaneously), could have been described as spectacular if you were watching it from inside a well constructed building, but not from inside a tent that seemed to be on the point of becoming airborne. Rather than coming in gusts, the wind was coming in one continuous blast and sounded like a massive piece of industrial machinery. Once the thunderstorm passed, the rain became even heavier with the threat that at any moment, water might start seeping into the tent.

At dawn I finally felt it was safe to venture out and heard voices from inside the hut. Wayne was in there talking to the other camping group, who turned out not to be members of a dangerous cult, but members of a re-enactment club specialising in tenth century Britain. They had walked the Razorback track, predominantly using copies of clothes and equipment common during those times. When Rene came into the hut, she quickly noticed that the ice had been broken and our fellow campers were now friendly. Without even



introducing herself, Rene got straight to the point and asked them what they used for underpants. They were very patient with all of our questions, (even that one), and gave us a good insight into how people travelled around Britain at that time. After breakfast they disappeared into the mist towards Mount Hotham and we reluctantly agreed, that with no improvement in the weather forecast, we would have to return home a day early.

The conditions for the descent down the mountain were terrible. The track was slippery, and the wet tents made the packs much heavier than they were the previous day. The rain was relentless and I felt it start to seep through my supposedly waterproof coat. Some people seemed to just stride down the mountain however, I felt I had to concentrate on every step I took. The views that were so clear on the previous day had now completely disappeared. At one point, I was so confident that I was at least halfway down that I started looking out for Tobias Gap. Depressingly I ended up not finding the sign until over an hour later. I began celebrating every tiny change in the vegetation as evidence that the altitude was changing and I must be making at least some progress down the mountain. Eventually I

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started to see glimpses of Harrietville through the trees and soon after, found Wayne, Rene, Tony and Paul looking as though they had just completed a walk to the shops.

My elation at reaching the bottom of the mountain was brought to a sudden halt by the sight of an enormous leech on my hand. Its enormous size indicated that it might have been feeding steadily for the last hour. However this was only one part of a sustained leech attack. Rene had one on her lip. If others didn't see the leeches, they saw the blood left behind after the assault, and it didn't end there. Some of the leeches were hitching a ride into Harrietville on the passengers in



Wayne's car. Rene fought back, deftly removing some of them and putting them in a plastic zip-loc bag where they managed to dramatically increase their size by feeding on the fluid of some discarded 'wet ones'. Unfortunately some of the leeches travelled even further, right into our homes. Back in Broadford, Paul found one under his watch and another between his fingers. All the way back in Melbourne I found another on my leg in the shower, and perhaps worst of all, Fran was rewarding herself by soaking on a bath only to feel something squirming in her hair. However, we were unaware of those future horrors as we rushed to the cars to get away from the track. We wanted to get dry, we wanted warmth and we wanted food.

Because of the weather, Harrietville seemed deserted. Luckily this meant that we were could change out of our wet clothes in a rotunda located in the main street, without the fear of being arrested. Other more modest members of the group remained in the car. We then travelled to a bakery in Myrtleford for hot food and drinks. Despite our best efforts in the Harrietville rotunda, the person serving in the bakery took one look at us and said, "Oh, you've been up in the mountains." The food and drink revived us for the remaining part of the drive home. Although we didn't complete the planned walk along the Diamantina Spur, the trip was great preparation for those who aim to complete the Grampians Peaks Trail in November. *(Report by Karen)*

Tooboorac Hill and Forest Loop. Sunday 8th October 2023.

Eleven people lined up for this "moderately challenging" circuit walk near Tooboorac. The weather was perfect, and though it was supposedly led by John, it was really Paul who led this walk. Other walkers were Karen, Fred, Wayne McG., Bec, Fran, Pia and her 7-year old grand-daughter Esme. Esme has walked with us before, but this was to be a bit more challenging than her previous walk.



The walk started just off the Tooboorac-Seymour Road, a few kilometres north of Tooboorac. After a few minutes of gently rising track, the gradient increased and we found that we were following ridges, rather than established paths. Esme was running backwards and forwards like a young puppy, and I was a bit concerned that she might exhaust herself early in the walk.



Paul and Pia were in training for the Grampians Peaks Trail walk in November and were both carrying significant loads in their backpacks. After the first hilltop, there was a bit of a descent before the next climb, which mercifully was shorter, but just as steep.



The group then had the option of taking a side track up to the summit of Tooboorac Hill, or staying put and waiting for the more adventurous in the group to return. It was only about 20 minutes walk to the summit from this point and I decided to sit it out. Esme also stayed behind, so while I stretched out in the sunshine, Esme explored around the site and did some tree climbing as she waited.

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(Apparently, the view from Tooboovac Hill was quite impressive, and we could see the summit, north of the highway when we drove home, later. There was not a lot of tree cover so the views would have been unimpeded.)

As we were all returning to the cars, Paul, Esme and I were walking together in a group, and it was a bit of an education session for Esme. I was discussing spurs, ridges , gullies and how to choose the easiest route to take in country like this. Paul's lessons were more to do with fungi, plants and insects. She was soaking it all up like a sponge, which is pretty typical of someone that age. She did remarkably well with all the walking too, particularly as she had been circling around us all early in the walk.. (Pia later confided that she may not have been quite so willing and uncomplaining, if she had had her mother present.)



We did not go to a café on the way home, as Marg had packed tea, coffee, scones, jam and cream from home, and they were waiting for us in the car. That went down very well and fortunately there was just enough for everyone. Then we packed up and headed for home..

Another excellent day of exercise with friends. We had covered just over 10 km.. Fran had borrowed Pia's heavy pack on the way down as she will be joining

Pia and Paul on the Grampians Peaks Trail. This will require walking 160 km over 13 days and carrying packs approaching 20 kg. in weight.

Not for me, anymore. I'm afraid. Those days are over, but I wish them well.

(Report by John)

Federation Walks. 21st & 22nd October 2023.

Tony, Bec, Sue and Paul left early Friday to arrive at Trentham Sport's Oval to set up the caravan and 2 tents just after lunch. The sun was shining, and the registration was not till between 3 pm & 6 pm. We decided to head out on the old racecourse track which also include the old railway station and Stoney Creek. We passed lovely old homes and magnificent gardens. The highlight was seeing an echidna burrowing away when it saw us. The creek had recently been upgraded with fresh gravel and chip bark. This was a nice 9 km walk and we were able to register, and then have our dinner. Pizza from Mr Peacocks. It was delicious.



After a good night's sleep, we were ready for our walks. Bec did Baddington Hill and Reservoir.

Tony, Sue and Paul did Newbury to Lyonville Mineral Springs, a return of 15 km. This passed the Domino Trail and visited the historic township with a walk along a slightly muddy creek. The mineral springs were refreshing. Yvonne came up early Saturday morning and did the Tunnel Creek Circuit which she enjoyed.



The Federation dinner was the place to be that night, and when that finished, we climbed into our beds and retired for the night. Well, the wind picked up and a few tents were blown about. Luckily ours withstood the force.

Sunday morning was wet. Only 1 mm. was predicted, but we received over 10 mm for the day and there was constant drizzle.

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Hence a few walkers pulled out of most walks. The 4 of us went on 2 different walks from Nolan's Picnic Ground and they ranged from 13 to 15 kms.

We returned to the oval for more refreshments. I think we ended up having about 15 coppers and pieces of cake over the 3 days. Luckily, the 40 km of walking compensated for that.

(Report by Paul)



Christmas Hills Reservoir Adventure. 29th October 2023.

We had a beaut walk. The sun was shining and, can you believe it, we needed sun-screen! After all the cold weather we have had, some of us even started to colour up a bit.

We walked around 10 km, with quite a few hills to test the calf muscles, and some of us were carrying over-night packs, in training for the Grampians Peaks Trail. Fred suggests that it best not to walk with people who are training because they can be a bit serious. I don't think so Fred.

Walkers were Fred, Karen, Fran, Paul and Mary. We all enjoyed the discussion about the Tawny frogmouth, An owl or not an owl? They build crazy nests that only just survive the fledging of their young ones. Such an amazing bird, and so well camouflaged. This area has a number of them, but alas we did not see any. We did meet a chap who was out with his big camera, looking for them though.

Then there was the discussion about the Echidna. Did you know that they eat with their eyes shut? They have very sensitive bills, and they can swim. The further south they live the greater the ratio of fur to spines, increasing their warmth. And so the day went on, with more interesting discussions.

I particularly enjoyed just being back in the Australian bush, with lots of bark, sticks and general chaos that is synonymous with the Australian bush, after coming back from Japan. There brooms are used to sweep the creeks to move the dirt away from the rocks, and the trees being intricately manicured. It was lovely to hear our birds calling and singing. They are great company when you're walking.

Christmas Hills derives its name from a shepherd, David Christmas, who became lost in the area in the early days. The area had a short-lived gold rush from 1859-1864. We found some evidence of this. There is also currently a working mine there, that we came across. We had some extensive views along the top to the rolling hills in front of us.

Thanks Fred for organizing another great walk.

(Report by Mary)

Upcoming Walks. *** Note. These are planned walks and may change. Please look for final details which are emailed out a few days before each walk.

Sunday, 12 November. No local walk this Sunday as most of our walk leaders will be doing the Grampians Peaks Trail, and it seems that most of our other regular walkers are otherwise occupied as well.

Sunday, 26 November. Mary will lead a walk, to be advised.

Sunday, 10 December. Bec will lead a walk from Heathcote to Eppalock and return.

Summer Walks Programme held on Wednesday evenings.

3 January. Marg will lead a walk at Monument Hill.

10 January. Mary will lead a walk at Wandong, (the Say G'day walk.)

17 January. Bec will lead a walk at or around Mount Piper.

24 January. Arthur will (hopefully) lead a walk including Broadford golf course and the Colin Officer Reserve. (To be confirmed)

31 January. John or Judy Rapley will (hopefully) lead a Seymour river-walk, with dinner afterwards. To be confirmed.

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Other news. There are several items I need to remind members of:

1. Our new sign-in sheet on walks will include a column where ambulance cover is indicated by walkers. *(Ambulance cover is strongly recommended by the group.)*
2. A medical form needs to be completed by all our walkers and carried in an outer pocket of their back-pack, in a plastic zip-bag, on all walks. *A copy of this form is included in the email to which this newsletter is attached. Please let us know if you are unable to print this yourself.*
3. **MBG membership is now due**, as our 12-month membership commences on August 1st. You can see membership information explained on the back page of this and every newsletter. The cost of renewal remains \$35.00, which practically all goes on the insurance we all must pay to Bushwalking Victoria. Details of how you can renew your membership are also on the back page of all our newsletters.

The easiest way to pay is by bank transfer to **Mitchell Bushwalking Group's** account at **Bendigo Bank**. BSB number **633-000**. Account number **160 294 047**, and be sure to write your **Surname in the Details section**. Other alternative ways of payment are on the membership application form on page 4.

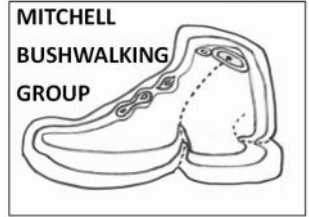
Please note that the \$5.00 per walk for non-members **is not an alternative to joining up**. It is an opportunity for prospective members to "see how they go" before paying for their membership and can only be done **twice** before a decision needs to be made. The \$5.00 does cover them for insurance on those 2 walks and if they subsequently join, the payments can be deducted from the \$35.00, meaning that they only have \$25.00 balance to pay.

(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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OFFICE USE ONLY	Receipt No:	Database updated Date:
Membership No:	Receipt issued Date:	Email notification sent Date:

The club membership year is 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024. 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

* 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 The membership fee could be paid via bank transfer to **Mitchell Bushwalking Group** at Bendigo Bank. The BSB number is **633-000** Account number: **160 294 047** Please write your surname in the "Details" section.