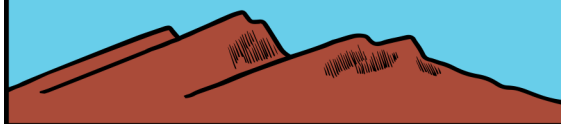


2/2025

**Winter
2025**

Grampians Bushwalking Club



A member of:


Bushwalking Victoria
towards better bushwalking

NEWSLETTER

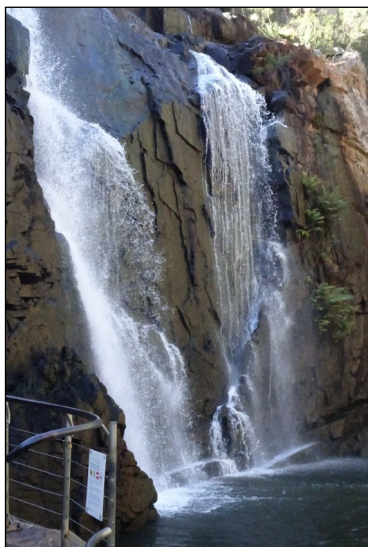
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Email: grampiansbwc@gmail.com

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/
groups/1076721436945813](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1076721436945813)

Website: www.grampiansbushwalkingclub.org.au



Photos from our recent club hikes in the Grampians

Walk Reports

SATURDAY 15 MARCH SIGNAL PEAK & MT ABRUPT

Walkers: Julie (leader & report writer), Sue, Hugh, Erelyn, Mike, Jeff, Connor, Lee, Ross
Distance: 8km Elevation: 400m
Rating: Medium / Hard

With a predicted 37C for the Saturday afternoon, it was surprising to get 9 walkers, including 4 guests (although Hugh and Sue have applied to join). Based on this forecast, we set off from Stawell at 7am and started walking from Cassidys Gap at 8.40am after setting up the car shuffle. Coming south along the Grampians Road from Halls Gap was quite confronting when you see how much of the National Park has been burnt. Both the Serra Range and Mt William Range were burnt with some areas obviously very hot.

However it's heartening to see the eucalypts shooting from their epicormic buds and the grass trees sprouting new growth from their reserves. We wait for gentle autumn rains to encourage seed to germinate for many of the other species. The recent summer rainstorms have been intense with runoff on bare ground carrying valuable topsoil downstream and across the road in places. The wildlife that remains was hungry for food and grazing by the roadside, so even more than usual we needed to slow down.

Even starting out early, it was warm walking and as the Grampians Peaks Trail quickly moves from the lower slopes of Signal Peak to the steeper rocky sections we were thankful for any little breeze on the rock outcrops. As we had Lee with us, who had been in the crew building this section of the GPT, he was able to point out particular features and challenges they had while constructing the track through the cliff line. We were happy to have regular stops to check out the track work and catch our breath.

The day was clear and sunny and the rock was starting to throw some heat back at us, so the stronger breeze at the summit was appreciated. Lizard sightings were common, but not much flower activity at this time of year with the bush looking pretty parched from our dry spring and summer. There were a few rocks holding water from the recent downpour. I was surprised to see a lake down in the southwest toward Mt Napier. Ross said that it was Lake Linlithgow but even though I'd been up there before, I'd never registered it. Ross - who is from Dunkeld - also named the lakes to our west in the Victoria Valley. Views across to the Victoria Range also showed the fire impact there. Unfortunately we were distracted by all this - the quick thought to get a group photo was blown away on the wind. Sorry Joy.

Coming down from Signal Peak, the track is more protected so pretty warm. When we got past the saddle to the junction with the downhill track to the carpark, it was decision time. To go up to Mt Abrupt summit or not. We elected for a compromise - don't go to Mt Abrupt but climb the short pitch up to the ridge to get a breeze and have lunch. In among the pine heath and with a little shade and breeze it was a welcome break and I think most were happy to head on down the track back to the cars at Mt Abrupt carpark.

It was pretty warm by the time we finished. Hugh Sue and Ross headed home from there with the rest of us back to Halls Gap for ice cream, thankful to have finished walking for the day.



Up the stone steps and past the rock shelters



Wonderful views north along the Serra Range



Lunch at Signal Peak summit looking south to Mt Abrupt

SATURDAY 29 MARCH POHLNERS LOOP, MT STAPYLTON

Walkers: Brett (leader & report writer), Mike, Jane, Gill, Sue, Hugh, Gareth, Lou, Graeme & visitors Hannah, Cathie & Anna L
Distance: 9.5km Rating: Medium

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Walk Reports

POHLNERS LOOP, MT STAPYLTON (cont)

Our initial pre-walk game of Automobile Tetris was a roaring success with cars from Bendigo, Wycheproof, Hamilton, Macarthur, Ledcourt and Stawell all converging on the Stapylton campground within a few minutes of each other for a 9:45am start on a 12km hike. However in a case of leader's prerogative, I then decided to shorten the walk by starting from where the track crosses Pohlner's Road instead, so our entire convoy headed out along the dusty Olive Plantation Road to our new starting point.

This last-minute change was made for a number of reasons: a forecast maximum nudging 30 degrees, a latish start, a largish group and cutting out a 1.4km section of flat dry heathland that would have been as boring as bat (... man!) if we had to walk it twice in one day at this time of the year when nothing much is flowering. Add in me needing physio treatment for a calf niggle on the day before the walk (they say that calf trouble is the "old man's injury" in football, so that probably applies equally to this "old mountain goat" bushwalker too!) and it was a case of "You know it makes sense!"

Shortening the walk just meant that we got to the good bit quicker as we soon started ascending the dozens of rocky steps and gradually gaining better views of the surrounding forest and farmland. We paused for a break at the point where our track joined the Grampians Peaks Trail and then enjoyed the fabulous trek along the ridgeline to the west with lots of interesting rock formations and sweeping views back towards Briggs Bluff and Mt Difficult and north across the Wimmera Plains to check out.

Eventually we could see Mt Stapylton looming up on the horizon and after passing through a wonderful little rock tunnel, we reached the Mt Stapylton turnoff and walked the final 300 metres to the lookout point just below the summit. The steep climb up the final section was enough to get our collective stomachs growling like the mythical Grampians puma, so we enjoyed a leisurely lunch break in the shade of the rock formations while taking in the magnificent views in all directions.

A thick layer of middle level cloud had hung around all morning in the calm conditions and kept a lid on the temperature, but it all started to burn off in the early afternoon as we were heading down from Mt Stapylton towards Bird Rock, Taipan Wall and the Amphitheatre and there wasn't much shade for us until we eventually reached the turnoff back towards the campground. Bird Rock proved to be an irresistible challenge for one of the senior members of our party to climb (nothing wrong with your calf muscles, Hugh!) and we saw a number of other climbers tackling much steeper obstacles on our way down to the Amphitheatre.

My leader's promise that it was "all downhill from here" soon came unstuck when we had to negotiate a couple of rocky uphill spurs (no wonder walk leaders are rated somewhere down with politicians and used car salesmen in the trustworthiness stakes!), but the track soon flattened out to a nice sandy stroll past the base of the Mount of Olives with a fair bit of shade and we eventually made it back to the cars at Pohlner's Road under clear blue skies and

warmer temperatures

Nice weather, great company, awesome scenery, intact calf muscles – it's hard to ask for a much better day of bushwalking than that! The only downside was that the Dadswells Bridge General Store was unexpectedly closed on our way back to Stawell, so we missed out on our post-walk ice creams. It will just have to be double headers all round after the next walk to make up for it!



Our hiking party on the GPT



Checking out a wind cave



Mt Stapylton from the eastern approach



Bird Rock & the Amphitheatre below

Walk Reports

SATURDAY 12 APRIL 2025 BRIGGS BLUFF

Walkers: Julie (leader and report writer), Connor, Alex, Mike, Erelyn, Gill, Denise, Hugh & Sue.

Distance: 12.5km Rating: Medium

There were nine of us that went on the walk coming from all directions to converge on Troopers Creek camp in the Northern Grampians. Because this weekend was also the one chosen by numbers of Federation Walks leaders to do their walk previews, Julie (the walk leader) had to be in Halls Gap at 8am for that briefing before everyone set off. So I met up with my group at 9.30am and it was already warming up.

We set off from the camp following the creek up the series of rock bars to Gar Falls. Unfortunately due to the dry spring and summer, the falls were dry as a bone. Lots of other overnight hikers on the GPT. Quick water break, then up the rocky steps around the falls to come up above them onto the rock shelf that leads over to where the Beehive Falls track comes in to meet the GPT. Then another steep rocky staircase – spectacular but also hard work. Up onto the next rock shelf with vegetation looking pretty parched. More uphill until the junction with the Briggs Bluff track. Another water break and looking for shade.

The final kilometre over to the summit and the steep rocky slog to the top. Unfortunately the flying ants had colonised the summit rocks, so we sat a bit lower (missing the breeze) to have lunch and a big drink. The views are always good and we enjoyed falcons and a wedge tailed eagle flying above us. We only saw one other person while we were out at the bluff. We retraced our steps feeling the heat reflecting off the rocks, as it was a surprisingly warm 31C for mid-April.

We took the turn off to Beehive Falls which involves 2km along the flat shelf until the big staircase down to the falls. Glad that we were not coming up that in the afternoon heat. A tiny trickle in the falls. The formed track back to the Beehive carpark had a little overhead shade, which was appreciated. The drivers got back and completed the car shuffle to be back for the remaining walkers. A hot day on an exposed walk - we need to keep hydrated under these conditions.



Taking a break at Gar Falls #4



Heading up the big staircase with Mt Difficult in the background



Approaching the top of Briggs Bluff over open rocky ground



Looking across Roses Gap from above Gar Falls #3

Walk Reports

SATURDAY 26 APRIL MT STURGEON TO DUNKELD

Walkers: Mike (leader & report writer), Erelyn, Sue, Hugh, Louise, Greg, Alex

Distance: 9.3 km Rating: Medium

Three walkers from Stawell, two from Ararat, and two from Hamilton all rendezvoused in Dunkeld on a partly cloudy crisp Southern Grampians morning. Leaving one car at the Dunkeld Visitor Centre, we drove 3.6 km to the Victoria Valley Rd Trailhead to start the walk up the eastern side of Mt Sturgeon.

The first 2.8 km long steep climb to the top took about 1 hr 15 minutes. Along the way, we enjoyed increasingly better views of Mt Abrupt to the northeast. At the summit (560m), we were immediately greeted by a pair of wedge tail eagles riding the thermals along the cliff face just below us.

After taking in the incredible views, we proceeded down the western side negotiating steep and very well-constructed stone steps and metal stairs. We were very grateful to the workers who built this trail so everyone can enjoy a safe descent while enjoying the views.

After lunch at 320m, the last 4 km was a relatively easy stroll through the redgums and along the art trail into town, then finished off with ice cream and coffee at Izzy's Cafe.



Heading up Mt Sturgeon with Victoria Valley beyond



At Mt Sturgeon summit with Mt Abrupt in view



One of the new walkways on the descent of Mt Sturgeon



Massive old gum along the river trail

SATURDAY 10 MAY ZUMSTEINS TO MACKENZIE FALLS (Return)

Walkers: Gareth (leader and report writer) Sue, Hugh, Brett, Alex, Jane, Lou, Jenny, Kim and John

Distance: 8km Grade: Easy/Medium

Ten walkers congregated on to the Zumsteins picnic ground from just about every direction, on a near perfect autumn morning.

We set off right on 10am and only a few minutes into the walk towards Mackenzie Falls we were greeted by two emus on the track. As we walked alongside the Mackenzie River in autumn sunshine, the constant flow of water was in stark contrast to most of drought stricken Western Victoria.

A couple of kilometres down the track we stopped and took in the multi-cascade layers of Fish Falls. The next 1.3km we shared the track with tourists, also enjoying the mornings sunshine. As we approached the main falls, the track became an expanded steel panel walkway and we were confronted with more visitors enjoying the sunny weather.

We reached the base of the Mackenzie Falls and were entertained by the usual volume of water flow thumping

Continued on Page 6

Walk Reports

ZUMSTEINS TO MACKENZIE FALLS (Cont)

into the pool from the vertical stream. This was a pleasant place to stop for our lunch break. Five walkers elected the optional stair climb to enjoy lunch from the top of the main falls.

After lunch we reassembled and retraced our steps back to Zumsteins picnic ground. The car trip home included a stop for ice cream.



Fish Falls middle section



River rapids below the falls



Mackenzie Falls from the base



Hikers at Mackenzie Falls

SATURDAY 24 MAY MOUNT OF OLIVES

Walkers: Brett (leader & report writer), Mike, Erelyn, Jane, Hugh, Greg, Jeff, John & visitor Peter
Distance: 7km Rating: Medium

I originally had 11 walkers registered for this hike, but I soon knew that my crew was in lieu of a few when I had to bid hooroo to Lou and then to Sue too. No need to stew or feel blue though, as we still could make do with Hugh, so we weren't totally in the poo – phew! Now just before you all start to boo, reach for a stiff brew or simply rue starting to read my report (join the queue!), we did actually manage to conduct a very enjoyable walk with a bit of a difference to a northern Grampians peak that doesn't receive many visiting hikers (mainly because it's only crazy people like me who lead walks there in the first place!)

There was actually a sense of déjà vu (stop it, Brett!) with this hike as it started at the Pohlner's Road Trailhead just like the previous club walk that I led in late March and followed the right-hand Stapylton Loop track up the familiar rocky steps around the end of the range until we linked up with the Grampians Peaks Trail, where we paused and had a morning tea break, just like last time around. We then continued heading west along the ridgeline with great views back towards Mt Difficult and ahead towards Mt Stapylton to appreciate, but shortly after traversing a big rocky ridge, it was time to head off-track through the scrub towards the Mount of Olives.

With the detailed pre-walk bulletins that we send out prior to each of our club walks these days, I had at least been able to give ample warning about the off-track section of approximately 300 to 500 metres (depending on how much zigzagging we would have to do to avoid the dreaded prickly hakea bushes ... and how much ducking and weaving I'd have to do to avoid being belted around the ears by my irate fellow bushwalkers as I led them into increasingly more impenetrable scrubland!), but it didn't end up too badly after all. There were no shrieks of prickly-inflicted pain and only a few audible swear words as we emerged from the bush on the rocky expanses at the back of the Mount of Olives.

After taking in the views to the southwest from the lookout point at the base of the cliff face, we then had to do a little bit more cross-country through the straggly trees before tackling the short steep scramble up the open rocky slope to finally reach the summit of the Mount of Olives. With gaining some 225 metres in height, we had a terrific birds-eye view of Pohlner's Road (and our cars) way down below and panoramic views of Briggs Bluff and Mt Difficult to the east, the Black Range to the southwest and Mt Stapylton to the west, with Mt Arapiles on the far western horizon.

The weather had been very pleasant considering that it was the week before winter, with mild temperatures and partly cloudy skies, but there was a strong cold wind

Continued on Page 7

Walk Reports

MOUNT OF OLIVES (Cont)

blowing across the top of the summit, so our lunch break was spent either taking in the views with the rocks providing a bit of a windbreak or inside a big rock hollow where there were limited views, but much better protection from the cold breeze.

We soon warmed up again after descending the rocky slope and upon completing the return bushbash through the scrub, we remarkably reemerged on the GPT within a couple of metres of where we first left the track. I'd like to be able to take the credit for my superb navigation skills, but the bushwalking gods would strike me down with something even more painful than hakea prickles (maybe another "old man's" calf strain!) if I pretended that it was anything more than sheer good luck.

Our real good luck came after we had completed the walk back to the cars as the Dadswells Bridge store was actually open this time around, so we were all able to satisfy our ice cream and coffee cravings as a nice way to finish off our day out. With all of the new walking tracks that we've been able to check out in recent times due to the opening of the GPT, we don't do very much off-track walking these days, so it was a bit of a novelty to go bush and to visit a peak that we haven't walked to before as a club.

Thanks everyone for a good day out. It was particularly nice to have Peter travelling all the way up from Melbourne to come on his first walk with our club and we hope to see him again on another walk in the future. We might even have the legendary Hugh, Sue & Lou combination back together again for that one!



Starting off from Pohlner's Road with Mount of Olives in the background



♪ Hi ho, hi ho, it's off-track hiking we go! ♪



Looking down on Pohlner's Road from Mount of Olives summit



East along the ridgeline towards Briggs Bluff & Mt Difficult



Descending the steep rocky slope from Mount of Olives summit



No missing out on our ice creams this time around!

Grampians Bushwalking Club walks for 2025

Please contact the walk leader at least two days prior to the walk to confirm your interest in participating and to find out details about starting times, meeting places and any other relevant information.

Sunday 8 June	GRAMPIANS RAIL TRAIL (Stawell)	Easy	Greg	0407 582776
Saturday 21 June	BORONIA PEAK (Grampians)	Medium	Alex	0447 914333
Tuesday 24 June	GENERAL MEETING - SES Hall, Sloane St, Stawell, 7:30pm	ALL WELCOME	Greg - Secretary	0407 582776
Saturday 5 July	DUNKELD VALLEY WALK (Dunkeld)	Easy / Medium	Graeme	0427 885397
Saturday 19 July	BOROUGH HUTS to MT ROSEA (return) (Grampians)	Medium / Hard	Gareth	0427 565860
Tuesday 29 July	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - SES Hall, Sloane St, Stawell, 7:30pm	ALL WELCOME	Greg - Secretary	0407 582776
Saturday 2 August	ST ARNAUD RANGE NP (Barkly)	Medium	Brett	0438 852773 or bretta5@bigpond.com
Saturday 16 August	HALLS GAP - WATCHTOWER LOOP (Grampians)	Easy / Medium	Greg	0407 582776
Tuesday 26 August	GENERAL MEETING - SES Hall, Sloane St, Stawell, 7:30pm	ALL WELCOME	Greg - Secretary	0407 582776
Saturday 30 August	HOLLOW MOUNTAIN (Grampians)	Easy / Medium	Graeme	0427 885397

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Grampians Bushwalking Club - Membership Fees for 2025/26

Family (inc children U/18 or full-time student) \$70
Single Adults (18 Years +) \$45

*Children under 16 Years must be accompanied by parent/s or guardian on walks.
To have your input in the Grampians BWC meetings or AGM, you must be a
current financial member of the club.*

A reminder that 2025/26 membership fees will be due on July 1st 2025.

NOTES . . .

WALK RATINGS . . .

FAMILY - generally suitable for your children and older persons.

EASY - generally suitable for family groups, walking on tracks.

MEDIUM - longer walks, some climbing involved, walking may not always be on tracks.

HARD - as for MEDIUM but longer distances, more climbing, creek crossings, etc.

OVERNIGHT - as for MEDIUM and HARD but with overnight packs to be carried unless otherwise stated. (2 day walks are overnight walks.)

All walks are free to members of the Grampians Bushwalking Club, unless otherwise stated. Visitors are welcome to participate with a fee of \$5 per walk to cover insurance. Visitors are encouraged to join the club if they intend to walk more than three times.

NOTE: If you wish to know more or participate in an activity, please phone the leader to ask and notify him/her no later than two days prior to the activity as details may change from what is initially published in the newsletter.

If less than 4 members attend an activity, then the activity will not be an official club activity. In this case no public liability insurance cover applies.

It is the responsibility of all walkers to ensure that they advise the walk leader of any medical conditions/ allergies and carry any medications that they may require.

If the day is a **DAY OF TOTAL FIRE BAN** (in the designated walking area) - there will not be a walk, but check with the leader, as he/she may change the walk location or day.

If you want to know more about the Grampians Bushwalking Club or want to hear what's happening with other clubs, come along to the **General Meeting on the last Tuesday of each month (unless otherwise stated) at SES Headquarters, Sloane Street, Stawell, commencing at 7.30pm.** Feel free to have your say on Club matters or suggest some walks. Read up on other bushwalking clubs and their plans for walks.

INTERESTED IN BUSHWALKING?

If you know of someone who is interested in bushwalking, maybe you can talk them into joining us on a walk and consider becoming a member of the **Grampians Bushwalking Club**. Our walks are mostly easy going and a great form of exercise and social interaction with a friendly group of fellow walkers. The scenery is always interesting and there is plenty of knowledge among the group on the various wildflowers, birds, geological and historical features that are spotted along the way.

Sunday walks are held close to home in the Grampians or Stawell / Ararat area, but the Saturday walks often take us further afield to places like Mt Arapiles, the Golden Triangle, Bendigo, Ballarat and the Western District. Weekend base camps have been held in recent years at Hattah, Wyperfeld, Lower Glenelg NP and Heathcote, while biennial club trips have been made to the Flinders Ranges, Tasmania, Wilsons Promontory, the Sunshine Coast, Sydney, Fleurieu Peninsula and Bright.

Official Newsletter of Grampians Bushwalking Club Inc.
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