



Federation of Victorian
Walking Clubs Inc
A2548 ABN 88 344 633 037

VicWalk News

September 2006

No. 164

\$1.20

Calendar

EXECUTIVE MEETING

Tuesday 5 September & 10
October
Community Room, Powlett
Reserve, East Melbourne
Melway Map 2G F2 (44 C7)

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 3 October
Address as above

BUSHWALKERS SEARCH & RESCUE MEETING

Monday 11 September at 6pm
Carlton Community Room,
216 Rathdowne Street,
Carlton (next to the baths).

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETINGS

4th Wednesday each month
except December at 7.30pm
St Martins Anglican Church
27 Cromwell Rd (cnr Wilson
St) South Yarra
Melway Map 58 F4

FEDERATION WEEKEND

17-19 November 2006
Bright & Beyond

WALKTOBER

Walktober is a program developed by Kinect Australia in collaboration with VicHealth, which aims to link a number of existing, disparate events under a common brand to promote walking. It will run for the first time this October. It aims to raise the profile of walking in the broader community as well as provide a lead in to the **Melbourne Walk21** international conference being held 23–25 October.

www.melbournewalk21.com.au

A number of high profile events will be held in Walktober:

Community Safety Month **October**
Seniors Festival..... **1-8 October**
National Walk to Work Day **6 October**
The World's Greatest Pram Stroll **7 October**
Foot Health Week **9-15 October**
Walk To School Day **18 October**
Planning Week..... **16-20 October**
Melbourne Walk21 Conference **23-25 October**
VicHealth Walk to School Symposium .. **27 October**
Prostate Cancer Awareness Walk **29 October**

As well, there will be a number of other walking events held across Victoria in October. An updated list of events in Walktober will be available on www.walktober.com.au.

VicWalk member clubs are invited to register any special event bushwalks that occur in October to be included on the Walktober calendar of events/walks on the website – email details to Jan Jacklin janjacklin@jigstrat.com.au.

Contributions

Email or post news, views, club profiles, articles, photographs, sketches and letters on any subject of interest to bushwalkers (subject to editorial approval) to ekerlin@optusnet.com.au or 2 Glenwerri Court, Vermont South 3133.

Deadline for October:

Monday, 11 September

Editor: Eileen Kerlin
Design & Layout: Helen Rowley

inside this issue ...

<i>Conservation</i>	2	<i>New Member</i>	4
<i>Walking & Talking with your President</i>	3	<i>Country Action Grant Scheme</i>	5
<i>Celestials</i>	3	<i>New VicWalk News Designer</i>	5
<i>Action for Clubs</i>	4	<i>Mullum Mullum Festival</i>	5
<i>BSAR News</i>	4	<i>Correction</i>	6
<i>Ballarat Bushwalking & Outdoor Club Invitation</i>	4	<i>Around the Tracks</i>	6

Who's Who at VicWalk

Administration Office

Jenny Sykes
Phone 9455 1876
Fax 9457 5438
vicwalk@vicnet.net.au
www.vicnet.net.au/~vicwalk

Monday 12 noon–3pm
Tues, Thur & Fri 10am–3pm
Not open Wednesdays

Office Bearers

President: David Reid
5984 0039
valdavid@alphalink.com.au

Vice-President: Jan Clark

Secretary: Wayne Rice
9842 2817
longgrain2@bigpond.com

Treasurer: Carole Petchell

Assistant Secretary: Barbara Guerin
bjg123@bigpond.com

Convenors

Bushwalkers Search & Rescue:
Monica Chapman
9899 6860
convenor@bsar.org

Conservation, Tracks & Huts:
Steven Robertson
9762 5367
srob7859@bigpond.net.au

Track Clearing: Jim Harker, 9547 1152
jnharker@netspace.net.au

For other project officers please contact Conservation Convenor, Steven Robertson, as above

Insurance: David Gordon
02 6051 2602W or 02 6040 9599H
david.gordon@fmg.co.nz

Publicity/Promotions: vacant

Publications: Claire Garrett
9598 4854

Risk Management: Wayne Rice
see details above

Skills: vacant

Representatives on Other Organisations

Bushwalking Australia: Marianne Watt
9328 4228

BMTAB: Peter Conroy
9596 2639

ORC: Kyle Matheson
9890 6094
mathesonkyle@hotmail.com

CONSERVATION

Members of the committee continue to strengthen relationships with land managers for the benefit of us all.

In recent months VicWalk has made applications through PV for community grants and has been successful with three applications.

Grant 1: \$ 5000 for mossbed rehabilitation in the Alpine NP. Although actual figures for each participant have not been finalised, all of the money will be used for accommodation, some fuel reimbursement and the famous Saturday night BBQ. Final details will be advised next month, but please note the dates of 26–28 January 2007 in your diaries now.

Grant 2: \$2000 for assorted track clearing equipment including two UHF radios.

Grant 3: \$3670 for realignment and maintenance of the walking track between Cape Schanck and London Bridge (Mornington Peninsula NP), including provision of enhanced directional signage and renovation of existing directional signage and interpretation signs.

CHAINSAW ACCREDITATION

In September PV will be providing six members of the Track Maintenance Group with accredited chainsaw training.

TRACK MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Our next event is on 17 September, with track work to be completed on Condons Track in the Yarra Ranges. You may recall that this track has been adopted by the VicWalk Track Maintenance Group. More numbers are needed. Please give your help on this day. For further details, contact Steve Robertson on 9762 5367 or email srob7859@bigpond.net.au.

OTHER TRACK MAINTENANCE EVENTS

Sunday 26 November: Freemans Mill Track Clearing, contact Graeme Kidd on 5629 8515 or email gandjkidd@nex.com.au.

Saturday 2 & Sunday 3 December: Bogong High Plains, Alpine NP, contact Bill Metzenthon on 9578 1062 or email billm@melbpc.org.au.

Friday 26 to Sunday 28 January 2007: alpine mossbed rehabilitation, Bogong High Plains, Alpine NP, contact Steve Robertson on 9762 5367 or email srob7859@bigpond.net.au.

SUBMISSIONS MADE DURING THE LAST MONTH

- PV regarding Draft Management Plan, Reef Hills State Park
- VEAC to protect Goolengook
- Preferred campsite location at Lake Tali Karng
- Proposed Mt Hotham development where VicWalk will also be involved in their panel enquiry. In this submission our concerns are the visual impact when walking within Alpine NP and the possible reduction in available car parking for all-season use by walkers and cross country skiers.

VicWalk is currently looking into the draft management plans of Point Nepean NP, Dandenong Valley Parklands and Beechworth Historical Park.

VicWalk has a long association with Federation Hut on Mt Feathertop, and has agreed to adopt this hut for ongoing maintenance. We await confirmation from PV. With the outstanding scenery of this area I am sure volunteers will be plentiful on work party weekends!

PV has advised that the first section of the O'Shannasse Aqueduct walk from Dee Road to Yuong Road (above Warburton) should be complete by the end of October. But of particular note the 30 kilometre of the aqueduct can be walked now – although necessary facilities are not in place as yet.

The committee is currently reviewing a number of other issues, including:

- the conservation policy (refer VicWalk website): we welcome comments from any clubs or individuals.
- the entire parks system in Victoria, examined by the committee at our July meeting as to the priority of various areas. Priorities were both the popularity of the area to us as walkers and the need to protect and improve walking opportunities in conjunction with land managers. For us to take this to the next stage, we need project officers for both regional and metropolitan areas. Please consider volunteering and contact me for more details. Being a project officer is a rewarding experience and it does not involve a huge commitment. Give your support where you can.

STEVEN ROBERTSON
Convenor, Conservation Committee

WALKING AND TALKING WITH YOUR PRESIDENT

There is a lot happening at present, both with our own activities and external events that have implications for bushwalkers.

FUTURE DIRECTION

The draft of a new constitution and governing structure has been circulated with explanatory notes. The proposals are aimed at establishing a platform for the future, from which we can be proactive and more effective in representing your interests. Please take the time to read the explanatory notes, discuss it and provide us with your comments by the due date. Members of the executive are available to speak to your club or committee and answer questions about the proposed changes.

THE OTWAYS

The Otways is a great walking area and in conjunction with the phasing out of logging, the Great Otway NP was proclaimed in December last year. A new group has been formed to develop a walking 'master plan' for the Otways and give input into the draft management plan for the new national and forest parks. PV is preparing the draft management plan which will be released in February 2007.

The group comprises Colac Otway, Surf Coast and Corangamite shires, City of Greater Geelong, VicWalk including the Otway Ranges Walking Track Association and Geelong Bushwalking Club, Otway Region Tourism and the Department of Victorian Communities. For more information regarding this group and to give input to the Walking Track Strategy for the Otways please contact VicWalk Otways Project Officer Don Hutton on don.hutton@sci.monash.edu.au. It's a great opportunity for the bushwalking community to have its say about the future of this region.

GRANTS

Country clubs please take the opportunity to consider applying for a Country Action Grant (see details on page 5). Applications close in the second week of October.

During the month we received advice that several of our grant applications for PV community grants have been successful. Steve Robertson will be detailing the way these grants will be used.

I also attended a whistle stop announcement by the Premier of one million dollars to be administered by PV through their 2006/2007 Metropolitan Trail Network Grants Program. We and other trail users will be discussing the priorities for expenditure of these funds soon. During my brief time with Steve Bracks we discussed his personal interest in recreational walking.

POLICY REVIEW

The VicWalk conservation policy is being reviewed. Please have a look at the existing policy (available on the website) and provide details of the changes you would like to see, including situations not covered by the present policy. Send comments to Steve Robertson ASAP.

REVIEW OF EMERGENCY SERVICES IN VICTORIA

Bushwalkers Search & Rescue Convenor, Monica Chapman, has lodged a submission to this review. In addition to the need for a reliable funding arrangement, the main thrust of our submission is that we require the government to give formal recognition to BSAR as a highly trained specialist volunteer group that contributes considerable value to the community.

CALENDAR

Much is happening over the next couple of months.

To provide the opportunity for members of the public to experience bushwalking for the first time VNPA is again hosting the Great Australian Bushwalk in Victoria on Sunday 10 September. If your club would like to help, please check the VNPA website and contact them direct.

On Sunday 15 October the "Steps Walk" to raise money for spinal research will take place at Jells Park. See the August *VicWalk News* for details.

Later in October the international walking conference 'Walk 21' will be held in Melbourne. This conference will draw some high profile keynote speakers including Justin Madden, Minister for Sport and Recreation in Victoria, Tony Abbott, the Federal Health Minister, Dr Rob Moodie, CEO of VicHealth, and several international specialists. VicWalk will be represented at the conference. Barbara Guerin and I will present a paper about the importance of advocacy groups for recreational walkers.

Looking ahead, don't forget the Federation Weekend 'Bright and Beyond', hosted by Border, Warby Ranges, Benalla and Wangaratta clubs. If accommodation take-up is any indication, this should be a great weekend.

Finally, have a look at the track clearing program on page 2. Join in, have some fun, meet people from other clubs and contribute to the maintenance of our track network.

DAVID REID

Full Moons

Friday 8 September; Saturday 7 October;
Sunday 5 November; Tuesday 5 December;
Wednesday 3 January; Friday 2 February

Sunrise & Sunset

Friday, 8 Sept 6.31am 6.04pm
Friday, 22 Sept 6.09am 6.16pm
Friday, 6 Oct 5.48am 6.28pm
Friday, 20 Oct 5.28am 6.42pm
Daylight saving starts Sun 29 Oct at 2am
Friday, 3 Nov 6.11am 7.56pm
Friday, 17 Nov 5.58am 8.12pm
Friday, 1 Dec 5.51am 8.26pm
Friday, 15 Dec 5.52am 8.38pm
Friday, 29 Dec 5.59am 8.44pm
Friday, 12 Jan 6.11am 8.44pm
Friday, 26 Jan 6.26am 8.37pm
Friday, 9 Feb 6.42am 8.25pm
Friday, 23 Feb 6.57am 8.08pm

Sources
www.museum.vic.gov.au/planetarium
www.timeanddate.com/worldclock

Action for Clubs

- Register special October bushwalks on the Walktober calendar (p1)
- Review and comment on VicWalk's Conservation policy (p2)
- Advertise the track maintenance program (p2)
- Request volunteers for VicWalk project officers (p2)
- Discuss the draft new constitution (p3)

BSAR NEWS**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS**

Some club executives have been sending approved BSAR membership applications to the VicWalk office. To avoid double handling, please send them directly to BSAR's Membership Secretary, John Retchford, as requested on the form. John's address is 15 Hillard Street, East Malvern, 3135.

MT FEATHERTOP SEARCH

Six BSAR members from Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club participated on 22 July in the search for a missing NSW man on Mt Feathertop. BSAR searchers line-searched exposed knolls and tracks between Federation Hut and the summit, and also covered Diamantina and Bungalow Spurs. They did not find any evidence of the missing man in the area they searched. It was later reported that the man's body was found the following day in Hellfire Gully and that there were no suspicious circumstances.

BALLARAT BUSHWALKING & OUTDOOR CLUB - INVITATION

David Witham, coordinator of the Grampians Walking Tracks Support Group, will be a special guest speaker at our October club meeting, giving us an overview of how the Grampians is regenerating after the fires. This will precede our working bee in the Grampians on 28 October. As many other VicWalk member clubs might be interested in the work of this group, as well as how our beautiful Grampians is recovering, we would like to extend an invitation to attend our October meeting and/or our working bee.

We hold our club nights on the first Thursday of the month (5 October) at the Kohinoor Centre, corner of Sebastopol & Errard Streets Ballarat, starting at 8pm and finishing with a cuppa and a biscuit.

For more information or to register for the working bee, contact Mary on 5339 5388.

VICKI RICKARD
Ballarat Bushwalking & Outdoor Club



Gippsland Outdoor Training & Youth Adventures

Remote Area Level 2 First Aid Course

Sat 16th - Mon 18th September 2006

Would you like to learn or update your first aid knowledge and be able to help injured folk out in the bush or other far away places?

Gotya is conducting this Swinburne University accredited course at Gilwell Park in Gembrook. So... come along, have some fun and learn some interesting medical stuff as well.

Price \$315.00 (inc. meals & accommodation)

Commercial Rafting Guides Course

Sun 24th to Fri 29th September 2006

Are you looking for a rafting guides course that is industry relevant? Our course instructors have over many years experience both in Australia and overseas.

Gotya in association with GippsTAFE is conducting an accredited Commercial Guides Course on the Mitta Mitta River

Price \$780.00 (inc. meals & accommodation)

Participant numbers are limited so register asap and get your deposit in!
RSVP: Friday 1st September 2006

For more information contact us on: 03 5628 1016

info@gotya.net.au

www.gotya.net.au

*New Member*

The bushwalking
community
welcomes the
Solo Grads
Bushwalking Club as
an affiliate member
of VicWalk

COUNTRY ACTION GRANT SCHEME (CAGS)

Funding applications will open on 1 September and close in the second week of October.

Grant applications can be for such things as:

- Development of policy and procedure manuals
- Development of a club website

- Enhancing skills that contribute to the effectiveness of the club

These grants apply to **designated regional areas** (most country clubs).

For more information keep checking the Department of Victorian Communities website www.grants.dvc.vic.gov.au

Your club may be eligible to apply.

NEW VICWALK NEWS LAYOUT DESIGNER

A very hearty welcome to Joslin Guest, who will be joining the editorial team as Layout Designer, commencing with the October edition.

In her own words, Joslin "came to bushwalking late, but absolutely love it. I am a keen day walker, love base camps and am starting to do pack carries". Joslin has been a member of the Boroondara Bushwalkers for five years, where she is a day-walk leader and has also been a club committee member for the last two years. Her professional background is economics and she currently works as a documentation analyst. Well, there shouldn't be too much analysing to do on the *VicWalk News* documentation, just plenty of shuffling the words around to fit onto the pages! Welcome Joslin.

... and a fond farewell

This is also an appropriate time to record our thanks and deep gratitude to our outgoing layout designer, Helen Rowley, for her four years of superb work on the *VicWalk News*. Helen has a keen sense of perspective and a great eye for detail, and has given the *VicWalk News* a very professional look with its clean lines and clear format. We wish her all the best in her 'retirement' from this role and hope she now has the opportunity to put those extra hours into some more leisurely pursuits! Thank you Helen.

EILEEN KERLIN

Thanks Eileen, you make me quite sorry to go! I'll miss your well-organised and on-time submissions. Thanks also to all the contributors who have made it such an educational, informative and interesting job.

HELEN ROWLEY

MULLUM MULLUM FESTIVAL 2006

September 3, 9 and 10

The Mullum Mullum Festival, a community festival since 1995, aims to raise awareness of the natural and cultural values of the Mullum Mullum Creek valley, which runs from Croydon to the Yarra River in Templestowe. Over this time more than 170 experts have led guided walks covering such topics as urban ecology, indigenous flora and fauna (platypus, birds etc.), Indigenous and European culture, and future development along the Mullum Mullum valley.

The 10th festival offers an opportunity for walkers to experience the diversity of the

Mullum Mullum Creek valley. Part of this urban creek valley was identified as being so important that EastLink should be tunnelled underneath to preserve bushland in the Donvale area.

A number of walking activities are on offer and a detailed program of events is available from the Maroondah, Whitehorse, and Manningham Council offices, libraries and Neighbourhood Houses, or contact Les on phone 9874 2641.

Program details also available on www.vicnet.net.au/~mulfest/.

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VicWalk News

Advertising Rates

1/6 page advertisement.....	\$25.00
¼ page advertisement.....	\$40.00
1/3 page advertisement.....	\$50.00
½ page advertisement.....	\$75.00
Full page advertisement.....	\$150.00
Address list of affiliate clubs....	\$50.00
Insert for Newsletter*	\$50.00

Note: Advertisements must be artwork ready.

*Advertiser to supply 300 printed inserts each edition

AROUND THE TRACKS

NEWS AND ARTICLES FROM CLUBS

PEREGRINE CLUB: HINCHINBROOK ISLAND

“One of the world’s great wild walks”, “a challenge”, “really tough” ... did anyone say “MAGNIFICENT”?

Eight Peregrines, neatly packed, shirts tucked into shorts, sunscreened, sunhatted and slathered in tropical insect repellent, lined up on the beach of Ramsay Bay, eager to start the Thorsborne Trail after a long trip across the Hinchinbrook Channel from Cardwell by ferry. Carrying EPIRBs for emergencies, permits to camp (only 40 are allowed on the island at any one time), and trail notes for the 32km, we wondered how hard the next four days could be. They were hard, as we had been warned. The trail was marked with orange triangles, but not formed. We trekked along beaches, clambered over rocky headlands and up cliffs, ambled through grassy woodlands or tall forests with a distinctly tropical feel – palm fronds, staghorns, and the almost invisible strands of clinging ‘wait-a-while’ or lawyer vine – once it got its claws into you it would tear you apart! Even the rain that started was warm and welcome to relieve the stickiness, though it did make rocks slippery and caused the streams to turn into torrents. These streams had to be crossed with great caution; normally a simple rock-hopping exercise, they became, for all but

the nimble Neil and Susannah, a tricky wade, often knee-deep at least. One was flowing so fast that we needed the rope that Neil strung across, and all the helping hands as we lunged and lurched from boulder to boulder fighting against the current. But there was no time to think about the danger just past, because another challenge would appear, as we climbed over a ridge or waded through knee-deep swamps. Apart from toilets and rat-proof food boxes at campsites, the only facilities along the trail were a crocodile-proof fence at one campsite and a knotted rope for hoisting oneself up a three-metre rock.

What do I remember most about this trip? Admiring the courage of an injured walker who chose to continue rather than turn everyone back, grasping a hand stretched across a torrent of water, gripping rounded rocks trying to resist the rush of water as they did, swishing through wet grass trees, kicking a washed-up float in a game of beach soccer, plunging into a pool below a waterfall after a long sweaty day and feeling the cascade of cool water over weary shoulders, laughing with a friend as she sank to her waist in a tidal creek, then galloping through the waves to avoid the same fate – what an adventure! It was hard and seemed at times perilous – one day, 10.5km took seven hours walking, climbing and descending, not including the swim at the top of a waterfall. But it was fun! I saw how diverse plants adapted to their environment, and supported but did not dominate each other, and I saw our group of companions do the same. I learned that fear could be a spur, not a restraint. I discovered again the invigorating breeze at a ridge top, and the refreshing caress of soft rain, the sweet taste of fast-flowing creeks and the warm spicy flavour of curry cooked and eaten under the stars. Sleep in a tiny shared tent came like a reward after a tiring day, as was waking to a new morning with another new journey ahead. Thanks to Penny for organising, and to all the Hinchies for their company and support on this magnificent walk.”

MARGARET KING

BENDIGO OUTDOOR CLUB: CAMELS AHOY, THE RETURN! (7-19 JULY)

This activity was destined to be exceptional and we were not thwarted – an exceedingly fulfilling venture. We had all researched camels and in doing so were also inexorably drawn into the history of the Afghans, the Ghan railway, the railhead towns and the pastoral development of South Australia. And we saw the lot and much, much more.

We explored the ruins of several railhead towns, participated in a local social gathering, and visited many museums and historical displays. We paid our respects to the Afghans at several cemeteries and search out the Afghan towns. We walked on Lake Eyre (South), along the banks of the Murray River, wet our feet or had a spa in the 88 000 year old waters from a bore and walked around the mound springs of the Great Artesian Basin. We ventured along the Dog Proof Fence, climbed the Ghan bridges and explored the historic railway stations and water-softening plants. We visited Talc Alf, a local maverick, who glibly expounded the meaning of Life (I think) and admired Klaus, a member of the wandering race, who gave up all to roam Australia with camel and wagon.

My promo for the trek said, “enjoy the gentle rocking gait of the camel while allowing your senses the freedom to take in what the outback has to offer.” What an understatement! For the seven day/120km trek we became cameleers. We shepherded the camels in the morning for their feeding, then led them into camp where we all assisted in saddling and loading the nineteen gelded and cow camels. We then rode or led the three strings of camels as we zig-zagged up the dry creek system of Stuart Creek, crossed gibber plains, climbed the breakaways, crossed many sand dunes to return to the creek system which by now had muddy crabhole gibbers and very muddy anabranches and flowing streamlets. We experienced azure sunny days and freezing nights under an early full moon and then substantial rains in the outback and wind and mud. We climbed the Chinamens

CORRECTION

The Freemans Mill Track article on page 3 of last month’s *VicWalk News* accredited the article by Graeme Kidd as Training Officer of the Maroondah Bushwalking Club. In fact, Graeme is a member of the Dandenong Valley Bushwalking Club, and also the Project Officer for the project. Paul Chamings is the Training Officer for the Maroondah Bushwalking Club. My apologies for this mistake, and any inconvenience caused to either Graeme or Paul.

EDITOR

AROUND THE TRACKS

NEWS AND ARTICLES FROM CLUBS

Cap and ran the Birdsville Track from Marree (well, 5km of it). We witnessed the geology and the differing landforms, found curios of wind sculptured rocks and 48-40 million year old fossils as well as the current flora and fauna. We experienced and admired the solitude, the vastness, the aridness, the despair and the beauty of the mighty outback.

We drove on bitumen, on smooth clay roads, on corrugated gravels and we 4WD-ed through mud (some tending sideways) and ferried across the Murray. We slept in cabins, caravans, tents, swags and historic buildings. We ate kangaroo, vegetarian, witchetty grub, desert plum and canned and pub meals, BBQs and home cooking. We lived by Vic time, SA time and camel time.

Thanks to club members Faye and Muriel and to guests David, John, Geraldine and Paula for your company and your willingness to share this experience. Thanks to the cameleers/cooks Greg, Prue, Peter, David, Deb and 12 yo Grace, the jockey who won the Marree Camel Cup on Dishdash. Thanks to the 19 camels, especially Marcia and Daisy who carried me many kilometres with their rocking lolloping gait. A very memorable trip.

TERRY POTTER

ESSENDON BUSHWALKING CLUB: 'BATS IN THE BELFRIES' TWILIGHT WALK (1 JANUARY)

The nightly exodus of bats from their tree-top roosts is an eerie sight at Yarra Bend Park, Fairfield. The total colony is an estimated eleven to twelve thousand bats located on the banks of the Yarra River. Around twilight on this night it looked like every bat in the colony was on the wing in a never ending line across the sky. In the background just across the other side of the river we could see the tall spires of the century-old Abbotsford Convent. This Sunday evening walk led by the McLean family on the first day of the new year followed a very hot new year's eve the previous night. Sadly, the media reported 300 mainly young bats perished at Yarra Bend in this phase of extraordinary heat. Some were saved by animal welfare volunteers. Following our visit I raced off to the local library eager to find out more about the bats and the convent – icons of the landscape of this highly notable area of Melbourne.

This is a colony of the 'Grey-headed Flying Fox' (*Pteropus poliocephalus*). The 'flying fox' is a bat which has characteristic 'foxy' looking features; furry face, large eyes and small ears.

There are four types of flying fox which inhabit coastal areas of Australia but this is the only one you will find in Melbourne or southern Victoria. With very good night vision and a keen sense of smell they feed off native flowers, fruits, nectar and tree blossoms. The Yarra Bend colony travel up to 100km around Melbourne on their nightly search for their favourite food. They will only eat orchard fruit if native food is scarce. They are believed to use natural landscape features to navigate such as major rivers or valleys. Their 'camps' are commonly located near water like on river banks or on islands. The smell of a camp of bats has been described as 'fetid' (dictionary definition 'having a strong, offensive smell'). A bit like a bushwalkers socks? As we navigated the Yarra River trail that night under their tree-top roosts I recall the pungent odour (of the bats). A 'camp' is the actual name for a nested colony of flying fox (something else us bushwalkers have in common with bats – not the smell – we love to camp!). There a few other interesting things about the flying fox. We all know they hang upside down. But they don't have a muscular grip – they just hang there by specially adapted claws. In this position they eat, sleep, copulate and give birth but face their head up to defecate

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AROUND THE TRACKS

NEWS AND ARTICLES FROM CLUBS

(you probably wouldn't want to do this upside down!). And their blood doesn't rush to their head either (reasons for this are something to do with how their heart and vascular system works). They drink by skimming the surface of water in flight and then lick the moisture from their fur. Bats are the only mammals that can actually fly (compared to some mammals which glide). The 'flying fox' is unlike the 'microbat' species, which is much smaller, has large radar-like ears and uses echolocation signals to hunt insects. The vampire bat is a type of 'microbat' famed for drinking the blood of its victims. Fortunately you will find none of these in the bellies of the convent (vampire bats are native only to Mexico, Central and South America). The historic convent buildings are very significant to this unique area of Melbourne. First European contact dates back to 1803 when Charles Grimes explored the Yarra up to Dights Falls. The aboriginal Wurundjeri people hunted and fished around the Yarra River's rich river flats. In 1838 the convent land was first subdivided and sold. Settlement and farming began. In 1863 the 'Sisters of Good Shepherd' established a welfare shelter for women at the convent site. In 1912 at its peak the convent supported

150 sisters and 1000 girls and women. The complex was totally self-sufficient and the original farmland is now the 'Collingwood Children's Farm'. The oldest surviving building was built in 1868. The current site of eleven buildings and extensive gardens cover 6.8 hectares. In 2004 the site was saved by the State government and a multi-million dollar project to preserve and develop the complex for the benefit of the wide community has begun.

COLIN CODY
Media Reports/Library

ROSS ICE SHELF

Neither distance nor difficulty made this walk one of the greatest and my most memorable. It was just before midnight when I stepped from the helicopter onto the Ross Ice Shelf. The sun was twenty degrees above the horizon and there was not the slightest hint of a breeze. Less than a kilometre, and over perfectly flat terrain, I traversed the area, which had been deemed by leaders to be safe and free from crevasses and ice bridges. Having covered all of the laid out area, I sat down and contemplated where I was. Well away from my fellow adventurers, I allowed the stillness and remoteness to penetrate. There was ice

and sun and sky! The thought that early explorers made it here without any of today's navigation and communication equipment is mind-boggling. We hiked on Campbell Island to see the albatrosses on their nests. We covered distances from our landing spots to the huts of Shackleton, Scott and Borgenevick. We walked the three miles from McMurdo Station (USA) to Scott Base (NZ). There was even a hike on Macquarie Island to the various penguin rookeries. But none will compare with the experience on the Ross Ice Shelf.

LUCY HAYWARD

These were four great write-ups of varied and interesting areas and/or topics. I am only sorry I didn't have the photographs to include with them. I would like to encourage all club editors to send me any reports with photographs, that they think would be of interest to the broader bushwalking community. This is your newsletter, and as evidenced above we have some great authors and, no doubt photographers out there, whose work we would love to share. So please send me any articles you think worthy of wider publication – they will also inspire and encourage others, as I am sure those above have done. Ed



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