



Rat Tales

April 2006

Web: www.ballarat.com/bushwalking.htm

E-Mail : ballaratbwc@yahoo.com (General correspondence)

rat_tales@hotmail.com (Newsletter articles)

Ballarat Bushwalking and Outdoor Club

OVERLAND TRACK CRADLE MOUNTAIN TO LAKE ST CLAIRE FEB 10 – 19, 2006

For several years now it has been my ambition to walk the Overland Track and, although I had heard a lot about it, I could not imagine just how wonderful it was going to be. It was a truly awesome experience and has given me the desire to do similar walks.

I was most fortunate to be part of a great group of happy people who were totally supportive of each other and like-minded in our attitude to the challenge. Our group comprised of Stephen (our leader) and Debra Peter, Vicki and Ashlee Rickard, Ian and Mary Caddy, Angela Beard, Marianne Delima also John and Barbara Merrifield.

We are all very grateful to Stephen for putting this walk on the calendar and opening up extended over night walking to novices like us. We are also extremely grateful to Vicki for taking over the responsibility of arrangements while Stephen was away on long service leave.

Arriving at Launceston Airport we were met by Lee from Wilderness Tours (with his bus and trailer), to transport us to Waldheim Huts for the first night. Lee's enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, the area was very contagious as he chatted and pointed out interesting landmarks along the way. After settling into the cabin we took a stroll around the area, this included an inspection of the original hut and bathhouse. We enjoyed a lovely dinner at Cradle Mountain Lodge before retiring for the night.

Saturday dawned with misty rain as we commenced our trek towards Waterfall Valley. Light rain continued to fall as we climbed to Marion's Lookout where low cloud prevented us from taking in the views. However this did not dampen our spirits and we continued on. It was actually really great to see the wilderness in its entire misty splendor. The attic of Kitchen Hut proved to be a perfect lunch spot out of the rain and included a visit from one of the resident Spotted Quolls. Due to the overcast weather we chose to abandon the idea of climbing Cradle Mountain.

Arriving at Windermere we had very heavy rain that

continued through the night. In the morning we decided to press on to the new Pelion Hut and were able to dry out bedding and clothing around the gas heater.

The next day some of us climbed Mt Ossa and were thrilled that clear skies enabled the enjoyment of panoramic views.

By the time we reached Kia Ora the weather was magnificent and the sunset on the mountains was spectacular. With a lovely fast flowing creek nearby it was the perfect place to camp.

The next night we stayed at Windy Ridge where everything became bathed in moonlight, which the possums appreciated, as they visited some of the tents playing "trick or treat" Luckily, not mine!!

Day 6 took us to Pine Valley. This is truly a magical wonderland with a lovely creek and lots of mossy trees and logs (not to mention inquisitive mosquitoes). Some of us climbed to the first lookout on the way to the Labyrinth while others took the shorter walk to the waterfalls. We all agreed that we would like to return to Pine Valley and spend a couple of days to climb the Labyrinth and the Acropolis which each require about 5 hours to complete.

We arrived at Narcissus by lunchtime on Friday and set up camp along side the river. Stephen booked the ferry for 9:30am Saturday morning. Most of the group decided to relax around camp while Angela and I went for a walk around Lake St Claire almost to Echo Point and sat on the edge of the lake enjoying the sunshine and the gentle sound of the water lapping in on the sand. This gave us the feeling that we actually had walked from Cradle Mountain to Lake St Claire.

The ferry ride was fun and Lee was waiting at the Lake St Claire Information Center where we were able to have a lovely shower, put on clean clothes, have coffee, snacks etc before heading to Hobart for our last night.

We arrived in Hobart with time to have a quick look around Salamanca Market before meeting for a celebration drink in the sunshine. After a delicious dinner at

(Continued on page 2)

Customs House where we were staying, some of us joined a rather interesting Ghost Tour of Hobart. The guide took us to several historic homes where she claimed there had been reported "ghost activity". I was not convinced but enjoyed walking around Battery Point and, with torches provided, going down into the tunnels where ammunition had been stored in the early settler days. Here we were treated to a glass of port after which we walked through the park to Lenna's, a magnificent old home with commanding views of the harbor and, you guessed it, more ghost stories!!!

Sunday morning dawned bright and sunny and some of us watched the start of the triathlon that was under way. After a great breakfast in the restaurant, we caught the shuttle bus to the airport for our flight home.

We met some lovely people along the way and enjoyed sharing our experiences with them and hearing about their day. Wildlife was abundant and obviously not

threatened by humans. We saw lots of wallabies, wombats, pademelons, a few snakes, a couple of quolls and a variety of birds.

We all survived the walk very well, extremely proud of our achievement and, I hope I speak for everyone, looking forward to the next adventure.

Thank you again to Stephen and Vicki for your wonderful leadership and organization and also a big THANK YOU to everyone for your company and helping to make this a truly unforgettable experience.

Marianne Delima
