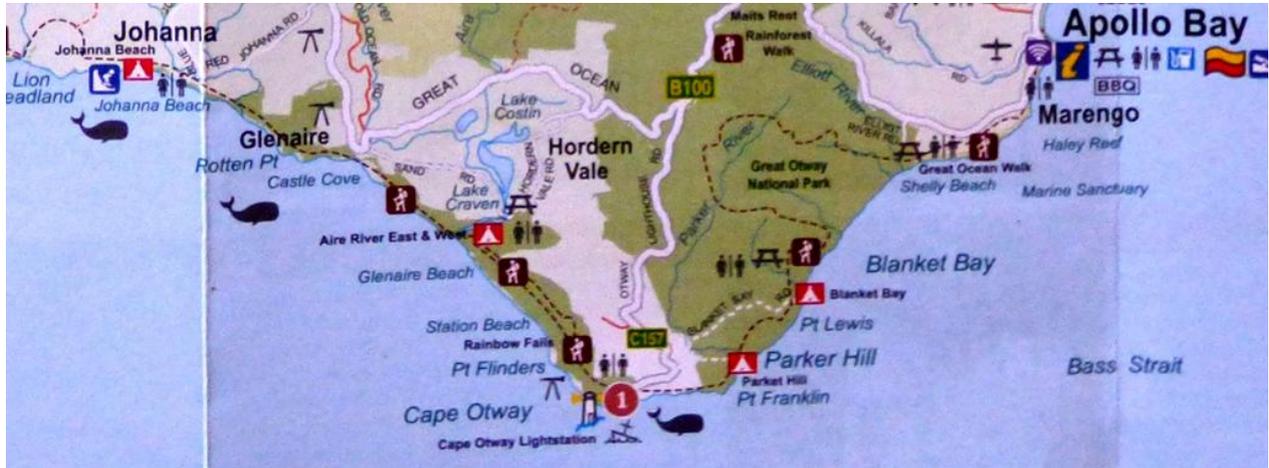


HFNC Otways weekend, 18-20 August 2017

Diane Luhrs, Rod Bird & Dave Munro

Participants: Yvonne Ingeme & Reto Zollinger, Diane Luhrs & Rod Bird, Janeen Samuel, Glenys Cayley, Jane Hayes, Dave & Lyn Munro.

Accommodation: Deluxe cabins at Bimbi Park, 90 Manna Gum Drive, Cape Otway. We hired 2 cabins and the cost per person for the weekend was \$76.



We departed Hamilton for Bimbi Park on Friday 18 August at different times. It rained for most of the afternoon. Glenys and Janeen were able to arrive before 5 pm to pick up the keys. Glenys, Janeen, Dave and Lyn travelled in convoy via Allansford; Jane travelled independently; Rod and Diane travelled via Terang, Cobden and Port Campbell (stopping at Loch Ard Gorge and Thunder Cave during a break in the rain); and Reto and Yvonne arrived at about 7.45 pm but were in time to share dinner with us.

Saturday 19th August

After breakfast and fun photographing a pair of striking King Parrots that came to our balcony, we set off for our morning's walk to the **Cape Otway Lighthouse** and part of the Great Ocean Walk. We bought our tickets to the Lighthouse at Bimbi Park at a discount. As we headed towards the gate we saw 9 Satin Bowerbirds (5 males and 4 females). The shining feathers and the purple eyes of these birds captured our attention. We heard and saw many different birds on our walk – see list below. We also saw trees killed by an excess of Koalas – and the use of trunk guards at Bimbi to protect the Manna Gums.



Dave at Bimbi Park photographing a parrot



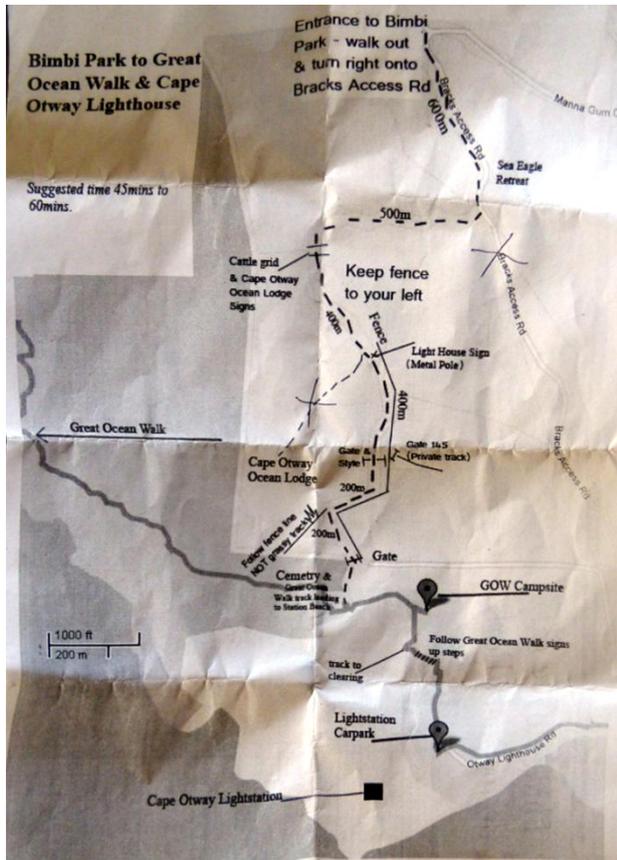
King Parrots at Bimbi



Satin Bowerbird female at Bimbi



Satin Bowerbird male at Bimbi



Sketch map of the walk to Cape Otway Lighthouse



Cape Otway Lighthouse from the walk



View east from the Cape Otway Lighthouse

We spent some time in the museum shed looking at posters, video and photographs of the history of the 1848 Lighthouse, the 1859 Telegraph Station, the shipwreck coast and the palaeontology (polar dinosaurs) of the coastal rim. A few of us climbed up the Lighthouse stairs/ladders, among a throng of other tourists. We all then had our picnic lunch on the veranda of the Old Telegraph Station and then enjoyed a coffee and cake at the café.



Cape Otway Lighthouse



Old Telegraph Station



Lunch at the Old Telegraph Station

After lunch our party split into two groups. Glenys, Dave, Lyn and Jane retraced the path back to our camp. Diane, Rod, Janeen, Yvonne and Reto visited the indigenous monument and the hut with the roof constructed to resemble an abalone shell. A fire was burning in a pit near the centre and the smoke was effectively vented through the spiral of the roof. A representative of the local group explained the Aboriginal presence in the region and the artefacts on display. The return to camp for this group was via the 4-km cliff path on the **Great Ocean Walk** to Station Beach.



Indigenous information shelter



Aboriginal artefacts on display

The coastal scenery was splendid – steep cliffs and interesting tilted limestone/sandstone pavements washed by the surf – and the weather was kind, with odd patches of sunshine.



Views from the Great Ocean Walk



Rainbow Falls on Station Beach

Reaching the intersection of the Great Ocean Walk with the trail to Bimbi, Rod & Janeen took the narrow track back to Bimbi. Diane, Yvonne and Reto descended to the **Station Beach** via the steep and high sand dune for better views of the Rainbow Falls at the southern end. The colours are due to calcium deposits on algae on the mudstone surface of the limestone cliff. As it was late in the afternoon they decided to forgo the walk along the beach to the falls.

After dinner, Reto, Jane, Rod and Yvonne drove out to **Mait's Rest** to see the Glow Worms – there were some to see, one spot near a boarded walkway across a stream showing over a dozen little flashing lights.

Birds seen on Saturday & Sunday at Bimbi and the walk to and from the Otway Lighthouse:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. King Parrot | 10. White-eared Honeyeater | 19. Superb Fairy-wren |
| 2. Crimson Rosella | 11. Magpie-lark | 20. Welcome Swallow |
| 3. Satin Bowerbird | 12. Red-browed Finch | 21. Forest Raven |
| 4. Grey Fantail | 13. Striated Pardalote | 22. Little Raven |
| 5. Australian Magpie | 14. Grey Currawong | 23. Galah |
| 6. Pied Currawong | 15. Eurasian Skylark | 24. Grey Shrike-thrush |
| 7. Rufous Bristlebird (heard) | 16. Scarlet Robin | 25. Brown Thornbill |
| 8. Singing Honeyeater | 17. Silver Gull | 26. Great Cormorant |
| 9. Laughing Kookaburra | 18. Striated Fieldwren | 27. Silveryeye |

Sunday 20th

We were all up in good time to make breakfast, pack lunch and leave camp by 10 am.

The day began with a return visit to **Mait's Rest** to enjoy the large Mountain Ash (*E. regnans*), Myrtle Beech (*Nothofagus antarctica*) and Blackwood (*A. melanoxylon*) and the tall Soft Tree Ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*) that framed our walk. Some Myrtle Beech were huge trees, extending 50 m into the sky. Blackwoods were almost as large.



Near the start of the walk was a massive, slightly leaning giant *E. regnans* with a part-hollowing of the butt that had been cut down 10 m above ground. A good tree faller would have seen where the tree would fall in a storm and then re-sited the tracks on either side of it, leaving the magnificent tree to stand until nature took its course.



Southern Boobook resting in the sun

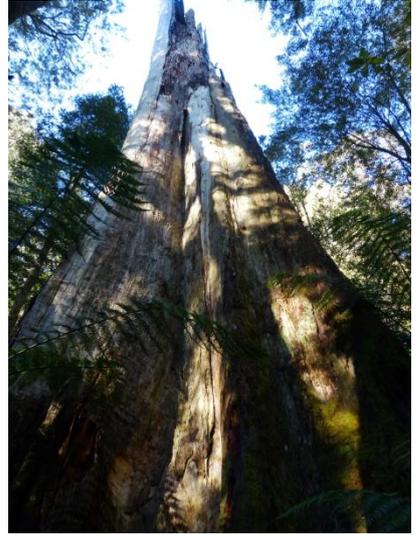


Boardwalk through Soft Tree-ferns



A Southern Boobook was spied sitting facing the sun high up in the hollow of a very tall eucalypt. Closer, but more difficult to photograph, were the Brown Thornbills and White-browed Scrubwrens.

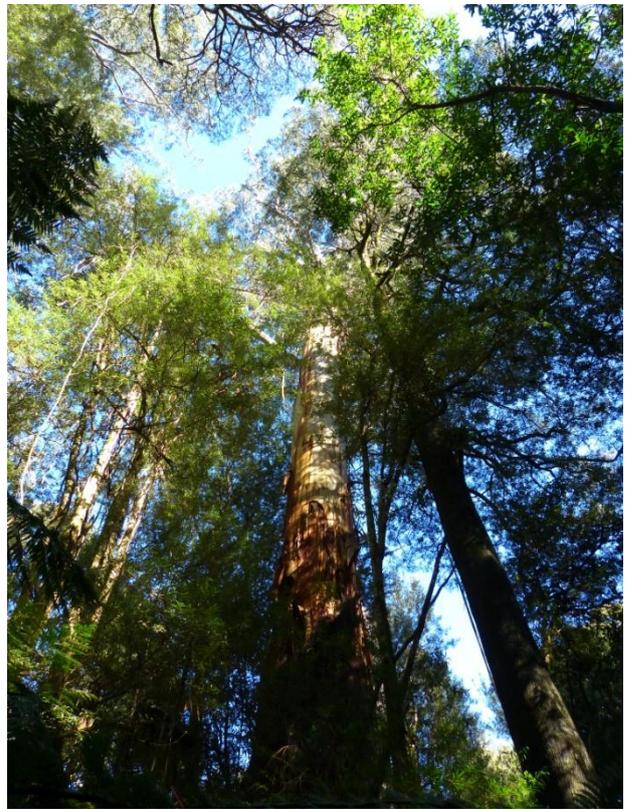
We saw more fungi on this walk than yesterday. The streams were bubbling along under the 4 little bridges we crossed and everything was damp but beautiful. We also saw the threads of the Glow Worms in an area visited after dark last night.



Three giant Mountain Ash at Maits Rest



Myrtle Beech at Maits Rest



Mountain Ash & Blackwood at Maits Rest



Gold-lipped Stereum at Maits Rest



Myrtle Beech at Maits Rest

Our next stop was at the lookout at **Castle Cove**. After taking in the view, our party fragmented with Reto, Yvonne, Rod and Diane remaining to explore the beach via the Great Ocean Walk trail east from the lookout. The beach visit brought to view amazing patterns of eroded cliffs overlain with a veneer of coloured, erosion-resistant mud flow. One impressive section of cliff face was a smooth but fluid shape interrupted either by jagged edges or smooth circular indentations. Nearby cliff faces revealed sand-dune or limestone structures that continue to be worked on by sea, sand, wind and rain.



Castle Cove beach to the east of the lookout



Castle Cove beach to the west



Castle Cove mudflow and patterns of erosion and colours in the mudflow and underlying limestone



From Castle Cove Reto, Yvonne, Rod and Diane drove to **Melba Gully** for lunch. Southern Blue Gum (*E. globulus*) grew tall on the higher approach. Melba Gully is a magnificent block that contains a remnant of the former tall forest of massive Southern Beech, Blackwood, Messmate and Tree Ferns that was given to the government in 1976. The relatively short walk passes Anne's Cascades across the streams and back to the picnic ground. Of fungi, we saw Gold-lipped Stereum, Artists Conk, polypores, rooting shanks and earth stars. Glow Worm threads and one rare carnivorous Otway Black Snail and their shells were also seen. Mountain Bitter Pepper (*Tasmannia lanceolata*) was in bud at the car park.



Melba Gully entrance area with Blackwoods



Melba Gully Soft Tree-ferns



Gold-lipped Stereum on a log



A polypore fungus on a stump



Glow worm threads at Melba Gully



Otway Black Snail at Melba Gully



Myrtle Beech at Melba Gully



Artists Conk at Melba Gully

Birds seen on Sunday at Mait's Rest (R), Melba Gully (G) or Castle Cove (C):

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Southern Boobook (R) | 7. White-browed Scrubwren (R, G) | 13. Eastern Yellow Robin (G) |
| 2. Grey Shrike-thrush (G) | | 14. Brown Thornbill (R,G) |
| 3. Crimson Rosella (G) | 8. Grey Fantail (R) | 15. Rufous Bristlebird (heard) (C) |
| 4. Forest Raven (R) | 9. Australian Magpie (G) | 16. Satin Bowerbird (M) |
| 5. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (G) | 10. Silver Gull (C) | 17. King Parrot (G) |
| 6. Striated Pardalote (G) | 11. Bassian Thrush (R) | |
| | 12. Superb Fairy-wren (G) | |

Fungi identified at Cape Otway (O), Maits Rest (R) or Melba Gully (G):

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>Bulbitius vitellinus</i> (Egg yolk Fungus) - O | 6. <i>Ganoderma australe</i> (Artists Conk) - G |
| 2. <i>Schizophyllum commune</i> (Split Gill) - M | 7. <i>Geastrum</i> sp. (Earth Star) - G |
| 3. <i>Hypholoma</i> sp. (Sulphur Tuft) - R | 8. A polypore - G |
| 4. <i>Stereum ostrea</i> (Gold-lipped Stereum) -M, G | 9. Rooting Shank - G |
| 5. <i>Heterotextus miltinus</i> (Yellow Jelly Bells) - G | |

On the way home some stopped for views at Lock Ard, Thunder Cave and near Port Campbell.



Views of the cliffs east from Port Campbell



Views of Loch Ard and Thunder Cave

