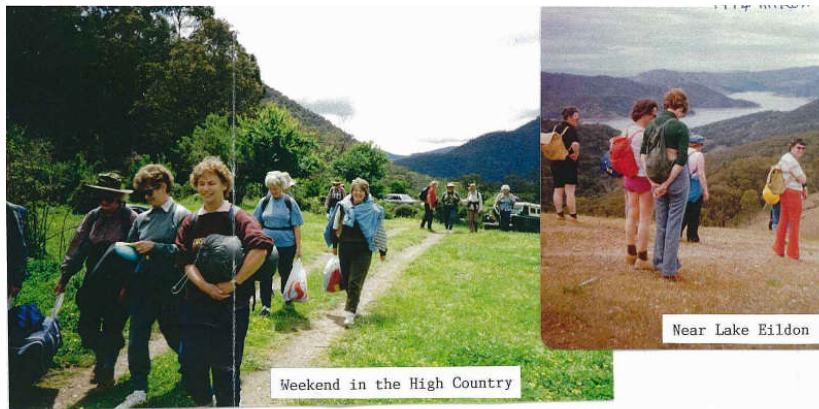


Ringwood Heights Ladies Bushwalking group

Informal group which went for 2 – 4 hour walks (approx) every Thursday in school term times commencing in 1971. The name ‘Ringwood Heights’ was adopted as we met near Ringwood Heights School at 9.30. Prompt. (We tried to be prompt!) Most, if not all of us had children at the school.

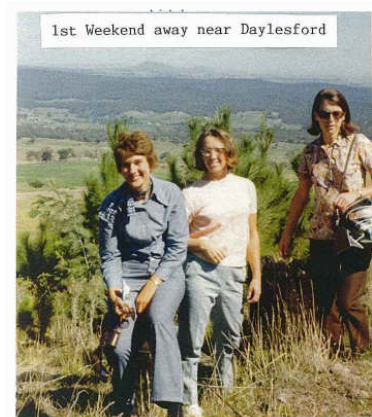
The group began when Betty asked a few mums who lived locally, whether they would like to go for walks in the country together to have a change from home and family, to see more of the countryside, and to enjoy some companionship, also exercise no doubt! She perceived that a number of us such as myself, knew few people in the area. As an example of this idea, our family had recently come to Ringwood from England and knew nobody! Thus the group began walking each Thursday – few of us worked in those days!! Some had part time jobs. So we fitted family needs and P/T work around our group explorations – until 3.30 – school home-time.



Weekends away

We decided, at Betty’s suggestion, to extend our activities to three weekends away per year – once a term! We took off into the unknown leaving “Them all” to cope without us!

The first weekend was held in a Daylesford area – we stayed in a central hotel (pub type – not expensive motel type). We usually chose this type of accommodation as town hotels were mostly friendly and inexpensive.



The first weekend was unfortunate for Ruth Schneider as some of her possessions were stolen from the car parked outside the hotel – a good learning experience for all of us to lock up our cars, even in country towns and to no leave our goods in cars overnight! T’was quite noisy in

the street late in the evening – perhaps we also valued quiet rooms after that. Never mind, a good weekend in all!

Where

Where did we walk? Usually we drove for up to half an hour to sites in the Dandenongs or the Warrandyte area; sometimes we bravely went further afield to Healesville area or beyond Monbulk or to Arthur's Creek.

Betty usually chose the walk route, either looking at maps or relying on her memory of trips in the area. Most others did not have many ideas of walking sites at first, but later made suggestions as the group progressed.

At some point we started giving small monetary gifts to the drivers towards petrol costs as we tried to take it in turns to drive to the starting points. We also tried to plan circular walks to cover a greater variety of tracks (or roads). Mostly we walked on tracks where possible, but gravel roads often had to be included.



Christmas time

Each year we held a Christmas party. These were held at a bushland site for several years. In the 1980s, Pam Mauritzen invited us to go to her property close to Seville for our Xmas party. So we went there for many years – we found the facilities and hospitality were tops!! The expansive property was wonderful for our group to potter around, and likewise the outdoor BBQ and eating area catered easily for large groups like ours.



At 2010 this group is still walking! It started almost 40 years ago! There have been minor changes eg. the group divided into 2 groups some years ago to cater for varied abilities – the ‘slower walkers’ group cater for those less able to walk at the average speed of walks. Aging and health issues were the main factors here. Those who were 30 years old in 1970 were 60 years old in 2000!!! – and were not quite so spritely!



Written by Carol Clarke (past walker), April 2010