

HFNC excursion to Byaduk Caves & The Great Barrier – 18 June 2022

Reto Zollinger & Yvonne Ingeme

Participants: Reto Zollinger, Yvonne Ingeme, Janeen Samuel, Peter Hocking, Peter McDonald, Caroline MacDonald, Sarah Scott and visitors Rob Stewart and Caroline & Michael Woodward.

We enjoyed a nice sunny day from 9.30 am exploring the lava flow and its features before having lunch at The Great Barrier and returning via the north dry stone wall back to the car park. We finished up at 2 pm.



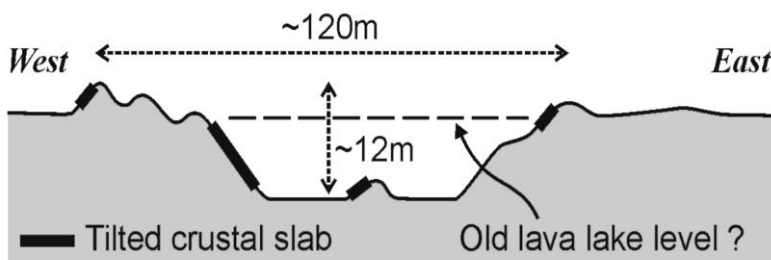
Map of The Great Barrier area of Mount Napier State Park

The dark straight lines in the aerial photo mark the lava-stone fences that bound the public land; the area outside (respectively north and south of the stone walls) is private land and includes undeveloped lava country. The Great Barrier is located about 1.8 km walk following the southern dry stone wall toward Mount Tapoc (Napier). A more direct route would be to follow the northern stone wall on its E-W course, then continue on that line past the North bend in the wall to the midpoint of the Great Barrier.

Ken Grimes (KGG) described the Great Barrier thus:

‘It runs in a curve, about 400 m long, transverse to the lava flow direction. There is a sharp ridge at the downflow (west) side, a central deep trench, and a much less obvious ridge on the upflow side (see cross-section).

Tilted crustal slabs can be seen on the sides of the ridges, at angles up to 45°. It has usually been attributed to pressure folding of the crust as the lava moved (e.g. Skeats & James, 1937), but when seen on air photos, its shape and the presence of multiple smaller ridges suggests that the trough may have been a lava lake with multiple overflow ridges on both sides, followed by subsidence of the crusted floor as pressure was lost at the end of the eruption’.



HFNC had 3 previous excursions to this site:

- May 1977 with Lionel Elmore
- May 1990 with John Cayley
- May 2011 with Ken Grimes.



Lunch on The Great Barrier (looking south)

Four of the party had a brief visit to Church Arch and others poked their heads into small cave features on the way back but none of them ‘went’ (i.e. none extended beyond the opening space).



Bridge Cave



Church Arch (looking out)



One of the open lava canals where the roof of the ‘tube’ has collapsed

Plants observed during the day included Wallaby Grass, Tree Violet, Black Wattle, Blackwood, Rock Fern, Maidenhair Fern, Manna Gum, Kidney-weed, Sweet Bursaria, Bracken, Sheep’s Burr, Earth Stars, Geranium.

Goats were observed – action taken by ParksVictoria staff in the park in the previous 3 years had culled at least 340 animals but the problem remains; goats camping in the sink holes remove the ferns. Native fauna seen included Swamp Wallaby, Australian Magpie, Laughing Kookaburra and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo.