

HFNC Excursion to Gariwerd Peaks Trail, Wurgarri loop, 19 November 2022

Present: Ross Simpson, Reto Zollinger, Yvonne Ingeme, Peter Hocking, Pam Lehman, Janeen Samuel

In spite of a discouraging weather forecast, five of us set out from Hamilton to Dunkeld, where we met our leader, Ross Simpson. We drove to the Wurgarri/Mt Sturgeon car park, where we encountered a small group of walkers who were just finishing the north-south Peak Trail. (The final part, from there to Dunkeld, was closed due to flooding.)



Our objective was to walk the Wurgarri circuit, which includes the climb to the summit (GNP114). From the Mt Sturgeon car park (GNP113) we walked Sth along an old trail to an intersection with the new Peaks Trail (GNP244). Along this part we noticed a great number of largish white daisy flowers with yellow centres which were possibly Blunt Everlasting (*Argentipallium obtusifolium*).



Argentipallium sp.



Ross, Reto, Yvonne, Janeen & Peter starting out

We saw a number of flowering species, including Large Duck Orchid (*Caleana major*), Tiger Orchid (*Diuris sulphurea*) and Bronze Caps (*Caladenia iridescens*).



Tiger (Hornet) Orchid



Large Duck orchid



Bronze Caps

As the climb became steeper, on the way to GPT114, Yvonne decided to turn back and go to Baingug instead, while the rest of us continued. Soon after this the promised rain began.



First sections of the trail

The trail led around the south-western side of the mountain, the route across a couple of cliff faces made possible by engineered sections. We noted Chocolate Lilies (*Arthropodium* sp.) and a Bassian Thrush.



A metal staircase section

We stopped for lunch in a moderately sheltered spot on the rise beyond the saddle. We had met a small party of walkers during our ascent, and another party came through while we were eating. All three parties we met consisted of well-seasoned walkers, all from Melbourne, and all very enthusiastic about the trail despite the weather; one man said it was the best walk he'd ever done.

We didn't linger long on the summit because there was a cold wind blowing through damp clothes, and the view was partly obscured by the rain. The trail then took us from GNP114 to GNP112.



Another flight of stairs



On the summit of Wurgarri



Eucalypt flowers



Lichen



A Platyhelminth flatworm



A rocky section descending



Looking west over the Wannan River to Mt Sturgeon Homestead



Flowers seen on the mountain and what appears (from the photo above) to be Shiny Tea-tree (*Leptospermum turbinatum*), a species with large white flowers that grows on many Gariwerd peaks.

The trail around the west side of Wurgarri gives great views of the Wannon River and the old Mt Sturgeon homestead. On a fine day great views further afield to Mt Napier and the Victoria Range would be seen. On this day there were no good views from the summit; on a clear day the sparkling waters of Bradys Swamp adjacent to the Wannon River to the east can clearly be seen.

We branched off the Peaks Trail at GN112 to follow the old track down the mountain to the car park (GNP113). The rain stopped and we had views to both east and west of all the swamps full of water. Later we even had some sun.

Among the flowers we admired were i Ivy-leaf Violet (*Viola hederacea*), the Flame Grevillea (*Grevillea speciosa* ssp. *dimorpha*) and also a Variable Prickly Grevillea (*Grevillea aquifolium*). A large gilled fungus, possibly an *Omphalotus* or *Armillaria* sp., was prominent along the way.

On the last section of the track we heard a Fantail Cuckoo.



Back to the car park



A gilled fungus



Flame Grevillea RB



Variable Prickly Grevillea RB

Once back at the car park, Ross, Pam and Peter decided to go to the Bainggug/Piccaninny car park to look for orchids, while Janeen and Reto headed back to Hamilton.

Much of the information for this report was provided by Janeen, while Pam provided all of the photographs except two from Rod Bird (RB). Rod compiled the report.



Viola hederacea