

U3A Port Fairy  
Science...naturally!  
**Battery Point – Self-guided nature walk**

John Miller March 2020



This is the second in a series of self-guided walks around Port Fairy to help relieve the tedium of COVID-19. The aim of the walks is to provide enjoyable outdoor activities that can be undertaken either by yourself or your family (with appropriate COVID-19 separation and other precautions). I hope you enjoy them.

This walk introduces you to a few of the natural features of Battery Point that you may have wondered about or maybe never noticed before. It is a bit like a treasure hunt – locations are not marked on the ground so you will need to keep your eyes peeled for the plants and other features illustrated.

To start the walk, take the left turn at the south end of Griffiths Street opposite the yacht club to the carpark. Park the car and walk down the boat ramp onto Little East Beach.



The large shrub leaning over the boat ramp is Coast Teatree *Leptospermum laevigatum*. Despite being a plant native to Victoria and common in Port Fairy it is considered introduced to all coastal areas west of Anglesea.

The small rounded grey shrubs under the Teatree are Cushion Bush *Leucophyta brownii* a native daisy species.

The spindly shrub in front of the Teatree is a small Drooping Sheoak *Allocasuarina verticillata* which has been planted as part of the restoration of Battery Point.

The walk goes south along the beach and then along the walking tracks in the bushy section of Battery Point. The tracks are generally well formed but there are a few steps.

If you want to avoid the beach and steps, go to the path on the south-east corner of the carpark and make your way along the bush tracks.

Little East Beach is one of the best shell beaches in Port Fairy. Look out for the triangular Southern Trough-shell *Mactra australis* – the most common shell you will see at lower tides. Many of these shells have holes bored into them. If the holes are countersunk, they have been attacked and eaten by the predatory Conical Sand-snail *Conuber conicum* which is also responsible for the firm jelly crescent egg sacks which often get confused for jellyfish.

The fragile Australian Angel-wing *Barnea australasiae* are often washed up on the beach as are the green and white Wavy Turban *Lunella undulata*. The Wavy Turbans get washed onto the beach attached to seaweed and are a favourite food of the Pacific Gulls who smash them open on the rocks. Pipsis *Donax deltoides*, can be recognised by the shiny porcelain-like inside of the shell and often look like purplish butterflies. They burrow into the sand below the waves.



Southern Trough-shell



Conical Sand-snail



Egg sack of the Conical Sand-snail  
(Photo Jane Lee)



Australian Angel-wing



Wavy Turban



Pipi

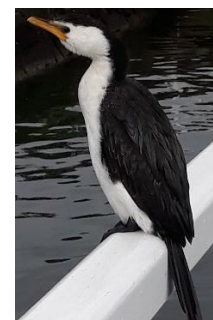
On the beach also look out for some of the usual coastal birds like the Pacific Gull (red lipstick), Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers (long red beaks) and Little Pied Cormorants (yellow beak).



Pacific Gull



Sooty and Pied Oystercatchers



Little Pied Cormorant

Continue walking south along the beach until you see a track off to the right up into the bush area – if you reach the river you have gone too far!



Follow the track back to the car park or up past the little blue stone powder magazine to the top of Battery Hill for a view over the ocean and Moyne River.

Some of the common smaller understorey plants you will see along the way are Hares-tale Grass (often called pussy-tails) *Lagurus ovatus* – a weed but attractive; Coast Sword-sedge *Lepidosperma gladiatum* with a cluster of brown papery flowers on flattened stems which have very sharp edges; and, Short-flowered Flax-lily *Dianella brevicaulis* which has little blue lily-type flowers in spring followed by purple berries. Sword-sedge and Flax-lily are both natives.



Hares-tail Grass



Coast Sword-sedge



Short-flowered Flax-lily

And some of the taller shrubs include Moonah *Melaleuca lanceolata*, a native which flowers in March and also occurs naturally in the Mallee; Coast Daisy-bush *Olearia axillaris* which is confined to sandy areas along the Victoria coast; and, Large Kangaroo-apple *Solanum laciniatum* - a member of the tomato family. Large Kangaroo-apple is an early coloniser after disturbance and was very common after the woody weeds (mainly Italian Buckthorn *Rhamnus alaternus*) were removed as part of the restoration of Battery Point but is now starting to die out.



Moonah



Coast Daisy-bush



Large Kangaroo-apple

There are many more plants and other good stuff to discover along the tracks so take your time...and your hand lens.

If you find a plant, shell, bird, whatever, and want to know what it is, email me a picture and a short description and I will endeavour to work it out for you. Email me at:

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Please feel free to share this with anyone else who might enjoy the walk.