



**THE
VICTORIAN SEEKERS CLUB
INC**

MEMBERS' HANDBOOK

2018

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Preface to the fourth edition

The Members' Handbook is an important document that the Club has produced to assist members to enjoy prospecting and camping in an effective, legal and safe manner, and to promote friendship with other members.

This edition includes our new website address, Facebook page, explanation of the role of the nominated camp Duty Officer, and clarification of the Club Rules.

The Committee recognises the continual need for a duty of care to members on all club activities and especially while camping in the bush and would therefore like to highlight the importance of our camp sign-in book, including departure date, for a clear view of members present at any time, which is particularly important in cases of emergency, such as a bushfire.

Please take the time to read this handbook and become familiar with the rules and hints, and particularly the emergency procedures, as they may save a life – perhaps your own.

Susan Moore, President, December 2018

Members Handbook origins

The Members Handbook had its origins in 1986 by Life Member Shirley Don. In 2008 a revised edition was produced with credit to Peter Maffey and Lindsay Tricker who put in much valuable work. Acknowledgement for the formalizing of the 2015 version and the new emergency guidelines was due to the hardworking members of our committee, with Ian Semmens and Geoff Lee making significant contributions. With thanks to Paul Hart and Eric Grummett for their assistance in updating the 2018 version.

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The story of the Victorian Seekers Club

In February 1980, the Victorian Seekers Club was formed by David and Pam Snelling. At this time large gold nuggets were being found in the golden triangle of Victoria. David noticed that many metal detectors were being offered for sale in the local newspaper. He spoke to several people offering the detectors for sale and realised all of them had the same story - they were unsure how to use their machines, did not know where to go to find gold and knew no-one of like interest to discuss detecting for gold.

David decided to use his experience in metal detecting to form a club in the Waverley area and advertised in the local paper that a meeting would be held at Waverley, inviting all interested persons to attend. To his surprise there was 'standing room only'. That night the Victorian Seekers Club (hereafter referred to as the Club) was formed with 37 inaugural members. Within the first 18 months membership grew to over 150 members.



During the 38 years that the Club has been operating, we have visited and detected in over 50 goldfields in Victoria, finding thousands of nuggets, and although most of these are small, there have been a few in the 3-5 ounces weight range. The Club has also found many coins and relics. In addition, there have been extended detecting trips to Western Australia, NSW and Queensland. We have had gold panning days, beach detecting outings and many social outings. We have also participated

in detector token hunts organised by local community groups in Ararat, Wedderburn and Tarnagulla, and teams have participated in the Victorian and the National Gold Panning Championships with some success.

We enjoy a good working relationship with State Government bodies that regulate our activities and we are involved in all relevant government inquiries into our hobby by putting forward submissions in the support of our continued access to the prospecting areas.

Due to the hard work and dedication of the various Committees and the participation and support of members, the Club has grown to be one of the largest and most active detecting clubs in Australia.



The Club offers members an opportunity to go prospecting with other like-minded persons and to gain knowledge and experience of both prospecting and camping. In the Club there is a wide range of skills in all forms of prospecting, with the more experienced members willing to instruct newer members.

Another important aspect is that members are given the chance to explore local and remote areas that they would not normally visit, and appreciate the "Great Australian Bush".

We wish everyone success in their prospecting, but most importantly, to enjoy the time in the bush, the park, the beach or wherever you are. Have fun with this great hobby and enjoy the fresh air and exercise in the company of fellow prospectors.

Overview of the Club

The Victorian Seekers Club is a family oriented organisation, the objectives of which are to promote friendship, co-operation and exchange of ideas among people interested in prospecting and metal detecting.

We help members acquire the skills needed to make their chosen hobby an enjoyable and rewarding pastime. We arrange outings to the goldfields and other prospecting sites - to search for gold, and where permitted by law, coins and relics. In addition, we also hold functions to foster social contacts among members.

Our prospecting activities are governed by a code of conduct as laid out in the Club Rules, including respecting owners of private property and respecting the natural environment. Hence our motto: ***"SEEK BUT DON'T DESTROY"***

The Club has a general meeting at 8pm on the first Wednesday of each month (except January) held at the Mulgrave Senior Citizens and Community Centre, 355 Wellington Road, Mulgrave (Melway map reference 71 C12).

Field trips are arranged each month to the goldfields and directions are published in the bi-monthly Club Newsletter. All meeting and outing dates are also advertised on our website: <http://www.victorianseekersclub.org.au>

Visitors, guests and prospective new members are welcome to attend two outings and/or two meetings for mutual appraisal, at which stage their application for membership will be considered by the Committee.



A 90 gram nugget detected by a member on a club camp

Statement of Purpose:

The purposes of the Club are to:

- promote the skill of prospecting using metal detectors and other suitable equipment in the search for gold, other precious metals, minerals, gemstones, coins, artefacts and relics
- encourage and foster friendship and co-operation amongst people interested in the above pursuits
- collaborate with other similar clubs and organisations e.g. PMAV and BUGU, to promote and protect our rights and access to areas for prospecting
- hold meetings, lectures, demonstrations, field outings and competitions for the furtherance of members' prospecting skills and experience
- engage in fund raising activities for the bona fide purposes of the Club
- encourage all members to act in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, and in accordance with the law

The Club Constitution

The Club is fully incorporated and as such is required by law to have a formal constitution. The Club Constitution sets out in detail the structure of our Club including such things as: election and duties of office bearers, conduct of meetings, mediation and resolution of disputes, and the process of imposing sanctions upon members who have refused or failed or neglected to comply with the rules of the Club.

For full details refer to a copy of the Club's Constitution.

Public liability insurance

The Club carries Public Liability Insurance. The cover is Australia-wide in respect of official Club excursions.

Members should note that the cover is **NOT** for Club members' personal injury or personal property - it is to cover the Club and its Officers in the event of being sued by third party for injury, damage or loss caused by or due to an act of negligence by any Club Member(s). The Club will not accept responsibility or any claim from a member or visitor for personal injury, damage or loss to property, while participating in any form of Club activity.

Members should ensure their caravans and other property are insured.

Social media

With the increasing use of the internet and related technologies by members, the Club implemented policies regarding the use of Social Media sites. Due respect to others must be given, and the Administrator can remove inappropriate comments or images. Further details at:

<https://www.victorianseekersclub.org.au/facebook--social-media-policies>

The primary purpose of the Club's original Facebook page was to facilitate private social communications amongst members. However, in 2018 Facebook deemed that, as a community organisation, we had to convert to a public page: <https://www.facebook.com/Victorian-Seekers-Prospecting-Club> As a result of this change, directions to club campsites are no longer published on Facebook.

Club Rules

The Rules have evolved to guide members participating in Club camps and outings to do so safely and lawfully, thus creating a congenial atmosphere in which members' enjoyment and satisfaction is maintained, and the natural environment preserved.

The Club takes its duty of care for the safety and wellbeing of its members seriously and exercises all reasonable steps to ensure that this is achieved. This is not just out of concern for our members but a legal requirement. A bush camp, and the surrounding bushland, is a constantly changing environment and it can become hazardous as weather and the levels of natural threats change. The Club will do all that it reasonably can to keep the members informed of any hazardous situation. However, it must be emphasized that each and every member is responsible for their own safety and wellbeing.

Note that Members who choose to camp and prospect outside the nominated dates for outings or outside the nominated camping area are doing so independently of the Club and need to act accordingly.

The following Club Rules apply equally to all members and their guests. Members are responsible for informing their guests of Club Rules and Emergency Procedures and ensuring they comply with same.

Joining Fee and Annual Subscription

The annual subscription shall become due on the first day of July each year. Members whose current subscription is in arrears on the first day of September shall automatically cease to be members and can only be re-admitted upon payment of both the annual subscription and a joining fee.

Field trips

The positions of 'Duty Officer' and 'Field Officer' should not be accepted lightly for they carry responsibilities which help ensure the safety and success of Club field trips.

Duty Officer

For each Club outing a 'Duty Officer' shall be appointed for the duration of the outing at the committee meeting prior to camp. Where necessary, a second duty officer will be appointed to cover the entire outing. The appointment would normally be the Club President or other senior member of the committee.

Specific duties:

- At the committee meeting, identify any special activities being conducted at the outing and ensure any additional resources are allocated and members appointed to manage particular activities
- Ensure the sign-in tent, Club's first aid kit, detector, chainsaw, and camp signs are taken to camp and set up where necessary
- List the Duty Officer/s name/s and mobile number/s in the Sign-in book
- Identify any prospective members at the outing and provide them with an orientation briefing, including safety matters
- For larger outings with numerous activities and/or a number of prospective members, organise meetings of Field Officers and other key members to ensure activities are being managed and prospective members have an experienced 'buddy' for guidance
- Manage safety, health and environmental matters (SH&E) at the outing e.g. identify first aider/s, ensure the location of the first aid kit is known, and any fire risk is identified and managed and notified to members via the Club's notice board clearly labelled "Bushfire Status"
- At the Saturday night raffle, provide members with an update on camp activities, club issues/information, SH&E issues

Field Officers

Field Officers are experienced Club members who are expected to:

- Carry and erect Club signs to guide members into the camp site
- Assist Duty Officer and other committee members at camp in ensuring Club Rules are complied with
- Make themselves available to assist, advise and guide new members at camp and on the gold fields
- Note suitable available camping sites within the camp site and be prepared to guide in late arrivals by torch light where necessary
- Collect firewood for the communal campfire
- Determine the best central position for the campfire, dig the requisite hole, then build the fire in readiness for lighting. If unsure of any restrictions on fire-lighting or firewood gathering they must first check with the Duty Officer or a member of committee
- On special occasions, assist in erecting and pulling down the Club marquee, carrying trestle tables, generators, and the like
- Ensure that at the end of a camp all fires are completely extinguished and the camp is left in a clean condition

Ordinary Members

On field trips, all members are required to:

- Be responsible for any visitors they have brought or invited
- Comply with any Lawful Statutory Authority, including Police and Fire officers and Park Rangers
- Comply with any direction given by the Duty Officer or committee member pursuant to Club activities
- Offer assistance in whatever capacity they are physically able, be it food preparation, table setting or decorating the venue
- All able-bodied members to assist in erecting the Club marquee, collecting firewood and preparation of the main campfire
- Winners of Club Treasure Hunts should be ready to collect the tokens and demarcation ribbons ready to set up the treasure hunt at the next camp

Sign-in book

The name and mobile number of the nominated Duty Officer and First Aider will be displayed in the Sign-in book, along with a list of the current Committee.

During a camp all adult Members, Guests and Visitors (collectively referred to as campers) must sign-in on arrival. Anyone arriving early or late at night should sign-in at the earliest opportunity. Campers are to record their name, date arrived, anticipated final departure from the camp (as in, not returning to camp), mobile phone number and emergency contact numbers.

It is highly recommended that campers have at least several phone numbers of members present at the camp stored on their mobile phone. These numbers can be obtained from the Sign-in book.

The primary purpose of the Sign-in book is for emergency use. For example, if there is a bushfire, or a member becomes lost, has an accident, illness, or any other emergency, the Club then has a way of contacting the member(s) or, if appropriate, contacting a family member or relative.

It is the campers' responsibility to maintain a record of their attendance. Failure to do so in an emergency situation may jeopardise their own safety, or the safety of others. Campers who depart without signing-out, at a time other than indicated in the Sign-in book, should advise the Duty Officer or another Committee Member (who is remaining at camp) at the earliest opportunity. This could be by phone.



Members gathered around the main camp fire at the end of the day.

Miners Right

The Victorian Mining Law states that all adults who look for gold, gemstones or any other minerals in the State of Victoria must hold a current Miners Right. It is each individual prospector's responsibility to obtain and maintain a current Miners Right. Without a Miners Right you have no legal right to search for minerals, including gold, which remain the property of the Crown (Government). The back of the Miners Right contains some of the conditions imposed on the holder.

No Miners' Right is required to detect for modern coins or jewellery. However, the Heritage Act forbids the removal of artefacts and relics from declared historic sites. Full protection is also accorded to Australian Aboriginal Artefacts and Sacred Sites.

Back-filling of detector holes

All holes dug as a result of a detector signal must be fully refilled after the hole is finished with. The ground should be made to look as close as possible to what it did before you dug the target. In addition, holes dug for panning or sluicing should also be filled. The Miner's Right states "The holder of a miner's right must repair any damage to the land arising out of the search" and stipulates a monetary penalty.

Detecting on private land

Members must obtain permission from the landowner before detecting on any private land. The Miners Right does not grant any right to detect on private land unless you have the express consent of the owner. It is preferable that consent be obtained on each visit to the locality. The landowner can withdraw consent at any time.

In cases where the Club has obtained permission for members to detect on private land, members are only permitted to use such land for the period of the one specific outing and not at other times.

Places where detecting is banned

Detecting is banned at all times in cemeteries, lone graves, declared historic sites and on roads. Members should also not detect on historic puddlers. Detecting is banned in most National Parks and in some parts of State Parks and Reserves. However there are parts of several National Parks where gold prospecting is allowed. Refer to the Duty Officer for more information.

Prospecting at night

Prospecting and detecting is only permitted during daylight hours. The danger associated with mine shafts, injury, or just getting lost is greatly increased at night. Other Club Members' safety may also be put at risk in trying to assist you in the event of an accident.

Dogs at camp

The permits issued to the Club by the governing authorities stipulate that all dogs brought to field trips must be kept on a leash at all times; this also applies while out detecting. It is the responsibility of the dog owner to collect and properly dispose of their dog's droppings.

There are some camps where dogs are not allowed. This is normally noted in the newsletter under the camp map; however it is the dog owner's responsibility to check current regulations. A dog may not be brought into most National and State parks - including being in your car.

Firearms

Firearms should not be brought to Club outings however if a lawful and genuine reason exists for a firearm to be in the possession of a Club member, the firearm must be kept secure and on no account produced or discharged.

Campfires

The lighting of campfires, including personal cooking fires, is strictly controlled by regulations at all times of the year. On occasion, the Committee Members present may decide that weather conditions and the abundance of dry undergrowth will make the lighting of a fire too risky and a 'NO FIRES' sign will be erected or it will be noted on the Club notice board. Members are requested not to light a fire when the sign is displayed or if directed by a Committee Member, Field Officer or Duty Officer.

In accordance with CFA regulations, when the lighting of a fire is permitted, it can only be done by following the directions. In brief they are:

- The area selected must be clear of everything combustible for 3 meters in all directions including directly above.
- The campfire must be built in a properly constructed fireplace or a trench 30 centimetres deep (one foot) and must be kept small - only sufficient for warmth and cooking.
- Fires must not be built against standing dry tree stumps - the roots can burn underground, sometimes for days.
- If the wind speed exceeds 10 kph, then the campfire has to be extinguished. It is strong winds that fan embers into life and spread sparks into surrounding dry grass and leaves.
- Fires must be attended at all times. Members finding an unattended fire shall immediately report the matter to a Committee Member who will arrange for the fire to be extinguished.
- On days of declared 'Total Fire Ban', no fires of any description are permitted to be lit in the open air nor allowed to remain alight. This includes candles, mosquito coils, and solid fuel barbecues. Gas BBQs are permitted.

For more details on fire regulations please download the CFA "I Can, I Can't" brochure at: <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/can>

Generators

The use of generators is not encouraged. The noise and exhaust fumes of a generator can be the source of annoyance to other campers. Alternative sources of power such as batteries charged by solar panels are preferred. If used, the generator should be sited away from other campers where possible, and steps should be taken to minimize noise by siting it in a pit or hole, or erecting a sound barrier. A generator can only be used between the hours of 8:00am to 9:00pm and should be operated for as short as time as possible.

Vehicles

Members must drive their vehicles with due care at all times while in camp and in its vicinity. In dry conditions, drive at a walking speed while in camp to minimise dust.

The practice of running the engine of mobile homes and camper buses for extended periods in order to warm the vehicle is not permitted while near other campers. It also pollutes the camp area with engine fumes.

Stay on defined tracks and pull off the roadway in natural clearings when parking to avoid damaging the vegetation. So-called bush-bashing or driving off-road is banned.

Camp rubbish and toilet waste

All domestic waste, rubbish and dog droppings are to be bagged and removed from the public lands. It is unlawful to bury same. Do not try to burn cans, bottles and any plastic in the fire. It is important to leave the campsite in a clean condition. If there is any other rubbish in the camp, please clean it up and take it with you.

The use of chemical toilets is encouraged but the waste must not be emptied in the camp site or surrounds but taken home and tipped down the sewer or a designated dump point. If defecating in the bush, you must dig a hole and properly bury the waste. This needs to be done well away from water courses, dams and lakes which could become contaminated.

Emergency Procedures

Be prepared

While we all hope that a camping and detecting outing will be without emergency, accident or illness, not everything can be prevented. We can however, be prepared to deal with common emergency situations.

Each camp map published in the Club Newsletter contains emergency numbers to contact essential services, the camp map co-ordinates and the fire region that the camp is located in. Members are encouraged to bring the map page with them to the camp or save it to their mobile phone.

Prospecting is an enjoyable activity however there are some inherent dangers on the goldfields. Chief amongst these is the danger of falling down an open or concealed mineshaft. Take particular care around these. Also be watchful of animals such as snakes, wild dogs and kangaroos. While they will often run away, if confronted and provoked, they can attack.

It is not advisable to prospect alone. Team up with a mate. If you do detect alone, tell someone of your intended destination, and stay in sight of your car. It is much easier to find a car in the bush than a person who becomes lost or injured.



Remember: **Members are responsible for their own safety!**

First Aid equipment

The Club's First Aid Kit is present at the outings however **members should carry their own First Aid Kits at all times.**

It is important to carry a comprehensive First Aid Kit in your car (along with a woollen blanket and water) and highly advisable to have a small basic First Aid Kit with you while detecting, particularly a pressure bandage to use in the event of a snake bite. Stinging insects such as ants, scorpions and spiders are common on the goldfields so make sure that you have some anti-sting ointment in your kit as well.

Should further First Aid be required, check with the Duty Officer regarding the location of the Club's kit.

Mobile phone and water

If going out detecting, it is *highly recommended* that at a minimum you should always **carry a fully charged mobile phone and water**. You should have other members' mobile phone numbers stored on your phone so you can contact them in an emergency. Store close family and relative's phone numbers in your phone under the name of ICE (*In Case of Emergency*) to allow others to contact them if you are somehow incapacitated.

It is also highly advisable to have your mobile phone turned on while detecting, in case you need to be contacted in an emergency situation. Be aware that mobile telephone reception can be very poor in the mountainous country of the goldfields, even though the network mobile coverage has much improved over the last few years.

A smartphone with a GPS and map application such as Google maps or OziExplorer will assist you greatly in finding your way, but only if you are proficient in their use. Don't wait for an emergency to test out these apps.

Also download the CFA FireReady app and configure it to send you Alerts within a radius covering at least, the forest surrounding the camp and your prospecting areas - probably 20kms.

Other equipment

Wearing suitable clothing and carrying a few extra items of equipment can make all the difference to how comfortable and safe you are when out detecting.

Along with your basic first aid kit, phone and water, it is also *highly advisable* to carry emergency items such as a handheld GPS unit, a compass and topographic map, torch, whistle, matches or a lighter, UHF radio and a snack bar. Remember to carry spare batteries with you for your GPS or radio.

CB radio units are very useful to communicate on the field over short distances and relatively flat ground and the Club preferred UHF channel is 12, however their reception is limited to line of sight which could be as little as 500 meters.

Bushfire Emergency

Camp Cancellation

The Club may cancel an outing before or during prescribed dates; nominally determined by weather forecasts, CFA Alerts and Code Red conditions, or any major incident. Notification of a Camp Cancellation will be posted via available internet resources (e.g. Club website, Facebook and email). Members without internet access should contact other Club Members.

NOTE: In the event that a Code Red Alert is declared, the camp Duty Officer must initiate a Camp Cancellation. DELWP (Dept of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) or Parks Victoria will close most forests and parks during Code Red days and penalties may apply for those that enter a park or forest that is closed.

Bushfire Awareness

During Camps and especially during the bushfire season, it is the Members' responsibility to keep themselves informed of potentially hazardous or severe weather. This could be through the radio, Victorian Bushfire Information Line, the CFA website or the CFA smart phone application "FireReady", the VicEmergency website, or the Club's Bushfire Status board. **VicEmergency** is Victoria's primary website for incident information and warnings on fire and flood, and lists other types of emergencies and incidents.

During adverse or threatening weather conditions, Members should make a special effort to maintain UHF and/or mobile phone communications. However, as mobile phone and UHF reception is not always available, Members should periodically check for Voicemail and SMSs. Members who use a channel other than UHF Channel 12 should maintain a scan on Channel 12.

In the event that a Member detects smoke or fire, they should (not necessarily in this order):

- Refer to any Bushfire Status notification on the Club's noticeboard
- Check if it is a local burn-off via any of:
 - VicEmergency <http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/>
 - CFA website <http://cfa.vic.gov.au>
 - CFA FireReady app
 - Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 226 226
- Inform the Duty Officer or a Committee Member (be it a burn-off or bushfire)
- Advise 000, if warranted



Bushfire Evacuation

If a bushfire or other threat is determined, the Club may initiate a Bushfire Evacuation. During such an event, the Club will attempt to advise Members of the urgency (e.g. pack or leave caravan), evacuation routes and a safe meeting place, if possible.

Also, if possible, the Club will broadcast a General Alarm by sounding car horns (3 beeps, pause; then repeat as necessary); and UHF Channel 12 will also be used to broadcast the alarm. ***During an Emergency, UHF Channel 12 should be kept clear for emergency use. Any 'discussions' should be switched to alternative channels.*** Members should monitor UHF Channel 12 for alarms and updates.

On hearing an alarm, Members should take appropriate action as well as advise others. Members should only return to camp if safe to do so.

The Club will endeavour to contact all unaccounted-for, Signed-in Members via mobile phone. This may be a time-consuming process and is a *Secondary Priority*. Members ***should not*** depend on this notification or its timeliness.

During or following an Evacuation, all attending Members must Sign-out and record their evacuation intentions, if possible. Otherwise advise the Duty Officer or a Committee Member of their well-being and evacuation intentions (in order that their status is recorded and efforts may be directed towards other Members who remain unaccounted-for).

*N.B. During an emergency, Committee Members will also have themselves to consider, and resources to implement procedures will likely be limited. Whilst the Club will endeavour to ensure the safety of all Members and their property, **responsibility remains with individual Members for their own safety and property.** Members should not rely on hearing an Emergency Alarm but use common sense at all times.*

In the event that Media or other Public Officials are involved, except for personal accounts, Members should refer all enquiries to the Duty Officer or Club President.

Bushfire ready tips

- When parking in the bush, always reverse in such a way that you are ready to drive out.
- Even in moderate heat, treat the bush with respect.
- During an emergency *always* travel with your lights on.
- If you get caught in a fire, park in a clear area with windows up then lie on the floor, covered with a woollen blanket.
- If you get caught in a bushfire on foot, then protect yourself from radiant heat: get in a miner's hole, behind a rock face, a ditch or dam, etc.
- For every 10 degrees of incline, a fire will double in speed (and vice versa). Be aware of this if evacuating or seeking high ground (for mobile phone reception, etc.)
- If evacuating without your caravan and if time permits, caravans can be better protected from bushfire by turning off the gas and winding away any pop-top and awning.
- Where to find warnings and updates:



Listen to ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations and watch Sky News TV.



VicEmergency website:
VicEmergency app or
emergency.vic.gov.au



Social Media outlets:
Twitter **@CFA_Updates** and
facebook.com/cfavic



1800 226 226
The VicEmergency Hotline is a freecall.

Lost in the Bush

It is advisable to always lock your vehicle and take a GPS reading before setting out detecting.

When you realise you are completely lost, panic and fear will set in and a desire to hurry or run will take over you. The first thing you must do is STOP. Look round for a place to rest and think. If it is hot, get into some shade and take time to calmly consider the situation. If it is raining, look for shelter. Look around you. Do you recognise any features at all?

Is there high ground easily accessible close by? If so, make your way up as from a higher vantage point you will see further and hear sounds better. Can you hear the sound of vehicles on a distant road? Can you see the glint of sunlight reflecting off a car windscreen? Is there a road nearby?

Unless you can actually see signs of habitation, do not cut through the bush but stay on the road or track. Searchers will initially look for you by car. The cars will only travel on the tracks. If you have ample daylight left, walk along the road in the direction of the traffic sounds you heard. If night is fast approaching it is far better to look for shelter close to the track.

If fire restrictions allow, and it is safe to do so, spend your time collecting firewood, sufficient to keep a small bright fire going all night; which is quite a lot of wood. Start your fire using a lighter or matches as soon as possible. A fire is very comforting and will keep you warm and its light will lead searchers to you.

Do not be tempted to stagger through the bush at night. Your chance of getting back to your camp is very remote while your chance of being injured is very high. If the spot you plan to spend the night at is out of sight of the road or track, draw arrows on the road surface pointing to where you are or which way you have gone. If your car breaks down and it is too far to walk to camp, stay with your car.

Medical Emergency

It is not possible to plan a course of action for every medical emergency and incorporate it in this booklet. Knowledge of basic first aid and CPR is recommended for each member.

The most common problems expected at Club camps will be falls, cuts and burns and insect bites followed by existing medical conditions such as asthma attack, diabetic collapse, heart attack and stroke. Minor medical problems can be dealt with by stabilising the injury and conveying the patient by private vehicle directly to the nearest medical facility. More serious matters will require first aid procedures to be applied while an ambulance is sent for. It may be necessary for someone to drive to the nearest main highway and lead the ambulance into the camp.

All medical incidents must be reported to a Committee Member. Many members have some medical first aid experience and those who are qualified are recorded in the Sign in Book.

If you are bitten by a snake, do not try to move until the limb bitten is firmly wrapped with a pressure bandage and immobilized. This is to stop the venom from travelling. Keep any movement to an absolute minimum. Help has to be brought to you.

*Take care in the bush -
members are responsible
for their own safety*



Camping etiquette and hints

Camping etiquette

When space permits, do not set up camp too close to another member unless invited. Do not enter another members caravan or tent unless invited or in their absence.

Unwanted noise can travel a long way in the bush so be considerate of your fellow campers and reduce the sound output to a reasonable level. If you operate your TV, radio or other device loudly or have a dog that barks then take appropriate step to reduce the noise level.

Remember that the camp is not an area for the Club's exclusive use; it remains open to the public at all times.

Camping hints

The following tips are written from the point of view of camping in caravans, but can similarly be applied to tent-camping.

Trees

When selecting a camp site, it is wise not to camp under large old trees.

It is rare for an entire tree to fall down; it is not rare for a large limb to drop off the tree, usually without warning, especially in hot humid weather when a storm is brewing and the barometer is falling. This is often the case with the large River Red Gums. It is safer to park near a stand of young box trees which will act as a wind break and if they are to the west of your spot, give shade in the late afternoon when the day is at its hottest. In winter the same rule applies although you may wish to be further out in the sun to gain maximum warmth and sunlight to operate your solar panel.



Positioning a caravan

Most caravans have an awning and a side entrance door. Position the van with the door facing the east so that the morning sun will shine under the awning. As the day progresses and warms up, the awning will give shade for the rest of the day. The trees behind you will put late shade on the van helping to cool it.

Another reason why it is not always a good idea to park directly under overhanging trees is when rain is forecast. Even light rain collecting in the leaves become large drops which make a loud noise landing on the roof at night, and continue to drum down even when the rain is finished.

Level ground versus sloping ground

When selecting your camp site, look for evidence of previous water flow which has rushed downhill leaving a series of tell-tale levees consisting of leaves and twigs at right-angles to the water course. You do not want to find a river flowing under your van, or worse if set up on level ground, finding your van sitting in the middle of a muddy lake, slowly sinking in the mire.

Strong winds

When strong winds are forecast, position the caravan so that the prevailing wind strikes either the front or rear of the van rather than the sides. You definitely do not want the wind coming straight in under the awning.

Be prepared to roll the awning up if the wind gets too strong. If possible, put on additional guy-ropes before the wind starts as it is very difficult once the blow arrives.

Levelling a caravan

Not only it is more comfortable living in a caravan that is nice and level, but most caravan fridges function far more efficiently when the caravan is level. This is to do with how the refrigerant flows under the effect of gravity down the rear of the freezer box in the fridge.

Levelling is best achieved by checking with a spirit level to ascertain which side caravan wheel is the higher. Dig a shallow sloping hole about four inches deep in front of the wheel on the high side then move the van forward until the caravan wheel goes into the hole, then check the level. If it is still high, rather than digging the hole deeper, back the van out of the hole then place a piece of wood, carried for the purpose, in front of the caravan wheel on the low side. Now when you drive the van forward, the high side wheel will lower down into the hole while the low side wheel will rise as it climbs onto the plank of wood, hopefully levelling the van across its width. The remaining front to rear levelling is achieved once the jockey-wheel is attached.



Detecting etiquette and hints

Detecting etiquette

Always remember to refill your holes straight away.

Be aware that modern detectors, especially those designed to find gold, transmit a radio signal that will interfere with other nearby detectors. This usually occurs at about 25 metres. It is normal practice to stay out of range of one another but if interference is heard, each operator alters his path to increase the separation.

If you see another operator obviously detecting or digging a signal, the onus is upon you to walk away, this operator is not expected to walk away from a target.

If you wish to speak to another detectorist in the field, turn off your machine and remove your headphones before approaching.

When a Club member locates a nugget or patch, it is expected that you will not crowd the area or approach so close that your machine causes interference. Do not invade this spot. Allow the search to be completed and do not occupy the area until invited to join or told the search is finished.

Respect the historic importance of the old puddlers and do not detect on the actual puddler. The adjacent heaps will be more rewarding in any case.

When participating in Club 'treasure hunts', many machines are in very close proximity so only VLF or coin/relic detectors are permitted as they are less prone to interfere with one another.



Treasure hunt Dec 2018

Detecting hints

If you are new to detecting, do not hesitate to seek help from one of the more experienced Club members. No matter what detector you have purchased, someone in the Club will be familiar with its operation. Remember, it is most important to understand how to operate your detector well. The second most important thing is to develop a good detecting technique. The old adage of 'low & slow' is equally true with the oldest model machine as it is with the latest technology. The following hints are intended to help the beginner to look for gold:

- In warm weather water should be carried and sipped often. By the time thirst sets in, dehydration is well underway. People have been found dead in inland Australia from dehydration and were still carrying water. Gold is most likely to be found in areas where it has been found previously.
- Your machine's ability to locate gold at depth is limited. Don't waste time detecting virgin ground where the bedrock or base is too deep. Maximum effective depth on a drink-can sized metal target is about 600-900 mm.
- Small coils (diameter of less than 11") are more sensitive to tiny gold nuggets but do not penetrate as deep as larger coils. Larger coils (greater than 11") penetrate deeper but are far less sensitive to smaller nuggets.
- For gold detecting with a modern pulse induction detector most operators will use a mono coil. As a general rule in highly mineralized ground, a Double-D coil operates more quietly than a mono-loop coil but is less sensitive to tiny nuggets. The Mono coil is noisier but is more sensitive to tiny nuggets and has different field pattern that can give more depth. Be aware that new technologies from the major detector companies may give different results from this general rule.
- When searching mullock heaps, look at how deep the old miners dug to get down to the thin layer of 'pay dirt' or 'wash layer'- often located from 2-5 metres deep in a typical shallow gully. The only gold you are likely to detect at the surface of a gully is what the miners dug up out of the hole and have thrown out on the heap. You are unlikely to locate gold in deep virgin ground adjacent to the diggings.
- Not all holes on diggings produced gold. These holes were called 'duffers'. Look for holes close together as they did not work in one another's pockets unless they were onto payable gold.

- Look for ground on gently sloping hill sides that look like a 'moonscape'. This is 'surfaced' ground in which the old timers removed all the top soil down to the bedrock, usually from 100mm to 600mm in depth, and carted it away to be washed in puddlers for its gold. Tiny nuggets can often be detected on the surfaced area and also in the higher ground just above the surfacing and the area just below it.
- When detecting mullock heaps and deeper ground, listen for the faint but repeatable signals. Don't be disappointed if you only detect bullets, shotgun pellets or even rusty nails. Gold sounds just like lead: you are doing everything right and you will soon find your first gold nugget.
- When detecting mullock heaps, you will be more successful if you concentrate your efforts in checking areas where a detector coil has not been: under prickly bushes and under rotting logs which have lain undisturbed for the last 25 years across the heaps. That portion of the heap has not had a modern detector over it! Remember there are no prizes for the person who detects the greatest number of heaps. Success lies with the operator who does a thorough job of detecting a heap. 'Low & Slow' will get the results.
- Never walk backwards while detecting - deep mine shafts are plentiful on some gold fields. They can be in the gullies or on the hillside. Do not be tempted to look down to see how deep it is. If you fall in and are lucky enough to survive, the chances of anyone finding you are pretty remote.

Clothing

To protect your body from sunburn, insect bites, cold and cuts and scratches, it is essential that you wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Ideally footwear should consist of quality leather elastic sided boots with no metal whatsoever in them. Steel-cap toes will cause the coil to signal every step you take. Even non-steel-capped boots can give you a signal if metal staples have been used to attach the upper to the sole. Check with experienced members on the brands suitable for detecting. Long pants are better than shorts. Dust gaiters over the boots and trouser cuffs will keep grass seeds and dirt out of your boots, and will help prevent the most painful and common of bites from insects - the bull ant!

A loose fitting long sleeved shirt and a cap or broad-brimmed hat completes the outfit.

The Victorian Seekers Club wishes you an enjoyable, safe and successful time prospecting, and encourages you to support the following organisations:



The Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria (PMAV) has been working to protect prospector's rights and opportunities since 1980.

Website: www.pmav.org.au

Email: pmav@pmav.org.au

P.O. Box 1706, Melbourne VIC 3001



Support the group that is protecting your rights to enjoy the bush

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