

# FOSSICKIN' ROUND

THE VICTORIAN SEEKERS CLUB BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 35 issue 2

March/ April 2014

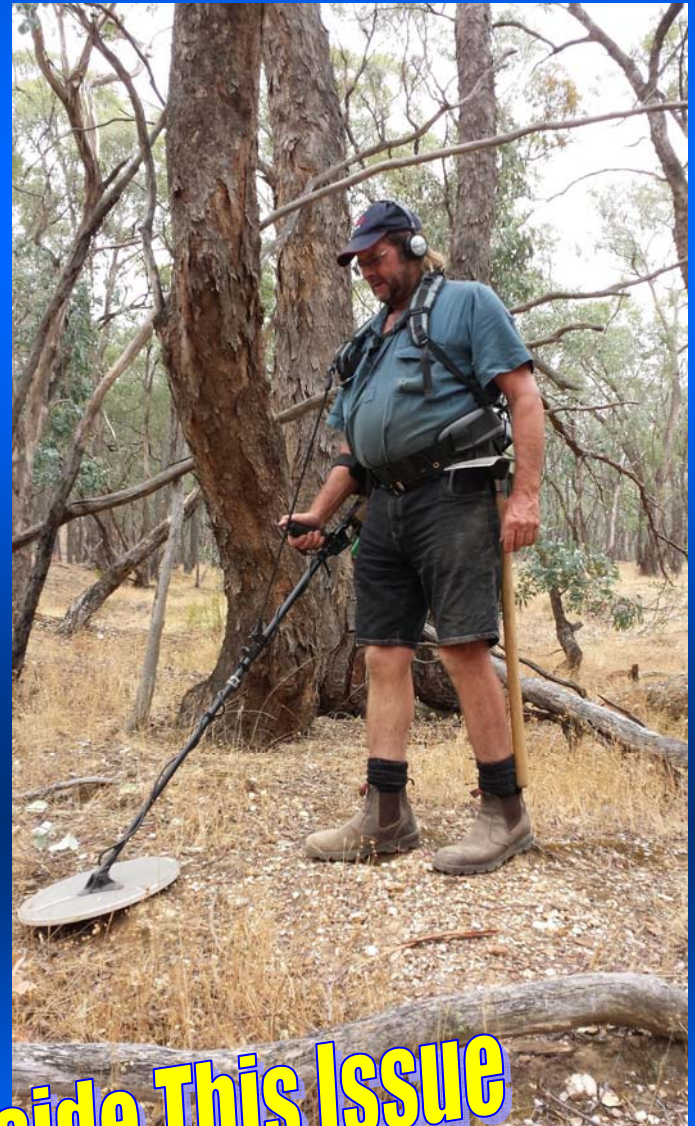
Geoff K.

## Detecting at Clydesdale



Ken W.

Photos by Robert Shannon



## Inside This Issue

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### The Victorian Seekers Club Inc. (A0001477T)

Is a family oriented organization, the objectives of which are to promote friendship, cooperation and exchange of ideas among people interested in prospecting and metal detecting. To realize these aims, we have meetings, lectures, discussions and practical demonstrations to help members acquire the skills required to make prospecting and metal detecting an enjoyable and rewarding pastime. We arrange outings to the goldfields and other prospecting sites, beaches, camps, ghost towns etc, to search for gold, coins, relics, gemstones and other natural and man made objects of value and / or of interest. In addition, we also have functions to foster social contacts among members. Our conduct is governed by a strict code of ethics including avoiding trespassing on private property or damaging the natural environment, hence our motto:

**"Seek, But Do Not Destroy"**

Membership is open to adult persons and their minor children without regard to race, creed or political persuasion, who are interested in these pursuits and prepared to abide by our Constitution and Rules of Conduct. VSC has general meetings on the first Wednesday of each month (except January) at the Mulgrave Senior Citizens and Community Centre, 355 Wellington Road Mulgrave, and at a field trip each month and, in addition, we also have some occasional day outings.

#### Annual Membership Fees

**Family Membership: \$55.00**

**Single Membership: \$45.00**

**One-off joining fee: \$10.00 single, \$20.00 family.**

**Subscriptions are due and payable by the 1<sup>st</sup> of July each year.**

Website: <http://seekers.metapath.org/>

email: [eric.grummett@bigpond.com](mailto:eric.grummett@bigpond.com)

PO Box 15, Mt Waverley BC, VIC 3149

#### Committee of Management

**PRESIDENT:** Eric GRUMMETT

Club management/ representation, Chairperson of meetings.

**VICE PRESIDENT:** Barry WESTON

President's deputy, arranging speakers.

**SECRETARY:** John CLOSE

Correspondence, rules, meetings, admin. matters etc.

**TREASURER:** Warren IBBOTTSON

Budget, finance matters ( other than subscriptions)

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** Ian SEMMENS

Typing & setting out Newsletter.

**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:** Warren IBBOTTSON

Subscriptions, membership records,

**RESEARCH OFFICER:** Rob SHANNON

Information about outings, field activity and site control.

**CATERING SUPERVISOR:** Jim LAUNDRY

**SOCIAL SECRETARIES:** Val LIPPINGWELL

Tina WHELAN

Organizing social functions, raffles, theatre bookings, etc.

**ALMONER:** Virginia LAKE

Contact on matters of personal nature, weddings, bereavement, etc.

**WEBMASTER:** Geoff LEE

**FIELD OFFICERS:** Ted COX, Bob LAKE, Graham SILVER, Lindsay TRICKER,

## Events Calendar

### March

**Wed. 5th:** General Meeting.

**Fri. 7th - Tues. 11th:** Camp Wedderburn

**Sat. 8th - Sun. 9th** Wedderburn Detector Jamboree

**Sun. 23rd-** Australian Gold Panning Championships  
Blackwood

### April

**Wed. 5th:** General Meeting.

**Fri. 18th - Tues. 22nd:** Easter Camp Fryerstown

### May

**Wed. 7th:** General Meeting.

**Fri. 16th - Mon. 19th:** Camp Talbot

### June

**Wed. 4th:** General Meeting.

**Fri. 6th - Tues. 10th:** Camp TBA

## Editors Report

*by Ian Semmens*

I am still in need for of any news, stories photos and articles of detector activity. Please email to me at [ian@regentvideo.com.au](mailto:ian@regentvideo.com.au)

## Almoner's Report

*by Virginia Lake*

Liz Foster had her right hip replaced again and Joan Heraud broke her arm. Best wishes for a full recovery to

**NOTE Change of frequency  
Vic Seekers are now using UHF Chanel 16**

### The Victorian Seekers Club Inc.

Website: <http://seekers.metapath.org/>

General Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month (Except January) at the Mulgrave Senior Citizens & Community Centre, 355 Wellington Road, Mulgrave, MELWAYS (80, C1). Meetings start at 8.00 pm sharp, punctual arrival would be very much appreciated.

**General meeting dates for 2014:** Feb 5, Mar 5, Apr 2, May 7, Jun 4, Jul 2, Aug 6, Sep 3, Oct 1, Nov 5, Dec 3.

**Committee meetings for 2014:** Feb 25, Mar 25, Apr 29, May 27, June 24, July 29, Aug 26, Sept 30, Oct 28, Nov 29.

# President's Report

by Eric Grummett

Jeeze, it's been extra hot lately, I'm glad our summer camps have missed all those 40°C days so far. We are off to Wedderburn next month for the Jamboree weekend, so I am hoping for some mild conditions, not like the extremely hot weather we had last year on that weekend. Peter Maffey and myself will be waving the flag for the PMAV during the event up at Hard Hill to promote the prospecting cause. Those competing will have the chance to win one of two Minelab detectors and many minor prizes this year, so it is well worth while having a go.

Australia Day this year saw club members Peter Maffey, Murray and Robyn Hall, Francine Gilbert, Mark Craig and I participate in the Australia Day Parade down Swanston Street with about 20 PMAV members and hundreds of other assorted clubs and ethnic groups to the Domain Park where we had our PMAV stand with gold panning and metal detecting for the kids. During the march we carried detectors, pans, and an old squeaky wheel barrow and many replica nuggets, and we wore our specially made t-shirts with the slogan "Discover your hidden passion GOLD." Every 100 metres we stopped and raised our nuggets and yelled "Eureka" to the roars of approval from thousands of spectators. It was a long hard day trying to keep up with the hundreds of kids who wanted to metal detect for coins and pan for their specks of gold. The display would have been the most popular in the park which encourages the PMAV to continue in future years.

It was pointed out by our treasurer at our last committee meeting that the revenue we received from membership fees, raffles, and bank interest etc, not counting our corporate advertising was only just covering expenses. There has been huge increases in costs since our last fee increase 12 years ago, especially insurance for public liability and office bearers, hall hire, newsletter printing and distribution (the newsletter has increased to 16 pages) and raffles etc. We also do not receive funds from the now defunct Monash Community Raffle (several hundred dollars). The advertising fees we receive, although substantial cannot be relied on to balance the books as it is not guaranteed to be a regular income. We do have a healthy investment account, however we feel that to be a strong club into the future we need to be strong financially in case we have to defend our existence someday, and we shouldn't have to rely on running down these funds. We do not want to cut back on the club funded events such as Xmas and Easter as these are enjoyed by all members. The new fees starting from June 30 will be \$45 for singles and \$55 for families.

Francois's condition since his accident has now stabilised, but it will take many months of intensive rehabilitation to hopefully restore the use of his arm. We are all with you mate hoping for a successful outcome. Elizabeth has finally had her troublesome hip joint replaced with the latest model, and so we expect to see her

back soon gathering all the nuggets that I have left in the ground for her (some say I am very generous). Our club has had that many hips done lately we may have to change our name to the Victorian Hippy Club and wear flowers in our long hair and grow pot (hey that gives me an idea to raise club funds).

Our sign-in book at camps is working smoothly and is well received by members. When arriving at camp, look for the sign in book and enter your details in it so as we know who is at camp in an emergency. Don't forget to sign out with a tick when leaving for home so we you have left the area.

Good luck in the field and the best of health to you all.

ERIC



Our esteemed and upstanding President setting a fine example to follow... Well, maybe not.

## Find of the Month

February  
Geoff Lee  
17.3g nugget



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### **Disclaimer:**

Opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect that of the VSC Committee.

# General Meetings

## GUEST SPEAKERS

**MARCH-** Carole & David Scholes - Beekeeping & Honey. Bee hives are sometimes found in State Parks. Honey is also known as liquid Gold. Its production is also similar to gold with both being [complex and interesting](#).

**APRIL-** Russ Connors - New Guinea Patrol Officer - has some extraordinary tales to tell about law and order in a primitive society. Gold mining was not on his agenda.

**MAY-** Robyn Vella - Tourism manager for Loddon Shire (Bridgewater, Tarnagulla, Wedderburn). Tourism & Gold history in the Shire and their recently introduced prospecting tours.



Glen Tarrant Explaining the Fire Danger Ratings at the last meeting.

# January Camp Report

## Chute

by Geoff Lee

I think most members were weary of all the hot weather that was around because this year's Australia Day camp at Chute was particularly small (also quite a number of our members participated in the Australia Day Parade in Melbourne). This was probably just as well because there was more undergrowth than I'd seen before; and we shared the camp with a stack of bee apiaries.

All told we had about six campers plus another two caravans ('The Farmers') out at Burrumbeet. I expect they would have stayed at Beaufort had it not been booked out by the folk attending the annual Rainbow Serpent Festival.

The weather was on the hot side but was not extreme and fortunately the nights were cool. It even threatened to rain one night. Surprisingly there were not many insects around.

Gold was, as usual, not plentiful although the largest piece found was a 5 gram'er (well done M). But not to worry as we all had fun in the hunt, especially on our various little group adventures.

## Easter Camp at Fryerstown April Friday 6th to Tuesday 10th

**Another exciting camp. Fun for everyone!!**

### SATURDAY:

☺ Chewton Market - handicraft and produce from local stall traders; all day, next to the Albion Hotel.

☺ **Egg race** - 5pm. Ladies' event followed by Men's. Balance a hard boiled egg in a holder on your detector and run a short course through camp.

☺ **Chewton Old Time Dance** - After dinner in hall behind the Albion Hotel. Supper will be provided.

### SUNDAY:

☺ Easter Bunny - Sunday morning visit by the Easter Bunny with Easter Eggs.

☺ Men's and Ladies' **Easter bonnet (hat) competition**.

### Fancy Dress competition -

Theme to be announced. This will be held Sunday evening before the dinner.



**Roast Dinner - 6.30pm.** ☺ Choice of 3 different meats: ham, lamb or beef. The cost is \$5.00 per person.

**Please bring salads and sweets.** Keep your dinner ticket for the Door Prizes.

☺ Games for all ages and genders.

☺ **Songs, sing along, sketches, jokes, etc. This is your chance to present an act. Go on, Have a Go!**

### MONDAY:

☺ Special Easter treasure hunt. Men's and Ladies' events.

**Be there and join in the fun . . .**

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# February Camp Report

## Clydesdale

By Ken Whittaker

Photos By Robert S.

A few members established the camp on the Wednesday the 12<sup>th</sup>, building to 24 present on Saturday including a few visitors and potential members.

The first few days were warm and humid but a couple of downpours on the Saturday afternoon dumped, arguably, approximately 12mm of rain. It washed the dust off our cars, however they got to be dusted up again on Sunday.

One visitor, using a Minelab army "Mine Detector" with a fixed 9" coil actually found his first nugget, 1.3g close to the camp. He demonstrated the machine and I'm sure it would find smallish targets at shallow depth. I was very pleased that he did not find any landmines in the area.

Some inventive engineering was designed by our President Eric to allow for "Robyn" to negotiate her entry and exit from a "Warren" parked caravan on a sloping site by borrowing Robert's 6 foot stepladder and attaching it to the step, which was just long enough. Robyn & Warren proudly introduced their new rescued Poodle puppy dog to the members. Welcome Milly.

Being Valentines Day, yours truly suggested to all of the males present that they should tell their partners that they love them, at least everyday. Consequently as the mobile phones were running hot with calls from home, it was noteworthy that most if not all of the "Macho" detectorists were heard to say "I love you" at the end of the call accompanied by loud cheering from all assembled. Well done fellas.

Quite a few bits of gold were found including a nice 10.7g specimen by Ron. Young Rob found a 3.9g good looker at the "Tromell" site on private property, organised again by President Eric. I think Kay also got a little one there too.

Rob went on to pocket several smaller nuggets from another local farm I think to a total of about 11grams. Well done to all who started, or added, to their New Year tally.

Geoff & Kay had to dig deep into the family purse, following a dash in to Bendigo to get replacement batteries for their caravan. Geoff's main concern was that we leave a rag or something on the private property gate so that he could with some luck replenish his ailing wallet. "Onya" Kay.



Ron's specimen.

Fossickin' Round



On Sunday evening around a formed circle of stones some members were regretting the communal warmth of a campfire. Our attending responsible executive members, rightly, would not allow the lighting of any fire. Our intrepid veteran members – not to be outdone, placed a battery operated small torch in the rock circle, smothered it with some twigs and proceeded to sit back and enjoy the substitute electrical warmth of its evening glow. It worked too. Funny about these primeval instincts that relish a "camp fire".

All in all, not a highly attended outing, but its early in the year. Those that were there enjoyed some good weather, great company, a few laughs and most importantly a few bits of yellow metal.



Part of a disused trommel.

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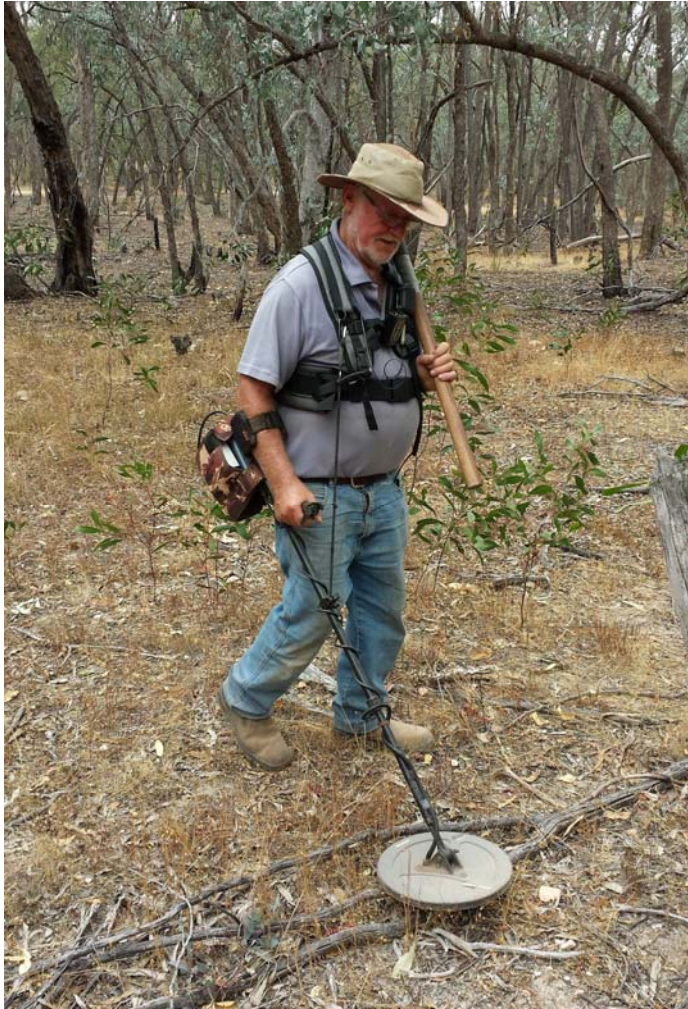


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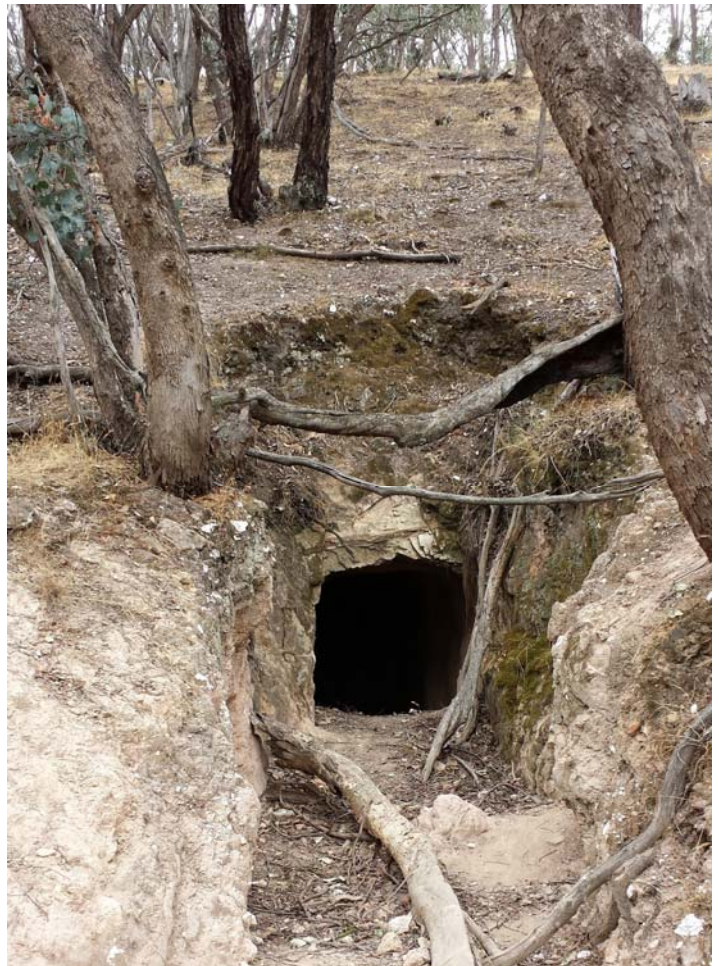
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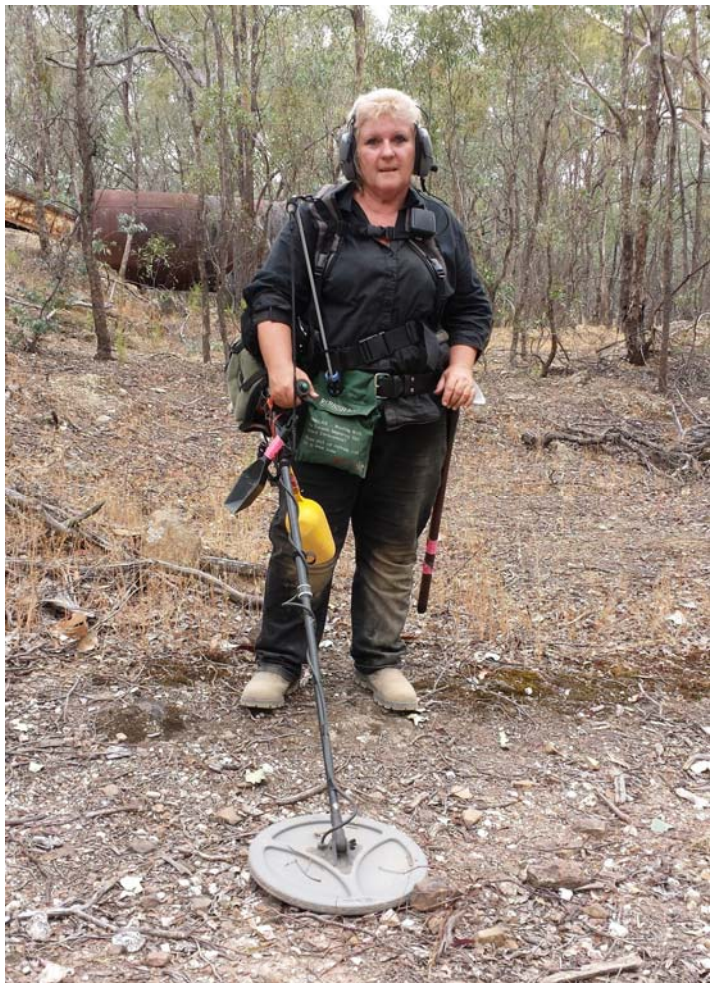
## More Clydesdale Photos



Eric G. detecting



Entrance to a mine adit



Kaye detecting



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## One-tonne boulder stolen from National Rock Garden

February 17, 2014

Ben Westcott Reporter at The Canberra Times



Thieves caused thousands of dollars of damage to the National Rock Garden while stealing a one-tonne rock containing a relatively small amount of gold.

The sandstone and quartz rock from a gold mine in Bendigo was stolen on Thursday night. It featured large veins of quartz running through it along with small flecks of gold. It was stolen from the National Rock Garden, on Lady Denman Drive near the National Arboretum, Canberra, sometime on Thursday night. The theft was noticed 10am Friday.

Police said the rock was one metre long, 75cm high and a triangular shape. It is grey and brown in colour, with prominent bands of white quartz.

National Rock Garden chairman Brad Pillans believed the rock had been stolen to extract the gold and described the act as "sickening". "It's just foolishness," he said. "It's stupidity on the part of the people who have perpetrated the act for thousands of dollars of damage to a display for the yield of a few hundred dollars of gold."

Mr Pillans said the thieves would be able to get a half ounce of gold at most from the rock. He said the rock weighed about a tonne and would have required a truck with a mounted crane to remove it from the display.

The rock was donated to the National Rock Garden by the Unity Mining company and the Victorian government, and was the only rock in the garden that contained gold. The stolen rock was part of the National Rock Garden's Federation Rocks display, which was opened by Chief Minister Katy Gallagher in October 2013 to celebrate the centenary of Canberra. The display was designed to commemorate Australia's federation. Each state donated a number of rocks that symbolised their history.

## From the Photo Album



A magnificent 23 oz. Nugget found by a club member in Victoria in the 1990s. Called the "Wylie Coyote Nugget" for obvious reasons.

### Safe Detecting

Prospecting is an enjoyable activity however there are some inherent dangers on the goldfields.

- Take care around any open shaft and when walking through the bush.
- Carry a mobile phone and water and the usual emergency provisions such as GPS, compass, first aid kit, torch, matches, UHF radio, snack bar.
- Be aware of hazards such as snakes.
- It is not advisable to prospect alone. Team up with a mate.
- And be SunSmart. Slip on a shirt, Slop on some sunscreen, and Slap on a hat.

*Members are responsible for their own safety!*



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# Bushfire information to help you survive



Notes from a presentation given by Glen Tarrant, CFA representative, to the club meeting on Wednesday 5th February.  
With additional information from Ian Semmens.

This is general advice.  
Each situation is different, and everyone has to make their own assessments of the particular risks they face.

## Sources of information

- The emergency website for Victoria is <https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au> and it has all types of emergencies and incidents listed and their current status.
- The CFA website is [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)

- The Bushfire Information Line is 1800 240 667 and it provides information during and after major bushfire incidents.
- Radio and TV
- Fire Ready phone app
- Follow CFA on Facebook or Twitter.

However, in a large scale emergency don't rely on technologies or even the fixed telephone to provide information as they can (and probably will) fail due to overload of demand, damage to the infrastructure or loss of local power. Don't rely on only one source for your important emergency information.

Information relating to the areas that we camp in is available from the CFA and is in the form of a Community Information Guide. It contains information such as a map of the bushland and grass land fire risk of the area, shire and state government contact phone numbers, whether or not there is a Neighbourhood Safer Place, a Community Map, the Fire District that the town fall in and other general bush-fire information. It is available at <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/community-information-guides/>



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## Warnings

All warnings are posted on the CFA and DEPI websites, and the VicEmergency website.

A warning from the CFA can come in three forms:

1. Advice – general information to keep you up-to-date with bushfire developments.
2. Watch and Act – There is an heightened level of threat, and that you need to stay informed and take appropriate action. This fire will impact a community area in 6-7 hours.
3. Emergency Warning – You are in imminent danger and need to take action immediately.



This fire is close and you have 1-2 hours to find refuge.

As we are camping in the bush we will not receive specific information relating to our area. Do not rely on an official warning to leave. These warnings relate to community areas, towns or cities. See more at: <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/about-warnings/#sthash.BR7UBzBu.dpuf>

### What to do if a fire threatens

If a fire is close to the campsite, don't try to hitch up your caravan and tow it away. Visibility will be very poor due to the smoke and it will be difficult enough to drive a car on narrow, dusty, and smoky tracks in a fire stress situation without a caravan. It will hamper your and others attempts to leave the area. Leave the area and return to pick it up when it is safe to do so. It is also highly recommended to have caravan insurance.

The real risks of bushfire are dehydration and heat stroke which can lead to unconsciousness and death. It is radiant heat that kills most people and a bushfire can get up to 800°C so you need to protect yourself from the radiant waves, which travel in a straight line from the fire source. If you are caught out in the bush, look for flat open ground with as little vegetation as possible. Try to find a ditch, hollow, rocky area or maybe a mine shaft to shelter in. Natural fibres such as cotton or wool can act as a barrier to the radiant heat. Do not wet your clothes as water is a good conductor of heat and radiant heat can cause steam that can burn your skin.

If you are in a car and fire threatens close by, stop the vehicle as far away from vegetation as possible, (people have been killed from driving into trees because of the low visibility), turn the engine off, close all windows and vents, turn the hazard and headlights on, get below the window line. If you have a woollen blanket, then put it over you and drink water regularly to avoid dehydration. Do not wet the blanket.

### Precautions

If there is a sustained period of dry weather and then there is a day of high heat, strong winds, high levels of very dry fuel and low humidity you then need to be aware that there is a high risk of a bush fire starting, and if it does, it will spread rapidly.

While out detecting be aware of areas that may offer a safe refuge if an emergency situation arises.

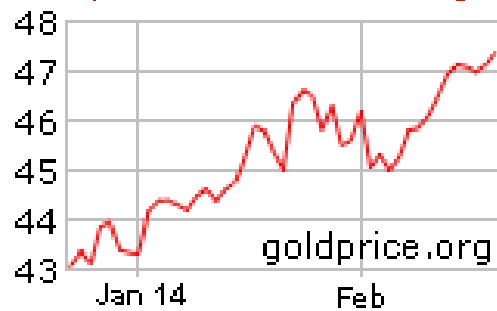
Always carry water and a woollen blanket in the car. Caravan gas bottles should be positioned so that the emergency relief valve is facing away from the vehicle and the caravan.



## Gold Price Report

*By Ian Semmens*

### 60 Day Gold Price in AUD/g



Price as at 21/02/2014

## New Members

- Nuvolari & Princess Corin SENEVIRANTE



*Welcome and Good Luck!*

### Code Red Fire Days Notice

**In the event that a Code Red Day is declared for any camp days, the camp will be cancelled.**



*During Code Red days, no one is permitted to enter State Parks and Forests. Camp may also be cancelled during other periods of severe weather.*

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# SOLAR POWER FOR CARAVANS

## PART 3

By Ian Semmens

### Equipment: (continued from last issue)

#### Connectors

It is important to have good firm connections between all of the electrical components of the solar system. It is equally important to use a connector of the correct amp rating to suit the load and to use the correct method or tool to terminate the cable. Failure to do so may result in voltage loss, intermittent connection, sparking and could be a potential fire hazard.

#### Types of connectors

##### 1. Fold-out solar panel:

The fold out type portable solar panels of up to 160 watts will have a basic controller which is glued to the back of the panel. Coming from this to the battery is normally a cable of 5 meters terminated with alligator clips, though you can replace this with a connector of your choice. Doing this will give a better, firmer connection, reduce voltage loss and eliminate the risk of incorrect polarity.



*Fold out panel showing the panel, controller, battery and alligator clips*

##### 2. Fixed solar panel

Fixed solar panels of 80 watts or more use the industry standard MC4 connector. To connect into the panel cable you will need to purchase and terminate the MC4 onto your cable. These are available for 4mm<sup>2</sup> and 6 mm<sup>2</sup> cable, rated at 30 amps and are sold for about \$7.50 each from Jaycar. You strip the insulation off and crimp the connector with a crimping tool (Jaycar cat. No TH1834 - \$15.00).



*MC4 connector*



*Crimping tool TH3418*

##### 3. Battery Connector

Cable lugs that are the right size for the cable and are properly crimped are the best way to make connection with the battery. Although crimping is the preferred method, they can be soldered. Cable lugs also suit the connection of cables to the fuse box and the circuit breaker threaded terminals. The Rhino Tools cable crimper is around \$60.00 and crimps cable from 0.5mm<sup>2</sup> to 6 mm<sup>2</sup>.



*Cable lug*



*Rhino Tools cable crimper*

##### 4. Other connectors

**AMP 1.5** Waterproof connector- for joining twin or single conductors. These are also good for headlights or driving



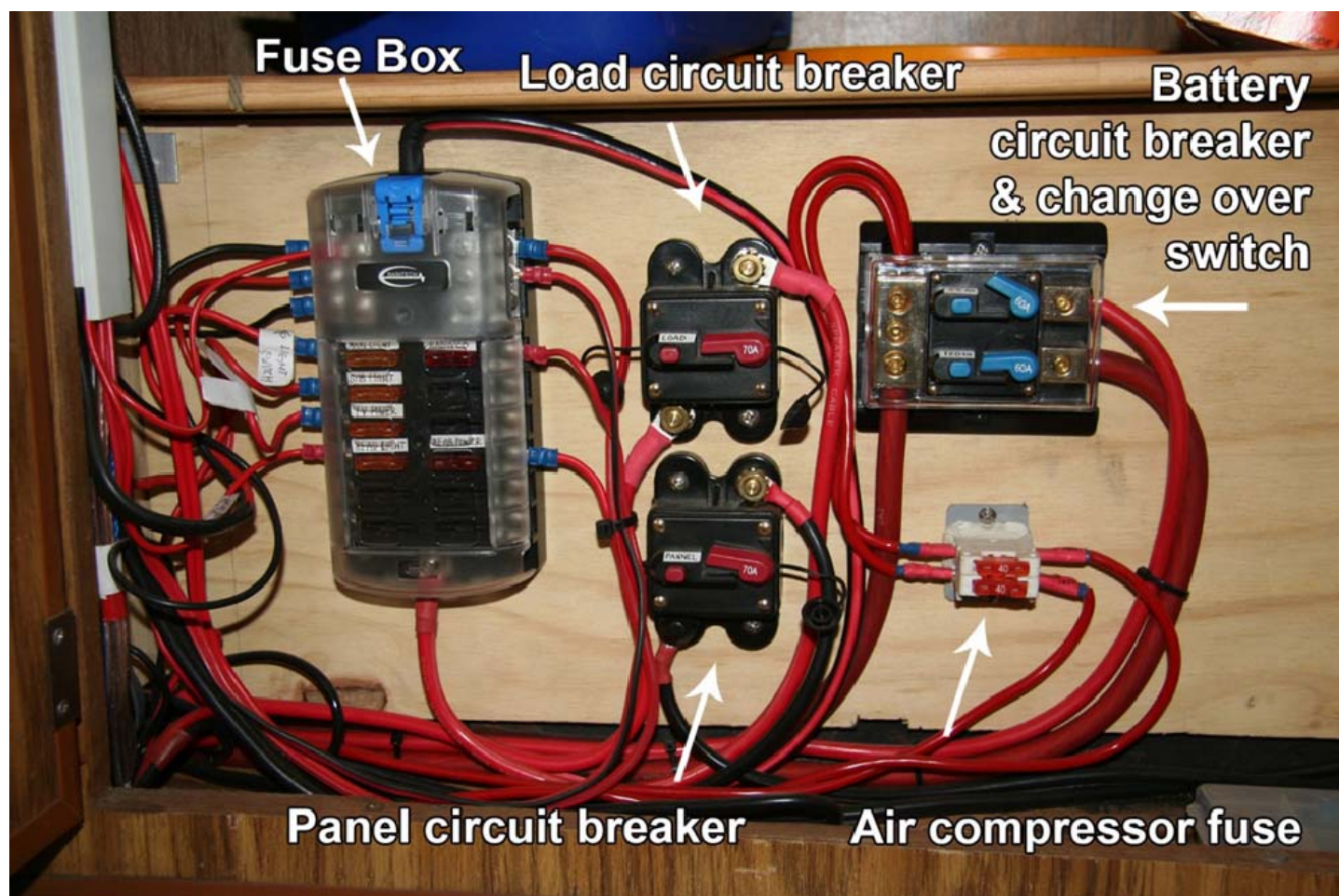
lights. Priced on Ebay at around \$5.00 each.

**Anderson Plug** - Available in ratings from 50 up to 175amp. Good for use where you are often connecting or disconnecting, for example from the foldout panel to the battery or from the vehicle to the caravan. Priced at around \$10-15.00.00 each set. Be careful not to buy the counterfeit ones. Go to [http://andersonpower.com.au/anderson-plugs-multipole-c-8\\_4.html](http://andersonpower.com.au/anderson-plugs-multipole-c-8_4.html)



*Anderson Plug -50 Amp*

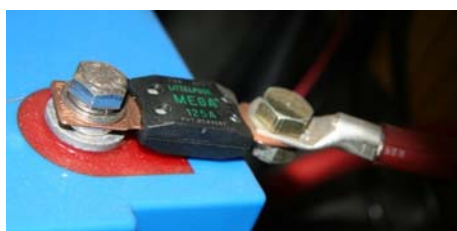




*The fuse box and circuit breaker layout of my caravan. Note the use of heavy cabling (16mm<sup>2</sup>) from the battery to the controller via a circuit breaker and battery change over switch and use of a cable duct to house some of the cables.*

## Installation Tips

- Use a fuse or circuit breaker of the correct size as close as possible to the solar panel and also ideally within 150 mm of the battery terminal.



*A 125 Amp bolt on fuse attached to the battery terminal.*

- For your safety and for the isolating of faulty circuits it is essential to use a fuse box for distribution of the power. Baintech make a very good fuse box with a capacity of 6 or 12 circuits.
- Make sure that the battery is secure anchored down as once they get over 100 amps they are very heavy (over 30 kilograms) and you may end up travelling on some rough roads and you don't want the battery shifting and rubbing on cables and causing a short circuit. Also in the event of sudden stopping or an accident there is less likelihood of the battery breaking loose and causing physical damage or a short circuit that may lead to a fire.



*Battery securely mounted close to the controller.*

- It is important to keep cable runs as short as possible, that way minimising voltage drop. To avoid rubbing or damage to cables leading to a short circuit all cables should be securely attached using cable clips, cable ties, cable ducting, or flexible or ridged conduit. Whenever cables pass through a metal cladding or frame ensure a rubber grommet is used to prevent cable damage.

*Continued next page*

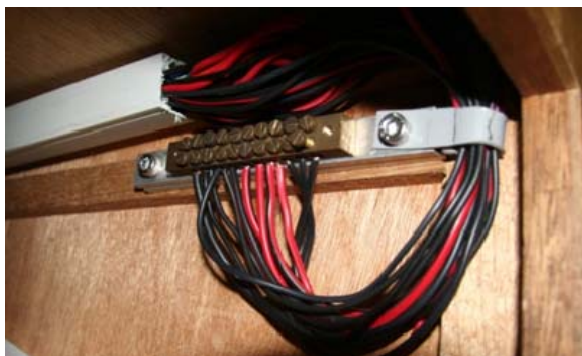


# SOLAR POWER FOR CARAVANS



## Continued

- When terminating a large number of negative (common) cables it is easier if you use a brass bus bar.



- Where possible use tinned copper cable as it is more resistant to tarnishing and corroding than plain copper.
- When you run cables underneath a caravan use PVC conduit, use either flexible or rigid conduit (or a similar product) to protect the cable from rocks and other objects. Inside, it is a good idea to use the split cable conduit or the spiral wrap. Use rubber grommets if you pass through any metal panel or frame.
- Allow at least 30mm between your roof and the solar panel for air ventilation to allow it to operate a cooler and more efficiently.



*A 180w solar panel mounted on the roof of pop top caravan using aluminium brackets. This panel will be raised 30mm higher for better panel ventilation.*

## Practical Experience

I have used my solar system on four camps during winter and 2 camps in summer and these have been a duration of about 6-8 days each. The solar system has worked very well and I have been very happy with its performance and now I don't need to worry too much about the power.

I use a 180 watt panel with 4 mm<sup>2</sup> cable connected to a 80 amp circuit breaker and then to an EPS -20 regulator which has a remote LCD monitor and this charges a 120 Ah Full River battery with a 16 mm<sup>2</sup> cable. The load output from the controller goes into a Baintech 12 way fuse box via a 10 mm<sup>2</sup> cable and an 80 amp circuit breaker. From here the individual circuits go to the devices or lights. Each circuit in the fuse box has the appropriate sized fuse to suit the device current draw. I also have a change over switch which allows me to charge up or draw from a secondary 55 Ah battery as needed.

The all up cost including components, cable, switches, and extras is around \$1200.00. Life expectancy of the panel is at least 20 years and the battery is 8-10 years.

I store my caravan in the open with the load turned off so the solar system is continually charging the battery and keeping it fully charged. When I hitch up the caravan the voltage of the battery is around 13.2 volts. Camping in winter the load in the evening is 3-4 amps per hour for around 4 hours per day and I find that by the sixth or seventh day the 120 Ah battery is down to around 11.2 volts. I then switch over to the secondary battery, a 55 Ah battery, and I will get another 3-4 days from it. I am running a Radio/CD player, a TV with the audio routed through to the Radio/CD player and its 4 speakers, charging the phone, electric shaver and the laptop computer, and of course, running the lighting. The weather on these camps was often either heavily overcast or raining on at least half the days. On these days I found that the 180w panel was still producing 0.5 to 1 amp of charge into the battery. When the sun broke through I measured a peak of 4.5 amps charge. This was with the panel partly shaded by trees and the sun at a low angle, as it is in winter.

In summer, with the longer daylight hours and the more vertical angle of the sun, there is ample power available. What power that I use in the night is replace during the day while I am out detecting.

## Words of Advice

- Get a bigger panel than you think you need. Panels are relatively cheap and you will soon use the extra capacity of a bigger panel. A 250w panel is now around \$250.00.
- Get it from a local retailer who you can trust and get advice from.
- Buy a good quality panel, AGM battery and a MPPT controller. The remote monitor is also very handy to monitor the performance.
- Use the correct sized cables, install it securely, and use fuses and/or circuit breakers.
- Do it properly and you will only need to do it once.

Just put it in and then relax and enjoy your camping!



## What is a SPOT 2?

A SPOT 2 is NOT a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) nor is it an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB). PLBs and EPIRBs are required to meet AS/NZS 4280.2 and AS/NZS 4280.1 standards. They must float and broadcast for 24 and 48 hours respectively.

A SPOT 2 device, shown at right, is regarded as a 'GPS Tracker'. It can, however, also connect to Emergency Services. It will not float without an optional flotation case, but is waterproof to 5m for 1 hour.



SPOT 2

## What does it do?

After you turn on the SPOT 2, it will obtain its GPS location. You may then press one of its other buttons to transmit that GPS location, via satellite, back to the SPOT 'Service' (yes, there is a subscription fee involved). The SPOT Service will then Email or SMS the 'event' to destinations of your choice.

If you press the 'Track' button, a Track Event will be transmitted every 10 minutes. This can be viewed in Google Maps, showing your progress as a 'bread crumb trail'.

If you press its Red SOS button, the SPOT 2 Service will send that GPS location along with a distress message to a GEOS International Emergency Response Center every five minutes until cancelled.

In all, the SPOT 2 has 6 buttons:

1. Power On/Off,
2. Check In/OK,
3. Custom Message,
4. Help/Assist,
5. Track, and
6. SOS.

The Check In/OK, Custom Message and Help/Assist, buttons, really perform the same function. The only real difference is their implied designation. In reality, you define a message of your choice, for each of them; so they can mean whatever you decide.

After you purchase a SPOT 2, you will need to 'activate' it via the Internet and subscribe to a Service. Once you've done this you then configure your messages, the Email addresses and SMS phone numbers against each message type (ie. Check In/OK, Custom and Help/Assist). Refer to the Configuration screen shot on the right. Multiple Email/SMS address can be configured against each message type. You also define your SOS Emergency contact information. You can

also define several 'profiles'. The screen shot shows my 'Test' profile. I've also defined 'Vic' and 'WA' profiles. The email that is sent out looks something like this:

```
SUBJECT: Check-in/OK message from SPOT Spotty

MESSAGE:
Spotty
Latitude:-32.50917
Longitude:137.79648
GPS location Date/Time:07/03/2013 19:21:29 EST
```

Message:I'm here :)

Click the link below to see where I am located.  
<http://fms.ws/C18js/32.50917S/137.79648E>

If the above link does not work, try this link:  
<http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&hl=en&geocode=&q=-32.50917,137.79648&ll=-32.50917,137.79648&ie=UTF8&z=12&om=1>

Spotty

You have received this message because Spotty has added you to their SPOT contact list.

Ready for Adventure  
FindMeSPOT.com

*Note. The first link has expired but the second link works.*

## What's the benefit?

Quite simply, SPOT 2 lets you communicate your GPS position to those who care (hopefully) via satellite; that is, without mobile phone reception. These can be Tracking, Okay, Help, Custom or SOS messages. *Continued ...*

### Showing Profile, Test

[Duplicate Profile](#)

Profile Name      Test      [Rename](#)

#### Check-in/OK

[Edit](#)

To:

Message To Send      TESTING: Check-in/OK

#### Help

[Edit](#)

To:

Message To Send      TESTING: Help

#### Custom

[Edit](#)

To:

Message To Send      TESTING: Custom

#### SOS

[Edit](#)

#### Your Primary Emergency Contact Info

Full Name	Wife's Name
Country	Australia
Phone Number	999999999

#### Your Secondary Emergency Contact Info

Full Name	Other Wife's Name
Country	Australia
Phone Number	999999999



## What's the downside?

The SPOT 2 device itself can currently be purchased for about \$135 AUD. Subscriptions are yearly. A Basic service costs \$115 USD p.a. This includes up to 200 SMSs. Tracking costs an additional \$50 USD p.a.

The device uses 3xAA Lithium batteries. I assume you can use regular batteries in an emergency but the device has printed on it 'Lithium Batteries Only'. I don't use Tracking (where you would leave the device on for extended periods) so batteries are not an issue for me. Unfortunately if you do use tracking, there is no external power connection.

## Other similar devices

### SPOT GEN 3

There is a newer device called SPOT GEN 3. Unfortunately, it is more oriented to Tracking, costs more and requires a more costly subscription (I assume most Vic Seekers will have little interest in Tracking).

The SPOT 3 subscription includes a Tracking service in the Basic Subscription of \$165 USD p.a. If you want Tracking (i.e. at 10 minute intervals) then this device would be preferable to the SPOT 2.

### SPOT Connect

SPOT also have a device called SPOT Connect. It provides similar functionality, however, it requires a Smartphone to operate with. This allows you to send out custom messages whenever you use it. (Unlike SPOT 2 where you require Internet connectivity to re-configure your messages.) You will also require an additional 'Service' to use the Type and Send facility. The SPOT Connect SOS functionality however does NOT require the use of a Smartphone.



**SPOT Connect**

I looked at the reviews and ratings for the SPOT Connect Android Smartphone application and it is currently rated at 2.8 out of 5. The reviews are not too good either, and the last time the application was updated was back in January 2013.

### DeLorme inReach SE and Satellite

If you are looking for 2-way satellite texting then the deLorme SE or Satellite devices may suit you. Both these devices provide similar capabilities as the SPOT devices. However they also allow you to receive



**deLorme inReach**

text messages. The main difference between the devices is that the SE has a built-in screen that allows you to input and display text messages; whereas the Satellite requires a 'companion' device (such as a Smartphone) to input and display text messages (somewhat similar to the SPOT Connect).

The SE currently costs about \$420 AUD and the Satellite, about \$370; and require a \$50 AUD Pivotal

'activation' fee. They have seasonal (4-month) and yearly subscriptions that range from \$20 to \$50 USD/month. The \$20/month plan does not provide much functionality, so a basic (Recreational) plan will cost \$33/month or \$132 USD/quarter.

Overall, the deLorme devices cost significantly more than the SPOT devices to purchase and operate. They do however provide a 2-way texting capability.



**deLorme inReach Satellite**

## Summary

In a sense, we have PLBs with SOS capability only, starting at around \$260 with no subscriptions.

These are followed by the SPOT devices with 1-way messaging, Tracking and SOS capabilities, at about \$300 and \$150 p.a.

After the SPOT devices we have deLorme devices that provide 2-way messaging, Tracking and SOS capabilities, at about \$500 and \$150 p.a. (Seasonal Plan).

Finally we have Satellite phone devices. The Iridium 9575 includes Tracking and SOS capabilities. It costs about \$1,700+ and \$500+ plans. Interestingly you can plug in your Global Roaming enabled Telstra NEXT G post-paid SIM, into the Iridium 9575, in lieu of a dedicated satellite phone plan. *Note that other satellite phones and plans are available at much lesser costs.*

One final word: this article has focused on satellite capabilities. If you simply want to send your GPS location to a loved one, whilst in mobile phone range, try something like 'GPS Share' on Android or 'GPS Share!' on iPhone.

## References

PLB and ERIB devices: <http://www.ja-gps.com.au/Emergency-Beacons>

Tracking devices: <http://www.ja-gps.com.au/GPS-Units/GPS-Tracker>

Satellite Networks and Phones: <http://www.exploroz.com/OntheRoad/Communications/SatellitePhone.aspx>

## March Outing: Wedderburn

This map is available to members only.

## April Outing: Fryerstown

This map is available to members only.

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**Note: Fire Risk season - No camp fires  
without committee approval.**

**THIS IS A BUSH CAMP. BYO water, power and toilet,  
strictly observe park and fire regulations. Dogs must  
be on leash and under constant supervision.**

**No unattended fires.**

**FILL IN ALL HOLES, take your rubbish home and car-  
ry a valid MINERS RIGHT at all times.**

Under current Government requirements fossickers  
should be trained in first aid; they should carry water, a  
mobile phone, a list of contacts in case of emergency and  
a basic first aid kit; any incident or injury should be report-  
ed to a Committee Member ASAP.





### Detectors for sale

Whites Surf Master Pulse Induction under water detector \$800 Ono

Minelab XTerra 305 coin detector \$200 Ono

Both in A1 condition. Contact John Fricke

onjfricke1941@gmail.com

Phone 0427 831 168 or 9558 2338



### Detector for sale

**Minelab GPX 4500** purchased from Miners Den, Mitcham

Complete with AC and DC chargers, harness and handbook.

Extras include Spare battery, External speaker, Spare battery cable, 10x5 inch Coiltek Mono coil and 10x5 inch DD coil.

Price \$4200.00

Control Box Serial No 1002253

Contact Peter Richards

Phone No. 03 9780 2688

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### Gold Book for sale

#### Gold & Ghosts Vol 4

Queensland Northern  
&Northwestern Districts

D.W. de Havelland  
1st Printing 1989 Re-  
printed 1997

A prospectors guide to  
metal detecting and his-  
tory of the Australian  
Goldfields.

From Charters Towers up to Palmer River.

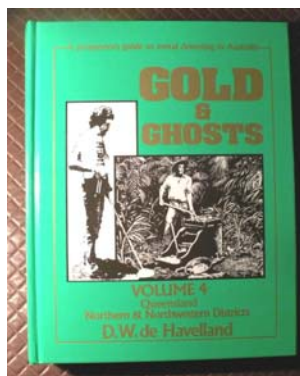
Hard Cover book in excellent condition, no  
markings within

Rare opportunity to purchase one of these  
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\$1,200.00

Contact Graeme Hodges.

Phone: 9803 4273 email :ghodges7@bigpond.com



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