



FOSSICKIN' ROUND

THE SEEKERS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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THE VICTORIAN SEEKERS' CLUB INC.
FOUNDED 1980

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April 2011

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
100 ounce nugget found!
Wedderburn Camp Repot
Musings on Ironbark Gully



The Victorian Seekers' Club

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 outing.

Annual Membership Fees

Family Membership: \$40.00

Single Membership: \$35.00

One off joining fee: \$ 5.00

Subscriptions are due and payable by the 1st of July each year.

Website: <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/seekers/web/index.html>

PO Box 15, Mt Waverley, VIC 3149

Committee of Management

PRESIDENT: Eric GRUMMETT

Club management/ representation, Chairperson of meetings.

VICE PRESIDENT: Graeme SILVER

President's deputy, arranging speakers.

SECRETARY: Lindsay TRICKER

Correspondence, rules, meetings, admin. matters etc.

TREASURER: Denise HEGARTY (Mrs)

Budget, finance matters (other than subscriptions)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Ian SEMMENS

email:

Typing & setting out Newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY.. Mieke SMITS (Mrs)

Subscriptions, membership records, changes of addresses, etc.

RESEARCH OFFICER: Geoff LEE

Information about outings, field activity and site control.

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Disclaimer:

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

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Please send your articles, ads, etc, to reach the editor no later than by the 15th of the month in which they have to appear in the newsletter. Articles need to be sent by email as a Word or similar file.

Please email to Ian at:

and if possible include any photos as a jpeg file.

Events Calendar

April

Wed 6th: General Meeting.

Sun 10th: Tour of Treasury Building **City** free entry

Fri 22nd to Tues 26h Easter Camp **Fryerstown**

May

Wed 4th: General Meeting.

Fri 13th to Mon 15th Camp **Moliagul**

June

Wed 1st: General Meeting.

Fri 10th to Tues 14th Camp **Goldsborough**

July

Wed 1st: General Meeting.

Fri 10th to Tues 14th Camp **TBA**

.....Tibooburra **Date to be confirmed**

Editors Report

by Ian Semmens

This months Cover shows Eric detecting away on a hill in Wedderburn. It was a great camp and a few nuggets were found and we had very good weather.

I would like to encourage members to contribute articles to the newsletter. It is only as good as the articles that are submitted, so please make an effort and write up something that would be of interest to our members.

Almoner's Report

by Virginia Lake

Please let Virginia Lake, the club Almoner, know if you think a card should be sent due to sickness or major event (age milestone, marriage etc). Virginia can be contacted on

The Victorian Seekers' Club

Website: <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/seekers/web/index.html>

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 2011: Feb 2, Mar 2, Apr 6, May 4, Jun 1, Jul 6, Aug 3, Sep 7, Oct 5, Nov 2, Dec 7.

Committee meetings for 2011: Feb 1, Feb 22, Mar 29, May 3, May 31, June 28, July 26, Aug 30, Sept 27, Oct 26, Nov 28.

President's Report

by Eric Grummett

Our club was saddened to hear of the sudden death of the president of the Bendigo Prospectors Club, Ron Lamont. Condolences were passed on, on behalf of our club. It is hard on a club when good members are lost like that.

Age is something that is definitely catching up with prospecting club members, and days out in the bush tramping over mullock heaps, pushing through thick bush, shifting rocks and logs, and digging holes while carrying all our gear takes a huge physical effort and strain on our old worn bodies. Luckily to date we haven't had any serious incident of any of our members suffering any major illness while out there. Indeed many of us are probably still here due to the exercise we have gained in our pursuit of the yellow stuff.

However, with the ever increasing effort required to find our Eldorado these days we need to be more vigilant with our safety out there. The following are some of the basic steps that we can do to minimize the risks of becoming a victim of the bush:

1. When venturing out always go with at least one other member. If that is not possible, tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return. Pin-point on a map to someone of the area where you are headed so as members have some idea where to look if you are overdue.

2. Carry communication of some sort. UHF radios are limited in their range, but may pick up another member if close by. Better models will have a scan mode so that they will pick any one of the other channels, and will also have access to repeater channels [1-8, 31-38]. Reception on cell phones has vastly improved lately, especially Telstra 'Next G'. If all else fails a whistle may do the trick.

3. Carry and use a GPS (or compass). If in unknown



Eric detecting in a old diggers hole at Wedderburn

country, or we have an attack of dementia, a GPS will lead you back to camp or your car. Make sure it has good batteries or carry spares, as they chomp through the power very quickly.

4. Carry water with you. Always carry sufficient water to get you through the time spent out, especially in hot weather.

5. Carry a First Aid Kit and/or Medication. If you are on special medication ensure that you take it with you.

6. Use Protection. Protection from the elements is something we need to be aware of. The use of UV cream, insect repellent or a fly net and a hat will help.

By following a few simple rules, hopefully my last resting place will be a nice soft bed and not an ants nest with the crows picking my bones clean.

General Meetings

by Graeme Silver

March

Peter Leslie from the Melbourne Antique Bottle Club gave an extremely informative presentation about historic bottles, their origins, and how they are recovered. It was also mentioned that some bottles that have been recovered in the past are worth anything up to \$15,000.00 at specialised bottle auctions.

April

John Garcia who is a Club member will be giving a presentation on Prospecting in general.

His knowledge is extensive in the prospecting field. Also John is willing to help anyone who cares to ask him questions about Metal Detecting etc.

From the Club's point of view we are fortunate to have him as a member, and his presentation will be extremely interesting for those who attend this Monthly Meeting.

May

This meeting will be a **Show and Tell Night**.

All members are asked to bring something along or a collection of items that has accumulated over a period of time to this Monthly Meeting that they have recovered. This is an **opportunity** for everyone to **participate**, and remember, be extremely **proud** of what you have recovered as this is the best object for **you** that has once again come to be seen in the light of day.



Peter Leslie from the Melbourne Antique Bottle Club gave us an interesting talk at the last meeting

March Camp Report

Wedderburn by Geoff Lee

Photos by Geoff L. & Ian S

The weather forecast for Wedderburn Camp was looking good when I got up there and the tracks were drying out nicely. The weather was a bit on the warm side but not hot. Not quite perfect detecting weather but certainly getting there; bring on Easter Camp!

Also from recent experience, Warm Weather's evil twin - Mozzies; seemed to be less of a problem too. Whilst they remained unsociable around dawn and dusk, they were much less of a problem than Chute (especially) and Craige. Shirley J. unfortunately, discovered how bad they can be the hard way. Whilst Ian S. complained that the Wedderburn mozzies gave him itchy, red bites whereas those in Craige did not.

We had a number of other natives around camp - lots of spiders, a goanna and even a scorpion.

We also has a couple of non-native Bumble Bees (*Bombus terrestris*, see pictures of Queen). These bees are about 1" big and make a loud buzzing sound whilst flying. Sightings should be reported to the Dept. of Primary Industries (<http://bit.ly/eg77K6>). First picture shows one with a captured locust (picture by Mariusz G).



Highlight of the Wedderburn Camp was the Detector Jamboree Competition. This year the winner of the GPX 5000 detector was a local. Our own Eric G. managed to find a token from last year which won him a commemorative nugget (about 1gm). As per last year, there were numerous gripes about the rules. Hopefully next year the competitors will be more satisfied. Because of the Jamboree, we shared the camp site with the Sunbury Club and some old friendships were re-

newed. Overall quite a large number of Vic Seekers members turned out which pleased Val 'n Tina with a nice raffle bootie.

On the gold front, about two ounces was recovered. This was mostly off the Pickles Patch and notably by Peter S. who managed almost one once by himself. Picture shows 20 gms of that (5.3, 6.7 and 9.8). Other rewarding areas were Luigi's Patch and Pooles Gully extension. Overall this was a much more rewarding camp than Craige and almost every-one found gold and several found nice 'lumps' of gold.



This was easily the most rewarding camp for quite a while.

On Monday evening Happy Hour extended to three hours as we Christened Claude and Marie's new caravan—and very nice it is too! Congratulations Claude and Marie and many happy miles of 'vanning. Also a big welcome back to Murray H on his first camp outing following his long battle with his hip surgery infection.

'See you's all' at Fryerstown for the Easter Camp in April!

Editors Note: It was a good camp and the weather was good with each night being very mild. It was very pleasant around the club campfire. Of an unusual note was the ubiquitous presence of golden orb spiders which had weaved a very large web across almost every conceivable twig, branch and tree in the entire state forest. With head down detecting you would often walk into the web and it would get wrapped around your face and upper body and you would instinctively reel back and make flailing gestures with your hands in an attempt to rid yourself of the entwined cobwebs. This strange observed behavior in the bush was later appropriately dubbed the "Spider Dance" by Marius.

Monash Raffle

Yes, once again the **Monash Raffle** that is being organised by **ROTARY** is on again and we are urging all Club Members to support the raffle because all proceeds go towards the running of the Club. The Club receives **\$1.54** for every ticket sold.

It would be appreciated if all monies owing on unpaid tickets could be returned by April to Graeme Silver. The reason is that the total number of tickets sold plus all money has to be returned **after the May Monthly Meeting.**

***This raffle will be drawn on
Wednesday 8th of June at 8 pm.***

First Prize is a Holden Barina 1.6L 5 Door Auto Hatch or an Auto Sedan. Its value is \$21,950.00.
Second Prize LCD TV 55cm Flat Screen Valued at \$499.00.
Third Prize is a Weber Baby Q Bar-B-Que. Value \$299.00.
Fourth Prize is a EB Games Voucher. Value \$70.00.

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Wedderburn Photos



Happy Hour at the christening of Claude & Maria's van.



François finding a target



The Happy Gold Hunter. Graeme M. detecting.



Geoff L. In Wedderburn

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Big 100 oz. Nugget found in California

Nugget shown actual size



This undated photo provided by Holabird-Kagin Americana, shows a 100-ounce gold nugget found by a man last year on his property near Nevada City, Calif. (AP Photo/Holabird-Kagin Americana)

Some 150 years after the forty-niners rushed west in search of riches, a new gold discovery in the Sierra Nevada is stirring excitement. A 100-ounce nugget, found by a man last year on his property near Nevada City, Calif., is expected to fetch between \$225,000 and \$400,000 when it goes up for auction March 15 in Sacramento, Calif.

Fred Holabird, a mining geologist whose Reno-based company is one of the country's largest sellers of Western Americana and is handling its sale, thinks it's the largest California gold nugget left in existence. Virtually all of California's gold fields have been thoroughly combed by miners, he said, and other monster nuggets from the Golden State have been melted into ingots for money.

While bigger nuggets have surfaced in Australia in recent decades, no similar-sized placer nuggets from California have turned up in museums, he added. The Smithsonian Institution's largest placer nugget from California weighs about 80 ounces. "The chances of finding something like this anymore are beyond remote. It could be one in a trillion," Holabird said. The man was using a metal detector in an unmined ancient stream bed near the old Mother Lode mining camp of Washington when he stumbled on the nugget in February 2010. The Union of Grass Valley, Calif., has identified him as San Francisco businessman Jim Sanders.

The so-called Washington Nugget is thick and oblong, and resembles a

"squished loaf of bread," Holabird said, adding it was found in the same area where hydraulic mining was invented in the 19th century. A lack of records makes it difficult to determine how the nugget compares in size historically, said John Clinkenbeard, senior geologist with the California Geological Survey in Sacramento. But he said he's unaware of any similar 100-ounce placer nugget being found in California in recent decades. I can't put a numerical value on how rare it is to find a nugget like this," Clinkenbeard said. "All I know is that large nuggets are very rare and your odds of finding one aren't very good." The largest known nugget found in California weighed 54 pounds and was found in 1859 in Butte County, he added.

The California State Mining and Mineral Museum in Mariposa, Calif., displays the Fricot "Nugget," a rare 13.8-pound specimen of crystallized gold discovered in the American River in 1864. But Clinkenbeard and Holabird said there's a difference between Mariposa's crystalline gold specimen and the placer nugget found last year. True nuggets such as the latter are a product of erosion in a modern or ancient streambed, while the former consists of native gold in quartz that has not gone through the same erosional process.

While current gold prices would make the Washington Nugget worth roughly \$130,000, Holabird expects a collector to pay well more because of its historical value. Gold closed at \$1,368.90 an ounce Friday.

"It's worth more as a collectible," he said. "No one will be melting this thing. It's one of the most important California gold artifacts that exist."

Ironbark Gully, Maryborough

by Graeme Melbourne

Although I have had little success in finding gold on the Eastern side of Majorca Rd. I thought I should have another look in the area as a number of small bits of gold were found by club members in the recent trip to Craigie diggings. To be sure, gold is getting harder to find as only about 5% of gold targets give a significant signal even with the latest detectors at optimum settings and Ironbark Gully is no exception. However, I subsequently found a few bits, the largest being 0.7 grams. Over a few days study, I found the area quite interesting.

There are a large number of reef workings together with alluvial workings. Some significant reef shafts lay either side of the main track to the area from the Whitehorse Track, as evidenced by the size of the mullock heaps. The largest next to the track has black hard rock, so I assume the shaft was quite deep.

As a detector fossicker, my main interest was the shallow alluvial leads that ran from the top of the hill in an Easterly direction. There are small exploratory reef workings at the sides of the main gully of alluvial workings. However the alluvial gully has an interesting character where the main gully typically starts as a narrow line of workings spreading to a width of about 50 metres as it flattens out. However, the point of interest was that a puddler, only just discernable, is about half way down on the ridgeline between the main gully and an adjoining gully some 100 meters away. On closer inspection a line of deeper holes with conglomerate at mid depth running up the ridge away from the puddler was evident. A narrow trench was evident running to the puddler tending to confirm that it is a puddler. What made the puddler interesting was that perimeter is raised above the general area which is surrounded by the deepest of holes about 3 metres deep. It seems that the puddler must have been constructed before the deep holes were dug as otherwise the poor old horse would have been precariously close to the deep holes as it walked around the circular trench where the wash was being puddled.



Full view of Puddler

Tour of Old Treasury Building

Sunday 10th April at 11.00 am

Entry is free but tour cost is:

\$11.00 or \$5.00 for Seniors and Concession

Transport (Spring St, top end of Collins St)

Tram: Trams 11, 112, 42, 109 and free City Circle

Tram stop near the Old Treasury Building

Train: Train to Parliament Station

Confirm Attendance

Please contact

Val [redacted] or Tina [redacted]

More Information

<http://www.oldtreasurybuilding.org.au>



Special day trip outing to the Old Treasury Building on Sunday 10th April.

Meet outside at 10.45am for a guided tour to see original documents from our archives of our early history, including, gold escorts, the Eureka conflict, early Melbourne, Indigenous people, criminal Squizzy Taylor, Ned Kelly and more.

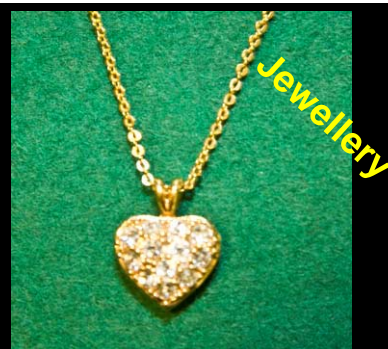
The easiest way to get there is by train to Parliament Station, which is right opposite, and is free for Seniors on Sundays.



Deep Hole beside puddler

Find of the Month

Francine:
Gold & Gem
Pendant



Easter Camp at Fryerstown April Thurs 21st to Tues 26th

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**, also a

Fancy Dress competition - Dress in the style of **Cowboys and Indians**. This will be held Sunday evening before dinner.

Roast Dinner - 6.30pm. ☺ Choice of 3 different meats: pork, lamb or beef. The cost is \$3.00 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.

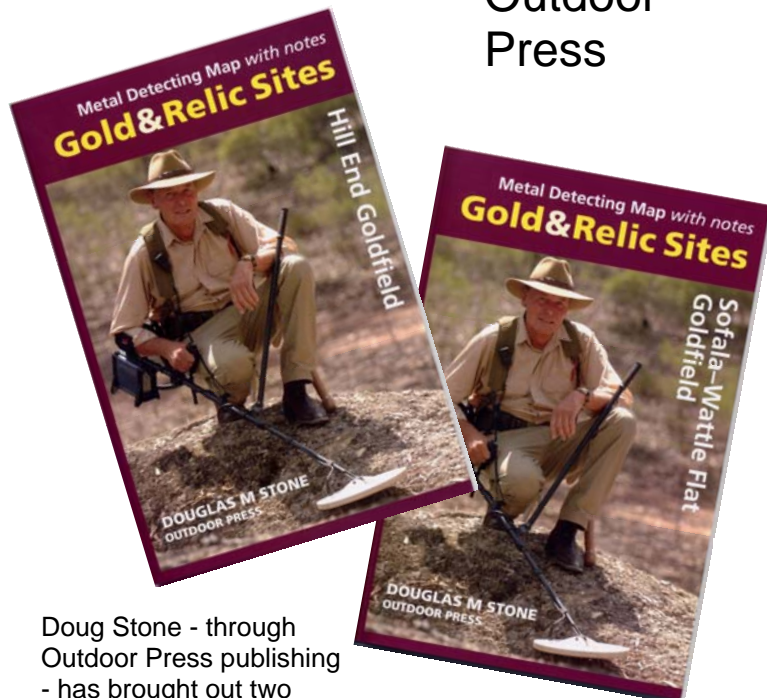
Be there and join in the fun . . .



News

By Ian S.

Two MORE New Maps from Outdoor Press



Doug Stone - through Outdoor Press publishing - has brought out two more new Goldfields maps. This time they are of the NSW Goldfields.

Adding to the growing collection of Goldfield maps are Hill End and Sofala-Wattle Flat. They have been done in the style that we are familiar with and Doug assures me that there has been a lot of field checking to ensure the accuracy of the maps. There has not been any similar maps of these gold fields available till now.

The price is \$15.00 for all the Doug Stone Maps and they are now available from Miners Den.



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April Outing: Fryerstown

May Outing: Mt. Moliagul

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No unattended fires.

FILL IN ALL HOLES, take your rubbish home and carry 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 reported to a Committee Member ASAP.

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No unattended fires.

FILL IN ALL HOLES, take your rubbish home and carry a valid MINERS RIGHT at all times.

Australian Gold Panning Championships 2011



Here is our club's gold panning team at the Australian Championships held at Wendouree - Peter Maffey, Ralph Daniels, and Peter Richards. Although not successful, with some honing of their skills during the year should see us up there next year.



The Goldpanning Championship showing the winners in the U12. Eric's grandson, Jeremy Gilligan [on the right] was very excited to come 2nd after his 3rd place last year.



One of the many spiders in the bush at Wedderburn.
Photo by Geoff W.

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