

L. Dodder-laurel, here parasitic on Red Box.

36 m. to a T intersection and the Great Dividing Trail.

M. T intersection. The first edition of these notes referred to a view of Mt Tarrengower towards the north west. Since then, the trees have grown and have obscured the view.

Turn left, and 35m. to a 2-trunk Red Box.

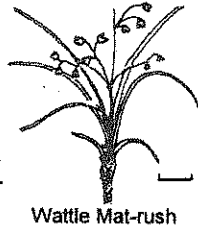
N. Honeyopts (*Acrotriche serrulata*) is a prostrate plant. Several are growing at the base of the Red Box. The flowers of Honeyopts are small, and usually hidden underneath the plant. The nectar-filled flowers attract ants, which pollinate the flowers.

22m. to a 3-trunk Red Box, on the right.

O. Grey Everlasting (*Ozothamnus obcordatus*) is growing nearby. Its small oval leaves are dark green above and pale beneath. The flat-topped flower clusters are yellow when fresh, and die off to a grey colour.

60m. to a Red Box and Red Stringybark copse on the right, about 10m. from a bend to the right.

P. Mat-rush. Mat-rushes have tough, grass-like leaves. Two kinds grow nearby. Wattle Mat-rush (*Lomandra filiformis*) has bluish leaves, and clusters of pale yellow flowers. The larger Many-flowered Mat-rush (*L. multiflora*) has green leaves. Mosses are growing on the stony ground.



Wattle Mat-rush

36m. to a foot bridge and another 14m. to a small tree with a curved trunk, on the left.

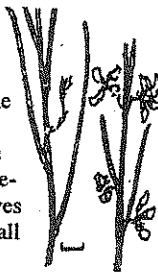
Q. Tussocks of Black-anther Flax-lily (*Dianella admixta*) are on both sides of the path. Its leaves are much wider and longer than those of the two mat-rushes.

22m to, on the left.

R. Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea (*Daviesia leptophylla*). This is one of the 'egg and bacon' peas that grow along the track. The name is given because of the yellow-orange-red colours of the flowers. The leaves have a bitter taste. The seed pods are small and triangular.



Flax-lily



Bitter-pea

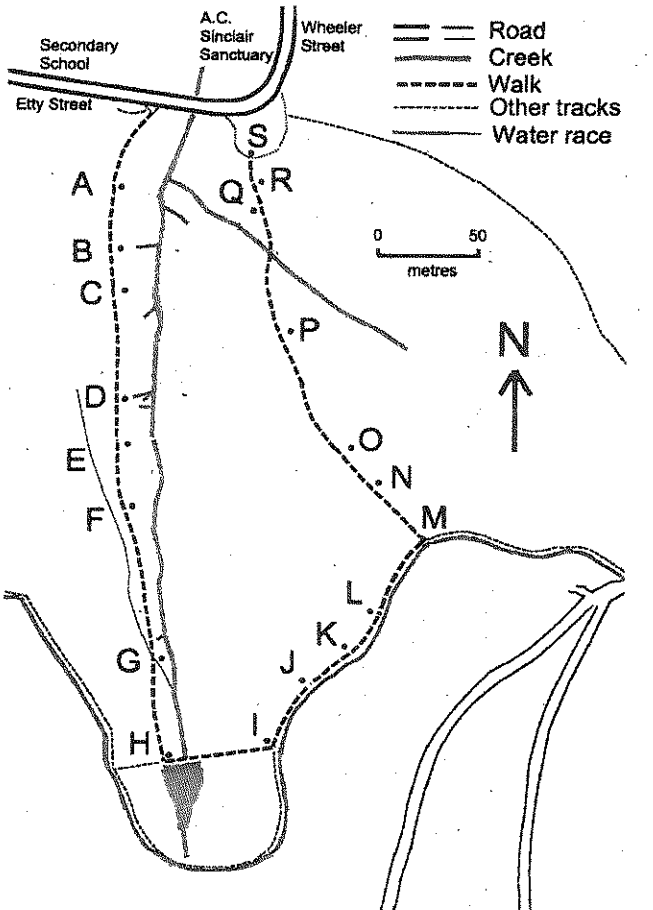
Nearby are some small Bendigo Wax (*Philotheca verrucosa*). These are small shrubs with warty leaves.

14m. to forest edge and Etty Street.

S. Box Mistletoe (*Amyema miquelii*) is the most common local mistletoes. It is usually most abundant on trees at the edge of bushland. Near Castlemaine, host trees include Box eucalypts, Red Stringybark, Red Ironbark and Yellow Gum. #

Bendigo Wax

The walk begins from Etty Street, Castlemaine, about 50 metres west of Wheeler Street, and on the west side of Dead Horse Gully. The walk is about 650 metres. There is one short climb, from the dam to the water race. Take care -- the eroded gully has steep drops and undercut cliffs. The walk is through a heathy dry forest. It is an ever changing forest. Plants germinate, grow, and die, so that the mix of plants varies from place to place, and over time.



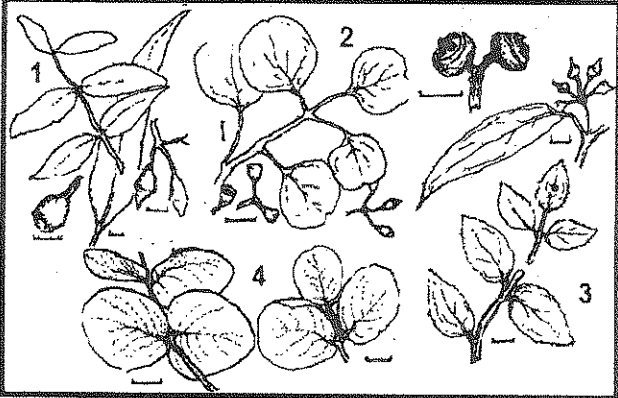
Start. Etty St. 37.07801° S, 144.21646° E.  
M. T-intersection. 37.07980° S, 144.21803° E. gda

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650 metre Nature Trail

A WALK IN DEAD HORSE GULLY, NORWOOD HILL

A walk in the Shire of Mt Alexander.



A 650 metre nature trail in the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park. Dead Horse Gully, Norwood Hill.

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc

Eucalypts:  
1. Yellow Gum  
2. Red Box  
3. Red Stringybark  
4. Mealy Bundy.

From Etty Street, walk 38 metres to, on the left of the path, a small single-trunk Red Box.

**A. Red Box (*Eucalyptus polyanthemos*).** Red Box have rough finely fibrous bark and almost round, often bluish leaves.

When the first edition of this brochure was produced (2001), **Coffee Bush (*Cassinia arcuata*)** was abundant on the hillsides. It is a native member of the daisy family, and is also known as Chinese Scrub or Drooping Cassinia. Coffee Bush is a pioneering species and can densely colonise newly disturbed ground. Most of those on the hillside died during drought, and have been replaced by other shrubs, particularly **Rough Wattle**. The 'leaves' of Rough Wattle (*Acacia aspera*) feel rough to the touch.

**Rough Wattle** 29m. to, on the left, a 4-trunk Red Stringybark.

**B. Red Stringybark (*Eucalyptus macrorhyncha*)** has bark with stringy fibres. The bark often spirals around the trunk. The 'red' in Red Stringybark and Red Box refers to the colour of the timber. When the original trees in this forest were cut down, suckers grew from the base. Here, four suckers have survived and now form trunks.

The stream has cut through alluvial deposits to the older Ordovician base rocks. The erosion is probably the result of mining activity. When the capping (about 30 cm thick) is cut through, erosion is much more rapid. The size of the trees in the gully give an indication of the age of the gully.

19m. to a cypress-like tree on the left.

**C. Cherry Ballart (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*)** is a root parasite. Its roots join to nearby roots and extract nutrients from them. The fruit has a swollen, red-coloured stalk, so that the fruit resembles a small cherry with the seed attached at the end. The red stalk is edible.

Some **Prickly Needlewood (*Hakea decurrens*)** are growing nearby. They have needle-like leaves and resemble a sharp-leaved wattle. The hard woody fruit distinguishes hakeas from the pod-bearing wattles. A three-trunk **Yellow Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*)** is several metres further on, on the right of the path. It has smooth bark.

50 m. to where the path crosses an erosion gully.

**D. Erosion Gully.** The soil crust contains a variety of fungi and other micro-organisms and is often a dark colour. During wet periods, the lower, softer rock is eroded, to undercut the top layer. This process of cutting back upstream is called headward erosion. There are many examples of this on the side stream branches. It takes many years for a new soil crust to form.

27 metres to, on the left, a 5-trunk Red Box.

**E.** A cave near the creek floor was probably dug by miners. Mining tunnels were often very cramped, and very poorly ventilated.

Wattles in the vicinity include:

**Rough Wattle (*Acacia aspera*).** It is abundant near Dead Horse Gully.

**Spreading Wattle (*A. genistifolia*)** which is an open, wiry shrub. Spreading Wattle often begins flowering in January, and some flowers may be present throughout the year. The flowers are cream coloured.

**Gold-dust Wattle (*A. acinacea*)** is here a low shrub, to about 20-30 cm. It has small, glossy, almost oval 'leaves'. It is a common shrub in the Castlemaine goldfields

**Golden Wattle (*A. pycnantha*).** Near Castlemaine it is a slender shrub to small tree, with large glossy green 'leaves'.

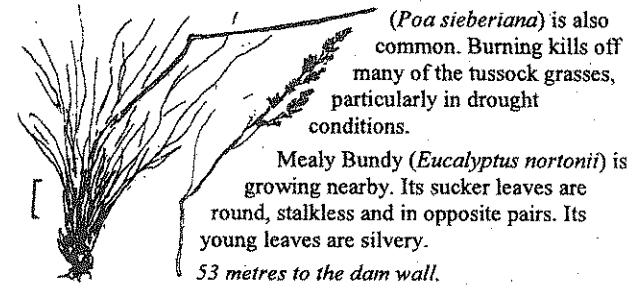
32 metres to small Red Box with mistletoe.

**F. Red Box with mistletoe.** The soil nearby is too shallow and infertile for

extensive plant cover. The pioneer plants are mosses and lichens, which help to break up the rocks, and accumulate humus. In summer, the mosses are dark coloured and appear to be dead. When wet, they recover and turn green. In such infertile spots, few introduced plants can survive, and almost all of the plants present are native species. Natives include **Wiry Buttons (*Leptorhynchos tenuifolia*)**, a small button-daisy, and wallaby grasses.

An old water race is on the right. These races were constructed to carry water to the mines. 73m to where the track crosses the old water race.

**G. Perennial native tussock grasses** are common understorey plants. The most common kind is **Red-anther Wallaby-grass (*Rytidosperma pallidum*)**. Its flower stalks are about a metre high. The smaller **Grey Tussock-grass**



**Grey Tussock-grass** **H. Dam Wall.** This is a man-made wetland.

Like most Australian wetlands it may be dry for many months, or many years. Australian wetland plants are adapted to wet and dry cycles. Rushes (with cylindrical stems) and sedges (here with triangular stems) grow on the edge of the dam. Soil has accumulated below the dam wall, and the damper conditions has enabled weeds to become established. These include introduced grasses, blackberries and cotoneaster. The valley is here much narrower than near the start of the walk.

**Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*)** is nearby. It is an open spiny shrub. Its seed cases are small and heart-shaped.

Cross the dam wall, and 50 m. to the Poverty Gully water race.

**I. Water Race.** The race is still in use, and carries water from the Coliban system to farm dams, and to the Loddon Catchment.

Turn left and 32m. along the race to, on the left.

**J. Multi-trunked Red Stringybark.** The rock strata exposed in the water race were originally deposited as horizontal layers. Earth movements tilted to them to be almost vertical. They are now starting to bend downhill. This bending of strata by gravity is called hillside creep. Although the rock appears to be strong and rigid, it slowly bends under continual pressure.

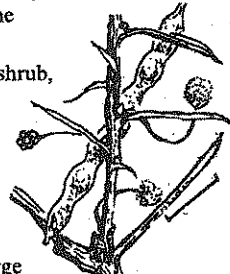
22m to an Apple tree, on the left.

**K. Apples** are not uncommon along walking tracks. A few metres further on **Dodder-laurel (*Cassytha melanantha*)** is parasitic on a Golden Wattle. The seeds germinate in the ground, and the young plant twines around another plant and obtains food from its support by means of suckers along the stems. The part connected to the ground dies off, and the dodder is then entirely dependent on the host for water.

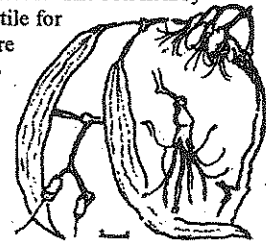
20m. to more Dodder-laurel, on the left



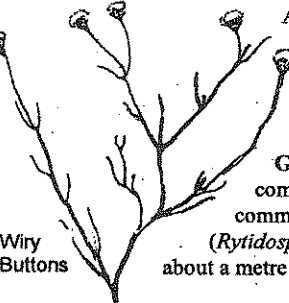
Gold-dust Wattle



Spreading Wattle



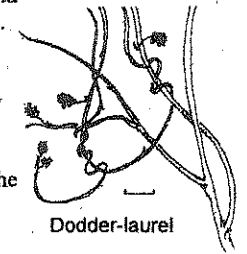
Box Mistletoe



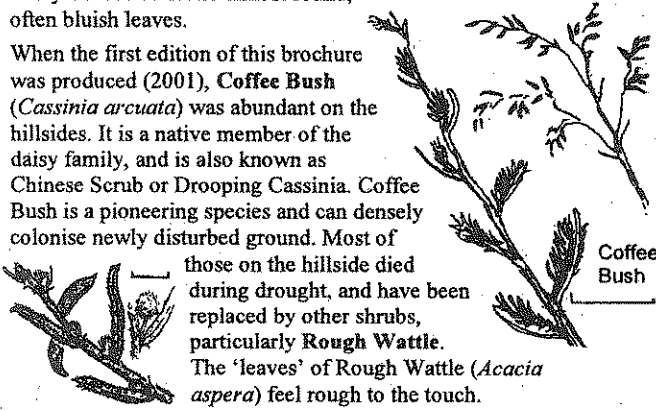
Wiry Buttons



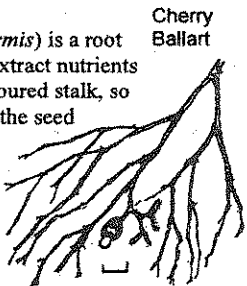
Tall Sedge



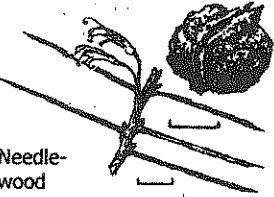
Dodder-laurel



Coffee Bush



Cherry Ballart



Needlewood