

When visiting Muckleford Forest

Please help look after our precious cultural and natural heritage.

All native plants and animals, and historic relics are protected.

Wear sturdy footwear and clothes suitable for the season.

Picnic tables are located near the mine. Toilets and drinking water are not available on the route.

Please take your rubbish with you when you leave the park.

This is a mining area, so there may be deep unmarked mining shafts. It is advisable to keep to the tracks.

The grey sand has high levels of naturally occurring arsenic and should not be disturbed.

For more information

Department of Natural Resources and Environment,
Hargraves St, Castlemaine. Phone 5472 1110.

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc, PO Box 324,
Castlemaine Vic 3450.

Further reading:

Historic Mining Sites in the Maldon Mining District Part 2. David Bannear, DCNR North West Area, May 1993.

Muckleford Forest Plant List. Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club, 1999.

The Forgotten Forests: a field guide to Victoria's box and ironbark country. Malcolm and Jane Calder. Victorian National Parks Association Inc. 1994.

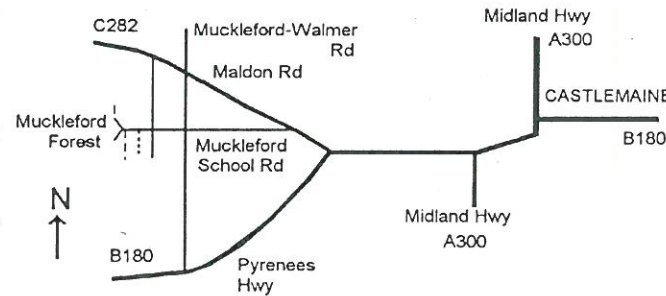
Birds of Muckleford Forest

Birds are plentiful in the forest, especially when the ironbarks are in flower in winter. Flocks of honeyeaters and lorikeets may contain hundreds of birds.

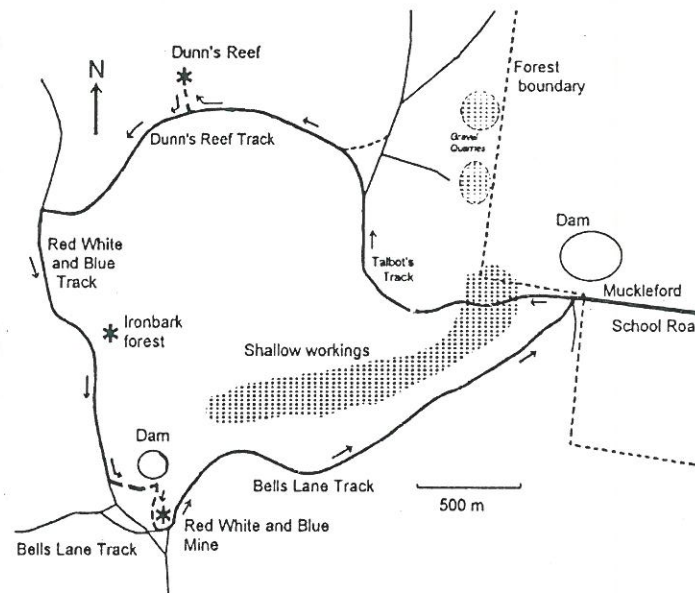
The endangered Swift Parrot is seen regularly in winter.

Reaching the start of the walk

From Castlemaine, take the Maldon Road. Turn left along Muckleford School Road to the start of Muckleford Forest.



The walk starts at the intersection of Bells Lane Track, Talbot's Track and Muckleford School Road.

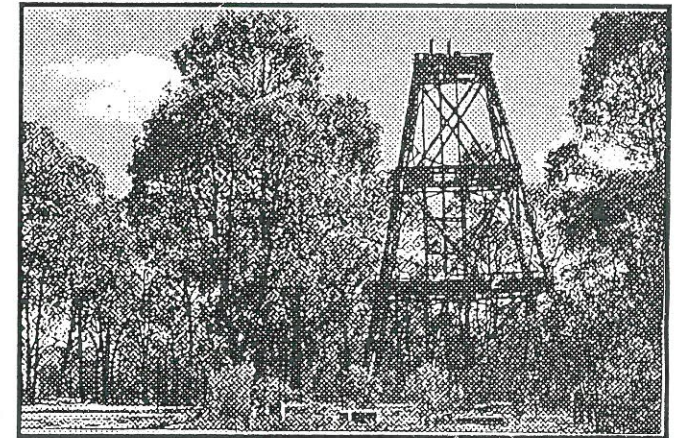


Text and photographs by E. Perkins.
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2 HOUR FOREST WALK

MUCKLEFORD FOREST WALK TO THE RED WHITE AND BLUE MINE

A walk in the
Mount Alexander
Shire



An easy 5 km walk
through box-ironbark
forest to Dunn's Reef
and the Red White
and Blue Mine,
through an area rich
in history, birds and
wildflowers

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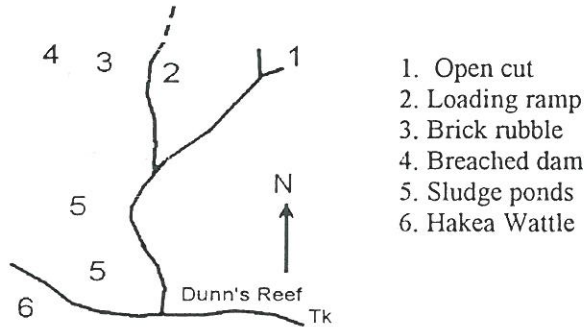
DUNN'S REEF

Dunn's Reef was a prominent exposed quartz reef before mining took place. It was mined on four main occasions.

Reef opened - late 1850s
 Concord Association - early 1860s
 Dunn's Reef Co - c 1875-1882
 Concord Co - 1914-1915.

By 1859 the shaft at Dunn's Reef was 320 ft deep. In 1876 the Dunn's Reef Company had a cross-cut at the 200 foot level. A reef in the crosscut showed payable gold.

The track leads to the open cut. Other features are the remains of a loading ramp, a rectangular levelled area with a spread of rubble of hand-made bricks at base of the loading ramp, a large water dam in the gully, and two sludge ponds upstream from dam. The remnants of a tailings dump can be seen below the dam.



1. Open cut
2. Loading ramp
3. Brick rubble
4. Breached dam
5. Sludge ponds
6. Hakea Wattle

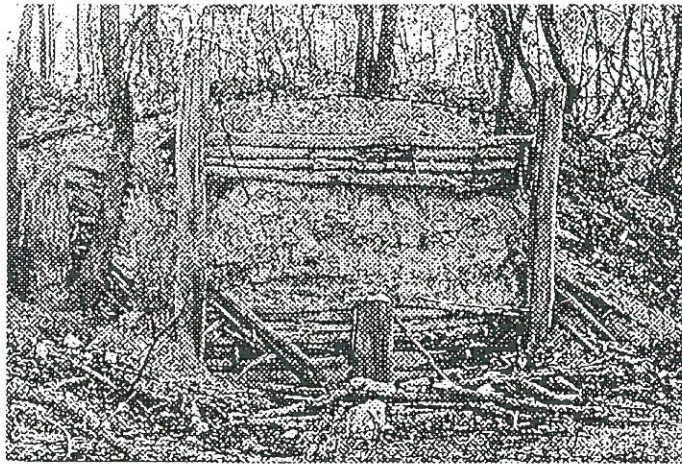
A Hakea Wattle (*Acacia hakeoides*) is growing beside Dunn's Reef Track. It is the only known wild specimen in the district.

IRONBARK FOREST

Ironbarks are the large dominant eucalypts with rugged, dark-coloured bark. Other eucalypts growing in the area include Red Box and Grey Box. When the original trees were cut down, suckers grew from the base. These have now grown, and many of the trees now have several trunks.

Tussock Grass and many kinds of shrubs are present.

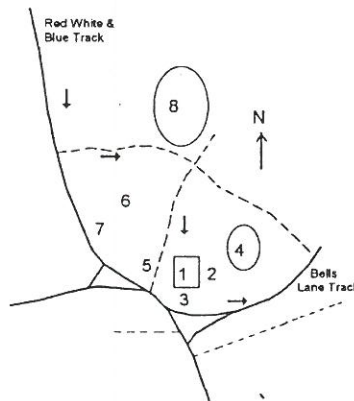
Ironbarks flower in winter. If the flowering is profuse, the forest supports large populations of nectar-feeding birds.



Dunn's Reef loading ramp.

RED, WHITE AND BLUE MINE (GOLDEN AGE MINE)

The mine is on the Red White and Blue quartz reef. Mining continued on and off for many years. In 1871 a shaft was sunk to the water level at 170 feet. Between 1909 and 1915 a total of 2369 ounce of gold was recovered from 4,452 ton of ore. The lease was acquired in 1957 by the Golden Age Gold N/L. The mine was re-opened in 1958, using plant purchased from Bendigo mines. The poppet head was originally at the Deborah United Mine in Bendigo.



1. Poppet Head and shaft
2. Mullock heap
3. Engine beds
4. Small dam
5. Concrete pads
6. Tailings dump
7. Swamp
8. Large dam

The reef has also been known as Maloney's (or Moloney's) Reef.

South of the poppet head are several concrete machinery bases, including a 2.5 m square winder bed (to raise and lower the cage in the shaft), and an engine bed.

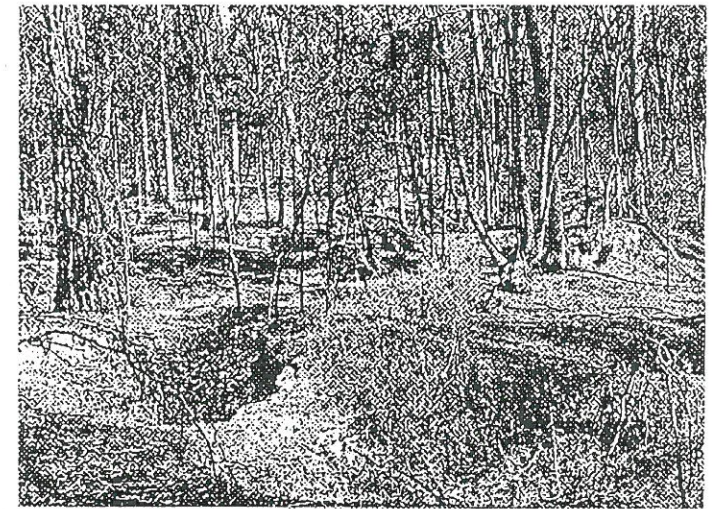
A drain carried water from the shaft to the smaller dam.

Quartz containing a small amount of gold was mined, and crushed before being treated to extract the gold. The treated sand (called battery sand) was placed in the tailings dump. Most of the battery sand has now been removed for packing sand. It has high levels of naturally occurring arsenic.

SHALLOW WORKINGS

A tributary of Back Creek extends from the large dam (at the start of the walk) to the Red White and Blue Mine. The gully has been extensively mined, and the scars of the shallow alluvial mining are still clear.

The debris associated with these workings is from the 20th century, so some of the mining works were probably carried out by unemployed people during the depression years.



Shallow alluvial workings with multi-trunked eucalypts.

At lower elevations Grey Box and Yellow Gum are the main tree species. Yellow Box may also be present. The most common shrubs are Coffee Bush, Golden Wattle and Gold-dust Wattle. There may be few other shrubs.

Red Box, Mealy Bundy and Red Ironbark grow on more elevated sites.