

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

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

Coffee Bush (*Cassinia arcuata*) is 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.

29m to a 4-trunk Red Stringybark on the left.

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 30cm 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.

Prickly Needlewood (*Hakea decurrens*) are seen near here. They have needle-like leaves and resemble a sharp-leaved wattle. The hard, woody fruit distinguishes hakeas from the pod-bearing wattles.

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

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

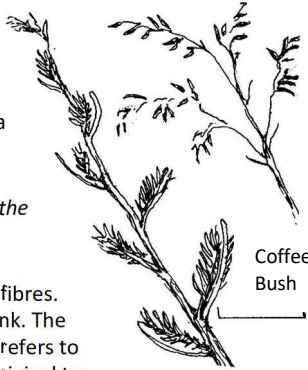
A three-trunk **Yellow Gum** (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*) is several metres further on, on the right of the path. It has smooth bark.

50m on, the path passes the head of an erosion gully on the left.

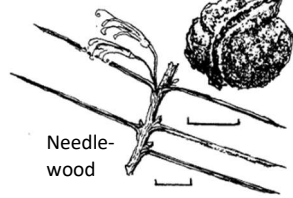
D. Erosion gully. The soil crust contains a variety of fungi and other micro-organisms and is often a dark colour. During wet periods, the lower, softer rock is eroded, to undercut the top layer. This process of cutting back upstream is called headward erosion. There are many examples of this on the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

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

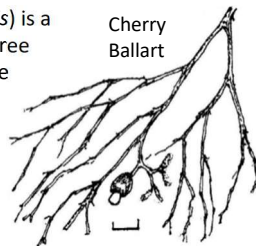
E. A cave near the creek floor was probably dug by miners. Mining tunnels were often very cramped, and very poorly ventilated.



Coffee Bush



Needle-wood



Cherry Ballart

Wattles in the vicinity include:

Rough Wattle (*Acacia aspera*), a small shrub. The 'leaves' (actually phyllodes, or 'leaf-stalks') are covered with short, stiff hairs so that they feel rough to touch. It is abundant in Dead Horse Gully.



Spreading Wattle

It is abundant in Dead Horse Gully.

Spreading Wattle (*A. genistifolia*) 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 a low shrub here,

growing 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'.

32m to a small Red Box with mistletoe on the left.

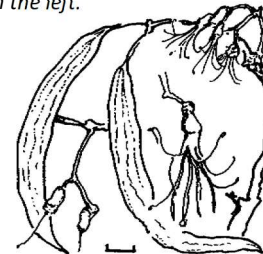
F. Red Box with mistletoe. The soil nearby is too shallow and infertile for extensive plant cover. The pioneer plants are mosses and lichens, which help to break up the rocks and accumulate humus (organic matter). In summer, the mosses are dark-coloured and appear to be dead. When wet, they



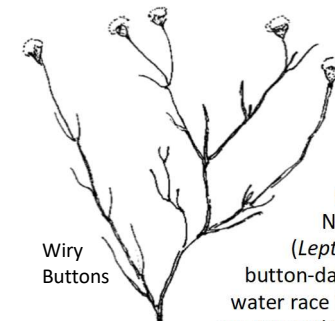
Rough Wattle



Gold-dust Wattle



Box Mistletoe



Wiry Buttons

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 tenuifolius*), 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** (*Poa sieberiana*) is also common. Burning kills off many of the tussock grasses, particularly in drought conditions.

Mealy Bundy (*Eucalyptus nortonii*) is growing nearby. Its sucker

leaves are round, stalkless and in opposite pairs. Its young leaves are silvery.



Grey Tussock-grass

53m to the dam wall.

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 have enabled weeds to become established. These include introduced grasses, blackberries and cotoneaster. The valley here is 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. *Bursaria spinosa* is an important food plant for the rare Eltham Copper Butterfly found in the Castlemaine area.

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

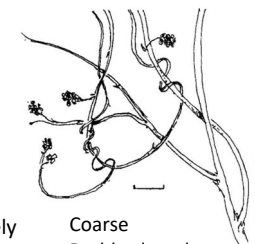
I. Water race. The race, no longer in use, carried water from the Coliban system to farm dams and the Loddon Catchment.

Turn left and walk 40m along the race to a Red Stringybark 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 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 on a **Coarse Dodder-laurel** (*Cassytha melantha*) 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-laurel is then entirely dependent on its host for water.



Coarse Dodder-laurel

20m to more Dodder-laurel on the left.

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

36m to a T-intersection with the Great Dividing Trail.

A few metres before the intersection there is a view of Mt Tarrengower through the trees towards the north-west.

M. T-intersection. The remainder of this walk is on a section of the Goldfields Track, a 210km walk from Bendigo to Buninyong.

Turn left and walk 35m to a 2-trunk Red Stringybark on the right.

N. Honeypots (*Acrotiche serrulata*) is a small, low growing shrub. A plant is growing near the base of the Red Stringybark. The flowers of Honeypots 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*), growing here and widespread on this walk, has small oval leaves that 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.

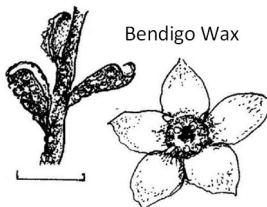
36m to a footbridge and another 14m to a tree with a curved trunk on the left.



Flax-lily

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

Nearby and elsewhere along the track are some **Bendigo Wax** (*Philotheca verrucosa*), small shrubs with warty leaves and beautiful pink and white flowers.



22m to Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea on the right.

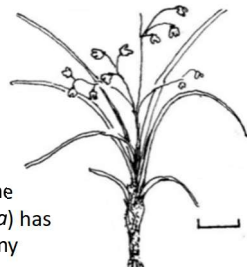
R. Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea (*Daviesia leptophylla*). This is one of the 'egg and bacon' peas that grow along the track. The name is given because of the yellow-orange-red colours of the flowers. The leaves have a bitter taste. The seed pods are small and triangular.

14m to forest edge and Etty Street.

S. Box Mistletoe (*Amyema miquelii*) is the most common local mistletoe. 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.



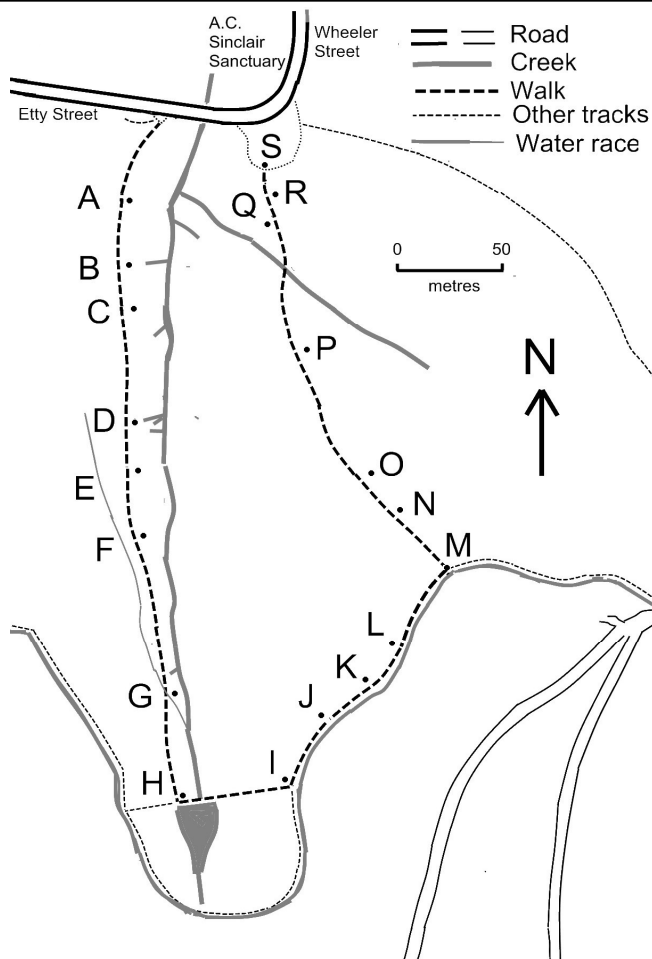
Bitter-pea



Wattle Mat-rush

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.



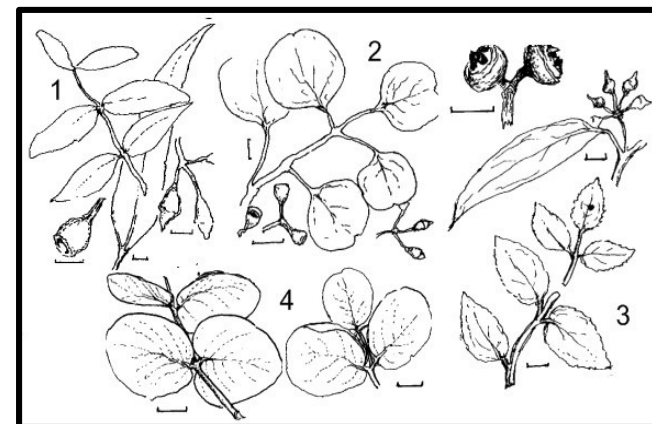
Start. Etty St. 37.07801° S, 144.21646° E.
M. T-intersection. 37.07980° S, 144.21803° E. gda

Originally compiled by Ern Perkins, updated May 2022.
Illustrations by David Parnaby. Scale bar: 1cm.

The Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung community as the traditional owners and custodians of the country where we meet and study the natural environment.

A WALK IN DEAD HORSE GULLY, NORWOOD HILL

**A 650 metre nature trail
in the Castlemaine Diggings
National Heritage Park**



Eucalypt leaves and nuts:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. Yellow Gum | 3. Red Stringybark |
| 2. Red Box | 4. Mealy Bundy |

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