

HFNC Excursion to Dergholm SP (Youpayang Block)
Report for 11 April 2010
Rod Bird

The day started off cool and with showers. We entered the Brimboal State Forest along the Nolans Creek Rd, off the Casterton-Chetwynd Rd (1 km north of Glenmia Rd), and drove across the Glenmia Rd and on to stop at the swamp on Nolans Creek Rd. There we met Hilary Turner, George, Jess and their two boys. That brought our numbers to 12 (Cayleys, Grimes, Turners, Reto, Reto & Yvonne, Diane & Rod).

After morning tea and a shower of rain we walked out onto the dry swamp but saw only Masked Lapwings and Kangaroos there among the rushes and reeds (a few clumps of *Eleocharis sphacelata*).

Next stop was a walk into the NE corner of Rod's 40-ha block of bush. This corner contains some large old Manna Gum. We walked down to the change into Swamp Gum and, on the return, across the slope to Brown Stringybark and wet heath.

Next stop was the Bilston's Tree, adjacent to Glenmia Rd. The tree was in good health and appears to have gained in height over the last 10 years since it was measured. We inspected the adjacent stand of River Red Gums, where one tree has rooted from a branch and taken over the support function for the crown, the original stump having died (Photo 1). We had lunch at the road.

Our route then took us along Glenmia Rd to rejoin Nolans Creek Rd. Then, at 0.3 km west, we turned up Loop Tk for 0.3 km, on to Rocky Ck Rd. At 2.4 km we took a track west towards the Glenelg River. This was a delightful route, passing through a varied vegetation from dense Brown Stringybark, wet heathland, open heathland and Drooping Sheoaks among giant granite tors on Rocky Creek. There were a couple of steepish sections that may be difficult in winter, since the track passes across or near a couple of small creeks.

We spent some time inspecting Rocky Creek and the granite tors.

Shortly after we came to a T junction where we would normally park and walk down to the river. However, this time we drove to the left, around a quite deep stream cutting, to park near the south boundary of the park extension down to the river. This point is about 100 km from Hamilton.

Walking down past some pools we saw a small flock of feral sheep - perhaps 20 sheep in all, some with long tails - and they appear to have roamed far eastward into the park (at least up along Rocky Creek area into the Drooping Sheoaks where we saw manure).

Also, we noted a small mob of cattle in the floodplain area and they bolted out through the southern fence and across the river. The fence there is not stock-proof. It has posts 15 m apart, no droppers and very slack wires. Installing at least 4 droppers per panel - and straining the wires up - might solve the problem.

Mistletoe seems to be taking a heavy toll on River Red Gums near the river - most trees are heavily infected. No doubt the dry years have added to the stress. The river has a liberal amount of snags in the stream (Photo 3).

We noted an Aborigine scar tree in the area just on the rise (37-20-22.2/141-13-44.0 on Geod 84 system GPS) (Photo 4). One Parsons Bands orchid in flower was seen.

The boys had a play in the sand and then we walked back to the vehicles. Our next stop was along Googs Track (we found this by turning left when we back-tracked to Rocky Creek Rd). About half way along this 2.5 km track we saw Desert Banksia (*Banksia ornata*) flowering copiously adjacent to the track on the south side - seems to be one of the few spots in the park where the species survives. When this area gets burned again it would be good to avoid burning all of this stand. Another small stand adjacent to (north) Glenmia Rd would also benefit from protection, since it appears that frequent burning in years past has eliminated the species from most other areas in the forest.

We hit Loop Tk, turning left and continuing on past the Link Tk connection to stop at Smokey Swamp (Photo 3). This swamp is skirted by Tea-tree and rushes, with trees all around. It was dry and probably is quite shallow when full. It is about 1 km across and very picturesque.

Afternoon tea followed and it was time then to leave. We saw quite a lot of heath species and *Correa* flowering after the recent rains. We did not see any Red-tailed Black-cockatoos on our trip through the Brown Stringybark forest. We continued south down Loop Tk to the Chetwynd Road, turning left and continuing on that until it reached the Chetwynd-Casterton Rd. The Spring Tk near Brown Reedy Swamp is a short-cut that could have been taken. We were back in Hamilton at about 6 pm after a very good day out - and the weather was kind to us after all.



Photo 1
Brimboal River
Red Gum – a case
of re-direction.



Photo 2
Smaokey Swamp.



Photo 3
Glenelg River
stream bed.



Photo 4
Scar tree upslope
from the river.