

HFNC Excursion to Mt Stapylton and Black Ian's Rock – 17 June 1995

Dave Munro & Rod Bird

Participants: John & Glenys Cayley, Lyn & Dave Munro, Rod Bird, Janeen & Ken Grimes, Roger Thompson, Penny Moon, Ann Duff, Lee Osmond, Elizabeth Arthur, Hilary Turner and two friends.

The weather was a little cold and windy with a few light showers. However, the Mt Stapylton bush walk was regarded by those who attended as one of the most enjoyable in the Grampians. The walk is a circuit, mainly over rocks. After climbing the shoulder west of Mt Stapylton the track plunges down then follows an interesting route through rocks to a ridge line that trends south. The return was via a newly contracted track which gave us a good view of the western side of our ridge.

Plants recorded:- *Acacia genistifolia* (Spreading Wattle)
Astroloma pinifolia (Pine Heath)
Baekea crassifolia (Desert Baekea)
Brachyloma ericoides (Brush Heath)
Epacris impressa var. *grandiflora* (Common Heath)

Orchids recorded:-*Acianthus pusillus* (Small Mosquito Orchid)
Pterostylis longifolia gp (Tall Greenhood)
Pterostylis parvifolia (Tiny Greenhood)
Pterostylis revoluta (Autumn Greenhood)
Pterostylis sanguinea (Banded Greenhood)

Birds recorded:- Wedge-tailed Eagle being harassed by 2 Peregrine Falcons
Brown-headed Honeyeater feeding on *Epacris impressa grandiflora*
Grey Currawong

A Koala was spotted in a low branch of a tree “looking over the valley”.

We left Mt Zero camp ground and, on our way home, drove to Black Ian's Rocks (also known as Red Rock Reserve, Black Range No. 1) at the northern end of the Black range to look for aboriginal rock art.



We found two indistinct figures in the western overhang that were described by Massola in 1963 (*Victorian Naturalist*, Vol 79, pp. 353-356).

A set of 2 hand prints about 1 m apart were found about 60 m east from the end overhang. These were protected by a slight overhang on the north-facing wall. These prints, particularly the one nearest the end overhang, were quite visible.

A much more impressive set of handprints was found on an exposed northern flank of the rock about 35 m further east. The panel is about 1 m x 0.5 m, placed 1-1.5 m above the ground. There were possibly 10 hand prints in red ochre, some remarkably well preserved given that there is no protection from the sun and weather. Some exfoliation of the rock has occurred which has removed some other prints. Four of the prints are very plain to see but the other 5 or 6 are faded. Photos in slide film were taken.

The art site is not easy to see, being mostly obscured by a shrub. Rock climbers have climbing routes on this wall and nearby but there did not appear to be any damage to the images. There was a group of climbers present when we visited. We believe that this was the first record of these images. When told to Ian McCann he remarked that he thought there was another such exposed site in the Buandik area of Victoria Range. Invariably, however, the paintings were made under overhangs or in caves that gave some protection against the elements.



The photographs show a figure in the NW overhang (left, above), hand prints under a ledge on the northern wall (right, above) and several handprints further east on the exposed northern wall (below).

