

NATURE NOTES

Special Issue: THE GRAMPIANS.

Vol.15.
No.4.

GUIDE to WHAT'S WHAT in the GRAMPIANS...



MCKENZIE FALLS. These waterfalls are the biggest of the half-dozen or so in the Grampians. Watch out as you walk down the path to the bottom of the falls because the spray will drench you after heavy rain has fallen. There are several small waterfalls before the big drop so don't think you've seen it all from the top.

ZUMSTEINS. Just down the McKenzie River from the falls is this delightful little spot where you can feed the kangaroos - the best time being in the late afternoon.

MT. ABRUPT. Way down south in the Grampians - near Dunkeld. This peak gives a great view over some of the biggest sheep farms in Victoria. It's about a one hour climb to the top and it's very easy to miss the track back down. There are some small caves on the way up.

LAKE WARTOOK. Together with the other lakes in the Grampians are, this lake forms part of a huge irrigation scheme which sends water to the dry Mallee and Wimmera regions of Victoria. As well as a nice picnic and camping area at the lake, there is a colony of koalas on the island in the middle of the lake.

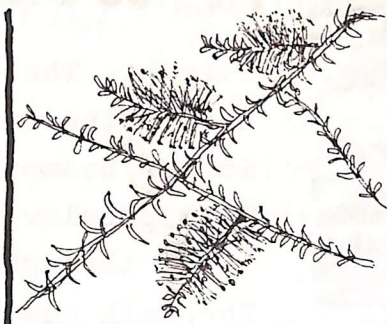
JAWS OF DEATH. About a ½ hour walk from Reed's Lockout on Mt. Victory, these rock overhangs are a spectacular sight.

SAFETY IN THE GRAMPIANS. Every year people have to be rescued from the Grampians area - especially from the rugged Victoria Valley. It is wise when walking to take waterproof covering with you and a pocket full of emergency rations such as health bars and barley sugars. Carry a good map and compass AND KNOW HOW TO USE THEM, don't just rely on our centre pages. If driving, stick to the main roads unless it's very dry weather or you own a land rover.

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2 Category B.

Wonderland Wildflowers

Color in these wildflower pictures so that you will be able to recognize them more easily. The correct colors are underlined for you.



Melaleuca decussata.
Shrub up to 2 metres high.
Flowers mauve (light purple).



Goodenia ovata.
Shrub up to 2 metres high.
Flowers bright yellow.
Leaves bright green.



Pine Heath.
(*Astroloma pinifolium*)
Bright green spiky leaves.
Flowers yellow tipped with green.



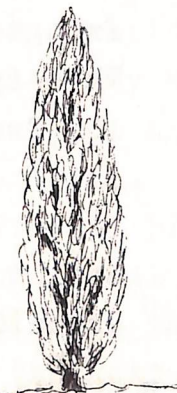
Common Heath.
(*Epacris impressa*)
Shrub up to 1m. high, flowers pink, white or red.



Victorian Christmas Bush
(*Prostanthera lasianthos*)
White flowers marked with brown and purple.



Acacia myrtifolia.
(A wattle)
Up to 1 metre high. Flowers yellow, buds red, leaves light green.



Port Jackson Cypress
(*Callitris rhomboidea*)
Small tree rather than wildflower!
Mid-green, like a mini-cypress.



Correa reflexa.
Shrub up to 60cm high.
Flowers green or red.
Leaves bright green.

AND MANY, MANY,
MORE

A Walk Around Wonderland — by F.J.C. Rogers

The Forest Commission has defined a number of walks in the Grampians. One of the most popular is that which leads through "Wonderland". The walk can be taken in easy stages and with much variety. One can start at the Camping Ground and walk past the large, flat, bare rock area called the "Elephant's Hide".

When one has been walking for some time a detour can be made to Splitters Falls where the result of sandstone weathering and erosion can be seen. Near here we are likely to find plants of Grampians fringe-myrtle (*Calytrix Sullivani*). This species is restricted to the Grampians area.

From the turntable the track leads through some interesting rock formations. The Grand Canyon is a valley with,

↖ The Army - practising rock - climbing in the Grand Canyon.

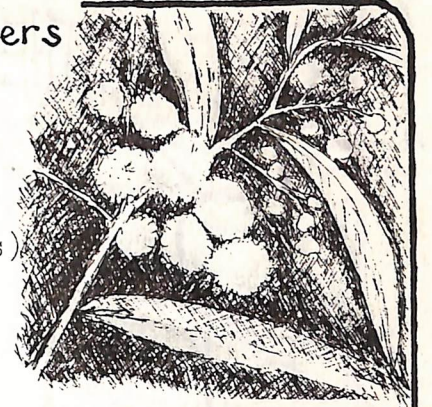
at times, steep sides. Austral King ferns (*Todex barbara*) put on a fine display while a form of Victorian Christmas-Bush (*Prostanthera lasianthos*) shows that at most times of the year (in this case summer) there will be some beautiful wildflower growing in this area.

As the climb is made to the top of the range a change in rock will be noticed. An igneous rock (i.e. caused by volcanic action) has intruded into the sandstone. Such rock formations as Silent Street, Fallen Giant, Mushroom Rock, Lady's Hat and the Nerve Test can be seen on the trip.

When the top is reached a fine view of Lake Bellfield and the surrounding countryside can be seen.

On the trip back to Hall's Gap in summer may be seen the small *Boronia nana* creeping over the ground. Koalas may sometimes be seen in the eucalypts and birds are quite plentiful.

A list of plants for Wonderland would total more than 200 species, including those listed and drawn on the next page.

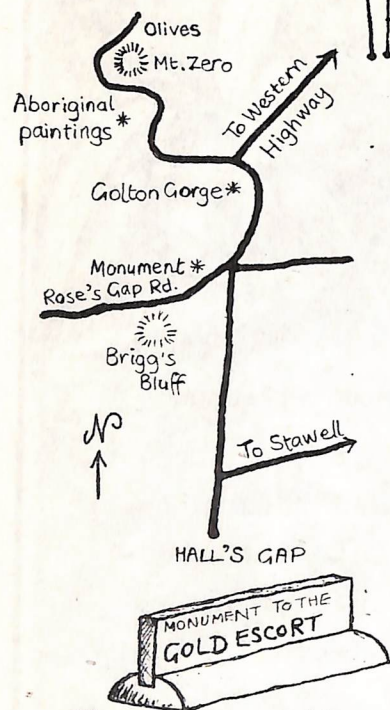


Acacia rhotinodes.



↖ Wally tries out the "nerve test."

THE NORTHERN END of the GRAMPIANS..



If we travel north from Hall's Gap we pass through some very beautiful wildflower country. It was not always wildflowers that brought people to the area though. Along Rose's Gap Road is a monument to the Gold Escort. In the goldrush days the coaches would divert from Horsham to travel through the sandy and rocky country rather than try to traverse the plain country farther to the north where the sticky mud would clog up the wheels and immobilize the coach.

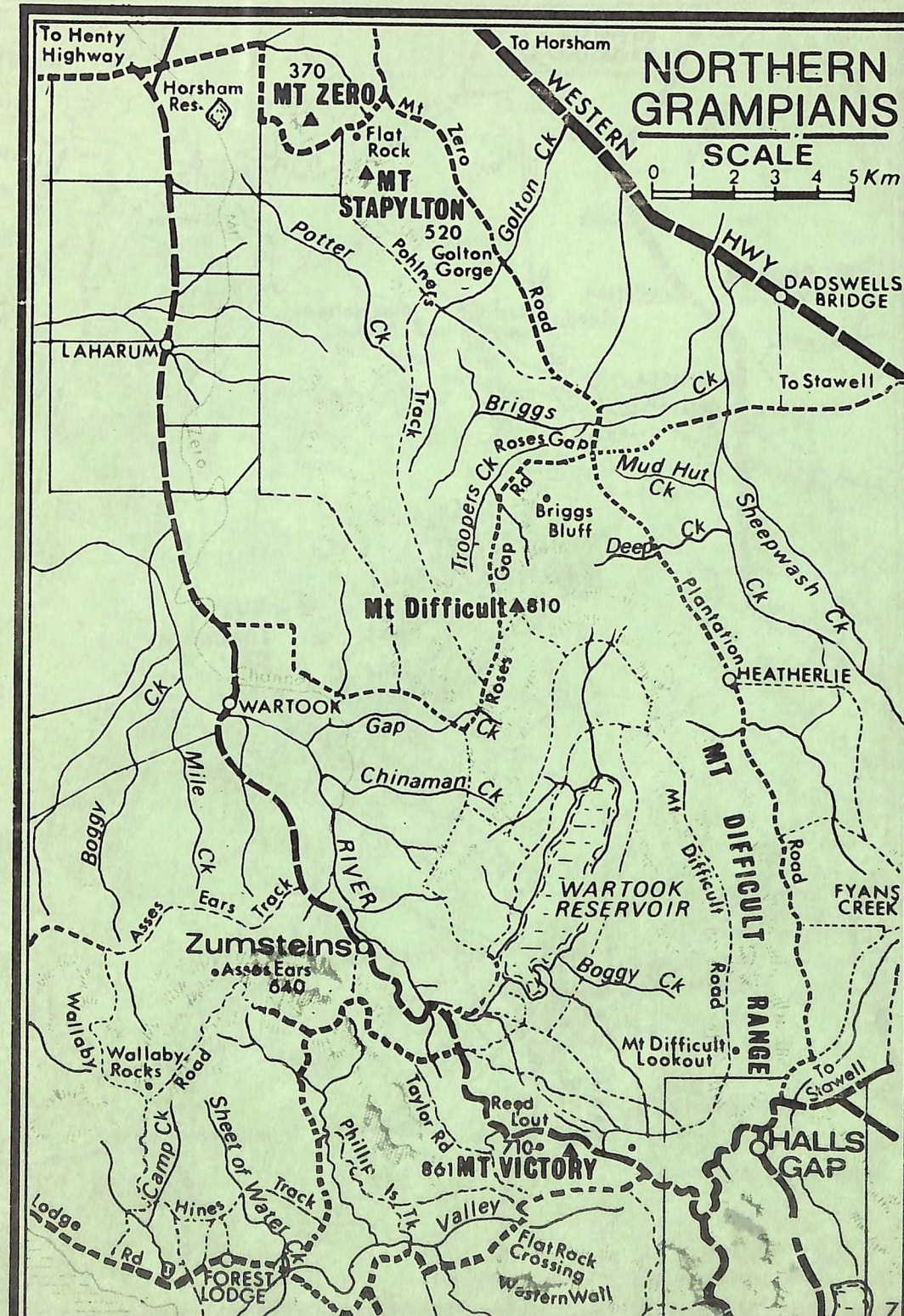
There are walks around Brigg's Bluff and Golton Gorge where people may climb over rocks and see many beautiful wildflowers and interesting animals.

The Aboriginal Tribesmen of Western Victoria called the Grampians "the Mountains of the Dreamtime", and some of their paintings may be seen in the caves near Mt. Zero.

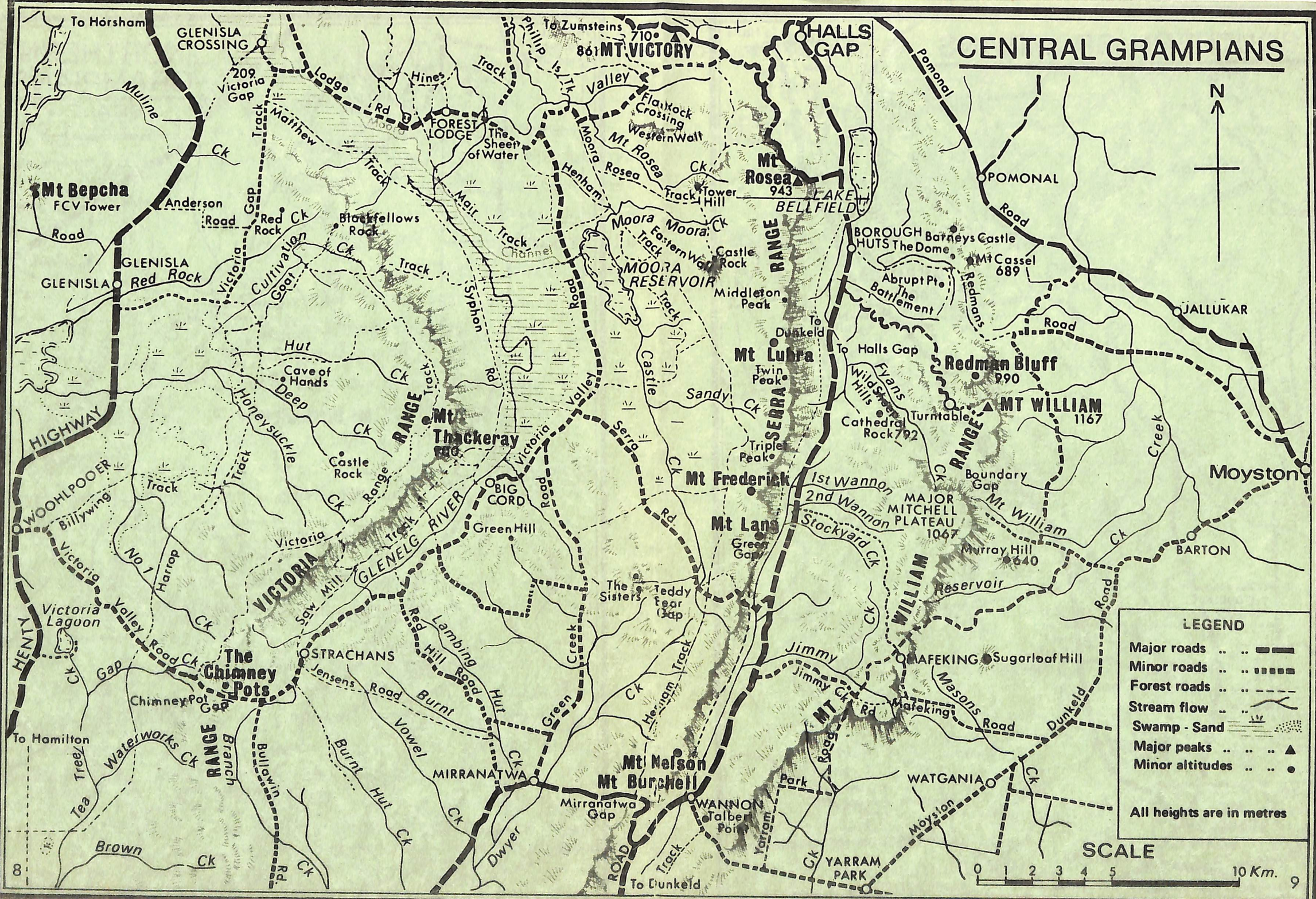
Mt. Zero was climbed by Major Mitchell in July 1836. From the top he could see Mt. Arapiles in the distance. Today cars can be left at the parking area where there are toilets and washing water, which leaves you a short, sharp walk to get to the top of Mt. Zero. From the top you can see the surrounding

Olive plantations. * Mt. Zero PLANTS CHECKLIST:

- Calytrix tetragona
- Psilotum nudum
- Hibbertia linearis
- Common Flat Pea (Platylobium obtusangulum)
- Correa reflexa
- Grevillea alpina



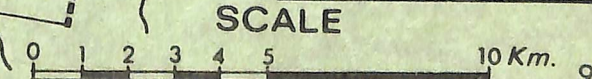
CENTRAL GRAMPIANS

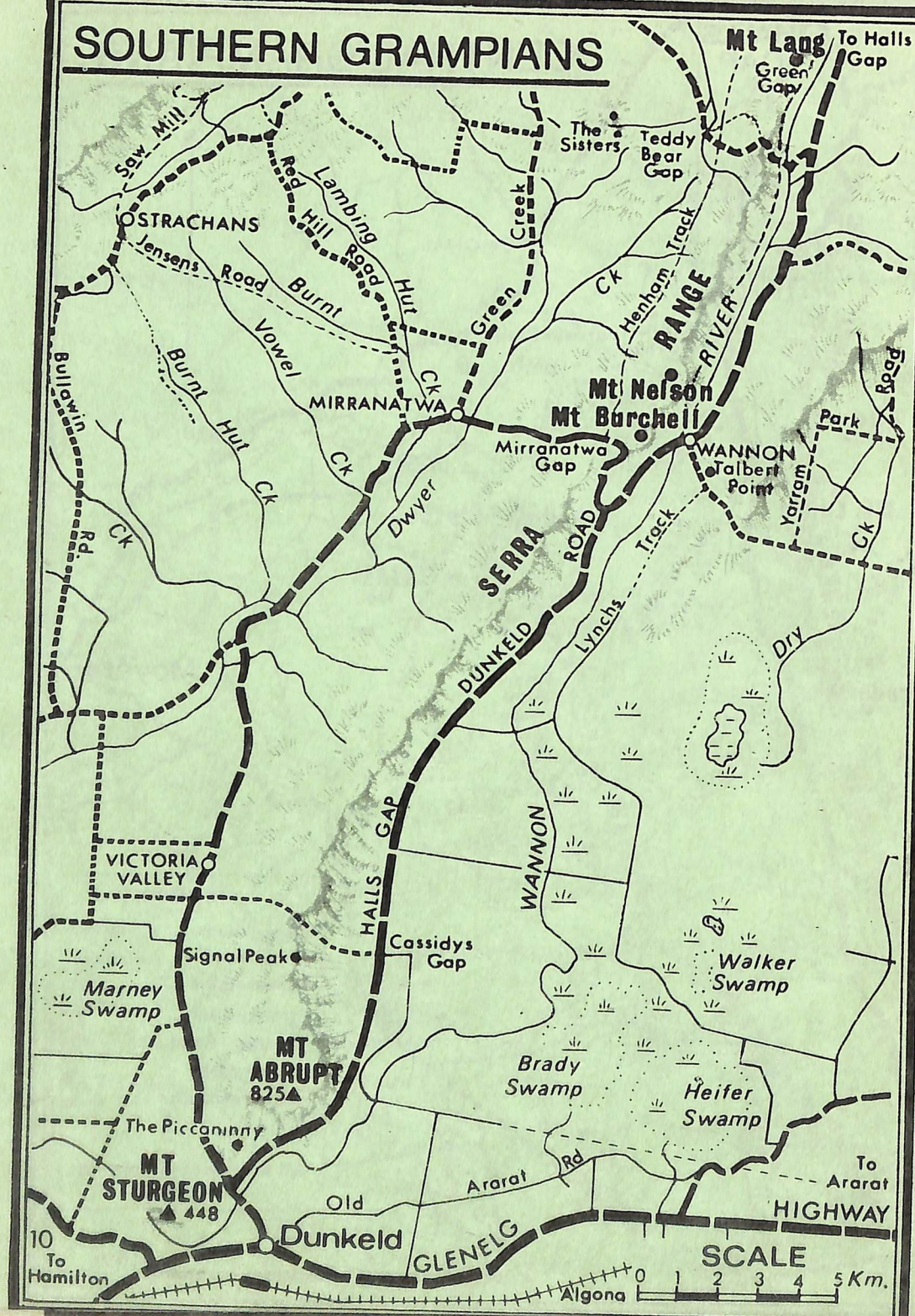


LEGEND

- Major roads ———
- Minor roads - - - - -
- Forest roads - . - . -
- Stream flow ———>
- Swamp - Sand [stippled pattern]
- Major peaks ▲
- Minor altitudes ●

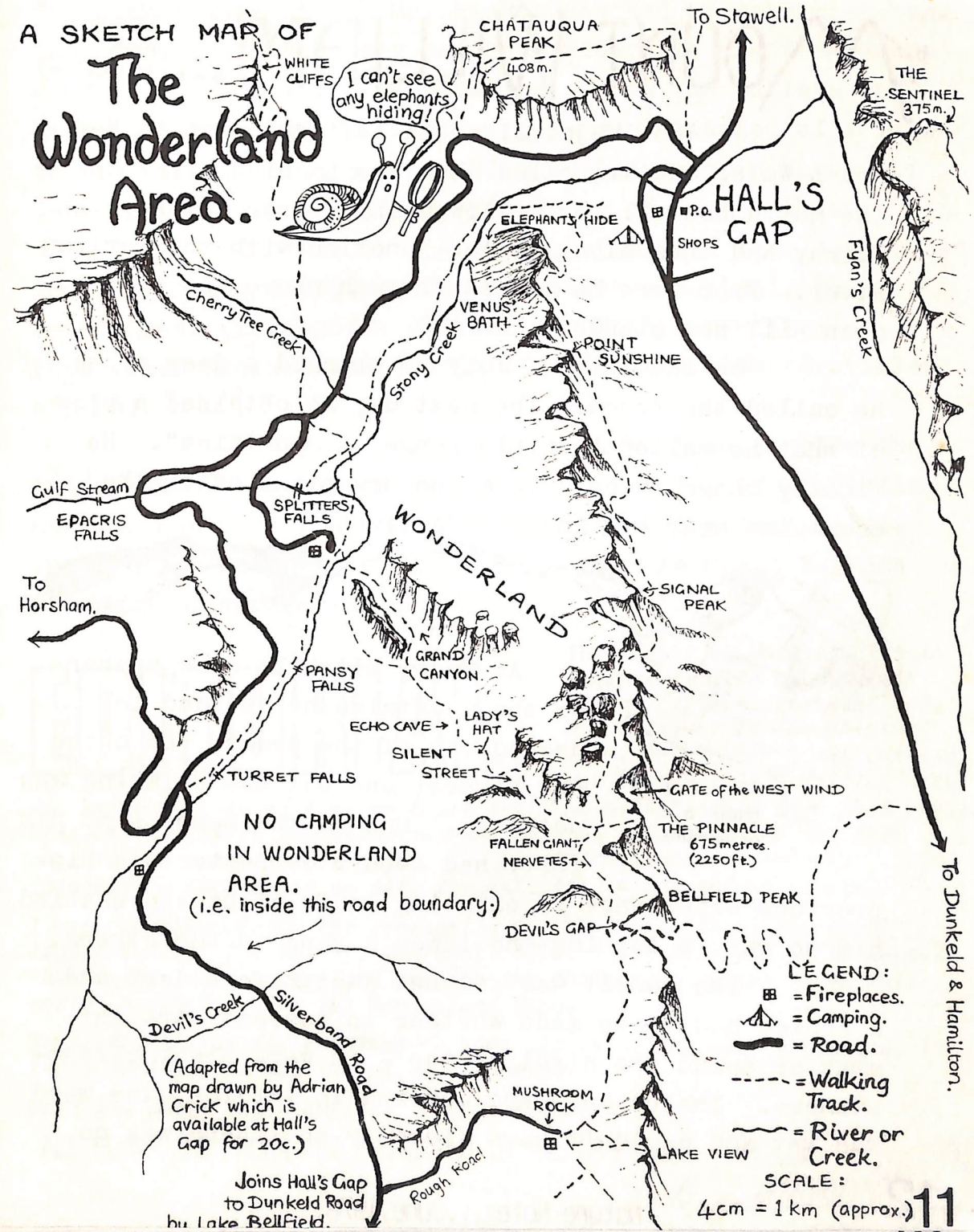
All heights are in metres





A SKETCH MAP OF

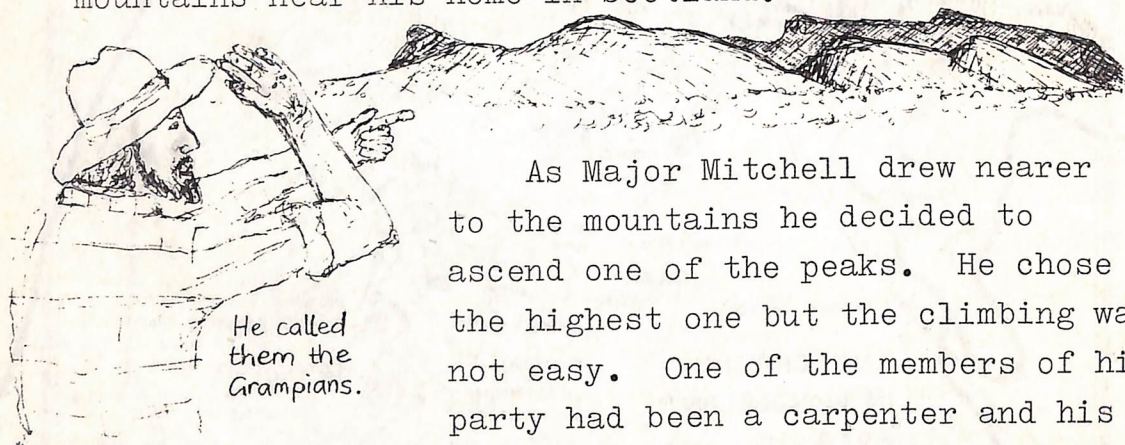
The Wonderland Area.



MOUNT WILLIAM... 3829 feet high (about 1,270m.)

In 1836 Major Mitchell left Bathurst in New South Wales and travelled down the Lachlan River to the Murrumbidgee. He followed this river to the Murray and then along to the junction with the Darling River. From here he passed through where the town of Swan Hill now stands.

On the 10th of July he crossed a deep creek he called the Avoca. The next day he obtained a view of what he called "a noble range of mountains". He finally chose to call them the Grampians after the mountains near his home in Scotland.



He called them the Grampians.

As Major Mitchell drew nearer to the mountains he decided to ascend one of the peaks. He chose the highest one but the climbing was not easy. One of the members of his party had been a carpenter and his

previous experience in climbing roofs of houses enabled him to gain a footing and lower a rope to the others.

The summit was reached just before dark and a choice had to be made whether to descend straight away or spend the night up top - in very bleak circumstances. The bushes were covered in icicles, the wood was wet and wouldn't burn fiercely and there was no

food other than what a Mr. Richardson had brought with him. The party endured a very cold and miserable night and were glad of the morning. Despite the fog in the valleys and storm clouds above, a brief glimpse was obtained of a lake to the north. This was called Lake Lonsdale in honour of Captain Lonsdale - the first Governor of Port Phillip.

On this trip a number of plants were discovered including: the Grampians Gum (*Eucalyptus alpina*), Twisted Beard Heath (*Leucopogon glacialis*), Holly Grevillea (*Grevillea aquifolium*) and Goldfields Grevillea (*Grevillea alpina*).

Today a well graded bitumen road enables the interested person to drive almost to the top of Mt. William and you can park your car before walking the last little interesting bit. Keep an eye open for the Coast Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*).

EDITORIAL.

This issue of Nature Notes is a reprint, with minor alterations of the successful Vol. 12 No: 6 issue. In its original form, the research was carried out by the 1975 Committee with

Mr. Keith Dyer as editor. We trust that you will benefit from this Special Edition on the Grampians and most of all, hope you use this magazine as your tourist guide. The Committee would welcome any information that could up date the articles in any future reprint.

I wish to acknowledge the generosity of the publisher of the book: *Algona Guides* (P.O. Box 52, MONTROSE. 3765.) for allowing us to reprint the maps in the centre-fold and for the photograph on our cover this month- Halls Gap from the Wonderland Range.

We apologize for the printing on some copies of the map on page 16. In these copies, the map is cut of alignment.

When you visit the Grampians, please remember:

ALL FLORA AND FAUNA ARE PROTECTED IN THE GRAMPIANS - BY LAW.

B. d. Whibald.

★ MT. ARAPILES.

Have you seen the film "Lost in the Bush"? Your Mum and Dad probably read this story in the Victorian Grade Four Reader and will know that it is about the three Duff children, who were lost for ten days without food or water in the wild bush about 22km from Mt. Arapiles. Many a lump was brought to the throats of the readers when they came to the part where the children were found alive - with Jane's coat protecting her young brother from the cold.

★ ★

It was Major Mitchell in July 139 years ago, who was the first white man to see the then un-named Mt. Arapiles. He described it as an "isolated mass" - a good description for it rises abruptly from the surrounding plains. Having seen it first on the anniversary of the battle of Salamanca (in Spain), he gave it the name of a mountain near Salamanca - Mt. Arapiles. He also named the strange looking rock near the base of the mountain, calling it Mitre Rock.

★ ★

From the summit of Mt. Arapiles Major Mitchell counted 27 circular lakes in the surrounding countryside, and found that the mountain was made of sandstone and quartz. He also collected the first ever specimens of Grampians Thryptomene - the best known shrub in the area if not Victoria. Centenary Gates were built in 1936 to honor Major Mitchell but they are not used today because only one car can fit through them.

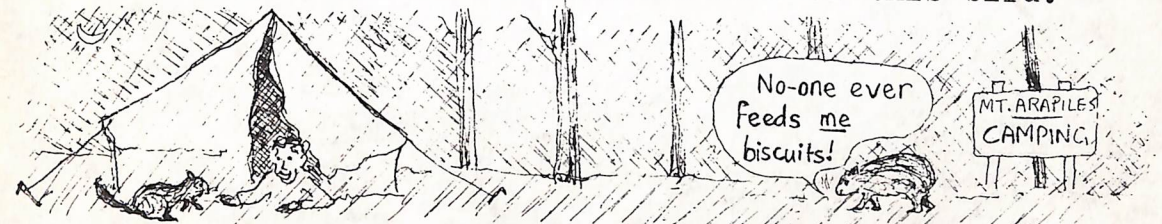


There is a beaut camping ground at the base of the bluff, which is a favorite place for novice rock climbers. However, tourists can take the easy way up along a scenic road. There is a firewatch tower which gives a clear view all around as you are some 556metres high on top!

Animal and plant life is plentiful in the Mt. Arapiles area. The lost Duff children were looking for Melaleuca uncinata branches which are ideal brooms with which to sweep the floor of their shepherd's hut. There is also a very rare fern - the Skeleton Fork Fern (Psilotus nudum) - found only in 3 places in Victoria. This fern looks just like dried-up twigs - which is why it gets its name.

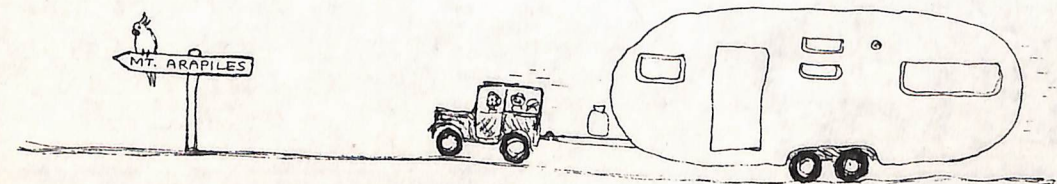
One of the lakes at the foot of the mountain is known as Gash's Wash. It was there that the shepherds took their sheep to wash the wool before shearing. Is this still done?

You will see great numbers of the Malle Red Rump Parrot or Red-backed Parrot. The Black Jay or White-winged Chough are also common. Watch out for the White Roundel on the wing and listen for the piping call. Find out about the unusual nest of this bird.



If you camp in this area - and I hope you will - you may have a visitor at night like we did, in the form of a Brush-tailed Possum. They will very gladly accept biscuits from your hand. Be careful not to step on an Echidna or Goanna - or the very common Bob-tail Skink. At night, if you are very lucky, you may discover a Phascogale or Tuan. These fairly rare animals are still believed to live in the area. (First find out what they look like!)

Mt. Arapiles - quite a place eh!? How about it for your September holidays camping trip???

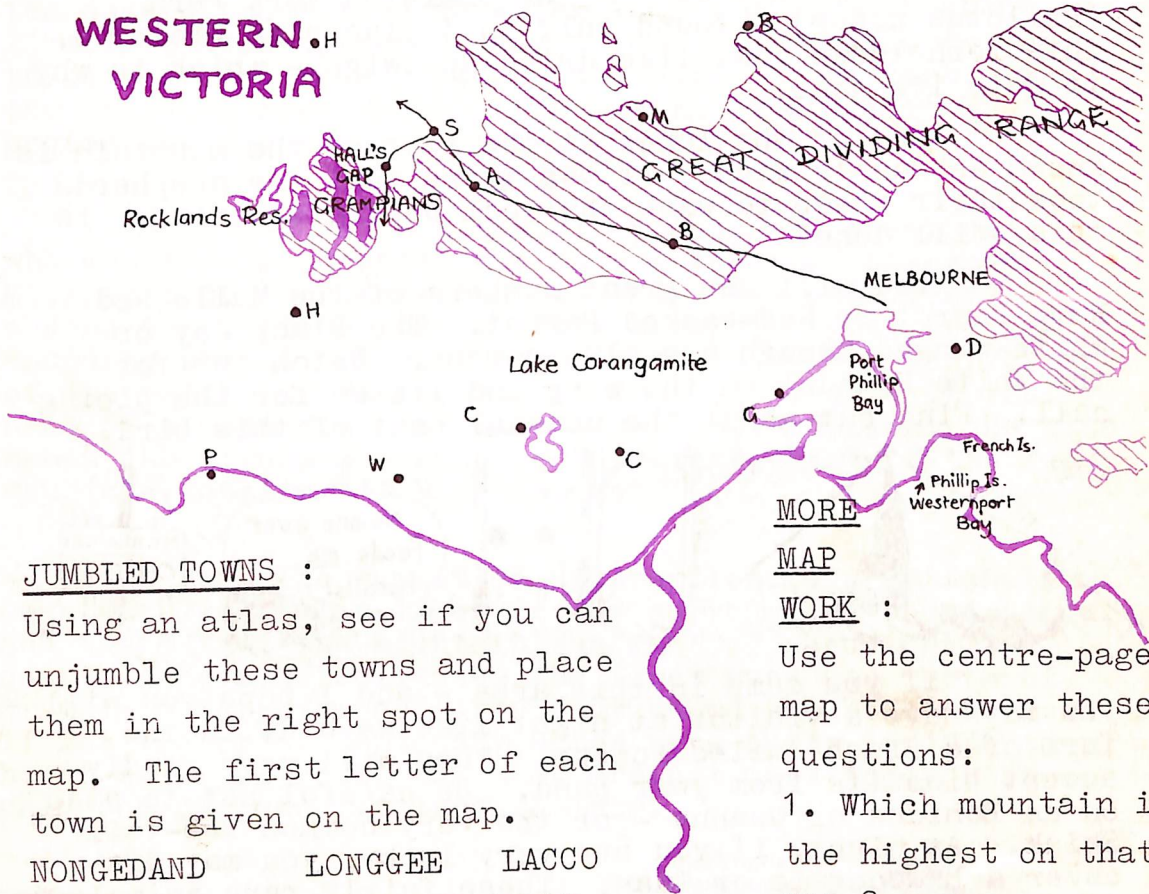


Map Work

0 Lake Hindmarsh

0 Lake Buloke

WESTERN VICTORIA



JUMBLED TOWNS :

Using an atlas, see if you can unjumble these towns and place them in the right spot on the map. The first letter of each town is given on the map.

NONGEDAND LONGGEE LACCO
TROPDNLA WETSALL MASHHOR
DOGINEB MRBRUHAYOOG AAARRT
RRWMAAONBL AALLABRT MILTONAH

CMEDWAPRON

MORE

MAP

WORK :

Use the centre-page map to answer these questions:

1. Which mountain is the highest on that map ?
2. Which is the longest river or creek on the map ?
3. About how many km is it from Hall's Gap to Lake Wartook; to Mt. William?

Sounds like a great place.

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