



Historic Grant and



Talbotville

As a family we decided to spend some

time camping on the Crooked

River near Talbotville with friends and check out the local mining history.

The Grant historical area including Talbotville offer fantastic 4WD tracks including Blue Rag, Collingwood Spur and Billy Goat Bluff track which leads up to the Pinnacles for one of the best views of the Alpine area.



The Talbotville and Grant area in particular, have been marked as an area of historical importance. Prior to the 1850's the population of the colonies mainly centred in the areas of Melbourne and Geelong. The gold rush changed all that.

Castlemaine, Ballarat, Bendigo and the Ovens valley all gained noticeable growth throughout the 1850's and 60's thanks to the gold rush. Explorers such as, Strzelecki, MacKillop, McMillan and McCallister made a name for themselves and opened up vast areas in Victoria.

Talbotville is a great area for 4wd drivers and walkers alike. However, there is little left of the town, except for the cemetery and the huge, well grassed campsite, which is very popular and I know our club and its members have been visiting the area for many

years.

Today people can discover or rediscover for themselves the wonderful Grant township area. It's easily reached with a two wheel drive vehicle. The township itself once sustained over 2000 people and there were banks, pubs, stores and churches. It was a substantial town and due to McMillan's track clearing there was even a Cobb and Co run from Sale. Only remnants of life remain in the old township. The buildings are gone with only information boards depicting what once stood in this thriving area. I still find it difficult to imagine the hardships the miners and their families endured for the promise of gold.



The region produced masses of gold. The Good Hope mine itself produced 20,677 ounces of gold, closing in 1914. At today's prices that's something in the vicinity of \$20,000,000. Today you can still walk up to the old battery site

where the remains of a boiler and stamper can still be found. These are the only original artefacts in the state, which are still in great condition, and still occupy their original site. I can understand why they were abandoned, as the terrain is steep and it must have taken an enormous amount of

muscle and ingenuity to get the machinery to the mine site.

In Grant, The Jolly Sailor mine is a short walk from the car park on the Jolly Sailor Spur track. There is nothing left of the mine but a few scrap bits of metal and remnants of the chimney stack but it's still worth the walk. There are numerous unmarked mine shafts scattered throughout the area so if you decide to wonder off the tracks be careful not to end up in the bottom of one.

The area not only offers history but in the summer shows off its flora. As you climb higher the flora changes and distinct regions are visible. At lower elevations you will find woodlands, heath and grasslands. While you climb the vegetation changes to snow gums and sub alpine woodlands to finally the alpine grasslands and heaths. While we were in

the area we found numerous and wonderful plants. As usual blackberries were everywhere but if you take the time to walk (I know, I said that word walk!!) you will be rewarded with a number of beautiful flowering plants and shrubs. Next time you're in the area take a look and enjoy the alpine flowers as well as its history and great 4wd tracks.

Maria Lucas

Reference : Victoria's Forgotten Goldfield, Christie & Gray

Grant Historic Area, park notes, Parks Victoria

